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# The COMMUNIST

MAY



## THE SOCIALIST PARTY CONVENTION

By GENE DENNIS

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The Schools and the People's Front	RICHARD FRANK
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## REVIEW OF THE MONTH

*Economic and Political Perspectives. Wage Increases Do Not Raise Production Costs. Rising Monopoly Prices and Cost of Living. An Approaching Boom Leading to Crisis. How Shall We Prepare? The Politics of Present Economic Discussions. Defend Right of Sit-Down. Resurgence of Reaction and Red-Baiting. New York Times Plays a Game. Past and Present of Industrial Unionism. Read Foster's New Book. Compromises and "Compromises". Why Democracy in Unions? Outlook for Socialist Party. Stalin Defines Present-Day Trotskyism. A Whitewashing Expedition in Mexico. Lessons From Stalin's Report and Summary. Communist Party Recruiting and Press Circulation. Greetings to Lincoln Brigade. A New Phase in Spanish War for Democracy and Peace.*

**I**NFLATIONARY tendencies, rising prices eating up wage increases and a maturing economic crisis—these are important and significant developments in present-day America. Labor and its allies should discuss these developments with a view of formulating common policies and programs of action on the basis of a clearly ascertained economic and political perspective. Yet one thing has to be emphasized right at the outset: American capitalist economy is still on the upward grade. It is beginning to manifest some of the symptoms of what is popularly known as a "boom", although proceeding unevenly and marked by several specific characteristics, of which the 10,000,000 unemployed, the continuing agrarian crisis and the lagging foreign trade are the most outstanding.

With all these vital limitations, capitalist economy here is still on the upgrade. Which means that the time continues *increasingly favorable* for trade union organization, for struggle to secure wage increases, shorter hours, and a general raising of the standards of living of the toiling masses.

Note, however, must be taken of the fact that the monopolies, whose price structure has suffered least in the crisis years, are now recklessly driving up the prices of their commodities, using recent wage increases as an excuse. In this way, the price structure of the entire economy tends to rise inordinately, with the result that wage increases are fast eaten up and the relationship between farm prices and industrial prices tends to become increasingly more unfavorable for the mass of the farming population.

That the monopolies are using wage increases merely as an excuse to further increase prices can be shown both theoretically and practically. Marx has proven long ago that wage increases do not raise the cost of production as measured by the expenditure of labor (*Capital*, Vol. III). If the productivity and intensity of labor remain the same, that is, if hours, tools and machinery, speed-up, etc., remain unchanged, then the only effect a wage increase has is to cut down the surplus value extracted from labor by capital; it decreases profits, although not always the rate of profit.

Practically it can be shown that the monopolies kept on increasing prices much before the present strike wave began to compel wage increases. They increased prices while wages remained stationary, whereas labor productivity has risen considerably. In the case of steel, for example, the Labor Research Association has shown "how the recent steel wage rise can be easily absorbed by steel companies without any advance in prices" (*Steel and Metal Notes*, March, 1937).

The same source (*Economic Notes*, April, 1937) cites Standard Statistics Co. estimates to the effect "that net profits of leading corporations for the first quarter of this year will be at least 50 per cent over the 1936 first quarter level" and that "steel profits in 1937 will be far above the high record of 1936".

Clearly, the people's case against the monopolies for their inordinate and reckless driving up of prices is complete. Equally complete and urgent is the need of a concerted struggle against high monopoly prices. While intensifying manifold the drive to unionize the

industries, to raise wages, shorten hours and decrease speed-up, while bringing forth more urgently and practically the demand for a guaranteed minimum yearly income, labor should *at the same time* take the initiative in bringing about united actions against high monopoly prices by the workers, toiling farmers, middle class consumers and small businessmen.

But this is not all by far. The rapidly mounting price structure taken together with the perspective of an approaching new crisis is sharpening the struggle around a number of other issues in which labor and its allies are vitally interested. Such are: taxation, social insurance, price regulations, relief policies and appropriations, the budget, etc. It is evident that the political struggle in the country around these issues is increasingly becoming more acute, with reaction taking the initiative. It is also evident that the great political realignment now in process (and in the face of the Congressional elections of 1938, not to speak of 1940) will be vitally affected by the policies of labor and its allies on these issues.

It is important to ascertain as far as possible the immediate economic perspective. From the available economic indexes it would appear that American capitalist economy is entering very unevenly into the so-called prosperity phase of the economic cycle, usually called a "boom". This phase of the cycle is, as a rule, very short and leads directly into crash and crisis. The capitalist press does not hide its worries and anticipations. The Roosevelt administration, including the President as well as Eccles, Wallace and Roper, have signaled the ap-

proach of such a perspective in various ways. Voices have been heard from the Department of Commerce forecasting a leveling off in industrial production and employment in the last half of 1937. *The New York Times*, which is quite optimistic about the outlook, finds that "at a moment, an atmosphere of doubt pretty plainly prevades financial minds" (April 4). To dissipate these "doubts", the *Times* is inclined to believe that, if a setback should occur, it might be just a slight recession and need not be another crash like in 1929.

While it is true that slight setbacks, or "readjustment correctives", may occur within the prosperity or "boom" phase of the cycle and hence be of short duration, yet it is certain that the prosperity phase as a whole must by itself be relatively short and cannot but lead to another crisis. As to its probable duration and depth, one need only remember that capitalism continues in condition of general crisis of the system, that world capitalist economy is broken up and chaotic, and that in the United States, for example, alongside the beginnings of a boom we have still 10,000,000 unemployed, a continuing agrarian crisis and badly lagging foreign trade.

From this perspective, certain immediate conclusions follow for labor and its allies:

1. The utmost and most intensive utilization of the continuing upward swing in industry to unionize the workers, to raise their standards and to *consolidate* these achievements. *The further labor advances in the present phase of incipient boom, the more difficult will it be for the economic royalists to push labor back in the coming*

*crisis*. Equally, the time element is beginning to play an important part.

2. *Social insurance in all its phases* must be fought for more energetically. The total inadequacy of the present Security Law has been so often exposed that there is no need going into it here. Whether by radically amending the present law, or by a totally new measure, or both (this being a matter of tactics), a genuine social insurance law is the crying need of the moment—a law that includes the agricultural workers, toiling farmers and all toilers and that covers adequately, together with unemployment and old age, also maternity, disability, health, etc., financed by taxing the rich.

Why is such a law the crying need of the moment? First, it will increase the income, the purchasing power, of large masses at once and will in part compensate the people for the rising prices. Second, it will prepare for the crisis that is now maturing.

This matter should be handled *now* in the present session of Congress.

3. *Higher taxation of large incomes and fortunes*, and the whole question of the budget—these are matter to which the Farmer-Labor-progressive forces in Congress and outside of it should pay, in our judgement, the utmost attention. The reactionary cry for a "balanced budget" at the expense of the people is again reverberating with increasing insistence. It is falsely and hypocritically represented as a means of "checking inflationary tendencies" and of preventing another 1929. President Roosevelt seems inclined to "cut expenditures" rather than increase taxation of the rich. Senator Harrison and Representative Doughton, chairmen of the two com-

mittees of Congress responsible for tax legislation, both have expressed themselves as favoring cuts in relief expenditures and opposing heavier taxation of high incomes and fortunes.

In view of all this, and considering also the administration plans to submit to Congress certain revisions in the budget, we again urge the Farmer-Labor-progressive forces to get together and fight for a *people's budget* in all its ramifications. A budget that will take care adequately of the immediate needs of the people and that will make all necessary provisions for the maturing crisis, especially insisting upon higher taxation of large incomes and profits and reducing the burden of taxation upon the toiling people.

4. *Support of the relief program of the Workers' Alliance* is another urgent task of the moment. The Workers Alliance demands a federal appropriation for 1937-38 of \$3,000,000,000 for the W.P.A. to care for 3,000,000 unemployed and to provide a 20 per cent increase in wages. This is clearly a minimum. The Mayors' Conference asks for \$2,200,000,000 to care for 2,800,000 jobless, leaving wages at their present intolerably low levels. Even the "six governors" find it necessary to urge upon the President an appropriation of \$1,750,000,000 to maintain the present number of 2,200,000 people on the W.P.A. Yet rumors are (at this writing) that the President plans to ask for only \$1,200,000,000, and may be inclined to cut even that amount if the demands of the Workers' Alliance are insufficiently supported by the struggles of the masses and the united actions of the Farmer-Labor-progressive forces in Congress.

5. *A coordinated Farmer-Labor pro-*

*gram for struggle against monopoly prices* and on "price regulations" generally. Labor's Non-Partisan League has declared recently in favor of a certain measure of Farmer-Labor cooperation. One of the things calling for such cooperation is a Farmer-Labor program for combating the reckless driving up of prices by the monopolies, the question of a people's budget and taxation, all of this in the light of immediate needs as well as from the angle of the maturing crisis and the political perspectives of 1938.

\* \* \*

POLITICAL perspectives are of course inseparable from the economic perspectives. The monopolies are quite evidently speculating on the economic situation that may prevail when the 1938 elections come around and how that could be exploited to insure a reactionary victory. This also in preparation for 1940.

Publicly these speculations take the form of warnings to businessmen to be on guard against the blame that will be put on them for the coming crash and the consequent danger of more government regulation and even "state capitalism". Virgil Jordan, president of the big businessmen's National Industrial Conference Board, has this to say on the matter:

"Any inflationary boom and subsequent collapse during the next three years will be the direct consequence of erroneous government policies during the past four years; but businessmen should recognize now that they will be blamed for it. They should be on their guard against abetting it by reckless speculation or by seeking government sanction for private production and price control schemes."

The immediate purpose of such ex-

hortations is, of course, to mobilize small and medium business against the President's court proposals and for a reduction of relief expenditures as a means of "balancing the budget" and of "combating" the inflationary trend. Yet inseparably connected with these immediate aims is reactionary speculation on the near economic and political perspectives. Should the crisis be upon us around the time of the 1938 elections, the monopolies wish to be in a position to blame it effectively upon President Roosevelt and his "erroneous" policies, upon labor and the C.I.O., upon labor's allies among the farmers and progressives.

No doubt, there is a good deal of vulgar gossip in much that is being written about these reactionary speculations. Yet much of this gossip is based on realities. And the realities are that a crisis is in the offing and that reaction is preparing to make the utmost use of its consequences to stage a comeback to power. Also Coughlin is beginning to prepare to exploit the coming crisis for fascist purposes.

President Roosevelt, in his own way, is seeking to counter the reactionary maneuvers, but *in his own way*, which means not the effective way. As a matter of good tactics, labor and its allies will support those measures of the President which are directed against the reactionary forces but in their own independent way. This independent way is made necessary both by the needs of the immediate situation and by the economic and political perspectives. The more independent the line and organization of labor and its allies on the political field—*now and in the immediate future*—the stronger will be the camp of progress—the camp

of the People's Front—in the next test which the maturing crisis and coming elections will make inevitable.

\* \* \*

**M**ONOPOLY capital and the reactionary camp generally are desperately trying to turn their recent setbacks and defeats into victories. Here we have reference largely to the vicious campaign against the sit-down, for anti-strike and anti-union legislation. Having been compelled to retreat from their open-shop positions in frontal struggle, the monopolies are now seeking by flanking maneuvers to so hamstring the unions as to make it almost impossible for them to function in the interests of the workers.

If unions we must have, the reactionaries figure, let these be *tame unions*, emasculated, registered and finger-printed, controlled and incorporated, bound hand and foot by compulsory mediation and arbitration and, where possible, thoroughly poisoned with a proper dose of Red-baiting. These would really be "ideal" unions, perhaps even better than no unions at all in the present situation, something approaching very closely the so-called unions of Hitler and Mussolini. Wouldn't that be a joke on the unionists—the reactionaries must be chuckling.

Bills and proposals to that effect are coming in galore, into Congress and the state legislatures, from the Manufacturers Association, from the Liberty League elements and all other reactionary forces in the country. And Donald R. Richberg is right on the spot with his "expert" knowledge to help put across this dirty business in a manner satisfactory to the "sane" ele-

ments among the employers and labor.

The activities of this person Richberg should be watched very closely, as suggested by Paul W. Ward (*The Nation*, April 3). The anti-union bill which he prepared for the Pennsylvania legislature and the "enlightened" views which he propagates in *The New York Times* (April 11) should be sufficient warning. Anticipating that his proposals would be branded as anti-union, he says:

"Of course, it may be claimed by a biased critic that this is 'anti-strike legislation'. A more accurate term would be that it is anti-coercion legislation."

No wonder *The New York Times*, the mouthpiece of "enlightened" open-shop opinion, champions Richberg's proposals. This paper, as is known, takes a rather "intimate" interest in the affairs of labor and its unions. It will be recalled that it was the same paper that tried to engineer a split in the C.I.O. on the eve of the last convention (Tampa) of the American Federation of Labor. And this it tried to do, unsuccessfully, by brazenly exploiting the issue of trade union unity. It sought to "unite" the C.I.O. with the A. F. of L. by splitting the C.I.O. And the notorious Shaplen was the "labor expert" with whom the *Times* was manipulating the affair. The thing was exposed in time and—collapsed.

But the *Times* will not be downed. Having convinced itself that the C.I.O. could not be split and, furthermore, that it was becoming strong enough to compel union recognition from such fortresses of the open-shop as Big Steel and General Motors, the enlightened *New York Times* is trying to make "peace" with the C.I.O. and the ad-

vancing industrial unions. But a peculiar sort of peace—a peace that would tame the unions, kill their militancy and working class integrity, saturate them with Red-baiting, drive out of them the Left, progressive and Communist elements, put them under the iron heel of incorporation and compulsory arbitration—a peace satisfactory to the reactionary monopolies and incipient fascists.

It is again no wonder that it was the "enlightened" *New York Times*, as distinguished, for example, from the crude *Herald Tribune*, that tried to build up a Red-baiting drive and a "purge" of Communists in the United Automobile Workers Union. It is a sort of division of labor. While the *Herald Tribune* and its like are still holding out against any sort of peace with the C.I.O., the *Times* is preparing the ground for an alternative policy: "peace" at the price of the virtual destruction of the C.I.O. unions as free, independent, militant and genuine unions of the workers. This is the meaning of the Red-baiting attempts and of the Richberg brand of anti-union legislation as distinguished from the more crude efforts of Dies, Hoffman and the *Herald Tribune*.

It goes without saying that all this fine maneuvering to tame the C.I.O. is a phase of the general resurgence of reaction to stop the forward march of the people, to save the usurped powers of the Supreme Court, to saddle the unions with semi-fascist legislation, to outlaw the sit-down, to stage a comeback to power of the Liberty League forces.

In the face of these facts, it should be clear that any tendency in the

unions to give in to the reactionary barrage against the sit-down, for anti-strike and anti-union legislation and for Red-baiting, is capitulation to the enemies of labor, to the enemies of the American people. Any tendency to indulge in Red-baiting no matter how "little", any inclination to accept the sort of peace that *The New York Times* is offering, is a concession to the enemy which may cost labor dearly. Surely no progressive labor leader has a right to forget even for a moment the disastrous experiences of American labor with the Hutchesons and Freys.

Nor should they forget the pioneering and progressive role of the Lefts and Communists in promoting industrial unionism and independent working class political action. It is merely stating a fact, and one that should not be overlooked, that without the pioneering and self-sacrificing work of the Lefts and of the Communists in the cause of working class progress, the present forward march of labor would be unthinkable, nor would the present advance of the C.I.O. and of Labor's Non-Partisan League be what it is.

It is highly pertinent to point out in this connection that a reading of Comrade Foster's new book, *From Bryan to Stalin*, would go a long way towards making the labor movement, and all progressives, more conscious of what they are doing, *more conscious of their past, present and future*. From this book they would learn what Foster and his collaborators have contributed in the past towards making possible labor's advance at present as well as the basic reasons for the constructive and valuable work done by Communists in the present magnificent upsurge of labor.

There is really no excuse for responsible workers in the labor movement to be uninformed, let alone misinformed, on the aims and purposes of the Communists. So much so that they should genuinely fall for the Red-baiting tales of a *New York Times* or *Chicago Tribune* that the Communists are seeking to bring about a revolution in the auto industry by means of the sit-down strikes. Day in and day out, our leaders, our extensive press and literature, openly and frankly discuss the affairs of labor and of our people, evaluating events and stating the Communist point of view and practical proposals. Moreover, thousands of Communist workers participate with the rest of their class in unions and other working class organizations, helping build the unions, doing their utmost to promote the advance of labor and its allies on the economic and political fields. Why, then, should anyone believe, or pretend to believe, the fairy tales of the Red-baiters?

That Communists hold advanced views on capitalism and socialism is no secret; least of all do Communists make a secret of it. It is equally no secret that Communists stand for democracy in the unions, for class struggle policies, for a People's Front against fascism and war, believing firmly that through such policies the working people can best advance their interests now, to help maintain peace, to prevent fascism from winning power in this country, and in this way become strong enough to abolish capitalism and build socialism.

Are these advanced views inimical to the building of strong industrial unions, disciplined and democratically administered? Quite the contrary. Just

because the Communists hold these views, they are consistent and self-sacrificing fighters for strong, democratic and disciplined unions. The thing that militates against the building of such unions is Red-baiting, insufficient democracy, lack of militancy, policies of class collaboration which Hutcheson, Frey and Woll have made notorious in the labor movement. Surely, no progressive would want this sort of thing in the C.I.O. as well as in the A. F. of L.

Does a class struggle policy call for "strikes for strike's sake", no discipline, no leadership, no agreements with the employers, no compromise? Ridiculous! Rubbish! What responsible trade unionist can believe such things? Years and years ago the world leaders of Communism — Lenin and Stalin — exploded such conception as utterly non-Communist and harmful to the class struggle. They have shown that there are compromises which are justified and serve the interests of the class struggle as against "compromises" which are only another name for treachery and betrayal. Each case must be examined on its merits, from the viewpoint of the relation of forces and the interests of the workers. And short-sighted, indeed, will be those progressive trade union leaders who will fail to encourage the workers, let alone discourage them by injecting a bit of Red-baiting, to examine critically proposed agreements with the employers, to discuss these agreements, to make reasonably certain that they contain the most that could be gotten under the circumstances, and to act on them in a democratic way, even though such procedure may sometimes require an additional couple of hours. Labor in

auto and steel has waited more than a few hours for a chance to establish a union in the industry.

Agreements arrived at in this fashion, consciously and democratically ratified by the membership, are the only guarantee that they will be kept. The employers will know that there is an alert and conscious membership of the union standing guard over the fulfillment of the agreement by the employers and this will discourage violations and double-crosses *a la* General Motors. At the same time, the membership of the union will be fully conscious that it has assumed voluntarily and in good judgment certain obligations for a period of time the observance of which was dictated by the interests of labor itself.

There are, of course, other ways of making the workers fulfil agreements: it is to let the employers violate freely their obligations while terrorizing the workers into quietude and submission. This is the Hutcheson and Ryan way. But this is a chapter of another book altogether—a book which the progressives are seeking to close. And the sooner it is closed the better.

\* \* \*

WHAT is going to happen to the Socialist Party? The *Socialist Call* (April 3) thinks that the emergency convention of the Socialist Party "marks a great step forward". Forward—to what? The fact is that Trotskyite influence in the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party (N.E.C.) is now stronger than before the convention. And if the non-Trotskyite elements in the N.E.C. remain as divided, confused and hesitant as they have been, there is a real danger

that the Tyler-Zam group will dominate the N.E.C.

And what is the Tyler-Zam group? In its "top", it is not only conciliatory to Trotskyism, not only is it working hand in glove with the hardened Trotskyite counter-revolutionists of the Cannon-Schachtman type, but is itself heavily poisoned with Trotskyism. This being so, what kind of an N.E.C. will it be if the Tyler-Zam group actually dominates it?

Some people say: why talk about the N.E.C.? Why not examine first the resolutions of the convention and the declarations of the N.E.C. and judge matters by these documents? Well, we can examine the documents also and that wouldn't be very comforting either. But the important point is that *you cannot any longer judge Trotskyites by the resolutions which they support*. They will support any document if only that enables them to penetrate workers' organizations in order to carry on their real work, the wrecking and diversionist work of agents of fascism. That was how they came into the Socialist Party to begin with.

The membership, and all healthy elements in the Socialist Party, should give serious thought to Comrade Stalin's speech before the last plenum of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. About the evolution and present nature of Trotskyism he said:

"... Trotskyism has ceased to be a political trend in the working class, ... it has changed from the political trend in the working class, which it was seven or eight years ago, into a frantic and unprincipled gang of wreckers, diversionists, spies and murderers acting on the instructions of the intelligence services of foreign states."

\* Joseph Stalin, *Mastering Bolshevism*, p. 14, Workers Library Publishers, New York.

A political trend in the working class does not hide its views and political face but openly shows it before the masses, seeking to win them for its point of view. That was what Trotskyism was doing seven or eight years ago but not now. Says Stalin:

"... present day Trotskyites are afraid to show their real face to the working class, are afraid to disclose their real aims and tasks to it, and carefully hide their political face from the working class, fearing that if the working class should learn of their real intentions it will curse them as an alien people and drive them from it."\*

This helps to understand a good deal the readiness of the Trotskyites in the Socialist Party to accept resolutions even for the defense of the Soviet Union which they are betraying daily; or to agree to resolutions favoring a Farmer-Labor Party which they are trying to bust up in Minnesota, and similar antics. The membership of the Socialist Party should become conscious of these special methods of the Trotskyites at present. Says Stalin:

"This in reality explains how it is that the chief method of Trotskyite work is now not open and honest propaganda of its views among the working class, but the masking of its views, servile and fawning praise for the views of its opponents, a false and pharisaical trampling of its own views in the dirt."\*

Isn't this the method by which the Trotskyites got into the Socialist Party? Isn't this the method by which they secured such a decisive power over the emergency convention even though the bulk of the Socialist Party membership distrusts them and is opposed to them? Certainly, we should examine resolutions and decisions, yet always remembering that as far as Trotskyites

\* *Ibid*, p. 15.

are concerned their acceptance of these documents is Trotskyite "method".

There was, of course, no excuse for the Trotskyites and near Trotskyites strengthening their positions in the N.E.C. of the Socialist Party. Had the healthy mass workers of the Socialist Party and the Thomas tendency and the budding genuine Lefts, representing the overwhelming majority of the Socialist Party, had these forces prepared properly before the convention and had they fought effectively at the convention to clean their ranks of the Trotskyite poison, this convention would really have marked a step forward.

As it was—what did we have? The mass workers, or most of them, displayed an alarming lack of political acumen and maturity, a failure to realize fully that their central task in the convention was to clean out the Trotskyites. The Thomas and related elements could not be accused exactly of lack of political maturity; with them it was rather a case of practising wrong and disastrous policies (or politics)—the policies of *tolerating* Trotskyism even though it may cost the Socialist Party its life as a workers' organization. As to the genuine and honest Lefts, the most promising current in the Socialist Party, these have been developing all too slow to present in the convention a decisive factor.

It is therefore necessary to say: should the healthy elements in the Socialist Party remain quiescent and should the Tyler-Zam group actually dominate the N.E.C., the crisis in the Socialist Party will infinitely sharpen. Tyler-Zam control will tend to isolate the Socialist Party still further from the masses, putting the party in opposition

to the developing Farmer-Labor movement, making more difficult united front actions with the Communists, driving the healthy forces out of the Socialist Party and threatening to transform it into an outright Trotskyite gang.

Will the truly healthy elements remain quiescent? *That is impossible.* It is most certain that the mass workers will not be able for long to stand the racketeering and criminal antics of the Trotskyites in Minnesota, for example, or the isolationist and sectarian line of the Tyler-Zam outfit. It is most certain that the genuine friends of the Soviet Union in the Socialist Party will not be able for long to breathe the poisoned air spread by the agents of fascism in their party. The Thomas and related elements (we don't know about Thomas himself), while willing to tolerate Trotskyites in their midst, could not for long tolerate Trotskyite domination and control. Whereas the developing genuine Lefts are bound to make serious headway in the coming months and they certainly will not tolerate Trotskyism in the Socialist Party. The fight against the Trotskyites and the Trotsky-poisoned Tyler-Zam "leadership" is bound to become more intense. And in this lies the salvation of the Socialist Party as a workers' organization.

In the face of this outlook, our role is reasonably clear. We have to take special pains to make the Socialists see the truth of the nature of present-day Trotskyism as explained by Stalin. This will help them a good deal. On this basis, we must exert all our efforts to convince the Socialists that it is their duty as workers to drive the Trotskyites out of the Socialist Party in order

to save their party from destruction as a workers' organization. We should increase a hundredfold our efforts for united front actions with Socialists in the unions, in the Workers' Alliance, other mass organizations, with branches and locals of the Socialist Party, giving all encouragement to its healthy mass workers and to all Socialist elements that will stand up against the Trotskyites and paying special attention to assist in the further and more rapid development of the genuine Lefts as exemplified by the Porter tendency.

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AS SOON as the Trotskyite white-washing expedition to Mexico began to work, it became evident to all that Trotsky and his assistant, Goldman, were in full charge of the business. Dewey looks from here like a fifth wheel to the Trotsky wagon while the other members of the so-called "commission" sit helplessly and don't know what to do. Trotsky is taking care of everything.

It also transpires that the Trotsky correspondence "is not in Mexico" and that the Trotsky documents consist of "copies". All of which must be very encouraging to the "impartial" investigators.

Meanwhile a Tokyo newspaper, *Myiako*, disclosed the fact that at a secret session of the budget commission of the Japanese lower house, General Sugiyama admitted, in reply to a question by deputy Acida, that the Japanese army knew the carrying capacity of the Siberian railroad from information gotten through the Trotskyites. Said the General: "In Russia there exist elements in opposition to the present

government and it is through them that we know" (*The New York Times*, March 2). And on April 2, an Associated Press dispatch from Moscow reports that the "Mr. H.", who was plotting with the Piatakov-Radek Trotskyites, has been identified as S. Hiroshima, "authority on transportation, who had been attached to the Japanese embassy here". He has now departed from Moscow.

Which should remind us that the "reserves" of Trotskyism, of which Comrade Stalin spoke recently, are also the reserves of the Japanese military-fascist clique as well as Hitler's. (Earl Browder, *Daily Worker*, April 9.)

Of some of these reserves in America, Stalin said:

"Or take, for example, the well-known gang of American writers headed by the notorious racketeer Eastman, all these gangsters of the pen who live by slandering the working class of the Soviet Union—aren't they reserves for Trotskyism?"\*

Of course, they are. And as such we should fight them. Incidentally, Norman Thomas, though out of the country at present, is still a member of the Trotsky "commission".

\* \* \*

STALIN'S report and summary to the recent plenum of our brother Party in the Soviet Union contain tremendously important lessons and leading ideas for the workers in all countries. With some of these, on the nature of present-day Trotskyism and how to combat it, we have dealt above. With many of the others, we shall be dealing for months and months to come. That's how instructive and important they are for our work here in

\* *Ibid*, p. 34.

promoting the advance of the American people and in building the Communist Party.

Just now, and practically since the Ninth Convention of the Communist Party of the United States in the summer of 1936, the Communists have been moving to a practical solution of a somewhat difficult problem. It is the urgent problem of building the Communist Party into a mass party of the American working class and all toilers while engaging most actively in the mass struggles of the working people against capitalist exploitation, reaction, fascism and war.

Theoretically the problem presents now no difficulty for it has been solved successfully by that body of revolutionary working class knowledge which is identified with the names of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. Yet in practice, at certain turns in the life of the working class and of the Communist Party, certain emphases have to be changed or modified and new forms of work discovered to continue successfully with organizing the masses for their liberation.

And so we find that in our work here *Party building* still continues to lag behind the expansion of Communist mass work—work for the building up of the economic and political organizations of the masses—as well as behind the spread of Communist influence generally. This is seen in such indexes as insufficient growth of Party membership, although the growth is considerable, and still more insufficient growth of the circulation of the *Daily Worker* and *Sunday Worker*.

The March meeting of the Communist Party District Organizers devoted itself to the practical working

out of plans and measures for increasing Party recruiting and circulation of the *Daily Worker* and *Sunday Worker*. In doing so, it proceeded from the understanding that the growth of the Party and its press “lags considerably behind the greatly increased activities of the masses” and that this was a serious matter both for the Party and the mass struggles.

The Party is now engaged in carrying out these plans. It is absolutely certain that a serious study of Stalin's leading ideas will help us tremendously in the carrying out of our present tasks—the building of the Party, the building of its press, to make ourselves a still more effective force in the promotion of the forward march of the American working class and its allies.

Some of these leading ideas, *in application to our special needs*, could be summarized as follows:

1. The attention of the Party comrades who become submerged in “current questions”, in one phase of work or another, should be turned to the big political questions of both international and internal character.

Does that mean neglecting the smaller and special questions of various phases of mass work? Not a bit. It means not to get bogged on and submerged in the special questions of daily mass work and to such an extent that the big political issues are forgotten or ignored.

2. The political work of the Party must be raised to the proper level, making the main task that of the political training and Bolshevik steeling of the Party's leading personnel (cadres). Here we should have to say more specifically: together with such training of cadres that are in charge

of the Party organizations, special attention would be paid to the proper training of those Party cadres that are engaged mostly in non-Party mass organizations.

3. Mass work and Party building must go hand in hand. For us, at the present time, this means several things. Communists must be trained to be not only good organizers of the masses and their organizations, not alone good speakers and leaders of mass struggles. Of course, we must be all that, much more than we are today. But we must also train ourselves to be *politically and ideologically* good Communists.

The American labor movement is rapidly growing in political maturity. As we pointed out some time ago, politics and economics are being consciously treated as inseparable by the progressive forces in the labor movement to an ever increasing degree. This is a great gain for the labor movement and for the entire camp of progress in the country. But this imposes obligations upon Communists who must be able to continue to be in the front ranks of the forward movement of the masses. And this requires political and ideological training.

It also requires (what has been emphasized before) central attention to the Party units, to the building up of these units into real centers of Communist mass leadership. This means, first, that the units as such must carry on systematic independent activities in the interests of the masses. It means, second, that the Party's independent line must be clearly understood by the membership and systematically propagated among the masses and converts be won to that line. It means, third, that the initiative and self-activity of

the Party membership must be developed energetically on the basis of unfolding and strictly observing the principles of Party democracy.

And in conclusion, the following from Stalin's summary:

"Contacts with the masses, the strengthening of these contacts, readiness to listen to the voice of the masses—in this lie the strength and impregnability of Bolshevik leadership."\*

For the beautiful, as well as instructive, example from the mythology of the ancient Greeks, and for many other things—read the report and summary of Comrade Stalin.

\* \* \*

**T**O THE Lincoln Brigade in Spain—our greetings and good wishes. Their deeds of glory and heroism have already written a chapter in American history which will not be forgotten. It will stand out as proof idelible that the American people are not willing to leave Spanish democracy in the lurch despite our fascists and reactionaries, despite also the hypocritical and unneutral "neutrality" of our government.

Let the brave Lincoln Battalion be our example and shining light for more and greater efforts in the cause of Spanish democracy, which is the cause of world democracy and world peace, even though bourgeois democracies have practically abandoned the Spanish people to the tender mercies of the fascist invaders.

That the Spanish people are fighting also for their national independence against the invasion of German and Italian fascism is now clear. It is also clear to every fair-minded person

\* *Ibid.*, p. 57.

that to allow Germany and Italy to get arms, munitions or any sort of war supplies in the United States means that the American government is directly and openly taking sides in the Spanish *in favor of the fascist powers*. This is the "neutrality" of our State Department. Isn't it obvious that in order to maintain even *formal* neutrality in the sense of *existing laws* the American government should at once embargo all shipment of war supplies to Hitler and Mussolini? This is what Senator Nye no doubt intended with his resolution of inquiry to the State Department. But the Senate which was very sprightly and quick to adopt the "neutrality" law is peculiarly sluggish in acting on the Nye resolution.

It is quite possible to make the Senate act by a sufficiently strong demand from all parts of the country.

Meanwhile the people's army of Spain is growing in strength and maturity and is retaining the initiative seized in the Guadalajara victories. It is perfectly correct to say that these victories mark a new phase in the Spanish war but the capitalist press is still trying to blur this fact and belittle it.

*The New York Times* is the most brazen offender. On March 29, this paper published a long dispatch from Ernest Hemingway, a competent eyewitness of the battle of Guadalajara, in which he says plainly that "reports that Brihuega was simply an air victory, with columns stampeded and panicked without fighting, are corrected when the battlefield is studied". Hemingway

then proceeds to describe and analyze the actual battle as follows:

"In the final assault, under which the Italians broke and ran, the day was just practical for flying, and 120 planes, *sixty tanks and about 100,000 government infantrymen* routed three Italian divisions of 5,000 men each. *It was the coordination* of those planes, tanks and infantry that brings this war into a new phase" (our emphasis—A.B.).

Clear, isn't it? And perfectly true. Anticipating that *The New York Times* may not like it, Hemingway concludes like this:

"You may not like it and wish to believe it is propaganda, but I have seen the battlefield, the booty, the prisoners and the dead."

The *Times* published Hemingway's dispatch, though it did not like it, because it made good news. But, on its own hook, it continues to peddle the explanation that the victory was only "an air victory".

No, gentlemen, you will not hide the truth. And the truth is not only that the people's army of Spain has now the upper hand in the air (which is big enough) but that it also knows how to *coordinate* planes, tanks, artillery, cavalry and, above all, infantry, and to carry on successfully maneuvers of counter-offense and offensive as well as defense. This is the new phase which Hemingway was quick to observe and which will inspire the friends of democracy and peace everywhere for ever greater exertions in the cause of Spanish democracy and world peace.

A. B.

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# THE SOCIALIST PARTY CONVENTION

BY GENE DENNIS

**T**HE special national convention of the Socialist Party held in Chicago was a convention of a special kind. It completely evaded the central problem facing the Socialist Party. It failed to eliminate from its ranks the Trotskyites, a group alien to socialism. It failed to purge the Socialist Party of the poison of Trotskyism which has been ruining the Socialist Party, destroying its prestige and isolating it from the main stream of the American labor movement.

The Convention decisions were influenced by Trotskyism on most basic questions. It failed to map out a Marxist policy of mass work, of united labor action, of building a wide anti-war and anti-fascist front of the working people. It substituted high sounding "radical" phrases for revolutionary action, and Trotskyist sophistry and demagoguery for Marxian analysis.

Significantly, it was a secret convention, held behind closed doors, not because of necessity, but because of political expediency. It was held in secrecy because the "Clarity" and Trotskyist groups which dominated the convention were afraid of being unmasked in the light of working class opinion.

Life itself had confronted the Socialist convention with the task of draw-

ing necessary conclusions from the previous ten-month period of cohabitation between the so-called Workers Party (Trotskyites) and the "militant" Socialists in what Norman Thomas has termed the "inclusive" Socialist Party.

What facts were presented on the basis of this relationship? What inescapable lessons followed from the period of collaboration of Socialists with the Trotskyites, of the prevalence of a liberal attitude within the Socialist Party towards counter-revolutionary Trotskyism?

Since the inclusion of the Trotskyites within the Socialist Party, after the May, 1936, convention (a "united front" and "organic unity" never sanctioned by the Socialist Party membership), it has been traveling the dangerous road of sectarian isolation. Thanks primarily to the influence of Trotskyism, its presidential election policy and activities brought the Socialist Party to the verge of collapse. Its "Left" strategy and tactics generally, particularly its abstract and reformist sectarian thesis of "socialism vs. capitalism" and its opposition to the developing Farmer-Labor Party movement have left the party stranded from the chief highway of the American labor and progressive movements. It has also left the Socialist Party with a little over 6,000 members in com-

parison with some 16,000 a year ago.

But more than this. Since the amalgamation of the "Workers Party" with the Socialist Party, the American Trotskyites, operating falsely under the banner of Socialism, have obtained a wider radius of activity and have committed a whole series of disruptive and counter-revolutionary acts. In New York, Akron and other centers, groups of Trotskyites, in the name of the Socialist Party, have openly attacked the heroic Spanish people and their anti-fascist struggle and have called for the overthrow of the People's Front government. In the great maritime strike, the Trotskyites on the West Coast, working as an official part of the Socialist Party, joined with the employers in making war against Harry Bridges and the militant leadership of the marine workers. In Minneapolis their reactionary role and activities have been recently climaxed by an open association with the strikebreaking Mayor Latimer and the underworld in an effort to split the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party and the labor movement.

Under the corroding influence of Trotskyism, the attacks and slander in the Socialist press against the Soviet Union have become more vicious and extensive and are being flanked on another anti-Soviet front by the disgraceful collaboration of Norman Thomas and a number of other "liberal" Socialists with some of the most hostile enemies of the Soviet Union organized in and around the "Committee for the Defense of Trotsky"—a committee which gives platform and voice to Trotsky and his anti-Soviet plotters.

It was this situation, intensified a hundredfold by the counter-revolu-

tionary activity of the Trotskyites in the U.S.S.R. and in Spain, that made it mandatory for the convention of the Socialist Party to perform a special surgical operation and to rid itself of the cancer of Trotskyism. This was the chief task placed before the convention by history—in order to enable the Socialist Party to free itself from the bondage of sectarian isolation, internal crisis and disintegration, and to save itself from a counter-revolutionary fate; thereby enabling it to march forward with the working class along the path of united struggle in joint action with all other anti-fascist forces in American political life.

But this task the convention did not accomplish, nor even undertake. What are the reasons for this? First, the relation of forces at the convention were in inverse proportion to the sentiments and convictions of the majority of the members of the Socialist Party. While unclear on many questions regarding Trotskyism, they are fundamentally opposed to its principles and activities. The policy and decisions of the convention were molded by a bloc of Trotskyist conciliators (the Zam-Tyler "Clarity" group) and Trotskyites (the Goldman-Dunne-Schachtman group), who, representing less than 15 per cent of the Party membership, controlled about 45 per cent of the convention delegates. These groups, with a long experience in unprincipled factionalism, intrigues and duplicity, systematically prepared for the convention. They came to the convention well organized, with a definite plan of action borrowed from the arsenal of Trotskyism. Operating on most questions as a unit, exploiting the differences and confusion existing

within and between the other groups to their own advantage, and masking their contraband Trotskyist views behind high sounding pseudo-Marxist phrases, they were able to maneuver and to avoid an open struggle on the issue of Trotskyism, while they simultaneously succeeded in swindling and influencing the convention into adopting an essentially Trotskyist position on such major questions as the anti-war policy and the People's Front.

The anti-Trotskyist bloc (a heterogeneous combination of the Wisconsin delegation, the New York Altman-Baron group, most of the Massachusetts delegates and scattered delegates from the South, Midwest and other regions) which represented approximately 60 per cent of the Party membership, at the convention had only around 35 per cent of the delegates. The weakness of this bloc, which was composed of representatives from the Right and Left wings, as well as the centrist groups in the party, did not lie so much in the small membership. Its chief weakness, which accounts for its ineffectiveness at the convention and in preparing for the convention, arose from its lack of Marxist clarity and firm principles, its vacillating position on the united and People's Front, its tendency to view Trotskyism merely as "harmful sectarianism" and not as an ideology and platform hostile, inimical to, and incompatible with every Socialist principle. Its weakness was accentuated because it did not consistently act in accordance with its convictions and was as yet unwilling to wage an uncompromising fight against the Trotskyites and the Trotskyist conciliators in order to save the party for Socialism. Lacking a suf-

ficiently strong Left-wing core, clear in its aims and ready to conduct a principled struggle, it fell a prey to the policy of compromise and capitulation. Its outlook was mainly limited to the confines of the convention and it did not look beyond to the membership of the party and to the basic issues at stake—issues which are determining the whole future of the Socialist Party of America.

The third main group at the convention, the Thomas group, which had about 15 per cent of the delegates and which influences a much larger proportion of the membership, carried on a policy which dovetailed with the strategy and aims of the "Clarity" faction. This was the traditional Thomas policy of compromise and liberalism. Thomas wanted to make peace with all factions, including the Trotskyites and anti-Trotskyites. He wanted to compromise all views and differences, no matter how fundamentally divergent. Above all, he wanted a "unified" and an "inclusive" party, guaranteeing freedom of association, representation and expression to the Trotskyites and to all other groups and factions.

It cannot be said that the policy of Thomas and the Trotskyist conciliators was unsuccessful. Temporary "harmony" was reached and the convention ended with no splits, secessions or expulsions—with the Trotskyites more firmly entrenched in the party than ever. Compromises were effected—at the expense of the cause of Socialism. Just what these were and what will be their effects upon the future of the Socialist Party, we shall now examine.

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No better estimate of just where the

Socialist Party is heading can be given than briefly to analyze the position taken by the convention on the cardinal problem of the struggle against fascism and war. The resolution on war submitted by Gus Tyler, which was adopted by the convention as a basis of policy and tactics, bristles with revolutionary "talk." It speaks of turning the approaching war "into an occasion for social revolution," of opposing "all capitalist wars," of agitating for "the overthrow of the government." But underneath this "militant" verbiage there flows a policy that is far from militant, a policy which is heavily indebted to Trotskyism.

As its fundamental starting point, the resolution states:

"The world struggle among the capitalist powers is only superficially a conflict between democratic and fascist powers. The struggle does not arise from the form of government in the capitalist state, nor from the special guilt of any nation or group of capitalist nations. A new world war will merely be the continuation by military methods of an incessant imperialist rivalry among all the capitalist powers.

"The root of a new war will be the capitalist system, not its fascist form."

Is it not clear that the authors of the resolution are attempting to put across the Trotskyist thesis that fascism does not play any special role in imperialist war preparations, that there is no difference between democratic nations and fascist nations from the standpoint of the instigation of world war? Who but the fascist inciters of war and their Trotskyist agents can profit by this falsification of history, by this crude effort to lull the vigilance of the international labor movement in the face of emboldened fascist aggression?

Is it accidental that neither in the

above quoted section nor elsewhere in the text of the war resolution is there a single line of reference to the fascist invasion of democratic Spain by the military forces of Italy and Germany? Is it accidental that the resolution does not even mention the need of mobilizing all sections of the labor and progressive movements for full and immediate support and solidarity action in defense of the Spanish people and their People's Front government?

Is it an oversight that the resolution does not even mention the rape of Ethiopia by Mussolini, the robber war of Japan against China, the intervention preparations of the Nazi and Japanese and Italian fascists for a military onslaught against the Soviet Union, or the preparations of fascist Germany to seize and annex Austria, Czechoslovakia and the Balkan countries and to plunge the entire world into a new carnage?

Does it not seem that the authors of the war resolution, while professing to believe in the necessity of waging a "revolutionary" struggle at the "outbreak" of war, seem inclined to "fight" against all "future" wars, but not against the present ones, not against the wars of conquest and fascist invasion now being waged against the people of Spain, Ethiopia and China?

Is it a mere slip of the pen that the Socialist convention only took note of the *general* source of war, the capitalist system, and overlooked the *specific* source of the growing danger of war—fascism, which is experiencing unprecedented internal and foreign contradictions and difficulties and is aggressively seeking a way out of its crisis by striving to unleash a new world war, the first steps of which have already

been taken by fascist military intervention in Spain, Ethiopia and China?

No, all this is not accidental. It is the logical outcome of a policy—a policy whose main source of inspiration is Trotsky and Trotskyism. These were decisively unmasked in the recent Moscow trials as operating in alliance with the Gestapo and the Japanese military staff and assured fascism of assistance in its plans of expansion and annexation at the expense of the U.S.S.R. and the democratic countries. It is a policy which bears witness to what direction collaboration with the Trotskyites is leading the American Socialist Party.

All lovers of peace, including the vast majority of Socialists in all lands, have come to recognize in the Soviet Union the firmist champion of peace. They have greeted the Stalin Constitution not only as a living monument of socialist construction and achievements, but also as a manifesto of peace. They have seen in the foreign policy of the U.S.S.R. a mighty instrument for strengthening the peace of the world. They are coming to realize that the Soviet policy of mutual assistance and non-aggression pacts has served to check the fascist adventurers and that an extension of the system of collective security would play a vital part in halting and defeating the fascist war-makers.

Yet the sponsors of the Socialist resolution on war think otherwise. They do not see in the Soviet Union a bulwark and fighter for peace. To them, the system of Soviet mutual assistance pacts against imperialist aggression is placed on a par with the Nazi-Japanese mutual assistance pact of military intervention and conquests. To them, as with Hitler, collective security against

a fascist aggressor "is a modern version of the old military alliances" and signifies a "step towards war." To them, the peace policy of the U.S.S.R. has "merely hastened" a counter-formation of alliances against the Soviet Union. So the U.S.S.R. and not Hitler and Mussolini is the aggressor!

Is it not evident that the policy outlined in the war resolution is intended only to slander and discredit the Soviet Union in the interests of fascism and its Trotskyist lackeys? Is it not clear that when the resolution calls "upon the working class to come to the support of the Soviet Union . . . in the event of war of the Soviet Union (!!!) against the capitalists" (and why not in the event of a war of fascist intervention against the Soviet Union, Messrs. Tyler, Zam and Goldman?) that this is only a double-dealing gesture to hide from the Socialist membership the real intent of the resolution?

Following from its main premise that fascism is no special menace to peace, that to curb, check or defeat fascism would be an act of aggression, the resolution proceeds to call upon "the working class, progressive and revolutionary forces to refuse support of all wars conducted by capitalist governments, whether they be democratic or fascist."

Here again we witness "Left" phrases covering a reactionary policy. Here we find another Trotskyist attempt to distort Lenin's teachings on war and to gloss over Lenin's advice to the Bolsheviks: "only when we observe . . . war in its historical surroundings, as it is the duty of a Marxist to do, can we determine our attitude to it."

Revolutionary Marxists, from Marx and Engels to Lenin and Stalin, have

never taken a neutral stand on any war, nor have they rejected in principle support of all wars. While working to overthrow capitalism, without which war cannot be finally abolished, Marxists have supported those wars which have been historically progressive, and have promoted the interests of progress and the world labor movement.

In this connection, Lenin wrote concerning the war danger of 1891:

"In 1891 there was danger of a European war. Engels corresponded about it with Bebel and they agreed that in the event of Germany being attacked by Russia, the German Socialists must desperately fight the Russians and any of its allies."

Lenin continued, quoting from Engels' letter to Bebel in October, 1891:

"If Germany is crushed, then we shall be too, while in the most favorable case the struggle will be such a violent one that Germany will only be able to maintain herself by revolutionary means, so that very possibly we shall be forced to come into power and play the part of 1793."

In 1914-18, when the world was divided into two rival imperialist camps, each pursuing its own imperialist aims, and the only interests at stake were those of the opposing imperialists, Lenin and the Bolsheviks advanced the slogan and carried out a policy of "the defeat of one's own imperialist government," of "turning imperialist war into civil war."

Since then important changes have taken place. With the emergence of the Soviet Union and the victorious building of socialism in the U.S.S.R., the working class of all countries has a fatherland, the land of socialism, which must be defended at all costs. Furthermore, with the rise to power

of fascism in a number of countries, world and class relations have been further altered. The division of the world today is different from that of 1914: on the one hand there is the Soviet Union, the international labor and progressive revolutionary movements in all capitalist and colonial countries, and also a number of bourgeois democratic nations who for the moment are desirous of avoiding the outbreak of world war; on the other are the aggressive fascist nations headed by German, Italian and Japanese fascism who seek to reshape the boundaries of the world by letting loose a new world war, aimed at the subjugation of not only the Soviet Union but of the bourgeois democratic nations as well.

In this situation, mechanically to advance the slogan of opposing all capitalist wars, whether conducted by fascist aggressor states or by democratic nations defending their republics, is to play into the hands of the fascist war-makers. It is a policy designed to facilitate the conquest of Spain, Austria, Czechoslovakia, France, etc., by Nazi and Italian fascism and to deliver the working classes and people of these countries into fascist bondage.

Is it not apparent that if the thesis of the war resolution regarding using the outbreak of war as "an occasion for social revolution" both "in the democratic and fascist states" alike is to be carried through to its logical conclusion, then the Spanish proletariat and the international working class would now be called upon to overthrow the democratic republic of Spain, as the fascist agents, the Trotskyites in P.O.U.M., are now bent upon doing?

In the war resolution of the special

convention, mention is made of the necessity of developing "united working class action against all war preparations." But all talk of united working class action is only empty phrasemongering when every effort is made to prevent united action by the working class and its allies against the specific and chief instigation of war—the fascist aggressors. Moreover, it is nothing short of treachery when such "unity" is put forward to include Trotskyites and Trotskyism, which having no mass base anywhere, which having long since ceased to be a political trend within the labor movement, has placed its stakes on war on the side of fascism.

Finally, note must be taken of the statements in the resolution regarding the "illusion" of preventing war under capitalism and using the outbreak of war "as an occasion for socialist revolution." Here is reproduced in the "Left" phrases of Trotskyism, the old reformist views of the inevitability of war, of the futility of struggle against war and war preparations. Using this fatalistic theory, enemies of the united proletarian front, headed by the Trotskyites, seek to disrupt and disorganize the formation of an international peace front. They endeavor to paralyze the power and independent activity of the working class and its allies from acting unitedly in erecting barriers today against fascist aggression and war.

It is to the honor of the Left wing of the Socialist Party that its spokesmen at the convention, though few in numbers, vigorously opposed the position of the "Clarity" and Trotskyist groups on the war question. Headed by Mrs. Meta Berger and Paul Porter, they fought for the formation of a

broad people's anti-fascist and peace movement, for a policy of collaboration of all the peace forces of the world with the Soviet Union for curbing and defeating the fascist aggressors and instigators of war.

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Inseparably bound up with the position put forward by the special convention on war and fascism is the stand taken against the policy of the anti-fascist People's Front, a stand which will determine the guiding line of the Socialist Party in the next period on the questions of the Farmer-Labor Party, united front and trade union unity, all other resolutions to the contrary.

The draft resolution adopted on the People's Front on the basis of the report of Herbert Zam, renegade from Communism, states in part:

"There is essentially no distinction between People's Frontism of today and coalitionism of the past. Both depend on alliances with the capitalists to defeat fascism, both abandon the struggle for socialism by operating on the basis of 'democracy vs. fascism' rather than 'socialism vs. capitalism.' Both by championing the status quo as against a basic change in the social system make it possible for the fascists to rally the discontented and middle class element and thereby provide fascism with a mass base. Like coalitionism, Popular Frontism therefore must inevitably fail because it offers no adequate defense against fascism, since it endeavors to maintain and rehabilitate a system which inevitably breeds fascism."

What is the essence of this viewpoint? It is that the People's Front "provides fascism with a mass base." It is the argument put forward by Trotskyism everywhere in an attempt to frighten the working class and to isolate it from its allies. It is especially

designed to discredit and disorganize the People's Front in France and Spain, which is based on the united front of the Communists, Socialists and trade unionists, and which has succeeded in uniting and organizing the struggle of the working people, thereby halting the advance of fascism in these countries and preparing its destruction.

The sponsors of the resolution endeavor to falsify history and strive to slander and disrupt the growth of the anti-fascist People's Front by comparing the tactic of the People's Front whose chief driving force is the working class and whose program is based upon the organized struggle of the masses to relieve their poverty, to bar the road to fascism and to safeguard peace—with the treacherous Social-Democratic policy of class collaboration and class division which paved the way for fascism in Germany and Austria.

Similarly they attack the People's Front movement from the "Left" by advancing the slogan of "socialism vs. capitalism" in opposition to the slogan of "democracy vs. fascism" put forward by the People's Front program. In such a manner they fall into the trap set by the Trotskyites who, as in Spain, use the slogan of socialism vs. capitalism as a decoy to weaken the defense of the democratic republic and democratic liberties against the onslaught of fascism and in this manner work for the triumph of fascism.

It is an axiom for revolutionary Marxists that formal democracy, bourgeois democracy, is not proletarian democracy—which can only be realized in a socialist society as today in the Soviet Union. It is likewise an axiom

for revolutionary Marxists that bourgeois democracy is not in itself a barrier against fascism. But it is also an axiom for revolutionary Marxists that in the present world situation the organization of the united proletarian and people's anti-fascist fronts, the development of a united struggle of the masses in defense of existing democratic liberties and rights, and the utilization of these rights in the interests of crushing the fascist enemies, can prevent the establishment of the open, terrorist dictatorship of finance capital, and is the key link today which the working class must use to advance toward its socialist goal. This is the lesson of Spain. This is proven by events in France.

In this connection it is well to remember the words of Lenin which were brilliantly confirmed in the course of the February and October revolutions in Russia:

"It would be a fundamental mistake to suppose that the struggle for democracy can divert the proletariat from the socialist revolution, or obscure, or overshadow it, etc. On the contrary, just as socialism cannot be victorious unless it introduces complete democracy, so the proletariat will be unable to prepare for victory over the bourgeoisie unless it wages a many-sided, consistent and revolutionary struggle for democracy."

The pompous "Marxist" oracles of confusion and distortion, the gentlemen of the "Clarity" group, display real versatility in their anti-Marxist attacks against the People's Front. They charge, for instance, that "People's Frontism becomes an instrument for preparing the masses to accept war," that "it promotes patriotism and class collaboration and inevitably becomes transformed into a national front, including even the patri-

otic fascist elements." This Trotskyist thesis is comparable only to the arguments of the French and Spanish fascists who try to frighten the peasants and middle class and win them away from working class leadership in a People's Front alliance by the demagogic propaganda that the "People's Front leads to civil war." It harmonizes with the chauvinistic demagogy of Hitler and Mussolini who are trying to shift the responsibility for fascist intervention in Spain upon the Spanish People's Front government.

In striking contrast to this reactionary position was the resolution submitted by a part of the Wisconsin delegation and supported by about 35 per cent of the delegates. It states as follows:

"The People's Front movement came into being as a result of fascism and finance capitalism taking the offensive against the working class. As a result the workers of many European countries turned to the agrarian and progressive middle class elements for a defensive alliance. The initiative came from the economic and political organizations of the workers and is proving successful in warding off the fascist threat in France and Spain.

"In neither countries have the working class organizations stagnated and lost membership as opponents of the People's Front policy contend. On the contrary, they have increased their membership and influence.

"Furthermore, the experience of both countries has shown that the People's Front is a highly dynamic movement which, if properly guided, will move to the Left.

"In the U.S.A. any move towards a People's Front will inevitably take on the aspects of a Farmer-Labor Party. If Socialists maintain their own organization and work as a disciplined militant group inside a Farmer-Labor Party, such an instrument can be made to serve a useful service in bringing the masses of farmers and workers to a Socialist position."

This resolution undoubtedly ex-

pressed the viewpoint of the majority of the Socialist membership. Despite its manifest limitations and shortcomings it reflects a progressive trend and approach to the People's Front which must be encouraged and further developed.

But the sponsors of the anti-People's Front resolution develop their campaign of attack against the People's Front along other lines as well. They attempt to mobilize the working class against the People's Front because within the People's Front there are people and organizations which are not yet convinced of the necessity of socialism, because within the People's Front there are parties which are not yet ready to fight "for a basic change in the social system," because the program of the People's Front is a limited program, one which can be realized within the framework of the capitalist system.

Clearly, these opponents of the People's Front have learned nothing from history, nothing from the experiences of the working class in Germany and Austria. They would limit the anti-fascist front only to the advanced sections of the toilers, to the adherents of socialism, and thereby leave the majority of the peasantry and middle class, as well as large sections of the workers, divided and unorganized, to fall victim to fascist demagogy and dictatorship. They would negate an effective struggle against fascism, one which to be successful must embrace the widest sections of the population, from the propertyless workers to the small and middle property holders—a fighting alliance headed by the working class and embracing all enemies of monopoly capitalism and war.

Messrs, Zam, Tyler and Thomas may be indifferent as to whether a "capitalist regime is democratic or fascist," but the German, French and Spanish workers and people are not. These gentlemen may see no difference between a People's Front government and an "ordinary" bourgeois democratic government, but the working class does. And the working class sees, as in Spain, that a People's Front government, resting on a united working class and enjoying the support of all anti-fascists, can curb and defeat the fascists, can protect and extend the democratic rights and liberties of the people, can improve the standards of living of the entire working population, can establish workers' control over big industry, can champion the special interests of the peasants, youth and women and oppressed national minorities. It sees with its own eyes that a People's Front government is different from any other democratic government, that it is an anti-fascist people's government which promotes instead of retards the development toward socialism.

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After this excursion into "foreign waters," the sponsors of opposition to "People's Frontism" turn their attention to home affairs. On the paramount question of forging an American People's Front, an anti-fascist Farmer-Labor Party, they have the following to say:

"In the United States advocates of the People's Front policy would destroy the effectiveness of a Labor Party movement by converting it into a Farmer-Labor Party."

And further:

"The net effect of People's Frontism in the United States would be to coalesce the work-

ing class with the capitalists even more firmly than at present and make even more difficult the central task which confronts the Socialists and the workers themselves, namely, the political separation of the working class as a class from the capitalists, and its organization as an independent force."

The meaning of this is clear: the authors of the resolution are opposed to working for the formation of a broad Farmer-Labor Party, based upon the trade unions and farm organizations, uniting all progressive groups, the Negro people and youth. They are opposed to the organization of a fighting, all-inclusive Farmer-Labor Party which would have an anti-fascist program based upon the immediate needs and demands of the working people, capable of realization "within the framework of capitalist society."

They are for the "political separation of the working class as a class from the capitalists" in words, but in deeds, they formulate a policy which would isolate the vanguard of the labor movement and would leave the majority of the working class tied to the two old parties or a prey to the influence of a Huey Long or Father Coughlin. They are for the "formation of a Labor Party with a class base" but would separate the working class from its natural allies, the farmers, the Negro people, as well as the middle class.

The convention did adopt the Thomas resolution favoring Socialist Party cooperation in building a national Farmer-Labor Party, under certain conditions. (The Trotskyist resolution on the Labor Party introduced by Goldman which receive 27 votes openly rejected in principle the formation of either a Farmer-Labor Party or a Labor Party.) This resolution was

adopted, over the opposition of the Trotskyites, because of the tremendous sentiment within the Socialist Party in favor of the Farmer-Labor Party, because the membership of the Socialist Party has drawn certain important lessons from life, from the sectarian election policy of the Socialist Party and from the growing movement for independent political action; because the members of the Socialist Party in the trade unions and mass organizations are already being drawn in varying degrees into the orbit of Farmer-Labor Party activity and in certain sections of the country, as in Wisconsin, are participating in building the Farmer-Labor Party movement.

As far as resolutions go, the Thomas resolution represents a limited improvement over previous resolutions and formally indicates a more positive attitude towards the problem of building a national Farmer-Labor Party. (Here we do not intend to analyze the Thomas resolution in detail, nor do we wish to deal with its lukewarm position towards building local and state Farmer-Labor Parties, its reformist sectarian policy of proposing that the Farmer-Labor Party be committed to a program of "production for use," etc.

But the essential point remains; that the *political line governing the approach and policy of the Socialist Party towards the Farmer-Labor Party movement is laid down in the resolution rejecting the People's Front which means in practice rejecting the specific American form of the People's Front—the Farmer-Labor Party*. Furthermore, the fact remains that the most influential group in the national

leadership in the Socialist Party responsible for the fulfilment of the convention decisions is the Trotskyite conciliators, the Zam-Tyler group, whose consistent opposition to the People's Front, to the Farmer-Labor Party movement, leaves little doubt as to how the Farmer-Labor Party resolution will be interpreted and carried out.

Just as a shadow should not be taken for its substance, *i.e.*, the Labor Party resolution of Thomas for the People's Front thesis of Zam, likewise, it is significant to note not only what the Labor Party resolution states—but what it leaves unsaid. Is it surprising that nowhere in the Labor Party resolution is reference made to the most advanced and progressive Farmer-Labor Party movement in the United States—the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Association? Is it not symptomatic that instead the convention adopted a resolution (true, over strong minority opposition) which tacitly approved the arch-reactionary and corrupt tactics of the Trotskyist-dominated state organization of the Socialist Party in Minnesota which in collusion with the anti-labor Mayor Latimer, the notorious Myer Lewis and Citizens Alliance members, recently split the Hennepin County organization of the Farmer-Labor Party? Does this not indicate just where opposition to the People's Front, the Farmer-Labor Party, eventually leads?

Is it accidental that no mention is made in the document nor any position defined regarding Labor's Non-Partisan League, the American Labor Party, the Washington Commonwealth Federation or the Farmer-Labor Progressive Federation of

Wisconsin? Is it not because these mass movements, despite all of their confusion and conflicting tendencies, are developing in the direction of independent Farmer-Labor political action along lines and channels which do not fit in with the schematic blueprints enumerated in the Socialist Labor Party resolution? Is it not because the majority of the Socialist leadership continue to maintain a negative or a hostile attitude towards these developments and the Farmer-Labor Party movement generally? Is there not some Trotskyist double-dealing here?

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In opposition to the tactic of the anti-fascist People's Front, the special national convention posed not only the "formation of a Labor Party on a class base" and "the maintenance of the independence of the working class" but it also put forward the alternative of "united action of the working class." In fact, it adopted a special resolution on the united front. But despite this, it must be stated that the convention, notwithstanding all its "Left" declarations regarding unity, did not lay the basis for promoting working class unity of action, but under the influence of Trotskyism created additional obstacles in the way of forging a united proletarian front.

As with the resolution on the Farmer-Labor Party, so with the united front, the resolution adopted formally indicates progress in relation to the previous position of past conventions. The resolution as passed, which is a reflection of the deep desire of the Socialist Party membership for unity of action of Socialists, Communists and all sections of the labor

movement, not only declared in favor of "specific cooperative and united front undertakings with trade and industrial unions," but also declares in favor of "united front activities with the Communist Party" on certain issues, under certain conditions.

For revolutionary Marxists, the united proletarian front is viewed and operated as a tactic of joint working class activity directed under present conditions so as to mobilize the widest section of labor, organized and unorganized, and simultaneously to set in motion its non-proletarian allies for concerted mass action against the attacks of capital and the menace of fascism and war. This united front of struggle is being realized in various forms and degrees on ever wider fronts in the United States as in other countries, despite the sabotage of the Trotskyites. While developing unevenly, it is nevertheless bringing together ever larger numbers of Communists and Socialists (chiefly in unofficial actions not sanctioned by the Socialist Party) in unison with a much broader section of the labor movement. This is evidence in the powerful C.I.O. campaigns, in the growth of the solidarity movement in support of Spanish democracy, in the extension of the Farmer-Labor movement, in the unification of the unemployed and student movements and in the struggle for equal rights for the Negro people.

Yet it must be recognized that the fundamental policies and tactics mapped out by the special national convention of the Socialist Party can only impede instead of promote the united front. By attempting to oppose the tactic of the anti-fascist People's Front with the tactic of the united proleta-

rian front, the Socialist convention not only substituted sophistry for dialectics, but also gave the enemies of proletarian unity another argument and weapon to attack the advance of united working class action. Is it not a fact that the reactionary sections of the Labor and Socialist International, those who are most vicious today in their opposition to the establishment of the united front of struggle on either a national or international scale in aid of the Spanish people, are being provided by the agents of fascism, by the Trotskyites, with "new" arguments against the united front, including that of "the dangers of People's Frontism"? Has not the experience of the Socialist Party of America shown that opposition to the People's Front leads to isolation from the labor movement, narrows and restricts the development of united working class action?

Life itself, above all the rich experience of the labor and revolutionary movements in Spain and France, has shown the organic and dialectical connection between the tactic of the united proletarian front and the anti-fascist People's Front. It has brilliantly confirmed the profound words of Comrade Dimitroff at the Seventh Congress of the Communist International:

"... the united proletarian front and the anti-fascist People's Front are inter-connected and interwoven, the one passing into the other in the process of the practical struggle against fascism as a consequence of the living dialectics of the struggle, and there is certainly no Chinese wall to keep them apart.

"For it cannot be seriously supposed that it is possible to establish a genuine anti-fascist People's Front without securing the unity of action of the working class itself, the guiding force of this anti-fascist People's Front. At the same time, the further development of the united proletarian front depends, to a con-

siderable degree, upon its transformation into a People's Front against fascism."

The conclusion is inescapable, that despite the resolution adopted favoring limited united front action, the Socialist convention did not establish the prerequisites for promoting the cause of proletarian unity. For it is not possible to unite the working class on the basis of opposition to and struggle against the development of the anti-fascist People's Front. It is not possible to achieve the unification of the labor movement under conditions of waging a campaign of slander against the Spanish people and their democratic republic, as the Trotskyites in the Socialist Party are undertaking. It is not possible to crystallize united working class activity on the basis of attempting to split the Farmer-Labor Party movement, or the Workers Alliance as is being done by the Trotskyites masquerading under the flag of Socialism. It is not possible to unify the ranks of labor on the basis of attempting to discredit the Soviet Union and of indulging in Red-baiting attacks against the Communists, as is practised not only by the Trotskyites but by the Right wing of the Socialist Party.

The united front of the working class can only be realized in struggle against the menace of fascism and war, on the basis of a clearcut policy of mass actions in defense of the day-to-day economic demands of the toilers, in defense of their democratic rights and civil liberties, in defense of the cause of peace and of Spanish and world democracy and in defense of the land of socialism—the U.S.S.R. It cannot be accomplished simply by adopting resolutions. It cannot be

achieved by refusing to act upon such specific proposals for united front action as were submitted by the Communist Party to the Socialist convention—proposals for developing joint action for mobilizing every form of aid for the defense of democratic Spain, for organizing the unorganized, for supporting the legislative demands of the people, for promoting the growth of the Farmer-Labor movement, for extending the struggle for Negro rights and for broadening the peace movement. Above all, the struggle for united proletarian action cannot be realized in collaboration with Trotskyites and Trotskyism which is the enemy of the entire labor movement, of progress, peace and socialism. On the contrary, the achievement of unity and solidarity of the working class and the masses of the working people generally for common struggle against fascism and war can only be brought into being on the basis of uncompromising struggle against Trotskyism on all fronts.

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The documents and decisions of the convention regarding its trade union and unemployed policy and tactics have not yet been made public up to the time this article is written. However, on the basis of the general line and decisions of the convention and certain press reports, a number of things are clear.

In the sphere of trade union work, there will be no essential change from the sectarian policy pursued until now by Trager and the "Clarity" and Trotskyite groups. Despite the formal endorsement of the C.I.O. by the convention, the position of the convention

on the question of the People's Front, the Farmer-Labor Party and united front will bring the Socialist Party leadership into sharper collisions with the progressive C.I.O. forces, as well as with the best mass workers of the Socialist Party in the C.I.O. movement, especially on such issues as strike strategy and tactics, collective bargaining and agreements, wage negotiations, Labor's Non-Partisan League, the American Labor Party, etc. This was already evidenced in the convention discussion by the critical remarks of a number of prominent mass leaders such as Murray Baron and David Lasser. It was further evidenced in the statement submitted to the convention by a group of Socialist trade union leaders from the auto centers of Michigan, including the Reuther brothers, which sharply criticized the policy of Trager and the *Socialist Call* in the auto strikes and condemned the disruptive work of the Trotskyites in the U.A.W.A. It was also indicated by the absence from the convention of most of the outstanding Socialist mass workers and trade union leaders, such as Powers Hapgood, Leo Krzycki, etc. The attempts to straight-jacket the Socialist trade union membership into opposition "leagues" within both the industrial and craft unions will further accentuate those conflicts.

The position of the Socialist Party on the united front especially will make it impossible for the party effectively to fight for trade union unity. Moreover, the tacit approval given by the convention to the anti-labor and provocative role and activities of the Trotskyites (who are members of the Socialist Party) such as in the Minnesota and California labor movements,

indicates that where the Socialist organizations are dominated or influenced by the Trotskyites, increased disruption and splitting tactics will result. The net result of the present trade union policy of the Socialist Party will be not only further to isolate the Socialist Party from the labor and progressive movements but simultaneously to drive out of its ranks the most active and honest Socialists in both the C.I.O. and craft unions.

As far as the work of the Socialist Party among the unemployed is concerned, the outlook is similar. Nothing was done at the convention further to promote the constructive and able work being done in the Alliance by the Socialist group headed by Lasser. Nothing was done to strengthen the unification of the unemployed movement nor to bring about closer working relations between the Socialist and Communists, the two most influential groups in the Alliance. Instead, there are indications that efforts will be made to disorganize the unity which has already been achieved, by defending the disruptive work and policy of the Trotskyites in the Alliance, by forming Socialist opposition leagues in the lower organizations of the Alliance and by launching public attacks against the national policy and leadership of the Workers Alliance. Such a policy will not only have harmful effects for the Workers Alliance, but will further weaken the Socialist Party, its influence and connections with the unemployed and labor movements.

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What conclusions are to be drawn from the convention? What are the

perspectives for the Socialist Party?

The convention of the Socialist Party faced the critical situation in which it found itself by continuing the policy of compromise between the different groups that compose the Socialist Party—a policy of compromise that will deepen the crisis in the party and play into the hands of the Trotskyites. For that reason undoubtedly there is dissatisfaction among all groups which will lead to a sharper accentuation of the factional struggle within the party and will further paralyze its mass influence and activity.

The Trotskyites are dissatisfied because although they have strengthened their position in the Socialist Party, the exposure of Trotsky and Trotskyism as agents of fascism in the Moscow trials, the unmasking of the treacherous role of the Trotskyites in Spain and the exposure of their reactionary alliance with Latimer and Myer Lewis in Minneapolis, placed them in a defensive position at the convention. They were compelled to make certain temporary retreats and concessions. They are not fully satisfied with the new National Executive Committee, despite its dominance by Trotskyist conciliators. They are not satisfied with the compromise made on the Labor Party and united front resolutions (which in effect changes nothing), on the organizational decisions for creating one central press and theoretical organ, etc. They are dissatisfied because while they were able to influence the basic line of the convention, they were not yet able to convert the Socialist Party into a Trotskyist organization. Therefore they will work to entrench themselves still more firmly in the Socialist Party

and its leading apparatus and will go to any lengths to capture the Party, or to destroy it.

The "Clarity" group, the Zam-Tyler-Delson group, also did not completely achieve its objectives at the convention, although it made the most headway and has the largest representation on the National Executive Committee. It is dissatisfied because under pressure of the Thomas group and the Wisconsin delegation, they were forced to make compromises on the war and Labor Party resolutions and the composition of the National Executive Committee. The "Clarity" group, even though it showed signs at the convention of breaking up into two or more groups, represents a big danger in the Socialist Party since it carries through a conciliatory policy towards the Trotskyites and Trotskyism and conceals its Trotskyist position from the membership. It is therefore able to mislead many honest Socialists who are moving Leftward and who are opposed to the Right opportunist Milwaukee brand of "municipal socialism."

While the Wisconsin group was able to exert some pressure on Thomas and therefore force the Trotskyites and the "Clarity" group momentarily to retreat on a number of issues, it is unquestionably the least pleased with the outcome of the convention. It will find it increasingly difficult to harmonize its policies and perspectives in Wisconsin with that of the national leadership of the Socialist Party and its semi-Trotskyist policies. It must be remembered, of course, that the Wisconsin group consists of nearly as many different groups and shades as does the whole Socialist Party. It is divided on

the C.I.O. and A. F. of L. situation, on the war question, on the attitude towards the People's Front and the united front, on the question of party discipline and centralization.

Though being in the main anti-Trotskyite, the leading Socialist groups in Wisconsin are also anti-Communist and some even anti-Soviet. The prospects are that in the coming months the Socialist Party of Wisconsin may secede from the national organization and will merge the party into the Farmer-Labor Progressive Federation. This estimation is given weight by the resignation of Henry Ohl, President of the Wisconsin Federation of Labor, from the Socialist Party, by the action of the Milwaukee organization, since the convention, in electing committees to redraft the resolutions adopted by the special convention for reconsideration by the National Executive Committee, and by the steps already taken to dissolve many of the local organizations and further to curtail the independent activity of the Socialist Party in favor of concentrating its main activity in and through the Farmer-Labor Progressive Federation.

The New York group headed by Altman, Baron and Lasser is certainly dissatisfied with the convention. They are dissatisfied with the National Executive Committee, with the "Leftist" policy on trade union and unemployed tactics, with the conciliatory policy towards the Trotskyites, with the abstract and sectarian approach to the Farmer-Labor Party. They will find it impossible to work in the mass organizations, to carry out a policy of mass work, under the present leadership and semi-Trotskyist line of the Socialist Party.

The Thomas-Coolidge-Allen group, more than any other faction, fosters and symbolizes the policy of compromise, coalition and vacillation. It follows the policy of borrowing a little from each group, making political concessions to all groups, tolerating all factions and tendencies, including the counter-revolutionary Trotskyites and Trotskyism. The Thomas group, which at the convention tried to balance all groups and through compromise establish some equilibrium in the Socialist Party, finds itself under pressure from all sides and will in the main exert less influence in the daily work of the party and in shaping the policy of the Socialist Party than it did prior to and at the convention.

On the whole, therefore, the special national convention did not solve a single basic problem facing the Socialist Party. It did not do this because it did not tackle the main cause for the special crisis in the Socialist Party which developed following the departure of the Old Guard—the inclusion of the Trotskyites and tolerance of Trotskyist ideology.

Instead of expelling the Trotskyites and putting an end to the policy of capitulation to Trotskyism, the convention in effect whitewashed the Trotskyites and their disruptive and counter-revolutionary work and made further political concessions to Trotskyism. The burning question of aid to Spain was glossed over and dealt with in a subordinate and secondary manner. A semi-Trotskyist line dominated the program adopted on the whole problem of struggle against fascism and war. A chauvinist resolution was concurred in on Negro work. The rejection of the policy of the anti-

fascist People's Front characterizes the main political line of the convention on all questions, including its policy on the Farmer-Labor Party, united front tactic and trade union unity.

At the convention there was not even laid a sound basis for carrying forward the struggle against Trotskyism. This was because the anti-Trotskyite forces, for reasons of mistaken tactics and because they have not yet realized that Trotskyism has ceased to be a political trend in the working class, did not develop a consistent and principled struggle against Trotskyism, although they had the most favorable situation for this.

The issue is clear. What the convention did not do, the membership must. The Socialist Party must not be abandoned to the enemies of the working class, *i.e.*, to the Trotskyites. The Trotskyites have already prepared and decided to continue the fight for completely capturing the Socialist Party. The chief organizers and leaders of the "Clarity" group will work more openly with them to accomplish this.

If the sincere Socialists still think they can save the party from Trotskyism—and this is the only way the Socialist Party can be saved as a working class organization—then the Socialist membership must not wait as they did for this convention. They must organize and act immediately. The Trotskyites must be immediately driven out of the Socialist Party. A decisive end must be put to all tendencies to compromise with Trotskyism or to adopt a liberal attitude towards it.

Time will not wait. What will be done in the next few months will determine to a large extent the fate of the

Socialist Party of America. One thing is certain. The Socialist Party corroded with Trotskyism cannot grow, cannot play a constructive role in the labor and revolutionary movements. Continued collaboration with Trotskyites, continued opposition to the united and People's Front, to the Farmer-Labor Party movement, to the Soviet Union and democratic Spain, will not only further isolate the Socialist Party from all sections of the labor and progressive movements, but will eventually result in the Socialist Party being converted into a Trotskyist party, into an agency of fascism and counter-revolution.

This is why the majority of the Socialist membership must not delay to act. This is why they must arm themselves with the great teachings of the masters of revolutionary socialism, of Marx and Engels, Lenin and Stalin. This is why they must declare and wage uncompromising war against Trotskyism on all fronts. This is why they must carry the struggle against the Trotskyites to the masses and with the masses wage a systematic and stubborn day-to-day fight for achieving a policy of united working class action against reaction, fascism and war. This is why every avenue and possibility of cooperation and joint struggle with the Communists and all other progressive forces in the labor movement must be utilized and developed by the honest Socialists to the maximum. For in the course of mass struggles, in the fight for proletarian unity and the welding of the anti-fascist front of the working people, the fascists and their Trotskyist agents can and will be defeated.

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In the light of the results of the special convention of the Socialist Party, our Party must also draw a number of important conclusions. First—the basic question of broadening the struggle against Trotskyism and of raising it to a higher political level. It must be admitted that the invaluable lessons of the recent Moscow trials, of the exposures of the Trotskyites in Spain, etc., have not yet been widely enough studied and popularized, especially in the trade unions and mass organizations. Insufficient work has been done to unmask completely before the masses the American Trotskyites and their counter-revolutionary program, their deception and double-dealing. Inadequate efforts have been expended to assist and clarify the honest Socialists in their struggle against the penetration and spread of Trotskyist views and ideology in the Socialist Party. Moreover, there have been tendencies in our Party to view the struggle against Trotskyism as some sort of a passing campaign, instead of as a component part of the struggle against fascism and war, which must be systematically conducted on all fronts, at all times.

The developments in the Socialist Party must serve as a warning signal and a lesson. Our Party must become more vigilant and must arouse the entire labor and progressive movements to the dangers of Trotskyism, must equip our membership and the masses for developing a more consistent and many-sided struggle against the menace of Trotskyism. In this connection, it is necessary to caution against certain tendencies to characterize all Socialists as Trotskyites and the failure to differentiate between Trot-

skyites and those sincere Socialists who may have temporarily fallen under the influence of Trotskyism. Insofar as the majority of the Socialist membership is concerned, much spade work is necessary; and a real educational campaign will have to be combined with a much sharper and convincing exposure of and struggle against the Trotskyites and Trotskyist conciliators in the Socialist Party. To arm our Party to fulfil its obligations in this situation it is essential that throughout the Party organizations a much more extensive study should be made of the history and teachings of Marxism-Leninism, in which connection the historic report of Comrade Stalin to the recent plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union is of special significance.

Second, the developments in the Socialist Party, especially the growth of Trotskyist influence, make it necessary for our Party to evaluate certain new tactical features in the application of the policy of working for united front relations with the Socialist Party as part of our general struggle for proletarian unity. What is necessary is that our Party take into account in each state and locality the relation of forces *within* the Socialist Party and the given relationship *between* the Socialist Party and the trade union movement and mass organizations of the working people.

In such centers as Minneapolis, it is clear that it is impossible to enter into any sort of united activity with the Socialist Party, which is completely dominated by the Trotskyites. In Chicago, where the Trotskyist conciliators are in the leadership of the So-

cialist Party and where the Socialist Party is a small organization, with practically no influence in the decisive trade unions, the question of united front activity with the Socialist Party as such must be carefully examined in accordance with each specific situation and the issues and mass organizations involved.

In the South, where Trotskyist influence is negligible in the Socialist Party, where close relations exist between the Socialist and Communist Parties in many localities, where the circumstances of the class and national liberation struggles are different in many respects from the North, it is possible and necessary that the Communists work for closer association and ultimate unification with the respective Socialist organizations. In Wisconsin, where the Socialist Party is being merged into the Farmer-Labor Progressive Federation, the problem of united front action with the Socialists is being shifted, in the main, from the realm of the Socialist Party as an independent organization to the Farmer-Labor Progressive Federation—not to mention the labor unions, shops and factories which remain the decisive centers and base for achieving working class unity of action.

Insofar as the trend away from the Socialist Party is concerned, our Party should be guided by the principle of preventing any worker, any honest Socialist, from drifting away from the movement for socialism. We should, therefore, endeavor to bring into the Communist Party those workers who believe in and want socialism, but who have left or are leaving the Socialist Party because of pessimism and disgust with the party's policies.

But despite the varying conditions and the particular problems of application of the policy of united front actions with the Socialists, one point remains clear. United action between Communists and the *sincere* Socialists must be established everywhere, especially in the unions, the Farmer-Labor Party movement, the Workers Alliance and peace organizations, whether officially or unofficially, on a group or an individual basis. For the tactic of proletarian unity of struggle remains

the key weapon of the workers. The treachery and provocative actions of the Trotskyites must only cause the workers and their organizations to guard and promote unity all the more firmly and energetically. For the united front of labor will not only protect and advance the immediate and basic interests of the working class, but it will simultaneously serve to unmask, isolate and defeat the Trotskyist scum and all other enemies of anti-fascist unity.

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# SOCIAL LEGISLATION IN MASSACHUSETTS

BY P. FRANKFELD

**T**HE December Plenum of the Central Committee laid down the policy of developing broad people's movements around essential questions of social and labor legislation. Following a discussion on the report of the plenum, the Party leadership proceeded to concretize our program and map out plans to meet conditions prevailing in the New England District.

We saw the possibilities of immediately developing a broad movement especially in Massachusetts. It was decided to concentrate on the following:

1. For repeal of the Teachers Loyalty Oath Law;
2. For ratification of the Child Labor Amendment;
3. In support of the five main bills introduced by the State Federation of Labor:

(a) Amend the Workmen's Compensation Act so that a state fund will replace the private insurance companies,

(b) Outlaw private detective and spy agencies,

(c) Raising the compulsory school age from 14 to 16 years,

(d) Direct election of judges,

(e) Baby Wagner Act for the State;

4. Protest the violations of the Anti-Injunction Law.

Contacts were established with the trade unions (A. F. of L. and C.I.O.),

liberal and progressive groups, and a number of prominent individuals. As a result, a Conference for Social and Labor Legislation was held on January 24 attended by over 300 delegates and observers and representing over 50,000 organized workers, some farmers and middle class professional groups. Eighty-four local unions were present, officially or through observers, as well as nine joint boards and three central labor unions. The Boston Central Labor Union had observers present.

The January 24 conference helped weld the unity of all progressive and labor forces in the state. The most vigorous campaign for social and labor legislation was put forward. Hearings were never better attended. Large numbers of workers and progressives attended the most important sessions on social legislation. Every hearing had its repercussions not only in the press, but among wide circles of people. The list of speakers on vital issues was large and impressive to argue the position of labor and the progressive sections of the population. The labor movement showed greater self confidence, a higher degree of militancy, and a feeling of expectancy that *these things were coming to labor because of the results of the elections of November 3.*

Robert J. Watt, secretary-treasurer

of the State Federation of Labor, and Kenneth Taylor, its legislative agent, did especially effective and good work. In addition, it must be noted that the January 24 conference made a decided contribution in making the hearing successful, in maintaining the complete unity of the labor movement on the legislative field, and helped to bring pressure on the General Court.

In these broader movements, the Party carried through the line of the Central Committee. While helping to establish these movements as preliminary steps in the direction of a Farmer-Labor Party, the Party played both an auxiliary and, at the same time, an independent role. There was a division of tasks and responsibilities between those active in the trade union movement and those active outside of the trade union field. And the Party as such brought forward its program, showed its face, and this in no way hindered good relations being established and maintained.

#### FORMS OF MASS PRESSURE

A number of hearings, as already stated, had mass turnouts of workers. It is interesting to observe the attendance of workers and others at hearings and on what pieces of social legislation.

Hearing to amend the Workmen's Compensation Act—attendance of over 900. Mostly trade unionists. Many local leaders and rank and filers present. The workers came in trucks, buses and cars. Among them were groups of workers gypped by the private insurance companies.

Child Labor Amendment hearings had attendances ranging from 600 to 900 at different sessions. The measure

to repeal the Teachers Oath Law had turnouts of between 700 and 1,000. On a smaller scale, due to the efforts of the Young Communist League, effective delegations were present at the hearings on the National Youth Act; against compulsory military training, and on the Sherman order to investigate Communist activities and propaganda.

In addition to mass delegations, other methods of mass pressure were employed as well. These were definitely the work of the January 24 Conference Committee. They included:

Fifteen hundred postcards addressed to the chairman of the Committee on Education calling for repeal of the Teachers Oath. These were gotten out and sold in three days' time.

Dozens of telegrams and hundreds of individual and organization letters on various issues of social legislation.

The student movement obtained about 1,000 names of students, including 200 in the Jesuit college, Boston College.

Calling for ratification of the Child Labor Amendment, the January 24 conference was able to get 4,000 signatures in less than a week, while the Amalgamated Clothing Workers obtained around 700-800 signatures.

The difficulty in utilizing these other means of mass pressure lay in the fact that usually less than a week was given in setting the dates for these many hearings. However, a well functioning group working on a long-range basis could plan such activities months ahead of time and succeed in getting tens of thousands of signatures and postcards, resolutions, letters and telegrams sent to various committees and individual legislators.

The highest point in the hearings this year was at the time of the Child Labor Amendment. Senator Mackay, chairman of the Committee on Constitutional Law, used some very unconstitutional and undemocratic methods of procedure. He consciously stifled the proponents of the amendment. His high-handed tactics forced the leaders of the State Federation of Labor, the C.I.O. officials and many other liberals and progressives to walk out of the hearings in a most dramatic manner. This walkout blazed a new trail for the labor movement. It marked a break with all previous A. F. of L. policy and legalistic traditions. It showed a high degree of militancy in fighting for democratic rights. It showed the unity of labor. Spontaneously, a united front picket line was established around the State House. It was a direct appeal to the masses over the head of the State Legislature.

The picket line grew from 50 to over 500. The Amalgamated Clothing Workers stopped its shops and the workers joined the picket line, which included ministers, educators, A. F. of L., C.I.O., students, League of Women Voters, Parent-Teachers Association, Socialists and Communists.

The following day a demonstration was held at the Parkman Bandstand. It was attended by some 2,000 people, mostly from unions affiliated to the C.I.O. From a numerical standpoint, the rally was not too successful. The issues were never taken up and discussed in the local unions. The organized labor movement has never trained its membership to react to political issues—nor to take to the streets in an emergency situation as the above. The result was that the legislators, who

were closely watching this demonstration, felt relieved and, not being under terrific pressure, voted 188 against ratifying the Child Labor Amendment to 13 for.

In connection with the mass attendance at hearings, postcards, signatures, telegrams, resolutions, the picket line and demonstration, the Party did effective and, in some instances, the decisive work. However, this role could not be an open one.

#### ROLE OF THE PARTY AS AN INDEPENDENT FORCE

The Party seriously cooperated with the organized labor movement in mobilizing general public opinion behind progressive social legislation. By working quietly and unobtrusively as we did, we showed in a concrete manner that the Communists were not there to make noise, to capitalize on publicity, to embarrass anyone, but rather through a cooperative spirit of selflessness to help break down many prejudices against us among the labor men and women. We succeeded in this to a certain degree, although the process has not been completed by far.

Red-baiters like Fenton (Green's personal agent in Massachusetts) carried on no attacks against us at all. Now, of course, this has all changed and he is up to his old tricks of Hearstian Red-baiting. In the main, not a single A. F. of L. or C.I.O. leader engaged in a single statement or word of attack against the Party. Last year, this was all different.

The Party, however, had still more important objectives to achieve. It was imperative for us to answer the many lies and slanders against the

Party. The Party was the whipping-boy for all reactionaries. Communism seemed to haunt them in their sleep, and every sleepy-headed legislator seemed to perk up every time that some measure or other was branded "Red" and "Communitic". Every political and intellectual bankrupt raised the cry of "Communism" every time he had no other arguments to present.

Slews of these Red-baiters appeared at every hearing devoted to a public discussion of social problems and issues. They came from the Legion, D.A.R., K. of C., Chamber of Commerce, etc. The Party and Communism were the butt of attack. The spirit of Communism had to be exorcised from the state house. Every progressive piece of social legislation was therefore a Bolshevik plot, or hatched by the terrible Stalin in Moscow.

These people apparently have not learned the lessons of the last election campaign at all. Following in the footsteps of Hearst and Father Coughlin, they still make Communism the main issue. And, at hearing after hearing, the more timid liberals would permit themselves to go into a little Red-baiting of their own—for the sake of "safety". This did not spare them the venom of the reactionaries and open fascists. As time went on, from a purely defensive position, the more advanced liberals and those progressives with more backbone began fighting back aggressively and after a while one could hear constant references to fascism, the dangers of fascism, and fascist procedure.

The Party's position, therefore, had to be presented; not in a provocative manner in answer to the provocations

of our enemies, but we had to bring forward our program—both immediate and final—in an intelligent, skilful, and constructive manner.

We had to use the forum of these hearings to reach large circles of people outside by a popular, simple and truthful statement of our program. The hearings were thus to be transformed by us into a tribune to reach not only those present at the hearings, but hundreds of thousands in the Commonwealth.

On the whole, the statements and speeches of our spokesmen were played down and given little publicity. This was to be expected. Yet our presence was felt at every important hearing. We did manage to speak despite many difficulties. We did manage to get important bits of our program into the bourgeois press. The Party spoke in its own name at fourteen hearings.

Three issues of our state bulletin contained much information on hearings, votes in legislature, impending bills, etc. The speech of the Party spokesman for repeal of the Teachers' Oath was published.

All in all, 18,000 copies of the three issues of the bulletin were issued, most of which were either sold or distributed.

The Party made a serious effort to get on the radio to speak on some of the important issues facing the people. We were turned down by every large and small radio station in Boston.

At the hearing on Sherman's order to investigate Communist activities, the Party put up what in the words of a certain liberal was a "magnificent defense". This did not prevent the fascist-minded gentlemen of the Committee on Rules from recommending its adop-

tion. At this hearing, the outstanding Party leaders took the stand to refute the mountain of lies and to make our position clear. We supplemented each other's statements and testimony. Each deepened the impression made by the previous speaker. A number of liberals spoke up in defense of the constitutional rights of our Party.

One interesting feature of this hearing was the fact that the Socialist Party sent a representative on our invitation to oppose the investigation. The S.P. spokesman, while arguing against the investigation, was using the same arguments that a Red-baiter used against the Party. The Communists were carrying out the "policies of the Soviet government because Stalin wants good relations with America", chanted the Socialist. From the "Left", this Socialist, unfortunately under Trotskyist influence, found himself in the same political bedchamber as the reactionaries, who also accused us of "being tools and agents of Moscow".

On certain issues, like setting aside the 6 o'clock law for women, the Party was the only organization opposing it. Our statements were given wide publicity in the New Bedford and other textile towns' press.

The Y.C.L., together with the American Youth Congress, helped form two broad committees. One was in favor of retaining the N.Y.A. The other was against compulsory military training. The Y.C.L. speakers made an excellent impression on the representatives of other groups, who at first were very fearful about the Y.C.L. speaking in its own name.

To summarize the question of our independent role and activities:

1. For the first time in our history,

we developed the beginnings of a correct and systematic approach to the basic problem of legislation.

2. Though we are as yet a negligible force in the parliamentary field in the sense of controlling votes and having people elected to office, nevertheless, we have played an active role in helping establish the beginnings of an organized people's movement around social legislation.

3. The Party was correctly able to utilize the democratic procedure of hearings to bring forward its program before the people and link the Party up with the progressive forces in the Commonwealth.

4. The Party at all occasions brought forward the idea of the Farmer-Labor Party.

5. Preparations for the hearings made our Party more alert and sensitive politically. We had to prepare ourselves thoroughly with the problem under discussion, in order to bring forward our position in a correct manner.

6. To a degree, we succeeded in involving our membership in legislative work. In this respect, however, we were very weak. The causes for this will be dealt with later on.

7. The Party played a decisive role in mobilizing for the mass demonstrative actions that took place around the issue of the Child Labor Amendment hearing.

Our Party line calls for developing and extending the democratic rights of the American people. To accomplish this, it becomes imperative for us to learn how to utilize to the fullest extent possible the already established democratic processes in the country.

For instance, in New England district, if ever we are to become a mass

Party, we must teach and train our membership to participate actively in the Town Meetings (which still exist in quite a number of communities). We must learn how to get large numbers of townspeople to attend these meetings. Where they don't exist any longer, we can raise as a slogan the revival of the old Town Meetings, as a broad and democratic form of popular self government.

Hundreds of communities have in their local charters clauses inserted in them giving the people the right to hold referendum votes on matters of public policy. So have many state constitutions. We must learn how to grasp this democratic right and make effective use of it to further a People's Front movement.

Public hearings at City Councils and State Legislatures should be a common practice in our Party instead of the uncommon and unusual thing it is today. We must learn how to work with and involve other organizations in such hearings.

The Party must *elect legislative agents* to handle the legislative activities of the Party. Instead of leaving this to chance, and to a committee that may or may not function, a legislative agent should acquaint himself thoroughly with the routine at the State Houses, help to draw up bills or petitions, make contacts with friendly legislators and try to get them to introduce our bills or petitions, have a strong legislative committee with ties in the trade unions and mass organizations, and be able to prepare for effective mobilization of the Party (together with the leadership) by analyzing in advance various pieces of legislation and preparing the Party for action.

This legislative agent should be a full-time Party functionary, and be responsible for the whole legislative work of the Party prior to the opening of legislature and while it is in session.

#### WEAKNESSES IN OUR LEGISLATIVE WORK

There were 2,700 petitions for bills introduced in the current session of the General Court. When we consider this for a moment, we can readily realize the whole scope of legislative action which covers every phase of political, economic and social life of the Commonwealth.

Of these 2,700 petitions, there were hundreds having a social significance and bearing on the daily lives of millions of people.

Our Party was and is not prepared or equipped to deal with many of these problems. In the first place, we were completely unacquainted with many of these problems. Many dealt with the political life and set-up of different communities. Others dealt with taxation. Still others dealt with education, agricultural problems, civil service, election laws, insurance, judiciary, pensions, public health, public service, public welfare, etc.

As a political party, we must react to all issues of public interest and matters pertaining to public welfare. To the extent that we learn to do this effectively, to that extent we will really establish our legal and political right to speak as a Party of the masses—not only in word but in fact.

We did not have the forces to cover many of these hearings. When a number of hearings would take place simultaneously, we would find ourselves short-handed. Another important

weakness lay in the fact that we have not yet developed sufficient local and state forces to speak *as native Massachusetts citizens*. At one hearing, a very bad impression was created because most of us who spoke were only one, two, or three years in the Commonwealth.

We did not devote sufficient time to study and tackle many important problems. The result was that we missed a number of hearings of great importance. Being unfamiliar with legal twaddle, we could not make out certain complicated and wordy formulations about "excise tax on certain types of goods of consumption, etc., etc.", when all that was meant was a direct sales tax of 2 or 3 per cent. We missed that hearing, and hundreds of small merchants attended to protest against it. In New Hampshire, Comrade Elba Chase, speaking for the Party, was received with loud and prolonged applause by hundreds of merchants, workers, and farmers—and even by State Legislators—when she got up to oppose the sales tax in that state. The Party could have done some effective work on this issue in Massachusetts.

We failed to conduct sufficiently educational work among our membership, with the result that only to a small degree did we involve them actively in legislative activities. Getting signatures, sending postcards, resolutions, getting representatives down to the hearings—this was done only by the most politically conscious and native elements. We did not link up the work in the neighborhoods with important legislative measures. We did not succeed in getting committees set up in

wards and legislative districts to bring direct pressure on legislators.

We did not organize a single delegation of citizens to visit the legislator on Beacon Hill and tell him exactly what they wanted him to do on any one bill.

Neither were we able to get hundreds of telephone calls made to the State Legislators and Senators telling them how they should vote on the Child Labor Amendment, Teachers' Oath and similar matters. These things the reactionaries do very well and effectively, and their pressure is distinctly felt on Beacon Hill. This we must learn to do more effectively than our enemies.

Neighborhood papers were not issued and neither did our industrial units react to issues by raising them in their local unions.

In a word, the work was carried on too much *on top*. *In the future we will have to judge the success of our activities by the number of committees we establish, the number of leaflets and bulletins we get out, by the number of specific mass movements we help create around specific issues of legislation, and the degree to which we involve the membership as a whole in this work.*

Finally, our mass organizations played little or no role at all this year. The Women's Council spoke three times at three hearings—yet our fraction in the Women's Council missed some glorious opportunities to call a conference of women's organizations on such issues as feeding undernourished school children, bringing down hundreds of mothers to attend this hearing as well as doctors, nurses, social workers and school children.

WHAT HAS THE PRESENT LEGISLATURE  
ACCOMPLISHED SO FAR?

The people of Massachusetts are following events on Beacon Hill with great intensity. The masses are alert and are discussing issues. The newspapers are full of letters written pro or con on these issues. Meetings are being held to take them up.

In these days, when things move very rapidly, when leading officials must take a definite stand one way or the other, it doesn't take very long for politicians to make their political tendencies known to the people.

Governor Hurley has clearly shown where he stands and has shattered all illusions about his position as the "friend of labor" he pictured himself as being. On the Child Labor Amendment, he wrote a letter opposing it. His supporters in the ranks of labor were heartbroken, but the governor showed his opposition to the abolition of child labor nevertheless. The governor was carrying out the wishes of two main reactionary groups—the Ely section of the Democratic Party which undoubtedly is the dominating group in Massachusetts and is allied with the Liberty League, and the hierarchy of the Catholic Church.

As soon as the sit-down became an issue in American politics because of its effectiveness on the industrial front, Governor Hurley issued a ukase against sit-downs. It had about as much effect as King Canute ordering the onrushing waves to cease rolling onto the beach. Governor Hurley, significantly enough, was one of the first governors who openly threatened the use of armed force against sit-down strikers. At the time of the sit-down in

the Waltham Shoe Company in Chelsea, which involved 1,400 workers, Hurley called in the head of the National Guard and prepared to evict the sit-downers by violence.

The Teachers' Oath Law, which was repealed by both houses of the General Court by a slight margin in each, was vetoed by Governor Hurley. His veto was upheld by a vote of 101 to 100. It requires a two-thirds vote by Legislature to override the veto.

During the election campaign Governor Hurley never indicated his opposition to the Child Labor Amendment or his support of the Teachers' Oath Law. His labor supporters never dreamt of forcing him to state his position on these vital matters.

Governor Hurley stands exposed as a full-fledged reactionary of the worst kind. By jumping on the Roosevelt bandwagon—without commitments—this Tory and fascist was elected over his opponent, the banker Haigis. Haigis at least had the honesty to make his position known on many matters.

In Massachusetts the Republican and Democratic Parties are parties of reaction and big business. Both are dominated by the First National Bank. The public utilities have a stranglehold over the Republican Party, and governors like Fuller have done their duty by the textile and shoe manufacturers on more than one occasion.

The Democratic Party likewise, through governors like Ely and Curley, has followed a steadfast reactionary policy. Ely is definitely linked up with the First National Bank, and was the organizer of the Liberty League in Massachusetts.

However, the hierarchy of the Catholic Church plays a dominant role

in Massachusetts politics. The extent of this can readily and openly be seen by the following:

1. It was primarily the opposition of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church that defeated the Child Labor Amendment. Michael Flaherty, well-known labor leader of Boston, openly charged that "the Cardinal cracked the whip, and the Legislature jumped to defeat the amendment".

2. Michael Flaherty demanded to know "what the investments of the church amounted to in the textile mills of New England". There is no doubt that the hierarchy is well entrenched economically, and is using its political influence to safeguard its economic interests.

3. From Lawrence, word has reached us that a number of priests have stopped "excoriating" Communism, and have now opened up their attack on the C.I.O.

4. It is an open secret that the hierarchy of the Catholic Church is steeped in the political-temporal affairs of the Commonwealth. The political power of the Cardinal is tremendous.

The Democratic Party of Massachusetts, taken as a whole, is the more corrupt, brazen and bankrupt party of capitalism and reaction.

The Republican Party, despite its reactionary character, still makes a pretense of preserving the democratic and liberty-loving traditions of Massachusetts.

In Massachusetts, a big movement has already developed around the issue of separation of church from state. Dozens of ministers from all denominations appeared at the hearings held on the question of repealing the bill which in Massachusetts provides free

transportation to children going to parochial schools.

There can be no question at all about it. A central problem for the people is to develop, as part of its program and movement against reaction and fascism, a movement for *complete separation of the church from the state*. The church must stay out of politics. Around the fundamental principles laid down at the time of the American Revolution, providing for freedom of worship and separation of church from the state, a powerful movement must be organized *as part of the general struggle against fascism*—to effect the separation of the church from the state as part of the democratic movement of the people. Here it must be stressed and emphasized: This cannot become a religious issue of Protestant versus Catholic—nor should we permit fascists and the hierarchy to make the issue such. Catholic people must be united with all others who desire to defeat the reactionary forces in the Commonwealth and march forward to a Farmer-Labor government in the state.

#### FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

Municipal elections are slated to take place in dozens of industrially important communities this fall.

The Communist Party can play an important role in every one of these elections.

Already, the Party everywhere should examine the local political situation, find out what the essential issues are, contact the local progressive elements, approach the trade unions and other mass organizations, make plans for these elections, prepare for broad conferences and have common

agreement as to the municipal program, begin grooming local labor people for office, etc.

Lessons should be drawn from the last legislative session of the General Court. Slogans must be raised:

Defeat the reactionaries of both parties. Defeat those who voted against the Child Labor Amendment. Defeat the party of Curley and Hurley.

Defeat the enemies of President Roosevelt's Supreme Court reform proposal. Defeat the reactionary Republican Party of Massachusetts.

Conferences should be called immediately. We should ascertain immediately what elections will be held in each community. It should also be determined exactly for which offices we intend to put up candidates and this decision should be based on a realistic estimate of forces, people, possibilities, importance of office, etc.

One factor can be very well utilized in most of the town and city elections, namely, that they are non-partisan—so-called. Around the platform and candidate, therefore, broad people's movements can be built and the slogan and idea of the Farmer-Labor Party popularized before the citizenry.

Even when and where Farmer-Labor candidates and tickets cannot be placed in the field, in cities like Boston, Worcester, Lynn, etc., the Party must be prepared to run its own candidates for office—after all possibilities for Labor Party or Farmer-Labor candidates have been exhausted. Here we must warn our Party in the sharpest possible manner against dilly-dallying, waiting, hoping, etc., for something to materialize, simply based on our wishful thoughts. After examining the situation and arriving at the conclusion

that united front candidates are out of the question, we must immediately prepare to run our own Party comrades as candidates, selecting proper people (and not select rumhounds and irresponsibles like a certain renegade named Benson in Lynn, whom the Party ran because "there was no one else to put up"), drafting a broad platform, mobilizing our people to get our candidates on the ballot, etc.

In some localities we can arrive at agreements with honest people running for office who have influence in their respective communities or localities. If those candidates accept a Farmer-Labor Party program, if they will speak for a new independent party of the people and labor—a Farmer-Labor Party—if they are trade unionists or are supported by trade unions, then we can arrive at some understandings with such individuals and groups. This is a practical question we face in a number of places throughout New England. We saw in Peabody, Mass., a few months ago an independent candidate running against a reactionary mayor up for re-election. The independent candidate—a leather worker and a member of the union—came within 58 votes of being elected. Our Party could have swung the elections—had we even lifted our finger politically to help.

As a step in the direction of developing Farmer-Labor Parties both locally and on a state scale, we must seriously consider the possibility and advisability of helping to establish committees of Labor's Non-Partisan League in Massachusetts. Labor's Non-Partisan League went out of existence after November 3. Before November 3, it led a very precarious existence; and

only managed to raise some funds for Roosevelt during the campaign.

Through Labor's Non-Partisan League we can help cement together the labor movement, uniting and keeping united the forces of labor. Both the A. F. of L. and C.I.O. can be gotten to cooperate with Labor's Non-Partisan League. Especially is this true since the actions of Hurley, the Republicans and Democrats, have helped to disillusion many tens of thousands of workers. With the drives of the C.I.O. under way in many textile and shoe centers, with the tremendous mass upsurge we are now experiencing through Massachusetts (and New England) the whole political complexion of the state can easily be changed—provided a proper medium and form is found.

Labor's Non-Partisan League offers the possibility of leading the whole labor movement along the lines of independent political action. This may serve even as the first step—when and where candidates are not yet ready to align themselves completely with the Farmer-Labor Party movement, but who are ready to work with and be supported by Labor's Non-Partisan League.

The main lessons to be learned from our legislative work and applied to the coming municipal elections are:

(a) To get the entire Party con-

scious of the problem and to understand the need for active participation in the coming elections. That these elections are important, and will have an important bearing on the state elections of 1938.

(b) To set up the apparatus to conduct the campaign and a responsible comrade in charge.

(c) To acquaint ourselves with all local issues and problems and to focus attention on these issues.

(d) To work closely along the line of the People's Front with trade unions, neighborhood and civic organizations, liberals, progressives, etc., with the idea of first getting them to cooperate along loose general lines and then to help bring them into line for support of a Farmer-Labor Party.

(e) To select proper people for candidates, spokesmen, etc., and to work out correct programs.

(f) To draw the conclusions of the last legislative session of the General Court and to convince tens of thousands of people in Massachusetts of the need to break once and for all with political double-crossers, reactionaries and Tories who have defeated the Child Labor Amendment, Teachers' Oath Law, who oppose organized labor, and who stand in the way of peace, progress and prosperity for the masses of people.

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# THE SCHOOLS AND THE PEOPLE'S FRONT

BY RICHARD FRANK

THE public schools are *community centers*, which bring together the broadest strata of the population. They can play a role of the utmost importance in the development of a wide People's Front in the United States.

The right to an education in America was won by a popular movement, the backbone of which was formed by the trade unions. The labor movement has always been conscious of the importance of education. Today, great masses of people are aroused over the inroads which have been made upon the educational system during the years of crisis. We have recently witnessed the development of an energetic and highly promising student movement in the United States. The unity which has been achieved in this field is of tremendous importance for broadening and developing the movement around the schools. At the same time, the American Federation of Teachers has been growing and taking on new life.

## I. THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM AND THE STATE

That which is most immediately apparent to anyone who studies public education must be the fact that *the public school system is a part of the state machinery*.

The function of the state machinery being to subjugate the proletariat and the toiling masses in general to the rule of the bourgeoisie, the role of the public school system cannot be isolated from this general function of the capitalist state.

Nevertheless, the right to free public education was won as a result of the struggles of the masses, with the trade unions playing a leading role. Organized labor has always been thoroughly conscious of the importance of education as a weapon, and has always struggled to obtain this weapon.

At the time when the fight for popular education was undertaken, the bourgeoisie found itself in a contradictory position. Like every ruling class, it desired to keep the masses in ignorance as a means of insuring its own supremacy. However, with the development of industry, it needed literate wage slaves and also a literate public to read its advertisements. Furthermore, the "universal" Catholic church had been broken up in the processes of the bourgeois revolutions. Thus great numbers had been liberated from any well coordinated institution for the indoctrination of the minds of the populace with ideas conducive to peaceful submission to the ruling class.

The struggles of the masses for free

public education eventually forced the bourgeoisie, torn by this contradiction, to a decision in favor of free compulsory public education, which it attempted to use as a substitute for a "universal" church.

However, free public education has never been universal. There have always been sections of the population (isolated rural communities, the Negro people in the Southern part of the U.S.A.) who have been denied educational advantages. Furthermore, education has almost never been *really* free in view of the fact that children are rarely furnished with free textbooks, with free car or bus fare, or with free hot lunches.

We must recognize furthermore that the public school system, won in the above manner, is administered not primarily in the interest of the children who attend it, but in the interest of the bourgeoisie, into whose state machinery it has been incorporated as an integral part. The bourgeoisie has used to its own advantage this concession which it was forced to make.

The function of the bourgeois school system can be expressed very simply as being the *training of efficient and docile wage slaves*. In other words, the task of the public schools is the ideological preparation for the perpetuation of capitalism.

This does not mean that the masses do not benefit from the public schools. On the contrary, the people must fight to preserve those benefits. However, it must never be forgotten that such positive values are partially counteracted by the bourgeois propaganda injected into the schools.

In fighting to extend education, this aspect of the schools must be opposed.

Such opposition will inevitably lead sooner or later to the realization that the educational system will be administered truly for the benefit of the majority of the children only when it has been wrested completely from the hands of the bourgeoisie, and, of course, this can take place only at the time when the toilers take power into their hands completely.

The primary schools impart a minimum of technical training (reading, writing, arithmetic) with almost a complete lack of any education in the natural sciences, but generously accompanied by inculcation of bourgeois ideology and sentiments of respect for the status quo. This minimum of technical training suffices for the standard of efficiency demanded by the bourgeoisie of the majority of its workers.

In addition to the elementary schools, the bourgeoisie also administers secondary schools, whose special function is to train more advanced or "white collar" workers. Economic necessity prevents the majority of children from ever reaching or completing these schools. Some additional training is imparted here. But even that science that is taught in the high schools is imparted in so fragmentary a manner as to prevent the student from ever acquiring a genuinely scientific outlook.

Since the schools are part of the state machinery, their administration is in the hands of bureaucrats. Educational authorities are not elected by the people or answerable to the people, but are appointed from above. Students, teachers and parents are subjected to the discipline of the educational system, but have no voice in its

administration. The bureaucrats who control the schools are carefully trained in an anti-democratic spirit of subserviency to the bourgeoisie. The administrative educational system is in fact a perfect hierarchy with semi-military discipline. The teacher is supposed to be in absolute subjection to the principal. In the same way, principals are subjected to the rule of superintendents; superintendents to state departments, and the latter in turn by hundreds and thousands of ties to the bourgeoisie (as evidenced, for instance, in a very open fashion in the aid given publishing companies, whose production and sale of textbooks and successes in bringing about frequent changes in texts constitute a genuine "racket"). Since school authorities are selected not for their ability as educators, but for political reasons, the cultural level of the public schools is appallingly low. Administrative positions frequently become means of obtaining graft. The welfare of children and the community is the last thing considered by the majority of such officials.

The present crisis in education cannot be divorced from the crisis of capitalism. Free public education is a *part* of bourgeois democracy. In attacking the latter, fascism also attacks popular education. One task confronting the People's Front or Farmer-Labor Party movement must, therefore, be defense of free public education. This people's movement must concern itself not only with defending and extending the material basis of education, but also with changing the content and quality of education.

The present crisis is not only a material or economic crisis, but also a

cultural crisis. Education in America has functioned largely on the basis of the philosophy of pragmatism. Pragmatism in education states, "We are confronted with certain problems, but no one knows what is the 'truth' which will solve them. There are all kinds of theories, but they are just hypotheses, one of which is no better than the other. We will try to look at some of them. We can try now one, now another, and maybe some day we'll hit on one that works to a certain extent." But in time of crisis, people grow tired of "waiting to hit on something that may work partially". Thus, as Comrade Browder stated in his debate with George Soule, the philosophy of pragmatism is now in crisis. And with it pragmatism in education is in crisis.

Thus, we see educators today turning away from pragmatism as a philosophy of education. And some of them, such as Hutchins and Adler of the University of Chicago, are, in seeking a more systematic philosophy of education, looking backward to the Middle Ages, to the scholastic university, to the *trivium* and *quadrivium*, to St. Thomas Aquinas.

We must not be oblivious to this effort to establish universities on a medieval model in the present twentieth century. We must note also that *some of the same people who are flirting with St. Thomas are at the same time also trying to flirt with the philosophy of dialectical materialism.* This wavering between opposites expresses the fact that the dissatisfaction with the present on the part of many educators may be led in either of two directions—either backward toward scholasticism or forward toward Marxism. We must not sit passively in the

midst of this wavering and confusion. We must not allow Hutchins to take the initiative in offering a solution to the present educational crisis. We must boldly counterpose to Hutchins' reactionary program a progressive philosophy of education which revitalizes the slogan which is the motto of the American Federation of Teachers, "Democracy in Education; Education for Democracy". This motto can give the slogan for a Farmer-Labor philosophy of education, which must be developed as a rallying-call to educators out of the morass of pragmatism, away from medievalism, forward toward Marxism-Leninism.

With the present crisis in education, many educators and even administrators are beginning to realize the necessity for struggle to preserve the educational system. This is one aspect of the general disintegration which begins to set in even among the old bureaucracy during the crisis of capitalism. While some go to fascism, others fight to *preserve* their places.

Because of this new attitude on the part of some administrators and educators, we must adopt a new attitude toward them. There must be no mechanical analogy drawn between the class struggle of workers and capitalists on one side and of students and administrators on the other. It must be remembered that many administrators are sincere believers in democracy and free public education. A strong movement of students, teachers and parents will actually give some of them courage to *fight* for these beliefs. This is especially true of many Negro educational administrators.

Many educators have been sincerely trying to work out progressive methods

of teaching (*e.g.*, the new curriculum program in Virginia), but the possibility of actually achieving them (even when the program is officially adopted, as in Virginia) is contradicted by the class role of the schools and the economic handicaps suffered by the children. We must consciously seek to give progressive educators a means of working out their educational programs in conjunction with the general program of the growing Farmer-Labor movement. And in states where Farmer-Labor governments exist, as in Minnesota and Wisconsin, we must actually seek to help them put into *realization* new methods and techniques of teaching, new curricula, and new methods of administration adjusted to the actual needs of children of workers and farmers.

Such are the general functions of the bourgeois public school and some of the broad perspectives which lie ahead of us in connection with the growth of the Farmer-Labor Party movement. We must now examine the educational system in its relation to (1) the children; (2) its own wage slaves, the teachers and (3) the community as a whole.

## II. THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM AND THE CHILDREN

The future wage slaves trained in the public schools are for the most part children of the working class or lower middle class. As such, they do not possess the economic well being necessary for taking full advantage of educational opportunity. Coming from homes of poverty, undernourished, poorly clothed, frequently forced by economic necessity to work for a living before or after school,

never free from worry, and often subjected to a harrowing home life where nerves are irritated by the constant strain of want, proletarian children, even when they can go to school, never have any real opportunity to obtain a genuine education.

Proletarian and the majority of petty-bourgeois children are thus faced with many real and pressing problems of their own—how to obtain a better and more comfortable life, how to find jobs after finishing school. Furthermore, all children are faced with personal problems as they grow into adolescence. Nowhere in the public school system are these immediate economic and personal problems of the children themselves subjected to study.

The children who attend school are subjected to a *rigorous discipline*, which, instead of stimulating and encouraging curiosity or the natural desire to learn, crushes every sign of intellectual initiative and tends to produce crushed and timid material for further exploitation. This discipline is necessary for the purpose of forcing a hostile culture upon the minds of the children.

Thus to the majority of children school seems dull and boring. They are full of the desire for knowledge—knowledge of those things which really interest them. But they are not interested for the most part in that which is actually taught them. In every classroom in every school in the country, the cry is heard, "But why do we have to learn these things? What good is this going to do us? What is the sense in all this?" These sensible questions of the children are regarded as manifestations of mere stubbornness by

school authorities. No effort is made to answer them. Although any genuine method of education must arouse interest in the student and must welcome and answer questions which puzzle him, there is nothing which school authorities fear more than questioning or thought on the part of students. Sincere questions tend to be met with such rebuffs that the majority of students never dare to ask them.

Those who persist in doing so are usually regarded as insubordinate or troublesome. Thus, bourgeois education really becomes a deliberate effort to stultify the native intelligence of children. Its rule is, "Learn by rote what is placed before you and do not dare to question". Brutal suppression of the natural inquisitiveness of all young minds tends to prevent that which is stupid or false in that which is taught the children from being questioned either now or in the future.

Because of the economic hardships of their home life, which unfits them for study; because of the severity of school discipline; and because of the ideas which are thrust upon them from above (ideas which answer none of the problems which immediately concern them, but which proceed from the hostile culture of an enemy class), the majority of children develop a feeling of hatred for the bourgeois public school system. This hatred develops that spirit of rebelliousness which is to be found in every public schoolroom.

Do not school children in their daily talk universally speak of school as a "jail"? This universal characterization by school children of the place where they spend the greater part of their days is deserving of the deepest consideration, for in very truth the

bourgeois school is, to a considerable extent, just that—a *prison*. The keen judgements of children have found the correct word. Within the school many of them suffer actual torture. Many of them during their first years in school leave their homes for this prison with tears. It haunts them at night. Recesses, weekends, and summer vacations are brief moments of freedom, at the close of which the grim shadow of that prison house, the school, again rises up to haunt them. Here, day after day, they find themselves deprived of liberty, without rights, without freedom to protest or express themselves, subjected to the complete despotism of an autocratic discipline.

It is true that because of the loneliness and hardships of many homes in bourgeois society, many children prefer school to home because in the former they come in contact with other children. This contact supplements the unhealthiness of the bourgeois home. However, even in this case, the social contact afforded by the school is vitiated by its hostile discipline imposed from above.

The rebelliousness of school children, directed against a part of the state machinery itself, is something that Communists cannot afford to ignore. This, together with their desire for knowledge and social life, must form the *starting point* for our work among students in the schools.

The problem in organizing public school students is *not* to set up separate aims, to lead a separate struggle apart from this already existing rebelliousness of students. Such actions would result merely in the creation of *small sects* of students isolated from the

lives of students as a whole. The problem is rather to *guide and direct that spirit of rebelliousness which already exists*. This means to root ourselves in the lives of the majority of the students. It means to make the interests of the students our own, to set up for ourselves no aims separate and apart from the interests and needs of the main body of students, but to crystallize and make clear those interests, to arouse in the students a consciousness of what arouses their resentment, accordingly to give their elemental spirit of rebelliousness definite and effective direction and thus to place ourselves at the head of the students in a conscious movement to improve their conditions.

In so far as possible, the broad mass student organization for this purpose should be the American Student Union, which, as a *union* for students, must fight first and foremost for their immediate economic needs. The A.S.U. must fight for government aid for needy students (extension and democratic administration of the N.Y.A., passage of the American Youth Act) and for a really free education (free textbooks, carfare, and hot lunches). It must help students improve their home life by helping their parents fight for better conditions—by cooperating with the labor unions, by conducting education as to the importance of unions, and by educating students to be good union members in the future.

The A.S.U. must campaign against the dullness of school. Since students have a natural and healthy desire for a good time, the A.S.U. must endeavor to win the possibility for this by campaigning for the right to use school facilities and to obtain more and better facilities (the use of school rooms, the

buildings of gymnasiums, swimming pools, athletic fields). It must itself sponsor games and parties.

It would be utopian to think that without a proletarian revolution the bourgeois content of the school curriculum could be completely changed. However, it is possible to win some changes in curriculum. Mass pressure can remove particularly vicious war or chauvinistic propaganda, can win the right of students to classes in sex education, to the inclusion of Negro history in history courses. The latter is a demand which Negro students feel with especial keenness.

The A.S.U. should conduct its own educational activity. It has already been very successful in many schools in conducting such activity on the danger of war and the method of fighting it, though it has not been so successful in high schools as in colleges. Such educational work must include the danger of fascism, the racial and national question with particular emphasis on the Negro question. However, the A.S.U. should be careful not to impose the broader slogans such as those against war and fascism from above without linking them with immediate questions.

In fighting for academic freedom, a fight which will grow out of the fight for economic needs or to vitalize the curriculum, those forces which suppress the freedom of thought and expression in the schools should be linked up with those forces which are driving toward fascism. To the students, fascism will then not be a word but will be something very concrete.

The fight for equality for all students should be carefully linked with the fight for economic needs (in-

equality expresses itself in economic discrimination) and with the fight for academic freedom. It can also be utilized as a means of throwing light on the nature of fascism and in strengthening the fight against it.

In order to win the opportunity for drawing all students into these struggles, the A.S.U. must fight consistently for democratic student government. It must point out that if schools are really to educate the people for participation in a democratic government, as is their alleged purpose, student government is the only practical means for imparting such education.

In all these struggles the A.S.U. should seek to involve in united front action all other existing student organizations. Due to the restrictions on high school students, the A.S.U. may never itself become the mass high school organization. It must find a way to stimulate the existing organizations to take a progressive stand.

The Y.C.L. must endeavor to raise the spirit of rebellion found among school children to a level of higher consciousness by educating the students, on the basis of their own experience, to a realization of the class basis for the oppressive nature of the schools and to a realization of how the school system under a workers' and farmers' government would deal with the immediate problems of the majority of students, imparting to them with the utmost solicitude for their own interests that warm and friendly culture of their own class. The task of the Communist student groups must be to coordinate and stimulate to activity all existing student groups. To the best of their ability, they must supplement the curriculum with Marxist-Leninist educa-

tion. At the present time, their most important task is to disseminate the idea of a Farmer-Labor Party and of a Farmer-Labor Junior Federation. They must give every possible aid to the organizational drives of the C.I.O.

Such are some of the chief aims of the student movement. Now how do the public schools affect the teachers and what are the chief aims of the organized teachers?

### III. THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND THE TEACHERS

The public schools as factories for the cheap production of docile and efficient wage slaves possess their own wage laborers, *viz.*, the public school teachers. Teachers are a part of the working class. Their wages are on the average as low as those of the average wage worker, in many cases far lower.

Teachers have no more to do with the actual administration of the schools than have students, but are, like privates in an army, subjected to a semi-military type of discipline imposed by a whole hierarchy of school officials. They are not supposed to think, to stimulate thought, to bring any new ideas to their students, or to be genuinely considerate of the welfare of the latter. More than of any other section of the working class, care is taken to prevent them from exercising freedom of thought or speech. They are instruments for indoctrinating the minds of the future working class with bourgeois ideology, and the slightest sympathy on their part for the labor movement is ruthlessly suppressed.

Because of their predominantly petty-bourgeois origin and because of the intellectual character of their work, teachers tend to regard themselves as

being above the working class, even though their pay is frequently lower than that of factory workers. Their psychology tends to be petty-bourgeois. Officials deliberately try to inculcate this attitude of superiority to labor.

The task of the Communist Party must be first and foremost to arouse the teachers to class-consciousness and to organize them into the American Federation of Teachers, which is in the main current of the American Labor movement.

The American Federation of Teachers must concern itself primarily with the immediate problems of the teachers (salary, tenure, academic freedom, etc.). Only on this basis can the majority of teachers be organized. However, the task of the Party must be to draw the organized teachers into a realization of the wider problems of the labor movement.

It is gratifying that the American Federation of Teachers has taken a position as one of the most progressive unions. It is supporting the fight for industrial unionism, although it has not affiliated to the C.I.O., in order that it may more effectively fight for the unity of the American labor movement. It has correctly taken a stand against any act which might help to cause a split. It has endorsed the movement for a Farmer-Labor Party, has passed resolutions to cooperate with the American League Against War and Fascism and the American Negro Congress.

Nevertheless, a danger must be pointed out. In taking a progressive stand the American Federation of Teachers must not forget that the majority of teachers are still unorganized. It must not in its excellent

zeal for progressive measures forget to emphasize and fight for the daily immediate economic needs of the teachers. Only thus can it organize those who are still on the outside.

In the effort to organize the teachers, every care must be taken to bring together in united front actions all existing teacher organizations. Especial attention must be paid to secure such action with the American Association of University Professors, the National Educational Association and the Guild. Our Party members in these organizations must work actively toward this end.

While the danger of forgetting immediate issues must be guarded against, the opposite tendency must be fought with equal energy, *viz.*, that the organized teachers develop a narrow trade union consciousness. The danger is that the teachers may think of only their *own* problems and forget the social characteristics of their place of work. While teachers are part of the working class, their function differs vastly from that of the industrial worker. *Communist teachers cannot afford to ignore this fact—that they come in contact with the children of the masses, that they are responsible for training these children.* They must realize that *the primary function of the school is to educate these children*, and this will be true to a much greater extent in a socialist society than now. Communist teachers are, therefore, faced with a tremendous social responsibility. They must consider not merely their own teacher problems, but the problems of the children. They must fight for the latter. They must mobilize the other teachers in this fight. They must take advantage of their positions,

without exposing themselves, to give their students to the best of their ability working class education.

To enable the teachers in the Party to do the latter, the Party must take careful steps to see that all teacher comrades are given thorough education in the teachings of Marxism-Leninism. Only when teachers have really mastered Marxism-Leninism, will they be able skillfully to inject it into their teaching at the least risk of exposure and at the same time to conduct struggles around the schools in a truly Bolshevik manner. Such teachers can also be used to advantage to conduct classes in Marxism-Leninism for workers generally, and many such teachers should be assigned not to school units but to factory or industrial units, where they can be of great aid in Party education, in helping with leaflets, shop papers, etc. Others can play an important role in the educational activities of the Y.C.L.

In rural communities, teachers who are among the few educated people are looked up to with tremendous respect. They are in a position to become community leaders. As a means of mobilizing the people in the villages and countryside, steps should be taken to try to send Communist teachers into rural communities, where they should become active in all community organizations.

The resentment of children toward the oppressive nature of the schools expresses itself most directly in the form of antagonism to teachers, with whom students are in immediate contact and who are the immediate agents of the school system for indoctrinating the minds of the children with bourgeois ideology.

Being oppressed themselves from above and being unconscious and unwilling agents of oppression toward the children, teachers tend to react toward the resistance offered by students to the process of bourgeois education by antagonism toward students in return. This antagonism expresses itself in a tendency to regard students as "stupid" or "bad".

It must be the task of the Party to break down this antagonism between students and teachers by arousing both groups to the realization of their common interests, of the fact that they suffer a common oppression from the same group, and that improvement of their conditions demands joint struggle. For this reason, there must be close cooperation, although not joint meetings, between student and teacher Party and Y.C.L. units. The American Student Union and American Federation of Teachers, as well as other teacher and student groups, must be led to undertake joint activity. The American Student Union should advance slogans and undertake struggles in the interest of teachers and the American Federation of Teachers, in the interest of students.

#### IV. THE SCHOOL AND THE COMMUNITY

Although the public schools were won as a result of the struggles of the people and although the latter have a vital and immediate interest in the schools, upon which welfare of their children depends parents have no voice in the administration of the schools. Principals and school officials are not elected by the people or answerable to the people, but are appointed bureaucrats.

It is necessary to strengthen the student and teacher movements by cooperation with parent groups. This cooperation should not be difficult to obtain, for parents are natural allies in any struggle to improve the schools. The Party should work actively within Parent-Teachers Associations and all similar organizations. Efforts should be made to secure broad united front activity between them and teacher and student groups.

In this way, it is possible to launch a broad *people's movement* around the schools as focal points. Such movements, as has been indicated, can be a powerful force in creating a powerful People's Front.

The schools frequently form the only rallying point for all sections of a community. This is especially true in villages and rural communities. The movement around the schools breaks down lines of division which keep apart members of various nationalities, churches, creeds, and political parties. School buildings are frequently used for community meetings or social functions. A people's movement around the schools can thus transform the latter into popular forums for progressive social action—ultimately into forums for the revolution.

In tsarist Russia, at the time of the Revolution of 1905, the universities had been granted autonomy as a result of conflicts with the students. The result was that the universities became forums for the whole revolutionary movement. If this could occur in tsarist Russia, why should we in a bourgeois democracy not be able to use the schools for social progress?

Everyone is familiar with the role of students in the national liberation

movements in China and Cuba. Negro students in our own South are beginning to play the same role. Negro students should more and more go out to mobilize their people in the churches and fraternal orders.

A united people's movement developing around the schools must demand the extension of educational opportunity to the point where it becomes really free for all (demands for free textbooks, car or bus fare, lunches; demands for equal educational opportunity for Negroes and children of rural communities; for government aid to needy students).

In the South, special efforts must be made to form united fronts of Negro and white parent, teacher and student groups to struggle for equal educational opportunities for Negroes and improved educational advantages for both Negro and white. Such a movement can become a powerful weapon in breaking down antagonism between Negro and white. Many white Southerners who at present would not be induced to enter the same organization with Negroes are willing to cooperate with Negro groups in united front activity. The united front is the key for breaking down the barrier between white and Negro. Many white Southerners who today could not be induced to oppose Jim-Crowism will yet agree that Negroes should have equal, though separate, educational advantages, and will cooperate in a movement to obtain such advantages for Negroes. Communists must make unmistakably clear their unalterable opposition to Jim-Crowism. Yet a struggle in which whites participate for equal, even though separate, educational opportunity is a transitional stage to the struggle against Jim-Crow-

ism as a whole. We must look for such transitional forms of struggle. In the process of such a fight, we must point to the waste of a dual educational system, to the fact that white children also would benefit from a unified educational system which would without doubt surpass the present white school system. In this way, we will draw Negro and white together, win gains for the Negro people, and speed up the struggle when the white masses will join with the Negroes in a fight against the system of segregation as a whole.

The American Federation of Teachers is now launching a broad legislative campaign for federal aid to education in the form of five amendments to the Harrison-Black Bill now in Congress. The latter, as it stands, possesses a number of serious inadequacies. As the National Legislative Committee of the American Federation of Teachers declares, it "(1) provides for appropriations which are markedly inadequate; (2) would tend to perpetuate or increase existing inequalities among states in ability to support schools; (3) permits gross inequalities in length of school term: and (4) would make the federal government a party to the perpetuation of gross inequalities between white and Negro schools."

The American Federation of Teachers has, therefore, proposed five amendments to the Harrison-Black Bill which would remedy these defects. These amendments would provide (1) for an initial appropriation of \$250,000,000, reaching \$500,000,000 annually by the end of the fourth year; (2) that poorer states receive a larger proportion of federal funds as a result of appropriations on the basis of the number of inhabitants of school age, as well as in

accordance with the payment of taxes; (3) that each school in a state obtaining funds should remain open for not less than one hundred and sixty days each year; (4) that each state must obtain an annual increase of 2 per cent in the ratio of average daily attendance of children of school age until that ratio reaches eighty; and (5) that an equal amount of these funds be allotted to each Negro child of school age as to each white child.

This legislative program would begin to eradicate educational inequalities. As such, it is capable of rallying the broadest masses—especially in the South, which so sadly needs educational equality with the rest of the country. This legislative program of the American Federation of Teachers forms a supplement to the American Youth Act in offering an immediately realizable program in the interest of American youth. As such, it should receive equal support from such organizations as the American Youth Congress and all its many affiliates. It presents the Southern Negro Youth Conference with just that concrete program for beginning to achieve the equality in education which it has set as one of its principal objectives.

Since the people are denied a voice in the administration of the schools, a fundamental demand of any popular movement around the schools should be democratic administration of the school system by elected representatives of parents, teachers and students. No one of these groups should fail to be represented. Only thus will their interests be guarded. The inclusion of students on school boards will seem the most radical demand. But this demand is of the utmost impor-

tance. Not only will it be a guarantee that the rights of students will not be forgotten, but it will give the students who elect their representatives and to whom the latter must be accountable, as well as the students elected to the board, a thorough training in democratic procedure. It will give them practical democratic experience.

As a result of the crisis, the bourgeoisie, which seeks to maintain its profits by shifting the burden of the crisis onto the shoulders of the people through decreased wages and curtailment of public expenditures, tries among other things to reduce its budget by reducing expenditures for education. This leads to tremendous educational retrenchment, which denies more and more children the right to an education, and works ever greater hardship upon both students and the educational wage slaves, the teachers.

Thus the people's movement, which first won the right to free public education, finds itself confronted not only with the task of improving the schools, but of defending those educational advantages which it still has. It must, however, combine this defensive struggle with an offensive struggle, not only to maintain but to improve the present system. Such a popular movement must take up all the demands that have already been mentioned in connection with the student and teacher movements.

As the crisis deepens, ever greater efforts are made to introduce military training and war and fascist propaganda into the schools. A powerful people's movement must drive military training and all such propaganda completely out of the schools.

It must constantly be emphasized

that the fight against educational re-trenchment and reaction is a fight against the forces driving toward fascism. In this way, the public will learn what fascism means in practice, and thus by fighting fascism concretely we can build a powerful anti-fascist movement.

The strongest efforts should be made to swing the people's movement of parents, teachers and students into alliance with the labor movement, which played the most important part in the early fight for free education. It can be seen from this how important it is to build the American Federation of Teachers. The labor movement in turn must be led to continue to advance demands in the interest of education and to increase the number and intensity of such demands. It must be emphasized that *the trade unions form the main force for improving the schools.*

The movement around the schools must finally be won for the Farmer-Labor Party, which will undoubtedly include educational demands in its platform.

In many small villages, the parent-teachers associations are the only genuine community groups and frequently the only groups to engage in struggles. Through them as parts of such a popular movement for better schools as has been described, we should be able to carry the breath of progress and the movement for a Farmer-Labor Party into the backward rural communities. In those sections where there are no trade unions, such a movement can be utilized to link the rural sections with the labor movement as a whole.

#### V. HIGHER EDUCATION

This analysis would be incomplete without some mention of higher education, although this is not the place for any detailed account of the latter.

Higher education is not always linked up directly with the state machinery, and even where it is, except in the case of a few municipal colleges, it is not free. *Higher education is essentially a commodity.* As a commodity it is sold for profit.

This means that it is not available for the children of the working class or lower petty bourgeoisie except in rare cases. It is to a large extent available only to the sons of the bourgeoisie as a luxury or to sons of the petty bourgeoisie or professionals as a means of enabling them to become skilled technicians or professionals. Only by means of the greatest hardship and by work which interferes with study can many of the latter obtain higher education.

Scientific training is offered as a commodity in the higher schools, but in accordance with the general planlessness of capitalism, no effort is made to care for the well-rounded intellectual advance of students. Subjects are offered haphazardly to be chosen at the student's discretion. Thus even in college it is almost impossible to acquire a genuinely scientific outlook.

The nature of bourgeois higher education tends to divorce students from contact with the masses, and especially the working class, by inculcating in them the feeling that they form a special aristocracy within society. Although the serious student may obtain an insight into society to the point of disillusionment with the status quo,

the general nature of bourgeois higher education is such as to turn him into a cynic or an ineffectual reformist rather than a revolutionary.

The same student and teacher organizations mentioned above must orientate themselves toward the different conditions prevailing in colleges and universities. Demands must be put forward for the economic needs of students and teachers, for academic freedom, and against racial discrimination. The American Student Union is taking steps toward making itself a real factor in the daily lives of the college students by undertaking the building of cooperatives. It should also place itself at the head of simple popular movements such as efforts to reduce admission charges to dances. It should participate in campus elections, injecting into them vital issues. At the same time, it should extend its anti-war and anti-fascist activity, finding for them new forms of expression.

Party and Y.C.L. fractions set up within classes and departments must supplement and combat by means of discussions, brochures, etc., bourgeois

omissions or distortions in the regular curriculum. Marxist-Leninist analysis must be injected into every class. In addition to this, serious education on immediate social problems and in Marxism-Leninism must be undertaken independently.

Efforts must be made to swing the college community out of its academic isolation and self-satisfaction into alliance with the working class and all progressive movements.

The ultimate demand in this realm must be to take higher education off its commodity basis, to make it an extension of the public school system, free to all, and considerate of the genuine welfare of the students, presenting its material in such a way as to synthesize knowledge, to impart a scientific outlook upon the world as a whole, Marxism-Leninism being the only such outlook, and to impart with this scientific outlook that which is inseparable from it, *viz.*, a sense of responsibility to society and practical collective action in the interest of the proletariat.

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# FARM PROBLEMS AND LEGISLATION

BY ROBERT CLAY

AT ITS present session Congress is faced with many farm measures of first-rate importance. The record to date is zero. For nearly four months Congress has stalled, but even this tactic has its limits. The Soil Conservation Act (A.A.A.) is expiring. Crop insurance of some sort must be passed to carry out Roosevelt's campaign promise. Tenancy bills have been fought over for three years and now that the leading farm organizations are showing every sign of lining up behind the Farm Holiday's Tenancy Bill, Congress cannot long postpone action.

With labor driving forward at a militant pace, Congress and the administration are fearful lest the farmers join forces with the workers and add new fuel to the fires now raging. Capitalism prefers to deal with its foes in atomistic fashion; it cannot defeat them in a unified and organized mass. Farmers can, therefore, win important concessions from Congress by using the opportunities afforded by the workers and, by doing this, the farmers will not only be aiding the workers but also paving the way for Farmer-Labor cooperation on a national scale.

To head off Farmer-Labor unity, the reactionaries have unleashed a wave of propaganda. The farmers are told that the sit-down strikes mean higher prices for the things they must buy.

Strikebreakers and hoodlums at the Hershey plant are masqueraded in the press as farmers. The reactionary Farm Bureau "deplores" the disregard for property and for farmers. But the farmers have not fallen for this hoary tactic of "divide and rule," and have greeted with enthusiasm offers of cooperation made by Labor's Non-Partisan League.

The administration knows that it has not solved the farm problem. It knows that a renewed militancy is now spreading on the farm scene. Administration leaders admit in private that at least 2,000,000 farm families have steadily gone downward despite the stock market boom and the tremendous jump in the profits of big business during the past two years. Will Alexander, head of the Resettlement Administration, testified before the House Committee on Agriculture that there are "from 500,000 to 1,000,000 families . . . just on the verge of losing their land." These are farm-owners who are facing the threat of tenancy or the prospect of trekking across the country even though the frontier has long since disappeared into the Pacific Ocean.

Secretary of Agriculture Wallace disclosed to the Subcommittee on Appropriations for the House that at least 1,420,000 farm families need immedi-

ate aid. And the President's Committee on Farm Tenancy admitted that, of the 2,865,155 farm tenants in this country, about 1,335,000 families require help. This does not include the hundreds of thousands of agricultural workers rendered jobless by the reduction programs and the drought.

Last year brought with it the most severe drought in the nation's history. Instead of rallying to the farmer's aid, the administration has slashed farm relief this year by 65 per cent as compared with the winter of 1935. It cut actual A.A.A. payments made in 1936 by 50 per cent as compared with 1935 and it has now clamped down on seed loans so sharply that thousands of farmers are unable to sow a crop this year.

The administration continues to ballyhoo the increase in farm income. But the facts tell a different story. While *gross* farm cash income went up 11 per cent in 1936, the *net* profits of the major corporations jumped up 90 per cent. Even this is not the full story. More than half of the increase in farm income came from drought liquidation of livestock at distress prices. In short, farmers were forced to sell their foundation herds, to cut into their capital, and thus to sacrifice even the chance for future earnings. Moreover, estimates of cash farm income are average for all farmers, allowing no comparison between big farmers and small ones. The private admission by government officials that 2,000,000 or more small owners and tenants have sunk further into debt in recent months adds a significant commentary to these statistics. While farmers in the drought area, especially the Northwest and the dustbowl, were hardest hit, the effects

were by no means limited to the drought area.

#### TENANCY

In various public statements President Roosevelt and Secretary Wallace have declared that tenancy is one of the most serious problems confronting the administration. The President finally appointed a Farm Tenancy Committee to bring in recommendations. These were transmitted to Congress in February, 1937, accompanied by a message in which he said:

"For the past 10 years, the number of new tenants every year has been about 40,000. . . . The agricultural ladder for these tenants has become a treadmill. . . . When fully half the total farm population . . . can no longer feel secure, when millions of our people have lost their roots in the soil, action to provide security is imperative. . . . Obviously, action by the states alone and independently cannot cure the widespread ill."

Likewise, Secretary Wallace recently deplored conditions among farm tenants, particularly in the South:

"I have never seen among the peasantry of Europe poverty so abject as that which exists in this favorable cotton year in the great cotton states from Arkansas on to the East Coast."

In convening the first meeting of the Tenancy Committee, Wallace took occasion to point out that it would take \$160,000,000 a year at the rate of \$4,000 per farm merely to stop the advance of tenancy. He pointed out that with an appropriation of \$50,000,000 for the purchase of small farms it would take 230 years to make owners out of the 2,865,000 tenants and sharecroppers counted in the 1935 census. A ten to fifteen billion dollar program would be needed to eliminate tenancy on the basis of the Wallace figures.

In addition, the Committee's report states that insecurity, rural slums and low incomes are also the lot of "thousands of farmers commonly considered owners . . . because in some areas the farmers' equity in their property is as little as one-fifth." Between 500,000 and 1,000,000 families are in this class.

Here then was an opportunity to do something about the farm population included in "one-third of a nation ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished", who were to be helped according to the promise of the inaugural address. The actions of the administration leaders in respect to its farm program take us far afield from the brave words spoken at the inauguration when Roosevelt said: "We will not listen to comfort, opportunism, and timidity. We will carry on."

For eleven weeks the House Committee on Agriculture wrangled over the Jones Bill calling for the appropriation of \$50,000,000 a year for 10 years, although Resettlement Administrator Alexander admitted before the Committee that this would take care of less than 5,000 tenants a year. This money was to be used for the government purchase of good farm land to be resold on a 40 year amortization basis to tenants regardless of property qualifications. Despite the figures used by Secretary Wallace to show the futility of such a small appropriation when addressing the Tenancy Committee, he later refused to tell the House Committee what he would consider adequate and added:

" . . . That speech was made to indicate the great magnitude of the problem, and not with the possible idea that there could be an appropriation sufficient to take care of it in that manner."

Hearings on the Jones Bill were almost over before the President's Tenancy Committee made its report, although it was claimed that the administration tried to delay the hearings until the report was due. No effort was made by administration spokesmen to amend the Jones Bill so that it would include the demands of the tenant farmers themselves, voiced by the Farm Holiday, the Farmers Union and the two Southern sharecropper organizations at the local hearings throughout the country conducted by members of the President's Tenancy Committee. Thus the wishes of the organized tenants and small owners received no consideration from the House Committee. The local hearings served merely to give a semblance of democratic procedure to the program.

It is now perfectly clear that the administration has no intention of following the recommendations of the Tenancy Committee. The House Committee on Agriculture has reported out a bill which is even more inadequate and vicious than the original measure. After a bitter fight led by Representative Boileau, Wisconsin Progressive, to retain the government purchase, lease and resale provisions, the reactionary landowning interests voted this section down, 13-11, on the ground that it was making the government a landlord and contained "socialistic tendencies". Seven Democrats sided with six Republicans to defeat the only progressive section in the bill.

While this action is an outright slap at the administration, Roosevelt, Wallace and Alexander of the Resettlement Administration must share considerable blame for this defeat. At no time prior to the vote was a whole-

hearted effort made by administration forces to insure victory for their program. After the first vote, Roosevelt's belated efforts to crack the whip were nullified by the action of a single Democratic Congressman, Owens of Georgia, who failed to attend the meeting where an attempt by Boileau to force reconsideration ended in a tie. Owens had previously voted for the government purchase provisions. A similar "strange paralysis" seized Roosevelt during the last session of Congress when he allowed the Jones Farm Tenancy Bill of 1936 to die in the Committee without lifting a finger, although it had been previously reported on the "must list".

As it now stands, the Jones Bill, H.R. 6240, represents a victory for Edward O'Neal and his reactionary Farm Bureau, which conducts one of the most unscrupulous and powerful lobbies in Washington and serves as a tool for big business. The bill is, furthermore, a victory for the plantation overlords and large-scale farm operators of the South, Middlewest and West, who have clearly shown that they control the land policies of the Democratic Party.

As the bill was reported out of Committee, it contains an appropriation of \$470,000,000 to be spent over a period of five years, as follows:

\$150,000,000 for Rural Rehabilitation loans, to be spent at the rate of \$75,000,000 a year for two years; a four-year submarginal land purchase program of \$70,000,000, of which \$10,000,000 is to be spent the first year; \$50,000,000 annually for five years to be loaned to selected families for the purchase of farms, the loan to be repaid in 30 years at 3 per cent interest.

This last feature was inserted into

the bill by the big landowners as a substitute for the original provision for the government purchase, lease and sale of farm land. The government lends money to "worthy" tenants selected by county committees of landowners. These landowners in turn will unload their excess land on the tenants they have selected. Needless to say these county committees of three farmers will be dominated by the big farmers, county agents, and members of the Farm Bureau, as experience with crop control committees under the A.A.A. has already shown.

Such a device makes it easy for landlords, land sharks, banks and insurance companies to unload worthless land on poor tenants, sharecroppers and farm workers and sell good land to their friends who can pay more. The amendment reveals more clearly than ever before that the main purpose of the tenancy program is to unload excess land at a good price and save the large commercial and absentee landowners. No wonder Chester Gray, master Washington lobbyist for the Farm Bureau, could say that his organization was satisfied with the bill, and predicted its enactment in virtually its present form.

Representatives of tenant organizations were quick to point out that the bill was a negation of the President's committee proposals. It "... is merely a bill for the making of business loans, ... excludes the fellow who is really down and out, and will be used mainly to enable farmers to retain their farms rather than to give tenants a start". All along the Farm Bureau has objected to any plan "making it easier for tenants than for able farmers to own land". Part of the opposition to

the government purchase and lease program in the House Committee is reported to have come from the belief that some less "social-minded" and more "business-minded" agency than Resettlement, preferably the Farm Credit Administration, should administer the new bill. By giving preference in making loans "to persons who are able to make an initial down payment, or who are owners of livestock and farm implements necessary successfully to carry on farming operations", in the revised bill, Congressmen have assured this result.

The prospect for a more liberal administration tenancy bill in the Senate requires that the militant tenant and small-owner farm organizations make known in no uncertain terms what they are demanding. The Farm Holiday Association has prepared a bill which Representative Boileau of Wisconsin has agreed to introduce. The bill has been drawn to include the views of the Farmers' Union, the Sharecroppers Union and the Southern Tenant Farmers Union. Leaders of these organizations have already endorsed it. The bill provides for an initial outlay of \$500,000,000 during the first year "to provide funds for the purchase of farm lands and equipment by needy tenants and sharecroppers through long term loans at low interest rates, to make loans to needy farm owners to secure them in the possession of their farms". It provides for democratic control by the tenants themselves and bases the selection of applicants on need rather than on the possession of money and property. Other features include payment of the purchase loan on terms of one-fourth of the crop annually, except in bad years when payment need

not be made; loans to farms in danger of eviction at  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent interest; and ample production credit. The bill establishes an independent agency controlled by the farm tenants to administer the bill instead of the Department of Agriculture designated in the administration bill.

A nationwide campaign for adequate tenancy and production credit legislation is rapidly crystallizing around this bill, which embodies the actual needs of tenants, sharecroppers, and impoverished owners, and is based on the findings of the President's Tenancy Committee.

#### RELIEF

For some time farmers have been getting the short horn and the run-around as regards relief. Although the Resettlement administration claims to have helped to a greater or lesser degree nearly a million farmers during its two years of existence, it admits that it has only "rehabilitated" 25,000 families during that time. Relief grants to about 450,000 farm families have only averaged about \$15 a month, and total amounts per family come to between \$40 and \$50. The number carried during the current winter after the severe 1936 drought was 65 per cent less than the number during the peak load after the 1934 drought despite the cumulative needs of a population drained of all resources by acreage reduction programs and bad crop years.

On September 6, 1936, before the elections, Roosevelt laid down certain policies in his fireside talk which sounded like a good omen for the future. He said:

"First let me talk about this autumn and the coming winter. We have the option, in

the case of families who need active subsistence, of putting them on the dole or putting them to work. They do not want to go on the dole and they are 1000 per cent right."

Immediately after the elections the policy of shifting 270,000 drought victims from W.P.A. to Resettlement began in contradiction to past promises.

This transfer meant a reduction of more than 50 per cent in monthly relief per family, from \$40 to less than \$20, depending on the month. In addition, it carried the absolute certainty that relief would be discontinued altogether a month or two after the transfer was effected. For example, Resettlement claimed that 264,000 drought stricken farmers had been transferred to its rolls by February 1 in addition to 148,000 families already receiving grants. Yet out of this total of 412,000 families undoubtedly in need, Resettlement only gave grants to 229,124 cases in February.

In spite of the 1,420,000 in need referred to by Wallace, which is approximately to 50 per cent underestimate of farm families in actual want, government officials only asked for \$53,000,000 for farm relief through June 30, 1937. This is barely enough to take care of the 300,000 families now receiving grant aid, and makes no provision for those additional thousands forced to migrate by lack of seed and feed loans or by drought and floods.

On the basis of these same figures the Northwest bloc of the Farmers Union, through its Washington representative, estimated that \$404,000,000 was the "minimum required to meet the situation decently". The Farm Holiday sees an additional half billion needed for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 1937.

In the face of the admitted need, administration officials have kept complete silence on the question of future farm relief, although they know full well that the Resettlement administration, now handing out the great bulk of relief doles to farmers, is slated to fold up on June 30, 1937. The Tenancy Bill discussed above is purely a loan bill which will at the most take care of the equipment and production needs of 150,000 farmers.

As the Farm Holiday News has pointed out: "Farmers may suddenly face a situation in which all available relief funds have been cut off . . ." in line with the announced Roosevelt relief program, unless quick action is taken to force Congress to appropriate direct relief for the farmers. Led by the Holiday and the National Committee of Agricultural and Rural Workers, farmers and farm workers everywhere are demanding "work relief" and not the "dole". They are insisting that W.P.A. be continued in the countryside as well as in the small towns and cities.

The struggle for relief is drawing workers and farmers together. Recently the Holiday sent official delegates to the Workers Alliance Relief Conference in Washington. Thus, at least a beginning has been made in cementing the essential unity of unemployed workers and farmers, without which both agree no adequate relief can be wrung from reluctant Congressmen under pressure from industrialists and financiers to cut relief to the bone.

#### CROP INSURANCE

Crop insurance had been one of the major campaign promises by the Democratic Party. Yet the present bill

now on the President's "must list" is crop insurance in name only. Its chief significance is that it recognizes the principle of crop insurance, but it does nothing to put content into this principle. It applies to only one crop, wheat, and starts in 1938. The bill gives full control to the Department of Agriculture, leaving it to decide what percentage of a farmer's wheat crop is to be insured, how large the premiums are to be, and whether payments are to be in cash or in kind. The Department of Agriculture plans to set up the crop insurance scheme on a regional basis, with the cost other than storage borne entirely by the farmers. Under such a plan the farmers on the Great Plains are thoroughly barred from insurance owing to the high rates involved. In fact, crop insurance on a strictly actuarial basis—that is, without a sizeable government subsidy—cannot benefit the mass of small farmers who are sorely pinched for every penny. Thus, the farmers who suffer most from crop failure are to be barred, unless this policy is changed.

As is well known, Wallace is interested in crop insurance as a device for storing up large quantities of a crop and thus achieving his "ever-normal granary". The military purpose of such a granary is clear. Last year's wheat crop fell short of the domestic market's requirements, and hence the government is becoming concerned. In peacetime the effect of a large granary always casts a depressing shadow over the market and is therefore objectionable to the farmers.

A \$50,000,000 appropriation for feed and seed loans was made by Congress at this session. Though planting time in most areas is already at hand and

though the sum appropriated was far from adequate, the Farm Credit Administration in the middle of April has paid out less than half of this sum. Two hundred and fifty families have moved off their farms in Meade County, South Dakota, because they could not get production credit. The Holiday News reports that in "many counties and states throughout the Northwest . . . farmers unable to get seed and feed loans . . . are deserting their farms. . . ."

#### A.A.A. PAYMENTS

While the administration has been slashing farm relief, its twin task of reducing benefit payments to farmers was made easier by the Supreme Court decision invalidating the A. A. A. Money actually paid over the counter in 1936 was nearly 50 per cent less than the amount distributed in 1935. Agricultural Adjustment Administration payments for back years and for the 1936 winter wheat contracts came to \$287,000,000. Only \$32,000,000 was paid out under the Soil Conservation program which was substituted for the A.A.A., although it was in existence during the entire crop year. Actually ample money for real soil conservation could have been raised by excise and other taxes on processors despite the Court ruling.

So far farm organizations have missed a big opportunity to limit benefit payments to farm operators to some reasonable figure. They did not capitalize on the public sentiment created by disclosure of the huge government payments of \$10,000 and over going to the big corporations and capitalist farms in general. In one year the United States Sugar Corporation

collected \$750,000 in benefits. The sugar legislation now pending in Congress marks a beginning toward such limitation by giving higher payments to family-size farms.

#### SOIL CONSERVATION

The administration's program is actually soil conservation turned upside down. The large farmers best able to pay for such work get the big checks while the tiny payments to the small farmers cover little except the loss from reducing production. Droughts, dust storms, and floods getting progressively worse have graphically demonstrated the need for a nationwide program to save the soil. The administration has made numerous investigations, all of which have admitted the seriousness of the problem, but instead of acting it uses soil conservation only as a thin disguise for reduction. The present Congress chooses to ignore the dust storms now raging on the Great Plains and shows no interest in pushing a vigorous program to rescue our rapidly vanishing resources.

#### FLOODS

After the record-breaking floods in 1936, Congress promised to "do something". Amidst loud publicity it passed two bills calling for \$600,000,000 of flood-control projects. But it quietly and deliberately "overlooked" putting up a red cent to carry out the projects. Now again, after record-breaking floods, it has done nothing.

Last year Congress voted \$50,000,000 to be loaned by the Reconstruction Finance Corporation to flood victims. Actually the R.F.C. held back all ex-

cept \$8,000,000 of this amount. And of the loans made, nearly half went to non-flood uses. The other half went to protect the banks which held mortgages on small business establishments or on city houses. Farmers were left out. And this year, not even \$50,000,000 was voted for flood loans; instead the amount was cut to \$20,000,000.

#### RURAL ELECTRIFICATION

Congress has already passed the appropriation for the Rural Electrification Administration. It voted \$31,520,000 instead of the \$40,000,000 promised and written into the original act. Last year the R.E.A. had \$50,000,000 aside from relief funds. With this amount it accomplished little, bringing current to less than one-half of one per cent of the farms without electricity and these were mainly "upper crust" farmers.

But the small sum appropriated does not excuse the R.E.A. from supplying farm co-ops with power, since the R.E.A. itself admits that it can borrow from the R.F.C. In addition to demanding power, farmers must also demand low rates. Responding to pressure, the R.E.A. has now agreed to put up generating plants instead of merely financing transmission lines which carry power from private utilities only at the monopoly rates set by these companies. In addition, farmers must press Congress to strike out the joker in the Rural Electrification Act which prohibits "duplicating lines". This joker enables the power trust to block cooperative power projects, which the R.E.A. agrees to finance, by building "spite lines" in the affected areas. By throwing up short, makeshift lines,

whose only aim is to prevent the carrying of power, the utilities have had no difficulty in getting court injunctions and sabotaging cooperative ventures.

In addition to national legislation, measures of first-rate importance are before state legislatures. In 17 states, farm moratoria were due to expire this year. Not only has it been important to continue the moratorium action but also to liberalize and broaden these measures so as to win further benefits for debt-burdened farmers. With farm foreclosures by the Federal Land Banks now at an all-time high, it is clear that the emergency is not over for the small and middle farmers.

Homestead Exemption Acts to cut farm taxes have received widespread support from farmers in many states. So popular have these bills become that in 30 states some form of Homestead Exemption Bill was introduced this year. These bills are especially significant since their effect when properly drafted is to give the largest relief to the small farmers. Particularly noteworthy is the bill sponsored by the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party and now before the legislature in that state. It calls for full exemption from taxation for the first \$4,000 of value on any homestead, thus applying to urban homeowners as well as farmers. It affects not only taxes levied by the state but also those levied by the county, school district, city or other tax authority. Homestead Exemption Acts in this form are actually graduated land taxes—a \$4,000 farm gets 100 per cent exemption, an \$8,000 farm gets a 50 per cent exemption, and a \$40,000 farm gets 10 per cent. Not only must farmers press the fight for such measures but at the same time they must

see that any reduction in revenue is not made up by means of sales taxes or other levies on the poor, but through taxes on big business and on the wealthy income receivers.

#### CONCLUSION

Prospects of a vigorous and concerted drive for meaningful farm legislation is better now than at any time in recent years. At its last convention, the members of the Farmers Union ousted Edward Kennedy from his national secretaryship. Kennedy, a fascist demagogue, had been the main agent working for the endorsement of Coughlin's Union Party during the election. Despite the fact that Kennedy ran the national office of the Farmers Union and filled the official paper with pro-Coughlin propaganda, the move failed. The main objective of the Union Party was to capture the support of the Farmers Union and bring about the election of Landon by splitting the farm vote. The failure of this move helped to hurl fascism back in the first skirmish on a national scale.

Progressive leaders in the Farmers Union, however, are still surrounded by bureaucrats of a reactionary complexion. Everson, dominated by Kennedy, is still the national president and provides Kennedy with a back-door entrance to the Farmers Union. But Everson has further isolated himself from the rank and file by his vicious attack against the proposed Court plan. At its last convention, the Farmers Union passed a resolution charging that the Supreme Court "has frequently exercised and assumed an unconstitutional power of passing on the con-

stitutionality of laws enacted by Congress" and is "destroying representative government". Everson, like Brenckman of the National Grange, was forced to admit before the Senate Committee that he was speaking only for himself. Newspapers sought to capitalize on this testimony, and it is amusing to note the confidential Kiplinger letter whispering to its readers, "Although each bespoke his 'personal views', it is inconceivable that they would speak without the authority of their organizations". By its vigorous and unified support to the Court proposal, the Holiday Association advanced in prestige among the farmers and won additional confidence from honest Farmers Union leaders.

The progressive leaders in the Farmers Union recognize, as never before, that they must join forces with the Left in order to defeat the Right, which has been blocking every move toward effective action. For the past three years, the official newspapers of the Farmers Union have been little more than "blurb sheets" advertising particular officers to the members and urging that farmers buy from the co-ops. Issues have been ignored. Even the series of sharp cuts in drought relief did not shock these organs into becoming fighting papers. Relief protests in the Northwest were either led by Holiday or else spontaneous.

But now the picture is changed. The progressives are in control of the National Board of the Farmers Union. The merging of the Sharecroppers' Union in Alabama with the Farmers Union has strengthened both organizations. The success of the C.I.O. has brought new enthusiasm to the farm-

ers, and the possibility that Labor's Non-Partisan League will cooperate with farmers has been warmly received. Progressive state leaders of the Farmers Union have in many instances sought aid and cooperation from the Holiday Association and directly from the Party comrades in their fights against the reactionaries.

The Holiday has gained rapidly in prestige and in membership. From a collection of members, loosely affiliated and usually unknown to the apparatus, it is now being welded into an organization with a definite program. Its growing strength is shown in its success in getting the Southern Tenant Farmers Union and state leaders of the Farmers Union to unite in backing its draft of the tenancy bill.

By presenting its tenancy program at the Lincoln meeting of the President's Tenancy Committee the Holiday walked off with the meeting, and even the local newspapers featured the Holiday's proposals. Even in Washington the Holiday is recognized as a force which cannot be ignored, and this year it was for the first time invited by the government to participate in a farm conference—the conference to consider the ever-normal granary. In Minnesota, the Holiday is working in the closest cooperation with the Farmer-Labor Party. Governor Benson recently called in the Holiday when the lumber workers' strike was jeopardized by the unorganized farmers who threatened to scab on the lumber-jacks. The trust of the farmers in the Holiday enabled it to bring the farmers and the union together. In the light of these developments, it is clear that the lull in farm activity is rapidly passing.

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# STEEL WORKERS ON THE MARCH

BY B. K. GEBERT

**T**HE signing of the agreement between the Steel Workers Organizing Committee of the C.I.O. and Carnegie-Illinois Steel Corporation (a subsidiary of the United States Steel Corporation) was a signal victory for the steel workers and for the trade union movement in America. It was a victory over the most powerful industrial corporation controlled by Wall Street—a corporation which for forty-five years was the spearhead in the struggle against trade unionism, and for the maintenance of the open shop, a corporation which, in its practical relations with the workers, established and maintained industrial feudalism with its “closed town”, where the rule of the superintendent of the mill was supreme.

The signing of the agreement was possible because of the successful organizational drive that had been undertaken by the C.I.O. through the instrumentality of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee, headed by such an experienced trade union leader as Philip Murray, Vice-President of the powerful United Mine Workers of America. The drive in steel was the best answer to all the arguments of the reactionaries of the Executive Council of the A. F. of L. as to the superiority of the industrial form of organization over that of the craft form. It was made

possible because of the united support to the steel drive given by all progressive forces and the activation of all sections of the working class—native, foreign-born, and Negro. The spirit of unity penetrated deep in the ranks of the working class and defeated fear of the power of the steel trust. It instilled confidence among the workers that they could accomplish their aim, to establish an industrial union with the national backing of the most progressive forces of the trade union movement and powerful trade union organizations and, above all, the United Mine Workers of America, which contributed so much toward the success of the drive. Not only did the miners pay special assessments to finance the organizational drive, but the miners’ union released a large number of its experienced organizers and drew into the staff of the organizers the advanced steel workers and others in their respective communities in the steel centers throughout the country.

At the time the agreement was signed with Carnegie-Illinois close to 200,000 steel workers were enrolled in the union—The Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel, and Tin Workers; some 450 lodges had been organized. The development in steel was not isolated from the general development in the country—the trend toward industrial

unionism, toward the C.I.O. The great victories of the auto workers in Flint, Michigan, took place at this time, where after forty-four days of the sit-down strike General Motors, for the first time in its history, signed an agreement with the union. The victory in auto paved the way also for the victory in steel, and in turn the victories in steel strengthen the auto union and make possible successful organization drives now being undertaken by the C.I.O. among textile, oil, aluminum, electrical and radio workers and many others.

The agreement in steel provided for the 40-hour week in place of the 48-hour week, a 10 cent increase per hour (from  $52\frac{1}{2}$  cents to  $62\frac{1}{2}$  cents), established the \$5 per day minimum wage for common labor, and corresponding adjustment of wages for semi-skilled and skilled workers, time and one-half for overtime, two weeks' vacation with pay, and recognition of the unions—the right to bargain for its members. The agreement further provided means of adjusting the grievances of the workers. It provided for union grievance committees, elected by the workers in the respective departments and mills. The grievance committee of the union will play a very important role in the further development and building of the union, and taking up grievances of the workers. It will help to eliminate the remnants of the company unions in practice.

The signing of the agreement with the Carnegie-Illinois Co. by no means settled all the problems confronting the steel workers. There are still many problems facing them. First of all, only subsidiaries of U.S. Steel have signed the agreement. Five large independent

steel corporations—Bethlehem Steel, Jones & Laughlin, Youngstown Sheet and Tube, Republic Steel and National Steel—have not yet signed the agreement although, as this is being written, negotiations are in progress with some of the large independent steel corporations. A number of small independent corporations have already signed the agreement. The struggle centers at present around the "Big 5" of the independent steel corporations and, above all, the union will have difficulties with National Steel, owned and controlled by E. T. ("economic tyrant") Weir. National Steel is known as one of the most bitter opponents of organized labor and attempts to play in the steel industry the role that Henry Ford plays in auto—that is, defying the right of the workers to organize and have unions, refusing collective bargaining and promoting company union movements, so-called loyal workers' movements and, through coercion and intimidation, seeking to prevent unionization of the workers.

But with the victories already achieved the "Big 5", including National Steel, will have to yield to the power of organized labor.

The signing of the agreement by no means ends the problems of the union in the industry. It does not mean that these problems are already solved and settled. To complete the organization of the union is still the main task confronting the union, and with this the problem of consolidating the union among those workers who have been enrolled. This process is taking place now. Lodges of the Amalgamated Association begin to function more and more as the local organizations of the workers, and are undertaking the

task of enrollment of the rest of the workers in the mills into the union.

Among the steel workers leadership is being developed which can handle union affairs. The district conferences of the lodges of the A.A. which are being held in a number of territories further consolidate the union. All this will lead naturally toward a national convention of the lodges of the Amalgamated Association, and a national leadership of the union will be elected. This work must proceed hand in hand with the educational activities among the workers and against the remnants of the company union, which received a smashing blow when the agreement was signed with the union, but which are by no means dead. The liquidation of the company unions is still a problem and naturally can be solved only with the growth and greater strength of the union.

The steel drive and building of the union have changed the life in those steel towns which were "closed towns" before the steel drive. The drive has undermined the rule of the brutal forces of the steel trust. Where once labor organizations were systematically crushed, where freedom of speech did not exist, where Mayor Crawford of Duquesne, Pa., could publicly say that "Jesus Christ himself could not speak for the union in this town," where the right to mass meetings and organizations was denied to the unions and other organizations of the workers, where workers were spied upon not only in the mills, but in their organizations, in their neighborhood and in their homes, where the local newspapers, churches, schools, city officials and police were under the absolute

domination of the steel trust—today the situation is changed.

Meetings of the workers are held without interference on the part of the police, the stool-pigeon system has been exposed by the La Follette Civil Liberties Committee and, in the November 3 elections, the steel workers voted by an overwhelming majority against Landon, creating an entirely new situation in these towns.

With steel being organized, the workers in other industries and trades are on the march. There is feverish activity among different crafts in the industries to build their unions. In the Pittsburgh District, side by side with the steel workers' union, unions have been built in electric and radio industries, including the power houses, aluminum, glass, spring, packing houses, restaurants, office workers, cement and among the white collar workers. Here we see in life the correctness of the theory advocated by our Party of concentration in the basic industries—that once the basic industries are organized and moved this will have tremendous effect upon the rest of the working class, as well as upon the petty bourgeoisie and the farmers.

In Western Pennsylvania we see this in full development today. The awakening of the entire working class is noticeable everywhere, and the slogan of making every town 100 per cent union is being realized before our eyes. With this develops and grows the unity and solidarity of labor and its natural allies, the farmers, Negro people, professionals, etc. There is also the beginning of the development of a political consciousness on the part of labor which is stimulated in Pennsyl-

vania by the decision of the Pennsylvania State Federation of Labor to advance the candidacy of Lieutenant Governor Tom Kennedy, International Secretary-Treasurer of the United Mine Workers of America, for governor of Pennsylvania. The labor and progressive forces will not consolidate their victories, will not be in a position to make further advances, if they miss this opportunity and fail to take full advantage of the situation, and enter with full force in the political field with the objective to elect public officers, representatives of labor selected by organized labor, paving the way for a People's Front and the Farmer-Labor Party.

The enrollment of many tens of thousands of steel workers and many others into the trade union movement also strengthened the unity of labor. It is much more difficult therefore for reactionaries to carry out the splitting policies of the Executive Council of the A. F. of L. That is how we can explain the decision at the recent convention of the Pennsylvania State Federation of Labor, which unanimously went on record to maintain unity within the trade union movement in the state.

The steel drive and the growth of the trade union movement in general also helped to bring closer collaboration and working relations among all the progressive forces in the labor movement, including Communists, Socialists, Farmer-Laborites, etc. The organized attempt on the part of the reactionaries within the labor movement to raise the Red scare was a failure. The Hearst-Liberty League crowd was not successful in its effort to split the forces of labor, precisely because the progressive and militant

forces and above all the Communists have proven in their daily work to be among the best workers and builders of the unions, to be men who through their many years of experience understood better than others the value of solidarity and discipline of the organized trade union movement.

The organizational methods applied in the steel industry should be studied by the active organizational forces now engaged in the textile and oil industries. What were some of the outstanding characteristic features of the organizational drive in steel? There was, first of all, concentration upon the key steel mills of the largest steel corporations, and to the extent that progress was made in the large mills to that extent, with less effort, was it possible to organize workers in the smaller steel mills in a given territory. In the towns where a particular stand was taken against the organizational drive, and obstacles placed in its way by the agencies of the corporations and the city governments, there the methods of flying squads have been applied. Hundreds of automobiles would come into the town with union literature and distribute it to all the workers in town in front of the mill gates, in the houses of the workers, in saloons and pool rooms, wherever the workers congregate, at the same time approaching workers openly in the streets, in front of the mill gates, to join the union. Mass meetings were held, supported by the workers in nearby towns. Loud speakers have been used to reach workers while they are going into the mills. Many times in the dark, although the face of the organizer was not seen, the voice was heard.

The company unions were organ-

ized by the steel corporation to maintain the open shop, to prevent formation of the trade union organizations—"outside unions." In the organizational drive, at the very outset, the policy was developed of work *within the company union* to win over to the side of the steel drive as many company union representatives as possible. These representatives have been won over by the hundreds and became, in many cases, the best organizers for the union. At the same time they became excellent agitators exposing the fraud of the company unions, its corruption and complete domination by the management of the plant and its complete inability to solve the problems of the workers. The work of smashing the company unions was carried out by active forces within the company unions and paved the way for a successful organizational drive.

There was also utilization of the support of all kinds of workers' organizations. The outstanding example of this was the fraternal organizations, which through their conference set up what is known as the Fraternal Orders Committee, uniting primarily foreign-born workers behind the drive. The National Negro Conference stimulated the enrollment of the Negro workers into the union, and cemented the unity of Negro and white. Involving women, wives, mothers and daughters of the steel workers by the means of women's auxiliaries also helped to overcome some of the obstacles in the way of building the union. Unfortunately, insufficient work has been done involving women and even less has been done in developing special activities to involve young steel workers in the drive. By this we do not

mean to imply that the young workers are passive in the drive. The younger element were side by side with the old timers among the forces in the drive. However, more could have been accomplished if we had been able to pay special attention to these problems. Utilization of progressive individuals and all those forces who were friendly to organized labor, including church groups, gave the organizational drive the wide and broad character of a community movement.

In application of these basic organizational policies there were many mistakes and shortcomings in not taking full advantage of the opportunities presented and, sometimes, slowness to utilize the auxiliary help to build the union, but by large it was utilized and utilized effectively.

The banner of industrial unionism raised by our Party over fifteen years ago, and advocated primarily by Comrade William Z. Foster, the leader of the great 1919 general strike, the patient work even with small groups of Communists within the mills for many years, the experience workers obtained through the organizational work in the recent period, primarily during 1933 and 1934 in the organizational drive of the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel, and Tin Workers, and the Steel and Metal Workers Industrial Union, were very helpful in the present steel drive because, on the basis of these developments, as well as the experiences of the 1919 strike, it was possible to overcome many weaknesses, prevent many mistakes and learn from the mistakes of the past. Therefore the success of the organizational drive is a result of these many developments and, above all, of the formation of the

C.I.O. under the leadership of John L. Lewis. With the successes in steel, the C.I.O. is now in a position to make much more rapid advances in other industries and experience obtained in the steel drive has already been helpful in the drives elsewhere. Nothing succeeds like success, and the C.I.O. drive in steel and auto spells success, and victory for the workers.

In reviewing this whole organizational drive in steel and drawing conclusions from it, there is one more thing we should not lose sight of. That is the significance of the existence of even a small organization of workers in a given industry, regardless of what character that organization may have had. I am referring here to the old Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel, and Tin Workers which at its sixtieth annual convention in May, 1936, in Cannonsburg, although it represented only 9,795 members, primarily in the small plants, headed by very reactionary leadership and attended by only eighty-two delegates, was won by progressive forces for progressive measures, and above all for the organizational drive in steel, and for affiliation with the C.I.O. As a matter of fact, this last was the only issue that stood before the convention. Even at that time the *Amalgamated Journal*, the official organ of the A.A., declared that the question of affiliation with the C.I.O. "has overshadowed other important questions and issues." The progressive forces were victorious at the

convention, and the resolutions adopted called for proceeding with a plan of organization of the steel industry. The C.I.O. was the only organization that could provide such a plan and give real assistance to such a drive. On June 4, 1936, an agreement was reached between the representatives of the A.A. and the C.I.O., authorizing the C.I.O. to undertake an organizational drive in steel and setting up the Steel Workers Organizing Committee. If these steps had not been taken and if the progressive forces and our Party had not worked toward that aim, the organizational drive would have had additional obstacles in its way. It is precisely because of the winning over of the A.A. for the C.I.O. that the drive proceeded with the spirit and tempo with which it did.

It would be a mistake to concede that because United States Steel and others have signed the agreement with the union the fight against the union on the part of the moguls of the steel industry has ceased. The fight will only take different forms and it will be continued even after the signing of the agreement. The steel corporations are reaping huge profits out of the sweat and blood of the workers.

Following is a list of steel companies, showing their net profits, profit per employee, and per cent increase over 1935. In every instance, except where noted, the profit figure is taken from official financial reports by the companies for the year 1936:

Company	1936 Net Profits	Profit per Employee	% Increase over 1935
United States Steel .....	\$ 50,525,684	\$250	4500
Bethlehem Steel .....	13,901,006	174	320
Republic Steel .....	9,586,922	192	110

## THE COMMUNIST

Jones & Laughlin*	4,000,000	178	....
Youngstown Sheet & Tube Co. ....	10,564,501	621	500
National Steel .....	12,541,842	597	12
American Rolling Mill .....	6,500,000	464	51
Inland Steel .....	12,888,647	347	36
Wheeling Steel .....	4,000,000	222	14
Crucible Steel* .....	3,500,000	194	175
Allegheny Steel* .....	1,500,000	230	31
American Steel Foundries .....	2,953,426	821	2393
Blaw Knox .....	1,548,173	600	166
Gulf States Steel .....	660,112	330	367
McKeesport Tin Plate* .....	1,300,000	371	....
Otis Steel* .....	1,700,000	340	....
Pittsburgh Steel* .....	571,114	(last 6 mos.)	....
Sharon Steel* .....	900,000	300	....
Sloss Sheffield Steel & Iron Co.* .....	750,000	....	....
Spang Chalfant* .....	1,600,000	533	62
Total and averages .....	<u>\$141,491,427</u>	<u>\$314</u>	<u>205</u>

\* Estimated.

These figures definitely establish the fact that the clearcut profit made by the steel corporations from each and every steel worker in 1936 amounts to \$314 and this is after deductions are made for many other "expenses" on the part of the steel corporations including maintaining the stool-pigeon

apparatus, money spent for ammunition and the high salaries of the officials of the steel corporations.

Here is a partial record of the annual loot of the big steel racketeers based on figures released to date by a government agency.

<i>Company</i>	<i>Officer *</i>	<i>1935 Salary</i>
Acme Steel .....	R. H. Norton, P. ....	\$32,505
Acme Steel .....	F. G. Gifford, VP. ....	30,005
Allegheny Steel .....	W. F. Detweiler, VP. ....	111,704
Allegheny Steel .....	H. E. Sheldon, P. ....	54,181
American Rolling Mill .....	G. M. Verity, C. ....	69,125
American Rolling Mill .....	C. R. Hook, P. ....	65,510
American Rolling Mill .....	C. Verity, VP. ....	49,131
Bethlehem Steel .....	C. M. Schwab, C. ....	203,332
Bethlehem Steel .....	E. R. Grace, P. ....	180,000
Bethlehem Steel .....	Q. Bent, D. ....	90,000
Bethlehem Steel .....	G. A. Buck, D. ....	90,000
Eastern Rolling Mill .....	A. J. Hazlett, P. ....	12,150
General Railway Signal .....	W. W. Salmon, P. ....	50,000

\*—C.—Chairman; P.—President; VP.—Vice-President; D.—Director.

Granite City Steel .....	H. Neidringhaus, P.....	30,000
Inland Steel .....	L. E. Block, C.....	60,000
Inland Steel .....	P. D. Block, P.....	60,000
International Bus. Machines..	T. J. Watson, P.....	303,813
Jones & Laughlin.....	G. M. Laughlin, Jr., C.....	49,609
Jones & Laughlin.....	S. E. Hackett, P.....	49,609
McKeesport Tin Plate.....	E. R. Crawford, P.....	225,417
McKeesport Tin Plate.....	G. V. Parkins, VP.....	137,500
Mesta Machine .....	L. Iverson, P.....	43,621
Midland Steel Products.....	E. J. Kulas, P.....	60,000
New York Shipbuilding.....	J. F. Mitten, P.....	31,700
Oliver Farm Equipment.....	D. R. Messinger, C.....	25,137
Pullman, Inc. ....	D. A. Crawford, P.....	74,800
Republic Steel .....	T. M. Girdler, P., C.....	140,778
Republic Steel .....	R. J. Wysor, VP.....	69,768
Republic Steel .....	B. J. Fairless, VP.....	64,692
Reynolds Metals .....	R. S. Reynolds, P.....	71,777
Royal Typewriter .....	E. C. Faustmann, P.....	40,159
Sharon Steel .....	H. A. Roemer, C.....	89,000
Spang, Chalfant .....	C. F. Cruciger, VP.....	22,800
Spang, Chalfant .....	C. R. Barton, VP.....	21,600
Underwood Elliot Fisher.....	P. D. Wagoner, P.....	108,480
Youngstown Sheet & Tube....	F. Purnell, P.....	80,200
Youngstown Sheet & Tube....	H. G. Dalton, C.....	30,200

What about the wages of the workers? According to the figures released by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry for the month of February, 1937, the average weekly wage of the steel workers on February 15, 1937, stood at \$28.74. This includes naturally the highly skilled workers, such as the rollers, to the apprentices, many of whom receive no more than \$2.50 to \$3 per day. Here we see the big discrepancies between the wages paid the workers and the profits and salaries of the steel corporations. At present the steel mills are operating at 91 per cent of capacity. It is the highest production output in the history of the steel industry, except at the peak of 1929. Prices in steel are going up, production per worker is con-

stantly increasing, and all this only signifies more profits for the steel corporations and higher salaries for the officials.

New strip mills are being built which will be completely electric. United States Steel, for example, will build such a mill in Mifflin Township, Pa. It is estimated that this mill will produce 600,000 tons of high finished sheet steel annually, and will employ a maximum of 4,000 men.

The methods of production in steel are lagging behind those of auto and other mass production industries. Now in the whole industry there is a definite trend toward introduction of new processes of production eliminating human labor through all kinds of labor saving devices, and above all the

system of continuous strip mills. These readjustments are shown today in view of growing profits from the industry, and therefore reinvestment and modernization of the steel mills will continue and many new problems are arising and will arise before the trade unions and workers in general such as the question of the shortened working week, control over speed-up and higher wages. But now, when the workers are building their own organization, they will be in a much better position to protect themselves from a merciless speed-up and exploitation at the job.

From these facts one must draw the conclusion that the trade union movement alone, as important as it is, can only serve as the first base for further advances on the part of the workers. The trade union movement is not an entity in itself. It is only one of the means of accomplishing the aim of the workers. It is precisely because of this situation that it is absolutely necessary for the steel workers to enter the political field together with the rest of the working class and toiling people with the objective of passing legislation in the interests of labor to protect their civil rights and pave the way for complete freedom of labor, that is, the abolition of the capitalist system as such. This task, however, cannot be accomplished without building and developing a powerful Communist Party.

The immediate tasks confronting the Communist Party are to consolidate, build and strengthen the industrial unions in steel, as well as in other

industries, to fight for and achieve unity in the trade union movement, to really develop solidarity of the workers in action, to unite the working class with farmers, intellectuals and petty bourgeoisie in the struggle against finance capital.

To develop such activities it is essential that labor enter into the political field as an organized unit, that is, building the People's Front, the Farmer-Labor Party. The struggle for the People's Front will take many forms including winning sections of the Democratic Party and uniting broad labor and progressive forces. This will pave the way for a Farmer-Labor Party. This next task is an immediate and integral step for further progress in the organization of the steel industry.

The Communist Party played and will continue to play a constructive role within the labor movement and will attempt to lead it on the path of further consolidation and strengthening of the labor front both on the economic and political field. To carry out this task it is necessary to strengthen Party organizations in the mills and towns in the steel centers, to develop and train cadres, bring forward Communists side by side with other elements, to cement unity of all advanced forces in the steel union. These are the immediate problems facing our Party. Without solving them in daily work, the future of the union is not secure. The steel workers are on the march, and as goes steel—so goes the nation.

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# THE RAILWAY LABOR ACT: A BARRIER TO MILITANT UNIONISM

BY JACK JOHNSTONE

**D**OES the widespread agitation for the application of the principles of the Railroad Labor Act to other industries, led by such anti-union forces as the National Association of Manufacturers, indicate a change of policy towards labor organizations? What benefits, if any, have the railroad workers gotten as a result of the Railroad Labor Act? The act has now been in operation since 1926. One cannot view this act by itself, but rather as developing out of the period following the end of the World War. It was a period of far-reaching strike struggles involving almost every basic industry in the country, between 1918 and 1924. It saw the rise and decline of the Farmer-Labor Party movement and the beginning of a long period of class collaboration that almost wrecked the American Federation of Labor trade unions, reducing their effectiveness as fighting organizations by abandoning the strike weapon and undertaking to convince the employers that through cooperation between the workers and management all differences could be ironed out to the satisfaction and to the interest of both the employers and employees.

It was particularly on the railroads that this scheme was carried out most

effectively. The B. & O. plan became known internationally as the ideal plan to abolish class antagonisms. Economic crises were not going to occur again; America was entering into a long period of prosperity, etc. This plan, worked out first on the B. & O. railroad, was very simple. The idea was to substitute cooperation between the railroad workers and the railroad management instead of struggle. The workers were to increase their productive capacity, and in return the railroad management promised to increase wages, abolish unemployment, guarantee the railroad workers steady jobs and, with the increase in production, guarantee a steady rising standard of living. All this was to be effected without strikes, in round-table talks between the management and the railroad union representatives.

Upon this wrong theory and in line with its false conception of the role of trade unions, the Railroad Labor Act was enacted by Congress in 1926. Its purpose was to put a check on labor rights, and eventually to legalize strikes. This act was supported by the A. F. of L. Executive Council and pushed through Congress by the grand chiefs of the railroad brotherhoods, and the railroad management.

It was not until the strike movements began in railroads in 1928 and 1929, when the workers generally adopted militant forms of struggles in the form of hunger marches, strikes in mining, marine, textile, rubber, etc., that some progressive amendments were added to this reactionary Railroad Labor Act (in 1934 and 1935). These amendments are favorable and can be used in the interest of the workers, but they do not nullify the reactionary character and purpose of the act.

The National Association of Manufacturers, the Liberty League and the main anti-union forces in the country who have fought so hard against the Wagner Act, who fought so hard to elect Landon and were against every attempt of the C.I.O. to organize the workers in mass production industries, are now becoming the champions of the principles of the Railroad Labor Act and want these principles applied to other industries.

In this first series of struggles of the growing progressive movement throughout the country led by the C.I.O., the Non-Partisan League, the American Labor Party, the Farmer-Labor parties, the Communist Party, etc., political reaction received a number of decisive defeats. However, this does not mean that they have given up the fight. They have been compelled to make some changes in their tactics, to cloak their real anti-union, undemocratic, fascist policy with a progressive demagogy. The Railroad Labor Act is now labeled the Wagner Act as applied to railroad. Therefore, why not apply it to other industries with a few amendments such as incorporating the unions, compulsory arbitration, thus

making strikes illegal and punishable by law?

It is a very simple program. These anti-union forces have been defeated by the workers, because the workers followed a policy of militant struggle developing the very effective new strike technique, the sit-down strike. So now they turn to Congress, to the reactionary labor leaders and politicians for help, to nullify these victories by making illegal the methods by which the workers are able to win these far-reaching victories.

The enactment of the Railroad Labor Act in 1926 did not come as a result of victorious strikes but followed a series of defeats, when organized labor was lulled to sleep by the poison of the non-strike, collaboration theory so effectively put over on the railroad workers by the general adoption of the B. & O. plan. While the Executive Council of the A. F. of L. was not as successful as the grand chiefs of the railroad brotherhoods in selling this plan to other industries, it is still their policy and they will no doubt support the attempts to fasten the principles of the Railroad Labor Act onto other industries. John P. Frey, the A. F. of L. theoretician, who labeled this B. & O. plan "the new wage theory" attempted for years to sell it to the open-shop employers and about a decade ago undertook to organize the auto industry and bring it under an A. F. of L. charter. He left for Detroit with a corps of organizers and had a meeting with Ford and other auto magnates to prove to them that the A. F. of L. would organize their men, guarantee increased production, no strikes, and that the A. F. of L. union that would be set up would be better and

cheaper than the Ford company union.

However, the autocrats of auto, steel and other mass production industries were then in a victorious mood. Although they were compelled to grant wage increases and other concessions, such as the eight-hour day in steel, etc., they had defeated the strikes in steel, railroad, marine and mining, etc. Their company unions were the only types of unions they wanted. They refused Frey's proposal. Frey, a typical lickspittle of the most reactionary employers, therefore abandoned all attempts to organize the auto workers leaving them to the tender mercy of the auto company union spy system. It is these same people who refused to collaborate with the A. F. of L. Executive Council when the policy outlined by Frey was to make the unions part of the management's efficiency apparatus, to make them as company-conscious as the company union with no right to strike, who now favor the application of the Railroad Labor Act to their industry. An Act was passed during the reactionary Coolidge administration, the purpose of which was to enforce the very scheme on the railroads which Frey failed to sell to the auto industry ten years ago.

Recognizing that their stubborn methods of attempting to destroy the trade unions by force and violence have failed, and that they have been compelled to recognize not only the right of workers to organize but to enter into collective bargaining with the C.I.O. trade unions, they are now seeking new methods of attack. They now want the trade unions to go back to the ruinous no-strike policy of Frey and the Executive Council of the A. F. of L. They demand that the Roosevelt

administration enforce by law the principles of the reactionary Railroad Labor Act, passed by the Coolidge administration on the newly organized mass production industrial unions. No amendments to the Railroad Labor Act can make a progressive act out of it, as long as the methods of mediation or arbitration outlined in the act remains. Long drawn out negotiations, then mediation, then arbitration, will break down the spirit and morale of any group of workers, or force them into unprepared strikes, the result of which is defeat.

Following are the results of the B. & O. plan applied to the railroad industry and put into effect through the Railroad Labor Act. We must remember that in accepting the B. & O. plan, the railroad workers were promised a higher standard of living. Their employment was to be permanent and secure.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Employed in Railroad Industry</i>
1920 .....	2,022,832
1929 .....	1,660,832
1936 .....	1,108,970

While employment in railroad has increased during 1937, this has not reached anywhere near the figures of 1929. So went the promise of steady employment. Together with these figures we must keep in mind the long periods of part-time work which further reduced the earnings of the railroad workers. Even during the period of the N.R.A. when unions not so well organized as the railroad workers made some gains, the railroad workers received wage cuts. For example, the U.M.W.A. won very substantial wage increases and the seven-hour day and just recently won another wage

increase plus time and a half for overtime, etc. The maritime workers on the Pacific Coast won substantial increases in wages, working conditions and forced the open-shop shipowners to hire all men through the union hiring halls. The longshoremen won the six-hour day where previously the hours per work day were unlimited. Recently they again won other substantial benefits. The shipowners tried to force the principles of the Railroad Labor Act on the Maritime Federation but the maritime workers rejected it and even refused to arbitrate certain fundamental demands like the six-hour day and union hiring hall. The U.M.W.A. in 1932 was almost nonexistent in the soft coalfields; they built their union again in this period. In this same period, the Maritime Federation on the Pacific Coast was also built. For over ten years prior to this, the shipowners were in complete control of the waterfront through their Blue Book Company Union. The railroad unions during this period were much stronger than either the U.M.W.A. or the Maritime Federation. What did they gain during this period? In fact, one can ask what have the railroad workers gained since their unions adopted the ruinous, poisonous theory of class collaboration contained in the B. & O. plan and enforced through the Railroad Labor Act. One can chalk up only setbacks.

It was exactly during this period of the N.R.A. when the workers in the trade unions were mobilizing for struggle and winning some concessions that the railroad workers through the Railroad Labor Act received a 10 per cent wage deduction. The demagoguery used to put over this wage cut was that

the railroad management would use this added revenue to keep more railroad workers on the payroll, and it was exactly during this period that tremendous layoffs took place and two or three days per week was the general working period.

It was also during this period that the Railroad Labor Act put over the dismissal wage on the railroad workers. Here the Railroad Labor Executive Association together with the railroad management under the Railroad Labor Act recognized in principle that an unnamed number of railroad workers were to be dismissed permanently from the railroad industry. Instead of the job security promised under the B. & O. plan, the Railroad Labor Act became the instrument for intensive speed-up and unemployment. Just recently the press announcement was made that a compromise old-age pension plan had been agreed to again between the Railroad Labor Executive Association and the railroad management under the provisions of the Railroad Labor Act. This pension plan discriminates against tens of thousands of railroad workers who are being robbed of their pensions, many of whom are being punished because they dared to strike. Every railroad worker knows the terrific speed up that has been developed under the Railroad Labor Act, the lengthening of trains, reduction of train and engine crews, lack of safety devices both for the employee and the traveling public, and a host of other measures, such as consolidation, that has on the one hand reduced railroad labor to a condition of insecurity on a par with industries much less organized than the railroad industry, but on the other hand has

brought greater numbers of railroad workers into their craft unions, influenced by the successes of the militant policy of the C.I.O. They are determined to break these shackles set up by the Railroad Labor Act in a struggle for wage increases and the shorter workday.

This is the Railroad Labor Act in practice. It is a product of the Coolidge reactionary administration in a reactionary period when the trade union bureaucrats had abandoned the strike weapon, when even this poisonous theory of class collaboration had penetrated deeply into the Socialist Party which had abandoned even their lip service to the Marxist theory of the class struggle in their 1924 convention. They supported this poisonous capitalist theory of class collaboration and the peaceful evolution of capitalism into socialism.

The Railroad Labor Act was not a product of militant progressive labor. It was not born in a period of militant struggle such as is taking place today. It was born in a period when labor had suffered a serious defeat. The Railroad Labor Act was a surrender to the Wall Street owners of the railroad industry. But even in this surrender railroad labor was strong enough to hold its unions together and even to strengthen them until they were strong enough and could win the wage increase demanded, the six-hour day and a national agreement.

The weaknesses of railroad labor are in its leadership. This leadership in the Railroad Labor Executive Association while it formulated the main demands around which the membership of the twenty-one railroad brotherhoods are ready and willing to unite

and fight to enforce, shows no evidence or willingness to lead such a struggle. The grand chiefs formulated the wage demands which were accepted by their rank and file. The grand chiefs formulated the Crosser six-hour day amendment to the Adamson eight-hour law now before Congress which has been endorsed generally by their rank and file. The grand chiefs of the fifteen of the twenty-one brotherhoods agree that wage proceedings should be handled in joint national conference while the five train service brotherhoods withdrew and presented their wage demands as a group.

Both the grand chiefs and the membership know that a wage demand of 20 cents per hour or 20 per cent increase or a six-hour day cannot be won through individual craft or groups of craft negotiations and action, or by separating these demands, placing the wage demands before the railroad management, the six-hour day, etc., before the Congress, one economic, the other legislative. The miners and the longshoremens would never have won the shorter work day by merely legislative action or mediation. They went on strike for it. It requires national joint negotiation and united national action of the twenty-one brotherhoods to win these demands through a national agreement. A child knows this, and when the grand chiefs, while endorsing the six-hour day, refuse to present this major demand to the railroad management and then split ranks on presenting (jointly) the wage demand which they had themselves formulated, then they are not honest or sincere. When this is followed by an insidious campaign in the unions to try and show the workers that the rail-

roads are poor and cannot really pay the wage increase asked and when they came out openly in the public press proposing to withdraw the six-hour day and other very good progressive railroad legislation in order to be able better to trade with the railroad management, it becomes very apparent that they have taken leadership of these popular immediate demands of the railroad workers with no intention of fighting for them. The same old B. & O. swindle is being perpetrated and the apparatus of the Railroad Labor Act is the method by which it is being carried out.

These anti-union forces see very clearly how effective the Railroad Labor Act has been in holding back railroad labor from aggressive struggle. This is made easier by a leadership incapable as well as unwilling to lead a struggle in the interest of the railroad workers, who by their actions have made it very clear to the railroad management that they do not intend to fight for the demands they raised. The purpose of this was to try and head off any progressive movement below that might take leadership into its own hands. They are liable to be mistaken in this for in almost every main rail-

road center the local unions are protesting and demanding action and results.

Progressive labor is not moving back to the period of the Railroad Labor Act. They have broken away from the reactionary splitting policy of Frey, Green, Woll and Company, which for a long period had such a disastrous effect upon organized labor and the workers' movement in general. However, the fascist reactionaries like to sugarcoat their bait. The present method of trying to put a progressive mantle over the railroad labor act must be exposed. It is the most suitable piece of legislation the reactionary forces feel they can use in order to continue their attack against progress. They are now trying to fasten this on the workers of mass production industries and through this nullify the victories won. They are in the hope that they can win in this manner, divert this progressive movement away from the path it is now traveling—which is leading these newly organized mass industrial unions in the direction of building their own political party, the Farmer-Labor Party—and head them back into the safe channels of the old two-party system.

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# YOUTH IN INDUSTRY

BY D. DORAN

**D**EVELOPMENTS in the country have placed uppermost in the minds of American youth the problems of the labor movement and of youth in industry. The interests of the labor movement will run like a red thread through the deliberations of the Y.C.L. Convention. This will be so not only because we are an inseparable part of America's young people, but because we have entered industry together with the rest of our generation.

Locking arms with industry and with the labor movement has not been an easy task for us. We still must travel far if we are successfully to complete this, judging from discussions which are taking place in our ranks. Discussions take place, not, as in the past, on how we are to reach the youth in industry, but rather on how we are to consolidate the mass contacts which we now enjoy.

Discussion centers in the main around the form the Young Communist League organization will take in heavy industry. An answer to this question will be supplied by our Convention, for we meet the same problem in every industry. Young workers are playing a more prominent role in industry than ever before in American labor history. Lip service was paid to this fact by the last convention of the American Federation of Labor at

Tampa which passed resolutions for winning the youth to the labor movement. Steel, auto and mining are employing more youth at the present time than ever before. Entire industries, department stores, sections of the textile industry, auto accessory, shoe and many others employ predominantly young workers. The C.I.O. unions with their program of organizing the unskilled and mass production industries are involving masses of young people in trade unions.

The question as to our form of organization in industry arises because of (1) the recent great employment of youth in industry and the swing of industrial youth to trade unions, (2) the fact that our Young Communist League is entering industry in greater numbers than hitherto and because we are playing a role in bringing youth into the trade unions, (3) today our Young Communist League is in a transition stage wherein it is directing its efforts toward becoming a broad non-party youth organization, a change which in industry has its own particular problems.

It is necessary first of all to establish the character of the Y.C.L., and the type of organization we wish to build. At the present time we still tend to function as a vanguard organization, as a sort of youth Party This is espe-

cially true of our organization in heavy industry.

Our main concern now will be that of becoming an educational youth organization. We will discuss policies, of course, but in an educational manner, combining in the Marxist-Leninist sense, education with activity. The Y.C.L. as an educational organization acts as an assistant to the labor movement in all its struggles, studying together with all progressive youth the experiences of labor struggles everywhere, and drawing political conclusions. It will enrich these experiences with internationalism and socialism, bringing out latent talents in the youth, developing a rich cultural life, winning practical aid for the needy and in other ways becoming an organization of the people. It cannot presume to act as a vanguard.

Now why has our progress toward a united youth league in America been so slow? Why is it that a year and a half after the Sixth World Congress of the Young Communist International, we have not advanced very far in the direction of a broad non-party youth organization?

First, I want to deal with two tendencies in the Young Communist League, found among leading comrades, which had stood in the way of building the type of youth organization we wish. Both these tendencies, willingly or unwillingly, consciously or unconsciously, lead to liquidation of the Y.C.L.

A number of comrades have a very mechanical and rigid conception of our Y.C.L. They want a Y.C.L. program that is fully Communist; they model the Y.C.L. branches after shop nuclei of the Party, preserve strict

Communist discipline and take no steps to broaden the present branches of the Y.C.L. The desires of those comrades are very honest, but nevertheless very wrong. These comrades feel that preserving the vanguard characteristics of the League is a guarantee against liquidating the Y.C.L. In this way, they will not "lose" members to the Communist Party.

The foolishness of this view is demonstrated by comrades in branches who say: Since our Y.C.L. functions are exactly like the Party, since we act among the youth as the Party among the adults, why must we have two Communist organizations? That is true. But further still, if comrades insist on a narrow conception of the Y.C.L., how are we going to build the non-party youth organization of which we speak? Our League will not change by itself and the above line would only lead to doing away with the Y.C.L. An important step in building a united youth league is to transform our present branches along broad educational lines. It is impossible to carry this through unless we combat tendencies to keep the Y.C.L. within narrow grooves.

Other comrades come out flat-footedly for liquidation of the Y.C.L. in all industries on the grounds that the League is a "Communist" organization, that under conditions of work prevailing in industry, the Y.C.L. will necessarily have to duplicate Party shop nuclei. Therefore let us do away with the League and start anew, by placing all of our present membership in the Party. Instead of solving the problem this is only running away from it. Instead of "hurrying-up" the process of building a broad youth or-

ganization these comrades are preventing it altogether. This means not only liquidation of the Y.C.L. but it tends to destroy the basis of a progressive youth movement. For there can be no non-party youth organizations unless this is built through the independent efforts of the present Y.C.L. In words these comrades pose as builders of the Y.C.L., but in deeds they will do just the opposite.

Both of the above tendencies are antithetical to a united youth league, to the successful realization of the Sixth Congress decisions, because while both proceed from seemingly opposite roots, they make impossible a broad transformation of the Y.C.L. which will enable it to reach out to the masses of youth.

Two main things stand out: (1) Transform the League, changing our inner life to conform to an educational youth organization, branch by branch broadening out and taking on more of the aspects of the type of organization young people expect to find when they join; (2) Reaching out and developing connections with progressive youth organizations, molding unity of the progressive youth movements on the basis of our new program and helping to shape the Farmer-Labor Youth Sections, not only in Minnesota, but by building as well the American Labor Party, Labor's Non-Partisan League and other movements for independent political action among the youth.

Comrades who have been guilty of advancing tendencies toward liquidation forget the two steps outlined above. This happened because they speculated about the type of youth organization they wanted and then ex-

pected it would suddenly appear full grown according to the rigid dimensions they pictured. The link to the transformation is changing each basic branch of the Y.C.L., step by step. A Y.C.L. that is broad below will find much easier the way to unite with other youth movements.

If we examine the possibilities of organizational unity with other youth organizations, we will come more readily to the conclusion that the key to the situation is the immediate need of transforming the Y.C.L. The Young People's Socialist League, due to Trotskyist influence, resists strongly the idea of a united youth league and in some quarters where Trotskyites have gained control of local groups comes out violently against it.

Our work is difficult but we are approaching a more favorable situation with the Farmer-Labor Party Juniors, the student movement and fraternal organizations, outstanding of which is the I.W.O. Youth Section. Unity with these youth movements will depend on how we demonstrate a similarity in aim and purpose, and on the extent that our Y.C.L. champions all that is progressive in the lives of youth. An important factor will be the growth of Y.C.L. membership on the basis of our program which now includes many features, identical with advanced sections of the youth movement. Thus while the picture is not yet complete for organic unity of the youth movement or for a federated type of youth organization one of the obvious channels will be the transformation of our Y.C.L. along the broad lines that our Convention will hand down.

Among industrial youth we must work toward making our organization

under conditions of illegality into a broad educational organization working toward the goal of becoming legal.

On the New York waterfront the Y.C.L. comrades have built a marine branch which is carrying through this principle.

"Many older seamen were attracted to our meetings and many of them insisted on joining the Y.C.L. Why were we able to interest a number of seamen in our meetings?"

"First, at every meeting there was not only a discussion on the strike but positive proposals on strengthening the strike, such as getting the Y.C.L. members to do additional and special work. Second, we concerned ourselves with the personal problems of the seamen, such as places for lodging, shoes and clothing for them, etc. Third, we made them feel that the organization was theirs by encouraging the utmost freedom of expression on the strike and on the Y.C.L. Lastly, we did not forget to broaden their general understanding by having varied types of discussion and this made them look upon the Y.C.L. as an organization of study and activity."

Among other activities this Y.C.L. branch is now learning and teaching union parliamentarism, science of navigation, and other important things every seaman must learn. Surely such activity will tend to implant the Y.C.L. among the membership of the International Seamen's Union.

We must learn how to be resourceful in other industries where still more repressive conditions of illegality exist. In Jones & Laughlin Steel, Pittsburgh, the Y.C.L. will invite young steel workers down to meetings, give them an interesting evening and at the close inform them that they just attended a regular meeting of the Y.C.L., inviting them to join. In Detroit, a one-industry city, it will be possible to build large neighborhood branches of the Y.C.L. in territories inhabited by auto work-

ers, winning the auto youth through cultural and educational meetings. In some cases we should even build clubs of auto workers, affiliated to the Y.C.L. The point here is that the Y.C.L. in industry can be made broader than our present conception, provided we make our revolving orbit a program of education.

If we understand this broad approach, then questions raised as to the name of the Young Communist League also become clear. Changing the name of the League today would be only a purely formal act as the Y.C.L. itself still has not emerged as a non-party youth organization. Regardless of how we change our name today, we will still be known to the masses as a Communist organization. The contradiction between our name and the type of organization we wish to become will have to be solved through the *daily practice of merging the Y.C.L. with masses of non-party youth*. In sections of industry, however, because of obvious conditions, branch memberships should determine their own name, appear openly before the youth under this name, but actually remain affiliated to the Young Communist League.

A broader approach to building our League in industry must also lead us to a complete reevaluation of our attitude toward mass youth organizations sympathetic to the Y.C.L. These organizations, if we work correctly toward building them, can become branches of the Y.C.L. in industry. Our proposed Constitution makes this possible.

1. A small number of miners are members of the Y.C.L. It would be wrong, however, to limit ourselves to just this estimation of our strength.

Precisely because the League existed as a duplicate organization to the Party, young miners not yet ready for this serious responsibility left the Y.C.L., and joined the International Workers Order. The I.W.O., functioning as a progressive youth organization, giving young miners cultural and educational activity, won many to its ranks. In Western Pennsylvania alone, there are 500 young miners in the I.W.O. Many more can be added from Eastern Ohio and Southern Illinois. Shall we fail to draw lessons from these developments? These young workers, while not belonging to the Y.C.L., are undoubtedly under our influence. It is clear that the restricted life of the mining patches, where conditions of work are difficult, requires that the League conduct its existence within the I.W.O. youth groups, helping to build this as the mass organization of the young miners. The young miners, by joining and building the I.W.O., have demonstrated to us the type of youth organization they wish.

2. Johnstown is a small steel town in Western Pennsylvania. Our comrades built the Progressive Youth League. This is now the outstanding youth organization in the town and has become the center of a progressive front of all youth clubs. We work within this group, helping it perform the functions of a legal and mass Y.C.L. Continuing our present relations with this organization, our aim should be to win them, through a system of education, as an affiliate of the Y.C.L.

These examples are cited to make clear the need for an elastic approach to the problem of Y.C.L. progress in big industry. The Progressive Youth League in Johnstown, the I.W.O. in

the mining industry and legal clubs in company-controlled towns tend to reinforce and strengthen the trade union movement among the youth and win them for a Farmer-Labor Party. This certainly is one of the functions of the Y.C.L. Our Convention will help make the Y.C.L. a builder of all progressive youth movements in centers of industry, working out steps through a policy of education to win them as affiliates to the Y.C.L.

In a number of places, especially in centers of heavy industry, our Y.C.L. has been liquidated and the members brought into the Party. In these places and in others where there is no Y.C.L. at present as in Allegheny Valley, McKeesport, Flint and New Castle, industrial youth when recruited are brought direct into the Party and given regular Party tasks which in most cases are not directed toward building a progressive youth movement.

We respect the desire of the comrades in the above places to build the Party. We also want to build the Party. We are for Y.C.L. members joining the Party. But we don't want this to be construed as a step away from building progressive youth movements in industrial communities. Our Party comrades must learn that a growing Y.C.L. will be the best reservoir for drawing young people into the Party.

It is the duty of the Party comrades to direct the work of its younger members toward developing sports work in the unions and creating a youth movement based on an educational and cultural program, remembering that the main problem of youth still is wages, hours and conditions. This can best be done through the formation of

a youth committee of the Party which will have as its perspective and orientation the establishment of an independent organization of young workers. Such an organization built along progressive pro-union lines can decide its exact relations to the Y.C.L.

It is necessary for the Party to take such steps where there is no Y.C.L. While it is true that the youth is moving progressively, the movement has only just begun. Is it not true that the reactionaries are trying to lead organizations of youth to their side against Roosevelt's Supreme Court proposals, and against the sit-down strike? Is it not true that the Flint Alliance and the vigilante group in Hershey, Pa., appealed especially to youth under the slogan "We want to work"? It is still necessary to remember Ambridge and the 1934 longshore strike where youth were openly recruited as strikebreakers. The struggle to win the youth from reaction remains one of the main tasks of our Party. The Party, once it tackles this problem, can be of great help toward broadening the character of the Y.C.L. in industry.

The experiences recently acquired, when our Y.C.L. appeared before young workers as an organization of immediate service to them and not as a vanguard, are valuable. The Cleveland and Detroit Y.C.L. raised money for the auto strike in its own name, gave the sit-downers ping pong tables, checkerboards, supplied recreation equipment, boxing gloves and the like. In Cleveland our League went so far as to offer volunteers among its girl comrades to take care of children of Fisher Body strikers so that the mothers could enter more freely into strike duty. All this had a pronounced effect

on the workers and especially upon the youth. The name of the Y.C.L. was cheered in the factories. Our Y.C.L. has grown in the auto industry, although it is still very small.

In marine our comrades assisted the striking seamen on the relief and cultural committees. It is a matter of deep pride to the Y.C.L. that in New York the seamen gave the organization full charge of night relief to pickets. A strike hall was set up for the seamen and the League supervised lectures, games and plays which were presented there.

We must guard against tendencies to wait for strikes as the only suitable conditions for the Y.C.L. to function in a service capacity. With the strike over in marine, we are helping to establish classes for young seamen, organizing tours of ships' crews to centers of interest and are providing them with the healthy social life they are ordinarily denied. Our marine comrades proposed within the I.S.U. that the union establish classes on splicing, handling the wheel, etc. This was adopted. In the steel industry we could organize classes on "tricks of the trade", parliamentary rules for union meetings, and other vital information.

Our League can gain considerable prestige among the youth if it perfects the policy of being a service organization. However, we must warn against the danger, already expressed, of our organization functioning in the capacity of assisting and nothing more. Any Y.M.C.A. or Salvation Army group can assist. We give service in order to teach, and by teaching we mean *political education*.

As a Y.C.L. we cannot be satisfied with teaching young trade union mem-

bers only parliamentary rules and trade skill, however important this may be. The Y.C.L. aims to broaden the scope of the young trade unionist's views beyond that of just the trade union and his immediate economic problems. In the Y.C.L., the young worker will learn the fundamental causes of his position in society, the need for international understanding and for socialism. The Y.C.L. in industry will not only be an organization for building the trade union and for sports; but will be an organization for peace, for a Farmer-Labor Party and for socialism. At the present time the Y.C.L. in industry, as the Y.C.L. everywhere else, will bring the struggle in Spain close to home and will rally the industrial youth in support of Spanish democracy.

If we fail to give this political education to the youth, then we fail to demonstrate to the youth the need for a Y.C.L. Failing in such education means to make the very error Comrade Stalin warns against in his report and summary before the recent plenum of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the error of separating our economic from our political tasks.

A number of our Y.C.L. comrades occupy leading positions in trade unions. In the form of these comrades the Y.C.L. leads and influences many thousands of young workers. Yet while remaining good trade union functionaries, our comrades neglect important political tasks.

Recruiting into the Y.C.L. has not kept pace with economic developments. How can we explain the fact that although a number of leading Y.C.L. members stand out in the leadership of the auto youth, yet not a single piece of Y.C.L. literature was

issued during the recent strike movement? How can we explain the fact that leading Y.C.L. members confuse the importance of being a trade union functionary with that of being a Y.C.L. functionary, tending to counterpose one against the other, and not seeing how as Y.C.L.'ers we combine both functions to strengthen our connections with the masses?

These comrades lack faith in the ability of the workers to recognize what we are doing and have done in the development of the present trade union upsurge. At the very time that the working class youth, which is becoming trade union conscious, is raising far more political questions than ever before, our comrades tend to view their tasks narrowly as "trade unionists", hoping that the youth will educate themselves spontaneously. The youth are certainly moving. We have helped and to some extent we move along with them. But if we do not take hold now and, through our independent organization activity and education lead them to the type of youth organization we wish to build, we may find ourselves falling behind. Some of our people have succeeded very well in becoming economic leaders of the youth but they must still learn in the Stalinist sense how to become political leaders as well.

Like a lost voice in the dark, the Young People's Socialist League theorizes that the role of the youth movement is not one of service to the labor movement, but rather that of doing nothing save pointing out the revolutionary road. All others, including the Y.C.L., have "deserted the revolutionary front". Working as a service organization, the Y.C.L. has not only a

mounting prestige among trade unionists, but our League membership in basic industry has grown. One hundred and ten young steel workers were recruited into the League in the space of a few weeks. In the marine industry, New York alone accounted for 55 young seamen, while on the West Coast more than 100 signed up. The membership of the League in the auto industry has tripled. And we can mention many more. The Y.P.S.L. made no such gains.

We mention these facts to prove that not we, but the Young People's Socialist League has deserted the revolutionary front, in spite of their high-sounding phrases. What is the standing of the Y.P.S.L. among proletarian youth, what have they in the trade unions?

Influenced by a counter-revolutionary band of Trotskyists, the Y.P.S.L. is not only isolated from industry, light as well as heavy, but in such important centers as Pittsburgh, the Y.P.S.L. is practically non-existent. Their membership has declined in Chicago and Cleveland. I do not know of a single Y.P.S.L. member in steel or marine—and this during a time of rising militancy among the youth. This shows the suicidal policy the Trotskyites have foisted upon the Y.P.S.L. Only in Detroit does the Y.P.S.L. possess any sort of standing in mass production industry. There the Young Socialist organization made up of a number of auto workers, in contradistinction to Y.P.S.L. composition elsewhere, rejects Trotskyism, works closely with progressive elements in the trade unions and, during the recent strikes, tried as well as they could to work close to the unions. The lesson is clear: Reject

Trotskyist policies and the Y.P.S.L. may grow among young workers.

The Y.C.L. is not the only organization desirous of assisting and strengthening the trade unions. Youth organizations in the American Youth Congress, the American Student Union, the Christian Youth Building a New World, the Y.W.C.A. and many more have gone on record to help win young workers to the trade unions. Within the trade unions a large number of progressive youth are coming forward with the aim of turning the labor movement toward the young workers. The trade unions in general are taking a greater interest in youth problems. This was seen in the trade union participation in the drive for the passage of the American Youth Act. This combination of factors has contributed toward a development of youth activities in the form of a sports movement in a number of international unions, not the least of which are the auto and steel unions, U.M.W.A. and I.L. G.W.U.; in the formation of youth committees to win young workers in the steel and textile drives, and in the development of recreational and cultural activity on the part of numerous local unions with the aim of making the unions more attractive to the youth.

Unlike the Trotskyites who saw in the united front of youth and the building of a progressive youth movement in America "a slurring over of class lines and a reserve against the working class", we supported the united front of youth organizations in the American Youth Congress, fought against the Trotskyite disrupters, and helped turn the progressive youth movement toward the trade unions.

Young progressives of America can do yeoman work in winning the masses of youth as a reserve for the labor movement.

The full consequences of uniting the youth movement of America in support of labor, especially those sections with membership in industry, will go far toward establishing sports and educational committees and youth activities in every local in the country.

The development of such youth activities in the locals will especially have great effect upon the lives of the youth in small industrial towns and communities. Young people within unions will help make the union a center for enriching the cultural life of mining patches, textile hills, steel towns and company dominated cities. Such a union recreational center as that built by the Maritime Federation of the Pacific can be established in hundreds of towns by the union. The union can become the center for building a front of all youth in such towns that can undertake campaigns for establishing playgrounds and swimming pools, classes on dramatics and other cultural pursuits, campaigns around issues of crime, health, the American Youth Act and other matters pertaining to the needs of the youth.

The growth of unions and youth activities in unions has stimulated the growth of labor sports and for the first time the outline of a nationwide labor sports movement is beginning to take form. The Amateur Athletic Union in numerous ways has already shown its willingness to cooperate with the building of such labor sports. In Pittsburgh, South Chicago, Cleveland and New York such a sports movement has already been started by the trade

unions. Such a labor sports movement should not divorce itself from the main stream of sportsmen in the United States, the A.A.U., but, instead, the two should work together. The penetration of industry by the unions would be made easier by a correct attitude toward the A.A.U., which has tens of thousands of worker sportsmen in its ranks.

Here it is necessary to take a stand on the position expressed by the Workers Sports League of America regarding the A.A.U. In the leading editorial of the January, 1937, issue of the *Sport Call*, it terms the A.A.U. a "bourgeois-controlled sports organization", further stating that "... a labor sports movement can be built only on a pure and unadulterated labor basis. Any decision that commits the trade unions and their sports movement to the A.A.U. and other groups outside of labor's ranks will greatly retard the growth of a genuine labor sports movement in our country."

Such a policy would make of labor sports an opponent of the A.A.U., splitting labor sportsmen into two camps. It would convert the labor sports movement, an energetic, important weapon for winning young athletes to the trade unions, into a lifeless burden. Have the comrades from the Workers Sports League any objection to assisting the thousands of progressives in the A.A.U. onto the road of becoming allies of labor? Or would they rather stand in the way? Have they any objection to cleaning out the remainder of the Avery Brundages and converting this mass sports movement, not only into a reserve for labor, but into a broad non-fascist people's sports association as well?

Only the closest working relationship of all conscious labor athletes with the A.A.U. will make this possible.

The increase of youth activities in the union provides us with the main base for the establishment of a youth section of a Farmer-Labor Party. Had not these activities been undertaken by the New York unions, a youth division of the American Labor Party would have been impossible. Today we must begin thinking in very practical terms of bringing youth to the side of Labor's Non-Partisan League and impel union support for youth divisions of this League.

\* \* \*

The struggle for democracy in Spain has received deep responses in the American trade union movement. Leading members of C.I.O. drives in various sections of the country spoke on the same platform as the Spanish Youth Delegation. John L. Lewis' speech at Madison Square Garden encouraged progressives in the labor movement to rally to the side of defenders of democracy. A number of trade unions have contributed from their treasury to the cause of Spanish democracy. Recently organized workers have also shown where they stand. In Detroit, auto workers took directly from the Madrid fighters the slogan,

"They shall not pass", and hung this slogan over a plant during the sit-down. All this shows a certain sentiment crystallizing around the Spanish people's struggle. It will be a task of the Y.C.L. as an educational organization working in industry to further this sentiment for getting more and direct assistance of every possible sort from America's trade unions.

In the simplest form it is necessary to teach the toiling youth how America's "neutrality" policies toward Spain would work if the same policies were applied to any factory of workers struggling for demands. The Y.C.L. will have the special task of raising the possibility of international collaboration of trade union bodies with other youth organizations throughout the world against the invasion of Spain. In carrying out its educational work among industrial youth, the test of its effectiveness will be measured in terms of support to Spain.

In this article only a few of the many problems confronted by our League in industry have been raised. By combining political education, assisting the growth of the industrial form of union among the youth, transforming the present Y.C.L., and reaching out to non-party youth, will we achieve the successful building of a broad non-party youth organization in America.

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