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Theses on Relations of the C. P. to an L. P. P.

by the Central Executive Committee of the C. P. of A.
Section of the Communist International

I.—Necessity of a C. P.

All experience in the modern class struggle proves that the working class can emerge victorious only after developing an organ of leadership in the form of a highly disciplined Communist Party, thoroughly conscious of revolutionary principles and tactics. The first task of communists is, therefore, to develop such a party.

II.—Action of Masses.

While the C. P. is the organ of leadership and bears the heaviest brunt of the fight, the revolution is an action of broad masses of the exploited sections of the population extending far beyond the limit of the numerical strength to which a highly conscious, disciplined party can be developed. The final struggle for power by the working class is not the result of a revolutionization of the minds of the masses through merely theoretical propaganda, agitation and education. It develops out of the irreconcilable conflict of the interests of the classes. This conflict is

first shown in the minor struggles of the workers for their existence. The minor struggles clarify the fundamental conflict of class interests, thus bringing class consciousness and leading toward the major struggle for power. Education and propaganda, though necessary to build the revolutionary party, would if taken alone, build a sterile sect, utterly impotent to deal with mass action. The major task of the revolutionary party in regard to the broad masses of workers is, therefore, not abstract propaganda and abstract theoretical education, but participation in all the struggles of the workers as the most active force.

III.—Contact with the masses.

The leadership of the masses of the exploited can be attained only by directly engaging in all their struggles, together with the masses of the workers. In a country where political conditions permit the possibility of mass political organizations of the working class, the revolutionary party cannot secure leadership without securing a powerful, and

finally dominant position among such mass political organizations of the workers. This essentially implies public contact with the masses. In America, it has become the most urgent immediate task of the Communists to secure a public, open, so-called "legal" existence as an organization.

IV.—A legal party.

A truly revolutionary (i. e. Communist) party can never be "legal" in the sense of having its purpose harmonize with the purpose of the laws made by the capitalist state, or its acts conform with the intent of capitalist law. Hence, to call a Communist Party "legal" means that its existence is tolerated by the capitalist state because of circumstances which embarrass the capitalist state's efforts to suppress it. The revolutionary party can avoid suppression into a completely secret existence only by one or both of two means:

a) By taking advantage of the pretense of "democratic forms" which the capitalist state is obliged to maintain. By this means the communists can maintain themselves in the open with a restricted program while establishing themselves with mass support.

b) (Later stage.) By commanding such mass support among wide masses of workers that enable them to proclaim publicly their final object in the revolutionary struggle and manouver openly to attain this object regardless of the desire of the capitalist state to suppress it.

It is necessary at the present time (and circumstances make it the most urgent immediate need) to resort to the first of the before-mentioned methods of open contact with the working masses: which means to maintain an open political party with a modified name and a restricted program. The second of these two conditions must be reached by the Communist Party of America. We seek to have an open Communist Party as soon as this can possibly be attained.

As to whether a "legal" Communist Party is possible, the test is whether the full Communist program (including the principle of mass action and the violent overthrow of the capitalist state), together with affiliation with the Communist International, can publicly be maintained without the Party being suppressed.

V.—L. P. P.

A legal political party with the before-mentioned restrictions cannot replace the Communist Party. It must serve as an instrument in the complete control of the Communist Party, for getting public contact with the masses. It must mobilize the element of workers most sympathetic to the Communist cause

with a program going as far toward the Communist program as possible while maintaining a legal existence. It must, with a course of action in daily participation in the workers' struggle, apply Communist tactics and principles and thus win the trust of the masses and prepare them for the leadership of the Communist Party. It must organize the sympathetic workers into a framework that will later become the framework of an open Communist Party, taking care systematically to educate the workers in the "legal" party in principles, tactics and discipline, so as to fit them—to become members of the Communist Party. Thus the building of a legal political party with a modified name and program will prepare the field for an open Communist Party strong enough to stand in the open and capable of leading in the revolutionary struggle.

VI.—Future Suppression.

The overthrow of the capitalist system can only come through the violent overthrow of the capitalist state. To accept this view is to accept the certainty that the capitalist state will find itself in violent conflict with the masses led by the Communist Party, and that the State will attempt to destroy the Communist Party. While the capitalist state retains the governmental machinery, and as the struggle grows sharper in approaching the final struggle, the capitalist state will inevitably strike again and again at the revolutionary party in the effort to destroy it. After the Communist Party shall have established itself in the open, it must be prepared for, and must expect to be driven out of a "legal" existence from time to time. The Communist Party must at all times be so organized that such attacks cannot destroy it. It must perform its functions of leadership in the class struggle no matter what tactics the ruling class adopts—open as far as possible, secretly as far as it must.

VII.—Underground.

The underground machinery of the Communist Party is not merely a temporary device to be liquidated as soon as the Communist Party with its full program can be announced in the open. The underground machinery is for permanent use. It is not a machinery to be used only on emergency occasions. It is for constant use. It must continue to operate not only while a legal party operates with restricted program, but also at all times, before and after the Communist Party with a full Communist program shall exist in the open. There is never a time, previous to the final overthrow of the Capitalist State, when a truly revolutionary party does not have to perform a considerable amount of work free from police knowledge and interference. The Communist

Party will never cease to maintain its underground machinery until after the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the form of the Workers Soviet Republic.

VIII.—Control.

Throughout the Communist movement of the World, the system of "Presidiums" prevails, by which matters of necessarily secret nature are kept in the hands of the most reliable and most trusted members of the Party. This is a necessary feature of a revolutionary organization. As the Communist Party of America grows to dimensions containing many thousands of members, it will be necessary to maintain this principle. At times when the Communist Party as such maintains itself in the open, the membership which constitutes at present the C. P. within the No. 2 will, with some variations, constitute the older and best known, and most disciplined membership, to be entrusted with the more confidential matters and the illegal work of the party generally. This does not mean that the whole Party membership will not be required to do work that conflicts with the capitalist law, but that the work of the most secret and important nature must be kept in the most trusted hands.

During the time when the Communist Party operates, not under its own name and program in the open, but through a "legal" political party with restricted program and different name, the same principle is applied by having full control of such legal party in the hands of C. P. This is accomplished by having a majority of all important committees composed of C. P. members, and by means of regular and

compulsory caucuses of all the C. P. members within any legal unit, bound by the unit rule, a principle which will prevail in some effective form when the C. P. is itself in the open. As the membership develops loyalty to the party and respect for its discipline it will be possible to lessen the purely mechanical control and avoid the small friction that is inevitable for the present. There is an unsatisfactory feature in the present condition. Committee members, persons in responsible positions, and all especially active members of such legal party should be, practically without exception, members of the C. P. The Party must make systematic efforts to bring this about. Definite efforts must be made to bring every member of such legal party who shows himself to be equipped with communist understanding and capable of leadership, into the C. P. Every such active member must be tested as to his readiness to accept the C. P. program and discipline, and the decision of the C. I., and upon passing the customary tests, must be brought into membership of the C. P.

IX.—Executive Committees.

The Party must endeavor to reach at the earliest reasonable time the condition where all members of responsible committees of an L. P. P., such as C. E. C., D. E. C., Sub-D.E.C. etc., shall be members of No. 1. The personnel of committees of an L. P. P. should consist in its majority of the personnel of the corresponding committees of No. 1. The remainder of the personnel of L. P. P. committees should generally be No. 1 members wherever possible. The organizers and officials of the No. 1 and the L. P. P. committees shall generally not be the same.

That Centrist!

By JAMES A. MARSHALL

The Communist movement of the United States for three years of its existence, has been cursed with an internal struggle. Division in its ranks has paralyzed its activities during all this time. This condition of our movement reflects the low stage of the class struggle of the United States. To apply revolutionary tactics in the present stage of the class struggle, we must use slogans and demands which differ greatly from those abstractions which the "one-hundred-percenters" in our party would advocate. This difference between the use of realistic slogans, which conform to the actual class struggle and the propagation of abstract, lifeless, academic, official dogma regardless of the conditions of the class struggle, has been the cause of the fractional strife,—the struggle between Marxian realism and Infantile Leftism. The slogans

of the lefts in the United States today are those of yesterday; and their slogans of this year are those of yesteryear. Untiringly they shout "Centrist!" "Centrist" is the name given to the "revolutionists by hesitation" as congregated in the 2½ International. It is a fighting slogan against **enemies of the Proletarian Revolution**. The American "leftists" have made a fighting slogan out of it **against the enemies of their illusions**. How hallow that phrase is I realize best when I consider that during a considerable period of the time that I have had this epithet hurled at me, I was afflicted with a serious case of "leftitis".

If the misuse of that phrase would not have been the cause of utterly disorganizing the party, there would be no reason for discussing the matter.

But since one part of the party is constantly at the throat of another it has become necessary to deal with the question seriously. The minute the throttled ones get a breathing spell to call for action, this sound is immediately drowned in a chorus of voices shouting "Centrists", "CENTRISTS". Instead of party loyalty we have mistrust. Instead of acting as a unit our ranks are split by factionalism. Instead of carrying on communist propaganda we sling empty and meaningless phrases. Instead of organizing communist action, we have been carefully nursing the germ of infantile paralysis.

Who is centrist? The chorus of leftists give answer. A centrist is one who does not believe as we do. But this answer is either demagoguery or ignorance. And yet, this is what the saviours of communism mean—whatever they have stowed away in their brain-chamber is the eternal truth, is the last word in communism—and whoever disagrees with them is either a centrist or a menshevik.

A centrist is one who "believes" in the proletarian revolution—but condemns the means by which it must be accomplished.

In any class society one class rules, exploits and oppresses the other class. The capitalist class is doing that now with the working class. The state is its instrument of rule and suppression. The capitalist state, whether monarchy or republic, is a disguised dictatorship of the capitalist class. Through the powers of the state the capitalist class tries to perpetuate its rule and make exploitation a permanent institution. The working class must wrest that instrument of a capitalist dictatorship, the state, from the hands of the capitalists, must destroy its machinery of capitalist rule, and must establish in its place a proletarian dictatorship for the suppression of the capitalist class. This dictatorship will not be a permanent one. It aims at the abolition of classes and consequently at the abolition of class rule and the state. This is the aim of communism, whoever believes in this, whoever works for this and is willing to take the consequences of his action is a communist.

But here I see the witch-hunters in the party fall all over themselves in a rush against me. I hear them shouting while they rush. "Centrist", "CENTRIST!" No ordinary mortal in the Communist International can suspect why. Only three years training in the American Communist Movement can sharpen one's senses so that one can perceive of such fine points. I wrote: "The working class must wrest the instrument of capitalist dictatorship—the state—from the hands of the capitalists." "Centrist," they howl, "why don't you say by means of 'armed insurrection' or 'through force, violence and —other unlawful means'". These phrases are the test of one-hundred-percent-

ism. Mind you, it is not the belief in the eventual necessity of armed force that is in question. It is the willingness to shout it from the housetops here, there, everywhere; now, tomorrow, any time. Not dictatorship through soviets is the essence of our immediate revolutionary aim, but the parrot like repetition of the phrase "armed insurrection".

My "centrist" tendency has made me shameless enough to admit that if during a crisis a peculiar constellation of conditions would enable the American working class to take power through its councils built up in this crisis, as was the case, for instance, in Hungary and in Bavaria, I would not hesitate a second to advocate the taking of power, although the taking of power by other than by the means of "armed insurrection" has been decreed a crime against Communism by our American "leftists". Of course I would also suggest as the first act of power of these councils the immediate disarming of the bourgeoisie and its army, and the arming of the proletariat and the formation of its red army. My "centrist" sense tells me, however, that with that willingness to resort to armed force I cannot win back the good opinion of our more than one-hundred-percenters, because my proposal would no longer mean conquest of power, but defense of power.

Now I do not in the least pretend that that is the way the workers will get power. But that is not essential. The essential point is that the proletarian dictatorship exercised through workers councils must be the instrument of the proletarian revolution, and that such a dictatorship—a proletarian state—must supercede the capitalist dictatorship, the capitalist state. The communist will work for this. Consistently and systematically he will help develop the class struggle to the point where the working class will wrest the state from the hands of the capitalists and set up its own dictatorship. Never losing sight of this aim he will propose to the working masses at all times the use of **such means in the struggle as the stage of the struggle and its immediate object require.** After he has succeeded in developing the struggles of groups of workers into mass struggles of the proletariat; and when he sees the mass action of the proletariat sufficiently dominated by revolutionary spirit and leadership; and when the class struggle has reached a revolutionary crisis, he will suggest, propagate and organize the conquest of the state by the organization of workers councils; by taking on of functions of government for the working class through the councils, by arming the proletariat for the conflict which will be the inevitable outcome of this revolutionary action either the day before the taking of complete power as a means of conquest, or the day after the taking of complete power as a means of defense of power and the sup-

pression of the capitalist class. Arms will be used not as a matter of principle, but as a matter of necessity.

To make the phrase "overthrow by armed force" or "armed insurrection" the test of Communist understanding is nothing but an admission of lack of such understanding. But when the open existence of the Communist Party is at stake, than the insistence of this phrase in the program is little short of lunacy. At least half of the sections of the Communist International have nothing like it in their program. Radeck closes his answer to Kautsky on the question of terrorism with the words of the Chartists: "We will achieve our aims peacefully, if possible, but forcibly if necessary". The historical experience of the proletariat teaches them that force will be necessary: it depends on the bourgeoisie whether it will or not.

Now that I have opened my "centrist" heart on this point, waiting for all the one-hundred-percent-Shylocks to claim their pound of it, I proceed to other sides of the question of "what is a centrist".

A centrist does not believe in centralization and discipline. How about that in our party? We find that many of those who only lately joined the chorus of "centrist" shouters and who want to make up for their past deficiency by shouting loudest, having done everything to destroy centralization and discipline. They have set up separate organizations within the party with separate connections, etc., thus aiming a blow at the centralization. They have used everything from typographical errors in party publications to the sending of speakers or reporters they did not like, to stage protest actions, pass protest resolutions, create and systematically organize dissatisfaction for one purpose and one only: To destroy party discipline and then go fishing in the chaos thus created. Any defense against an accusation of centrism from these quarters must convert itself into an accusation against the accusers. Their cry of "Centrism" is only a variation of the old trick of "stop thief".

The centrist also abhors action. His slogan is at all times "first organization". Certainly, organization is necessary. But with the nucleus of the organization established action becomes the order of the day for that body. The organization can not enlarge and strengthen itself merely FOR action, but it must do that IN action. And action of the advance guard of the revolutionary proletariat is not the shouting off phrases and slogans abstract and meaningless if not related to the immediate problems of the struggle. The Communist Party program must determine the party's course of action. But never must the action of the party exhaust itself in a mere propagation of its program. This mistake is commonly made not by those accused of being centrists in our party, but by their accusers.

Lately the question of so-called liquidation of the number one has become the real and pretended cause for much display of energy by the "centrist" shouting chorus. Most of this is mere demagoguery. As one of those accused I challenge the whole congregation of the chorus to prove—not to me, but to the Communist International—that it is "liquidation" and "centrism" to claim:

1. That three fourths of the sections of the Communist International are open parties.
2. That the CPA was formed as an open party and went underground not as a matter of revolutionary virtue, but as a matter of necessity.
3. That only as long as that necessity exists must it continue such exclusive underground existence.
4. That the CPA cannot accomplish its task in America through the underground organization and for that reason creates open instruments.
5. That through such instruments **the party must consistently and diligently work its way back out in the open again.**
6. That this task can be accomplished best by extending the activities, enlarging the functions, and clarifying the program of its open instrument.
7. That when the possibility of an open existence of the CPA is established by the actual practice of the open instrument **the re-establishment of the CPA as an open Party becomes an imperative duty.**
8. That in the same degree as the CPA will function more and more through its open instrument it will lose the character of a separate political party and will become solely the directing force of the open organization.
9. That by the time the CPA can become an open party the original apparent dualism of open and underground organizations must have transformed itself into an unquestionable entity. Partly through the absorption of the best elements of LPP, partly through the permeation of LPP with its understanding, spirit and leadership, the CPA must have established itself so securely within its own open instrument that the CPA and its open apparatus are in appearance and in reality one and the same thing.
10. That the open CPA comply in organization and action to the 21 points and be openly affiliated with the Communist International.

This is my program. If that be "centrism", if that be "liquidation", make the best of it. But remember, the Communist International will say the last word in this question as it has done so before in a similar question.

Comrades! The issue is not "centrism", but "LEFTISM". The slogan cannot be and must not be, therefore, "centrism", but common sense, REASON!

The Blight of Purity

By J. BALLISTER

1. We are Descended from the Theological Apes

Every social movement has in it many of the properties inherited from older social movements. The form is only partially revolutionized by changing conditions, no matter how sharply the new movement may fight against the older. This is hard to realize in its full meaning.

If I write that the Communist movement has carried along with it automatically and blindly many of the foolish traits of our deceased Aunty, the Socialist Party, many comrades would readily admit that this is true. But I am going to make a more extreme claim. I am going further back than the Socialist Party, and will say that the Communist Party has in it today many of the outworn and stupid thought-forms of the old **religious** movements.

Some of the qualities of religious faith necessarily enter into any revolutionary movement and are not harmful. The self-sacrificing ardor for the cause, the emotional stimulation in action, the dogged rejection of everything contrary to the program agreed upon, and the refusal to waste time listening to enemy arguments while in action, rise to a higher pitch and spread over wider masses in a revolution than even in a religious wave. But all of this gets us nowhere unless the revolutionary organization is based upon the coolest, clearest-headed weighing of values; and unless the tactics, before being adopted, are subjected to a careful, objective search in connection with all surrounding social factors. With all the admitted similarities to religious movements, the philosophical and practical fundamentals of the revolutionary proletarian movement are the exact reverse. When a Communist begins (or continues) to use the thought processes of the religious sects, disaster is ahead.

The reader considers himself a "class conscious member of the vanguard of the revolution." You will be irritated if I say that in your thought processes you are only partly a Communist and partly a morbid, hysterical, shallow-witted and self-righteous Christian Baptist or synagog Jew or Catholic. Yet that is exactly what I say.

Look into yourself and see if you don't find some of the distinctive qualities of those outworn religious movements. What is the typical way of reasoning of religious sects?

"We have found the Truth. We know the Truth and others don't—therefore we are right and they are wrong. We are the baptized, and they are heretics. We don't have to learn, because we know. We will

teach them, and they must learn. We are the Chosen People. Our Truth will prevail, so all we have to do is to remain Pure and unchangeable, teaching our True Faith."

This way of thinking has been the basis on which thousands of sects have grouped themselves during many hundreds of years. The habit of mind did not stop suddenly on the day that Marx wrote the Communist Manifesto. On the contrary, if we read the history of the various groups that made up the First International, we have to recognize that such thought processes were carried far into the beginning of the modern proletarian revolutionary movement. And it persists today. Those of us that know the Socialist Party, the Socialist Labor Party and the Anarchist and Syndicalist movements, are aware that such a habit of mind persists in those movements and is a dead barrier to the development of the revolutionary movement. Is it not reasonable to suspect that some vestige of it has survived in us?

We get a curious result in comparing our own processes of thinking with those of the old religious sects. For instance, when we say, "we are the vanguard of the proletariat," is it not somewhat similar to "we are the Chosen People",

If we say that "we are the vanguard of the proletariat", it may not be perfectly untrue, but to reason from that basis is perfect rot. It is in violent contradiction to the whole process of Marxian thought and action. To build with that process of thought is to build a sect. Many sects call themselves "Marxian", but nothing that is a sect can be Marxian. Marx found England and France teeming with sects, and he spent half of his life's energies breaking them up. His whole philosophy is a cold blast of insistence upon never-ending change and never-completed truth.

Instead of saying "we have the Truth," the proletarian revolutionary movement must say "we have learned some partial truth well enough to act upon it; now let us learn more." Instead of saying "we are right," it says "up to a certain point we are right; now let us find out where we are wrong and correct our mistakes." A Marxian revolutionary organization cannot tell itself "we are the vanguard of the proletariat" until it sees a proletariat following it. Before that time it tells itself "we must learn how to become the vanguard of the proletariat; by careful judgment of experience we must find out how and for what reasons the proletariat will accept our leadership."

A philosophical sect, on the other hand, decides once and for all that it has the Truth, and then seals

itself up with a sort of hymenal obstruction against the vulgar, changing world. By this process it seeks to remain Pure. But it rots in its "purity." It rots until it stinks, and dies. The philosophical cemetery is full of grave-stones inscribed "We Died Pure—and childless."

The soul of Marxian revolutionary philosophy is receptivity and **contact**. If the virgin party is pure, then marry her quick to the Mass Man. Purity is no good unless it is preparation to give life.

What is the matter with the Socialist Labor Party, for instance? It is "Pure," or at least it was more or less pure until it began fooling with itself in maidenlady fright before the Russian vision of armed workmen. The S. L. P. has guarded its virginity against Mankind and against the changes of experience these forty-odd years, and is now carrying its hymen to a celibate grave.

Young Communist Party, beware of "Purity"!

2. Inherited Habits

How does this "Purity" work in our Party? Some comrades feel that their main duty is to keep the faithful at the task of repeating psalms from Theses, awaiting the Red Resurrection. They are willing to issue a leaflet now and then, as a sort of defiance to the other world, and they would faithfully publish the underground organ regularly to be circulated exclusively among the faithful except for the few dozen copies that go on file in the Department of Justice. They would even force themselves to show their loyalty to the inscrutable will of Moscow by publishing a legal press and by allowing some of the heathen to gather around them in the form of a legal political party, where the heathen can admire and obey them and receive their rebukes. But they feel that their own status is fixed for all time as the Chosen People. God or somebody has promised them that they are the Vanguard of the Proletariat, and the proletariat will perforce follow them when the great day comes.

This is the psychology of the Baptist Church or the Synagog. It spells death to the Communist movement. It is the direct reverse of the Communist philosophy. I do not believe that the workers will follow these people in their present beatific state of mind, nor follow our Party if it operates on such a point of view.

It is astonishing to see how many sub-district organizers we have in our Party that are better Communists than Comrade Lenin is—from the point of view of the Pure. Take, for instance, Comrade of Subdistrict He's got the light of Pure Truth in his soul. He has always been exactly right, ever since he quit the S. P. thirty seven months ago. You can judge that he is absolutely right from

the tone of his voice when he orders the mere cattle around. The mere cattle are getting less and less appreciative, but that does not matter; he's the Vanguard of the Proletariat, according to the Theses, isn't he?

Comrades, the leaders of Communism in Russia and in the International are not so pure as that. How many comrades in America remember that the Russian Communist papers very frequently carry announcements, signed by one or another leader of the Party, publicly acknowledging that he was mistaken in his view on a certain occasion? Comrade Trotzky, or Zinoviev, or Lenin, or Bukharin, considers this a matter of plain duty to the Party.

A Communist Party has not only a different purpose and a different structure from all other parties—but it also has **different mental process**.

If Communists let themselves sink into the emotional drunkenness of being "absolutely right," it results in a contagious form of mental stagnation and the reintroduction into the C. P. of all the old diseases of the individualist movements. For instance, if you have got the 'Pure Truth' in your soul, you don't have to listen to what the other fellow says, but only have to make your point against him. If there are weaknesses in your reasoning, you obscure them and turn the argument in another direction. Unconsciously you begin to use the old tricks of debate which are a part of the individualistic culture. In non-Communist parties the tricks of debate are legitimate. Arguments are used in order to baffle an adversary. Your object is to win your point. This process is deliberately taught as a "science" in bourgeois universities, where the ideal is the advancement of superior individuals and the baffling of the masses. It is the ethics of the poker game in a Society that is a poker game.

I think that many comrades will think it is a child-like innocence on my part when I say that the trickery of debate has no place inside of a Communist Party. If so, that means that they have not yet learned what the essence of the Communist movement is. Within a Communist Party, the use of any trick of confusion is treachery. Your purpose is never to "win a point." You do not try to baffle an adversary, but always to explain to an adversary and to your hearers. You try, further, to understand your adversary. You do not try to confuse your adversary's meaning, but to help him bring his meaning out as clearly as possible. You try, not only to find where your adversary is wrong, but also to find where he is **right**. Further still, you try constantly to find out **where you are wrong**. Immediately upon discovering where you are wrong, it is your business to say so and to explain how you were wrong. In a Communist Party there is no room for personal triumph. The function of a Communist Party is different. Your purpose in discussion is, not to

win a point, but to bring the best collective result in the decision. Not the individual, but the collective body is the unit of expression.

In the Russian Communist Party, this is considered as the most elementary principle. Political trickery and competition for position are practically unknown in the Russian Party. Time and again you hear a comrade of world-wide fame in the midst of a debate say that he has been shaken in his opinion by the opposite argument and wants to acknowledge that he may be mistaken in a certain point. When a petty egotist rises in the Russian Party and begins to act on the motive of proving himself always right, he stands out in ridiculous contrast and is soon scraped off like a barnacle from a ship.

Such diseases result from 'Purity,'—from the habit of looking upon ourselves, first collectively, and then individually, as the Chosen People. They are diseases of the past of the religious and political movements of individualism.

3—A Step Out of the Morass

In this number of THE COMMUNIST is published a Thesis on Relations between the Communist Party and an L. P. P., adopted by the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party in its last session, which will be a shock to the Pure. The fundamental idea of the Thesis, as I interpret it, is that we will take advantage of every opportunity to approach, and as soon as possible to attain, the objective of establishing the Communist Party in the open, under its own name, with the full Communist program and public announcement of affiliation with the Communist International.

The announcement of this as the point of view of the Central Executive Committee, will disturb all of those comrades whose instincts are sectarian. All of those to whom unconsciously it has become a dogma that the Communist Party of America must exist only in the underground, will be angry and yet will not know exactly what to complain of. I would suggest that the best course of action for them would be to file with the Communist International a demand that the Communist Party of Germany and those of Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, France, Italy, England, etc., shall be expelled for existing in the open.

A careful analysis of the Thesis of the C. E. C. will show that the Central Executive Committee regards that the Communist's entire organized movement, including a legal political party organized out of Communist sympathisers, shall have the quality of ONE STRUCTURE. Those who have been looking upon the C. P. and an L. P. P. as two parallel but organically separate bodies, will find this Thesis to the contrary. The position of the C. E. C. calls simply for

organizational centralization—for making such L. P. P. truly responsive to the central authority. How can such an instrument respond to the authority of the C. P. unless the C. P. is the organic center of a single structure? The idea of the C. E. C. is that the Communist Party together with a political organization of its sympathisers shall be organically one structure. But within a legal political party, the C. P. shall have its own structure, complete and so thoroughly protected with the underground system that none of the Capitalist State's attacks can destroy it, even though they may destroy all of the open structure.

When the Communist Party can maintain itself in the open as a "legal" party, the principle of the inner structure will have to be maintained, though perhaps in a less mechanically distinct form. If we play with abstract theory, we might say that even when there exists a large open Communist Party of many thousands of members, every member must be equally tested and equally dependable for underground work. But in concrete reality, we know that it is not physically possible to realize this principle in regard to a large body of many thousands of members.. Therefore, the principle of maintaining an inner structure of the best-tested and more dependable membership, will have to continue even after we shall have an open Communist Party taking into its membership all of the membership of an L. P. P. that may at that time be prepared to enter the open Communist Party.

In order to make the entire Communist movement a growing thing, it is necessary to have a vital, intimate connection at all points between the inner structure and the outer structure. The Communist Party cannot be a closed corporation in respect to such L. P. P.

The conception of the Communist Party as a closed corporation exercising mechanical, arbitrary control over a surrounding body of men and women **permanently excluded** from the Communist Party, has never been the expressed theory, but has too often been the practiced fact. It has been strangling the vitality of both elements.

The sectarian conception in the Party has brought about the practice of enrolling sympathetic elements into a legal organization and then leaving them there without the slightest effort to bring them further. This is a dangerous stupidity. Our purpose is not to make semi-Communists of those whom we organize in sympathetic bodies, but to make them **Communists**. Hereafter the Official Organ of the Communist Party will be circulated among all whom we may organize into a legal political party. Beginning with those who show the most capability and Communist understanding, systematic efforts must be made to fit the members of such a legal organization for membership in the Communist Party and to bring them in when fit. Con-

versely, it may be assumed that inactive members of the Communist Party will have to change their ways or be dropped out. The principle is that all active members that are fit to be Communists, and only the active members, of the entire political structure controlled by Communists, shall be within the inner, controlling structure.

The door must be open between the Communist Party and such a legal political party which is an extension of the same structure; that is, the door must be open for all especially active members of clear Communist understanding to pass into the Communist Party, and for all of the inactive type to pass out.

4—The Necessity of a Communist Party

It is absolutely necessary to make the members of an L. P. P. understand the function, purpose and indispensability of the Communist Party.

Every sharpening of the class struggle—the Paris Commune, the Russian Revolution of 1905 and the great revolution of 1917—has proven the necessity of a highly disciplined, centralized and clear-principled party of the most advanced workers, a Communist Party. The necessity that comes before all others is to build such a party and to make it the undisputed leader of the revolutionary workers. We are bound, before everything else, to cause all of the most intelligent revolutionary workers voluntarily to come within the discipline and centralized authority of such an organ of revolution. In order to accomplish that first task of **mobilization** of the vanguard, it is necessary to make our existing organization the most flexible and responsive instrument of all of the most intelligent revolutionary workers. It must be the executive of their will, the clearing-house of their thought, the boldest leader and the soundest tactician. Until our Party is all of that, it will not become the most important factor, even among the most sincerely revolutionary workers.

Are we successfully impressing the sympathetic workers that we have organized around us, with the necessity of the Communist Party? I fear that we are not. The picture that they get of the Communist Party is not impressive. If we have a legal political party under our leadership, we must not give it the impression that we are a haughty little clique of egotists, a sort of rival faction to the rest of such legal party. We must show them that the Communist Party is the very heart, the core of such legal party, and that they are expected and wanted to enter it as soon as they can and will take up the duties and responsibilities in the more intensified form.

5—Mass Action in the Program

It will be noticed that the Thesis of the C. E. C., while saying “we seek to have an open Communist

Party as soon as this can possibly be attained,” at the same time lays down the test of this possibility, as follows:

“As to whether a ‘legal’ Communist Party is possible, the test is whether the full Communist program (including the principle of mass action and the violent overthrow of the capitalist State), together with affiliation with the Communist International, can publicly be maintained without the Party being suppressed.”

As I understand the Thesis, this means that the full Communist program must make clear beyond question that the final act of taking the State power from the Capitalist class by the Working class can not be accomplished within the “democratic parliamentary” forms provided by the Capitalist State, but will necessarily be accomplished by direct action of the masses outside of, and in conflict with, the Capitalist parliamentary forms which will be destroyed and replaced with the typical and natural working class form of State, the Soviet form. It is necessary to establish this principle in any program claiming to be a full Communist program, or we have gained nothing from the terrific history of the past five years in Russia, Germany, Hungary and Italy—or even from the history of Seattle and Winnipeg. To omit to state this principle, and yet to claim to be stating the Communist program, would be a cheap deception and betrayal.

If this principle is not stated, the assumption is that we mean that the “revolution” we advocate will be accomplished within the previously existing forms; and the essential difference between the Communist Party and the Socialist reform party is lost; the whole reason for our existence disappears.

But the necessity, so far as a written program is concerned, involves only the clarifying of the principle. It does not mean that a Communist program must call for an immediate armed insurrection. Furthermore, it does not mean that the program must ‘call for’ an armed insurrection at all, in the sense that would supply prosecutors with evidence of direct incitement to violence. It is not necessary to write our program in language best suited to prosecutors. The object must be to make clear to those who join our Party, that such will be the inevitable development of the struggle and that the working class must be prepared to engage in the struggle accordingly. To establish the historical-political principle in the minds of the workers is the task of the program on this point. We don’t have to use bucket-of-blood rhetoric just to show how brave we are.

6—Armed Insurrection vs. Armed Phrases.

While I am writing this article, the newspapers announce a battle in the State of Illinois. It is a battle in which several thousand armed coal miners marched

against a scab coal mine, laid siege to it and after a terrific rifle fight, defeated the scab army, and closed the mine down.

This is not the first time that the coal miners of this country have resorted to armed mass action. In fact, it is **typical** of the American proletariat. A few months ago thousands of armed workers marching against the forces of the State of West Virginia (so the employers claim), and now the same thing in Illinois. Are the active spirits in these operations organized as Communists? In the great strikes that are going on, are the foremost rank-and-file leaders organized in a Communist Party? In most cases they are not.

Let's quit calling ourselves the "Vanguard of the Proletariat" long enough to look around at reality. The workers are engaged in actions in this country which in several cases have revolutionary significance. The facts prove that the Communist Party does not contain all, nor even a large proportion of the intelligent rank-and-file leaders of the working class that are moving toward revolutionary action. The workers who will take the natural leadership of their class in the revolution are NOT at the present time in the Communist Party in this country.

Then, are we the "Vanguard of the Proletariat?"

We are not. To call ourselves the "Vanguard of the Proletariat" is the petty self-worship of sectarianism.

What is the trouble? I think that the trouble is that we have allowed false thought processes to lead us into mistaking armed phrases for armed insurrection. I think that our primary duty is, not to issue aimless leaflets and proclamations about armed insurrection, but to pursue a course that will put us in the actual leadership of the struggle which inevitably leads to armed insurrection.

If we come out of our haze of dream-clouds, I think that we will see that our unconsidered, dogmatically repeated phrases about armed insurrection, are one of the things that PREVENT our getting on any working basis with those workers who don't talk about "armed mass action" but take their guns and close down the scab mine and paralyse the State machinery by military action.

Let's see if it isn't **words** that interfere with us.

The capitalist press claims (though it may not be true) that leaders of the West Virginia miners' regiments sent telegrams to the armed men ordering them to disperse and to do nothing unlawful. but then hastened to the front in automobiles and told the workers not to mind the telegrams, but to go ahead and fight. This may not be true, but let's assume that it is, for illustration.

How does our Pure comrade look at this? Why, the leaders of these miners are yellow traitors. They

denied their principles. They sent counter-revolutionary telegrams ordering the workers to obey the law. That cuts them off. They are not Pure; they publicly disowned their principles.

But how does it work out? Who is leading the proletariat in its advance toward revolutionary action—the men who distribute "armed leaflets" in a sleepy Brooklyn streetcar strike, or the men who distribute armed coal diggers in the strategic points of West Virginia?

It's a queer case of choosing between armed phrases and armed action. It is a curious fact, that all of the talk about armed insurrection in West Virginia is to be found in the mouths of witnesses for the prosecutor. The **action** happened to require some degree of reticence. (That is, assuming for illustration that the State's witnesses were not lying, though they probably were.)

I do not mean to say that armed insurrection does not have to be talked about by Communists. Most emphatically, it does have to be discussed, explained and endorsed. But how? And why? Before we can do a thing in the right way, we have to know for what **purpose** we do it. The purpose is not to show how fierce we are, we can only do that with actions, not with words.

What, then, is the purpose of the Thesis of the C. E. C. in stipulating that the full Communist program must include "the principle of mass action and the violent overthrow of the Capitalist State"? Does it mean that we must pursue the old left-sick policy of pouring a bucket of blood into every utterance of the Party? Does it mean that we cannot advance a Communist Program without including a direct incitement to armed insurrection? I say, most emphatically no.

What is the purpose of a program in respect to "mass action and the violent overthrow of the Capitalist State"?

As far as the Program is concerned, the PRINCIPLE must be established, and nothing more. In addition to establishing the principle, the Party propaganda must persistently and systematically familiarize the workers with the concrete knowledge. But the applied knowledge that Capitalism can be overthrown only by armed mass action destroying the Capitalist State, can be supplied by life and action, and CANNOT be taught by handbills. Especially this is true if the handbills talk more like a witness for the State than like a coal digger.

7—Purity in the Trade Unions

Purity is Hell in the Trade Unions. It has blighted our Trade Union work from the beginning. First, we had to be so Pure that we couldn't stay inside of the trade unions; and after we learned what foolishness

that as; we had to suppress a lot of infantile notions in our Party to the effect that our business in the Unions is what Gompr's says it is—to break them up. And then a notion went the rounds of the Party to the effect that we must agitate for strikes at all times without distinction, even at times when we know that a strike would result in crushing defeat.

Another notion is that we must fight at all times against all union officials that are not members of the Party, even if such officials offer to co-operate with the Party on all immediately practicable points of our program. Some comrades seem to think that refusing to co-operate with a non-Communist administration of a union is like refusing to co-operate with the government of a Capitalist State. The Comrades forget that while we deny the right of the Capitalist State to function or to exist at all, we recognize a union as a legitimate and highly valuable organization, and we recognize the right of a union administration to function. We only dispute the way in which it functions. When it begins to function even partly, in our way, then there is no contamination of our party in having dealings with it. Throughout the entire activities of the Red Trade Union International we see no refusal to co-operate with union official heads that want to co-operate. In fact, quite the reverse. Delegates to the Red Trade Union Congress are not asked, "are you a Communist?" They are asked, "do you want to co-operate?" They are not even asked to affiliate officially, if their doing so would greatly endanger their movement. In short, the whole spirit of the Red International of Labor Unions (the trade-union phase of the Communist movement) is the spirit of co-operation and coalition with non-Communist, but friendly, working class organizations. And this extends to union official heads that take a pro-Russian attitude and an attitude of co-operation with the general Communist movement. Of course the mere fact that such union heads were not Communists would indicate the extreme likelihood of clashes with them later; but if we were to refuse to co-operate with them where they accept the substance of our program, our comrades in Moscow would think we were crazy. In my opinion, one of the most urgent needs of the Communist Party is to stamp out the last traces of that left sick Purity that wants to treat a labor organization in the same way as a Capitalist State.

8—Condition of the Party

What is the condition of our Party? The Party seems to be given to the continuous yelling of general slogans.

There is an old school of revolutionary literature which consists entirely of shouting defiance to the

bourgeoisie. There was some excuse for this in its time: History had not yet developed the definite means of accomplishing the revolution, or at least had not proven the definite means clearly enough for the mind of any great number of men. General defiance was about the only expression that the revolution could have. It was a sort of glorified curse at the police. You will notice that such literature is in spirit addressed to the Capitalist class. That is its weakness; it is really based upon the theory of present helplessness.

But this is not the day of hopelessness. History has at last proven that certain specific forms of action are effective up to a certain point. It is now our business to quit the general yelling at the Capitalist class. In the light of this day, we want to talk to the WORKING class, and to talk fight and victory. Not just **general** fight, but **specific** fight, because the specific fight is before us.

Only a dead sect can now content itself with yelling general slogans, and with blindly trying to apply them to all things regardless of whether they fit or not. This sort of thing soon sinks to the level of dry formality and loses the interest of intelligent workers.

In a surprising number of cases, both in the C. P. of A. and in the Minority Opposition, whole Party groups and even branches have simply dried up with useless formality. Comrades that came into the Party full of enthusiasm and willingness to work endless hours at Communist work, have found their days and nights piled up with tedious routine having no apparent connection with the revolutionary movement which is teeming in development in the world outside of their stale, dry meetings. Time and again, young, enthusiastic workers whom I personally know have come into the Party and then dropped out. When I ask them why they dropped out, they invariably mention being forced to listen to long-winded, mimeographed reports and to eternal petty squabbles of little bureaucrats.

The effect of this is, what? To drive out of our party everyone whose character demands action, everyone who values his time. It results in making the Party a receptacle for all of the mummified type of man or woman who simply sit in the Party because of having no use for his time. The result is sectarian decay.

The Thesis of the Central Executive Committee is a clear-headed proposal to clean the whole structure of its stagnation, as well as to comply with the Communist International's demand that we:

"Try, all ways and means to get out of the illegalized condition into the open, among the wide masses."

Theses on the Relations of No. 1 and 2

By J. FORD and A. DUBNER

1. Government is force organized by one class to keep another in subjection. When the subject class becomes conscious of the oppression under which it labors, it organizes to overthrow the class in power. This struggle, of necessity, develops into a struggle of force against force—of the armed force of the oppressed class against the armed forces of the class in power—the Government.

2. This being a phenomenon based on historical fact, it is the task of the Communists to prepare and organize the working class for this struggle against the master class, the capitalists, and against their organized armed force, the government.

3. The great masses of the working classes cannot be consciously organized for this task. Weighted with the burden of false education, prejudice and the terrorization of the master class and the government, they cannot be formed into organization consciously under the control of the Communists.

4. It is the function of the Communists, therefore, as the most conscious, militant revolutionary section of the working class, to organize themselves into a party and by means of this party prepare the rest of the working class for the struggle against the capitalist system and the government.

5. The nature of the struggle—the overthrow of one class by another—makes it impossible, as history has shown, for a party with this program to carry on its most essential work in the open. The conflict with the government is so brutal and so frequent that the revolutionary organization working openly would be disrupted and ground to pieces by the superior force of the State. The Communists, therefore, are compelled to function as an underground party—the C. P.

6. Work in the underground limits activities, is very cumbersome and does not suffice for the overthrow of the capitalist system. The C. P. is obliged to penetrate all existing working class and semi-working class organizations and to form other open organizations to reach the masses, using these organizations as tools and auxiliary of the C. P. One of these organs is the open political party, consisting of revolutionary workers, not all of whom are real Communists. The program of this party, by its very nature, is restricted, in that it must adapt itself to the laws of the country.

7. This L. P. can by no means replace the real C. P. On the contrary, the underground party must

be built ever firmer and stronger; it must guide and control the L. P. through their influence of its membership, through its official organs and all other means of propaganda at its disposal.

8. To perform its function as the directing and controlling body, the C. P. must be made up of only the best, the most advanced, the most trusted, tried and intelligent section of the working class! It must exercise a rigid discipline, removing from its ranks all who merely comprehend the principles of Communism but fail to carry out the work of the party. Not understanding alone, but activity, willingness to sacrifice and to do every kind of dangerous work must determine membership in the C. P.

9. The tasks of the C. P. and all the organizations that it creates must be clearly defined, in order that all may serve their purpose without conflict and waste or duplication of effort. The specific functions of each party may vary at different stages of the development of the class struggle. At the present preparatory period, undoubtedly a large part of the work can be done in many parts of the country openly, leaving for the underground party functions, which, though limited in quantity, nevertheless are of extreme importance, without which no real Communist movement can be conceived of.

10. The main task of the C. P. is to organize UNRESTRICTED Communist education and propaganda, thus insuring that the full Communist message is made clear at all times. The C. P. must carry on all such work as cannot be done openly; it must build and support the L. P. and other open organizations and direct their activities.

11. The C. P. must at least once a month issue its organs, dealing theoretically and analytically with all the problems of the class struggle and of the party. It shall give direction to and formulate the slogans for the work of all open organizations. The attitude of the C. P. to its open organizations and especially the L. P. shall be a favorable and encouraging one. It must, however, always point out the deficiencies in the activities of the L. P. The C. P. shall devise ways and means of reaching the membership of the L. P. with its illegal organ in order to further their education. The C. P. must also issue all such literature as cannot be published legally.

12. The C. P. must issue leaflets dealing with the struggles of the workers in a REALISTIC manner, so that the masses will perceive that the C. P.

understands the struggle, but is unable to work openly because of the nature of its organization.

13. The C. P. must constantly make recruits to its ranks from the membership of the L. P., labor unions and other working class organizations. It is one of the main tasks of the C. P. to develop and strengthen its organization.

14. The groups of the C. P. must meet regularly at least once a month.

15. The C. P. is the section of the C. I. in this country, and is the only body capable of stating the official position of the C. I.

16. The task of the L. P. is to participate directly in the every-day struggles of the workers, endeavoring to develop the struggles for immediate needs into revolutionary mass struggles. It must conduct open propaganda and education, participate in the elections, issue papers and leaflets on the basis of immediate demands, bringing the masses more and more to the Communist position. As far as possible, all editors of the L. P. organs must be members of the C. P.

15. Through the L. P. membership, the C. P. permeates all existing working class organizations, acting as nuclei within those organizations. In the Labor Unions, the L. P. must form a left wing, acting as nucleus and taking the leadership in it.

18. The C. P. shall endeavor to establish the same discipline, wage scale and regulation for all officials on the L. P. as prevails in the C. P. It must always be remembered that the real revolutionary party—the American section of the C. I.—is the C. P. of A., and the L. P. is but an instrument which it uses to better carry out the work among the masses. Only through membership in the American section—the C. P. of A.—can the American workers become members of the C. I.

19. As organs of the C. P., the L. P. and other open organizations must be under its direction and control. The discipline of the C. P. is SUPREME for members. The convention of the C. P. must be held prior to the convention of the L. P. and determine all policies for the party and all of its open organizations. It is the duty of the committees and of the membership to carry out these policies in the L. P. and all other organizations. In order that the work of the C. P. and L. P. may be conducted properly and the C. P. at the same time be safeguarded from the clutches of the government, the Ex. Com. elected at the convention of the Communist Party shall divide into two parts, the major part becoming the No. 1 department and devoting itself to carrying out in the C. P. the policies laid down by the convention and the Ex. Com., the minor part becoming the No. 2 depart-

ment and devoting itself to carrying out in the L. P. the policies laid down by the convention and the Ex. Com.

20. This policy of division of work shall be followed in all subordinate committees of the CP.

21. The functions of organizers of the CP and LP being different, and the safety of the organization making it imperative, the organizers of the CP shall, as a rule, not be the organizers of the LP.

22. The Communists must seek to control all committees in the LP. By better understanding of principles and more active participation in the LP work, they must win over the membership of the LP to the real Communist position.

23. Members of the CP must work as a nucleus in the LP. Although all the policies are laid down in CP, the activities of the Communists in the LP evolving out of these policies must be left to the Communist understanding, better organization and generalship of the members of the CP.

24. CP members act as a caucus in the LP nuclei in the Labor Unions. Decisions on all important matters must be made in caucus meetings.

25. As the situation becomes more revolutionary the LP gaining the support of the masses, will become more revolutionary in form, character and activity. In such a situation, the LP may formally amalgamate with the CP and assume its name.

The underground CP, remaining as an organization within the open Party, continues to be the directing and controlling body. It remains intact and must continually be strengthened. There must be a periodical purging of its ranks and the discipline made more rigid. New blood from the open party and other open organizations must be introduced into the underground organization.

26. Even though the CP shall have come above ground and act as the section of the CI, the underground organization remains as the directing organ of the open CP. All important policies must first be taken up by the underground organization and its decisions put through in the open party. The underground organization must continually be reinforced, since even when fighting in open, the activities of the open party will depend on the vigor, understanding, strategy and generalship of the underground organization. The open party being a mass organization can not have the discipline and understanding of an underground organization, and will respond to calls to action only in proportion as the underground membership is disciplined and exerts influence. This status will continue up to and through the revolution and to the establishment of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

The Question of Relations Between the C. P. and an L. P. P.

By J. P. COLLINS

After the few months of experience of maintaining double machinery most of us must have noticed the advantages and disadvantages of the C. P. organization. We cannot help coming to the conclusion that not only has the No. 2 absorbed almost all the ordinary tasks carried out through the C. P. in the workers' everyday struggle but these tasks are being performed more efficiently by the No. 2 than by other apparatuses.

Most of us come to C. P. meetings and find that nearly everything we meant to do or talk about might just as well be done in our No. 2 meetings. It is difficult to convince yourself or to convince others that so much time and energy should be wasted for the maintenance of machinery to enable us to hide ourselves in small groups when most of the things we are doing could much better be done in larger gatherings and in the open. It is difficult to get new members into the C. P. because it is not easy to explain the necessity and advantages of the present system.

The objectionable features of our present organizational machinery are especially emphasized in the fact that the mere routine upkeep of it forces us to spend more time in interminable meetings among ourselves than we spend in working among the masses. The party machine is at present a Gordian Knot which strangles the energies of the membership.

We are forced constantly to develop new machinery as we enter real activities among the masses, machinery which we deemed not necessary before, but which can put the party in real touch with the masses. We are entering the labor movement—the most important field of activity in the party. But how in the world can we make our work in this field effective and create the necessary machinery for that purpose when our time is spent looking after the upkeep of the two general machines not to mention the other organizations which though temporary in character still enlist the energies of our most capable and active members? The party machinery is so chaotic that we undertake tasks without any serious possibility of carrying them out. Under such conditions discipline is only a pious wish; it becomes a physical impossibility. System becomes an illusion and efficiency a Utopia.

It will not suffice to set up dogmas. The problem

is one of practical organization. We are few in numbers with a tremendous field to cover. We cannot afford to fritter away our energies in the upkeep of the present machinery. There must be a revision of our ideas to conform to new needs and the structure of the party must be radically changed. This together with a judicious application of the United Front policy are the two major and dominant questions before the coming convention. Upon the proper solution of these problems depends the future of the movement as far as results are concerned.

I believe I have stated the main evils of the present organizational system and see visions of execution as a liquidator, centrist or the personification of some other bugaboo that may mean anything or nothing. It is very easy to disagree, but difficult to offer a solution of the pressing problems that now confront us. It is easy to always agree with the majority. In your own circle you will have the reputation of being always right, but those who are always right may be good politicians but they are not good revolutionists.

Are we for an open Communist Party?

All the objections to the present system are the practical and technical outgrowth of a wrong policy not so much on the part of the C. E. C. as on the general attitude of the members themselves. The confusion arises over the relative functions of a C. P. and an L. P. P. Some want to make the first a holy Synod for the chosen ones privileged to function as the C. P. of A. with the legal organ a mere necessary evil where the Ishmaelites can be allowed to enter. Others want to develop a bonafide Communist Party of America to function in the open, and the manner in which this result can be obtained is to have a legal party evolve into an open Section of the C. I. as soon as technically possible.

If the idea of an exclusive underground party prevails then of course the Communist Party must function pretty much the same as now and L. P. P. must be further relegated to the background much more so than at the present time. In which case L. P. P. will be reduced to im-

potence, its wings clipped and less time spent on it. Such a policy would be suicide for the Communist movement in the United States. It would be the very anti-thesis of a policy for the development of a Communist mass party —and entirely out of harmony with the Theses and spirit of the Third Congress. It must be rejected.

The other policy which tends to the development of a Communist party which can only be done in the open must be taken as a basis. In which case L. P. P. must become the Communist Party. We must strive to train the membership to become a Communist membership and make them participate in all Communist activities among the masses. We need a Communist mass party in the open, to manoeuvre in the open in full view of the masses, facing the dangers and taking advantage of the possibilities of the struggle.

The exclusive underground party has been a happy hunting ground for many queer types and the morale of many ardent rebels has become sapped by a policy, the principal characteristic of which was the suggestion of **running away** from danger. This atmosphere must be cleared, unless we are to degenerate into a mystic sect of political Freemasons every now and then crawling into a hole and pulling the hole in after us, all the time fooling ourselves with the idea that we are doing dire deeds of revolutionary significance while in reality we are like little boys amusing themselves with tin soldiers. Let us get away from this hocus-pocus and on to the task of developing an open Communist Party.

It would be tactically foolish however to come into the open now with our real name, for we have not as yet entrenched ourselves sufficiently in the labor movement nor rallied the bulk of the rebels in this country within our ranks. It is better strategy for this time being from many points of view to operate as at present. We cannot gamble and take chances. The only safe policy is to rely on strength and we are not yet strong enough in the labor movement compared with the strength of our enemies who desire our destruction,

Hence we must maintain the No. 1. machinery in a form not suited to an open C. P. But the main purpose of this No. 1. machinery is to develop out into open through L. P. P., an open Communist party; in other words we must not restrict the development of L. P. P. in any way whatsoever. All communist activities that possibly can be carried out shall be done through the medium of L. P. P. and all members of L. P. P. shall participate in these activities.

The Function of No. 1.

The question then arises what shall No. 1. do? Control? Yes, the thoroughly conscious minorities within shall be organized even though we would have an open Communist Party for the purpose of preventing the open party from sliding back under pressure of capitalism into compromise and expediency which easily becomes the fate of mass movements during the more peaceful and more ordinary periods of the class struggle. But that is not the only purpose of the organized group within. It must also carry out the many tasks that will develop during the struggle which cannot and should not be done in open. It must be this group that does the illegal work and prepares the whole movement for such work. The training for such work and the necessary organization cannot be created offhand when the occasion for it suddenly arises but foresight must be exercised in preparing for such eventualities and the successful coping with such situations will only be possible when the members have the necessary training and experience.

The clear, and active cells of revolutionists within it that must control the open movement and prepare it for its illegal task as well as protect it from the onslaughts of the enemy. It would be ridiculous to say that our No. 1. is such an organization; in its relations with No. 2. Ours is not an underground organization, but a Communist Party that functions semi-legally. At least 50% of our members are inactive and as to their clearness on communism; well utopian revolutionary sentimentalism is the most polite term I can think of to characterise their political understanding.

The No. 1. cannot remain the kind of organization it is now. It must become different in methods, in function and must try to include within its ranks exclusively only the active portion of the membership. It must rather control by activity and ability rather than by numbers; by a virtual monopoly of the virile force of a large open movement. This can be accomplished by limiting the No. 1. organization to active members, the purpose of such an organization being to function adroitly within as a solid body of cells for secret and illegal activities and as a caucus for the purpose of controlling the open movement and keeping it along the correct lines.

This can be done without the enormous waste of time now involved in the upkeep of our No. 1. machinery. A trained group of active revolutionists does not need innumerable routine meetings under the illusion that such is the only way to keep the No. 1. together. The organization is there and

meetings are called when necessary that is, when important work is to be done or new policies to be discussed and decided on. No active revolutionist can afford to waste his time for nothing and the chaos of meetings and useless machinery we have now is breaking the discipline and the morale of the whole movement. This waste must be eliminated

and the superfluous organizational junk consigned to the scrap heap. It is not liquidation of No. 1. that we need; it is reorganization that is required to conform to new conditions. Only then will liquidation be liquidated and the No. 1. instead of being a monotonous drudgery will become the indispensable virile and leading force that we all want it to be.

The United Front

By J. A. MARSHALL

(The following article was written by me in reply to one on the same subject submitted for publication by Comrade Ford. Comrade Ford's article was set up with the intention of having it appear in this issue with my reply. However, the readers cannot have the privilege of comparing the two articles, as Comrade Ford withdrew his for reasons unknown to the editor on the eve of publication. Aside from the fact that composition is a costly luxury, I feel that the subject is too important to warrant me withdrawing my reply to Comrade Ford's article.—JAMES A. MARSHALL.)

1. What it is.

The United Front must be understood first before it can be applied. Misconceptions such as expressed in comrade Ford's article in this issue will make it hard to even discuss the problem of applying the United Front tactic in the United States intelligently. To determine correctly the use of a weapon in the revolutionary struggle there must be first established a unity of understanding its character and object.

The theory of the United Front is the very antithesis of the tactic of breaking up, of splitting, applied by the Communist International heretofore, argues comrade Ford. And many comrades agree with him. This would imply that the Communist International finds, after more than two years of application of its original tactic that it made a mistake and now, to rectify this mistake, reverses its tactics. That is exactly what the leaders of the second International, of the 2½ and the Amsterdam International say, what the Bergers and Hillquits say. To us it seems that the Communist International has the right not to be misunderstood and misrepresented at least by its friends.

The Essence of Marxism.

The Communists are Marxians. The essence of Marxism is that the new society we strive for, communism, is nothing outside and apart from existing society. It does not teach that communism is a form of society invented by us and to be set up by us through a forceful revolution in place of capitalism after its destruction. The Marxist sees in Communism the solution of the contradictions that capitalism develops within itself. Capitalism was, on the one hand, an instrument of progress. But it develops within itself forces of stagnation, of reaction. This

contradiction is exemplified on the one hand by the reactionary economic and political forces of the capitalist class and the capitalist state; and on the other hand by the revolutionary forces of the proletariat, both products of one maker, Capitalism. As the contradiction between these forces develops and the antagonisms sharpen, the struggles of these forces increase in intensity and finally develop into revolutionary struggles for power. The victory of the proletariat will then solve the contradictions of capitalism in the establishment of a higher form of society, communism. No matter what stage the struggle between the old and new has reached, even though it may only be in its initial stage and far from the revolutionary struggle for power, still, the revolutionary forces must participate in it. The lower stages of the struggle are as essential to the revolution as are insurrection and civil war. In both instances not because we want them but because without them there will be no revolutionary struggles, no victory of the proletariat, no communism.

A Force of Evolution.

It is obvious, therefore, that all activities of the revolutionists must be based on the immediate struggles of the workers, no matter how little revolutionary their forms or apparent aims may be. The Marxian conception of history enables the communist not only to reconstruct past history but also to anticipate the development before him. By conscious participation in all struggles he makes himself a force of evolution. Just like a knowledge of the laws of nature does not enable man to overcome or eliminate them. But man succeeds in forcing these laws to serve his purpose. The communist does the same thing with the laws that govern social developments. He consciously directs

these laws and thus makes them serve him in his revolutionary purposes. To disregard immediate struggles for their supposed lack of revolutionary character is to throw away the only chance of giving the class struggle revolutionary directions. To do that does not mean to prove revolutionary quality and integrity as many comrades falsely believe. It means an utter lack of revolutionary understanding. It is leftism, pure and simple.

Difference between "rights" and Communists.

We are revolutionists not only because we realize the necessities for a revolution, because we know that this revolution will eventually take the forms of a civil war, or because we are ready to take leadership and responsibility in this civil war. We are revolutionists first and foremost because we know the revolutionary potentialities of even the little skirmishes of the workers, not against the capitalist class, the capitalist state and the capitalist system, but even against an individual exploiter or a group of them by smaller or larger groups of workers. We are revolutionists because we know that conditions will force these skirmishes to grow into veritable battles; we know that out of all such skirmishes the workers emerge richer in experience, nearer to class consciousness, and better fit for coming greater struggles. We participate in these skirmishes and take leadership in them to prove our faith to the cause of the working class as the workers understand it. We participate as teachers to help the masses to learn from the experience of these struggles to develop class consciousness and class solidarity. We participate because we know that the climax of the class struggle, the struggle of the working class against the capitalist class for power, is essentially the same as the every day skirmishes of groups of workers against individual capitalists or groups of them and represents only the result of a logical development of such every day skirmishes. This necessary development cannot be brought about by abstract teaching of the revolutionary class struggle, but by becoming a part and a factor in the struggle in the stage we find it in and by applying ourselves to the task of developing it consistently into the stage we want it in. The accusation of not wanting the end because of propagating to start at the beginning is, therefore, not an accusation against the comrade it is made but against the one that makes it. The difference between the right betrayers of the working class and the communists is not that they want to participate in the daily struggles of the workers while the communists only fight in the revolution. The difference is that the right betrayers mislead the workers into the belief that these daily struggles are revolution itself—that a certain sum of reforms won constitute the revolution. These misleaders try to

have the working class exhaust what revolutionary energy it possesses in these daily struggles. We, the communists, use the daily struggles to develop revolutionary understanding and energy in the masses for the coming final struggle.

The End of the War.

At the end of the war the working class of Europe was in revolt. To direct this revolt against the capitalist class and its state was the duty of the advance guard of the workers, the revolutionary organizations. But, outside of Russia, there were none such. Those that had posed as such turned out to be instruments of capitalism. They took great pains to change the direction of the revolt. Not the state but only its monarchist form was made the object of the struggle. Individuals and groups of revolutionists, loyal to the cause of the proletariat could not give leadership to the revolt. They had neither organization nor influence among the masses. To form such organizations and establish such influence was the task of the Communist International. To accomplish that task splitting became an imperative necessity. But not splitting up the forces of labor — but splitting away from the forces of capitalism such groups of labor that were ready to form a nucleus for a united front of labor **against** capital, as against a united front of labor **with** capital.

The United Front tactic of today is, therefore, not the very antithesis of the tactic of splitting used yesterday, but it is the logical development of the policy used yesterday. Yesterday the Communist International split away from the united front of labor **with** capital, the advance guard of the proletariat. And today it gives direction as to how to split away from the same united front of labor **with** capital the masses of the workers for the establishment of a united front of labor **against** capital. There is no contradiction in policy. The tactic is different. To achieve the same end, a united front of labor, the slogan yesterday was "separate", while the slogan today is "unite".

Ford Apologetic.

If it were true that the united front tactic of today is a reversal of the policy of yesterday its object would obviously be to undo today what was accomplished yesterday. Comrade Ford feels that, and he therefore feels compelled to apologize for the Communist International on that account. He feels that if the tactic of today means the opposite of the tactic of yesterday it must mean to undo today what was done yesterday. And yet, he also feels that it can not mean that. He does not try to solve the contradiction but merely drops the subject unsolved after he has

stated the contradiction. We want to solve the riddle by showing that there is no contradiction and that the United Front tactic of today merely proposes to complete the job begun with the splitting of yesterday.

To understand that is to know that the United Front does not mean a reuniting of our forces with the Socialists on the basis of organizational unity. It means a uniting of the masses of the workers on the basis of one action.

Establishing Contradictions.

Comrade Ford does not stop short with the establishment of one contradiction without solving it. He establishes another one. Says he: "The method of struggle on the industrial and parliamentary field is different". Then he goes on to show that in the field of industrial struggles our duty is to participate in them, show up—the shallowness of the present leaders and to forge to the forefront to take leadership. So far so good. But why the artificial contradictions? Why is that our duty on the industrial field and not also on the field of political struggles. Because, he says, to do that would mean to place yellow leaders of labor in a position where they can betray the workers, and we would than share responsibility for such betrayal. He forgets that wherever such leadership of the yellows is established it is as little our responsibility as it is ours that Gompers leads the economic labor movement in this country instead of Foster. Yet, we enter the struggles even under the leadership of Gompers because the treachery of false leadership can only be exposed in action. But that part of comrade Ford's reasoning is less important. Important is, that in one paragraph he speaks of political action in general, while in the next paragraph he takes it for granted that political action is — parliamentarism. This misconception the "rightists" and the "leftists" have in common. The one says: political action means election

campaigns, means parliamentarism. Therefore the United Front means political coalitions of the communists with other parties for election campaigns. Let's have them. The "lefts" on the other hand, say: United Front on the political field can only mean coalition with other parties for election campaigns. That is impossible for communists. Therefore no United Front on the political field for us. It is needless to say that both are wrong. The methods of struggle on the political field and the economic field are not so different as comrade Ford wants us to believe. Or does comrade Ford deny the possibility of a political strike, in no way different from an economic one, and even carried out by the existing economic organizations, the labor unions?

An Utopian Expectation.

Assuming that the development of independent political action of the masses in the United States will wait until the communists have succeeded in establishing themselves as the expression of the political aspirations of the masses of the workers that tactic proposed by Ford may be debatable. But such an assumption is created by a pious wish. Furthermore it is unscientific. It presupposes the possibility that the heretofore completely motionless masses of the proletariat in this country, as far as political activity is concerned, can be set in motion all at once at top speed. This is utopian. The masses of the American proletariat will not jump from a state of complete political inactivity to a state of revolutionary political activity. Our Marxian understanding should save us from such dreams. Here, too like in all social developments, we must anticipate the development and base our tactics upon the course this development takes.

In another article we will discuss the possible forms the application of the United Front tactic may take in the United States.

Imperialism

By. L. C. WHEAT

I. Imperialism is that stage in the development of capitalism mainly characterized by the following conditions.

a) The domination of the monopolies and of finance capital is finally achieved.

b) The export of finance capital has attained a tremendous importance.

c) The division of the world among the international trusts has begun.

d) The division of the entire territory of the earth among the greatest capitalist countries is complete.

II. The ability to maintain high monopolistic profits in certain countries or in certain branches of industry affords the capitalists the economic possibility of winning over some sections of the working class. Thus there is born the union of opportunism and imperialism.

III. The intense struggle for the division of the

world produces among the imperialist nations a sharp antagonism which strengthens this tendency of the upper crust or "aristocracy" of labor to line up with the capitalists.

IV. Imperialism is the parasitic or stagnating period of capitalism as manifested in

a) Monopolies and finance oligarchies being part and parcel of imperialism.

b) A tendency toward domination rather than toward freedom.

c) The exploitation and oppression of an ever increasing number of small or weak nationalities by a handful of the most powerful nations, resulting in

d) A development of the rentier or userer nation whose capitalists live on the export of capital and as coupon clippers.

V. Violence is an essential characteristic of imperialism. Regardless of the alignment or realignment of capitalist forces, the moments of decision are accompanied by violence.

VI. Imperialism maintains huge military and naval forces to

a) suppress the workers so as to perpetuate capitalist exploitation,

b) maintain domination over and control of the sources of raw material.

The Communist tactics are rooted in the above analysis of imperialism.

MILITARISM AND ARMAMENTS.

I. Militarism is a special, violent, mechanical barrier to the realization of our plan.

II. Militarism brings about a perversion of proletarian class-consciousness. It promotes in the worker a spirit of servility and causes him to submit more readily to economic, political, and social exploitation and oppression.

III. We fight militarism as a function of capitalism. Our anti-militarist propaganda is only a form of anti-capitalist propaganda. We make our appeal exclusively to the working class—the enemy of militarism in the class struggle, tho we are glad to see opposition to militarism arise in sections of the bourgeoisie themselves.

IV. Our anti-militarist fight is not based on abstract, humanitarian points of view but solely on the interests of the workers in the class struggle. All our tasks in this campaign arise only from the interests of the workers in the class struggle.

V. The struggle against militarism is a most dangerous one and compels us to adopt a course of special and particularly elastic action. We hold that the complete abolition of militarism alone is impossible. Militarism can end only with the abolition of capitalism.

"War is a link in God's world order" (Moltke)—as long as capitalism is God's world order.

VI. An army based on universal military service is best suited to the present stage of capitalism. Altho it is an army composed in the main of workers, it is not a workers' army but an army against the workers and is more and more being developed with this end in view.

VII. Today America has invested over Three Billion Dollars in her navy. Harding's military policy is best exemplified by the National Defense Act of June 4, 1920. This provides for one huge army consisting of the Regular Army, the National Guard and the Organized Reserve including the Officers' Reserve Corps. The country has been divided into nine territorial corps areas to carry this scheme into effect.

VIII. This policy strives for a mark in militarism never before attempted. It proposes to organize an army of two million in time of peace, the creation of a distinct and permanent propagandist caste of army officers thruout the country. The duty of this caste is to stimulate militarism. Under this policy the Regular Army is to be used to garrison overseas possessions, the Coast Defenses, and instruct the National Guard and Organized Reserves. The Organized Reserves "will be available for emergencies within the United States or elsewhere."

IX. Because of the weakness of our forces, we cannot today hope for more than effectively acquainting the working masses with the above and lining up organized labor against the whole system of capitalist military and naval establishments.

THE COLONIAL QUESTION.

I. The colonial question in general is part of the imperialist question. American colonialism is today not dominantly based on purposes of direct exploitation. America's colonies serve rather as the bases of military operation against imperialist competitors and a means for protecting and extending the investments of American capitalists.

II. The United States has developed an aggressive Colonial policy. Among its conquered territories are, Hawaii, Philipines, and Porto Rico. The Caribbean is now an American lake and the Central American Republics and Mexico live by the very grace of Wall Street. American imperialism is now flourishing. It has become a power in the Near and Far East.

III. The Party must wage a campaign against oppression of the colonial peoples and merge the struggles of our own workers with those of the Colonies. In form this campaign will not differ from the one waged against militarism because of the weakness of our forces.

RECENT TREATIES AND FUTURE WARS.

I. The Washington Conference brought into bold relief the new role played by America as an imperialist power. The United States is now the Gold Baron of the world—the creditor of capitalism.

II. The Main treaties adopted at this Conference are

a) The Five Power Naval Limitation Treaty to be in effect for ten years. The universal economic crisis is driving all the capitalist governments to a reduction of budgets. Verging on bankruptcy, they are unable to maintain the huge, costly armaments.

b) The Four Power Pacific Treaty has placed, formally at least, the Anglo-Japanese Treaty and created an apparent realignment of forces in the Pacific, tho the balance of power remains fundamentally unchanged. The struggle for the domination of the Pacific, as a cause for hostility between the United States and Japan, has not been removed.

c) The Five Power Treaty prohibiting the use of the submarine against merchant shipping is at best only an attempt to add stability and security to certain modes of commercial procedure considered essential to the very life of capitalism by most of the great powers.

The Nine Power Treaty is an agreement to exploit jointly China and to maintain the status quo in the Far East.

III. The Pacific is the battleground of the coming imperialist conflagration. The vast resources of China

and Siberia are the bones of contention. A Japanese-American conflict continually looms up on the international horizon as a prelude to a new and more terrible world war.

IV. These treaties of peace have grown out of the imperialist World War and the resulting realignment of capitalist forces. They are only breathing spells between wars and in turn prepare new wars.

HELP TO PREVENT ATTACK ON SOVIET RUSSIA

I. Regardless of the differences that may arise in their camp, the Imperialist forces present in the last instance a united front against Soviet Russia, the implacable foe of capitalism.

II. Our general policy must be practical if we are to get results in our efforts to prevent attacks on Soviet Russia.

III. We must utilize to our advantage even the slightest difference that crops up in the imperialist ranks and spread and intensify dissension in the camp of the enemy so as to prevent individual attacks and lessen the danger of a concerted attack on Soviet Russia.

IV. We must correlate the struggles of our workers with the struggle of the Russian workers by coordinating our fight for such immediate needs as unemployment relief with the demand for recognition of and unrestricted trade relations with Soviet Russia.

V. We must wage the fight directly thru the activities aimed at strengthening the C. I. and the R. T. U. I.

Communist Activity in the Trade Unions

By TOM PAINE

The Communist Party as the vanguard of the proletarian movement must have an army to lead against the bulwarks of capitalism. Without a proletarian army the Communist Party of America will accomplish nothing. The proletarian army that the Communist Party of America must guide and lead is the organized labor movement of the country. The organized labor movement of the country contains the great masses of the workers that have fought against capitalism for their immediate interests and are prepared to do so over and over again. The bulk of the organized workers in America are in the American Federation of Labor. The present commander in chief of the American proletarian army is Samuel Gompers the obliging lackey of the American capitalist ruling class. The task of the Communist Party of America and at the present time its most important task is to win away from Samuel Gompers and his crowd the

leadership of the American Labor movement.

This task can not be accomplished by merely shouting phrases, passing resolutions and issuing proclamations. Wind and paper alone will never accomplish anything. Systematic organization involving great efforts and sacrifices on the part of the membership must be carried on by the Communist Party of America to achieve this task. The task of winning the American labor movement is surcharged with explosive difficulties. In carrying on this work the membership of the Communist Party of America will often face great dangers.

The bureaucracy of the American Federation of Labor and the bureaucracy of some of the powerful independent labor unions, such as the Railroad Brotherhoods are to-day part and parcel of the black repressive forces of the capitalist government. At the last A. F. of L. convention the American Federation

of Labor made an alliance with the American Legion. In New York one of the organizers of the American Federation of Labor sits on a committee established by the Lusk law, a committee that is engaged in the work of hounding and clearing the public schools from the danger of radical teachers. During the war the reactionary bureaucracy of the American labor movement was used as a spy agency by the government in its activities against radicals in the labor movement. During the outlaw railroad strike of 1920 the leaders of the Railroad Brotherhoods were used by the capitalist government of the U. S. to smash the strike and intimidate the strikers.

The bureaucracy of the American Federation of Labor and the Railroad Brotherhoods do not maintain political neutrality because their policy of non partisan political action means active support of either Republican or Democratic candidates at elections. Such support is active support of the two dominant bourgeois political parties of the country. The bureaucracy of the American labor movement is therefore almost in its entirety closely bound to the capitalist class politically. At the present time the American ruling class has given over to Samuel Gompers and his crowd the task of combatting revolutionary tendencies among the American workers and suppressing radicals. After the capitalists have exhausted themselves in hurling their tirades against the Soviet government, communists and bolsheviks generally we find Samuel Gompers and the crowd of reactionary labor bureaucrats continuing where the capitalists left off by repeating the very tirades the capitalists had been shouting against the revolutionary movement of the working class.

The capitalist class of the United States however recognizes in the organized labor forces of the country an immediate potential danger to itself. Hence the inconsistency. On the other hand 100% cooperation with the reactionary labor bureaucrats in their campaign against the reds and on the other hand the open shop drive of the capitalists to smash the unions of those bureaucrats. What here appears inconsistent is very consistent. The same reasons that induce the capitalist class to adopt their program of trade union activity should induce the Communist Party to adopt a program of trade union activity in the opposite direction. The capitalist class of the U. S. realizes that in the organized labor movement an army of workers is organized on class lines. Such an army if it should free itself from the leadership of the reactionary labor bureaucracy would constitute a menace to capitalist rule. The capitalist class has no confidence in the ability of the reactionary labor bureaucracy to keep its control over the organized

labor forces of the country. They know that the organized workers in the U. S. have in recent years shown signs of revolt against that labor bureaucracy on many occasions. They know also that there is a growing tendency among the organized workers for closer unity and independent working class Political action in direct opposition to the desires of their leaders. The Communist Party must not lose sight of the fact that Samuel Gompers and his crowd is not the American labor movement but that the millions of workers organized on class lines are. For the very same reason that the capitalist class supports Gompers and his satellites the Communist Party of America must oppose and fight them. For the very same reasons that impel the capitalist class to carry on an open shop drive to smash the unions the C. P. of A. must carry on a campaign to maintain and preserve the existing unions and to actively help them defeat the open shop efforts of their opponents. The policy of dualism —is a policy of treachery to the organized working class. Such a policy aids directly the capitalist open shop campaign and strengthens the control of the reactionary labor bureaucrats over the masses of organized workers. The policy of craft unionism and division of labors' forces on the economic field strongly maintained by the reactionary labor leaders weakens the forces of the workers. It is a policy that plays right into the hands of the capitalist efforts to smash the unions. The Communist Party should relentlessly expose it as such. The policy of amalgamation and unity of labors, forces on the economic field as advocated by the communists is not a policy of splitting the unions but a policy of strengthening and solidifying them. By repeatedly pointing out these differences between these policies of the communists and the policies of the reactionary labor leaders in the concrete struggles being waged by the workers the communists can gain the confidence of the broad masses in the organized labor movement.

How then must the Communist Party of America proceed in the trade unions to gain the confidence and support of the organized workers? To engage openly as communists in a campaign to win the masses away from the leaders may be lightly desirable but at the present time unadvisable. The best members of the Communist Party of America in the trade union movement would be subjected to the venom of the reactionary labor bureaucracy who would use their official government connections to hound them out of the union movement.

The trade union movement is composed of many non communist elements. The trade unions must be

so composed because they are organized on class lines and in order to be effective must bring in to their ranks all of the workers regardless of their political views. Communist activity in the trade unions must be directed towards the objective of winning the confidence and support of all the different elements in the trade unions. This must be done in such a way that the trade union movement will endorse the views of the communist party and will follow its leadership. Communist activity in the trade unions is therefore not a question of rigid iron clad communist party control of the trade union movement as a whole. It is a control that is won on account of the superior intelligence, devotion and correct tactics displayed by the communists in their activities within the trade union movement. In winning this leadership of the trade union movement the communist must so organize that they will not expose themselves to destruction and will at the same time be able to carry on their propaganda in the unions and actively engage in their struggles. The communists must therefore organize secretly in the unions together with sympathizing elements communist fractions completely under the control of the Communist Party.

Wherever progressive trade union tendencies manifest themselves those tendencies must be supported and strengthened by the communist fractions in the unions. Besides supporting progressive movements in the trade unions the communist fractions must align themselves with such movements and become an active part of them. This however does not mean that the communist fraction loses its identity. As a communist fraction under the control of the Communist Party of America it still continues to function.

From such a movement as the Trade Union Educational League the communists cannot stand aloof. Its program of action within the trade union movement of this country is one that communists must actively support.

The communists- by becoming active participants in all the militant and progressive movements of the workers in the trade unions will be in a favorable position to use their intelligence in directing these progressive and militant forces. More and more will the progressive and militant non communist forces begin to rely upon the communists. When these forces will have gained the ascendancy in the labor movement of the country the Communist Party through the activities of the communist parties will stand in a position of leadership. In such an instance though not actually controlling the unions, the —unions will nevertheless, depend upon the party

intelligence in trade union matters and will accept its guidance. The Communist Party of America as the vanguard of the proletarian revolution will then be in a position to depend upon the broad masses of the workers to follow where it leads.

The communist fractions within the unions cannot exist solely upon a program of opposition. The reactionaries must be opposed with a constructive program. Whenever trade union officials are willing to accept a part of the program of the communist fraction they must be commended and supported for so doing. However the communist fraction must see to it that such acceptance is translated into deeds. It must organize the union membership to exert pressure upon the officials that an expression of support be followed up by action. To be specific, a labor leader or a trade union officialdom may express by word and resolutions their support of the program of amalgamation advocated by the communists. The communists support the labor leader or the trade union officialdom as far as they have gone and then continue to insist that they do something for amalgamation to actually bring it about.

The communist fraction within the union must bury minor, petty, unimportant merely oppositional issues and must concentrate all their efforts on a few big important issues confronting the labor movement.

The communist fractions must become the most active participant in the daily struggles of the workers. In strikes they must be the most active members. They must always —show by their activity and daring their loyalty to the working class and to their unions in particular.

The communist fraction must also develop a program on the immediate needs of the workers in their daily struggles against capitalism. The mass of the workers can not be won over by theories and phrases. The workers understand their jobs and are intensely interested in them. A communist fraction that neglects the job interests of the workers in their particular industry, is doomed to sterility and will never gain influence among the masses.

The reactionary labor forces will in combatting the militants in the trade union movement try to divert their attentions on side issues. In fighting the militants to-day Gompers charges that they are in the pay of the 3rd International, that the Soviet government supports them, that they are dominated by the Communist Party etc. The Communist Party fractions must never give the reactionary forces an opportunity to so divert the attention of the militants from their struggle against the reactionaries by foolish actions on their part.

Problem of Communist Organization in the U. S.

Proposed by DAMON AND MARSHALL

The historic role of the Communist Party is through its leadership to marshal the working masses against the capitalist state, conquer and destroy that state power and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat in the form of Workers Councils and through the power of the Workers' state transform capitalist production into communist production.

In order that the CP may perform this historic task, there are two conditions which it must fulfill:-

(a) it must organize in the CP the class conscious revolutionary workers and have a clear understanding of the class struggle and the aims of the CP. It must infuse these workers with an unshakeable loyalty and iron discipline.

(b) through its program of action in the every-day struggles of the workers, through the activities of its members in these struggles the Party must win the confidence and leadership of the masses of the workers. Through the winning of this confidence and leadership in the every-day struggles the Party creates the conditions when it will be able in time of revolutionary crisis to array the mass power of the workers against the capitalist state to overthrow that state.

The Communist Parties organized in the United States in 1919 were made up of a membership of which at least 90% were from the language federations. With the open Party and open work these earnest, loyal revolutionary language groups which came into the Communist Party and the Communist Labor Party would have served as a basis of a movement that would soon attract to its ranks the best elements among the American workers.

The attacks upon the Communist Parties four months after their organization resulted in reducing the membership of the two Communist Parties from 50 to 60,000 to about 10,000 which resulted in cutting down the American element to a still smaller proportion than before. As a result of the various splits, the membership has been still further reduced to about 5 to 6000, among whom it would be difficult to find 500 American comrades.

It is almost an impossible task for the Party as it exists today to fulfill the historic role as outlined above. How can we hope to interpenetrate the life of working masses of the country and have the members if our Party become the leaders in their

every-day struggles when a large proportion of our membership is not able to speak the language of these workers and only a very small number are not debarred from active public work. It is true that there are in the basic industries of the country a large number of workers who are of the language groups represented in the Party and though these language groups are of great service to us we cannot hope to fulfill the role laid down in (b) above while our Party is made up completely if its present membership only, nor is there much hope of bringing into that membership the required new elements as long as we work under the organization conditions of the last two years. We need only to ask how many of our members can take an active public part in carrying out our program in the unions, how many of our members can assume positions of responsibility in a strike, to realize that we must achieve a revolutionary change in the character of our organization before we even make the beginning in becoming a force in the class struggle in the United States.

No one will be able to challenge the statement that our Party would have been far in advance of its present position if it had been permitted to develop as an open Communist Party. We would by now have had the Party stronger than the SP ever was both in the character of the membership and its numbers. We would have had attracted a large American element. Under the guidance of the C. I. we would have established our organization for underground work as part of that Party. We would have created a machinery which could take the Party underground in time of crisis. Such normal development would have by now made our Party a powerful force in the struggle of the American workers. There has grown in the Party during these two years of illegal existence the belief that a Communist Party must of necessity exist as an underground organization. There is no revolutionary virtue in a Communist Party being an underground organization. It is at all times a bitter necessity against which the Party must fight with all its energies. When the capitalist state forces a Communist Party underground it gains a victory because it increases the difficulties of its tasks; when a Communist Party throws off its underground existence it wins an advantage in the struggle. The aim of the CP

must, therefore, be to systematically work for its establishment as an open CP.

The attacks of 1919 and 1920 which drove the Communist Parties underground arose out of the revolutionary crisis which existed at that time. The Russian workers and peasants had established their dictatorship; Europe was aflame with the spirit of revolution; the whole capitalist world felt insecure. When, therefore, the American capitalists found themselves face to face with a series of great strikes, — the steel strike; the miners strike; the threatened strike of the railroads at the end of 1919; — expressing the revolutionary ferment prevalent in the capitalist world, they struck out at the Communist Parties which were the leaders in revolutionary agitation.

These conditions do not exist now. True, there are great strikes and more strikes threatening, but the capitalists do not feel insecure. They feel that they have gained the whip hand; that they are safe. As a consequence they have again assumed the hypocritical mask of "democracy" and tolerate revolutionary agitation which two years ago was put down with an iron hand. The CPA must take advantage of this situation to again achieve existence as an open CP. There is an element in the Party which holds that the Party can only come into the open when it can advocate as part of its program "the principle of mass action and armed **insurrection**". This view is a hangover from that "leftist nonsense" which felt it necessary to preach "armed insurrection" to the workers when there was a street car strike or some other struggle of the workers over wages and working conditions. There is no magic in the words "armed insurrection" which makes it necessary to a program in order that it can be a communist program. The test of a communist program is whether it advocates mass action, the Soviet State and proletarian dictatorship, and includes affiliation with the C. I. To make a test of the possibility of an open CP the advocacy of "armed insurrection" by the program is to say that there can be no open CP until the time of revolution, a condition which is given the lie by the greater number of existing open Communist Parties all over the world.

Based upon the foregoing discussion, we declare:—

(a) that there is no revolutionary virtue in a Communist Party existing as an underground organization; on the contrary in order to fulfill its historic role, it must, if driven, underground carry out a consistent struggle to attain an open existence.

(b) that it is an established necessity for the CPA to again attain an open existence so that it may draw new elements into its ranks on the basis of a full communist program; elements which are needed in order that it may attain the leadership in the class struggle in the U. S.

(c) the formation of the No. 2 must be considered as the first step toward the attainment of an open existence by the CPA. The CPA must make use of the No. 2 make a consistent drive to again work itself into the open.

(d) This task is accomplished by extending the activities, enlarging the functions and clarifying the program of the No. 2 **step by step**; in the degree that the program and activities of the No. 2 take on a communist character the underground loses more and more its character as a separate political party.

(e) Through this process the apparent duality of the No. 1. and No. 2. ceases to exist and there is a transformation into an unquestioned entity. This is accomplished through the permeation of the No. 2. with communist understanding and spirit.

The immediate steps to be taken by the coming convention should be

(a) To develop a clear communist program for the No. 2 although retaining its present name

(b) To seek recognition as a sympathetic organization from the C. I. for the No. 2.

During the process of transformation the relationship between the No. 1 and No. 2 should be the following:—

(a) All duality of committees and officers should be eliminated as quickly as possible wherever possible. To achieve this end, the best elements of the No. 2. who are not members of the No. 1. must be brought into the No. 1.

(b) The units of the organization of the No. 1. must act as a caucus within the No. 2. Have meetings and discuss questions of policy relating to the actions to be carried out by the No. 2 and act as a unit within the No. 2 committee so long as these are not made up completely of No. 1 members. In carrying on its political activities through the No. 2 the CP acts as the directing force of the No. 2. The Executive Committees of the CP then become the coordinating force of the directing caucus of the CP within the No. 2

After the CPA becomes an open party it will maintain an illegal apparatus for the conduct of such work as cannot be carried on openly. It will maintain machinery necessary to carry the party underground in case of renewed attack upon the organization.