

# Report to the Central Committee Meeting of the C.P.U.S.A., January 15-18, 1935

By EARL BROWDER

**F**IRST of all on the developments of the international situation. It is one of the signs of the times that yesterday the newspapers reported the speech of Senator Nye, in which he declared that "it is safe to say we are closer to war today than we were thirty days before the World War". Senator Nye is not talking as a private individual, not only as Senator, but as the head of the munitions investigation which has led him very close to the question of the imminence of war. His utterance is not an isolated one. Where a year or two ago the Communists were the only ones to talk about the war danger, today everyone speaks of it much in the same terms as those used by Senator Nye.

Since the last meeting of our Central Committee there has been a series of outstanding events to underline this question. There was in the first line the assassination of our Comrade Kirov, one of the outstanding leaders of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, one of the closest co-workers of Comrade Stalin. This assassination was without question part of a highly organized conspiracy of international ramifications, designed to answer the tremendous achievements of our Socialist fatherland in the construction of the new order by not only attempting to throw confusion into the ranks of the Russian workers, but at the same time to encourage and provoke the imperialist attack against the Soviet Union. It is a definite part of the drive towards war.

The events surrounding the Saar plebiscite, the results of which are just announced this morning, are by no means ended with the announcement of the poll. The Saar remains one of the points of greatest strain in the imperialist system around which forces of imperialist war are revolving. The break-up of the naval negotiations further emphasizes this situation and brings forward in the center of the war danger, especially in relation to the tasks of the American Party, the sharpening of the Japanese-American antagonisms, which play a decisive role on the whole process of the regrouping of the imperialist forces of the entire world. There is no doubt that but for the threat of revolutionary upheavals and the enormously growing defensive powers of the Soviet Union backing up the ag-

gressive peace policy of the Soviet Union, that war would long ago have broken out.

The rising tide of revolutionary struggles—outstandingly the battles in Spain and the growing revolutionary crisis in Cuba, right at our own doorstep, strengthen the forces of the struggle against war, but at the same time bring it closer to the point when some event, more or less casual or accidental, may explode the powder barrel of imperialist antagonisms.

All of the work of our Party has to be conducted in the light of this world situation. It is not necessary for us to give again a detailed analysis of all of these problems, but it is necessary to remind ourselves of these as the foundation for all our treatment of the daily problems of our work.

Now I want to say just a few words about the developments of the economic situation since the last meeting of the Central Committee. During this short period, there have been ups and downs of the economic trends. In October and November the economic activity of the United States had reached the bottom of a new decline, which was approximately about the same level which had already been reached under Hoover in November 1932, two years before.

Now there is again a slight upturn. We cannot say definitely how far it will go, the exact moment at which the decline will again come, but we can establish the fact that all of the fluctuations, up and down, in the last year and a half have taken place within the limits below the high point of the inflation policy of the first months of the Roosevelt Administration and above the low levels of the Hoover Administration. That is, all of these ups and downs serve to emphasize that characterization given by Stalin a year ago when he pointed out that the crisis has entered a period of depression, but it is a depression of a special kind—a prolonged depression which gives no hope for a return to boom prosperity. Everything that is happening confirms this analysis.

It is necessary to say just one or two words about new features of the policy, as carried through by the Roosevelt Administration. Since our last meeting the Administration has definitely moved to the Right. It has definitely set itself to bridge the gap between itself and the policy of the Liberty League. The policy on unemployment and the so-called "security" program fully confirms this.

It hardly even has a demagogic value any more. The labor policy, the policy towards the American Federation of Labor unions has moved even further, more definitely away from the demagogic promises of Section 7A, more decisively towards the possibility of company unions, necessary to prevent the organization of real trade unions and against any unionism at all where that is possible.

This first policy of the Roosevelt administration is particularly important for us to note because it serves to emphasize greatly the favorable opportunities for our work among the broadest masses, especially in the organization of the A. F. of L., because this development brings out before the masses in much sharper form than ever before the contradictions between the immediate interests of the masses and the policies of the leadership of the A. F. of L. Circumstances under which the bureaucracy carry out the policy today are much more difficult, and the maneuvering ground has been narrowed, and all possibilities of leading the masses and winning them to our class struggle policy in much broader numbers have been greatly increased.

Coincident with this whole development, which serves to emphasize the economic results of the year 1934 for the bourgeoisie, which has been one of increasing profits for the capitalists and a decline in the living standards for the masses, we have the concurrent development of fascist mass movements in their first stages. The concerted attack against the living standard of the masses is necessary more and more, supplementing the methods of demagoguery with that of open fascist violence. Not that demagoguery is passing out of the picture, but rather that it is incorporating within itself more and more the direct physical attacks against every manifestation of revolutionary mass organization and action.

The revelation of Smedley Butler throws an interesting light on all of these things which are going on underneath the surface, and by no means has revealed the most important facts. The rising of the figure of the half-fascist Huey Long as a major national political figure has also an important connection with this problem.

The beginnings of a national mass organization around the radio priest Father Coughlin are also a symptom of this development. And above all we must note the open fascist campaign of Hearst in the Hearst press which is already, in the case of Hearst's attack against all even liberal tendencies in universities and schools in the United States, taking on all the characteristic features of the first stages of Hitler's campaign in Germany.

We have already in documents, and in articles which have been made available for the whole Party, analyzed the main features of the upsurge of the working class, the toiling masses generally, which has developed during 1934, as the response to these attacks by the bourgeoisie. It is not necessary for us to take the time of this meeting to go over all of this ground again. We will note here these things as basic to our further discussion.

We must emphasize that as a result of all of these developments, profound changes have taken place in this country in the recent

period. We have been adjusting ourselves to these changes step by step during the course of the year. We have been modifying and hammering out our policy, trying at every step of the development to keep our feet firmly upon the ground, not going off into any speculations, testing the ground as we go along, and making the further steps in the developments of our policy, the correctness of which has been proven not only to the Central Committee leadership of our Party, but to the Party membership as a whole and to the broad masses surrounding our Party, and the correctness of the decision after that development. We can say that the most successful feature of the work of the Central Committee of our Party in this past year has been precisely this feature: that we have carried the Party and the workers who are with us almost 100 per cent without the slightest doubt being left in their minds as to the correctness of these policies in connection with every change and every shift of emphasis that we have made.

I will speak first about the new development in our trade union policy. This is basic to all of our work. We have made important changes in our trade union tactics in the course of 1934. Some of these we discussed at the Eighth Convention of the Party. We developed this further in the two following meetings of the Central Committee. The general direction of these changes has been clear to the Party from the beginning. It consisted of a shift of emphasis away from the independent organization to the work within the larger mass organization, in the American Federation of Labor. It is clear, the force that predetermined this shift were the influx of many hundreds of thousands of new workers from the basic industries, including large numbers of unskilled and semi-skilled, including mass production plants as well as basic industries, into the A. F. of L. unions and the growing radicalization of the old membership in the reformist unions.

These factors opened up new and greater possibilities of mass work within the larger reformist unions, opened up a field which had not existed for several years. Now as a result of our concrete developments in carrying through this shift of policy we are able to summarize the results of our last years' work now at this meeting of the Central Committee and to give a general clarification of the whole question in much more precise and comprehensive terms than we were before. The line is clear. The problems have been worked out in principle, we have proven in action among the masses the correctness of the policy which we have developed. We are now able to say very clearly and definitely that the main task of the Party in the sphere of trade union work must be the work in the A. F. of L., so as to energetically and tirelessly mobilize the masses

of their members in the trade unions as a whole for the defense of the every day interests, the development of the policy of class struggle in the mass unions of the A. F. of L., fighting on the basis of trade union democracy, for the independent leadership of these struggles in spite of the sabotage and treachery of the reformist bureaucrats.

We have established unquestionably an enormous increase in strength which we are getting from taking the initiative boldly, aggressively for the struggle of the unity of the trade unions, the struggle for one united trade union movement, for their industrial structure, for the organization of the unorganized, for amalgamation of the craft unions along industrial lines; the struggle for trade union democracy within these unions, within the general framework of the A. F. of L. We have established that in this development a very serious and important role is played by the revolutionary unions. I don't think it is necessary for me at this meeting again to go over the ground of establishing the historical justification of the revolutionary independent unions. They proved themselves in the class struggle as necessary instruments without which we could never have had the present situation of great advance within the A. F. of L. And also at this moment, the independent revolutionary unions have a great role to play in the fight for the general unification of the trade union movement and for the establishment of class struggle policies within the A. F. of L.

The revolutionary unions which have taken the initiative in leading this struggle have strengthened themselves and not weakened themselves, and where there has been the merger with the A. F. of L. unions, it has not been at the cost of weakening the revolutionary movement, but greatly broadening and deepening the mass roots of the revolutionary trade union movement.

An outstanding example of this has been the Paterson silk workers and dyers, which gives an answer that should convince the most skeptical of our comrades, that should convince everybody except the incurable egomaniacs, and renegades like Zack. We have established the fact that while practically we will for a long time be faced with the problems of the necessity of independent unions in one field or another, that we cannot have utopian hopes of quickly securing the immediate unification in the trade union movement within the A. F. of L., yet in principle even the maintenance and strengthening of these independent unions, which must continue independent, are best served by the approach to the questions that in principle we are for the complete unification; that the independent existence of smaller trade unions is a temporary thing and not in any sense a question of principle with us. We have proven that this approach does not

weaken the work in the independent unions. Those who have tried to come forward against these changes, against this trade union line, who have put themselves up as the champions of the policy who want to mechanically liquidate them, have been fully answered by the fact that these independent unions, which are growing and strengthening themselves, are precisely those which are closest to the Communist Party. And we have proven in life that the policy of the C.P. is the best protection of the interests of those workers and the best defense against any liquidation tendencies. We have learned in the carrying through of these changes that the change that we are in the process of making, must be much more profound and deep-going. So far this change has not been completely carried through. So far it has not yet sufficiently penetrated and affected and changed the habits and methods of our work of our comrades down below. This is reflected especially in the question of our daily response to the daily questions of our relations with the A. F. of L. unions.

At this meeting it is necessary for us to see that we must from top to bottom in our movement change the tone with which we approach and deal with A. F. of L. unions. We must not have the tone of an approach toward enemy organizations. While criticizing and exposing more concretely, more effectively, the treacherous leadership of the officialdom, we must make it in a manner that is really convincing to the broadest rank and file, and with the tone which gives not one single worker the excuse for believing that in us he finds an obstacle towards the building and strengthening of his union—what he regards as his union. We must have the approach not of fighting against the functionaries in the trade union movement, but of drawing in all of the honest functionaries,—and there are thousands of them down below—and winning them for our movement, and making these lower activists of the A. F. of L. real forces for the revolutionary trade union movement.

And we must establish that we are not an irresponsible criticizing opposition within the union, but that we are the most active and most responsible section of the union; ready ourselves to take the full responsibility for the leadership and the administration of the union as a whole and responsible to the whole mass of the membership. And in this connection we must speak very concretely against old habits of thought and old methods of work in the reformist unions which have crystallized around the conception of opposition and minority movements. Around these two terms there have crystallized whole sectarian habits of thought where we have withdrawn ourselves from the life of the union, with no expectations and hopes of ever becoming the leadership and administration, but become a small

group of opposition on principle, whom the membership always expects to be against everything and never doing responsible work in the unions for the solution of the problems.

The same thing applies to the conception of minority movements, of a permanent minority. We come in the unions not to be the minority, but to win the majority in the shortest possible time, to break down the whole ideology of our forms and habits which we have.

This means that while we must give the struggle an organized form, that this must not be a blue-print uniformly and mechanically applied everywhere, but that the organized form must grow out of the intimate life of this union so that all the members will understand that this is not an outside body, but even those who are against us must see that it is something natural and legitimate that grows out of this union, the members of the union.

These are the main features that we establish in our Resolution, before you, on the trade union question. We take a further step in this Resolution. But a step which is logical and inevitable, summarizing and rounding-out all of the steps we have been taking in the past year. With this Resolution, I think, we can say that the evaluation of our trade union policy to meet the present situation has now been completed, that our problem from this becomes the finding of the concrete roads through which we can establish everywhere and in every industry such powerful foundations by our movement as have already in a few short months been developed in the few places in textile, some beginnings in steel, in mining, etc.

Now a few words about some of the special problems of the united front. The trade union question is, of course, basic to the whole problem of the united front. The signs of the development of the united front moves and movements among the workers are above all demonstrated in the trade unions. Precisely in this connection we have spoken about the various industries and such phenomena as the rebuff given to Green's circular for the expulsion of the Communists.

In the United States more than in most of the leading capitalist countries, the problem of the united front is broader than winning the workers in and around the Socialist Party. The problem of the united front is, first of all, the problem of the trade unions, of broad circles of non-party workers or followers of the old parties, and of the non-proletarian strata. However, we must not on this account underestimate the importance of the question of our relation to the Socialist Party workers. The Socialist Party has in spite of its weak and demoralized condition at the present time, enormous potentialities for harm for the working class movement,

which can only be countered and overcome by us with the correct united front approach and the winning of the followers of the Socialist Party for united front actions. The central question which we have not yet sufficiently solved in practice in the development of all phases of our united front activity is the carrying out throughout various united front work of a very broad mass agitation and propaganda about the role of our Party. This problem we used to express in the caution against hiding the face of our Party. But that old phrase has perhaps become too much of just a label which is mechanically applied to certain situations and mechanically answered. Let us restate this problem. Let us place this question from the point of view of the tasks of our Party to make use of the united front activity to educate the broadest masses as to what our Party is, what our program is, what our practical program is, to bring this through our united front activity, not merely in touch with our membership, but giving them knowledge of our Party as the organized driving force within the united front.

We have been in the past year trying to teach the Party by example how this can be done and how there is no contradiction between this talk of educating the masses on the role of our Party, with the simultaneous task of building the united front on the broadest possible basis. Any attempt to broaden out the united front, by putting into the background this task of teaching the masses about our Party, is a fatal opportunist error, which not only places our Party in the background and hides it from the masses, but defeats and destroys our efforts to broaden and build the united front of struggle for important and immediate issues.

I think that in the recent Washington Congress on Unemployment Insurance, we gave an example of how the sharp bringing forward of the Party and its role and its whole revolutionary program not only doesn't endanger the broadest united front, but serves to cement it, to crystallize it together as a conscious, organized movement which cannot be shattered and dispersed by any casual event of the day.

We must make the whole Party conscious of the problem, and on the basis of the best examples of our Party work, carry this method of work down into every neighborhood, down into every trade union and into every workers' organization. We must make a determined effort now to liquidate the still-strong sectarian tendencies in the daily work of our Party.

We have talked a great deal about the struggle against sectarianism; we have been struggling against sectarianism quite consciously in an organized way for several years. But now we must bring this struggle against sectarianism and methods and habits of sectarianism



to a new stage, and not just a question of increasing the amount of our talk against sectarianism.

Now it is the question of bringing the whole Party actively into mass work and liquidating through practical experience every old habit, and every old idea that stands as an obstacle between us and the masses. That means, of course, getting the whole Party active in carrying through these trade union tasks, these tasks of the united front, getting every Party unit, every Party committee, every Party member daily facing and solving concrete problems of contact with broad masses of workers; to throw the whole life and attention of the Party from the inward orientation, to the outward, so that their whole life is dominated by the problems of the masses around them and not by their own inner difficulties and discussions.

We have in the past year made a whole series of approaches to top leadership, especially of the Socialist Party, in the development of our united front activities. We will have to make such approaches in the future. At this moment, however, it is necessary to emphasize this point—that whatever advances the united front is able to make through these approaches from the top, in the final analysis, it always depends upon our work down below among the membership of the Socialist Party and the American Federation of Labor Unions.

The united front from below—this remains basic to everything that we are doing in this field. It is impossible to think that we could have built up the various organized phases of our united front activities even to the inclusion of these leading strata which we have drawn in, except upon the basis that we had below a growing mass pressure upon these leaders, so that they are not moving independently; they are being carried along in mass streams of thought and activity of their own membership and of the surrounding population. This is the thing that changes minds of leading elements, activists, in the various organizations.

Our arguments may help to change their minds. But much more potent to change their minds than our arguments is the pressure of the masses. Our arguments, the development of the explanation of our position on every question—this is basic for the gaining of the masses down below. But for the gaining of the leading cadres and top leadership basic is not our arguments to them, but the fact that the masses have taken our arguments and bring pressure against them. That is why we will continue on appropriate occasions the approaches from above. But here again we emphasize that all united front activity is basically the building of the united front from below.

We must emphasize this right now with relation to the Socialist Party. The Socialist Party is split up into many groupings. Three

definite trends can be discerned among all these groupings—a real Leftward development of a large proportion of the membership and following of the S.P.; a very hard-boiled crystalized Right-Wing Old Guard; and then a section of the leadership which tries to play the Centrist role of conciliation between these two basic tendencies and the controlling of the Left tendencies by giving certain concessions in words and phrases with practical capitulation to the Right Wing.

We must develop our struggle for the united front among the Socialists by a correct attitude towards the well-developed, well-concretized raising of issues and development of struggles among the Socialists, which will make clear to them, through their own experience, the role of these various currents and groupings in their leadership. That means that we must direct a heavy, sustained fire against the Old Guard, the Right Wing; and that we must develop a very penetrating criticism of the Centrist tendency on the basis of showing to the masses of the membership how in practice Thomas and the whole Centrist group carries through, in a masked form, the basic policies of the Old Guard. And towards the Left, the real Leftward-moving membership and large numbers of their leading activists, we must develop the most comradely approach, not conciliating for one second to their remaining opportunist illusions or to their confusion, conducting the most painstaking and patient explanatory work among them to prove to them the essentially reformist character of even their Revolutionary Policy Committee, not to speak of the official Declaration of Principles, by establishing as our basic approach to the whole rank and file to these revolutionary groups or Left group, including their activists, the atmosphere of expectation of winning them, of carrying them into the united front struggle, and eventually winning them to the Communist Party.

In the course of this, we will, by the experiences of these Left groups of the Socialist Party, bring forward quite naturally the differentiation among their leading elements between those who are really Left, in the sense of really wanting to go with the masses in their present trend and those who are "Left" (in quotation marks) not to further develop this movement, but to divert it, check it, and hold it within the old boundaries and bring it back under the control of the old leadership.

Our Resolution points out that the political changes that have taken place in 1934 among the masses demand that we review our whole attitude towards the question of the Labor Party. One feature of our approach to this question has remained constant throughout the whole period since 1928. The correct basic approach

to the question which we have never changed was formulated by the Sixth World Congress in 1928. At that time we were faced with a situation in which practically there was no mass movement for a Labor Party. We had to determine how we should readjust ourselves towards this question when there was no mass movement for it.

The question was greatly discussed in the Commissions of the Sixth World Congress, and finally the decision which was written into the thesis of the Congress was that proposed by Stalin. I will read it to you—it is brief, only a few lines—but it stands as an essentially correct approach for this whole period, when we opposed practical proposals for a Labor Party, as well as now when we decide again to revive the question.

“On the question of the organizing of the Labor Party, the Congress resolves that the Party concentrate its attention on the work in the trade unions, on organizing the unorganized, etc., and in this way lay the basis for the practical realization of the slogan of a broad Labor Party organized from below.”

In 1929, a year after the Sixth World Congress, in discussing what this means practically in our concrete work in the United States, we came to the conclusion that this correct orientation required that we should come out against all of the current proposals then being made for the organization of a Labor Party. We declared that any practical steps towards organizing a Labor Party in those conditions could only result in the building of a new appendage of the old parties. The only ones who were practically for a Labor Party would have been the Communists, the narrow movement of the Socialist Party and a few scattered bureaucrats. True, the process of radicalization of the masses under the impact of the crisis was already beginning then, but this radicalization of the masses was not taking such forms as to give promise of any immediate mass Labor Party emerging. The best proof that our judgment was correct at that time is the fact that in the five years that have intervened, nobody has been able to do anything practical with the idea of a Labor Party.

#### SITUATION IS CHANGING

It is clear now when we look back over these years that if we had been playing around with the slogan of a Labor Party in the absence of a mass movement it would not have advanced us one step. We would not have developed a Labor Party and we would have taken attention away from the basic tasks of the movement directly connected with what was going on among the masses. The question which we have to answer now is whether in 1934 this situation is

changing in such a way as to require us to revise our practical attitude towards this question. We say, when we look over the situation of the past year, definitely: Yes, the situation is changing. There has begun in this year the clearly discernable beginnings of a mass disintegration of the old Party system, the beginnings of the breakup of the old parties, the distinct possibility appears now that a new mass party may come forth out of this disintegration of the old parties, the Democratic and the Republican parties. This is something new in the political life of our Party which we have not seen since 1923-24 when in the period following the post-war crisis, a similar break-away movement developed which was finally corralled into the LaFollette movement.

Under present conditions in 1934 what can we say about the possible character and for which such a mass break-away from the old parties will take? What are the possible variations which such a new mass party will take? It is clear that there is a large number of possible forms in which this movement might emerge. In our resolution we point out four possible variations, four possible types which this movement could take.

#### WHAT KIND OF LABOR PARTY?

First of all it may become a popular, populist or progressive party of the type of the LaFollette party in Wisconsin, of the Sinclair movement, of the Olson, Long movements, crystallized as a new mass party on a national scale. Or secondly, it might be a party similar in composition and character to that, but which would put forward a name of Farmer Labor Party, or Labor Party even, differing only in its name and in the degree it developed the demagogy which would come with such a name. The third possible variation might be more concretely a Labor Party with a predominant trade union base, with a program concerning immediate demands, possibly with a vague demagogy about the cooperative commonwealth such as even Olson carries on in Minnesota, but dominated by a section of the trade union bureaucracy organized from above, with the assistance of the Socialist Party and the excluding the Communist and the militant elements. The fourth possibility is that this mass break away might crystallize in the form of a Labor Party built from below, as pointed out by the Sixth World Congress resolution, on predominantly a trade union base including also all mass organizations of the workers, but in conflict with the bureaucracy or with the larger part of it, putting forward a program of demands closely connected with the mass struggles, strikes, unemployment, and so on, with the leading role being played by the militant elements including the Communists.

Of course you must not understand these four types we list as rigid, fixed things. They can develop in all possible varieties with even parallel developments of different types and at various stages the movement might reflect one type and then another. But these four types that we give as possible variations serve to illustrate the various relation of forces of the struggle between the revolutionary trends and the reformist trends and how they would result in given circumstances in the different types of parties, with a different type of leadership and program and towards which our attitude would have to be different. We cannot take one and the same attitude towards all the various forms and crystallizations which the break away from the old capitalist parties may take on. Our attitude must be varied according to the form which it does take. Especially now in this early stage of the development our attitude has to be directed towards helping to determine in advance what kind of form this movement will take so that we become an active factor in determining what will be the result.

It is clear that we cannot be passive towards this mass break away from the old parties. We must have a positive attitude towards it. We must change our negative position towards the Labor Party question which was determined by the absence of a practical mass movement which made it a practical problem. Now there is a mass movement and it is a question of our Party's participation among these masses and influencing their course.

In our resolution we say that the Party must declare its support for the movement for a Labor Party and fight within this general mass break away from the old parties to determine that the party form and character which are taken by the movement shall correspond to this fourth possible variation we have listed and not to any of the others, that it shall be a Labor Party organized from below, reflecting in the closest possible way the mass struggles and bringing forward the militant elements as an integral part of the leadership of such a party.

Our resolution points out very sharply that within this general movement we must carry on a systematic struggle against all attempts to direct it into the channels of the progressive party or a similar party which only masks itself as Farmer Labor or Labor Party, and so on. In order to accomplish this, of course, in order to influence this movement at all, we have to be in it and have positive proposals to make. We cannot participate in it effectively if we stand merely as inactive critics of it. Neither can we expect that with such a mass break away of millions, in which millions will be shifting from old political allegiances overnight, that these millions will come directly to the Communist Party. We have nothing in our political experi-

ences which would lead us to expect that we, still a small party, can overnight bring these masses to Communism.

We know that before they come to us they will have to go through a process of struggle and education out of their own experiences. We know that this process will be much faster and more complete if at all stages of their development these masses see the Communists fighting shoulder to shoulder with them, working together with them in the development of the broadest phases of their mass struggle. That is what predetermines our decision that it is necessary to declare positively in favor of the support for and participation in a Labor Party of that fourth type which we have described.

In our participation in this broad mass movement, of course, our central task is to bring the clear differentiation into two distinct camps, those who want on one hand to develop this mass movement along the moderate, liberal, social reformist channels and on the other hand those who want to develop the struggle of the masses for their immediate interests without regard to or in direct opposition to the interests of private property and profits.

In the struggle for this differentiation within this movement, we will have two dangers which we must avoid, two possible deviations on our part. On the one hand we will have the danger of sectarian narrowness on our part which would only play into the hands of the reformists. This means, first of all, that the basis for gathering together of the workers into such a Labor Party must be the immediate demands with the broadest mass appeal. We must not allow the reformist leaders to split the masses with speculations on these differences among the masses between those who accept the class struggle clear up to and including the dictatorship of the proletariat, the revolutionary section, those that follow the Communist Party, and on the other hand that larger section of the masses which accepts the class struggle for the immediate issues, but is not yet prepared to go the whole way up to the dictatorship of the proletariat.

#### MUST AVOID SECTARIAN DANGER

The sectarian danger, the danger of limiting down this movement to only the revolutionists and their sympathizers must be at all costs avoided. At the same time the open Right danger will be the greater danger if we reach the stage of crystallization on a national scale of a mass Labor Party, the danger of opportunistic capitulation, surrender to the reformist trends, practices and habits which will be a very strong factor at work within such a mass Labor Party.

It is clear, as our resolution points out, that in this situation the

simple slogan for a Labor Party under which we operated years ago would express such conflicting tendencies that it is not sufficient to be the effective banner for our struggle. Yes, we are for a Labor Party, but we are for a particular kind of Labor Party. We are for a Labor Party of the nature that we specified in the resolution as the fourth possible type. We are against this movement being organized under the leadership of the LaFollettes, with the program of the Progressive Party. We are against all of these various compromises between the idea of a mass Labor Party and such a progressive bourgeois party. We Communists enter the movement for the Labor Party only with the purpose of helping the masses to break away from the bourgeois camp, break away from social reformists and find the path to the revolutionary class struggle.

This means also that all premature organizational moves must be very carefully avoided. In this early stage of the movement it is especially our enemies within this movement that will press most energetically for quick reorganizational crystallization of the new party, before the masses find out what it is all about and while they will still by habit put their old leaders in the positions of responsibility and power.

#### OUR TASKS

On the other hand we must be speeding up the political differentiation within this movement so that when we come to the stage of organization the masses will already have a basis for political choice between class collaboration and the class struggle. We must already have a broad section of this movement crystallized on issues of the class struggle so that a class struggle leadership will be developed in the organizational crystallization of such a party. The Communist Party therefore must not now take the initiative in the organization of a Labor Party on a national scale. In the various states, however, the situation will be of many sorts, according to the various stages of the development of the movement. It will be necessary to study the situation in each place, study the relation of forces, the tempo of development and give a concrete answer in each state and even in each city. Very often we will find in certain cities it will be much further developed than the state as a whole. In those states and cities where the conditions have matured for the formation of a mass Labor Party we must be prepared to ourselves initiate the organizational steps either directly or through people and organizations close to us.

While we have warned against premature organizational moves, at the same time we must emphasize this does not mean slowness of

initiative on our part or lack of initiative. The development in this movement does not necessarily take its first steps with organizational measures. We have immediately taken political initiative on this question directly from the Political Bureau with the speech which I made, on the decision of the Political Bureau, in Washington at the Unemployment Congress. In this sense we want the greatest initiative displayed. Only when the masses see the Communists as the political initiators of those steps which they themselves will conclude are necessary for their own life's interests, only then will we begin to win them for our whole program.

A question has been raised as to whether these changes in our policy that we propose do not necessarily require that we shall self-critically declare that we were mistaken in our previous attitude towards the Labor Party. Already some—of course, the Lovestoneites—are proclaiming that the C.P. has finally come around to their point of view, but of course the C.P. will never admit that it made a mistake. They say that of course it is clear that the Party was absolutely wrong in its stand with regard to the Labor Party, and that now we are forced to admit it by changing and coming around to their opinion. Even some of our Party members have said: Of course we are glad to hear about this new policy, and we are for it 100 per cent, but why don't you say—we recognize our mistake.

We have already given the basic political answer to this question, but it is necessary to go into one or two more angles of this question. We must very clearly answer the question for ourselves—not merely to answer the renegades. Was our position on the Labor Party question at all times and in all particulars correct during this period? On the whole the answer I have already given is the correct one—that our Party correctly refused to play around with an abstract slogan when there was no practical mass movement to embody it. I think, however, that we must not take the position that all the details of everything we said about the Labor Party question during the discussion of this question is gospel which must be defended today. I think that some things were written and said which were not correct, which were a deviation from and a distortion of the line of the Sixth World Congress of the Comintern, some things which were partially correct, and some incorrect. For example, we printed during that period an article by Mr. Zack (now the lying open Trotskyist counter-revolutionist) on the Labor Party which contained a whole series of fundamental errors, and we allowed Zack's article to be printed without criticism. Also, in some of our official documents, we made some arguments which were incorrect. There were other statements made and not effectively



criticized in the Party. There were such incidental mistakes in the course of the development of our attitude toward the Labor Party question, which we have no reason to hide. We have nothing to gain from covering up the mistakes that have been made, and which in the light of the changed situation, require of us to review very critically our past; we can very well afford to make these corrections.

In making these corrections, however, it is the opinion of the PolBuro that we must be very much alert to combat and to liquidate tendencies which reflect the attitude of the Lovestoneites, who will see in this new move an opportunity to revert to the opportunism of the Lovestone group. As for the Lovestoneite leaders, it is true that since their "fundamental" change in becoming renegades they have held firm to their course.

Next: There is a whole series of questions as to how to apply this line in practice. We have not tried to work these out in the resolution before you; but this must occupy the center of our discussion, particularly in each district, the comrades should not confine themselves to saying that they agree with the line presented, which I think almost everybody already does—from that moment they should concentrate their contribution to this discussion upon the concrete question as to how in each city, in each district, this line can best be applied—to most effectively, most quickly give us a mass movement, a political crystallization around this question of the Labor Party.

Next: There is a special feature of this problem which we have not worked out in the resolution, which will require special examination and a special document as soon as we can be certain that we have gotten a clear line of development—that is, the alignment of the Negro masses to this possible Labor Party. There is no question but that with the proper development of our work in the Negro mass organizations—churches, clubs, lodges—that we can further our Negro work, in developing the issues of Scottsboro, Herndon, the movement for the Negro rights' bill—and if we properly connect this up, we have the possibility of developing a mass swing of the Negro population into the new Labor Party. This must still be worked out and answered.

Then, lastly, we must answer the question that has been raised as to whether the PolBuro has correctly gone about in placing this question of the Labor Party before the Party and the whole working class. We received in the National Office a letter from a comrade which raised this question in which he states that while he agreed with the policy he believed that the PolBuro had gone about developing it in the wrong way—that before any public announcement of any change in policy was made—that it was necessary to

have a Party discussion and a Party decision after the discussion—that the whole membership of the Party had a right to say *yes* or *no* before the PolBuro had the right to make a public announcement on this question. This comrade did not state this in so many words, but this was the nature of the criticism raised, and this is a question that demands an answer.

We think that the development of our trade union policy, and also the question of a Labor Party serve us as an example of the real function of proletarian democracy within our Party. I have already taken occasion to emphasize how in the development of our trade union policy we have been so careful to move not as a leadership closeted away from the movement and membership of our Party and the masses generally, but took every step to insure the most active collaboration of the broadest circles of workers, to convince them and ourselves of the correctness of our course in the light of our joint experiences. This is real working class democracy.

We also think that our Communist Party has long passed the stage when inner Party democracy takes the form which it used to have for so many years, that when a new political problem arises the Political Bureau discusses it, divides it into two groups, issues two theses and goes before the Party to fight it out as to which group in the Political Bureau is correct. That was the old type of Party “democracy”. I don’t think our Party needs that kind of democracy. I don’t think that our Party would have had its level raised if we had had a division within the Party leadership and then brought it before the units for vote.

Further, our opinion is that especially since the Eighth Convention of our Party, we have stabilized our Party to such an extent that the established leadership of the Party has an authority which is not merely formal, but that the Central Committee has before the whole Party an authority which is based upon a confidence which the Party members and broad non-Party sympathizers have—a confidence in the leadership of the Party which is based upon experience, a confidence which has been continually renewed and strengthened by the further use of this authority which our Central Committee has given examples of in the past year. The authority of our Party leadership is not something mechanical and arbitrary, it is an authority which we are able to increase continually because we use it correctly, because we never make a decision or take a step in which we fail to convince the Party and the working masses around us that it is a correct decision and a correct step.

Such is the relationship between our leadership and Party members, between our Party as a whole and non-Party masses surrounding us.

Now I just want to give a few words to a series of concrete questions that will occupy our attention especially in some of the later phases of our discussion here. I have already indicated, in discussing the Labor Party about a certain necessary turn in our Negro work. I think that we must very strongly put forward the idea throughout the Party that to make a real turn in our work among the Negro masses we must shift the scene of our attention to the existing mass organizations among the Negroes, no matter what—churches, fraternal organizations, neighborhood clubs, lodges, anything where the Negro masses are, that is where the center of our work is. We have, of course, said this for a long time that the basic concept of the building of the L.S.N.R. is, first of all, in the federation of existing mass organizations, individual membership groups and branches. But that was too much yet on paper. And in practice we always went out and did nothing except build up merely membership groups and even separating them from the mass organizations to which they formerly belonged.

I think a few words in the same sense are necessary about our agrarian work, especially work among the farmers where they are in their mass organizations. To a certain extent it applies to special work among the women. It is necessary to point out that while we have made certain advances in our special women's work, that as yet the Party as a whole is not conscious of this problem. I do not know of a single district in the Party that gives attention to work among the women. If I am wrong—if there is an exception then it is not even necessary to speak up about it. As a rule Party districts are paying no attention to it.

We have made a little more of a turn in bringing the Party into the solution of the problems of the youth. To the extent that we have changed the life of the Party, to this extent this turn dates back to the Eighth Convention when we placed it on the Agenda. Since then we dramatized it by some reports in the Central Committee meeting in July. But still we cannot say that this situation is satisfactory. Not that our youth movement is in the same isolated, sectarian situation that it was two years ago. No. The Y.C.L. has made a very promising step forward from being a small sectarian isolated sect. It has become the center of a great united front youth movement in which unquestionably our Y.C.L. plays the central political role. This is a tremendous advance. But how much more it could be if the Party in each district was taking this question seriously and giving leadership and a little help to the Y.C.L.

In those places where the Y.C.L. is still lagging behind, the responsibility rests precisely on the District Committee of the Party.

We must emphasize in this meeting of the Central Committee this responsibility of the districts.

Just a word about the development of our cadres. There is certain improvement in this, in the last months, in the life of the Party. But as yet this is not placed upon a satisfactory basis, an organized part of the Party's work. There is a distinct improvement in the development and administration of the schools, in the curriculum and teaching staffs, although here the situation is far from satisfactory. Not sufficient direct leadership and participation of the most politically developed comrades in the school work. But it is not only in schools and in the development of the cadre commissions in the districts which are of most vital importance, but both that we must establish the practice in our Party that every leading Party member undertakes the task of the direct personal guidance and political patronage for the development of new cadres from below. Every one of our leading comrades must have at least two comrades attached to him whom he personally undertakes to supervise in political education. Is that too much to ask? There are a hundred other claims, but without this everything else will fail.

This also means more systematic distribution of the literature of our Party and especially the theoretical literature. Not only distribution but more systematic utilization. The whole thing is bound up together.

Now just a word or two about the *Daily Worker*. We have made innumerable decisions that we were seriously going to increase the circulation of the *Daily Worker*. But we don't carry them out. Since the last meeting of the Central Committee when we spoke about this very seriously, improvement of the *Daily Worker* circulation has not gone forward at a satisfactory pace. It is clear that long discussion about such a problem as this is fruitless. It simply means that the Party, leading committees, leading individuals, in spite of all decisions that we have taken, have proceeded to ignore the question. Is it possible that we would have this condition in circulation if any considerable number of our leading forces paid any attention to the problem of circulation? Maybe somebody will bring the argument that the contents of the *Daily Worker* are not satisfactory. It is true that the contents are not satisfactory; we must criticize and improve very decisively the *Daily Worker* although it has been improved. But we must say that all talk about the contents has no relation to the circulation problem. Not now. Maybe it will have in a few months from now, if we will get the *Daily Worker* circulation up to 100,000. From that time on we will argue as to whether further extension of the circulation requires further improvement of the contents. But at the present time we can say that

without any regard to the contents, except that it is our paper, there is absolutely no excuse for it not having 100,000 today. There is no explanation except that we have not taken it up seriously at all.

The PolBuro has established a special commission to deal with this question, composed of myself, Comrade Krumbein and Comrade Wishnak, the manager of the *Daily Worker*. We are already carrying through measures in New York to make a turn in this question of circulation. But we want to make the same turn in every district of the Party. When the proposals reach your district, we want you not to merely file it, but take it up with the same seriousness that we take it in the center.

The question of recruiting. Here we will have a special examination under a special order of business and a very interesting report that will be given to you. We have recruiting going on, but it is still unsatisfactory. We do not keep the members that we recruit sufficiently and the recruiting power of the Party is not equally developed in all districts. Some districts recruit twice as many per member as other districts. Why is that? We must say that one of the ways in which we will strengthen the whole recruiting power of our Party is precisely this comparison of district to district. Concentrate on those districts which show the lowest recruiting power and find out why. Why Chicago, for example, recruits in 3 months 18 per cent of the old membership, whereas another district or center immediately adjoining Chicago recruits up to as high as 32 per cent. This problem of the recruiting power and activity of our Party is the very essence of the Party growth and development, and until we solve this and the question of reducing the Party fluctuation down to reasonable limits, we will not have sound ground under our feet.

Finally, let us again emphasize what we have made the main note of the last Party Convention, of what we have a tendency to forget, the making of decisions is only the first step to the solution of a problem. If we make a decision we have to organize the execution of that decision, control its execution, control its carrying out, and unless we do that, it is better not to make the decision in the first place, because a decision which is not carried through has a demoralizing effect in the life of the Party. It disorganizes, discourages, demoralizes the whole Party membership. We see continuously decisions being made and not being carried out. We have got to establish the most strict attitude throughout the Party to the question of decisions—and not so ready to accept decisions. It appalls me sometimes when I sit in on committee meetings to see the light-hearted way they make the most far-reaching decisions. Why do they make so many excellent decisions on paper? Because they

have no intention of carrying them out; because they are interested only in expressing their excellent intentions. There is such a light-hearted approach to the question of whether a decision is to be carried out or not. These are remnants from a non-Bolshevik past. This is the enemy of Bolshevism, the enemy of the Bolshevization of our Party, and we must guard ourselves and make a rule against it.

We must demand that every decision be carried out, and if it is not, a formal explanation why, and a registration of our failure. Only if we approach our problems with this strict Bolshevik standard can we seriously expect to meet the tremendous burdens and difficulties that are going to fall upon us. It is true that we are expanding and growing, and strengthening ourselves. This not only multiplies our problems, but it requires a higher degree of organization and responsibility.

Unless we improve the quality of our leadership, the quality of our daily work, and the quality of our execution—the more we get among these moving masses, the more certainly we are going to be lost among them, broken up and distintegrated, unless we concentrate all attention on this supreme instrument without which the whole movement cannot go forward but a single step.

This is our Communist Party. The building of the C.P. is the building of responsible leading cadres. The committees and organs of our Party should never make decisions except that they carry them out in life; every line we write into our minutes has an immediate repercussion among the masses, and we can control and direct events among the masses, get these masses towards revolutionary struggle, towards the transformation of society, because we are able to control and guide our own inner-Party life, control the execution of our own decisions.

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