

The End of Relative Capitalist Stabilization and the Tasks of Our Party

EXCERPTS FROM REPORT TO SIXTEENTH
PLENUM, CENTRAL COMMITTEE, C.P.
U.S.A., JANUARY 28, 1933.

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COMRADES, the introduction to the examination of the specific problems of the American Party has been pretty well taken care of in the two reports that we have received on the Twelfth Plenum of E.C.C.I. These reports have brought out very sharply the deepening crisis of capitalism, the growing attacks upon the masses, the increasing revolutionary upsurge of the masses, the extreme sharpening of the war danger and, outstanding in this period, the sharp contrast between the two world systems, between growing Socialism in the Soviet Union and rotting, decaying capitalism. We have all of us had the lessons of this great contrast especially impressed upon our minds in the past few days by the reading of the speech of Comrade Stalin in the recent Party conference, which is published in today's *Daily Worker* as a special supplement.

These things provide us with the foundation and the background for examining specifically our problems in America. I think it would do no harm to remind ourselves again how Stalin characterized the role of our Party in the world revolutionary movement. In 1929, when Stalin was performing that tremendous service that he did directly for our Party, in guiding the work of the American Commission in May, 1929, he said, the American Communist Party is one of those very few Communist Parties of the world that are entrusted by history with tasks of decisive importance from the point of view of the world revolutionary movement. We should recall these words of Stalin, not for the purpose of giving ourselves a subjective satisfaction of feeling that we are important, but for the purpose of very deeply impressing upon us the tremendous responsibilities that we carry—responsibilities for which we must account before the entire world proletariat—and the very small degree to which as yet we have prepared ourselves for meeting these responsibilities.

The recent Twelfth Plenum of the E. C. C. I. has given not only the general orientation for the period of entrance into a new round of wars and revolutions. It has further clarified questions of daily work for our Party, as well as other parties of the C. I.

Some of the main features of the Twelfth E. C. C. I. Plenum in this respect had already been worked out ever more detailed for us in the resolution for our Fourteenth Plenum last April. We should consider our Fourteenth Plenum Resolution as a concretization of the Twelfth E. C. C. I. Plenum for America, and it holds good with the same full force as the decisions of the Twelfth E. C. C. I. Plenum—as our main directives. The importance of these directives of the Fourteenth Plenum for the work of our Party is more than ever emphasized in the past months since our Fifteenth Plenum by the fact of our advances in almost all fields of work and struggle.

These advances which we have made serve to raise more sharply than ever, because in a more practical form, every one of the questions raised by the Resolution of the Fourteenth Plenum and to impress more deeply upon us that these tasks have not been accomplished, that these tasks remain the tasks which we must find the means of accomplishing, which guide our everyday work.

Our Seventh Convention marked the basic, historic turn of our Party on to the path required for the third period, on to the path of preparing the Party for decisive class battles; that is, the Seventh Convention gave us the major strategic line as established in the Sixth World Congress for this whole period—the line of mass struggles, the fight for the streets, independent leadership of the masses for their immediate demands, politicalization of these struggles, the main fire against social fascism, especially its left variety, and so on. Our Eighth Convention, for which we are now preparing, has the task of carrying through this turn towards Bolshevization. Our Eighth Convention does not have an independent political task separate from that of the Seventh Convention. Its task is to carry forward and complete the process begun by the Seventh Convention, by the Sixth World Congress, especially by liquidating all of the remnants of our social democratic past, which still hamper us and hold us back from completing the turn which we began with the acceptance of the C. I. Address and the Seventh Convention of our Party.

It is true that, during the whole process of our Party's development from the period of the C. I. Address and our Seventh Convention there has been one line, there has been no change in line, and there is now no change in line. There has, however, from time to time, arisen the necessity in our Party and in the Communist

International, to recognize and to struggle against certain distortions of this line. The appearance of such distortions—right and “left,” and the necessity for special struggles against them, has been taken as the basis for the charge of the renegades that the line of the Communist International and the line of the American Party represents a zig-zag. We have not sufficiently exposed this slander, and especially we have not sufficiently combatted the echoes of this idea that sometimes appear in our own ranks.

THE STRUGGLE ON TWO FRONTS

We must make the Party understand that we are still in the process of making the historical turn, called for by the Sixth World Congress, to the conditions and tasks of the third period, to the end of relative capitalist stabilization, and the new round of wars and revolutions. The struggle against distortions, against right and “left” deviations, is a permanent feature of the life of the Communist Party. We have had experiences in America which more or less coincide with the international experience of the other Parties. Just before and at the Twelfth Plenum we witnessed the sharp emergence of a right distortion and the tendency towards *kvostism* (tailism), and the tendency towards avoiding the leadership of struggles, on the plea of the unpreparedness of our Parties; furthermore also, of turning our very necessary and essential self-criticism of continued weaknesses into attacks against the main strategic line. While these questions were being raised on an international scale, simultaneously we were facing corresponding problems at the same period, in our own Fifteenth Central Committee meeting, which met almost at the same time as the Twelfth E.C.C.I. Plenum.

We are faced with the task of mastering the Bolshevik weapon of the struggle on two fronts, against right opportunist tendencies and, simultaneously, against leftist distortions, both of which find their main breeding ground in the traditional sectarianism of our Party. The importance of a speedy development and a quickening of the tempo of our work in this respect is emphasized—if we recall—in another statement of Comrade Stalin.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVE

In 1929 already, Comrade Stalin in pointing out the inevitable development of a crisis said with regard to our Party:

“I think the moment is not far off when a revolutionary crisis will develop in America. And when a revolutionary crisis develops in America that will be the beginning of the end of world capitalism as a whole. It is essential that the American Communist

Party should be capable of meeting that historical moment fully prepared of assuming leadership of the impending class struggle in America.”

Comrades, when Comrade Stalin uttered those words, American capitalism was at the peak of its development. That was at the moment when the right opportunists were speaking of American exceptionalism and of the Victorian Age. How much more weighty, how much more full of immediate significance for us, are these words of Comrade Stalin, when we review the developments since our Fourteenth Plenum, even since our Fifteenth Plenum, in the United States.

Just in the past few months, we witness not only the development of the economic factors, deepening of the crisis, not only the sharpening of the difficulties of the bourgeoisie, not only the intensification of the attacks against the working class. We witness very decisive beginnings of upsurge of the masses in struggle against these conditions, in resistance to the capitalist offensive, in the beginnings of development of a counter-offensive.

Further, we see the serious beginnings of leadership, political and organizational, given to the growing upsurge by our Communist Party. It is only necessary to mention a few facts to establish this. The Chicago action of October 31 in the broad united front demonstration before City Hall, a development of considerable historical significance; the Birmingham demonstration of November 7, when some thousands of whites and Negroes demonstrated jointly on the streets of a Southern city—something new in the history of America; the National Hunger March at the beginning of December at the opening of Congress in Washington, not something entirely new (it was repeating the Hunger March of the previous year), but something new in the sense of a higher order of action than the previous Hunger March; the Farmers' Conference in Washington and especially the spread, from that Farmers' Conference, of the plans of struggle which have seized upon hundreds of thousands of farmers in the short period since that conference, and which has set a fire under the very seats of the ruling class; the growing upsurge among the Negro masses, coming to the point already that even in Harlem, where we thought we had been sort of check-mated or something had happened to us, there we see that we are making tremendous inroads in the last weeks, so that even the bourgeois press is forced to devote front page and editorial columns to dealing with what Communists are doing and the Communist program on the Negro question and the actions which are taking place throughout the country on the basis of this program.

THE GROWING MASS UPSURGE

We can mention further the growing, deepening ferment among the middle class elements and especially at this moment among the students and intellectuals, which has great political importance for our Party, and at the same time presents certain Bolshevik tests to our Party of its ability to handle, to direct, to control these currents. Especially in these past months, we must know that we have begun some serious penetration into the A. F. of L. and that in the period since the Fifteenth Plenum, small as our work in this field has been, inadequate as it has been, yet even this small amount of work and this low quality of work has proven the tremendous opportunities to such an extent as to already place us back into the position which we had surrendered for some time, the position of leaders of the national opposition movement to the A. F. of L. bureaucracy—a position which was confirmed and expressed by our rank and file conference held in Cincinnati coinciding with the A. F. of L. Convention. In this same period we see the beginnings of our penetration into the organized ranks of the Socialist Party, winning over a large number of individual workers in support of our actions and, in many cases, the joining of our Party, the winning even of whole branches of the Socialist Party and the development of a deep ferment and the beginnings of division between the rank and file and leaders under the pressure of events and issues and especially under the pressure of the criticism of our Party. Especially significant for this whole period is the struggle of the automobile workers in Detroit. In this strike we have an expression of this broad mass upsurge already coming to open mass struggle in the heart of American trustified industries, industries of mass production. The automobile industry is second in importance to American capitalism—the steel industry being the first—and represents even a higher technic of mass production. And here in the stronghold and citadel of capitalism we have organized and are leading mass revolt, mass struggle.

Finally I would mention as a good characteristic of these past months the Lenin Memorial Meetings which took place just a week ago. These Lenin Memorial Meetings have a special significance for us: Without any unusual preparations of our Party, we suddenly found that these memorial meetings have been transformed by the response of the masses into great demonstrations, such as usually have required tremendous efforts and concentration of our Party to produce. The meeting in Milwaukee which Comrade Minor already spoke of is perhaps most significant of all, where thousands of Socialist Party workers turned out to our meet-

ing, and where the discrepancy between our expectations and the result was dramatized by the necessity to move from a small hall to a big hall at the hour when the meeting was scheduled. The same experience was had in many, many cities. Philadelphia, I understand, had 8,000 people at the Lenin memorial meeting. In New York I am quite sure that the same tendency at the Lenin memorial meetings was strictly limited by the size of the halls made available, and could easily have been half as large again or perhaps twice as large if hall had been provided. [Interjection by Comrade Hathaway: In the Coliseum they were still coming when the meeting was ended.] Way over in Brooklyn, where I spoke, the hall was jammed with 5,000 people, while at least 1,600 to 1,700 were standing up throughout the meeting; every seat was taken at 7:30 in the evening. Way over in Brooklyn, where we never thought of mass meetings of that size before! The same characteristics can be found wherever you touch the connections of our Party with the masses. We can say that in all fields, after a brief period of hesitation and falling behind, we again are becoming the decisive subjective factor in the development of the struggles of the masses.

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST SOCIAL FASCISM

We see further evidence that we are beginning to learn how to conduct our work, in the "left" maneuvers which the reformists are going through at the present moment. The development of the objective factors of the crisis would not be sufficient to explain fully these left maneuvers of the reformists and social fascists. To bring them to this point requires also the conscious intervention of our Party with correct Bolshevik mass work. Today we already have a situation which can be described by the capitalist writers in the words I am going to read to you from an editorial in the *World-Telegram*, just the day before yesterday, I believe it was. Dealing with the article of William Green published in the *Journal of the American Chamber of Commerce*, in which that capitalist organization broadcasts Mr. Green's threats of retaliation against the same capitalists of the American Chamber of Commerce, the *World-Telegram* says:

"The significance of this defiant note is not that here is a new Mr. Green speaking. It is that a new union labor is speaking. Mr. Green never has marched ahead of his rank and file. That he now speaks militantly, desperately shows that he has been forced by his members to do so. The same is true of Mr. O'Neal and his farmers. These warnings are not bluff. Behind them is the explosive desperation of a vast majority of American citizens."

These are the leaders of the bourgeoisie, whose judgement we cannot always rely upon for our own purpose, but whose opinions are sometimes quite valuable, especially when they are speaking against themselves and their own agents.

In such conditions, with the deepening and sharpening of the objective factors in the crisis, with the rising upsurge of the masses, and with the beginnings of Bolshevik mass work by our Party, we have to take seriously the possibility, even the probability, of sudden sharp, quick developments of mass struggle.

Comrade Gusev spoke in some detail about this question at the Twelfth Plenum of the E. C. C. I., specifically in relation to America and other Anglo-Saxon countries. It think it is worth while to quote a paragraph from Comrade's speech, which has already been printed in *The Communist* for January. Comrade Gusev said:

"Three years of monstrous economic crisis... has called forth intense upheavals which assume... such a catastrophic character that one cannot exclude the possibility of the U.S.A. or Great Britain or Australia pushing forward to the front with regard to the swing of the revolutionary demonstrations of the proletariat and the masses of workers in general. In such a case it will be up to the Parties in the Anglo-American countries to prepare the struggle for the proletarian dictatorship, which implies the same direct practical tasks confronting now the Communist Parties of Poland and Germany."

THE HIGHLY EXPLOSIVE CONDITION OF SOCIETY

I would cite just a few examples, still on a small scale, of the possibilities of sudden developments in America. The outstanding example during the crisis period was the great March 6 outpouring of 1930. This was certainly such a sudden mass movement coming unannounced. A similar character was taken by the Bonus March last summer; although in the initiating of this march we played quite a decisive role, yet it is impossible to say that the march was the product of our political and organizational capacities. It was one of those great mass upheavals. The farmers' movement has much of the same character. And especially in the first stages of this farmers' movement last summer it began quite independently of any existing organizations, without preparation, without leadership, with very little participation by us in the first immediate stages, although we reacted correctly and quickly to it and rapidly were able to direct this spontaneous mass movement into channels determined by us.

And finally, a phenomena of the same character which reflects the highly explosive condition of society, is this craze of Tech-

nocracy, which almost overnight spread the country and became a seven-day wonder. A new way out of the crisis, the emancipation of humanity from all their ills! There is a revolutionary significance also in this phenomena of Technocracy, especially as it affected the masses, in addition to its counter-revolutionary significance as a means of misleading, befuddling and holding back the revolutionary development of the stirring discontent of the workers.

In such a situation as this, the role of the Party, the importance of the Party as a Party of action, becomes more decisive than ever. Our responsibility becomes greater, the consequences of our good work reflect themselves with one hundredfold intensity, and the consequences of our weaknesses and mistakes show themselves in greater harm, greater damage than ever before. The subjective factor, our Party and its work, becomes decisive. In such a situation as this it is possible even for a small Party, if it is a Bolshevik Party, to play a decisive historical role. In such a situation as this, a small Party such as ours will never become a large Party, a mass Party, unless it knows how to perform as a Party of action, leading masses in struggle.

TO BOLDLY INITIATE AND LEAD THE MASSAS IN ACTION

It is necessary, or at least permissible, to quote from Comrade Lenin on this question, the words he spoke at the Third World Congress of the Communist International. He said:

"It is possible that even a small Party, for instance the English or American Party, after having made a thorough study of the course of political development, and having familiarized itself with the life and habits of the non-Party masses, will be able at an appropriate moment, to develop a revolutionary movement. If it will, at such a moment, come out with its slogans, and will succeed in having a million workers follow it, then you will have before you a fully developed mass movement."

But what is necessary for us to emphasize at this moment is that to do this thing described by Comrade Lenin, requires a Bolshevized Party, able clearly to see its way and boldly to initiate and lead the masses in action. It requires a Party that is able to carry through the decisions of the Fourteenth Plenum.

In this general situation the problem arises sharp and clear—the dominant problem, the key problem to the whole future development—who is going to lead these stirring, rising masses? Will it be the Communist Party or will it be the "left"-maneuvering social fascists? This is the decisive question and we will decide this question against the social fascists, and therefore against capitalism, and for the proletarian revolution and for the Com-

munist Party, only if we learn how to carry through a correct Bolshevik mass policy, how to perform the tasks established by the Fourteenth Plenum, how to smash the sectarian past that still holds us back, and how to combat and liquidate all right and left deviations that arise out of this sectarianism.

The basic needs in solving this problem have been described for us by Lenin in dealing with another situation which is comparable to that in which we work. There is no solution to our problems through mechanical organizational means, there is no juggling of our forces back and forth, that is going to solve this basic political question for us. There is no all-powerful Communist God in the Political Bureau that will answer the fervent prayers of the comrades in the districts. There is no generous Providence that is going to hand us these things on a platter. We have to learn how to use that basic force that Lenin was dealing with when in 1905, in dealing with similar problems of the Russian Party, he said:

"We must greatly broaden the cadres of the various Party organizations, and its close affiliations, in order to keep in step with the one hundred-fold increased torrent of revolutionary energy of the people."

The broadening of our cadres in order to connect with the hundred-fold energies of the masses, directing, channeling this energy, this is the only force that can solve a single one of our problems.

Directing the revolutionary energy of the masses, drawing all these energies into our channels, under our direction is possible only by a hundred-fold more sharp struggles against social fascism.

THE GROWTH OF SOCIAL FASCISM

We have been especially backward in this respect in our Party. We can say that it is only in the past period, since the Fourteenth Plenum, that we have even begun seriously to take up this question. How important this is we have new evidence to show us every day. We saw and registered effectively to a certain degree the bourgeois support to the Socialist Party during the election campaign. This was not an isolated phenomenon. This was a part of a whole system being worked out and applied by the American bourgeoisie facing the deepening crisis. Just a few weeks ago we saw another example of this in the report of the Hoover Committee on Social Trends which bemoaned the fact that the American Federation of Labor is going backward, becoming weaker and less influential, and declaring the necessity for capitalism of a strong, vigorous A. F. of L. We see in the unemployed movement a

very sharp development of social fascist leadership seizing a hold of considerable sections of the unemployed and taking them away from us. The rise of social fascism among the unemployed is not a mere matter of the neglect of certain fields by us, thereby giving them the opportunity to come in because we are not there. One of the characteristic features of this rise of social fascist unemployed organizations is that they come in especially where we are strong, especially where we are active (and because we are active). For us this requires that we give even sharper critical self-examination to our methods of work, to our understanding of the political problems involved, and how the social fascists have been enabled to make progress in this field. Of course we must not underestimate the effectiveness of the support of the bourgeoisie to the social fascists. They come in as semi-governmental institutions, with tremendous power, control over the distribution of relief, etc. They are given the material basis upon which to conduct their work, as in Chicago, where the Borders outfit operates on the basis of the church system, and I understand they even have their unemployed meetings in the churches. This material and political support of the bourgeoisie and of its State apparatus would, of course, guarantee a certain degree of success in the first stages of such an effort for the social fascists. But after taking into consideration all of these factors outside of our control, we must say that the degree of success which the social fascists have been able to secure among the workers themselves is a demonstration of the weakness of our work and our methods among these unemployed. For us the decisive question becomes, then, so to improve our work among the unemployed as to win away the unemployed workers from these social fascist unemployed organizations. This is not only necessary, it is *possible* for us to do it.

THE NARROWING BASE OF SOCIAL FASCISM

While the basis of the social fascists is decreasing and also shifting, the intensity and danger of their role rise sharply, as both Comrade Minor and Comrade Gebert emphasized in their reports. The new left manoeuvres of Green and Norman Thomas, the latter's public dispute in the capitalist press against Hillquit, etc., is an elaborate stage play in order to create the impression among the masses of a leftward move in the leadership of the Socialist Party and A. F. of L. The recent split in the C. P. L. A., the Musteite organization, is a similar development. The activities of the renegades fits into that whole picture. So we say that not only have we the general strategic orientation that the main fire must be against social fascism and to win their followers to

the Communist Party, but we see this general strategic orientation very sharply emphasized by every new development of the day. It becomes obvious that it is impossible for us to move one step forward except we win that step in struggle with the social fascists.

We have not made sufficiently clear either to ourselves or to workers what social fascism means in terms of their daily lives. We have made the workers understand that this links up the Socialist Party through high politics of various sorts with the camp of fascism. But we haven't made clear that social fascism expresses itself in the smallest every day questions as well as in questions of high politics.

The social democrats say that we Communists are responsible for the rise of fascism. Norman Thomas, writing in the Summer, 1932, issue of the *Socialist Quarterly*, brought forward this charge when he wrote:

"Communism, I am sure, whatever its intentions, is now playing into the hands of fascism by continually discrediting democracy and by insisting on the inevitability of ruthless dictatorship and of great violence. Nothing could be better calculated to scare the timid into the arms of fascist saviors of 'order and security.'"

Now let us analyse this charge. In this we find not what Norman Thomas wanted to bring out, but the contrary. We find the political connection between social fascism and fascism in this very quotation. Remember, that fascism is the instrument of the bourgeoisie for smashing the revolutionary organizations of the working class, for combatting the revolutionary upsurge of the workers. Therefore, if there is no revolutionary organization, no revolutionary upsurge, fascism will not arise. Therefore, those who are responsible for developing the revolutionary upsurge of the workers, force the bourgeoisie to develop fascism. This is the argument of Norman Thomas and the whole Second International. The conclusion is, therefore, in order to prevent fascism from rising, they must prevent the development of revolutionary organizations and struggle; therefore, they must direct their fight against the Communist Party, which organizes and leads the revolutionary upsurge of the workers.

HOW TO FIGHT SOCIAL FASCISM

Every worker can understand this question if we take the question apart for them and analyse it and especially if we do this in terms of a specific problem. For example, on the Negro question, Norman Thomas and the Socialist Party apply this principle, saying that the Communists are responsible for the develop-

ment of race riots by raising the issue of self-determination. Is there any Negro in America who cannot understand this position of the Socialist Party if we analyse it in the way that I have just analyzed this quotation from Norman Thomas; is there any worker who would fail to understand that this placing upon the workers of the responsibility of bourgeois oppression is merely a particularly poisonous and incidious form of putting across the program of our enemies, of the bourgeoisie, the white chauvinists, the fascists?

In our struggle against social fascism we have often been formal, mechanical, bureaucratic; we have lacked political content, we have attempted to settle with the social fascists by denunciation. But it is not possible to win the masses by denunciation. We will have to convince and prove satisfactorily to the minds of even the backward workers, not only that the social fascists are bad, but how, and why and the relation of their program to the issues of daily life and the relation of our program to the same question; explanation, patient, persistent explanation, carried on with a comradely approach and close contact with the followers of social fascists.

We have often had the contrary in the United States. In this respect I want to speak about one of the very bad developments that we had in the course of the election campaign. In our directives at the Fourteenth Plenum we raised the slogan, "Not a single political meeting without Communists present". A few of our very good comrades, very zealous, very energetic comrades, who are ready to lay down their lives for the Party, interpreted this to mean to go in and break up the meetings of our enemies and they proceeded to carry out their Communist duty as they understood it. (*Laughter*) The only trouble was that by this mistaken understanding of their Communist duty, they did our Party ten times more harm among the masses than all of the slandering that the social fascists were able to do. They didn't convince a single worker in this manner. They drove these workers away from us; they created an atmosphere not of sympathy but of antagonism between us and these workers. As a matter of criticism for the center, I want to say that we didn't sharply enough correct this. We should have corrected this publicly and openly, and in a sharp manner, instead of, as we did, trying to control and correct this mistake through inner Party channels. It should have been an open, public, political act of correction.

Comrades, we have many lessons to draw from our experiences in the mass struggle. Because we are preparing for a convention of the Party, the first convention for two and a half years, (it will be almost three years before it is held) we have to deal not

only with the experiences of the past few months. Already we have summarised the most important of these lessons, in our various resolutions and editorials that have already been printed and distributed. We have drawn together the most important of these in the draft resolution now before the plenum.

I don't want to consume the amount of time that would be necessary for a recapitulation of all these lessons. It seems to me that we can draw a few general conclusions from the detailed lessons of our struggles in the strike movement and especially the biggest strike that we have organized and led, the Pennsylvania-Ohio strike on which we have had a very detailed and very important resolution last year, lessons of our unemployment struggles, the struggles for the united front, the Chicago actions, the questions involved in the organization of the National Hunger March, etc., the problems involved in our leadership and our mistakes in the Bonus March, the struggles that we have had with regard to the development of the farmers' movement, the experiences that we are accumulating, and the problems involved in our experiences, with the intellectuals and students, the problems of other middle-class elements such as bank depositors movement which we have seriously neglected, the movement of small home owners, etc.

THE CARRYING OUT OF THE FOURTEENTH PLENUM RESOLUTION

All of these experiences and lessons we have already discussed. The general line of our analysis was already clearly established and requires little debate, except for purposes of deepening our understanding of them. They serve to emphasize for us and to make it possible for us to really begin to understand the resolutions of the Fourteenth Plenum. It is necessary to say that we did not and we could not understand the full significance of the Fourteenth Plenum resolution merely by reading it. It is in the dialectical process of establishing the connection between this resolution and life that we begin to get an appreciation of the full depth and significance of the Fourteenth Plenum resolution.

Some comrades seem to think that the Fourteenth Plenum resolution is something which is used for state occasions, that is, when we have a plenum the Fourteenth Plenum resolution is placed on an altar and everyone comes before it and says, "I have sinned against you." This is a sort of mystical and religious conception of the Fourteenth Plenum resolution.

I do not think we need that kind of an understanding. I think we have to begin to understand that our plenum resolutions are not show-pieces for a large gathering, but instruments for the

carrying on of the daily work, directives for the daily work. And when we come together again, with a period of experiences in their use, we come together for the purpose by collective consultation of increasing our mastery of this weapon of our resolutions, sharpening it up and preparing it for the new specific tasks.

We have in our experiences since the Fourteenth Plenum and before the Fourteenth Plenum, accumulated a lot of experience and lessons. Some of these are positive, many of them negative. We have had especially serious errors committed by the Center in the development of our work.

THE LESSONS FROM OUR WAR ERRORS

I want to deal now with the errors that we committed in the struggle against war. Especially those errors around last March and April growing out of our campaign against Japanese imperialist attacks in Manchuria and Shanghai.

The first error from which many others flowed was that the Party in its own name initiated the campaign against the Japanese imperialist assault on Shanghai with the slogans of "oust the Japanese imperialist representatives" and of "economic boycott". This was a very mechanical and very stupid handling of a question which required a flexible Bolshevik development in a situation which could by no means respond to a formula mechanically applied. We were unquestionably faced with a situation in which mass resentment against Japanese imperialism could most quickly be mobilized and brought into immediate action under such slogans because such slogans responded to the degree of political development of those masses at that time. We undoubtedly had the duty and the task of utilizing all opportunities to the utmost. It was undoubtedly correct that we should direct mass anger, mass demonstrations against Japanese imperialism which was the spearhead of the war developments direct against the Soviet Union and against the Chinese people. All arguments which were directed against these fundamental tasks did not help to correct the error which was made by the issuing of these slogans as Party slogans. Wrong criticisms that arose, prevented our Party for some period from correcting this original error and made it very difficult to correct because it perpetuated and deepened the confusion with regard to the whole question within our leadership. From this confusion developed a much more serious error in the expression given in the *Daily Worker* of April 12 of a conciliatory attitude towards the bourgeois propaganda which spoke of a possible alliance between the Soviet Union and the United States against Japan. This error has been criticized at the Fifteenth Plenum and has been criticized

in print. It is the kind of error, however, that takes on a certain historical significance, which is not settled by being once examined and criticized, but which must become one of the features of the education of the Party on the whole question of the struggle against war, to vaccinate the Party against such errors in the future, to arm it against any possible repetition of such errors at another time.

Further it must be said that at the Fourteenth Plenum in my own speech which was directed against the wrong interpretations and criticisms of the main line that was being pursued at that moment of the development of the mass struggle against Japanese imperialism and thereby also struggle against our own imperialism, that I myself fell into a serious error. My error was not as some comrades have intimated that it was incorrect to quote Lenin on the question of Japanese-American relationships. It was correct to recall all of those things that Lenin said on this question. But while recalling these things, it was necessary to do more, which I did not do. It was necessary to examine the specific situation in which these statements were made by Lenin and show the difference between our situation and that situation in which they were issued. We have much to learn from these quotations and these quotations are a necessary part of the education of the American Party but they require especially that they shall be stated in the light of those differences in the tasks of a Communist Party which has already seized governmental power, on the one hand, and the tasks of a Communist Party which is not yet even facing the task of the immediate seizure of power on the other hand. It is not possible to draw a mechanical analogy between the tactics of the Party when it has power and the tactics of the Party still facing the struggle for power. Because I failed to draw this distinction I left the door open for a completely wrong understanding of the question. The nature of the error was the same as if one should propose that the Party itself should put forward the peace slogans which Litvinoff puts forward in the name of the Soviet government at Geneva. We have learned the distinction between the Soviet government and our Party in relation to the slogans of peace and disarmament. We understand quite well that the Soviet government in proposing disarmament at Geneva and in its whole peace program is making a correct Bolshevik use of all possible instruments for mobilizing mass forces against war, against the imperialist intervention in the Soviet Union. And at the same time we know that our work in supporting the peace policy of the Soviet Union can never take the form of ourselves putting forward a program in the name of our Party of disarmament and peace pacts. In all of such questions our first, main and principle attitude is to

expose the false character of all of these supposed instrumentalities of peace, to expose the character of the pacifist philosophy that has developed around them as instruments of the bourgeoisie for masking the preparations for war. And in the same way we have to draw similar lessons in our concrete working out of the methods whereby we have to make use of the imperialist antagonisms in order to develop in our own particular field the broadest, deepest, possible mobilization of the masses against imperialist war.

The greatest error and the greatest weakness of our struggle against war was the slackening of our campaign against war. Our reaction to our errors and the confusion that arose around them was one of hesitation and fear to deal with such questions, the avoidance of mistakes by making the biggest mistake of all, of not doing anything. With regard to my own errors in this question I must admit an additional weakness in not yet having written the extended article on this whole question that was suggested in the letter of the Comintern. I hope that I will be able to do so soon and in the process of preparing this article which I have been going through for some weeks already, I hope to deepen my own understanding on this question. Perhaps if I succeed in that, my article will be of some help to the Party, carrying through the same process for the Party as a whole.

THE APPLICATION OF THE POLICY OF THE UNITED FRONT

In all of our mass struggles we are faced with the detailed application of the policy of the united front from below. In every concrete development of this policy we find the necessity for the struggle on two fronts, against the right capitulators to the reformist leaders and the "leftist" sectarian narrowing approach to the masses in the united front.

The struggle in Chicago around the action of October 31 gave us a classical example of these two dangers and gave us a good instrument for educating the whole Party on this question, by showing the Party how we fought against and defeated both dangers and thereby succeeded in carrying through, to our political gain, a large scale mass action. I do not want to review the details of the Chicago experience again. This has been done in *The Communist*, in the *Daily Worker*, in many articles and editorials.

But just a few comments upon our Chicago experience. In facing the problems in Chicago we delivered our heaviest blows against the manifest right danger there, recognizing that this is *the main danger* in all further development of mass work. At the same time we had to strike against the "left" phrase-mongering

which showed a very sharp sectarianism. And we have to recognize that in most places in the United States, that the reason why we do not have the necessity of a sharp struggle against right opportunism is because our leftist sectarianism prevents us from getting enough contact with the masses to make a right mistake.

Our leftist sectarianism is, in most cases, the obstacle that prevents a single step forward today and which must be smashed through before we will even have the necessity of fighting against opportunist developments in the mass work. It is impossible to capitulate to the reformist leaders when we are so far away from the masses that we don't have any contact. At the same time, while we are satisfied that—that is, we are convinced (the word satisfied might be misunderstood)—we should say we are convinced that the comrades in Chicago followed the correct line in handling the struggle around October 31, yet we are not convinced that the chief obstacle, leftist sectarianism, has been liquidated in in Chicago. And we are a little bit disturbed in looking at Chicago, when we see that Chicago, after October 31, seemed to heave a sigh of relief and sit back in their chairs—a sort of, “Well, thank god, that's over.” Since October 31 we have failed to see the concrete development of the united front struggle against Borders. We do not doubt that it has been going on; but it hasn't assumed forms sufficiently sharp and deep to arise as news that would reach us in the center. [Interjection by Gebert: We get some, but not sufficient.] Not sufficient. And I think there is a certain sectarian relief (*Laughter*) in Chicago that the terrible problems of this struggle with Borders in that united front conference aren't facing them now!

MISTAKES IN OUR TRADE UNION WORK

The distortions of our united front line, of course, are many and varied. One has to overcome difficulties of knowing which to choose as examples. There is an embarrassment of riches in this respect. I chose the example of Chicago because it gave us a good example of the correct main line and at the same time served to emphasize that the struggle against sectarianism isn't over and won't be for a long time, even where we broke through and where open resistance to the correction of our line has been largely overcome.

Now I must say a few words about the trade union work. I am going to speak about this very briefly because Comrade Stachel is going to make a complete report on this question, and we will have a special discussion on this. I only want to touch upon one very important general question which is directly related to some of

the main political problems of the Party. The Twelfth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. had to declare for a very sharp correction of some distortions of the trade union line which had taken place in many countries. Not merely one country, but many countries had distorted the line of the Fifth World Congress of the R.I.L.U. of independent leadership of struggle; distorted it in the sense of an actual desertion of the reformist unions and the setting up of the principle of independent leadership as something possible of achievement only through new red unions.

This distortion appeared also in the United States. We have been developing the struggle against it for the past year and a half, but more especially in the last six months we have been sharpening up the fight for the liquidation of this distortion. With the sharpening up of our struggle for the correction of our practices in this field, there has come a certain sharpening of resistance against this correction, and it looked for a while like we might have a very serious debate on this question with some comrades. Especially in this respect it is necessary for me to mention the name of Comrade Zack.

In resisting our corrections of these distortions, in resisting our insistence upon the serious development of work inside the A. F. of L. and other reformist unions, Comrade Zack raised the slogan that he is defending the line of the Fifth World Congress of the R.I.L.U. against those who want to revise the Fifth World Congress. This slogan of his would have greater weight, if it was not for the fact that he raises it after the Twelfth Plenum, so that today, to speak of defending the Fifth Congress in the sense of defending these distortions, is to put oneself into opposition not only to our Political Bureau, but to put oneself in opposition to the leadership of the Communist International.

There cannot be allowed to develop any idea that there are two kinds of trade union work, one the opposition in the reformist unions which differs in principle from the other, which is organization of the unorganized into the Red trade unions.

This is merely two phases of one task—the development of the revolutionary trade union movement. We organize the unorganized wherever we can find them and whenever we can make contacts with them but the question of whether we organize them in the Red trade unions or in the A. F. of L. or in a separate organization depends entirely upon the particular situation and upon the relation of forces. There is nothing in the directives of the Fifth World Congress of the R.I.L.U. or in any of the Congresses of the Communist International or in any of the plenums that gives the line that unorganized workers brought into trade

unions must go into our *new* trade unions. In the Illinois coal fields it would be nothing but sheer stupidity at this moment to take workers directly into the National Miners Union. It would be the same in the Anthracite if we set up locals of the National Miners Union. If we are seriously going to develop revolutionary opposition within the mass trade unions, we must do it preparatory to taking unorganized miners into these unions and strengthening our opposition and we must object to any action that prevents us from carrying out this simple sane program. We must take into account the state of our development of left opposition inside the reformist unions in particular localities and vicinities.

THE NEGRO QUESTION A QUESTION OF AN OPPRESSED NATIONALITY

The work among the Negroes requires a few words. The resolution pointed out that in Negro work we have seriously passed over from mere agitation to the field of struggle and action, to a great degree the result of clarification of our program and understanding of the Negro question as a question of an oppressed nationality. At this moment it is necessary to emphasize that our chief weakness now is in our failure to follow up and to develop the trade unions, the Unemployed Councils as the chief channels for the development of work among the Negro masses. Some small successes of involving Negroes can be recorded in the unemployed movement but very little in the trade union field. Only certain incidents demonstrating the possibilities of work in this direction, have taken place but no systematic follow-up work. We have even seen the development of liquidatory tendencies in our Negro work set directly against the L.S.N.R. We have made big steps forward in the Bolshevizing of the entire Party including our Negro comrades. This has been reflected in the growing consciousness of our Negro cadres generally toward the acknowledgement of the necessity of setting up the L.S.N.R. organization. Formerly it was especially the leading Negro comrades that opposed this. Our experiences in the last two years have definitely proven to all of these comrades that the Party and other mass organizations are seriously taking up the Negro question and are pressing forward in the struggles for Negro rights and that the L.S.N.R. is not a substitute for the main political path of our work. And now that that question has been settled in their minds, they realize that the L.S.N.R. is a valuable and necessary instrument to extend over wider fields our struggle for Negro rights.

The L.S.N.R. is by no means a substitute for the Party, or trade unions, or Share-Croppers' Union, or Unemployed Councils, I.L.D. or other mass organizations, but I think it will be found that

everywhere, including the South, there is a field for the development of the L.S.N.R. One great obstacle to this development is that we have never succeeded in convincing the leading cadres of the Party that we meant what we said when we outlined the organizational structure of the L.S.N.R. The L.S.N.R. was conceived of as a federation of existing organizations on the basis of economic needs—Share-Croppers' Union, Unemployed Councils, organizations of any and every kind which also were interested in the general program of the L.S.N.R., and incidentally where we are dealing with unorganized people, we can organize them into special branches of the L.S.N.R. Formerly only when we had a fixed number or percentage of white people in each local, were we not afraid of falling into the danger of Jim-Crowism. Only now that we are not afraid of the spread of any such deviation, do we finally work to organize branches which even contain only Negroes. We know that these things may be necessary and in fact will be necessary and where they are necessary, we will not be afraid to make organizations composed entirely of Negroes. In regard to the L.S.N.R. it will be effective organization only if it is a federation of organizations and not set itself the task of creating entirely new individual branches. These are all very good, especially in Chicago, where we have them. Wherever the workers are organized and the organizations are satisfying their needs, they will refuse to liquidate their organization. One of the main weaknesses of our work is the still seriously insufficient understanding of our leading cadres of just what the Negro question is and what the significance of our Negro program is. There is not adequate understanding of our slogan of self-determination among many of our District Committee members who have not read the basic resolution of the Communist International on this question seriously. I am quite sure that the pamphlet, *The Communist Position on the Negro Question*, which included these basic questions, has not been taken seriously as the basis of political education of every leader in our Party—it is taken as another agitational pamphlet. This is not the case. This pamphlet must be read by everyone, by every leader in our Party as it is impossible for anyone to face these problems without first having read and studied every phase presented in this pamphlet.

We must also emphasize still the insufficient attention given by the Party to the Bolshevik training of new Negro cadres, their training in action, their involvement in the leadership, and in political and organizational work of developing of our mass actions generally among whites and Negroes and among Negroes especially.

The basic education of our new Negro cadres, which we require so pressing, must come in the process of action and struggle, but must be supplemented by systematic schooling work also.

ON THE STRUGGLE AGAINST WHITE CHAUVINISM

A word about the struggle against white chauvinism. We have made some of our most decisive advances in this struggle through the medium of mass trials which were made the occasion for dramatically developing a political examination of the Negro question. However we must say that there has been a certain tendency for a large mass production of white chauvinist trials in which quality has been sacrificed to quantity. We have begun to develop a certain "Model T" white chauvinist trial, the quality of which is very, very bad. The cylinders don't hit, you know, the fenders drop off, the workmanship on the thing is the most inexpert and sloppy work. This is, what we have in this mass production of white chauvinist trials—the most primitive stage of mass production, where the whole intent is to produce a large supply of what appears to be the right thing, and which won't stand examination—a complete sacrifice of quality to quantity. I think, in the struggle against white chauvinism here, if anywhere, we have got to insist absolutely on quality. Quantity is not so important right now. Quality!

Every time we put on a demonstrative action in the struggle against white chauvinism, it must be so well prepared politically that out of every such action we win 99.3 per cent of all workers who come in contact with it. We must really win the masses who come in contact with every action of ours against white chauvinism, and that has been seriously neglected. When we prepare these actions unpolitically, mechanically, we set up barriers against the development of a political understanding and thereby strengthen the influence of white chauvinist ideology.

Now I must say a few words about the question of the penetration of the shops. Fortunately, we are in a position at this plenum where we no longer have to take elaborate precautions to make sure in the *stenogram* to make a "good showing" about shop work—that we discussed it. Fortunately, even before the plenum, we not only began a little systematic discussion of our shop work—we even surprised ourselves to learn that we had even begun a little practical work inside the shops. This is a tremendous event. This is something that must be registered as of supreme importance for our Party. We began to do a little work inside the shops. Of course it is not very much.

EVALUATING OUR SHOP WORK

In discussing this question not long ago I used a comparison as to how we should evaluate this work in the shop, by comparing it with Lenin's speech at the Fourth World Congress of the Comintern, when he pointed out that the Soviets had just achieved a tremendous historical victory. They had accumulated 20,000,000 roubles of new capital for the heavy metal industry. Twenty million roubles—that was in 1922. When you compare this 20,000,000 roubles of ten years ago with the billions that are being put in Soviet heavy industry today, it looks like a drop of water in an ocean. If you will compare the little shop work that we have got started with what is necessary before we are seriously organizing and directing millions of masses in the United States, then it is nothing at all. It is so small that it is just nothing compared with what we must do. But for us it has the same significance as that first 20,000,000 roubles had for Soviet heavy metal. It is our first little accumulation of capital. Of course, if we take this first little accumulation of capital and light-heartedly forget about it and do not develop it further with a constantly increasing tempo, it will not be worth anything, but if we take it as a beginning, as a proof of what can be done, which enables us to proceed forward further—it is this little beginning of shop work that will become history in our Party.

I have spoken about many of the detailed problems involved in shop work in the Chicago conference. My speech at that conference has been printed in today's *Daily Worker*.* It is probably unnecessary for me to take the time of this plenum to go over again these questions.

I think it should be possible for me to assume that all of you have read this, and consider this as part of my report. I want just to say one additional word about the relation of the small demands to the large demands. In Chicago I heard one little story that illustrates the importance of this question very dramatically. One of the comrades told me about a shop, I believe it was a foundry. They started an initiative group in the shop and began to raise issues for sanitary conditions, towels in the wash rooms. The demands increased the influence of the group and they became a real power in the shop. They decided to continue this fight for small demands very energetically. At this time along came a big wage cut, and our comrades decided that we were not strong enough to fight against a wage cut, and instead of putting up a fight against the wage cut, they put up a fight for toilet paper in the toilets. The

* See also *Party Organizer* for February, 1933.

workers decided that the wage ct was more important and thought we were vulgarizing their demands, and our comrades lost influence in the shop, and the second fight for immediate demands, for sanitary conditions was lost because it was something which was not uppermost in the minds of the workers in the shop.

We have to develop in our every-day shop work large political questions which will make the workers understand not that something is being forced down their throats, but that each himself is interested in large political questions rising directly out of his shop conditions; and bind him closer to us, and this will solidify our forces in the shops. One further point on shop work that it is necessary to speak of, is the conception of keeping politics out of the shops, or the separation of economics from politics, an idea that was confusedly expressed in a formulation by Comrade Zack—that in penetrating the shops, the trade union comes first and only after the trade union has been established will the Party be brought forward. This is not only wrong organizationally, but is a complete political confusion, there is a tendency to separate economics from politics and a practical refusal of the necessary instrument for the penetration of the shop. The most important shops cannot be successfully penetrated with trade union organization inside if at the same time it is not penetrated with Party shop nuclei which are the force for building the trade-union work from the beginning.

BUILDING THE PARTY—OVERCOMING FLUCTUATION

A few words about building the Party in the lower organizations, and overcoming fluctuation. The comrades who visited the Communist International last, report to us that Comrade Piatnitsky asked the question, is there a law in America that prevents the Communist Party from increasing its membership above 10,000? And it seemed that there was such a law and we were suffering from legalism. But we must say that recently we have begun to break the bonds of this legalism. We began to break this law. We began to go above the 10,000 membership. This fact is not yet fully recognized by the Comintern. We have to convince them that it is true, they still list us as a Party of 10,000. We are today a Party of 19,000 members. This becomes significant also when we take the dynamics of the membership figures not month to month, which shows large fluctuation, but from year to year. When we examine our vital statistics in yearly periods we see in 1931 we averaged 8,500 members, approximately. In the year 1932 we averaged 15,000, an increase of about 80%, and in December and January of this year, we have averaged 18,457, just under 19,000. These figures are all based on weekly dues payments. What will the

1933 average be? I hope no one will look upon these technocratic charts on the walls and consider that already these charts have solved the problem, that in 1933 it has to be so much higher. We have no guarantee that the line in 1933 will not drop very sharply. What is going to prevent it from dropping? There is only one thing that will prevent it, and that is the work of our Party in recruiting and holding new members.

Our work will decide, and one of the lessons of these charts that must be very seriously studied is the lesson that while we broke the law which prohibited us from going over 10,000, we are not yet breaking that law which says that we must lose a large percentage of all new members we bring into the Party. This law is still being carried out very regularly and loyally. We have not overcome fluctuation in membership. The only reason why the Party is growing is because the attraction power is so great that it can overcome the bad conditions of Party life which drives away new members. The solution of Party growth of which we see some beginnings was not achieved through improving the inner life, which cuts down fluctuation. The real problem of the growth of the Party is the problem of keeping all new members who come to us, and of transforming them into Bolsheviks and this is essentially a political problem. We can and we must give a lot of attention to organizational questions involved in Party life, and especially the lower units, the relation of lower units to the higher, and of the multitude of problems involved in this. The organizational questions play a big role.

ON THE ELECTION RESULTS

It is necessary to say a few words with regard to the elections. The election campaign gave us one of the principal tests of our Bolshevik qualities after the Fourteenth Plenum, and the general judgement on this election campaign cannot be very favorable. It must be said that, while we conducted a broader campaign than ever before in our history, that we improved the political contents of this campaign in almost every respect. Yet after the campaign is over we can say that while we had a bigger and better campaign than ever before it was only an improved version of the old election campaigns. We did not introduce the essential changes that were required in our methods of participation in the election campaign.

The only occasion upon which the election campaign mobilized masses was for meetings and marches to meetings. We did not succeed in connecting up the election campaign and the election issues, and our Party as the leader of the struggles, with the daily strug-

gles of the masses, with the economic problems that were in the minds of the vast masses of the country. It must be said that in exploiting these daily issues before the masses, that even Roosevelt and the Democratic Party were much more expert than we were. That even in exploiting the issues of unemployment insurance that the Democratic Party captured the mass sentiment for unemployment insurance. And this criticism can be extended to almost every phase of the election campaign. It can't be said that we did not see this problem beforehand. You re-read the Fourteenth Plenum resolution and you find we had a correct approach to the election campaign in this resolution, but somehow in the process of transforming the resolution into action something got lost and precisely that something that was lost was the binding of the election campaign with the struggles of the unemployed, the strike struggles, and the struggle for Negro rights.

With regard to the results of the elections. We cannot in any way bring forward the question of the loss of votes through disfranchisement, corruption, vote stealing, etc., as an explanation for our weaknesses, our failing to make a stronger showing in the election campaign.

This is no explanation. At the same time it is necessary to say that in the last election campaign the direct stealing of votes that were cast for our Party was on an unprecedented scale, and we can by no means accept the official figures as the results of votes that were actually cast for our Party.

I discussed this question the other day with Comrade Foster who has had more leisure to collect all sorts of information about this question, than any of us who have been tied up with daily work, and who has been very seriously following up this question. And Comrade Foster expressed the conviction that our vote actually cast at the polls was certainly between four and five hundred thousand.

Although we have no way of ever establishing any finality of what was the actual volume of stealing of our votes, this is important, not to furnish us with any alibi for the weakness for our campaign, but important that we should not allow the Party to feel that the lessons of the election is the impossibility of extending the actual vote of the Party.

The official vote was slightly more than double that of 1928, but it was quite clear that it was multiplied about seven or eight times in reality. This does not take into account that votes were also stolen in 1928.

This factor is much more accentuated today than ever before.

I express my agreement with the remarks made by Comrade Gebert on the election campaign.

We got a great lesson on the problem of leading the non-proletarian masses in the Bonus March. We are learning a great deal about this in the development of the great farmers' movement, in the development of the students' movement, the intellectual and middle class elements. This is still greatly underestimated, there is still a sectarian narrowness in our Party which tends to look at these non-proletarian strata and say, "What business have we got monkeying with such people? We are a workers' party." This tendency is a tendency which rejects the role of the proletariat at the leader of all the oppressed masses in the struggle against capitalism, and it must be very sternly faced and overcome.

THE STRUGGLE ON THE IDEOLOGICAL FRONT

Another product of our participation in actual mass struggles has been that we have developed not only our theoretical understanding and deepened it, but we have begun to develop the struggle on the ideological front, on the theoretical front. Hitherto theory for us has been the abstraction from struggle, but didn't represent itself a field of struggle. And it is a sign of a certain growth and maturity of our Party that today we are moving into the ideological field as a field of struggle, as people who are taking over the hegemony of theoretical, ideological life.

This was made possible and at the same time was made necessary by the development of mass struggle. The first decisive steps in this respect are being taken now in our publications, especially in *The Communist* and the last issue of the *New Masses*. Read contribution to theoretical development, the application of Marxist-Leninist theory to America is contained in some very valuable articles by Comrade Jim Allen on American history, and our Marxist-Leninist interpretation of American history. These are polemical articles, articles of struggle against the conceptions of the renegades, specifically of the renegade theoretician, Will Herberg. Also the development of our polemics against the revisionism of Sidney Hook provide one of the features of the theoretical development of the Party and one of the instruments for the further deepening of the theoretical equipment of the Party.

A further phase of the development of the Bolshevization of our Party is the question of reaching the native-born American elements, that is, the Anglo-Saxon elements which constitute one of the largest groups of the American population. The only native section in which we can say we have made some decisive steps in

reaching, is the American Negroes. Among the Negroes of the native American-born elements we are making progress. There has been a conception rather widely spread in our Party that this question of reaching the native Americans is to a great degree the problem of using a more popular language, that the obstacle between us and the native Americans is that we use a language which they do not understand.

I want to challenge this conception, at the same time that I stand for a more popular and more simplified language. I deny that this is the main obstacle between us and the native-born Americans. If we wanted proof that difficulty of language will not prevent the development of mass interest and attention, just look at Technocracy! If there has ever been any fad that had the most unintelligible language, that nobody can understand—and look at the millions of people that will swear by it today! [Bedacht: And don't know what it is.] So to get mass interest and attention, which is our first problem with the native Americans, we must recognize that merely changing our language will not solve our problem. And it is necessary to change our language, because as Comrade Bedacht said, our task is not only to get their attention, but their understanding and penetrate their minds and not to daze them. But if the question of language is not the decisive question, then what is the problem of finding that approach which will seize a hold of the minds of these masses and make them feel close and thereby draw them closer to us.

In think one of the main factors is the question of our ability or lack of ability to make use of American revolutionary traditions. In this respect, the articles of Comrade Jim Allen in *The Communist* are making big contributions along this line, making us more fit and capable of linking up our present work among the masses. Comrade Lenin many years ago gave us direct advice along this line in his famous letter to the American working class. Comrade Lenin pointed out the importance of making use of the revolutionary traditions. He said:

“The best representatives of the American proletariat—those representatives who have repeatedly given expression of their full solidarity with us, the Bolsheviks—are the expression of this revolutionary tradition in the life of the American people. This tradition originated in the war of liberation against the English in the 18th and the civil war in the 19th century.”