
Recommendations to the American Commission

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Confidential.

We recommend that the decision on the American Question embody the following points:

1. United Front Struggles Over Concrete Issues.

The central tactic of the Workers Party in the present issue shall be the organization of united front struggles of the workers on the basis of concrete understandable slogans which correspond to the burning needs of the workers, and which will be linked up in the agitation of the Party with the revolutionary goal of the struggle. These slogans shall be of such a nature that they will enable the Party to set masses of workers into motion against the capitalists and the capitalist government, and which will consequently bring them into conflict with the policy and leadership of the petty bourgeois third party movement as well as the non-partisan support of the parties of Big Capital by the trade union bureaucracy. This general agitation must be accompanied by systematic and merciless criticism and exposure of the petty bourgeois policies and leadership in the mass organization of the workers. These united front movements must be essentially from the bottom, and must not be based primarily upon agreements with leaders from the top. These campaigns shall be the means of starting an elementary movement of the workers, of accelerating the

process of their disillusionment, and of preparing the ground for the development of class political action on a broad scale.

2. Role of Workers Party in United Front Campaign.

In these struggles the Workers Party itself, under its own name, must come to the fore as the practical leader of the workers and poor farmers, as well as the champion and advocate for the proletarian Communist revolution and the Workers' and Farmers' Government. The tendency to minimize the role of the Workers Party and to overestimate the role of the Labor Party, especially the tendency to represent the Labor Party as a revolutionary class party which will fight for and lead the workers in real struggles against capitalism, must be sharply rejected, and the leading role of the Workers Party emphasized. The Workers Party shall conceive of these united front struggles as the best means of developing a broad movement of the workers, of building itself into a mass Communist Party, and of establishing itself in the eyes of the workers as the practical leader of the working class in all its struggles against capitalism. In all this agitation the Party should aim to broaden the outlook of the workers, to develop their political consciousness, and to transform isolated fights into the general revolutionary political struggle.

3. The Question of the Labor Party.

The Workers Party, while concentrating its main energies on its effort to draw the unions as organizations into economic and political united front struggles over concrete issues, shall advocate the idea of the trade unions entering into politics independently as organizations and of their forming alliance with the poorer sections of the farmers under the leadership of the workers. But the slogan of the Labor Party shall be put forth in an organizational sense only in these circumstances where it has or is capable of developing mass support. It shall not be used in such a manner as to obscure the identity, the leading role of the Workers Party. The Labor Party can be formed only under conditions where it secures genuine mass support from the trade unions. The creation of so-called Left Wing Labor Parties, which amount in practice to little more than the Workers Party and its closely sympathizing unions, is a caricature of the Labor Party idea and is inadmissible.

4. Work in Local Labor Parties, the CPPA, and Other Non-Partisan Trade Union Committees.

In carrying out its united front program and in its executing its general policies, the Workers Party shall permeate all proletarian and semi-proletarian organizations on the economic and political fields. In such local labor parties as may be developed on a mass basis, the Workers Party shall take part in their organization and shall attempt to officially affiliate to them as an autonomous part. Within such labor parties the Workers Party shall fight for a class program against reformist illusions and for the mobilization of the masses for the militant class struggle. It shall fight for the leadership of these mass labor parties and carry on a constant campaign to absorb the most advanced elements into its own ranks. Towards CPPA [the Conference for Progressive Political Action] and other so-called non-partisan committees of the trade unions, the following shall be our policy:

1. A resolute fight on principle against the non-partisan policy in general, and for a class policy and the idea of independent class political party of the workers.
2. Where these non-partisan committees have mass support, Communist delegates from the trade unions must penetrate them and fight to give them a rank-and-file character and a class policy.

5. Theory of a Left Wing Communist Labor Party.

The theory of the formation of a Labor Party consisting of the Left Wing elements, principally Communists and close sympathizers, which is expressed in the August (1923) theses must be categorically condemned. The following phases of this conception are specifically repudiated:

A. Theory of Competing Labor Parties. In the August theses the idea is elaborated that the Labor Party movement in the United States takes the form of several competing Labor Parties, one controlled by the Socialists, one by the Progressives, one by the Communists, etc. As against this theory the Comintern decision must state definitely the principle of a mass united front labor party.

B. Theory of Transforming the Labor Party into a Communist Party. In the August theses, which serves as the theoretical basis of the Minority's Labor Party policy,¹ is expressed the theory of transforming the Left Wing Labor Party into the mass Communist Party. This theory in practice would result in the creation of two communist parties. One a loosely federated party based on the affiliation of organizations, and the other the Workers Party based on individual membership; the former, according to this theory, conducting the daily struggles, and the latter propagating the final aims. The Comintern must raise clearly the point that we must concentrate upon building the Workers Party as such into a mass Communist Party. For this purpose the Communists shall permeate the trade unions, labor parties, and other working class organizations, participate in and lead their daily struggles, and absorb their best elements into the ranks of the Workers Party.

C. Organization of a Left Wing Communist Labor Party. Under present conditions, the attempt to organize a Left Wing Communist Labor Party would result, as in past attempts, in breaking the connections of the Workers Party with the broad economic and political movements of the slowly awakening workers and of isolating the Communists and closest sympathizers into a "fake" Labor Party, a caricature of the united front. The Comintern decision must put forward the idea of the Workers Party keeping contact with the broad movements of the working masses. It must not allow itself to be isolated from them by premature action. It shall not take the initiative in the formation of Labor Parties until the ground has been thoroughly prepared and the assurance of real mass support is evident.

In its decision last year [1923], the Comintern condemned these theories in the following words:

7. The aim to strive at is not to split the Left Wing from the Labor Party as quickly as possible in order to form this split off party into a mass Communist Party. But we must strive at letting the Left Wing grow within the Labor Party at the same time as taking in its most advanced and revolutionary elements into the Workers Party.

¹ By "Minority" is meant the Pepper-Ruthenberg-Lovestone faction. This former and future majority faction was organizationally defeated by the Foster-Cannon faction and its allies in the Finnish Federation and the Lore group at the 3rd National Convention of the Workers Party of America, held at Chicago from Dec. 30, 1923 to Jan. 2, 1924.

The persistent adherence to these theories by the Minority necessitates that in the present decision the repudiation of them must be more categorical, more specific, and more complete. Otherwise, the controversy over these central questions cannot be liquidated.

6. Party Work in the Trade Unions.

The Comintern and Profintern shall send a joint letter to the Workers Party on the trade union question. This letter shall deal specifically with the American situation. It shall stress the vital necessity of work in the trade unions, instruct all Party members to immediately join the unions in their crafts and industries as a matter of Party discipline. It shall at the same time point out the great danger of allowing factionalism to demoralize and undermine the work in the trade unions. The letter shall outline a policy defining the conditions and limitations for united front activities within the unions, which should serve as a guide to the Party and in TUEL [Trade Union Educational League] efforts to create an opposition bloc against the reactionary bureaucracy in union elections, etc. The latter shall emphasize the necessity of extending the party fraction system in the unions and the TUEL and of applying the RILU [Profintern] program for the TUEL.

The Party shall give the TUEL support; strive to broaden and extend it as a left bloc oppositional movement, and to give it more formal separation from the party. The campaigns to broaden and deepen the trade union activities and to promote the TUEL should be accompanied at the same time by systematic efforts to draw the most advanced trade union elements into the Party ranks. The TUEL shall reestablish its central organ and develop its literature department.² Every effort should be made to crystallize the TUEL influence into a left bloc organization, and the efforts of the reactionaries to isolate the TUEL, to drive it underground in the unions, and to reduce its membership to Communists and their closest sympathizers, should be resisted at all costs. It should be pointed out and emphasized that

² The official organ of TUEL, *The Labor Herald*, was merged with the magazine of the Friends of Soviet Russia, *Soviet Russia Pictorial*, and the party theoretical and artistic monthly, *The Liberator*, to form a new combined magazine called *Workers Monthly* in October 1924. The first issue of the new publication was dated November 1924.

the aim of the Party work in the trade unions is to rouse the political consciousness of the workers, to lead their everyday struggles, and develop them into revolutionary political struggles. The Party should constantly keep in mind that by active participation in and leadership of the economic and political struggles of the workers it will extend its influence, increase its membership, and develop into a mass Communist Party.

7. Bolshevization of the Party.

The decision of the Comintern on the American question should point out the concrete aspects of Bolshevization of the American Party, laying emphasis on the following points:

A. Liquidation of Two-and-a-Half International Tendencies.

The decision shall outline the method and form for an ideological and political campaign to be carried on by the CEC for the successful liquidation of this tendency, which has been most characteristically expressed by Comrade Lore. This campaign shall be so carried out as to win away the proletarian elements of the Party who are under the influence of such ideas and to isolate these leaders who persist in defending such conceptions. The question of Trotskyism shall be thoroughly elucidated in order that the entire Party may be permeated with the spirit and teachings of Leninism. Care must be used in the struggle against this tendency not to create a situation which will lead to a demoralizing split and cost the Workers Party valuable proletarian elements. The factional exploitation of this issue, which has the effect of strengthening and consolidating this tendency and hampering its successful liquidation, shall be warned against.

B. Reorganization of the Party on the Basis of Shop Nuclei.

The Party must proceed energetically with the work of reorganizing the Party on the basis of shop nuclei. While exercising due care in dealing with the situation presented in the American Party (small size of Party, foreign language membership, etc.), a warning must be issued against "acceptance in principle" of shop nuclei reorganization, which amounts in practice to covert opposition. This opposition manifests itself by magnifying existing difficulties and the laying down of a whole series of preliminary conditions which make the carrying out of the program impossible. The decisions of the Comintern on this question should specifically point out the incorrectness of the

resolution adopted by the Boston District Committee, which lays down as a preliminary condition the shop nuclei reorganization “a material increase of our membership in the industrial sections and an increase of English-speaking elements in the large cities.”

It must be clearly pointed out the program of reorganization applies also and equally to the present membership of the Party belonging to language federations. The decision should emphasize the importance of the shop nuclei as party bases amongst the unorganized masses in the industries for taking the leadership in their strikes, organization campaigns, and other mass movements. The best means for the organizational unification of the Party and to overcome the present national and language barriers is the shop nuclei form of organization. The shop nuclei form of organization will also be one of the best means of attracting the Party to the native American workers who are indispensable for the future growth and activity of the Party.

C. Centralization of the Party. The decision must point out that the segregation of the Party membership into 17 different language federations, which under their present form function almost as autonomous bodies, tends to create artificial and national divisions and to prevent the development of uniform Party life and activities. Such a state of affairs is incompatible with the Bolshevik centralization and discipline. International branches consisting of Party members of various nationalities who are able to speak the English language should be formed as a step towards greater centralization. The necessary care and caution must be exercised in view of the great difficulties of the language problem in the American Party, but resolute and progressive steps must be taken for the improvement of the present condition, which is a breeding ground for factionalism and a source of great weakness to the Party.

The Party press must be centralized in reality. All publications, including the language publications, must be brought under the complete control and ownership of the CEC. The Daily Worker must be promoted as the central organ of the Party and regarded as the most valuable and indispensable of all the Party publications. The Comintern decision should stress the necessity for much greater discipline in the Party, and for the subordination of all party organs, including the language bureaus, to the CEC

D. Proletarianizing the CEC and Other Party Organs. In order to give a proletarian character to the leading organs of the Party and to insure real contact with the life and struggles of the working

masses, the decision should point out the necessity of drawing into the Central Executive Committee and other important party organs a substantial number of workers employed in the industries and who are connected with the trade unions and active in them. This will also be one of the best means of liquidating the unhealthy factional situation.

E. Party Educational Work. The decisions should point out the necessity of extensive and systematic Marxist-Leninist educational work in the Party ranks, and to draw into this activity the members of the Young Workers League. The importance of maintaining and strengthening the Party schools in New York and Chicago and permeating them with the spirit of Leninism should be emphasized. The system of elementary classes and circuit lecture courses already established should be supported and extended and efforts should be made to establish a Central Party School and the periodical publication of theoretical literature should be pointed out as a cardinal necessity.

8. Support of the Young Workers League.

The decision should take note of the substantial progress made during the past year of the Young Workers League and should call the attention of the Party to the necessity of far greater and more serious support of the Young Workers League in all its activities. The Party should take upon itself the responsibility of developing the YWL and should put forward the slogan of "Organize a unit of the Young Workers League in every shop where the Party has organization and influence." the success of the YWL in attracting the native proletarian youth should be regarded as one of the most important means of laying the foundation of the future American Party. The Party press, including the foreign papers, should devote far greater attention to the problems of the proletarian youth and the extension of the activities, organization, and influence of the Young Workers League.

9. Party Work Amongst Agricultural Workers and Poor Farmers.

The decision should call attention of the Party to the great necessity of organizing the agricultural proletariat into labor unions, giving full support to the IWW where it is functioning in the field, and of drawing the most militant and advanced elements of the agricultural

workers into the Party. At the same time the Party should consider it a most important duty to establish contact with and influence over the poor tenant and mortgage farmers who have a most important role to play as allies of the proletariat in the American revolution. The agrarian department of the CEC shall work out special forms and measures for the conduct of this work. In the work amongst the farmers the Party must not fall into the error of minimizing or neglecting the interests of the agricultural wage workers, but on the contrary, should put them to the fore in all its agitational work in the agricultural districts.

While devoting itself energetically to the interests of the poor farmers, the Party must never forget for a moment the leading role of the proletariat. It must establish its base firmly and fundamentally amongst the workers in the basic industries and not allow itself to drift into an unbalanced activity, which overstresses the work amongst the farmers to the neglect of the work among the industrial workers.

10. Work Among Negroes.

The decision should emphasize the importance of the work among the Negroes. It should stress the necessity to make the coming American Negro Congress the beginning of a deep-going movement among the Negroes. It should also point out that in carrying on this work care must be exercised to bring out the class character of the struggle, and to draw a line between the Negro workers and the Negro bourgeoisie.

11. Work Among Women.

The decision should remind the Party of the necessity of making a real beginning with work among working women, laying special emphasis on the following three points:

1. Work amongst working women is the work of the entire Party.
2. The center of gravity must be among working women in the shops.
3. In order to reach working women it is desirable to enter existing non-partisan organizations or to create new ones on the united front basis, with the provision, however, that wherever such organiza-

tions are formed, they must not be mere paper organizations, the Workers Party under another name.

11. Imperialism and the Dawes Plan.

Note should be taken of the fight that the Workers Party has made against the Dawes Plan and against American imperialism in Pan-America. In the coming convention of the American trade unions a strong campaign should be made against American imperialism, especially its manifestation through the Dawes Plan. Wherever possible, united front movements on these issues shall be developed among the rank-and-file of the unions and other proletarian and semi-proletarian organizations. A wide propaganda shall also be carried on through the Party press, meetings, etc. The fight against imperialism in Pan-America shall be centered in the Pan-American Anti-Imperialist League. Bureaus shall be maintained in Mexico City and Buenos Aires and Chicago. The work of these should be coordinated under the general direction of the Comintern. The Anti-Imperialist League shall be a united front organization embracing Communist Parties, trade unions, cooperatives, farmer organizations, etc.

13. Liquidation of the Factional Fight.

The factional controversies in the Workers Party, which arose out of the complicated situation in America, have been exaggerated and intensified to such a degree by the Minority under the stimulation and direction of Comrade Pepper that they now constitute a majority problem of the Party. The reckless and irresponsible factional conduct of the Minority not only paralyzes the activity of the Party, but actually threatens its unity. The Comintern decision will facilitate the liquidation of the factional fights by embodying the following points:

A. A clear statement on the question of united front tactics in general, as applied to the United States.

B. A specific condemnation of the theory of organizing a Left Wing Communist Labor Party and of transforming it into a mass Communist Party, also a rejection of the general forming of "paper" organizations under the guise of the united front.

C. Renewed efforts to amalgamate the two leading groups of the CEC on the basis of the decision of the Comintern.

D. A substantial number of new proletarian elements, workers actually employed in the shops and who are active members of trade unions, shall be drawn into the CEC and systematic efforts be made to train and develop proletarian leaders.

E. Caucuses and fractions shall be dissolved and prohibited, and the practice of circulating underground “documents” in the Party shall be condemned.

F. Energetic work with regard to the concrete aspects of Bolshevizing the American Party referred to above, liquidation of the 2-1/2 International tendencies, reorganization of the Party on the basis of shop nuclei, centralization of the Party, proletarianizing the CEC and Party educational work.

G. The trade union work must be developed and intensified on a manifold scale. All party members must join the trade unions and start faction fights against the bureaucrats. The anti-trade union tendency in the Party must be categorically condemned.

H. Point out the necessity for Party leaders to frankly admit mistakes in policy. There is a danger to the Party in the tendency to cover up past mistakes by porturing [*sic.*] present theories to fit them, which hinders the Party from turning back from a wrong path once it has entered it.

Edited with footnotes by Tim Davenport

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