

radicalization of the workers. On the contrary, it was one of the poorest. The indications of the radicalization process, which is bound to be accelerated in tempo in the coming period, are to be found chiefly in the daily economic life and struggles of the workers of this country. They are to be found in the movement for the formation of the new industrial unions, in the growing discontent of the workers even in the old A.F. of L. unions, and the growing mood for struggle that is partly exemplified by the increasing participation in strikes.

Relative to the possibilities, the Communist Party made a poor showing in the elections, which cannot be explained away solely on the basis of the disfranchisement of foreign-born workers and Negroes. In the 1924 elections the Party was on the ballot in 14 states and received 33,361 votes. The vote for the Party in the same 14 states in the 1928 elections was only 31,128, that is, a decline of 2,233 votes. For the same 14 states we received .001146 of the total votes cast in 1924; in 1928, we received only .000846 of the total vote cast in the country. Thus we lost in those states (the most important ones, too, like New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Illinois, Indiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Wisconsin, etc.) absolutely, in number of votes received, and relatively to the total vote cast. Our total vote in 1928 in all the 34 states where we were on the ballot was 45,710, an increase over 1924 not at all commensurate with the fact that in this election we were on the ballot in 20 additional states, that is, more than twice as many as in 1924.

This alarming showing cannot be explained, either, by the "Smith sweep" for there was a "La Follette sweep" in 1924. It cannot be explained by the terrorism of the bourgeoisie or vote-stealing; that condition also existed in 1924. In addition, it must be remembered that in the period between the two presidential elections, the Party had more opportunities for growth, popularity and influence than ever before. It led a number of the most significant strikes and mass movements: Passaic, the miners, New Bedford, the Sacco-Vanzetti agitation, and so forth and so on. The real explanation for our failure is in the fact that the Stalinization of the Party, here as elsewhere, has had terrific results. The Party has been corrupted and weakened by factionalism and opportunism, finding its chief source in the Lovestone-Pepper leadership supported by the Communist. It has brought about a steady decrease in Party membership, factional distrust, irresponsibility and dilletantism, and has weakened the Party in the class struggle in every instance. It is the greatest obstacle in the crystallization and growth of the Communist movement in this country. There is no other basic explanation for our parliamentary decline and can be no other.

We deal here only with main lines, and omit the repetition of such points as the opportunist and corrupt parliamentary methods of the Lovestone-Pepper clique, the buying of signatures and electors, the false conception of the Labor Party and its role in the election, the failure to act with sureness and speed in selecting our candidates and putting our ticket into the field, the factionalism rampant throughout the campaign, and so forth. We have dealt extensively with these features of the election in other documents, notably "The Right Danger in the American Party" and articles in the press.

Struggle for a Class Movement of the American Workers

Due to the strong position of American capitalism, which has enabled it to bribe large sections of the workers and to provide a higher general standard of living than that of the other capitalist countries, the American workers, from a class standpoint, are in a primitive stage of development. The American workers are not class conscious, they have not yet developed even the concepts of social reformism or independent political action and, on the whole, are permeated through and through with the ideology of capitalism. These incontestable facts are the starting point of the Communist approach and indicate our fundamental task: to struggle for the creation of a class movement of the American workers, for the development of class consciousness, and to lead them toward revolutionary concepts in struggle.

The fight for a class movement of the American workers is in the first place a fight against the capitalist ideology which dominates them. The

labor bureaucrats of the A.F. of L. and the unaffiliated unions of the same type are the direct bearers of this ideology in the working class and must be fought as such. The labor bureaucracy is a part of the capitalist rationalization and war machine—its "labor" wing. De Leon's classic definition of the reactionary labor leaders as "labor lieutenants of the capitalist class" holds doubly good today. The distinctive features of these labor leaders in comparison to the social-reformist leaders of Europe consists in the fact that they are outspoken defenders of the whole capitalist regime and all of its institutions, without "socialistic" pretense or class struggle phraseology. Their program is a program of stark reaction. They repudiate the class struggle in words as well as deeds. They oppose any kind of independent political action. They support the whole military program of American imperialism and will indubitably be a powerful ally of the capitalists in lining up the workers for the coming war and demoralizing the struggle against it. They decline affiliation with the reformist Amsterdam International. They oppose even the mildest proposal for social legislation and reform, and sharply differentiate themselves from all of its advocates. The condemnation of the Brookwood Labor College at the last convention illustrates this attitude.

This bureaucracy is the chief influence against the class movement within the workers' ranks—the strongest, the best organized and the representative of the most reactionary program. The specific nature of the American labor bureaucracy—its present source of strength—also makes it the more vulnerable in the period of growing radicalization. The very first steps of the workers towards a class movement can be taken only in direct struggle against them. The relentless and irreconcilable fight against the A.F. of L. leadership, based on a correct analysis of its specific role as the outspoken bearer of capitalist ideology, is a prerequisite for effective work in developing the struggle of the workers, increasing their class understanding and leading them to the fight for broader political aims.

The indiscriminate lumping together of all the various forms and methods of deluding the workers and holding back their class development, and the elements that represent them, (capitalist welfare schemes, A.F. of L. program, La Folletteism, liberal churchmen, liberals and progressives, Republican and Democratic Parties, bourgeois economists and efficiency experts, etc.) under one head, as is the current policy enunciated in the theses of the two factions, is profoundly erroneous. It glosses over the distinctive features and specific role of each and consequently makes impossible an estimate of their relative importance at the moment and the formulation of the most effective tactics of struggle against them.

The Socialist Party has progressively degenerated since the expulsion of the Communist Left Wing in 1919, and in great labor struggles of recent years, particularly in the needle trades, became the open ally of the employers and the A.F. of L. bureaucracy. It appealed for votes in the last election campaign on the basis of petty-bourgeois liberalism. The union struggles as well as the election campaign showed its influence to be in decline. In view of its tradition and its phraseology, however, its potentialities as an influence against the class movement of the workers are very great. The Communists must fight the Socialist Party on all fronts in the most direct and irreconcilable manner. A correct estimate of its position and function is necessary for this. The Socialist Party is not dead and its possibilities for a new growth in a period of growing radicalization of the workers will be greatly strengthened by false tactics of the Communists. The Socialist Party fights on the side of imperialism against the workers in its own way, but it is wrong to describe it as an organic and indistinguishable part of the A.F. of L. machine. It is true it will always form a united front with the latter against any serious movement of the workers but there is an important difference in function and division of labor between them.

The function of the A.F. of L. bureaucrats is to stifle all progressive tendencies in the working class and to defend capitalist institutions as they are. The function of the Socialist Party and of the related social-reformists is to exploit these progressive tendencies under more or less "radical" phraseology and to divert them into harmless reformist channels which avoid a real collision either with capitalism as such or the A.F. of L. bureaucrats. The new "campaign" of the Socialist "New Leader" against the Civic Federation policies of Woll and the "Progressive Manifesto" of the "Labor Age" group, are highly significant expressions of this specific role of these social-reformists. The

influence of these groups at present is weak, but the growth of discontent of the workers and their mood for struggle will give them the possibility of the expanding it on a wide scale. The Communists must unmask them and make their deception clear to the workers. Otherwise there is great danger of them gaining the leadership of workers' movements and strangling them.

The main reservoir of labor militancy is the masses of unskilled and semi-skilled workers in the unorganized, basic industries. The full horror of the capitalist rationalization falls directly upon them, and the attacks of the capitalists in the present depression and coming crises strike them first and hardest. The Party must turn its face to these unorganized masses, put itself at the head of their struggles and lead in the work of organizing them into new industrial unions. This historic task must be accomplished in the fire of struggle against the capitalists and their state power as well as against their agents in the labor movement, the reactionary bureaucracy of the A.F. of L., the Socialist Party and allied groups of social-reformist elements. In this protracted struggle on all fronts extending over a period of years the decisive break of the workers with the ideology of capitalism will be effected and the genuine class movement of the workers will be built.

Trade Union Policy

A correct policy on the trade union question and its consistent execution by a sound Communist leadership are decisive for the expansion of the Party as the leader of the struggling masses. Moreover, the tactics of the Left Wing, lead by the Party, a dynamic force of gigantic importance, will be one of the most vital determining factors in the future course and development of the trade union movement.

The narrowing base of the A.F. of L. and the increasingly reactionary conduct and policy of its leadership raise before the Party and the Left Wing the problem of organizing the unorganized workers in the basic industries, primarily the unskilled and half-skilled, who are becoming radicalized and ready for struggle. It is the task of the Party and the Left Wing to lead in the work of organizing these masses into new industrial unions. The center of gravity in our trades union work belongs in this sphere. This has been indicated by the whole situation for some time and the long delay of the Party in shaping its course in this direction, due to the resistance of the leadership, has already had extremely harmful consequences.

The history of the Party has been also the history of continuous struggles for the correct line in the trade union question. Isolation from the masses and their struggles was the price paid by the Party for its false trade union policy in its earlier years. The trade union program adopted in 1920 which called for a "boycott" of the A.F. of L. and support of the I.W.W. was only corrected after a stubborn and protracted struggle conducted by the main nucleus of the present Opposition. It was not until the Unity Convention of June 1921 that a realistic program, steering the Party into the trade unions and outlining the plan for the formation of a broad Left Wing was finally adopted. The entrance into the Party of a number of experienced trade unionists was facilitated by this decision and this in turn gave a great impetus to its practical execution. Isolation gave way to a speedy penetration of the Party into the trade union struggle, to the wide expansion of the Trade Union Educational League as a bona-fide movement of the Left Wing and to the appearance of the Party as an important factor in the Labor Party movement.

The rich results of this policy adopted at the 1921 convention were in themselves an irrefutable proof of its correctness. It was not executed, however, without one-sidedness and distortions. In reacting against the basically false policy of the 1920 convention which called for the "destruction" of the A.F. of L., the Party went to another extreme and developed an A.F. of L. fetishism. "Dual unionism" became a bogey—and practically all independent unions and movements were labeled as such. This very terminology graphically illustrates the great concessions to the labor reactionaries implicit in the one-sided policy; for it is their language. "Dual unionism" is their time-worn epithet for all revolting groups of militants. This fetishism blinded the Party to its tasks and duties in the unorganized fields and narrowed its base of operations too much to the organized, more or less skilled workers. It was a factor in the delay of the Party shaping its course towards the unorganized and shifting its center of gravity,

there—a course made imperative by the changing circumstances.

This shift of emphasis to the formation of new unions of the unorganized has been accepted in words after a long and stubborn struggle of the Opposition for this line. But the work has not yet begun in earnest. The practice of the Party leadership in this field is marked more by sporadic spurts and spectacular stunts than by painful, systematic and deliberate work. Moreover, the turn of the emphasis to new unions of the unorganized, which ought to be indissolubly bound up in one comprehensive policy with the intensified work in the old unions is already being interpreted and applied one-sidedly.

The work in the old unions has been virtually abandoned. This fact is clearly revealed in the almost complete disappearance of the Party representatives from trade union gatherings. Still worse, the leaders of the factions are competing with each other in the elaboration of "theories" which preclude the idea of serious work in the old unions in the future.

The factions are outdoing each other in irresponsible striving to be "Left" in this burning question. These theories and practices are a menace to the Party and threaten to put it off the track again. It is time to sound a warning and begin a determined struggle against them. The building of the new unions and the work in the old unions must be carried on together and not the one set up against the other.

The role of the A.F. of L. leadership as the outspoken agents of American imperialism in peace, in war preparations and in war does not at all obliterate the fact of three million members in its affiliated unions. The new "theories" are attempting to rationalize the A.F. of L. out of existence as a federation of unions and to arbitrarily preclude the possibility of its future expansion and growth in an organizational sense. The unrelenting struggle against the labor agents of imperialism in general and an unceasing exposure of their role as a bulwark against the working class resistance to war is an obvious necessity. The struggle against them for the organization and leadership of the unorganized workers is the main aspect of the fight. But the matter does not end there.

The workers organized in the A.F. of L. unions have an enormous strategic importance. We must fight the bureaucrats for influence over them from within, no matter how arduous the task, no matter how severe the persecution and discrimination against us. The abandonment of this struggle now taking place under cover of high-sounding "radicalism" will only prevent the crystallization of an insurgent movement within the old unions and free the hands of the bureaucrats for more effective sabotage of the organization of new unions, for these two processes are bound together. The net result will be to strengthen the effectiveness of the A.F. of L. bureaucracy as a part of the capitalist war machine.

The decline of the A.F. of L. in membership and influence during recent years in an incontestable fact. But it still represents a powerful force, both in an organizational and ideological sense, on the side of reaction. And its further expansion in a period of growing mass struggles and serious work by the Left Wing in the building of new unions, particularly in the event of war, is by no means excluded. The assertions to the contrary, conjured up to support the new "theories," are purely arbitrary.

The obvious fact that the big employers under "normal" conditions prefer their own company unions to the most conservative trade unions and fight militantly to destroy the latter is not of itself sufficient ground for such a contention. The whole rationalization process with its unbearable and increasing exploitation drives the workers to revolt and to endeavor to form class organizations. The coming period will see such struggles on a large scale. Under such conditions it is not only possible but even probable that employers, who reject the conservative trade unions now, would accept them as an alternative to new unions under militant leadership and would even collaborate with the bureaucrats in their formation.

Such a possible perspective in no way "removes the base" for the building of new industrial unions of the unorganized workers as the main task of the Party. On the contrary it makes the energetic execution of this task all the more imperative. The greater the progress the Party makes with this work, combining it with increased activity in the old unions, the stronger will be the barriers against the betrayals of the coming revolts by the A.F. of L. machine.

The attempt to classify the entire membership of the A.F. of L. unions as aristocrats of labor, immune from class struggle agitation, which is implied, and even partly stated, in the new "theories," is likewise false. Deep currents of discontent, full of potentialities for future struggles, already exist in the old unions and they will increase in the coming period. The recent manifesto of the pseudo-progressive group of the "Labor Age" is primarily a reflection of this discontent in the ranks of the unions which the reformists seek to divert into harmless channels. The appearance of the new movement, even in a nebulous form, with pseudo-progressives at its head, is a sign of the abdication of the Communists and the Left Wing who in recent years have led these movements. It is a warning that continued neglect of the struggle in the old unions clears the road for the reformist stultification of potentially revolutionary movements within them.

The Party must clarify its tactics on the trade union question without delay. The organization of the unorganized, into new unions, the foremost and basic task, must go hand in hand with intensified work in the old unions, including those which exist alongside of new unions, and a revival of the discarded united-front tactics. The Party must penetrate every movement of opposition and revolt against the bureaucracy, forming united fronts with all honest progressive workers, exposing the particularly deceptive and dangerous role of pseudo-"Left" and pseudo-progressive leaders, and struggling against them for the leadership of the opposition movements.

In 1925 the present Opposition conducted a struggle against the narrowing of the T.U.E.L. into a purely Communist body with a Communist program and for broadening it into a united front organization. This was one of the most progressive struggles in the history of the Party. The revival of the Left Wing in the Miners Union and the subsequent leadership of the Party in a great miners' mass movement were the result of the change in course brought about by this struggle. That basically correct line must be restated and insisted on in view of the departures that have been made from it recently.

The T.U.E.L. which, thanks to false policies, has degenerated into a mere shadow of the Party existing on paper, with little or no organization or life of its own, must be revived as a bona-fide united front organization of the Party and non-Party militants in the unions, the organizing center of the new unions and the co-ordinating medium between the new unions and the Left Wing in the old. The actual participation of influential non-Party workers in the activities of the T.U.E.L. and in its leading committees is one of the absolute prerequisites for this proper functioning of the T.U.E.L. on a genuine basis of broad organization. And this holds good with a hundred fold emphasis in regard to the new unions which are being formed. The leading role of the Party in the new unions and in the Left Wing of the old unions is necessary for their development into higher forms of struggle. But the construction of the leading staff of these movements on a narrow Party basis with mechanical forms of Party control, above all mechanical faction control, which is the growing practice under the present Party regime, are fatal to the growth and development of these movements.

In the work of forming new unions of the unorganized workers, no less than in its work in the A.F. of L., the Party must revive and apply the united front tactic. Maintaining always its independence and freedom of criticism, the Party must form alliances with groups and organizations willing to co-operate with us on a minimum class-struggle program and win the non-Party militants over to the platform of Communism by degrees in the course of joint struggle. An approach to revolutionary syndicalist workers in the spirit of Lenin is especially necessary.

The Party must strive to establish its decisive influence and leadership in these united front struggles by its initiative, superior tactics and conscientious persevering work. These methods must replace the growing tendency toward exclusiveness and mechanical, monopolistic Party control which only result in the narrowing down of the base of the new movements and organizations, in their degeneration into impotent cliques, in their isolation and defeat. Under the present conditions and relation of forces, the Party cannot put forth the demand for arbitrary and mechanical control without endangering the developing movements and blocking its own approach to the awakening non-Party masses. The leadership of the Communists, which is alone able to steer the new movements on a correct course, must be won in struggle.

The chief danger to the progress of the Party in its trade union work is the opportunist leadership of the Party. Constantly oscillating between conservative passivity before the A.F. of L. and adventurous plunges in the formation of new unions without adequate preparations in advance, regarding the workers as objects for maneuvering rather than as class brothers in arms, dabbling with mass movements in dilapidated fashion, and permeating all the trade union work with corrupt and poisonous factionalism, the Lovestone-Pepper leadership has already proved itself ten times over to be a positive barrier in the path of the Party and the Left Wing and a weight in the scale against the proletariat. Its potentialities for harm in the impending struggles, with all their vast difficulties and possibilities, are enormous.

The Lovestone-Pepper leadership rejected the proposal of the Opposition in May 1927 to begin preparations for the mobilization of the Left Wing in the United Mine Workers through a National Conference and followed a do-nothing policy month after month while the strike was being cut to pieces by the Operators and the Lewis machine. It was not until April 1928, after the strike was a year old and had already spent its force, that a National Conference was finally held. It resisted the course toward a new miners' union and did nothing to begin organization work in the unorganized fields. (Conservative passivity, fear of the labor fakers, lack of faith in the masses.) Then it plunged into the calling of the strike in the unorganized fields in April 1928 without the slightest preliminary organization. (Adventurism and irresponsibility.) It sabotaged and delayed the proper organization of relief work for months out of internal Party factional considerations. It excluded and discriminated against the most qualified and authoritative leaders of the miners' movement in the formation of the leading bodies of the new union. It pushed aside real organizers of the workers and flooded the coal fields with incompetent faction agents. It reduced the Party fraction at the convention of the new union to a fiction and decided all questions in advance through a small steering committee of the C.E.C. selected on a faction basis and comprising a majority without experience or authority in trade union work. (Criminal factionalism, callous disregard of the basic interests of the movement.) The Lovestone-Pepper leadership lost interest in and virtually withdrew support from the new union at the most critical time immediately after the convention. It made no serious attempt to provide the necessary financial help for the necessary organization work. Even funds which properly belonged to this work were diverted. The Lewis machine was thus given the opportunity to entrench itself again through lack of real competition from organizers of the new union. (Dilletantism and irresponsibility.)

The same methods have marked the course of the Party leadership in other trade union fields. The formation of the new union in the needle trades was unduly delayed while opportunities were lost and the Right Wing advanced. Here a bloc of crass opportunists is maintained in leadership while the Left Wing of genuine Communists is suppressed. In the textile industry a policy of passivity before the old unions was followed by the sudden formation of a national textile union prematurely, without sufficient preparation and without an adequate base in local organizations.

These evil methods, repeated systematically, are accumulating into a crushing weight upon the Party and the Left Wing, and leading to failure and collapse at the time when the possibilities are greatest and the demands heaviest. They directly threaten to discredit the idea of new unions, to demoralize the workers and destroy the prestige of the Party for years to come. The Bolshevik struggle to organize the workers cannot be separated from the struggle to reorganize the leadership of the Party on a proletarian Communist basis.

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