

The Communist Party of the U.S.A.

**ITS HISTORY,
ROLE AND
ORGANIZATION**

BY EARL BROWDER

The Communist Party of the U.S.A.

ORGANIZATION
ROLE AND
ITS HISTORY

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N O T E

This pamphlet was compiled from excerpts from the writings and speeches of Earl Browder, General Secretary of the Communist Party, dealing with the historical roots and background, as well as the role and organizational principles of the Communist Party of the United States of America. The books from which this compilation was made were published between the years 1935 and March, 1941, and include *The Way Out*, *The Second Imperialist War*, *Fighting for Peace*, *What Is Communism?*, and *Communism in the United States*.

For the reader who wishes to study more extensively the writings of Earl Browder on the principles and program of the Communist Party, and for a systematic and comprehensive presentation of its viewpoint on the problems of the war and the conditions required for victory, his new book, *Victory—and After*, is recommended.

CONTENTS

I. The History of the Communist Party	5
II. What Is the Communist Party?	18
III. The Unity and Discipline of the Communist Party	23
IV. Qualities of Communist Leadership	29
V. The Work of the Party Branch	37
VI. Party Vigilance Against Agents of the Class Enemy	40
VII. The Young Communist League and Its Tasks	44

I. THE HISTORY OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

AMERICAN labor has a long and rich history. Its militancy is comparable with that of any country. It made profound contributions to American democracy. It produced many powerful and selfless leading personalities, as well as great mass movements. Yet for many generations it lagged behind other advanced countries in political and intellectual development, and is only beginning to achieve its independence as a self-conscious and directing force in the national life. The full elucidation of these positive and negative features of the American labor movement, with the tracing of their historical roots, poses the central problem of working class and Communist history in America up to the World War.

The pre-war history falls quite naturally into several distinctive periods. These may be briefly characterized as follows: (1) From the beginnings of trade union organization, in the 1820's, through the Civil War and Reconstruction period; (2) the Knights of Labor movement, its struggle with the rising American Federation of Labor, and its decline, through the 1880's; (3) the early American Federation of Labor, up to the turn of the twentieth century; (4) from the early 1900's up to the World War, the rise of the Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.), in 1905, the dominance of "pure and simple trade unionism" in the A. F. of L. (comparable to Russian "economism") symbolized in the Civic Federation, organ of collaboration between labor leaders and monopoly capitalists.

Socialist or Communist development for these periods may be briefly described as follows: (1) Utopian Socialist and Communist colonization schemes and philosophies; the first be-

ginnings of Marxian thought through German immigrants; (2) the struggle between anarchism and Marxism; the American groups of the First International; (3) the rise of the Socialist-Labor Party, and, in the West, the Social-Democratic Party; (4) the Socialist Party, split from the Socialist-Labor Party and amalgamated with the Social-Democratic Party, its rise as a mass movement under Debs, its crystallization around two conflicting tendencies, vaguely identified as "Right" and "Left" wing; the first mass circulation of Marxian classic literature.

The American Socialist Party and the World War

The World War revealed the bankruptcy of practically all the European Socialist Parties, comprising the Second International, which fell apart at the first touch of war. Only the Bolsheviki, under Lenin's guidance, pursued a clear and consistent line. Recognizing the alignment as one of aggressive imperialism on both sides, Lenin charted the course of "revolutionary defeatism" which led to the October Revolution of 1917. All other Socialist Parties became patriotic agencies of their governments, except those of Italy and the U.S., which adopted a formal course of opposition but in practice fell into confusion. There were, of course, groups within many parties (*e.g.*, Liebknecht and Luxemburg in Germany; Bulgaria, etc.), which approached Lenin's position, and which later contributed to the founding of Communist Parties.

The American Socialist Party did not attempt to answer the question of its war policy until 1917, in the same month the U.S. entered the war. In special convention in the city of St. Louis it patched up a compromise resolution opposing American entrance into the war, but failing to indicate any line of action for the masses. The weakness of the St. Louis Convention was but the inevitable consequence of its whole history, the absence of a consistent Marxian theory, and indeed of any consistent ideology. Its opposition to the war remained

without any serious influence upon the working class, nor, indeed, did it give direction even to the Socialist Party itself. . . .

Two outstanding figures in the Socialist Party tried heroically to lead their party into revolutionary struggle against the war. . . . They were Eugene V. Debs and Charles E. Ruthenberg. Just before going to prison for his anti-war struggle, Debs dramatically exclaimed, in a public speech: "I am a Bolshevik from the crown of my head to the tip of my toes." Ruthenberg later became a leading figure in the formation of the Communist Party and was its first General Secretary until his death in 1927; with him went most of those who actively fought against the war. Debs, held back by his own lack of Marxian theory, isolated in prison and after his release by sickness, and repelled by manifestations of "infantile Leftism" in the confused formative period of the Communist Party, never made the transition to the modern Communist movement, although by temperament and instinct he fully belonged with it.

The October Revolution in Russia brought a wave of mass enthusiasm among the workers and of rapid growth to the Socialist Party. The writings of Lenin began to appear in English, in imperfect and sometimes even distorted translations, but of a most profound influence. A period of intense study and furious discussions ensued. Theory became a matter of preoccupation on the part of thousands and tens of thousands. Marxism was discovered by the American movement. A revolutionary wing took shape within the Socialist Party, quickly obtaining the allegiance of the great majority of its membership. The call for the founding of the Communist International appeared. The Left wing in the Socialist Party organized itself in a National Conference early in 1919. At first the Socialist Party leadership maneuvered with the issue; but, finally, under the influence of Hillquit, it took its stand against the Russian Revolution and against the Communist International. Abandoning all pretense of majority rule within the Socialist Party, it expelled the organizations rep-

resenting the majority of the membership, right on the eve of the national convention called in Chicago. Thus, the split in the Socialist Party was forced by its leadership, and the Communist Party was born in Chicago, on September 1, 1919, with little preparation, very chaotic organization, and a minimum of mature and tested leadership or program.

The First Decade of the C.P.U.S.A.—1919-1929

It is convenient to deal with the first decade of Communist Party history as a *single period*, because the entire ten years was dominated by the basic problem of the creation of a "party of the new type," basing itself on Marxism-Leninism, beginning the mastery of theory and its independent application to American problems and conditions.

Throughout these first ten years, the Party's development was hampered and distorted by alien and hostile influences working within its leadership. These influences, in the course of these years, finally crystallized into two definitely counter-revolutionary and anti-Communist groups. First was the Trotskyites, followers and adherents of Leon Trotsky. Second was the Lovestone group, followers and adherents of Bukharin. It was not until 1928 that the Party gathered enough internal strength and cohesion to throw off the Trotskyite group; and 1929, when it cleansed itself of the Lovestone group. Until then, these two groups worked in a conspiratorial manner within the Party leadership, creating confusion and political deviations, organizing factional struggles, and keeping the Party in turmoil and separated from the American masses and American life.

This decade covered the first two periods of post-war world history; first, the period of post-war crisis, upheavals and revolutions, up to 1923, and second, the period of temporary and relative capitalist stabilization, that continued until the outbreak of the great economic crisis of 1929.

In the U.S. the period immediately following the war was

also one of deep disturbance and conflicts. Great strike movements took place, and serious political unrest swept the country. But the Communist Party was unable to play any decisive role as yet. The "party of the new type" was as yet only an inspiration, a desire, something to be achieved, but it did not exist in concrete American reality. In September, 1919, at Chicago, the party had been "born as twins," known as the "Communist Party of America" and the "Communist-Labor Party of America"; the cause of this division was only incidentally ideological differences. Besides the general political immaturity of the movement, and the confusion prevalent at the time, the division must be ascribed primarily to the existence of the national group federations, as the most powerful organizations among the expelled Socialist Party membership; the federation leadership, forming the Communist Party of America, was quite rigid and doctrinaire in political and organizational questions, and repelled those forces which formed the Communist-Labor Party of America, who were less politically educated but in closer contact with the broader American masses. Both groups were necessary to the formation of an effective party, but neither had leadership sufficiently mature to solve the problems of unity at the moment. Both groups suffered seriously from "infantile Leftism" and revolutionary romanticism.

These "normal" difficulties were multiplied, and confusion was confounded, when the infamous "Palmer raids" of January, 1920, fell upon the infant parties like a thunderbolt. The first great modern "red scare" had swept through the ruling class, as a result of the great strike movements of 1919, which synchronized with revolutionary upheavals in Europe. Notwithstanding the almost complete isolation of both the infant Communist Parties from these mass strike movements—neither of them exercised any important influence either on the initiation or conduct of these strikes—the fear and wrath of the employers born of the strikes and the unstable world situation were all concentrated against the

two young parties, which were identified with "foreign-born" and "alien" groups.

Significance of the Palmer Raids in 1920

A gigantic scheme for mass deportation of all foreign-born Communists was hastily conceived, and launched by Attorney-General Palmer in simultaneous "raids" all over the country, timed at a common hour of the night, arresting thousands of known or suspected Communists, who were torn from their families and thrown into immigrant detention stations for indefinite periods, subject to purely administrative handling. Although Labor Secretary Post, technically the final authority on deportations, labored seriously to introduce some sanity and humanity into the problem thus created, the "red scare" hysteria whipped up by both Republican and Democratic politicians in the hope of capitalizing it for the 1920 Presidential elections, or at least with the idea of preventing the other side from monopolizing and using the "red" issue against them, overbore all liberal influences and counsels. Federal and state legislation and prosecutions multiplied. Not since the days of John Adams and the infamous "Alien and Sedition Laws" (1796-1800), had anything like it been seen in America. It should be called to attention that the Palmer "red raids" were not unconnected with the Republican victory in 1920.

The divided and unorganized Communist groups were scattered. All their immaturities and romantic tendencies were multiplied and emphasized by the official hysteria and persecution. They "went underground" to escape the constant harassment of "red raiders," and began a slow and painful process of secret gathering of the Party members, hidden away from the forces of persecution as well as the almost totally inexperienced organizations knew how to hide, which turned out to be not very effective.

It is of tremendous significance that these terrific assaults

could not destroy the Party. But there is little value in tracing the tortured experiences of the "underground" days through their details. What is important is that the indestructible elements of the Party existed and worked. The underground days ended in 1922, when the Communists were brought together again in an open, legal, political party under the name "Workers' Party of America" (December 25, 1921), which also amalgamated the "Workers' Council Group" which had remained with the old Socialist Party until that time; as well as significant groups from the S.L.P. and the I.W.W., and, more important, the trade union groups around William Z. Foster, who entered the Party leadership.

The Workers' Party was the first united organization of the American Communists; it was a sharp break with the romantic "Leftism" of underground days, for which it accepted no responsibility.

From the founding of the Workers' Party until 1929 was the period of the famous Coolidge-Hoover "permanent prosperity," the illusions of economic grandeur of American capitalism, the fantastic stock market and land booms, the erection of the great Tower of Babel that collapsed with such destructive effects in the crisis of 1929. Within the labor movement it was marked by the rise of illusions of the working class entering into partnership with capital, through labor banking, efficiency engineering (B. & O. Plan), profit-sharing, etc., while extension of the labor movement and the fight for better conditions were largely abandoned. Labor leadership was dominated by extreme reaction. The Communists were swimming against the stream; they found but few and unstable allies among labor organizations with whom it was possible to cooperate during that period. On the whole, with certain necessary reservations, regarding short intervals, it was a period of isolation for the Communists, in spite of strenuous efforts to broaden the field of cooperative and united front action which was the declared policy of the Party from 1923.

In three fields of activity the Communists in this period

made significant contributions to the labor movement and gained immense and invaluable experience. These were: the movement for industrial unionism (through amalgamation of the craft unions), various big strike movements that arose against and in spite of the reactionary union leaderships, and the political movement toward a labor or farmer-labor party. In the field of anti-imperialist struggle, and of struggle for Negro rights, the Party made constant efforts, which left their impress, and laid the basis for the permanent achievements of the next period.

Cleansing the Party of Trotskyites and Lovestoneites

The chief problem of the period, in the sphere of internal Party development, was that of transforming the Party from a federation of national group organizations to a uniform party structure uniting all its members in a centralized and democratic organization on a territorial sub-division basis. This problem, inherited from long years of a wrong organizational practice in the old Socialist Party, was a stubborn one, and proved amenable to final solution only with the cleansing of the Party from Trotskyites and Lovestoneites.

Political education and mass experience had already, despite all negative features of Party life, gone so far that no little clique could long dominate the main body of the Party. In 1928 the membership and leading forces so overwhelmingly repudiated the Trotskyites, that even Lovestone and his group found it expedient to go along in cleansing them from the Party. Some years after he publicly repented of that "moment of weakness," and apologized to the Trotskyites for it, when he was again making one of his periodic coalitions with them. The next year, 1929, Lovestone and some two hundred of his personal following were expelled from the Party, following the revelation of his project to seize control of Party property when he had been defeated in the Central Committee.

This was the period when the capitalist world was approaching the turning point of the 1929 crisis. The Soviet Union, preparing its First Five-Year Plan of socialist industrialization, had been forced to meet and defeat the attacks of the Trotskyites, and then that of the "Right" Bukharinites, and later the combined forces of both. Similar groupings took place throughout the world, including within the C.P.U.S.A. In America the issue took place on the estimate of the character of the period of Herbert Hoover, elected to the Presidency in 1928. Lovestone took over Hoover as his guiding star; he predicted that his regime would become known in history as the "Hooverian Age," corresponding to the "Victorian Age" of Britain, the time of unexampled expansion and prosperity. Bertram Wolfe wrote a programmatic article, entitled "A Program for Prosperity," based upon a supposed necessity for the Communist Party to adjust itself to the "permanent prosperity" promised by Hoover.

Against this vulgar philistinism, the most active Marxian students in the Party raised the alarm, and pointed to the gathering signs that the Coolidge-Hoover boom was nearing its peak, and that its collapse would fully involve the U.S. in the impending world crisis.

The Maturing of the Communist Party— 1929-1939

Entering the crisis period, the Party was basically united for the first time in its history. Its enemies were on the outside, not within its ranks, and the Party sailed into the storms of the crisis boldly, beginning to gather its fundamental political experience that made it a factor in the national political life. The struggle for its basic clarification had left the Party, however, with but 7,000 members in 1929, of whom around 1,000 had been members since the beginning in 1919. It still carried a heavy baggage of sectarian practices and preconceptions, which it had to struggle against, and which it finally threw off

only in the period of the Seventh World Congress in 1935, with the full development of the policy of the People's Front.

During the three years 1930-32 inclusive the Party was a major factor in two fields of mass struggle and organization, and participated in a third; it initiated the unemployed movement, it threw all its strength in support of the independent unions and their strikes that arose as a result of the complete passivity of the established trade unions, and it participated in the initiation and conduct of the veterans' bonus movement and the famous "march on Washington" in 1932.

The Party directly called and organized the national demonstration of the unemployed, on March 6, 1930, which brought a million and a quarter demonstrators into the streets of American cities. Up to that moment, the press and all other political organizations had united in denying the existence of any significant mass unemployment and suffering. These demonstrations smashed that pretense, and established the issue of unemployment in first place in national life; they gave rise to the first moves for independent organization of the unemployed. At a Party Conference called in April to discuss the results of March 6, it was agreed that the Party could not continue directly to lead the unemployed, and the suggestion was thrown out that the unemployed should immediately proceed to organize themselves into councils.

In July, 1930, the first National Conference of Unemployed Councils was held, which organized the struggle for relief in all the major centers of the country. The Unemployed Councils organized the great "Hunger Marches" to Washington in 1931 and 1932. These councils continued for six years, until 1936, when they merged with all other similar organizations in the country, to form the present Workers Alliance of America.

Throughout 1930 the Party was discussing the demand for unemployment insurance. The A. F. of L. was openly opposed to such a measure, and no other organization took up the question seriously. Finally, early in 1931, the Communist Party

itself formulated a draft law for a system of unemployment insurance, and secured its introduction in Congress by Representative Lundeen of Minnesota (Farmer-Labor). Around the Lundeen Bill a broad movement arose in the trade unions, organized around the A. F. of L. Committee for Unemployment Insurance, which finally forced the A. F. of L. to reverse its former stand, and come out in favor of the principle of such insurance. The United Mine Workers was the first great trade union to endorse unemployment insurance.

It was, without doubt, the broad mass movements of the Unemployed Councils and for unemployment insurance, from 1930 to 1935, which laid the foundation for the New Deal measures of social security and relief.

From 1929 to 1933, despite the passivity of the official labor movement, strikes and organizing movements broke out more and more among the employed industrial workers. With the labor officials ignoring or sabotaging these movements, it was inevitable that independent unions should arise. These efforts were fully supported by the Communist Party, which used its influence to unite their forces in the Trade Union Unity League, established at a conference in Cleveland in 1929. The unions affiliated with this center conducted a very high proportion of all strikes of this period, trained a large number of trade union organizers, and established some stable organizations. Its membership, however, never rose above a quarter-million.

The Communists and the New Deal

With the beginning of 1933, at the depths of the economic crisis, the New Deal was inaugurated in the U.S., almost simultaneously with the rise of Hitler in Germany. The new period of wars for imperialist redivision of the world, already initiated in 1931 by the Japanese seizure of Manchuria, had now definitely opened up for the whole world. In the first period of the New Deal, the Communist Party viewed it with the

deepest suspicion, considering it but a camouflage for reaction. This suspicion was fed by the vociferous support of Wall Street to the President, and by the role of such men as General Hugh Johnson, of Blue Eagle fame, as head of the N.R.A., who did not hide his admiration of Mussolini nor his basic fascist tendencies. It was further strengthened by the concessions to monopoly capital, by the reliance upon dollar-devaluation as the basis for the first New Deal, and by the policies of restriction of production and destruction of commodities. Within the first New Deal phase, only the famous Section 7a, of the National Industrial Recovery Act, guaranteeing the workers' right of organization in unions of their own choice, clearly pointed the road of the further development of the New Deal; but even on Section 7a there were two interpretations, General Johnson and Leo Wolman attempting to transform it into a means of fostering a semi-company unionism.

From 1933 to 1935, accompanying the economic revival stimulated by Roosevelt's policies, and assisted by the legal establishment of the right of collective bargaining, a great mass movement of trade union organization began. By 1934, this was already fundamentally changing the situation that had given rise to the independent unions of the T.U.U.L., and in 1935 the Communists joined full-heartedly in the movement to merge these independent unions into the A. F. of L., within which a militant wing was arising of mass proportions. By the middle of 1935, these amalgamations had been largely completed. The trade unions were growing by some million new members. At the end of 1935 those forces in the A. F. of L. largely instrumental in the great forward movement had united themselves in the Committee for Industrial Organization (C.I.O.), with the program to complete the organization of the mass production industries, which the reactionaries controlling the A. F. of L. Executive Council were attempting to halt.

Beginning with the Party's Eighth National Convention, in 1934, was launched our systematic campaign to revive

American revolutionary traditions, for rediscovery and re-evaluation of American history in general. This played an enormous role, not only in the further development of our Party, but for the whole country. . . .

Toward the last half of 1935 great realignments crystallized in America and on a world scale. The Soviet Union, having successfully established the collectivization of agriculture, and launched the Second Five-Year Plan, had begun to expose and destroy the conspiracy of the "Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites," in the service of the fascist powers, that had culminated in the assassination of Kirov in December, 1934. Italy had launched its war to destroy the Ethiopian state. The Popular Front had been formed in France, and checkmated the first fascist attempts to dominate that country. Hitler had reoccupied the Rhineland with his military. The Soviet Union was actively cooperating in the League of Nations, while the fascist Axis powers were withdrawing from it. In the United States the "national unity" around the Roosevelt Administration had been broken, by the emergence of the Liberty League, representing Wall Street and the "sixty families."

II. WHAT IS THE COMMUNIST PARTY?

THE Communist Party is the Party of the working class. The Party is the most advanced section of the working class, its vanguard, uniting its immediate interests with its ultimate and broadest historical goal. The Party is its most organized detachment, furnishing the working class with a nervous system and center of intelligence, which enables it to think and act as a class. The Party's every thought and action is directed toward elevating the working class into the position of leader and ruler of the nation, in alliance with the farmers and all other sections of the toiling masses—that is, the full realization of democracy. It is from this high standard that we must review the work of our Party, formulate its tasks for the next period, and solve all its inner problems and its relations with the working class and the nation as a whole.

It is in times of deep crisis that men and leaders, issues and parties, are put to the acid test. It is in times such as these we are now living through that all are put to the proof, to disclose their true character, to test their mettle. How has our Communist Party passed through this preliminary phase of the ordeals of fire?

First, we must note that our Party has come through the first phase of the war period more solid and active than ever before. All efforts of the enemy camp—and they were of unexampled intensity—to throw the Party ranks into confusion failed miserably. Deserters can be counted in the dozens, and they were of the type we are well rid of—dry leaves only waiting for the first stiff breeze to blow them away, or decaying

bureaucrats looking for secure office chairs. Party activity multiplied, as revealed in the tremendous increase in pamphlet and leaflet distribution. There has not been a single branch or committee to display hesitation or disagreement with the political position of the Party. Its solidarity is unexampled.

Second, the Party's ties with the working class and the masses generally have been strengthened. We may take as decisive evidence the fact that collection of signatures to put Party candidates on the ballot in the various states has met with unprecedented success, in face of the most vicious campaigns of intimidation from the press and from governmental sources, not to speak of the pressure of employers.

Third, our Party has demonstrated its ability to perform its vanguard role, to speak with clarity, sharpness, and precision, to point the way to the masses through the increasing chaos of reaction and war, without ever breaking its intimate contacts with the broadest mass movements and organizations. . . .

Fourth, the Party as the most organized detachment of the working class has impressed its role as never before upon our own members, upon the broad circle of sympathizers, upon the broad masses, and, by no means least, upon our enemies. The evidence from our friends and the masses is the demonstration of affection for and reliance upon the Party as the sure, stable, unerring compass through the storms; the evidence from our enemies is the frantic and hysterical campaign against our Party, which goes to the length of legislating Communists out of private employment. Need we remind our enemies and friends of the story of Galileo, brought before the Inquisition and forced to deny that the earth moves, who whispered immediately afterward the words that have re-echoed through the corridors of time, down to the present, and which consigned his tormentors to eternal contempt: "But the earth does move!"

The Party as the Organized Vanguard of the Working Class

The enemies of the people, who are the enemies of our Party, labor under the strategical disadvantage, which will be ultimately fatal, that every blow they deliver against the people, every blow against the Communist Party, serves to drive home the basic truths which the Communists have been untiringly expounding. The more they hammer against us, therefore, the deeper are our teachings embedded and rooted in the thought of the masses. The masses, the people, are immortal; therefore, our teaching, once it is rooted and growing among the masses, is indestructible even by the most frantic rage of the ruling classes. The calm certainty of ultimate victory arms our Party for every difficulty and every battle.

The key to every problem of our Party lies in the working masses of the people, in our correct scientific program, and the organic union between the two.

When we proclaim our Party as the party of the working class, we do not mean to say that we have won the whole class, nor its majority, to our support. No, only the first beginnings have been well begun in this great task. We must always have this goal clearly before us, must be conscious of the big gap between our present position and the goal; and must know that the crossing of this gap calls always for certain qualities which we need consciously to cultivate, namely: modesty, patience, persistence, endurance, enthusiasm, self-sacrifice and heroism.

When we proclaim our Party as the vanguard, and our program as scientific, we must remember always that our Party is not fully the master, but is only in the process of mastering, the theoretical inheritance which is the source of our power,

the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. For our entire Party, and especially for its leadership, the first task is to deepen our political-theoretical knowledge and understanding.

We must master the art of self-criticism, systematically to search out our weaknesses and shortcomings and to correct them in such a way as to guard against their recurrence. And this we are only beginning to learn.

Our Political Committee and National Committee must frankly say that we have all felt at moments during the last nine months the inadequacy of our political equipment to solve promptly and effectively the problems pouring in upon us. During the first weeks of the war, despite a correct general line, we lagged perceptibly in our ability firmly to grasp *all* features of the developing new world situation. This expressed itself in two contradictory (but complementary) moods and tendencies; one, to rush ahead of events, to speculate, seek change for its own sake, to reverse slogans as a system; the other, to hesitate before changes of position and slogans even after such changes were demanded by the rapidly changing situation. I think it is possible to declare that we have corrected these weaknesses in our leadership, before any permanent damage resulted, and that the Party as a whole has been armed against them. . . .

A Party of a New Type

More than ever the Communists must call into activity all their organizational knowledge and art. The power of the masses lies in organization. The mass movement does not spontaneously organize itself, beyond the most primitive forms; consciousness and planning are of the essence of organization, and must be transmitted to the masses first of all by the Communists. This requires the constant review and re-vamping of our Party organization to fit it to the rapidly changing situation.

No other organization is quite so democratic, in its inner life and in its relation with the masses, as the Communist Party. Those persons for whom "democratic" is synonymous with "disorderly" and "disunited" see a fatal contradiction between this declaration and the observed fact of the unexampled unity of thought and action that exists among the Communists, and the "iron discipline" upon which we pride ourselves. Such persons can understand discipline and unity only as something imposed from above by authoritarian methods. With such conceptions they can never understand the Communist Party.

III. THE UNITY AND DISCIPLINE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

OUR Party is entirely a voluntary association of individuals with common ideas and aims, who agree to work together unitedly to advance the common cause, to work together in the fashion demonstrated by Lenin and Stalin, exemplified by the victorious Communist Party in the Soviet Union. It is a Party of a new type. No one is admitted to membership unless the Party has reasonable assurance that he holds these basic views, which unite the Party, and no one is constrained to membership for any reason; whenever, for any reason, the individual member finds himself out of harmony with this voluntary association, he is free to terminate it; likewise, whenever the Party feels that an individual is an alien body within its ranks, it is free to expel that individual. There is nothing forced about our relationship. It is free on both sides, on the side of the collective body of the Party and the side of the individual members. Within this association, we find the democratic process of discussion and decision fully ample as the instrument to build unity of thought and action, which expresses itself in the "iron discipline of the Party."

This type of Party organization is not the unique discovery of the American Communists. We learned it above all from the example of the Party of Lenin and Stalin, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and from the teachings of those great leaders.

How the Party Builds Its Iron Discipline

Stalin fully rounded out this concept of the Communist Party in the great discussions in 1925-26, which defeated and

eliminated the influence of Trotsky, Zinoviev, Bukharin and those others later exposed as agents of fascism. A few quotations from Stalin may serve to deepen and sharpen our exposition on this point.

“The authority of the Party,” said Stalin, “is maintained by the confidence of the working class. The confidence of the working class is not to be won by force; for the use of force would kill confidence. It can only be won if Party theory is sound, if Party policy is correct, if the Party is devoted to the cause of the working class, if the Party is closely linked with the masses of the working class, and if the Party is ready and able to *convince* the masses that its slogans are the right ones.”*

Stalin continues:

“Unless these conditions are fulfilled, ‘the authority of the Party’ and ‘the iron discipline of the working class’ are but empty phrases, are but an idle boast.” **

After showing several concrete examples of how the C.P.S.U. attained (and maintained) these conditions in the Soviet Union, in the course of the Revolution, Stalin continues:

“Now let us contemplate another possibility. Let us suppose that, owing to the political backwardness of the working class, the Party policy (though right in the main) does not inspire general confidence or command general support; let us suppose that the Party has not yet been able to convince the working class that its policy is sound, the reason being that (as the phrase runs) the time is not yet ripe. In such a case, is the Party to take a decided initiative? Should the Party try to give a strong trend to the actions of the masses? No, certainly not! In such case the Party, if it is to lead effectively, must know how to wait until it has convinced the masses that its policy is sound, must help the masses to learn this by their own experience.” ***

* Joseph Stalin, *Leninism*, Vol. I, p. 285, International Publishers, New York.

** *Ibid.*, p. 286.

*** *Ibid.*, p. 289.

Stalin then quotes the words of Lenin, written in 1920:

“No revolution is possible without a change of views in the majority of the working class. Such a change of views is brought about, in the masses, by political experience.” *

“The proletarian vanguard has been won over to our ideas. That is the main thing. Until so much has been achieved, we cannot take even the first step toward victory. The vanguard cannot conquer unaided. It would be worse than a blunder, it would be a crime, to send the vanguard into the fighting line before the class as a whole (the broad mass) is ready to support it, or at least ready to show benevolent neutrality and fully determined not to go over to the enemy. But propaganda and agitation alone will not suffice to ensure that the class as a whole, the broad masses of those who labor and are exploited by capitalism, are to be depended upon. For this the masses must have learned by their own political experience.” **

The Relation of the Party to the Masses

Those words have special and compelling significance for us American Communists today, in relation to our whole policy of this period, as well as our conception of the Party in general and its relation to the masses. And the following words of Stalin, applied to another country and time, fully correspond to our own present moment in the United States, when he says:

“The present moment is one at which it is more than ever incumbent on us to keep these dangers well in mind, at a time when the political activity of the masses is increasing. Now especially the Party must be ready to pay close attention to the voice of the masses; must have a fine ear for their demands; must display extreme caution and show peculiar elasticity in its policy. Now, more than ever, will the Party leadership of the masses be imperilled if Communists should suffer from swelled head. Let us never forget Lenin’s golden words at the Eleventh Party Congress: ‘Among the masses of the people, we Communists are but drops in the ocean, and we

* *Left-Wing Communism*, International Publishers, New York, p. 64.

** *Ibid.*, p. 72.

cannot rule unless we *give accurate expression to the folk consciousness.*' " *

If we need a horrible example of what it means for a political party to depart from these principles, so clearly set forth by Lenin and Stalin, just look at the miserable debacle of the Socialist Party under Norman Thomas, for all its prattling about "socialism," "party discipline," and the like. Or, for a more extreme illustration, see how the Trotskyite sects have become the direct auxiliaries of Father Coughlin's fascist activities, and of fascism and reaction in general.

Our Party is growing, its relations with the masses are deepening, its influence is spreading, its membership is more steeled, its discipline is more solid, precisely because our Party as a whole has grasped the basic teachings of Marxism-Leninism and is learning how to develop them creatively in the peculiar historical and political setting of the United States, and in this particular moment of world history.

The Unity of the Communist Party

There are people who profess to find in our unity and discipline an argument against the Communist Party. They describe it as mechanical uniformity and an inner-party dictatorship. We can only smile at such lack of understanding.

The Communist Party has iron unity and discipline. This is based upon an inner-party democracy, of a richness and completeness which no other political party can even dream about. It is based upon an active membership, fully participating in shaping every angle of Party life, of which there is no counterpart in any other existing organization. It is based upon that confidence which grows out of the experience of finding the Party emerge successful from every testing in struggle of its policies.

* Joseph Stalin, *Leninism*, Vol. I, p. 296.

This principle which underlies the unity and discipline of our Party was expressed in the following words of Stalin:

“Iron discipline in the Party is impossible without unity of will and without absolute and complete unity of action on the part of all members of the Party. This does not mean, of course, that there will never be any conflict of opinion within the Party. On the contrary, iron discipline does not preclude, but presupposes, criticism and conflict of opinion within the Party. Least of all does it mean that this discipline must be ‘blind’ discipline. On the contrary, iron discipline does not preclude but presupposes conscious and voluntary submission, for only conscious discipline can be truly iron discipline. But after a discussion has been closed, after criticism has run its course and a decision has been made, unity of will and unity of action become indispensable conditions without which Party unity and iron discipline in the Party are inconceivable.”*

The same thought is further elaborated by Lenin:

“How is the discipline of the revolutionary Party of the proletariat maintained? How is it tested? How is it reinforced? First, by the class consciousness of the proletarian vanguard and by its devotion to the revolution, by its firmness, self-sacrifice and heroism. Secondly, by its ability to link itself with, to keep in close touch with, and, to a certain degree, if you will, merge itself with the broadest masses of the toilers—primarily with the proletarians, *but also with the non-proletarian* toiling masses. Thirdly, by the correctness of the political leadership exercised by this vanguard and by the correctness of its political strategy and tactics, providing that the broadest masses become convinced of this correctness *by their own experience*. Without these conditions, discipline in a revolutionary party that is really capable of being the party of the advanced class, whose mission it is to overthrow the bourgeoisie and to transform the whole society, cannot be achieved. Without these conditions all attempts to establish

* Joseph Stalin, *Foundations of Leninism*, Little Lenin Library, International Publishers, pp. 116-117.

discipline are inevitably transformed into trifling phrasemongering and empty gestures.”*

What our critics have in mind, when they attack our Party unity and discipline, is usually their opposition to decisive action to carry out the Party policy. When they speak for “democracy,” what they really defend is the unlimited freedom of discussion without ever coming to a binding decision, the freedom of factions and faction struggle, and the right of irresponsible gossip—three characteristics of the inner-party life of the Socialist Party, which we do not envy them, which we have no wish to take over. Our discussions must always be directed toward a decision which binds us all; without this there is no true democracy. We tolerate no factional organization within our Party which destroys the Party’s capacity for action. We burn out any tendency to irresponsible gossip with a red-hot iron; criticism means the right openly to raise questions in the Party units and committees, it excludes the gossip of the small cliques, the cafeteria tables, and mutual admiration circles.

* V. I. Lenin, *Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder*, Little Lenin Library, p. 10.

IV. QUALITIES OF COMMUNIST LEADERSHIP

WHAT is the central weakness in our work of building a mass Party on these principles of Lenin and Stalin?

It is the insufficient number of politically trained and technically skilled leading people, the shortage of adequately prepared officers to lead the mass army which we are recruiting.

The best policy in the world turns out in life to be no better than the people who must execute it, who must apply it to the thousand variable conditions of daily life. Application of policy among the masses is first of all a problem of securing a high quality of leading personnel. . . .

We are not adequately providing a leading personnel to these masses who are coming to us. We attack this problem in a desultory, unorganized, and mechanical fashion, without thinking out the problem fundamentally. The result is the too slow growth of our Party, and the still high losses from among our new recruits, the still low quality of much of our work among the masses.

Is there any shortage of potential leading forces which can meet all our needs? Not at all. Among the new tens of thousands coming into our ranks we have all the forces we need. *But we are not using them adequately.* Our leading forces tend to petrify in closed circles of the oldest Party comrades. The new active elements, potential leaders, are not systematically brought forward and trained for their tasks. . . .

What are the main points of a consistent personnel policy? Comrade Dimitroff gave the four leading thoughts on the question of the standards to apply in selecting and promoting leading personnel. These points are:

1. Absolute devotion to the working class, loyalty to the Party, tested in struggle and under the enemy's persecution.
2. Closest possible contact with the masses; only if the masses accept a person as a leader can the Party do so.
3. Ability to make decisions, to find the correct course independently, to take responsibility and initiative.
4. Discipline and steadfastness in the struggle against the class enemy, as well as against all deviations from the Party line.

Some of our comrades, who in the past have thought of the qualities of leadership largely in terms of speaking and writing, will be astonished to find these qualifications not mentioned in these four main points. We must finally learn, throughout the Party, that speaking and writing well are of importance *only* when developed upon the foundation of the four points of Dimitroff.

To select and promote leadership upon this basis, we must first of all study the human material with which we are working. We must know our people, their qualities, their strength and their weakness, their capacities of development.

At the present moment, a first consideration in promoting new forces is to find capable *native Americans*. From top to bottom of our Party the predominance in leading personnel must belong to the native people most closely corresponding to the composition of the masses of the population among whom we are working in each particular city, factory, neighborhood, or mass organization.

Systematic guidance, assistance, and training must be given to the leading personnel selected for promotion. Every leading Party member must assume this task as part of his daily life, not only in Party schools, but in all our work. The special problems of each person must be considered, his preferences and qualifications must be considered in assignment of work, and special help given to overcome special difficulties.

Finally, the whole Party life must be organized on the prin-

ciple of making every Party member into a leader among the masses. Every member must assume the task of leading and educating at least *one* worker outside the Party; he shall consider himself a real Bolshevik only when fifty to a hundred workers regularly look to him for guidance and leadership in the problems of class struggle.

We must do away with the reluctance to advance new forces to leadership.

“We must extend the ranks of our army, transfer it from a peace to a war strength, mobilize the reservists, call up all those on furlough, organize new auxiliary corps, units and services. We must not forget that in war it is inevitable and necessary to fill the ranks with less trained recruits, very often to put rank-and-file soldiers in the place of officers, and to speed up and simplify the promotion of soldiers to the rank of officers.”

We must guide the great recruitment of new members into our Party which is now beginning, to insure that it shall especially strengthen the Party among workers in basic and key industries.

The Development of Leading Party Personnel

How shall we develop the leading rôle of higher committees and the Section and District Secretaries? Leadership is an art which every Communist Party member must learn; but he must learn the special qualities of Bolshevik leadership. Weaknesses in leadership inevitably reflect themselves in poor and weak inner-Party life, weak recruiting and loss of members. Examining the work of our District and Section Secretaries, for example, we find two wrong methods appearing time and time again.

One is the method of the “strong man” who goes into his committee with his mind already made up on everything without consultation, brushes aside all discussion except by

“yes-men” on the committee; who does not even bother to take a vote on disputed questions, but asserts his “higher authority” over the committee; who achieves unity by direction, by what could be called intellectual “strong-arm” methods, the overriding of all critical examination of his proposals.

The other wrong method is just the opposite; here there is plenty of freedom of discussion, but it is not directed toward welding together a real unity of opinion, so that every one goes out of the committee not with a united opinion, but with exactly the views he brought in; divergences are not ironed out, every one goes his own way, and the iron unity of a Communist Party gradually disappears in a swamp of unrelated individual approaches to different questions.

Neither of these methods has anything in common with the Bolshevik conception of leadership; this is always collective, the gathering and welding together of the varied and supplementing qualifications of many individuals, the arming of each one of them with the strength of all the others, the elimination from each of his weak points, the development of self-criticism and mutual criticism as a system and method, and thereby the multiplication of the leading powers of the Party, a thousandfold over that which any individual, even a genius, is capable of giving.

All of this must result in a considerable enlivening and strengthening of inner-Party democracy, expressed in increased initiative and self-activity of Party members and committees in carrying the Party policy into life among the masses. This must result in a considerable refreshing and strengthening of the Party leadership, national, state and local, as well as in the branches.

We have a great wealth of new and valuable forces in that half of the Party membership which has joined us in the past two years. We must treasure it and make the fullest possible use of it. At the same time, we must give special attention to that growing core of the Party, members who have steadfastly performed their tasks over five, six, seven, and up to twenty

years, the old members and leading personnel. Party building today is, in a special sense, the combining of the new with the old, the supplementing of the strong points of one by the strong points of the other, their fusion into a solid and homogeneous Party of Bolsheviks, capable of overcoming all difficulties and solving all problems.

How shall we select, train, and promote new leading personnel? In this matter we still have many abuses in our methods of work. We find Districts where this question is the personal property of a single leading comrade, instead of the collective work of the leading committees with the participation of the membership. We usually find in such places the complaint of shortage of forces; everybody at hand, we find, is "no good" for one reason or another. Personal caprice means disaster to the direction of the work. Individuals are pushed from one post to another with no regard to their own interests or the opinions of those with whom they must work. All such carryovers from the system of capitalist factory management or from bourgeois political life must be combated and eliminated from our methods of work, if we want to build the Communist Party.

Upon this foundation, and the improved position of our Party in relation to the masses, we are now engaged in a profound reconstruction and improvement of our mass education and also of our Party schools. A higher quality in all our work, political and organizational, is the indispensable precondition for our Party to defeat all its enemies, to gather all its forces, and to pass over to the next higher stage in its development. . . .

Marxist-Leninist Theory to Illuminate Political Work

Our practical work must be more illuminated by the theory of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, those greatest educators of the people known to history, the leaders of the realization of socialism. This can be achieved only by systematic educational

work, education for the masses, and especially intensified education for the most responsible leading people.

Education must become a characteristic feature of all Party life. The process of education must be continuous, never-ending. It begins with self-study and self-education in which the individual organizes his own systematic course of reading in connection with his practical work. The process of education is the process of transformation to higher capacities; the sloughing off from the past of everything that hinders this development; the radical reconstruction of the human personality; the ruthless searching out of every bad influence of the past in one's political and personal life, the burning out of such influences with a red-hot iron, and their replacement with the living contact of the constantly growing Bolshevik.

That is what we mean by education; not just the mechanical learning of repeated formulas, not the accumulation of a body of knowledge; but the reconstruction of the individual from the bottom up, his transformation into an entirely new and different kind of human being. This understanding of education must be created throughout our Party. The process of education, beginning with the conscious activity of the individual, is continued by every responsible worker establishing an educational contact with one or more others for some joint work in this field, with periodical joint discussions on related questions, even if only across the lunch table or while waiting for meetings to open. Every responsible worker must at all costs conduct such systematic mastering of the current problems of world and national politics, buttressed by reading of the classics of socialism.

Such joint work should be planned, not left to chance, and should be continuous, as much as possible, with the same persons. Such educational preparations should immediately be reflected in the improved quality of unit discussions, speeches in mass organizations and street meetings, leaflet preparation, shop bulletins and all expressions of mass educational work. Study classes should be planned and organized, which bring

larger groups together, through the medium of units, section committees, meeting in homes or available meeting rooms. . . .

All these measures will lay the basis for lifting the whole ideological level of the daily life of the movement, and for raising higher the Party training schools, District and national, to which the Party is now going to give major attention.

In the selection of students for the full-time training schools, our Districts have in the past proceeded on the principle of choosing "those who can be spared." In the future that rule must be abolished. It is precisely "those who cannot be spared" that we are going to choose; for we do not want anybody who can be spared. The Central Committee has been too weak in capitulating before "practical" considerations in the Districts on this question. . . .

The training schools are the "heavy industry" sector of our educational work; they produce the means of production in this field. You know what happens in industry if all sources are thrown into the production of consumption goods? It means production itself dies. Neglect of our training schools gives us exactly the same results. We can only expand our mass work and improve its quality by the most serious attention to the selection of our best material for the training schools. These schools are not for beginners; they are for the leading personnel of the Party. . . .

Systematic self-education must be made a habit among all leading people of our Party. Planned reading and study by each individual, supplemented by individual consultations and help among his associates, are the universal form of education which we need to establish throughout our Party. The basic works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin should become familiar to all of us, as necessary to our daily life as the air we breathe. The writings of the founders of American democracy should be at our command, and we Communists should make Thomas Jefferson, Tom Paine and Abraham Lincoln live again in America. We should become experts in American history and understand and explain it better than anyone else.

We should constantly study our own Party documents, and never leave them to gather dust on our shelves. We are the bearers of American culture and civilization, and must use every hour to qualify ourselves for that noble and historic rôle.

All those who assume the responsibility of leadership within our movement thereby submit themselves to the constant inspection, criticism and verification of the whole movement. No one, having gained a leading post, can rest on his laurels and drift. Above all, no one can be allowed to degenerate, to grow slack and indifferent and to fall victim to corruption or the influence of ideas from the enemy camp. Now, when our Party has emerged from its old isolation, when it is fully in the stream of a great mass movement of the American people, when it is exposed every day to the impact of open and masked enemy influences—now, more than ever before, our Party needs constant vigilance, constant re-examination of its leading people, constant verification of their fundamental political health and soundness.

A Communist leader must be, like Caesar's wife, above suspicion. He must be an example to his fellows, and to the masses, of the best qualities of the working class and the American people. He must inspire and maintain confidence among the masses. He must be the steel link that binds our Party immutably with the toiling people.

V. THE WORK OF THE PARTY BRANCH

FIRM and steady growth of membership is one of the basic necessities for the execution of our political tasks and our responsibilities to the working class and to the whole country.

We have several thousand branches, which display the widest variation of effectiveness in their work. Some of them, many in fact, work very effectively among the masses of their territory, have a rich and varied Party life which is closely tied up with their community; these are the branches which are responsible for much the greater part of the Party's growth. But the majority of branches do not come up to this standard; they tend to drift, remain comparatively isolated in their communities, and conduct on the whole a routine and listless Party life. And then there are the "problem branches," which are unable even to stabilize themselves, which meet irregularly, have a high turnover of membership, and by their barren and hostile sectarian attitude repulse the people with whom they come in contact. The problem of Party growth and consolidation among the masses is, thus, largely one of spreading the influence of the well-functioning branches throughout the whole Party.

What are the characteristics of our best branches which bring them success? They always have their attention fixed upon the community in which they operate; they find the clearest and most concrete answers to the questions about which the community is thinking, whether these be unemployment relief, a community school or playground problem, national political issues, or international questions. They make their influence felt through their members working modestly

but energetically in the mass organizations of all sorts, as well as collectively through the Party branch, which makes itself well and favorably known as a militant and constructive influence. They systematically circulate Party pamphlets, magazines and newspapers not only among Party members, but among sympathizers, systematically cultivating selected individuals and groups. Within these branches the work is organized, to distribute it among as many members as possible, according to their abilities; every good branch has an executive committee which leads the work, giving it organized form without hampering the full inner democracy of the branch, and without stifling the individual initiative of the members. Branch meetings are never allowed to degenerate into dull routine, but are made lively and interesting with planned educational and social features. And, above all, in the good branches we always find a growing number of members who are conducting systematic self-study of theoretical and practical questions, consciously improving their own capacities and enlarging their sphere of usefulness to the Party and to the community, and providing the priceless treasure of leadership which binds the Party in unbreakable solidarity, and firmly connects the branch with its community life.

The majority of branches, the mediocre ones, fail to develop some of these essential features of the good branches. And when they fail to develop all or most of these attributes, then they fall into the lower category of "problem branches."

Study of the branches, in order systematically to help them all to become well-functioning and virile, is the chief task of our Party leadership, from each branch executive committee, through the Section Committees, to the State Committees and their Bureaus and the National Committee itself. This is the only path to that growth and consolidation without which our tremendous political tasks cannot be met and solved.

In order to develop well, a branch must have a well-defined community as its field, with a certain degree of homogeneity and common interests, social and economic. This may be a

shop or factory, or a department in a larger institution, in which case the common interest of the productive unit provides a solid foundation. Or it may be a residential neighborhood in which case particular study must be made of the social and national composition of the population. It is especially the various national groups which become decisive in the success or failure of the neighborhood branches—and, of course, also of the Section organization that combines many neighborhoods.

VI. PARTY VIGILANCE AGAINST AGENTS OF THE CLASS ENEMY

OUR Party is still insufficiently vigilant against the efforts of enemy agents to penetrate the Party ranks to carry on their provocations. And yet we know literally millions of dollars are spent to promote such efforts. It is possible, from our study of the work of the spies and agents whom we have discovered, to describe rather fully their aims and methods and their specialized functions.

First, there are simple information agents. Their aim is to get the names of members in order that they may be discharged from their jobs, and to obtain organizational plans in order that these may be circumvented and defeated. Such agents work as inconspicuously as possible, try to make themselves useful in technical capacities, and keep out of political discussions to avoid betraying themselves.

Then, there is the lowest grade of provocateurs. Their aim is to plant evidence, or to create it, for the purpose of feeding "red scares" or to frame up evidence against particular persons. Their "reports" are circulated confidentially among big employers to scare them into keeping the funds flowing into the office that organizes the espionage. They are particularly happy when they can get elected to the post of branch secretary or membership director, where they can get hold of Party membership cards, and then produce "evidence" against any progressive their employers wish to "convict" of being a Communist. They report elaborate "plots," which they usually copy out of detective story magazines or John P. Frey's testimony to the Dies Committee, which is a collection of such reports.

Another type of agent, recruited from professional criminals

who gain release from prison or dismissal of charges as their reward, perform the first two types of espionage and provocation, and add a special angle of their own; when discovered in burglaries or hold-ups they explain to complaisant and confiding police who are in on the game, that the crimes were committed "for the cause," that they were only carrying out "party orders." A typical example of this was Arthur Scott, or Margolies, in California, but he was only repeating a pattern first witnessed in the A. F. of L. back in 1915-16.

A higher type of provocateur is the one sent into the Party to obtain, or already equipped with, political training which he is instructed to utilize for creating differences and disputes, which he tries to lead toward the crystallization of factions. Such agents are always "more revolutionary" than the Party leadership and the members generally; they are impatient for "revolutionary action"; their talk runs to "blood and thunder"; they are the advocates of "violent overthrow of the government" who are Martin Dies' ideal of a Communist. Their special purpose, besides furnishing employers and police with "evidence," is to exert influence upon the activities of the Party toward sectarianism, to create an atmosphere of conspiracy and suspicion, to appear themselves as "spy hunters."

A historical example was the government police agent Morrow, who was sent to the Bridgeman Convention of the Communist Party in 1922, and cast the deciding vote between two equal factions that deadlocked the convention. Those two factions, as we learned later, were the work of more clever and subtle wrecking agents, who came to blossom later as the Trotskyites and Lovestoneites, who were not cleaned out of the Party until 1928-29. Since that time, this type of agent has had a more difficult job, but they abound in the trade unions and work among the newer, less experienced organizations of the Party.

The most specialized and skilled types of spies and provocateurs are the Lovestoneites and Trotskyites. Their leading figures are highly trained professionals following their occupa-

tion as a sort of "free profession," selling their products in as many markets as possible at the highest market price. When they can get hold of a Homer Martin, they have "found gold" almost literally, and there is a "gold rush" of all their smaller fry to share in the riches. Their main occupation is furnishing "revolutionary" reasons for the performance of reactionary deeds. They are constantly searching for "contacts" among Party members, especially discontented ones, for whom they have an established technique to transform into active agents. Their main fields of work are in mass organizations of a progressive character, which the powerful reactionaries wish to see thrown into turmoil by inner conflicts, fights, scandals and splits. They have also kept some of their members within the Party purely as information agents, some of them ever since the formative days of the Party, posing over years as loyal Party men; we are beginning to find a few of these figures through new channels of information long hidden from us.

We have sufficient evidence to convince us that a number of these various types of agents hold Party membership books; we know that some of them have been or are members of State Committees or work in state office technical staffs; some are found in Section leading committees. This knowledge is the result of intensive investigation by the National Committee without engaging the whole Party membership or even the leading cadres in a spy hunt. A considerable number of these enemy agents have been removed from the Party; others disappeared as they realized they were under suspicion. But the problem is still before us, and history teaches us that the supply of new ones will never end except with capitalism.

We can by no means ignore or hush up this problem, and when we find concrete evidence linking up the anti-labor and anti-Communist espionage network directly with the consulates of the Axis powers—Germany, Italy and Japan—as well as with detective agencies and big employers. The Senate Civil Liberties Committee has helped to expose and thereby limit some of the espionage practices against the trade unions. But

the problem remains, and will require increasing attention especially with the sharpening of the war danger.

How are we to locate, identify, expose, defeat and drive out the spies and provocateurs? Certain specialized investigations are, of course, required on the part of National and State Committees. But the basic measures are those which involve the entire Party, membership as well as committees, and they are measures that are intimately linked up with the solution of all our problems of Party building. They are measures of political education, of raising the level of political life of the Party, and of improving our methods of selection, promotion and education of the Party's leading personnel.

Enemy agents are not and cannot be in full and enthusiastic participation in the political thought and life of the Party and the mass movement. If they try to disguise themselves as loyal and active members, their masks never withstand a systematic observation and analysis. Their only possibility of continuing their work is to avoid observation and analysis. This possibility is given them only where and when the Party is careless, lacks vigilance, does not know its own members thoroughly, and does not seriously try to know them. This possibility exists only where the political thought and discussion of the Party lags, and where planned work and business-like check-up are lacking.

Thus we see that all those measures needed to sanitize the Party from agents and spies are at the same time the things we need to improve the Party's life and work in all fields, and to improve its relation with the masses. . . .

VII. THE YOUNG COMMUNIST LEAGUE AND ITS TASKS

NEVER before in all history was there such an opportunity for the people, and especially the younger generation, to transform the world fully and completely into the sort of place which the best minds have dreamed about over the centuries. . . .

My generation understood very little about the world in which we live. Your generation has a fairly clear understanding of the world. And your generation has powerful forces consciously working with it—the Soviet Union, and the labor and people's democratic movements all over the world.

My generation was also dissatisfied with the world, and wanted to change it into something better. But it was very difficult to find out how we should go about that task. A multitude of advisers shouted their particular ideas at us, but there was little in our own experience or in the world of achievement about us, which could help us sift the false from the true. Only a fortunate few of us stumbled on the writings of Marx and Engels, and even then found them only in fragmentary and distorted translations.

Your generation has available a rich treasure of the writings of the best teachers of mankind, in authentic and verified texts. Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin are at your free disposal. You have a thousand means of checking up on the operation of these teachings in the life of tens and hundreds of millions of people. You have available the experience of witnessing the rise of an entirely new civilization, in the land of socialism, the Soviet Union. You have available the history of the Party that founded this new civilization, the Communist

Party of the Soviet Union. You are able to study the path by which humanity travels from the present to the future.

It can truly be said that your generation is fortunate, despite the terrible dangers that overhang the world, despite the difficult tasks to which you must turn your minds and hands. You have at your disposal those resources, the lack of which brought failure to my generation in America.

Yes, rich treasures are yours for the taking. You can, by thought, effort and organization, become the masters of your own destiny. But these riches are yours only at the price of sustained study and understanding, of exertion of all your faculties to the utmost, and of organization of the thought and effort of many, of a growing multitude, in a great collective social movement.

The Young Communist League is the beginning of such collective efforts among the young people of the United States. Your organization is not subordinated, not auxiliary to the Communist Party. It is an entirely independent organization, standing on its own feet. Membership in the Y.C.L. does not commit one to any Party program or discipline. Each one will choose his party program and discipline for himself when he feels that he is sufficiently mature in understanding and experience to make a wise and permanent choice.

There is, however, an intellectual and spiritual connection between the Young Communist League and the Communist Party. Both find their greatest resource and inspiration in those great teachers and guides, Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin and Joseph Stalin, and in the magnificent successes of the new civilization which embodies their teachings in the life of over 170,000,000 people—the Soviet Union. Both are finding, by the use of these teachings, our own American history, rediscovered after some generations of neglect, as a great soil of democratic and revolutionary tradition, typified by Jefferson, Paine, Jackson and Lincoln, in which we can thoroughly root these teachings, so that they can grow and come to fruition also in our country. . . .

American cooperation with all peace-loving, progressive, and democratic forces in the world gives the point of contact between our country and others, without which all efforts become isolated and fail. And for the Young Communist League, as a specific sector in the united front of the young generation, the guiding thought will, in all probability, be found to be something like this: "Character Building and Education in the Spirit of Socialism."

You will note that I give character building in the first place, before education. In the broadest sense of the word, character building is included in education. But it would seem to require special emphasis as the necessary foundation for all other phases and sustained habits of life and of education, because in the past it has not received the attention that it must have.

By character building is meant the accumulation of consistent work, which best fits the individual into society, and equips him to sustain and improve society, making him a strong and reliable individual within the collective life. It means making the strong individual without contradicting the collectivity of his fellow individuals. It means establishing, as habits of life, those attitudes and relationships from which will best grow up strong and healthy social organizations from the smallest to the most general and all-embracing. It means the systematic combating and elimination of the destructive influence of a disintegrating capitalist system upon the individual, the family and society. Education that goes to accomplish these things must be, in the first place, character building, must create fighters for these ends: men and women who can stay put, who can be relied upon, who are not swayed from day to day, and year to year by the winds of circumstance.

Further, you will note the last half of the slogan I suggested emphasizes that our education is "in the spirit of socialism." Without binding its members to a political program, the Y.C.L. must always cling fast to the "spirit of socialism" as its guiding light. That is what distinguishes it from the multi-

tude of other progressive and democratic youth organizations. In a day when capitalism is so palpably breaking down, when socialism is so magnificently succeeding in the Soviet Union, it is only the spirit of socialism that finally will snatch the young generation, so hungry for the full and free life which capitalism denies it, out of the clutches of a demagogic fascism.

By EARL BROWDER

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