

What the Inner Regime of the Communist Party Looks Like

The Communist party of the U.S. A. is beyond doubt the worst example, in any capitalist country, of the devastating effects of Stalinism in the working class movement. One question has persistently perplexed the average militant: How is it possible for the leadership to go from one blunder to another, to chalk up defeat after defeat for the Communist party and the working class, to commit the greatest enormities and crimes, without generating a rank and file rebellion that would fling the leadership on to the scrap-heap? An intimate knowledge of the inner workings of the Stalinist machine, as exemplified by its American section, will supply the answer to this question. The documents and facts which we have at hand will shed a revealing light.

In considering a normal working class organization, it is customary to start at the bottom and follow the superstructure which is built up on it. That's exactly what would be a fatally wrong and misleading approach to the Communist party. The reason? It is not a normal working class organization, but one of the most unique in modern times. Every last vestige of workers' democracy has been destroyed in it, root and branch. It can be analyzed and understood only by starting from the top and moving downward, just as you would if you had to set about digging a ditch. It is with the intensely bureaucratized leadership that the beginning must be made.

Inventing Miniature Stalins

The Stalinist theory and practice of leadership and organization has prevailed in the Third International for quite some time. It has now reached its highest point, or rather, its lowest depth. The first principle of the central Stalinist machine, in whose hands are all the controlling threads, is to find, manufacture, groom or invent a thoroughly reliable "national leader". He becomes a miniature Stalin, on a national scale. Just as Stalin has established the significant practice of never having the party leadership referred to any way except as "the Central Committee with comrade Stalin at its head", he likewise arranges matters for those whom he appoints in each country to serve him with what the Germans call "Kadavergehorsamkeit"—the obedience of a corpse. Thus the German Stalinist must repeat every day, like a pious Mohammedan, "the Bolshevik Central Committee with comrade Thaelmann at its head". The Frenchman must make his ritualistic obeisance to "the Bolshevik Central Committee with comrade Thorez at its head". In the United States, the "head" is Earl Browder, General Secretary and almighty poobah of the party.

After the expulsion of the Lovestonites in 1929, a secretariat was established in which those Lovestonites who jumped over the fence in time had the majority. No general-secretary was appointed in Moscow for the simple reason that Stalin was taking no chances with unknown quantities; he wanted to be sure of his man first. Little by little, the weeding-out process was gone through. Recalcitrant Lovestonites, particularly the not entirely house-broken "Leftists", were relentlessly eliminated, or to put it

more simply and bluntly, they were exiled. Bittelmann, for example, was sent to cool his heels in the desolate parts of Russia, and to this day he has not been reinstated to an important position. At the Cleveland party convention early this year, Browder merely laid down the law, and Bittelmann—once a terror in the party but now a broken reed—was not even elected to the Central Committee. Johnstone, another Leftist suspect who was for "cleaning out" all the Lovestonites, was sent packing to India. Zuck was spirited away to the warm climes of Latin America. Krumbein was sent to England and Bell to Ireland. After a period of testing and re-testing, Stalin finally hit upon the least talented, and consequently the most desirable, of the former Lovestonites, Browder. Redacht, a post-1929 convention period member of the secretariat, was pensioned off into the I.W.O. Minor, another secretariat member, was brutally driven out of any political work of directorial importance and sent to make speeches. The secretariat became a thing of the past. The time was ripe for a General-Secretary, and the proper candidate was at hand. Browder got the job.

The Rubber Stamp Pol-Bureau

Browder is responsible to absolutely nobody but Stalin, who, like the Lord himself, giveth and taketh away and must be praised—constantly. The Political Bureau of the party, once an important, responsible and representative body, is today a hand-picked institution which has no actual control over the General-Secretary. Its only possible function is a potential one. That is, should the time come when Browder (god forbid!) gets too presumptuous, or if he must be made the scapegoat for some catastrophe which cannot easily be explained away, the Political Bureau, upon order from the Stalin machine, will automatically remove him into oblivion. The fate of his predecessors proves that no simpler problem exists in the world than to "eliminate over night the artificially manufactured 'leaders' of the Stalinist parties."

Just as Browder is personally picked by Stalin, so he in turn personally picks the Political Bureau, whose composition and activities are unknown to nine-tenths of the party membership! Here too is to be found a unique aspect of the Stalin internal regime. The Political Bureau must not be made up of the leading, most experienced and most qualified party members. That might be necessary if there were any policies to discuss, or political problems and disputes to thrash out collectively. But under Stalinism, the "line" is simply handed down from the Moscow secretariat to its agent in New York. He is directly responsible. He sits in the center of the Political Bureau and, like a Delphic oracle, interprets the transmitted "line". There is no discussion, and above all, no dispute. How can there be? To deviate to the Right or Left of a decision is just about the most dangerous thing a party bureaucrat can do, as so many have learned. The surest way of being right, and staying where you are, is to nod your head solemnly and wisely,

The New Party—The Answer to Stalinist Corruption

Following is the second of the series on what is going on behind the scenes of the Communist Party of the United States. The startling facts revealed in the article are sufficiently explained and consequently require no introductory comment. Every argument made is substantiated by authentic facts, reliable information and official documents. No revolutionary worker can read this amazing revelation and not be revolted at the combination system, including the worst features of the Roman Catholic Church and the ugliest sides of Tammany Hall, which prevails in a party that calls itself "Communist".

Without fear of contradiction we can say that least of all are the members of the Communist party familiar with the inside information we are herewith disclosing. Without ever discovering the truth about the inner regime thousands of workers join it only subsequently to get out as fast as they can, many

being forever lost to the revolutionary movement.

This regime has blinded the eyes of hundreds of otherwise sterling militants to the real crimes of Stalinism. Plunged into hectic but very futile activity, made the scapegoats for the false policies of the leadership, blamed for failures which were the natural result of the political line, the membership has been led from defeat to defeat like driven cattle. The revision of the fundamental teachings of Marx and Lenin, the disastrous policies leaving a trail of catastrophes over ten years and throughout the world—the party membership was oblivious to all this. The Stalinist system of "education" has two results: either the workers leave the party or they are inculcated with a blind faith and unquestioning discipline, more worthy of church disciples than of revolutionaries.

If the inner regime of the C.P. closed the eyes and the ears of the workers in it to our theoret-

ical criticisms this revelation of the real situation in the ranks of American Stalinism ought to be an eye-opener. The disgraceful picture of what is going on in their own back yard should have a rousing effect on even the most rabid member of the C. P. It should clearly point to him that a party of this kind, corrupt to the very marrow, cannot lead the American revolution. It can only put the brakes on it and then lead the working class to defeat.

Instead of walking out of the party and then the movement the militant should turn his feet in the direction of the new revolutionary party. Stained either with the crimes of Stalinism or its Jesuitical system, the new party will lead not to defeat but to victory. Every policy will be weighed and discussed by every member, every leader will be democratically chosen and controlled by the ranks. With such an internal regime based on the foundations of Marx and Lenin victory is assured.—Ed.

and keep your mouth shut. That is why the present Browderian Political Bureau is the strangest one the party has had since its inception. It is composed of Browder, Stachel, Ford, Hudson and Foster. The latter being ill and unable to attend meetings without seriously aggravating his malady, his place is taken by Haywood. Astonishingly enough, neither Hathaway, Weinstein, Minor, nor Redacht, Bittelmann, Zack, Amter nor Krumbein, are Political Bureau members. None of them is needed, however much they all would like to occupy the coveted place.

Political Bureau meetings are positively weird affairs. The four neophytes are called into the Royal Presence, and summoned to give their reports. They do. Browder takes notes. Then he takes the floor and hands down the decisions. The meeting adjourns. And that is all. No questioning, no discussing, above all no disputing. That has been tried before, openly and covertly, and every venturesome soul came to a bad end.

Rife with Intrigues

For example: Stachel knows that, for this reason and that, he can never hope to take Browder's place as The Leader. But he has a cordial dislike of Browder's ineptness and would give a pretty penny to see him thrown to the lions. On at least two occasions he has intrigued with Hathaway and Weinstein, especially with the latter, to put the boots to Browder. But the system remained intact, and with it, its secretarial incarnation. In effect, the ambitious Hathaway was kicked down the steps and given a post which is of no political importance at all in the party nowadays, the Daily Worker editorship. As punishment, he is not even a member of the Political Bureau. Weinstein, whose first attempt to realize his ambition earned him an enforced and prolonged stay in Moscow, was simply kicked out of New York, the center,

when he tried it a second time; he was sent off as district organizer in Detroit. Browder got the necessary pretext for this exile by ukase when Weinstein allowed himself to state that the Washington bonus demonstration was an "adventure" and that the veterans were nothing but "marching bums". Stalinism's internal regime, which inevitably produces such intrigues, suppresses them with a mailed fist so as not to undermine its autocratic system of leadership and the theory of papal infallibility which is inseparable from it.

Stacked with Pie-Card Artists

Control of the Political Bureau and the Secretariat automatically guarantees control of the various districts and all the important conventions which are, in passing, held rarely enough. Browder has surrounded himself with a sturdy and highly subservient central staff—the core of the bureaucracy. Its overhead is a bit breathtaking. The confidential financial report of the Central Committee to the Cleveland convention showed, according to "Exhibit B" that in 1932, the C.C. alone paid out in wages exactly \$25,584.45 or over one-sixth of its annual expenditures, whereas in 1933, it paid out in wages the sum of \$24,374.15, or almost exactly one-fourth of its annual expenditures, with more than an additional \$30,000 going in the form of subsidies to the district organizations and other bodies.

To this Central Committee bureaucracy is attached a faithful group of lesser functionaries who owe their political existence to appointment from above. In spite of the fact that time and again, for the past few years, official resolutions have vowed that the next task of the party is the reduction of the number of full time paid functionaries, the number continues to rise. Thus, the well-known "Open Letter" in the middle of 1933 called for a cut in the apparatus. Eight months later, things were worse

than before. Thus, "Chart D" on the "Organizational Status of the Party" handed out for the Cleveland convention shows that "BOL" (Before the Open Letter) there were 82 full time district functionaries, and 86 "now" (i.e., February 1934). "BOL" there were 66 full time section organizers, and "now" 67. "BOL" there were 12 "other full time section functionaries", whereas "now" reports 38! In addition, the chart shows 231 "mass full time functionaries".

With this as a compact machine (and these figures are only a part of the whole apparatus), the inner regime is guaranteed the perfect unanimity, monolithism and homogeneity of the graveyard.

We have seen how the General Secretary and the Political Bureau are handpicked. Let us trace the system further.

The Political Bureau (read: the "Gen-Sec") appoints all the district organizers. If Browder is a paper-backed pamphlet edition of Stalin, the district organizers are leaflet editions of Browder. They select their District Bureaus. In turn, these actually appoint each section organizer, who picks himself a section bureau subject to the critical eye of the higher body. Thus it runs down to the last rung in the ladder.

Hand-Picking Convention Delegates

But the party conventions—hasn't the membership a chance then? Does it not elect the delegates? It does, and it doesn't; essentially, it doesn't. In the first place, conventions are increasingly rare. Whereas in the old days—the period of the Lenin International—conventions were held every year and sometimes more often, even when the American Communist party was underground and illegal, the intervals are far greater now. The Third International has held only one congress in the last ten years, whereas in the three first years of its existence (the Lenin period) it held four of them. So in the Am-

erican party: four years went by before a national convention was held. In the second place, party democracy has been so thoroughly eradicated, that the conventions are fixed and settled well in advance by the bureaucracy, and every little detail is so carefully arranged beforehand that every single aspect of the outcome can easily be foretold by Browder. Here is how the conventions are manufactured:

The section or local conference elects a "nominating committee" which has been prepared for it in advance. After looking over the field, this committee recommends a slate for approval by the convention, which, ninety-nine times out of a hundred, automatically "elects" the slate. It almost looks democratic. The delegates, for the most part, are not aware of the fact that both the "nominating committee" and the slate for the District Committee have been arranged in fine detail by the officialdom. It is true, of course, that additional nominations are allowed by that unusual phenomenon, the "independent" or the uninitiated delegate. But such nominations very, very rarely alter the slate, which is pushed through with all the pressure of the united bureaucratic apparatus. What happens at the district conventions is repeated faithfully at the national conventions. Before the Cleveland convention met, and before even the district convention met which elected the delegates to the national gathering, Browder was in a position to know the name of every delegate who would attend—practically to a man. He knew with even greater exactitude and certainty just who would be "elected" to the incoming Central Committee. The "nominating committee" and the slate were arranged in advance. And just as is the case with a Democratic party candidate in Mississippi or Alabama—nomination is equivalent to election. In the deepest and truest sense of the word, the central party bureaucracy appoints the delegates to the extremely rare party conventions!

But why do the members tolerate such a despotic regime? The answer is that most of them do not tolerate it.

Barracks Discipline

Workers are attracted to the party because of its militancy and its activity, although its activity is about as effective as churning up a lot of tepid water in a bowl. The first, and usually the only principle they are taught in the party is obedience, disguised under the name of "discipline". Lenin's axiom that revolutionary discipline is based upon understanding, upon freely and democratically organized discussion, is considered a petty bourgeois prejudice in the party today. In his unit, the new party member is loaded with a number of tasks, the reasons for which are not clearly explained to him, if at all. Problems and policies are not democratically discussed in the units under any circumstances. The "line" has already been settled up above. Just as it was transmitted to the "up above" by a still higher officialdom, so it is transmitted further down, where a barracks discipline and not a revolutionary proletarian discipline is enforced. The initiative, the resourcefulness,

the intellectual and political development of the ranks are thus choked off from the very outset. "Theirs not to reason why; theirs but to sell Daily Workers or go to demonstrations or shout 'social-Fascist' today and the opposite tomorrow."

This is the horrible situation which the official plenum and convention resolutions of the C.P. refer to when they speak of the "poor inner life" of the party. You can't pick up a resolution without finding that phrase in it. All sorts of remedies are proposed, but not one of them touches the heart of the problem, the basic cause. Nor can the Stalinist bureaucracy propose a fundamental remedy, for the simple reason that bureaucratism, the abolition of party democracy, is the direct and immediate cause of the "poor inner life".

Leaps In—Bounds Out

"Chart B" in the statistical material given the Cleveland party convention delegates deals with "Party Growth—Fluctuation". It gives the membership of the party, month by month, from January 1931 to February 1934, along with the figures of what the membership would have been "if recruits would have remained in party". Thus, at the beginning of 1931, the C. P. had 8,519 members. In February 1934, it records 22,344 members. The chart further records the fact that "if recruits would have remained in party", the membership in that month (Feb. 1934) would have been 56,595. In other words, from the beginning of 1931 to the beginning of 1934, the C. P. took in 48,076 new members, a steady average of more than 1,300 new members every month for three years. Of these 48,076, there remained in the party only 13,825; the rest, 34,251, quit the party. Which means that out of every four workers who joined the C. P. in the last three years, three left the party and only one stayed in it! In 1918, Lenin said about the peasants who were quitting the trenches and refusing to fight any longer, that they were voting against a continuation of the war with their feet. For the most part, it can be repeated today, the workers who quit the party in such a hurry are voting against the bureaucracy and its regime with their feet. Those who stream into the C. P. are living testimony that the American workers can be won to Communism by the thousands. The mass exodus from the party of those workers who get a small sample of the regime and its policies, is tragic witness to the ravages caused by the pestilence called Stalinism.

The curse of bureaucratism has doomed its victim to irremediable disintegration. The putrescent obstacle of the C.P. must make way for the lusty new movement which will grow all the more healthily and strongly because of the lessons it learns from the decay of bureaucratic Stalinism.

The next article in this series will deal with the phenomenon of corruption in the Stalinist party, again on the basis of documents, concrete facts and examples, and reveal how this festering sore is inseparably connected with the suppression of party democracy under Stalinism.

REVIEWING THE NEWS

So You Can't Take It, Mr. Young!

Owen D. Young, chairman of the board of the General Electric Company, counseled the students of an Arkansas college against the fast tempo of modern times. "Recent events," he articulated with a benign abem, "have gone so fast as to get out of hand. Today we do not see great masses of people orderly and intelligently moving upward (bless me Hannah, but what does the dear old gent mean?), but millions of people in every land hanging on in panic to this treadmill of terrific speed, which no one seems able to control."

Oke by us Mr. Young. Why not start this slowness campaign right now. And what a marvellous opportunity for you to revive that good old custom of example setting. Why not slow down the tempo of the General Electric works? Give your men shorter hours, increase their wages and thus insure for them more leisure. What? You say you didn't mean that at all? Well, well, well.

Is There Any Possible Connection Department?

On Tuesday of last week the papers carried headlines to the effect that the war between Bolivia and Paraguay had taken on a new ferocity. On Wednesday of the same week, tucked away in a corner of one of the most respectable of the morning papers appeared the following item: "The announcement of the international tin committee in London of an increase of 40,000 tons in Bolivia's quota means more than \$15,000,000 in Bolivian revenue. Before the increase Bolivia was exporting 14,000 tons, the rev-

enue permitting her to finance the Chaco war without any extra taxation." . . . Get the connection.

Friend or Foe—We Want to Know

The Stalinists have squeezed a new curl in their peripheral wig. This time it is an organization known as "The Friends of the United Front". Now this column is a stickler for accuracy. We want to know, are they friends of any kind of a united front? Are they "the friends of the united front from below" or are they "the friends of the united front from above"? There should be no secret among "friends".

For a Nickel on the Drum You Get a Strikebreaking Bum

(Just a parenthetic remark to the readers—Forgive the poetic headings. . . It's the Spring that's in the air these days). Now to the story.

In this week's A. F. of L. Bulletin we find Mr. William Green exchanging felicitations with the Salvation Army. Had Mr. Green taken a few minutes off from felicitating exchanging and spoken to a rank and file member of the A. F. of L. he might have found out that the Sall is one of the most distinguished recruiting agencies for strike-breakers in this country. Needless to say Mr. Green did not see this. So we find the notorious Baptist writing to Evangeline Booth, Commander of the Salvation Army: "The well wishes, sympathy and support of the A. F. of L. are extended to you. . . We will follow your work with unusual interest and I assure you that we will endeavor to give the Salvation Army our continued cooperation and support."

Leaving Mr. Green for a moment in the act of "cooperating" with the S.A. we turn to the notorious and self-advertised strike-breaker par excellence, Mr. P. L. Bergoff. Turning to strike-breaker Bergoff we find that in his articles for the

New York Post he tells how on being stuck for scabs on one occasion he trotted down to the Salvation Army and there after a few words with the captain in charge Mr. Bergoff was given the run of the shelter. So splendid was the "cooperation" of the S.A. that he was able to enlist over 200 scabs in no time at all. Looks like the good old double cross or is it double play? . . . From Bergoff to Booth to Green.

Meet the Gang!

Would you like to meet the lead-

ers of the Minneapolis truck drivers strike? Would you like to meet the delegates to the League convention coming from all parts of this country and Canada and probably Mexico? Would you like to dance with us and eat with us and drink with us at this festive occasion? Of course you would. Well—don't let nobody but your best friend and your best friend's friend that we are throwing a little shindig at our headquarters this Saturday night. Come as guests of the column.

—GLEE.

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MARCH OF EVENTS

Upturn Hangs Fire

The oft-heralded upturn in American business continues to hang fire with the depression and stagnation taking on a prolonged character. It was the consensus of opinion of economists that the summer slump which dragged the business indices down to record lows would continue on into the fall. Now there are again predictions that the upturn will have to wait till next spring despite the holiday season at the year's end. The heavy industries, the durable goods industries, have failed to show improvement. All the efforts to get housing construction going in order to create heavy demands on the basic forces of production have not as yet proved effective. Through the building trades the bourgeoisie is preparing a new offensive against the standards of living of the working class—under the pretext that high labor costs are the obstacle in the way of a real construction boom.

Under these circumstances the American bourgeoisie, far from confident of the future, have reached a stage where they begin to make up their minds that in order to save the capitalist system it will be necessary to resort to extreme measures. With utter dismay they read in a recent bulletin of the League of Nations that since last May the United States is eleven on the list of countries in rate of recovery as measured by indices of industrial activity. Only four nations—Czechoslovakia, Belgium, Austria and Poland—made a poorer showing. Not the least factor in pushing the finance capitalists toward the road of violent reaction is the growing evidence of working

class militancy. The second of the two strike waves that have swept the entire country recently, showed far greater readiness to battle on the part of the proletariat than did the first, although the strikes were for the most part failures so far as achieving actual gains for the workers was concerned. Already there are evidences of a third strike wave ahead, possibly to be heralded in by the building trades workers.

Danger of Fascism

What is going on in the minds of the moneyed interests is strikingly revealed by General Smedley Butler. There can be not the slightest reason for doubting his story, whatever his motives for making public the truth. Butler was approached with offers of tremendous financial support by Wall Street financiers in order to have him build up a national fascist force for the purpose of establishing a fascist dictatorship. MacGuire acted as the go-between for his employer Colonel Murphy, and for Clark, inheritor of the Singer Sewing Machine millions. Murphy, who served with Butler in the army, is an ideal figure to bring together the actual drill-sergeants of the forces of bloody reaction and the financial backers, belonging himself to both camps. He is connected with an imposing list of corporations, among them the Foreign Credit Corporation, United States Distributing Co., Guarantee Trust Co., Aviation Corporation, Liberty National Bank, Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co., Interborough Rapid Transit Co., New York Transportation Co., Bethlehem Steel Co., Youngstown Sheet and Tube Co., Cuba Cane Sugar Co., etc. Names to be conjured with in the fields of banking and business, companies reeking of reaction and imperialism. It is not difficult to discern, as is barely hinted in the press, the ominous figure of Morgan just back of Colonel Murphy. Butler reveals that

the same interests were to approach General MacArthur, head of the United States Army, and MacNider, former head of the American Legion. Undoubtedly the fascists will seek close connection with the staff of the army, through whom they will be able to secure arms and drill masters all the more readily (witness Italy and Germany). It need not be thought that these public disclosures will deter the bankers and big capitalists from their chosen task. The negotiations with the possible timber for the "man on horseback" will now become all the more secret and hidden from view—that is all.

Our Task

No worker can fail to realize the significance of the few facts that have thus become known, more or less by chance. The situation in America is ripe for the attempt on the part of the capitalists to wipe out all working class organizations, political parties and trade unions. The vast army of unemployed, continually on the verge of starvation, can no longer be fed illusions in place of bread. The impoverished middle class cannot be satisfied any longer with promises. We may look forward to the repetition of the damogogy of European fascism in the attempt of finance capital to ensnare the strata of desperate workers and petty bourgeoisie in the net of reaction. Hence it becomes the duty of the vanguard of the proletariat to meet the challenge of fascism, to intensify its effort to establish a working class United Front of Action against fascism. It becomes the duty of every class conscious worker to help build a new revolutionary party, the only force that can defeat fascism. The new Workers Party shortly to be launched will dedicate itself to this task and deserves the support of all workers.

—JACK WEBER.