

Where Is the British Party?

Nine years ago the Communist Party of Great Britain was formed. The delegates at that unity convention in 1921, representing over 5,000 members, had visions that at last a united revolutionary party had become a reality.

It would be quite true to state that every delegate present honestly believed that with the elimination of sectional differences, which would from then onwards be settled within the party, a rapid advance would be made.

A Nine Years' Balance

Nine years have passed and what are the results? Have we built up that strong revolutionary party rooted in the masses? Has our membership gone up in leaps and bounds? Has our influence spread into every section of working class life? The answer to these questions is unfortunately, No. In fact, we haven't even held our own. The reverse is the case.

Our membership has decreased by fifty percent. Our influence is of a negligible quality and as for being rooted in the masses, we are scarcely in touch.

Many reasons can be given and many excuses made. The writer puts forward his reasons as to why.

A revolutionary party in an industrial country like Britain must have leaders that continue to be in close touch with industry. Our leaders, with few exceptions, have never been industrial workers or else they left industry with the formation of the party. If a mass meeting is to be held with three or four of our leading executive members as speakers, we can advertise and boost it as we like but the net result would be at the outside perhaps two or three hundred people and two-thirds would be our own members. This refers to a London meeting.

The experiences of our Russian comrades have been accepted and applied too literally. To transplant into Britain tactics, methods and so on, just because they happened elsewhere, is the height of folly, and to insist that this is the only correct line in spite of adverse experiences is suicidal.

Robotizing the Party

Whilst recognizing that discipline within a revolutionary party is a necessity, to instill fear into every member that a thought, word or deed which wobbles a hair's breadth of the straight and narrow path, means expulsion—makes it not a party of intelligent working class fighters that is being built, but a party of robots. Our party might well shrink by half.

Can a party really have a healthy growth when the financial responsibilities are matters considered outside the jurisdiction of the membership? The experience of the British party is emphatically, No. A subsidized party sows the seeds of its own destruction.

Thousands of members have left the British party in disgust. Where we had locals of fifty to a hundred strong, we have small groups and in many places only contacts. There are industrial cities by the score without a single party member.

This weakness reflects itself in other directions. The Y.C.L. is practically defunct. To state that they have a hundred and fifty members would be putting it high. A hundred would be nearer the mark.

The Minority Movement is in a similar position. Following any strikes where their members have taken a leading part, the *Worker* (organ of the M.M.) devotes pages for weeks afterwards to our mistakes. Always mistakes and defeats, never victories or good generalship.

The Minority Movement

A recent issue of the *Worker* devotes more than half a page to a meeting of the executive committee and if the brief and incomplete statements of the E.C. members are anything to go by, it appears fairly obvious that a general state of dissatisfaction exists.

In view of the fact that the army of unemployed has reached the two million mark, and the workers have thrown off the apathy that followed the general strike of 1926, and are now fighting every inch against all schemes of capitalist rationalization, a continual decline of a revolution-

ary party shows something must be wrong. The above is not a pleasant picture to paint, and it certainly would not be correct to state that all hope has been abandoned. Recently there have been signs of an awakening. The mesmeric influence is weakening.

Just what will happen when certain of the sleepers awake is hard to state, but it sure will be interesting. Future developments within the British party are worth watching.

—“BLACK DIAMOND”

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Rakovsky in Danger!

(Continued from page 1)

A third raid and search has just been made at Rakovsky's. The ring draws more tightly around him. Rakovsky is in danger.

The Left Opposition calls to every Party comrade, to every member of the Left wing and its unions, of the I.L.D. and the Friends of the Soviet Union: Comrades, it is the best Bolsheviks that are being exterminated. The bourgeoisie is following this work of extermination with a silent joy. It is pursuing the overthrow of the dictatorship of the proletariat by every means, including the external and internal corruption of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

Remember this: Stalin replaces the Rakovskys with Bessedovskys. He unites with Purcell and Chiang Kai-Shek but has only the most brutal methods against Trotsky. He assassinates Blumkin and puts Agabekov in his place. These changes are an inexorable law of Stalinism.

To defend the U.S.S.R., the dictatorship of the proletariat means primarily to save the Left wing of the Bolshevik party, the Oppositionists. You must act with energy in the revolutionary organizations. In the Party, in the T.U.U.L., in the I.L.D.—raise these questions to the irresponsible bureaucrats: **What are you doing with the deportees? What is the situation in the solitary confinement prisons? Why was Blumkin killed?**

To Browder, Bedacht, Hathaway and Co. the triumphant leaders of every defeat and setback to our Party, we ask: **What are you doing to our deported comrades? What are you doing now with Rakovsky?**

The Fight of the New York Plumbers Helpers

“Every trade man a union man is a slogan never omitted from the journals of the A. F. of L., but there is an abyss between their words and their deeds. One of the strongholds of the A. F. of L. is the building trades, but the industry is far from being organized. “Patronize the union label,” “do not work with a scab” and other slogans like it are the favorites of unionism as proclaimed by various A. F. of L. organizations, but after these many years the potential scab on the building construction job remains ignored.

The plumber's helper is a building trades worker who is not only exploited by the boss but also the goat of the industry. In all the days of “prosperity”, when wages ranged from \$12.00 to \$15.00 a day and \$8.00 to \$11.00 for apprentices, the plumber's helper received a meager \$4.00 a day. The cost of living rose with the wage increases, but the helpers wage remained the same.

Many attempts have been made by the workers in the trade to organize into a union to better their working conditions and in general, to gain the benefits of organized labor. Many were the lessons taught these young workers that the officialdom of the A. F. of L. would not organize them. They not only discourage organization, but continue to hinder its slightest progress.

The year 1927 was rich with such experiences. The American Association of Plumbers' Helpers, with more than 3,500 members, was welded together in greater New York, fighting for recognition from the United Association of Plumbers, Steam-

Self-Determination

The Problem of Mobilizing the Negroes in the Class Struggle

The Communist International has issued the slogan of Self-Determination for the American Negro. The 7th Convention Thesis of the American Party says, “The Party must organize the most intense struggle around the demand of social and political equality for Negroes, which is still the main demand of our party in its work among Negroes. At the same time the Party openly and unreservedly fights for the right of the Negroes for national self-determination in the South, where the Negroes comprise a majority of the population. Self-determination for the Negro masses is the logical continuation and highest expression of the struggle for equal rights (social equality).”

Is Slogan Correct?

There can be no argument among Communists regarding social and political equality for the Negro masses. The question is, does the slogan of self-determination mean “the logical continuation and highest expression of the struggle for equal rights” for the Negro of the United States?

Either class, capitalist or proletariat, can use the slogan of self-determination to their advantage in concrete situations. The proletarian vanguard uses it against the imperialist in the colonial struggle for freedom. The capitalists use the slogan too, and a good example is its use against the defeated nations and the Soviet Union as a two-edged sword in the Balkans and Central Europe at the close of the last world war. Self-determination under a Soviet power is a concession and transitory measure in our development toward Communism. Such a concession in the south may be necessary but the conditions of the Negroes, interwoven in the whole economic structure with decisive sections in the industrial centers indicates that such will not be needed.

Self-determination for a colonial people or subjected national unit with cultural and language differences is a blow against the enemy forces and a step toward our hegemony. But self-determination for the American Negro can only be accomplished by the establishment of a Soviet power and such a measure then would not be a stepping stone.

Self-determination at that stage instead of a Soviet class emphasis means subordinating the class issue to the race

issue because all indications are that such a stepping stone or concession is not necessary. Cuba, India, Manchuria or Ireland constitute economic units with language and cultural differences, etc., and such slogans at certain stages can be used by the proletariat against the imperialists but this slogan for the American Negro who does not constitute such a unit only blurs the class issue of the struggle in America.

The Garvey Movement

The Garvey movement rallied a considerable mass for the slogan of self-determination as a petty-bourgeois movement directing their energies away from the class struggle. The Party says we are turning this right side up. In the case of Garveyism the slogan was right reformism and in our case it is only shifted to left reformism. The change from Garveyism to the Party is a change in form but not in content. The change from Africa (Garveyism) to the South (Stalinism) may be far in miles but it is quite close in content. The Negro business man who is a watchdog for imperialism must not be confused with the petty-bourgeois element and ideology of the Negro, just like the A.F.L. leaders as imperialist watchdogs must not be confused with the liberals and petty-bourgeoisie even though all these unite on many issues. The petty bourgeois section will join our bandwagon, not as a back seat driver but as the real driver because the slogan takes the class content out of the struggle for the United States.

Self-determination within a national unit must imply more than double exploitation, racial difference or a majority in a backward section, to be used as a slogan. The Negro race has the same language, are part of the same economic unit and do not have marked cultural differences. The Mexican in the southwest faces the same conditions the Negro does and in addition has language and cultural differences. If the slogan means anything it must include him where he is the majority.

The Party says self-determination in the south where the Negro comprises the majority of the population but the Party uses the slogan mainly in the north and in the industrial centers.

The distinction drawn between the north and the south as to where the condition of self-determination is to be carried out leaves the impression on many Negro workers that we want them to leave the north and the industrial centers and go back south. On the other hand it implies that the southern agrarian Negro is the decisive section of our ally. We know that the industrial Negro (including such centres as Birmingham) are the decisive section of the Negro race. The industrial and urban Negro and the Negro in the north does not want self-determination if he must move south. What the Negroes want is social and political equality where they are. The white worker must put the main emphasis on this side of the question.

Racial and Economic Oppression

Racial oppression is economic oppression and the class struggle in this case takes on racial forms. But as Marxists our aim is not to enlarge the racial form or any other distorted form but on the contrary, to direct our slogans, tactics and strategy to transform this racial form toward the real content of the class struggle. The class issue must dominate and especially the proletarian Negro where we are using this slogan the most.

The slogan also shows confusion of the problem of imperialism and the colonial oppressed. The Negro of the United States cannot be classified as an oppressed national group as was the case of peoples under Czarism with national cultural and language differences. The decisive section of the American Negro is interwoven through the whole economic unit, just like the oppressed Jewish people are interwoven through the whole capitalist system. The Negro of the United States demands social and political equality where he is. The decisive section of the Negro race is scattered through the whole economic unit and the Soviet power with proletarian democracy can easily remedy the situation in the south. “Against white chauvinism and for social and political equality for the Negro masses!” —H.

(Another article on the problems of the plumbers' helpers will appear in our next issue.)

—J SPRAGUE