

WORKERS' FORUM

Avenge the Death of This Auto Worker!

Editor:
Frank Clus was 58 years old, father of six children. He was an auto worker, a good one. He had the pleasure of making a home for his children, there was a garage in the backyard. When the 1929 crash came and the layoffs began, Frank was lucky. He didn't go in the first layoffs, or the second or third. But in 1931 he did go.

He never got his job back. Not in nine years, for never during all that time did all the workers go back to work, and Frank was a little older and they took back only the strongest. So yesterday Frank went into the garage in

the backyard of their home here on Solway Avenue, after he slashed his wrists, and he hanged himself to be sure of finishing the job. His 26-year old son, Frank Jr., came home and he saw a trail of blood through their home and he followed the trail of blood and at the end of it he found his father, dead.

Frank, the elder, was a fine man. He'd done his duty to society. God knows, raising a family of six children. And his reward was to die in that horrible state of loneliness that must be the lot of suicides. Is there any reason why his children, and every worker who knew him, shouldn't swear to avenge him?

Unemployed Auto Worker
Detroit, Mich.

Warning About Funds For Anti-Nazi Work

Editor:

Every local and central body affiliated to the AFL is now receiving letters from the Federation, signed by Green, calling upon all affiliated unions to back the underground German labor movement, morally and financially.

A splendid idea! International solidarity! Support the German revolution!

But alas, it turns out that the money is to go to the Vorwaerts group, that is, the "official" leadership of the Social Democratic party of Germany, who publish the Vorwaerts now in Paris. It is true that before Hitler suppressed it, Vorwaerts was the official organ of the German labor unions as well as of the Social Democracy, but it is also true, and easily verifiable:

1. Not a single group of socialists or trade unionists which remained in Germany to carry on the struggle against Hitler has recognized the leadership of the Vorwaerts group. On the contrary, all those who managed to get word out have re-

puted these bankrupts who, equally with the Stalinists, were responsible for the triumph of Hitler. All money received by the Vorwaerts people is expended outside Germany for their clique.

2. Vorwaerts is published freely in Paris today, when all other German refugee organs there are suppressed, as are suppressed all the anti-war papers of French labor. That alone tells the story. Reading Vorwaerts is like reading communiques of the French war propaganda machine. In a word, these "socialists" fight Hitler with French bayonets, and their sole perspective is to march home behind these bayonets.

For the purpose of making the principle stand alone, I do not add the names of those groups collecting money for anti-Nazi work within Germany which are worthy of support, groups which are genuinely anti-war against the French too. I hope, however, that I have indicated the principle by which these groups should be judged before one gives them money.

German Socialist
New York City

Auto Workers Listen Vainly to Lewis

(Continued from Page 1)

the greatest productive wealth ever accumulated by mankind. The workers cheered that, but their cheers were snuffed out as Lewis gave no direct word how to win jobs and decent living for the millions of locked-out toilers.

Lewis pointed out that there are 4,000,000 families in America with an income of about \$26 a month, and another 6,000,000 families with an income of \$63 a month. But he carefully avoided saying a word about how these millions of families are to fight and win from the multi-billionaire share of the national wealth.

Two-faced On War

The founder of the CIO warned the workers that there are many who would like to see the American workers shed their blood in an imperialist war" and the auto workers massed and jammed in the halls roared their hate of war.

But the auto workers became uneasy and silent when Lewis said: "If you want the workers to fight, first give them a chance

to earn a living". The workers instinctively felt Lewis was promising the war mongers the unqualified help of American labor for imperialist slaughter, if only the American capitalists would give a bribe to labor now.

Silent On Labor Party

Lewis attacked the old parties, Democrats and Republicans alike. But the workers listened in vain for him to bring them to their feet with a declaration announcing the launching of a labor party, independent of both boss parties, a party which labor and only labor controls.

Then Lewis skirmished with every major problem facing the labor movement, but for none of these problems did he point a way out.

Reuther No Better

Walter Reuther, Executive Board member of the UAW-CIO spoke in precisely the same manner as John L. Lewis. He pointed out only what is known to every auto worker, that the UAW-CIO

is the only union in the industry. He spoke vaguely about "a guaranteed annual wage" but gave not a shadow of indication how the union was to take definite organizational steps to achieve this demand. He mentioned the 30 hour week at 40 hours pay, but did not explain the program of action to win this fundamental and necessary demand from the corporation.

Workers Mean Business

The mass meetings were a demonstration of the situation that has prevailed in the auto industry for some time. The rank and file auto workers are eager and anxious to fight for and with the CIO. But the leaders are hesitant and afraid to direct the workers' militancy in a definite direction, in an organized campaign to win security for the workers from the huge profits of the corporations.

The auto workers have demonstrated over and over that despite the vacillation of the leaders, the

workers are capable of starting and winning a fight against the corporations.

The 1937 sit downs are the eloquent testimony to the militancy and determination of the auto workers. What more do the leaders want?

"Ordinary" Demands Pointless

All auto workers are convinced today that to achieve any kind of security in the plants the ordinary demands of seniority, wage increase, and the like are not sufficient in themselves. With the daily introduction of new machines, new methods of decreasing the need for labor, the corporations are displacing more and more workers, condemning them to permanent unemployment.

Every year the auto worker produces more and more. The profits of the corporation get bigger and bigger with fewer and fewer men in the plants.

There is a way out. And that way is—ACTION on the 30 hour week at 40 hours pay!

Minority Resolutions On Organization, Rejected by Party Convention

MINORITY RESOLUTION ON THE ORGANIZATION AND TASKS OF THE PARTY

(REJECTED BY THE CONVENTION)

The main task of the party in the present period has been and remains to organize and orient itself in such a manner as to enable it to meet most effectively the decisive test of the war. The party, and above all the party leadership, has thus far failed to carry out this task.

The present party leadership revealed a complete failure to respond to the problems created by the outbreak of the war. Although the war has lasted for more than six months, this failure has yet to be overcome. For the proposal to set the party in motion on a new footing, corresponding to the new situation, the leadership substituted the policy of dead calm and indifference which has kept the party in a state of paralysis for half a year. The proposal for a plenum of the National Committee to meet the war situation promptly was resisted for weeks on the most absurd of pretexts. At the plenum and since it was held, not a single serious step has been taken to adjust the outlook and activity of the party to correspond to the war situation. The party press has virtually ignored the Second World War, has given no analysis of it, no analysis worthy of the name of the new Stalinist turn, no analysis of the succession of steps taken in the war by the Soviet Union. It is significant that of all the important radical labor organizations, our party is virtually alone in not having issued a manifesto on the war to this very day. To all intents and purposes, the party continues along its road as if the Second World War had not broken out at all.

This entirely negative reaction to the war crisis has clearly disclosed the existence of a party leadership permeated with routinism and conservatism. This spirit is communicated to the ranks with demoralizing effects. It is reflected in the passivity or rather in the haphazard direction and general lack of initiative of the leadership. It is concerned more with the preservation of its authority and with acting as a "court of appeals" over the branches than with launching and carrying through systematically the indicated campaigns of the party. It displays the greatest sensitiveness to healthy criticism from the ranks and little sensitivity to political events. It leaps readily from its state of passivity whenever it is confronted with such criticism.

The painful but all-important process of making the turn from the past of the movement as a propagandist group to a movement seeking to exert growing influence among the masses, is confined to episodic advances in isolated situations and, above all, to resolutions which remain on paper. The Transitional Program, upon every single letter of which the present leadership insisted when it was formally adopted, has been put into effect spasmodically or not at all. The taking of bold steps calculated to speed the party's intervention in political events, is frowned upon. All tendencies in that direction are usually attacked as "ultra-leftist" and "adventurist," although these are scarcely the most dangerous or widespread tendencies in the party. All the failures and shortcomings of the party are usually attributed to the "objective situation."

The results have been a condition that is little better than stagnation in the party, which would be worse were it not for the numerical contributions to party membership made by the youth, and a state of constant friction and bad relationships between the members of the party (and especially of the youth), and the party leadership, which resents all serious criticism and resists it with the stubbornness of a petty bureaucracy.

The more serious the criticism of the party leadership, its policy and its regime, the more clearly does it reveal that it is dominated in actuality by a clique which was never elected by the party membership and which has not justified its existence by a separate political platform of its own. Convinced that its permanent domination of the party leadership is for its best interests, and is predestined, regardless of the political or organizational question under discussion at any given time, it consequently pays only a verbal respect to party democracy and readily violates it when it conflicts with its own clique interests.

It is necessary for the party to lay the greatest stress upon this situation, not to the exclusion of or for the purpose of minimizing the importance of other defects and evils, but precisely in order to proceed to their correction. Without eliminating the stranglehold of bureaucratic cliquism which has imposed the present regime upon the party, it is impossible to adopt and carry out correct policies, to improve the composition and functioning of the party, or to remedy any of the other serious shortcomings of the party.

The Second World War, the war danger in the United States, and the struggle against it—these must constitute the central axis around which all our work revolves. The party must be organized and oriented in this spirit, because it must stand out in the eyes of growing numbers of workers as the party of militant struggle against war. It is therefore necessary to proceed along the following lines:

I — ROOT THE PARTY AMONG THE WORKERS

The change in the social composition of the party cannot be achieved by the mere assertion that such a change is needed. It is realizable only by planfully directing every branch, and every member in it, to concentration on the trade unions and other mass organizations, and on the factories. In this respect, the youth movement is our most important single instrument. It is composed of comrades with a relatively high political education who, unlike the youth of the "prosperity" period, are revolutionary-minded, militant and devoted to the cause. Despite the evident difficulties, they must be systematically directed to enter industry, in which they can acquire an experience and training

indispensable to their own development and at the same time become the most effective organizers for the movement.

II — A PARTY OF ANTI-WAR AGITATION

The idea of facing towards the unions and the factories can become—as it has been too often in the past—meaningless without a party activity which would realistically make possible contact with and success in these fields. Party activity in the trade unions means not so much the elaboration of grandiose "trade union policies" and maneuvers with other union groups—we are far too weak as yet to entertain such ambitions—but the popularization of our immediate demands and slogans among the masses of the workers. Chief among these must be, in the coming period, those demands and slogans which are directly related to the war danger which is so keenly and deeply felt by the working masses and the youth. This means the revival and extension of the campaign principle of party activity. It means, above all in the present stage, concentration upon the printing and distribution on a large scale of the simplest and most popular leaflets and cheap pamphlets, each confined to a single slogan expressing and popularizing our program. These must be written and disseminated with an eye towards the industrial workers, and be calculated to arouse them to political consciousness and action and above all to the consciousness that our party is the only militant anti-war organization. If the activity of the party and youth membership, and the columns of our press, are organized in this spirit, we shall accomplish far more towards rooting the party among the industrial workers than a dozen formal and detailed resolutions on trade union work. This is especially true of the work among the Negroes as a group which, as the most downtrodden and oppressed, must find in the party a consistent champion. The activity of the Negro Department has already shown how fruitful this work can be for the party, and the weak support thus far given the Department must be greatly increased.

III — CAMPAIGNS AND RECRUITMENT

Because of its essentially propagandistic past, which has fostered corresponding habits, the party has not developed the practice or technique of recruiting. Hand in hand with a far too high standard of political requirements for membership which has served to limit recruiting possibilities, has gone a low standard of activity requirements for those already in our ranks. The campaign principle of party activity can degenerate into a purely literary effort unless it is integrally coupled with systematic recruiting efforts. These efforts, in turn, would be nullified unless we eliminated from our minds the sectarian rigidity with which we tend to approach the potential recruit, that is, again, the far too high standard of political and theoretical qualifications we set for party membership. The development of the average recruit towards a full-fledged revolutionary position will take place during his membership and activity in the party rather than prior to it. It is not so much the program as it is written down in our fundamental documents that must—or can—attract recruits to the party, but the program as translated in the daily political activity of the party that will accomplish this end. In this sense the campaigns of the party must be recruiting campaigns as well. It is in this sense that the mass actions of the party must be conceived. An attitude of alertness and boldness, of seizing on appropriate occasions, can often make such mass actions possible and fruitful. This was demonstrated during the anti-Coughlin, anti-Bund campaign of the party. Such an attitude should not be decried as "baseless in the present objective situation" or as "adventurist," but should rather be encouraged.

IV — BUILD UP THE YOUTH MOVEMENT

The most important single section of the movement in this country is our Youth organization. The fact that the party leadership has never paid attention to the problems and development of the Youth save, in most recent times, for purposes of factional advantage, is a standing indictment of this leadership. The importance of the Youth organization may be understood not only in the light of its comparatively large membership and the fact that it contributes the overwhelming majority of the party's new membership, but above all by the fact that it represents the generation that will do the fighting in the war and, therefore, constitute the main reservoir of revolutionary mass strength. The party must devote a hundred times more attention in the future than it has in the past to building and strengthening the Youth organization. This requires not an ignoring of its mistakes and defects, but, among other reasons, in order to remedy these mistakes and defects, a comradely and serious attitude towards it and its problems. Up to now the party leadership has had a bureaucratic and contemptuous attitude towards the Youth, on those occasions when it has bothered to concern itself with the organization. The critical attitude of the youth towards the political and internal problems of the party has been generally healthy and progressive, which is added reason why this attitude should be encouraged instead of rudely denounced and attacked. A party leadership can establish its authority with the Youth, and with the movement generally, only by a patient attitude and one which welcomes criticism. This in turn will enormously facilitate its task of educating and training the Youth for the revolutionary proletarian movement, its task of correcting the mistakes and straightening the line of the Youth.

V — POLITICAL EDUCATION OF THE PARTY

The course of the present discussion in the party has revealed the need of greatly intensifying the work of revolutionary Marxist education in fundamental principles among the party membership. The educational work of the party has declined noticeably in the past couple of years, which is especially dangerous in view of the newness of many party members and the prospect of gaining still other new members. The ability of the party leadership to base its case to so large an extent upon appeals to prejudice, to "faith," as well as the injurious effects of the

party leadership's theoretical and political helplessness in dealing with new problems or new manifestations of old problems, would be greatly reduced by planned training of all party and youth members in the basic principles of revolutionary Marxism, including, especially, the question of the nature of the party and its role in the revolution. The discussion has also revealed more clearly the ever-latest danger of the tendency to regard "politics" and political or theoretical discussion as a luxury, particularly as a "luxury" which is counterposed to "practical" work. At bottom, this expresses the tendency to remove the practical, daily activity of the party membership, especially in the mass organizations, from political direction and control, which can only mean in the last analysis from the direction and control of the party. While such a tendency is often understandable, in that it represents a reaction against dilettantism or permanent "discussionism," it is nevertheless necessary, by combatting the latter, to resist and overcome the tendency referred to. It cannot be resisted, however, by demagogic attacks upon the democratic right, and need, of discussion which only fosters this tendency.

PARTY DEMOCRACY AND COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP

The pressing problems of the party cannot be solved independently of the question of the party leadership and its regime. Rather, the first big and serious step towards solving them can be taken only frankly and fearlessly facing the question of the party regime and by changing this regime.

The passivity, routinism and conservatism of the party regime, its political helplessness which borders on paralysis, is only the other side of its bureaucratism. The party leadership is concerned above all else with its "authority" and "prestige." It seeks to maintain these primarily by a clique formation which sedulously nurtures the reactionary idea of the Leader cult, presumably on the theory that an outstanding leader is superior to a collective leadership. Leadership is tested not so much and not in the first place by its policies and actions but, in this conception, by the degree of loyalty to the individual leader. Leading committees officially and solemnly installed by the representative institutions and bodies of the party become hollow and decorative, and have a function only in so far as they agree with or accept the policies of the clique. In consequence, criticisms of the leadership, regardless of their degree of validity, are fiercely rejected as personal attacks upon the clique, above all, on its leader. A healthy relationship between the party membership and the party leadership is impossible under such conditions. Equally impossible is the normal and healthy elaboration, application, checking and revising of party policy. Under the best conditions, party democracy thus becomes a set of essentially meaningless formulas.

The sound principle of democratic centralism has been perverted in practice into a super-centralism in defense of the party leadership, that is, the clique which dominates it, and anything but centralism in the direction of the daily activity of the party. The best traditions of the revolutionary Marxist movement in this realm, especially the traditions of Lenin, are defied in the name of a "Bolshevism" which is equated with the particular interests and needs of the dominant clique.

PROTESTS LIMITATION OF PUBLIC DISCUSSION

The preservation of democratic centralism, of party democracy, requires the free and collective elaboration of party policy by the entire membership and a correspondingly free selection of a collective leadership; and, in turn, complete solidarity and discipline in action once a policy is decided upon. The present party leadership has repeatedly violated the principle of democratic centralism. The auto crisis in the party, for example, revealed the existence of a closed clique actually dominating the party leadership, deciding party policy and organization, and making it clear that the regularly elected leading committee was essentially decorative and formal. The suppression of the point of view of the minority in the present dispute, by excluding it from the regular pre-convention discussion in the columns of the Appeal, and also from the pages of the party's theoretical organ, is a violation of the best traditions and practices of our movement, representing at bottom a bureaucratic fear of confronting a revolutionary opponent before the militant workers.

It is imperative that the deadly grip of this group, which is a typical clique because of the fact that, apart from the present dispute, it has continued to maintain itself without a separate political platform, be broken in the party, its monopolistic control of the party leadership eliminated, and the regime it has established replaced by a regime of party democracy. Collective leadership in the party is a meaningless phrase in the present concrete circumstances unless these steps are taken. Above all, these steps are unoppositely urgent in view of the war danger. The war will put the party to decisive tests. Among them will be the test of the leadership's ability and desire to maintain the utmost loyalty, and the utmost party democracy compatible with war conditions. The party and youth membership must have a greater assurance than it now feels that its leading committees will not abuse their positions and power and reduce genuine party democracy to an even greater mockery than it is today, in time of peace. The elimination of the dominance of the present clique leadership, or its replacement by the minority faction, is not sufficient. It is necessary to introduce into the leadership fresh elements, primarily genuine proletarians and the most qualified youth; and we must not substitute for genuine industrial workers those who, on the most superficial grounds, try to parade as such merely on the grounds that they are part of the "proletarian" faction in the party.

WANTS DISCUSSION TO BE ENCOURAGED

It is necessary, furthermore, to have more specific assurances in the party that discussion in the party, far from being curtailed and looked upon as a "luxury," will be encouraged in the future. The fact that discussion must always be regulated by

the party and its leading committees, must not be used as a pretext for suppressing discussion on the demagogic grounds that "there is work to be done." All party work will be done better and more effectively and correctly if party democracy is jealously maintained. The revolutionary party cannot be a "discussion club," but neither must it be converted into a Stalinist "monolithic" organization. Only a rich inner life can make possible a fruitful life of activity in mass work. The party must therefore adopt the following rules: (a) an internal party bulletin shall be published regularly and be made available to the membership for the discussion of daily problems of party work and policy; (b) the party leadership shall be bound to open the columns of the Socialist Appeal from time to time for the discussion of new policies of the party, not in the sense of a factional dispute, but in order to acquaint the sympathizers of the party with our problems and the manner in which we solve them; in such discussions, party sympathizers should be invited to take part; in pre-convention periods, the Appeal should be thrown open to a discussion of all convention problems, with a censorship exercised essentially only over confidential party affairs or irresponsible polemical exaggeration; (c) the pages of the New International shall be open the year round to discussions of theoretical and scientific problems of Marxism, of such questions as, for example, dialectical materialism, or the class nature of the Soviet state—discussions in which, it goes without saying, the party shall expound and defend its own view on all those questions on which it has adopted an official position.

The special technical preparation of the party for war, though decided upon some time ago, has gone the way of most of our decisions, more accurately, it has remained a decision on paper. Regardless of what else is done, the first blows of the war can scatter us all in a hundred directions unless this preparation is actually set on foot. Collectively and individually, from top to bottom, the party and youth membership must be impressed with the key importance of this question, and be given the necessary preliminary training and instructions.

Only if the party is organized and oriented along the lines indicated in this resolution will it be able to pass the test of the war crisis and utilize it to build up the mass revolutionary party of socialism.

MINORITY RESOLUTION ON PARTY UNITY

(REJECTED BY THE CONVENTION)

The dispute and discussion on the Russian question has revealed the existence of two politically irreconcilable tendencies in the party. As the discussion develops in other sections, it is clear that these two tendencies exist throughout the Fourth International.

In the Socialist Workers Party, the struggle between the two groups has led to accusations by each side that the other is preparing a split. Whatever opinions may be on the validity if these accusations, it is quite clear that the danger of a split in the American section of the Fourth International is a real one. It is also clear that a split would prove disastrous to the American section and to the International as a whole. Every possible political and organizational step, compatible with the fundamental principles of the Fourth International, must therefore be taken to avert such a split. Despite the sharpness and profundity of the differences, it is still necessary to allow the further intervention of events to exert an influence on both groups, to test their positions, and thus to make possible a much closer political and organizational collaboration at a subsequent stage without the risk of a split in the meantime.

It must, however, be recognized that the nature of the differences is such that it does not permit of solution merely by the procedure, normal in the movement, of having the convention minority submit to the convention majority. Although both groups acknowledge the irreconcilability of their positions, they both nevertheless declare that the conflicting tendencies are compatible with membership in the Fourth International, that is, neither group proposes to expel the other for its political views.

MINORITY WANTS ITS OWN PUBLIC PAPER

Under these exceptional conditions it is therefore necessary to take an exceptional measure in order to preserve the unity of the party. The party must extend to whichever group is the minority at the convention the right to publish a public journal of its own, defending the general program of the Fourth International and at the same time presenting in an objective manner the special position of its tendency on the disputed Russian question. Under the conditions of the present factional fight, that is, given the views which each faction holds concerning the other, such a journal can only be published upon the responsibility and under the control of the tendency itself.

While recognizing that this is an exceptional measure, the party, which has nothing in common with Stalinist monolithism, must call attention to the fact that the Leninist party and our own Fourth International has on similar exceptional occasions found it necessary to take such a step in the attempt to preserve the unity of the movement. Minorities of the Bolshevik party, both before and during the first World War, exercised this right under unusual conditions, thus often reducing the danger of a split; the history of the Fourth International contains many similar instances, most recently in the case of the French section.

Such a solution of the threat of a violent split in the American section is the only concrete one that can be made in the present factional fight.