

# A Picture of the Party from Inside

## What the Party Bulletin Says About the «Achievements»

The criticisms leveled by the Opposition against the Stalinist leadership for the organizational and ideological devastation it has produced in the ranks of the party, have never been met by our opponents. On the contrary, from time to time, under the pressure of the events themselves or the discontentment of the comrades in the ranks, the Stalinist officials have been compelled to make admissions which confirm to the hilt every one of our criticisms. A case in point is the official internal bulletin of the New York district committee of the Communist party. We take some excerpts at random from its leading article:

"It is a known fact that the life of the units is very sterile and dead."

Could a more damning confession be made in a more off-handed manner? The Communist party should be distinguished from all other parties in precisely this respect, that is, in the existence of a virile, productive internal life at its base. In the revolutionary proletarian party there is no class distinction between leadership and ranks, there is no need of a leadership which must convert its followers into dumb, footweary cattle. The absence of this distinction serves as a terrific arraignment of those responsible—the leaders. For how can the life of the party units be other than sterile when the initiative of the ranks is systematically crushed for fear that its unfolding may disturb the papal domination exercised by the bureaucracy? How can the "life" in the ranks be anything but "dead" when the bureaucratic leeches confine their activities largely to bleeding the party of every vital element?

For years now, the party leaders have promised a change in this system by means of the biggest fraud since Barum's white elephant: Stalinist "self-criticism", i. e., the practice of finding scapegoats in the second, third and fourth ranks for the crimes committed by the first rank. But the disease is not rooted below—that is only where its effects are manifested most disastrously; it has its seat at the top. Like fish, the Stalinist hierarchy begins to decay and stink at the head.

"The general understanding of the membership of political and economic events in the District", continues the bulletin, "is at an extremely low level."

Nor can it be otherwise. The Communist party at its birth was to distinguish itself from the social democracy and the syndicalists by vigorously combating that contempt for theory which was practically the only "theory" tolerated in those movements. In the post-Lenin period, the Communist movement was inundated with that "unprincipled practicalism" against which Lenin inveighed so contemptuously, and which has received the acme of its expression in the Stalin faction.

A leadership which has played ducks and drakes with such fundamental tenets of Marxism as its teaching on the class role of the State (China, "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry", etc.), as the independent role of the proletarian party (subordination of Communism to Sun Yat Senism and the Kuo Min Tang, the masquerades of Muenzenberg, Barbusse, Stalin and Co.), as internationalism and its economic and political implications ("socialism in one country")—to mention but a few of the points in which Stalin contributed only revisionist conceptions—such a leadership could scarcely be expected to do anything but bring to "an extremely low level" the "general understanding of the membership of political and economic events."

Can a wolf instruct its cubs in vegetarianism? Can a catholic priest teach his flock the truths of evolution? Can a witch-doctor teach savages the elements of science? Can the man who is up to his neck in a swamp lift another to a safe and higher point? That is how the Stalin school teachers can raise the extremely low level of the general understanding of the membership.

More: the raising of the level of the membership of the party will be accomplished at exactly the same rate that the party bureaucracy is kicked out of the place it has usurped. Between these two forces in the party there is no harmonious link; there is a fatal conflict, a gnawing contradiction which can be eliminated only by an upheaval from below.

"Our trade union work", we read further on, "despite the objective favorable situation is lagging far behind. . . . We have not developed any real struggle in the A. F. of L. . . . This Bulletin will give concrete aid in this work."

If the aid to be furnished the party members by the editors of the Bulletin, and their associates in the leadership, is of the same caliber as the aid given in the past, then the prediction may be freely ventured that next year's Bulletin and the resolutions of next year's Central Committee Plenum will contain the same lamentations about mysterious failures of the party. Here, for example, is the warning given as early as two and a half years ago by the March 31, 1930 Plenum in an obscure reference made in the "Resolution on Party Fractions":

"Party fractions must be established and must be engaged in active work in all A. F. of L. unions. All tendencies to neglect work in the A. F. of L. unions must be sharply condemned and corrected."

Similar admonitions have not been lacking in the intervening period, nor will they be in the future. Nor, furthermore, will the work of the party in the A. F. of L. be improved one hair's breadth thereby. And that for the simple reason that the naked instructions: "must be established", "must be engaged", "must be sharply condemned", have proved

to be quite meaningless without a fundamental correction of the party's analysis of the trade union problem in this country. The hierarchy may continue to establish and engage, to condemn and correct until the stroke of doom, but the party will not advance one step in the reactionary unions until it proceeds beyond administrative orders of a technical nature and into a political alteration of its line.

Who is responsible for the party's complete isolation in the reactionary unions when the two principal resolutions of the March 1930 Plenum do not by as much as one single word (literally!) mention the need of working within the A. F. of L.? Is such an attitude conducive to the proper functioning of the Communists among the mass of organized workers? In the thesis on the "Economic and Political Situation", we read about "the reformist organizations and elements, some of which (A. F. of L.) are outright Fascist" (page 11); that (only!) on the basis of the Trade Union Unity League will the party be able to assume the leadership of these economic struggles" (page 20); that it "has been a mistake on our part (hear, hear! self-criticism!) that we did not sooner clearly analyze and characterize the open Fascism of the A. F. of L." (page 33).

Is there any wonder that with such an analysis and perspective, the party's fractions in the A. F. of L. (they can be counted on your thumbs) "have not developed any real struggle in the A. F. of L."? What progress in this direction could be made by a Communist worker who, in his A. F. of L. local, would have to repeat after the blockheaded theses writers: This is an outright Fascist union and we can move ahead only on the basis of the T. U. U. L.?

But have no fear, the marauders are still at work. The doctor who reported that his "patient was improving" until she died . . . of improvements—cannot even compete with the directors of the Party Builder who promise to "give concrete aid in this work". A little more concrete aid of the type they have given in the past and the poor patient. . . .

"The struggle against social-Fascism in the district", we note finally, "is in an extremely weak shape. Despite the repeated acts of treachery of the social-Fascist leaders, we have been unable to develop any real struggles and exposures of these people. . . . The Bulletin will give leadership and guidance. . . ."

One would imagine that after the record rolled up by them in the past, the party chiefs would be more modest with their offers of leadership and guidance. But we are dealing here with people who have lost all sense of proportion and place. The party has now been shouting itself hoarse against all species of "social-Fascism" imaginable. It has fought a furious battle in a vacuum of its own invention. And yet, "despite the repeated acts of treachery", the Bulletin observes with a puzzled air, no real struggle or exposure of the reformists has been developed. Why? The Bulletin scarcely bothers to attempt an explanation, it simply recommends more "persistent exposures" and volunteers its leadership and guidance.

But the question is important and requires an answer. How have the "social-Fascist" demagogues been able to make the steady headway which even the Stalinist sages can no longer ignore? Essentially because of the enormous blunders which the party leaders have chalked up to their account. Especially in the period of the crisis, when the weakened working class feels most acutely the need of all its forces to resist the capitalist offensive, the Stalinists have met their aspirations and appeals with a scornful rebuff. The workers who have not yet developed to Communism increasingly gain the conviction that the Communists plot their own party interests above the interests of the class. To answer them with the trite phrase that the party has no interests separate from those of the whole proletariat, means to substitute what should be, for what actually is.

In this whole period of the crisis, the party had unexampled opportunities to champion the fight for the united front of the working class. By forcing the reformist leaders to the wall in every concrete question of struggle, the party would have had chance after chance to break the workers' present alliances and win them to Communism on the basis of concrete experiences through which the workers would then pass together with their own leaders and the Communist leaders—experiences which would give them the best possible opportunity to judge which group is superior.

But the Stalinists, who only yesterday lay in the arms of Chiang Kai-Shek and A. A. Purcell, were overcome with such a tremendous wave of remorse, you see, that they now indignantly reject any united front with the reformist organizations or leaders. From the ivory tower of splendid isolation to which they have retired, they choose to hurl down anathema and vocal thunderbolts upon the reformist demagogues. The only trouble is that the mass of the workers shrugs its shoulders, in despair, in indifference, or in contempt. Such exposures have just about the same practical political value as the campaigns of the socialist muckrakers in the pre-war days: they set no appreciable mass of people into motion. The "social-Fascists" continue their "repeated acts of treachery", the struggle against them continues to be "in an extremely weak shape", and the Stalinist balliffs at the head of the party continue to be, we suppose, the very essence of Bolshevik wisdom, strain-

ed twice through cheesecloth and silk. The reformists make progress, the party stagnates, the trade union work lags behind, the life of the units is sterile, the work among the Negro masses is at a standstill—but the party leadership is as inviolate and impeccable as the College of Cardinals. Aren't people with such a record of achievement just the ones to complain irritably about the extremely low level of the general understanding of the membership? Thank God somebody in the party is on a different level.

—M. S.

# League's Program of Action on Unemployment

(Continued from page 1)

## The Conditions of the Movement

There is not yet in the United States a serious unemployment movement of a national character; and hence to set the workers into motion around this issue still remains the task. It imposes a serious duty upon the Communists. But it is precisely in this respect that the official Communist Party has failed despite the fact of masses responding to its early demonstrations. This is entirely due to the false policies pursued. At a time when serious preparations on a broad basis and mass propaganda were required the party frittered away its opportunity in adventurist extremes. The objectives of its demonstrations were characterized by the slogans: "Fight the police" and "Conquer the streets", which almost entirely isolated the Communist vanguard and left the workers disinterested in the party appeals. From this the party swung to the other extreme, to opportunist methods of fighting for unemployment relief, as, for example, the purely parliamentary petition campaign for the social insurance bill, not to speak of the almost exclusive centering of the struggle against petty cheating and thieving of local relief agencies and losing sight of the large objectives.

In regard to the organizational problem the party at first pursued the sectarian method of arbitrarily harnessing the unemployment movement within the extremely narrow framework of the T. U. U. L. It imposed upon it all sorts of bureaucratic limitations. While the force of objective reality and the weight of our criticism have compelled the party to abandon its extreme adventurism and the most sectarian organization methods, many of the above mentioned false policies and bureaucratic limitations still remain. This presents a picture today, in the fourth year of the crisis, where workers who were attracted to Communism have been expelled by the thousands; and where most of the once organized and party controlled Unemployment Councils are non-functioning, some in the process of dissolution and some have entirely disappeared. Many workers who were attracted to the Communist Party have therefore again left its ranks in disappointment.

## The Social Reformists and the Unemployed

With the decline of the party controlled Unemployment Councils other unemployment organizations have arisen, mainly on a local scale, under leadership of the social reformists. There are, for example, the Citizens' Unemployment Leagues in the State of Washington, in Superior, Wisconsin, and the miners' employment movement of West Virginia developed under the direction of the Mustelites. There are also the unemployment leagues organized by the Socialist party in some cities. The first mentioned have attracted broad masses on a local scale because of their "practicalness" of securing measure of relief largely by the methods of mutual self-help. All of these movements reflect the pressure of the working class, but being essentially reformist in character, they are taking the direction either of practical parliamentary (reformist) politics or purely mutual self-help societies, in some instances promulgating the false illusions of running the industries for capitalism to create jobs.

While it is perfectly clear that neither direction will lead to a serious fight for relief at the expense of capitalism, and not at all show the way out of the unemployment situation, nevertheless these movements are becoming effective instruments in the hands of the reformists to attract the workers and to contest the Communist party for mass leadership. They are becoming serious contenders. The headway they have made so far is in no small measure due to the false policies and the bureaucratic blunders of the party which, it should be remembered, at first held sway over the movement of the unemployed.

This proves conclusively that the course of the American working class, even its unemployed section, is not at all yet decided in favor of Communism. It flows in both directions, both the revolutionary and the reformist. Inevitably, however, the deception and the impotency of the reformist leadership will stand out more clearly in the more serious and the more decisive situations and therefore constantly offer new opportunities for Communist leadership, provided the party can learn to advance the demands and slogans which will attract masses, set them into motion and lead in a revolutionary direction. But to do that effectively the Communists must also penetrate the reformist unemployment movement to fight for the revolutionary program.

## An Unemployment Program of Relief

An unemployment program must of necessity be in harmony with the elementary needs of the situation. As such it must present immediate demands and agitation slogans which appeal to the broad masses by offering means of temporary amelioration. They cannot offer a solution in themselves and should not be so designed. They are by the very

nature of the class struggle strictly limited to the character of a partial help. But they must also become a help to unite the workers on the basis of their common interests and to set them into motion against their class enemy. These demands and slogans cannot solve the problem. There can be no solution to the unemployment problem under capitalism. Its solution can be found only in the proletarian revolution; in our agitation and struggles we must always make this clear.

Approaching the fourth year of the unemployment crisis the question of immediate relief has become a matter of life and death necessity for the American workers. The growing hunger and want has been met only by the miserable, debasing charity rations. This must be substituted by immediate governmental relief, federal, state and municipal. By virtue of its pressing necessity this demand stands in the forefront as one which brooks no delay in organizing the fight for its attainment.

The permanent feature of the unemployed army, however, makes imperative the advancement as an immediate objective also of the demands for a system of unemployment insurance, the cost of which is to be borne by the state and by the employers. That it can be obtained only by mass pressure, by tenacious struggle against and over the opposition of the capitalist rulers, has been made amply clear by all experiences so far. The capitalist way out of the crisis is the opposite one, the one of forcing the working class to shoulder the whole burden. The reformist way of unemployment insurance is the one of all classes alike carrying the cost and awaiting their mutual voluntary consent, which cannot be expected from capitalism. But this is only so much more a reason for the Communists to make this demand a class demand and a fighting demand, one which must bring the broad masses within its scope.

**The Problem of the Shorter Workday**

The scourge of unemployment threatens all workers and is a problem of the class as a whole. Unity of the employed and the jobless is therefore essential. That must be taken into account in a programmatic sense. When keeping in view the perspectives of a standing unemployed army and a developing workers' struggle resisting the further attacks upon their standard of living, the necessity of advancing the slogan for the shorter workday assumes additional importance. The concrete slogan must be "the six hour workday, the five day week, without reduction in pay."

The workers' struggle for the shorter workday flows from the contradiction between the constantly developing productive forces and the enormous surplus labor power. The employers are now endeavoring to reorganize this relationship at the workers' expense. Hence the bosses and their government are advancing their stagger plan proposals of the shorter workday with a corresponding reduction of the standard of living. This the Communist forces must counteract correctly. The demand for the six hour workday, the five day week, without reduction of

pay is today a propaganda slogan addressed directly to the working class for it to adopt to become a slogan for action. More than any other demand this has the quality both of offering real and tangible improvement of the workers' conditions and of moving them into action. Hence it will meet with serious opposition from the employers. But its advancement today as a propaganda slogan will help to prepare for the struggles of tomorrow. By virtue of this it becomes the slogan of the working class offensive. The demand for the shorter workday is the most fundamental of all immediate demands from the standpoint of class relations. It possesses the quality of welding the unemployed and employed workers alike into united efforts for its attainment and for the advancement of their struggle on a class basis. The Communist forces must take upon themselves particularly the duty of arousing the existing labor unions and workers' organizations and unite them in a powerful movement for the shorter workday.

**Large Scale Credits to the Soviet Union**

An unemployment program must give correct attention to the world-wide character of the unemployed crisis which embraces the whole of the capitalist world. To that appears the enormous contrast of the Soviet Union teeming with activity of industrial construction, but seriously hampered by the difficulty of obtaining sufficient credits from the capitalist countries with which to buy the materials needed from the world market. This is still a decisive issue before the Communist movement. It involves essentially the question of the international working class objective. It offers the opportunity of definitely uniting the needs of the Soviet Union with the immediate aims and demands of the proletariat in the capitalist countries. Therefore, the proposal of the Left Opposition to demand large scale credits from the capitalist world to the Soviet Union, remains as correct and as imperative as when first advanced.

In the United States this becomes a particularly potent demand. Here is a superabundance of credits available. The further success of the great industrialization progress of the Soviet Union is bound up with the facilitation of an increased supply of machinery and material for the immediate future. The placing of new orders for machinery in this country will provide more work for our unemployed. It would make the American workers real participants in the struggle toward Socialism in the Soviet Union.

The American Communist movement must unequivocally take up the slogan for the extension of large scale credits from U. S. capitalism to the Soviet Union. It should without delay initiate united front conferences of all working class organizations for the purpose of laying definite plans for the promulgation of this demand on a practical concrete basis.

To sum up we recapitulate our proposed concrete slogans for the unemployment movement as follows:

Immediate Governmental Relief, Federal, State and Municipal.

Unemployment insurance at the Expense of the State and the Employers.

The Six Hour Workday, Five Day Week, Without Reduction of Pay.

Recognition and Extension of Long Term Credits to the Soviet Union.

It goes without saying that the unemployment movement should generally take up slogans of special local issues and also such concerning evictions, union conditions and dues payments, etc., according to conditions prevailing and in conformity with the general program.

**The Organization of the Movement**

The existing unemployment situation can be viewed correctly only in the light of its revolutionary perspectives. In that sense the demands advanced today must become stepping stones toward the revolutionary goal, hence it is necessary to preserve their class content and organize the fight for their realization on a class basis. They can become so only when the Communist forces thoroughly understand and practice, in action, the tactics which enable them to become the leading force of ever broader masses and establish the logical unity between the struggles of today and the solutions of tomorrow.

The unemployment situation cannot be considered as an isolated problem separate and apart from the general working class problems, nor can the unemployment movement succeed as a separate and isolated movement. It can remain so only on the penalty of degeneration and impotency. Its objectives must become those of the general working class objectives, its struggles a part of the general working class struggle for the revolution. The potentialities for advance on this basis are growing daily. When the Communist movement begins to employ seriously and genuinely the united front policy the first steps will have been taken to unify the workers, employed and unemployed, in common struggle for their common interest of today as well as toward their ultimate objective.

In this direction it is necessary to reorganize the Unemployed Councils. There should be block councils in the cities, composed of unemployed and employed alike. These should be centralized on a territorial or a citywide basis into delegated bodies fighting for the minimum program of the unemployed. To these central bodies all other workers' organizations should be invited to send representatives for common action for the needs of the unemployed. They should include the workers' political parties, such as the Communist party, the Socialist party, the Unemployment Leagues, where such exist; and above all the trade unions. This is the way to put reformist and reactionary labor leaders to the test. It is the way to establish the working class united front for specific immediate objectives and set the masses into motion for its immediate interests and needs. The duty of the Communist party in such a broad movement is the one of functioning independently, maintaining its right of criticism and of fighting for the revolutionary program to push the movement forward to a higher plane.

# A New Crisis in Soviet Economy

(Concluded from last issue)

Above all, the following unpostponable measures appear to us to be necessary:

- (1) To put a decisive stop to the inflation. To stabilize the "chervonets" on a realistic basis—by the introduction of a budget (industrial budget included) that lies within the frame-work of the actual possibilities of economy. To reinvent the "chervonets" with the means of playing a role in economic regulation.

- (2) To renounce the maintenance by coercion of collectives incapable of an existence. To elaborate a series of practical measures so calculated, that the disintegration of these so-called collectives into individual holdings does not effect the interests of the collectivized village poor and so that it does not burden too painfully the foodstuff and raw material situation in the country.

- (3) Formally and openly to liquidate the policy of "liquidating the kulaks as a class", which has already been torn up at the root by a series of decrees in the course of the last two years. But, to keep in mind at the same time that the re-establishment of private trade will deepen and accelerate the differentiation in the village (both between as well as inside of the collectives); to introduce a concretely thought-out system of measures for the limitation of the exploitative activities of the kulak.

- (4) To create for the more promising of the collectives, such technical and economic conditions, that they, together with the Soviet farms, will be able to assure the feeding of industry and of the cities.

## The Second Five Year Plan

- (5) To utilize as a basis for the second Five Year Plan, the actual and not the falsified results of the experience of the first Five Year Plan. To recognize that the economic irregularities, which existed even before the Five Year Plan, have been made more profound by the latter and that they have assumed a menacing character. To make the highest criterion of the second Five Year Plan, the problem of the "smytchka".

- (6) On the basis of the actual technical and economic results of experience, but insofar as industry as a whole is concerned as well as with regard to the individual enterprises, to work out realistic possibilities of growth. The most important elements of every industrial and financial plan must be: (1) providing of each enterprise with labor power of satisfactory quality. (2)—providing labor power with normal condi-

The following document arrived from Russia in a foreign language, into which it had been translated for conspirative reasons. The first page was missing. Editorial revision was provided for by the Editorial Board of the Bulletin of the Russian Opposition.

... (3)—establishment of certain qualitative standards, without which the process of production is converted into the production of "seconds".

7. A very serious danger for the entire economy is constituted by the deterioration of all forms of calculation and accounting as well as by the decline in the reliability of all statistical data connected with the Five Year Plan and with the economic situation in the country as a whole. The false system of statistics can only be destroyed with the destruction of the whole system of bureaucratic lies. The economic atmosphere can be cleared and cured only by party, trade union and Soviet democracy.

8. Clearly to take into account that the prospective difficult, economic reorientation, which will be inevitable even in the case of a turn toward a correct policy will favor the rise or the temporary consolidation of efforts at a bourgeois restoration. The rebirth of the Bolshevik party as the independent proletarian vanguard will under these conditions become a question of life or death for the proletarian dictatorship. To bring about a change in the economic course, the Stalin regime must first of all be renounced, it is a regime which stifles the party and economy and threatens to destroy the dictatorship.

**Capitalist Crisis and Soviet Economy**

9. The years of capitalist crisis have been utilized extremely little and unsystematically by the Soviet government in the economic, and by the Comintern in the agitational, sense. As the Left Opposition has more than once affirmed, both sides of this matter can and must be linked up with one another. With a correct approach to world economy the difficulties of the capitalist world could be exploited in a far greater measure to weaken even the sharpest of the disproportionate relationships in Soviet economy, thereby alone raising the standard of living of the masses.

The question of collaboration between Soviet economy and capitalist world economy must be raised as a center of attention for the European and American

working masses and especially the unemployed. It is not a matter of possible credits and orders, but of a developed plan going beyond the borders of Soviet economy and including the capitalist countries. As incomplete as our experience is—it nevertheless permits, for the first time to show with figures and facts in hand, what enormous and at the same time close and immediate possibilities are opened up for planned economy once it extends to the advanced countries.

We do not consider these first drafts as a finished platform. Without discussion, such cannot be elaborated. The lack of party democracy is a double burden for the Left Opposition. At any rate, we believe that the L. O. of the U. S. S. R. must make haste with the elaboration of a collective opinion, no matter how difficult the conditions are at present.

At the same time, we consider it timely and urgent to declare immediately in the name of the Left Opposition (Bolshevik-Leninists) that today as always we are prepared to render every possible aid to the present faction—in the defense of the country against the external dangers as well as in conducting it out of its present economic difficulties.

## The Opposition's Attitude

We have more than once declared that the sentiment of revenge—is not a political sentiment. We have not directed ourselves according to this sentiment and have no intention to. But it is to be understood that the serious education of the party requires a serious and open re-examination of the policies in the years of the factional domination of the Stalinists. But we are prepared, on our side, to switch this critical work onto the rails of mutual understanding and agreement.

We are prepared to exert every effort in order to prepare the transition from the present, manifestly unhealthy and untenable regime to the regime of party democracy with the least possible convulsions and dangers, with the least possible loss of our valuable time.

The stoppage of the police measures of suppression against the Bolshevik-Leninists, the liberation and recalling of all the imprisoned, banished and exiled comrades must be the first signal for the rebirth of the Leninist party.

Representing a group of comrades,  
—N.  
Leningrad-Moscow, July 1932. —M.