

Tactical Problems

IN the development of an American Communist party, as in the development of the Communist party in all nations, there is necessary an adaptation of old revolutionary concepts to the new. There are elements who still cling to the old; and other elements who in the enthusiasm for the new reject the experience of the old.

The Communist Party realizes the importance of this problem; it appreciates the importance of industrial unionism and the concepts developed by De Leon; it appreciates the importance of the One Big Union movement and of unionism generally. But the Communist Party still more appreciates the importance of the concepts of mass action and proletarian dictatorship, of the experience of the proletarian revolution in action.

This process of adjustment between the old and the new is difficult, although indispensable. Some, like the I. W. W. and the S. L. P., reject the new altogether and cling to the old. Some, like the Communist Labor Party, make a hash, instead of a synthesis, of the old and the new.

In its program the Communist Labor Party is not at all clear on fundamentals. We have mentioned its misleading formulation of mass action, its failure to limit participation in the elections, its confusing the revolutionary use of parliamentarism with the use of the machinery of the bourgeois state. In its program the C. L. P. makes still another serious error. It says:

"In America there is a highly developed Labor movement, and this makes it impossible to accomplish the overthrow of Capitalism except through the agency of the organized workers."

This means—

—either, that the American Federation of Labor, which is "the highly developed Labor movement" in the United States, becomes the agency of the revolution;

—or, it means the I. W. W. concept that there can be no revolution until the majority of the workers—some maintain 100%—are organized into industrial unions.

It is sheer absurdity to maintain that the A. F. of L. can become the agency of the proletarian revolution. The A. F. of L. is a bulwark of Capitalism; it will in the final crisis unite itself with the bourgeois state. Our attitude toward the A. F. of L. must be to fight it, to split away from it unions and workers who accept the revolutionary conception of the proletarian movement. It is difficult for us to believe that there was any delegate at the C. L. P. convention so reactionary as to accept this view of the A. F. of L. But the C. L. P. program says: "In America there is a highly developed labor movement"—this can mean nothing but the A. F. of L.;—"and this makes it impossible to accomplish the overthrow of Capitalism except through the agency of the organized workers."

But we shall grant that this is not the C. L. P. conception. In another place in the program the C. L. P. says: "There is in America a centralized economic organization of the capitalist class which is a unit in its battle with the working class, and which can be opposed only

by a centralized economic organization of the workers."

The Communist Party appreciates the importance of a centralized industrial organization of the workers, of industrial unionism. This is a problem not alone of the immediate struggle, but of the transition from Capitalism to Communism, since after the conquest of power and proletarian dictatorship the industrial unions will become the starting point of the Communist reconstruction of society. But the C. L. P. program makes it appear that the industrial organization is the most important, ignoring the dynamics of mass action and the process necessary to achieve proletarian dictatorship. But it is a repudiation of Communist fundamentals to isolate industrial organization as the Communist Labor Party does. Industrial unionism must be related to mass action and to the general Communist program; any other course is an evasion of the problems of the revolution. Revolutionary mass action and not industrial unionism will conquer the power of the state.

There are delegates to the C. L. P. convention who will "interpret" these contradictions as not being contradictions; they may quote some other sentence in the program to confirm their interpretation. But a program that must be interpreted in this way is not a consistent program of theory and practice.

The divergent elements at the C. L. P. convention united in one thing: opposition to the old Socialist Party. But they were not united on theory and practice. The different elements compromised each with the other, and a compromise program was manufactured. But a compromise program of this character is not the basis for a real Communist movement.

THE JOY OF LIFE

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beauty of life partly flowered. There were the Pagan Greeks; there was the Renaissance—each with its philosophy of self-expression, of life and the joy of life. But these efflorescences of the human spirit were limited by their class character, by not including the whole of humanity, but being based upon the oppression of the majority. The Pagan Greeks ended in degeneracy, the Renaissance in libertinage. The emancipation of humanity is necessary to realize life and the joy of life.

The Communist program implies the emancipation of humanity from material oppression; but it equally implies emancipation from oppression of the spirit of man—freeing life from the fetters imposed upon its expression, its joy and its beauty.

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"The Class Struggle"

IN the spring of 1917 a group of comrades in New York City decided to issue a Left Wing organ. Among these comrades were Leon Trotzky, N. Bukharin, Alexandra Kollontai and Sen Katayama. Before the first number was issued the first three comrades left for Russia. The magazine, "The Class Struggle" appeared in May, 1917, with L. B. Boudin, Louis C. Fraina and Ludwig Lore as editors.

The group issuing the magazine was not a unified group. The first struggle of policy appeared on Boudin's attitude on the war, a struggle emphasized by the Bolshevik Revolution and Boudin's opposition to it. One group, led by Fraina, insisted that Boudin should be ousted; another group, led by Lore, urged compromise and unity. Finally Boudin's actions became so impossible that the compromisers were compelled to yield and Boudin resigned.

There was peace after that until the Left Wing developed as an organized movement. Again Lore appeared as a compromiser. Lore did not approve of a Left Wing organization, did not want the magazine to officially endorse the Left Wing, although willing to carry its propaganda. "The Revolutionary Age" at the time stigmatized Lore as "a cheap American imitation of Hugo Haase." Again after a struggle, the impulse of events swept the compromisers into the Left Wing.

But the attitude of these compromisers toward the Left Wing was vacillating. Lore never participated actively in the Left Wing organization, insisted on his right to speak on the same platform with Right Wing speakers, and generally compromised and hesitated. Then about two months ago Lore was slated for expulsion from the Left Wing, charges having been preferred against him.

At Chicago, during the conventions, Lore again compromised miserably. Although instructed to participate in the Communist Party convention, Lore disobeyed these instructions and participated in the Communist Labor Party convention.

At a meeting of "The Class Struggle" group two weeks ago the question was the disposal of "The Class Struggle". At first Lore proposed neutrality for the magazine concerning the Communist Party and the Communist Labor Party; but then changed his mind. At the meeting eight voted in favor of neutrality; on the final vote 13 favored turning the magazine over to the Communist Party and 16 in favor of the Communist Labor Party, six of those favoring the C. L. P. having first voted in favor of neutrality and at least one still being a member of the Socialist Party!

Precisely those who wavered concerning Boudin, who compromised miserably on the Left Wing—Centrists all—voted in favor of the Communist Labor Party.

This is significant of the elements which are rallying to the Communist Labor Party—compromisers, Centrists, masters of the revolutionary phrase and poltroons in action.