

**Moissaye J. Olgin**

# **Why Communism?**

## **Plain Talks on Vital Problems**

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**Contents:**

**I. The Malady**

**II. The Diagnosis**

**III. The Cure**

**IV. The State**

**V. A Program of Action**

**VI. The Revolutionary Overthrow of Capitalism and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat**

**VII. The Communist Party**

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## Chapter I — The Malady

YOU are a worker. You have had a job for a number of years. Your pay was not high, but you managed to get along. You were a faithful worker. You never shirked. Perhaps you saved up a few dollars against a rainy day. Perhaps you married and raised a family. You were decent, law-abiding.

One nice morning you are told your services are no longer needed. In plain words: you are fired. You are thrown out. There is a depression, they say. The employer has no more work for you. He cuts operations or he shuts his plant altogether. While you remain without a livelihood, he goes to his country estate or abroad to have a good time. He does not care to think what will happen to you. You plainly do not exist for the “company” any longer. It has no obligations towards its unemployed.

And yet, come to think of it, you are not a stranger to this factory or mill or shop. You, and the like of you, have built it. You, and the like of you, have created all the machinery, all the raw material and all the fuel which is necessary to run an industry. You and the like of you are the live power that puts motion into the dead matter of every industrial undertaking. It is your blood, your sweat, your muscle and your brain that is sunk into every piece of goods produced. You have much at stake in this establishment — your whole life. It is yours, more than the owner’s. It is part of your very self.

Suppose now, when you are told to go, you refuse to budge. Suppose many of you get together and say that you are going to stay where you belong and continue working because this is the only source of your livelihood. Suppose you say you are going to produce for the benefit of yourself and others. This thought may be strange to you. Yet consider what would happen. The owner, who has never worked and who does not know how to work, would call the police. Most probably the riot squad would appear. Perhaps the militia would be called out. There would be clubs and riot guns and tear gas bombs galore. You would be clubbed and shot at and many of you imprisoned, tried and convicted — for the sole crime of wanting to continue working at the machines and with the materials you and the like of you have produced.

Has it ever occurred to you that such a state of affairs is wrong?

Take another example. You are a tenant. For ten or fifteen or twenty years you have been living in a house. You have paid your rent regularly. You have paid off your flat several times over. Your landlord smiled at you as long as you were a “good” tenant. But now you have lost your job. You have not paid your rent for several months. A sheriff comes. Your furniture is thrown out on the sidewalk. You are “evicted.” Yet you know perfectly well that it isn’t the landlord who built the house. It is you, and others like you, who have produced all the building material and who have actually constructed, the house. Besides, you made the landlord rich by our payment of rents.

Suppose now, you refuse to quit the house. Suppose you band together with your fellow tenants and declare you are not going to permit anybody to drive you out into the street. You are a proud

American; you will not allow anybody to turn you into a beggar. Again, you would be confronted with police clubs, courts and jail.

It looks strange. But this madness is the every-day practice of our great and wealthy country. Now there are some notions that have to be made clear before we proceed. We said that the owner “has never worked.” You may disagree with this statement. Doesn’t a factory owner spend days and days in his office? Doesn’t a banker keep office hours? Doesn’t he go to the country club and golf links to rest after his strenuous labors? The papers and the preachers and the professors tell you that the businessman is “doing his share” in production. They even say that he is an indispensable part of the industrial organism. This is one of those incorrect notions that are being inculcated in the minds of our people from childhood on. In fact, the small business man may still do some work by himself: the grocer works behind the counter, the cobbler works together with his few men. But the bigger the business, the less work remains for the actual owner. What does Morgan know about the operation of railroads and mines and restaurants he controls? What does Rockefeller know about work in a coal mine or an oil refining plant? Remove Ford from the top of his pyramid and nobody will notice the loss. Ford may have been instrumental in working up his business long ago with the aid of numerous engineers and workers — but he no more “runs” his business than the man in the moon.

Big business, large scale production of the modern type is conducted by all kinds of specialists with the aid and cooperation of workers. Engineers, technicians, draftsmen, machinists, chemists, all kinds of experts are managing the big industrial giants of today, and these are hired people, while the board of directors and the other “big cheeses” of the corporation only decide upon policies which reduce themselves mainly to manipulating stocks. These people never produce. They could be removed without any loss to actual operations.

And yet, it is they who decide to cut down production or to close the plant altogether, depriving both the staffs of specialists and the skilled and unskilled workers of their sole means of making a living. Those who do not produce decide for those who produce.

As to bankers and brokers, real estate operators and promoters — they do not produce anything essential to human life although they have the lion’s share of control over production. As a matter of fact, they produce nothing. They transfer “paper” from hand to hand. That paper — call it checks or deeds or drafts or shares — is a claim to the fruits of somebody else’s labor.

Another question is that of “bad luck.” You have been taught to think that when you are out of work it is just your misfortune. “Business is bad,” “there is a depression,” they say. “Nobody is to blame.” you are given to understand that economic powers are beyond human control. You are told that a depression is something like an earthquake, like a thunderstorm, like an avalanche.

And yet, human ingenuity has learned how to control some of the most formidable forces of nature. The human mind has harnessed electricity, which produces the lightning. Human knowledge is accomplishing things which look miraculous. The tropics and the poles, the air and the bowels of the earth are all coming under control of man. Why should he not be able to control the production and distribution of goods that are vital for his life. Isn’t the Soviet Union a

living example that this can be achieved? Why should there be a situation like the one we suffer under in the U.S.A. at present where millions of able-bodied workers, capable and willing to work, are being consumed by idleness and hunger, while excellent machines and mountains of raw material are lying around unused? Is it so difficult after all for human genius to organize a constant flow of goods which would satisfy everybody's needs with nobody compelled to go without food, clothing and shelter? Humanity has learned to master the forces of nature. The progress of science is tremendous. New and ever newer inventions are made to aid human labor. At the "Century of Progress Exhibition" at Chicago, they showed cotton-picking machines, each of which does the work of 16 to 48 men. There are excavators and ditch diggers that do the work of 20 or 30 men. Between 1922 and 1929 the productivity of American labor increased 100 per cent. Why should the terrible crash in 1929 have had to come? Why should we have had to suffer those long weary years of the most terrible crisis in the history of this country?

We cannot blame this plight of millions on "natural forces." There is nothing natural in such a situation. It is not natural that men should go hungry while the means to produce food are close at hand. It is not natural that a government should order the destruction of three and a half million bales of cotton by plowing under the year's harvest on ten million acres of land in the South the way it was done by the government of the U. S. A., while so many are badly dressed. It is not natural that there should be poverty in the midst of plenty. It is not natural that milk should be dumped into rivers while babies are starving. It is not natural that the most ingenious means of production and transportation should be rusting away while those who produce them and can operate them are being wasted away by starvation and disease. All this is most unnatural. It is insane.

One word about the law. You have been taught to respect the law which appears in the shape of the policeman or the judge. You were taught that this is "justice." Yet where is the justice of your being thrown out into the street for nonpayment of rent? Where is the justice of your being dismissed from the mines after many years of work? When the owner ejects you forcibly from his premises, this is not called force; when you resist, they say you are using force and violence. When the sheriff puts your belongings on the sidewalks, that's law. When you break the padlock and replace your furniture in its old place, that's unlawful. Why is it that violence against the workers is law and resistance to violence is unlawful? Why is it that robbing you of your only source of life is justice and protesting against this bloody justice is injustice? Something is wrong here, too. Apparently, all these notions about law and order, about justice and injustice, about crime and punishment, are made in the interests, not of you and the like of you, but in the interests of those who use them against you.

One more instance. The workers declare a strike. They have been told many times by many fine gentlemen that there is a partnership between the owners and the workers, that they must cooperate for the benefit of the industry. When partners disagree on a certain issue they fight out their dispute. Suppose you decide to fight it out by refusing to work. You are entitled to do so under the law. You organize a picket line. You say you are partners to this plant and you want to

fight it out with your own employers. The employers try to bring in scabs. You refuse to admit the scabs into the plant. Immediately police arrive. The law protects the scabs and attacks the strikers. If you insist on your right to keep the plant shut, you are fired at, and the history of strikes in America is one long trail of bloody murders perpetrated by the police, by the “law” protecting the scabs.

There must be something wrong in a “law” that professes equality of employer and employee but at the same time uses all its power to oppress the latter in favor of the former. There must be a monstrous lie in the statement that employer and employee are partners to the business and equal before the State. The capitalist State itself apparently is something vicious and cruel and not the nice and lovely “institution of freedom” it is reputed to be.

We think it is urgent for the workers to look more deeply into these matters. Moreover, it is our deep conviction that workers who do not concern themselves with these vital problems are doing grave harm to themselves and their class. Only when you understand the malady can you find the proper cure.

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## Chapter II — The Diagnosis

Two professors of Columbia University, Adolf A. Berle, Jr., and Gardiner C. Means, recently published a book called *The Modern Corporation and Private Property*. In it they tried to sum up the concentration of wealth in the U. S. A. These very conservative economists came to the conclusion that out of a total of 367 billion dollars that formed the national wealth of the U. S. A. in 1929, 200 big companies held assets amounting to 81 billion or, roughly, 22 per cent. How many persons controlled those 200 companies? Possibly no more than 2,000. An insignificant handful of people controlling over one-fifth of the wealth of a country with a population of over 120 million. The professors call it “concentration of economic power” and they point out that that concentration is proceeding at a very rapid pace.

“The actual extent to which the concentration of power has progressed is striking enough,” they say. “More striking still, however, is the pace at which it is proceeding. In 1909, the assets of the 200 then largest non-banking corporations amounted to only 26 billion dollars. By 1919 the assets of the 200 largest corporations had reached 43.7 billion dollars, an increase of 68 per cent in ten years. In the next ten years from 1919 to 1929 they increased to 81.1 billion dollars, an increase of 85 per cent” (p. 33).

According to the *Report on National Wealth and Income* published in 1926 by the Federal Trade Commission, the richest 1 per cent of the population in the U. S. A. owned at least 59 per cent of the wealth; the small capitalists, 12 per cent of the population, owned at least 31 per cent of the national wealth; the workers and workings farmers and small shopkeepers, 87 per cent of the population, owned barely 10 per cent of the national wealth. This is capitalism in its modern form.

Capitalism is a system of society where all means of production, factories, mines, railroads, are in the hands of private owners called capitalists, while labor power is a commodity which has to be sold to the owners of wealth for use in production in order that the worker may make a living. This *class division* into capitalists holding or controlling all the wealth, and workers owning nothing but their labor power which they are compelled to sell for a livelihood, is to be found in every phase of capitalist society; modern capitalism, however, is characterized, not only by this division, but by a staggering concentration of wealth. It is the *corporation* that now owns and operates industries in the U. S. A. The small owner, the individual manufacturer, is the exception, and even he is controlled by the big corporation. The rule is the large corporation. Eighty-three per cent of the total capital investment in the U. S. A. in 1928 was in the hands of the utility, manufacturing and finance corporations. From 1922 to 1928 inclusive, the stockholders in American corporations received over 36.5 billions in cash dividends and over 7.3 billions in stock dividends. This is sufficient proof that your employer is no more a free individual acting on his own accord; he is a member of a group, a corporation. This corporation is in actual control of the business of the U. S. A.

What is the result?

You are working for a boss. You are his “hands.” He uses you to make profit. How is this profit possible at all? Because he makes you work more than is necessary to defray your wages. In other words, when you work you are not only reproducing the value of your own upkeep but you are also producing *surplus value* which goes to the owner. The longer the working day, the more surplus value you produce. The quicker the pace of your work, the more surplus value you produce within a given time.

The capitalist will sell the produced commodity in the market. He will sell it at the price fixed, not by himself individually, but by the corporation of which he is a part. If he can produce more cheaply than his neighbor, his profits will be larger. This is why he drives you on to work faster and faster. This is why he introduces labor saving machinery which results in what they call “technological unemployment”, which is another name for throwing out workers displaced by a machine. This is why he uses efficiency engineers and experts of every kind. He calls it industrial progress, but he doesn’t think of progress at all. He thinks of profits. Every other manufacturer thinks of profits. Every other manufacturer speeds his workers ever faster and introduces newer and better machines. The result is that ever greater numbers of workers are being displaced, while the production capacity of the plants is enormously increased.

And here we have arrived at the source of, the madness called capitalism. The numbers of actually employed workers grow smaller. The production capacity of the factories and plants grows bigger. The wages of the workers are being cut in order that the employers may get bigger profits, but together with this the purchasing power of the population decreases. Mass production goes on at breakneck speed, while the market shrinks. It seems inconceivable that anything like this should be carried on by reasonable human beings, yet this is actually what was happening between 1922 and 1929. Even at the very height of industrial “prosperity” this vicious discrepancy was noticed by sober observers. There was over-expansion of plant with no corresponding expansion of the home market due to the greater exploitation and impoverishment of large masses of workers and farmers. American automobile companies had a capacity of 7.7 millions per year; production was only 4.5 millions. The steel industry had a capacity of 65 million tons of ingots and castings; it produced only 56.4 million tons in 1929. Oil refineries were running at about three-fourths of their productive capacity. The bituminous coal mines had a capacity of 750 million tons but they produced in 1929 only 535 million tons. Cotton textiles used only about three-fourths of their mill capacity; the woolen and worsted industry ran about 60 per cent of capacity.

But even that section or that percentage of the plants which were in operation produced vastly more than the market could absorb. America was producing goods it could not sell either at home or abroad; competition among the producing units therefore increased. Every unit was trying to produce cheaper than the other, which meant on the one hand greater exploitation of the workers, and on the other hand introduction of more and better machinery with a greater production capacity. Wall Street at the same time was doing its bit. Wall Street is the popular



name for the greatest combination of financial manipulators, and it was boosting stock prices sky high. The price of stocks is based upon the estimated earning capacity of the unit that issues the stocks. This earning capacity was declared by the advocates of Wall Street to be unlimited. Prosperity was to go up and up in an unending spiral. The big sharks of the stock exchange were making billions. The volume of trading on the New York Stock Exchange rose from 173,000,000 shares in 1921 to 1,125,000,000 shares in 1929. The average price of leading industrial stocks rose from \$79 in 1921 to \$366 a share in 1929. The fat boys of Wall Street were having the time of their lives. Everybody praised the glory of mass production under the modern industrial system.

The structure was built on sand. The crash came. It was inevitable. Stocks tumbled down. Capitalist propagandists asserted that it was only a violent "downward readjustment." It was more than that. It was a disaster. Production, which lagged even before the crash, began to decrease more rapidly. By 1932 the steel industry was working at 15 per cent capacity, the automobile industry decreased over 50 per cent, coal production decreased 55 per cent, freight car loadings were down 50 per cent; the index of business activity was around 50. Factory employment decreased 40 per cent, and the total earnings of the workers decreased about 60 per cent. The loss in wages in 1932 amounted to over 20 billion dollars.

We are still in the grip of the crisis and all the stunts and displays of President Roosevelt with his National Industrial Recovery Act are of little avail.

Let us now cast a critical glance at the whole situation. They call it depression and they wish to make you believe it is sheer accident. But it isn't. It is rooted in the very nature of capitalism. Think of this: while you were speeding your life out of yourself in a Ford plant or a Rockefeller mine, the big heads of the business corporations were garnering the profits. When 17 million workers had been dismissed to face the hazards and miseries of unemployment, the big heads of corporations were still reaping profits. True, they complained of hard times. But these hard tunes have not made a single chairman of the board of directors of the large corporations go begging in the streets for a nickel to buy a cup of coffee. The "captains of industry and finance," as they call themselves, are well off, depression or no depression, whereas the wages of the employed workers were cut mercilessly and the unemployed were left to shift for themselves with the beggarly Home Relief hardly sufficient to keep body and soul together. Big business is still prosperous while the working class is suffering the greatest hardships. Must that be?

And it is not the workers alone who suffer, either. The small and poorest farmers, millions of them, are not much better off. They, too, feel the crushing hand of the big industrialists and bankers. As producers of agricultural goods they have to sell; as consumers of manufactured goods they have to buy. When they sell, they are confronted with the food trusts, milk trusts and tobacco trusts which pay them a small fraction of what they charge to the ultimate consumer. When they buy, they are confronted with the agricultural machinery trusts, the automobile trusts, the fertilizer trust and all other big corporations which charge high prices for their goods. When

they need money they are at the mercy of the banks; when they transport their goods, they are at the mercy of the railroad magnates. In either case, they suffer.

The rich farmer, himself an exploiter, can stand his ground. The small and poor farmers succumb. During the crisis, millions of farmers have sunk to the level of actual poverty and near-starvation. Sturdy workers of the soil, often equipped with the best machinery and tools, living on fertile land that is capable of feeding multitudes of men — unable to feed themselves! Must that be?

Under the New Deal, the prices of agricultural products have been raised, but the farmer has to pay higher prices for manufactured goods. The farmers' mortgages were guaranteed by the government, but the farmers' debts have not decreased. The richest farmers may be benefited by some of the provisions of the Roosevelt administration; the small and poorest farmers, millions of them on the verge of ruin, are left without actual aid.

Nor is this all. We mentioned above the engineers, the draftsmen, the chemists, and all those scientifically trained men and women who actually manage a modern industrial establishment. They did splendid work in helping to build up American industry. When the crisis came many of them were dismissed without much ado. Those who did not know how to manage industries dismissed those who knew. Engineers who designed the Eighth Avenue subway in New York are known to be selling shoe-laces for a living. Architects with years of experience sleep in parks. The capitalists did not need them any longer. They were "dismissed," thrown out like old rags. Dismissals became general throughout the entire educational and cultural field. Writers and artists, professors and research men, inventors and teachers — all had to go. The plight of hundreds of thousands of intellectuals is aggravated by the fact that for years they were wont to think: of themselves as part of the ruling class. They are now "fired" by the ruling class because they were no more needed — for the owners of wealth.

Is this an accident? It is not. It is the outcome of an insane system where wealth is owned, not by those who produce it, but by those who do not produce anything, who have amassed it out of the work of others under the protection of the law; a system where production is directed, not towards satisfying human wants, but towards making profits for the owners of wealth; a system where productive capacity increases vastly while the purchasing power of the people is being slashed through cuts in wages and through the exploitation of the working farmers by the large corporations; a system where the primary purpose of labor — to satisfy the basic needs of humanity — is completely lost sight of in the scramble for bigger fortunes, for fatter stock exchange slices and more ruthless "cleaning out" of the small fellow. Where there exist all these *contradictions of capitalism*, a situation like the present is inevitable.

One outstanding feature of this situation is war. Economic rivalries are extended from the home market to the world market. Economic rivalries on an international scale lead to economic wars, and economic wars lead to a clash of arms. This is a truth that cannot be denied. Even Professor Raymond Mosey, Roosevelt's former chief adviser, recently admitted this. But not many realize that this is a basic law of capitalism. The war of 1914-1918 was nothing but the clash of two

coalitions of big powers, one led by Germany and the other by Great Britain, for the economic domination of the world. Great Britain was an old capitalist power with colonies all over the world. Germany was a powerful newcomer in the world of big industry and its colonial possessions were small. On the eve of 1914, capitalism was being strangled within its own frontiers by the contradictions between Mass Production and insufficient purchasing power, as pointed out above. World expansion had become imperative for the capitalism of every country. Since there were no more free territories left on the globe for the big industrial states to take possession of, the clash came. It was a clash for the re-division of the earth.

This clash is now vastly more imminent than it was before 1914. Capitalism is literally choking within the borders of each state. Capitalism is seeking to dominate the markets of the world. This cannot be done by peaceful means. The London Economic Conference, which was supposed to facilitate a peaceful cooperation of the capitalists on an international scale, failed. The result is a sharpening of the economic warfare. In this warfare the front line is occupied by the duel between the pound and the dollar. But other rivalries are not eliminated, like the growing intensity of struggle between the U.S.A. and Japan for the domination of the Pacific. Hence the increase in armaments that is going on everywhere. Hence the frantic efforts of the Roosevelt administration to build up the American navy to "treaty limits", to make the American navy second to none, to reorganize the army, to build new naval bases, to increase military aviation. Hence the appropriation of nearly a billion dollars for the army and navy in the current fiscal year.

Capitalism breeds war. Capitalism cannot solve its contradictions without war. But this solution is the solution of ruin. War is devastation. It destroys not only precious human lives, but large amounts of goods. It is an orgy of destruction. The brunt of a capitalist war, however, is borne by those who work. Such wars are *imperialist wars* because they are waged for the purpose of dominating other countries to be used as markets, sources of raw materials and investment grounds. Where capitalism is organized in big corporations to control the markets, we have *monopoly capitalism*; the states that are dominating oppressed nations and are driving towards war to control foreign markets, are *imperialist powers*.

This is capitalism in its modern form. This is capitalist civilization. A palace built on crushed human bones. Glittering glory for a few at the price of oceans of blood and tears of the many. Progress running amuck at every step. Prosperity devouring itself and devouring untold human lives. Expansion made possible by killing and maiming huge masses of innocent people. Scientific advance made to serve the purpose of destruction. Security for the non-producers; starvation for the producers. The drones in great esteem; the workers downtrodden and despised. Must that be?

The Communists say it must not. The Communists say this huge waste of human energy and human resources, this colossal amount of human suffering, this humiliation of starving in the midst of plenty, this living in Hoovervilles and Rooseveltburgs on the dumping grounds of big cities at a time when humanity knows already how to build Empire States towers, this debacle

which is worse than war and pestilence, can be avoided. Life can be made livable. Life can be made a continuous and uninterrupted stream of work and cultural growth. This can be achieved only by the working class arising to take over and organize society on a new basis. This basis is to be Communism.

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### Chapter III — The Cure

We propose, in brief, that all resources, all land and buildings, all manufacturing establishments, mines, railroads and other means of transportation and communication, should be, not private property, but the common property of all those who work. We propose that society should consist only of those who work which means that all members of society should be socially useful human beings. We propose that production be made to serve the needs of those who work, rather than to serve the needs of a few parasites. We hold with science that production and distribution of goods can be *planned* to avoid anything resembling the crises in capitalist society. Planned economy on the basis of common ownership without any class division is called Communism.

#### “Planning” Under Capitalism Impossible

Before we proceed we must say a word or two about a proposal to have planned economy under capitalism. Roosevelt’s “New Deal” is supposed to be a kind of planned capitalism. Roosevelt proclaims “partnership” of government and employers for the purpose of regulating wages and hours of work, the amount of production and the prices of goods. Roosevelt promises to abolish the crisis by doing away with what is known as anarchy of production under capitalism.

Experience has proved that planning under capitalism is impossible. Mussolini tried it. Hitler talks about it. What resulted is capitalism worse confounded.

Roosevelt has introduced the National Industrial Recovery Act. But the “codes” under the Act do not do away with competition. Prices are to be fixed by the common consent of the manufacturers. It takes a good deal of dickering until the Manufacturers agree on a price, with the tacit understanding that each one will break the agreement as soon as it suits his private interests. But even if the manufacturers should adhere to the agreement, they are at liberty to compete with one another by introducing better machinery and by driving their workers to higher speeds. Thus, the very mechanism of the Industrial Recovery Act induces the capitalists to increase the speed of production and to eliminate workers, which means *increasing unemployment*.

Roosevelt’s “New Deal” is supposed to raise the wages of the workers. In point of fact, it cuts the wages of the workers in many instances, especially in the higher brackets. But even where wages had to be increased, such increases could not overcome the basic anarchy in industry. In the first place, prices of consumers’ goods rose even more rapidly than wages, so that the real wages of the workers, expressed in food, clothing and shelter, have actually been lowered; secondly, this rise in wages gave rise to an introduction of new machinery. The New Deal with its high prices, says the *Annalist* (a business magazine published by the *New York Times*) for July 28th, 1933, “will put a premium on efforts to lower the cost of production for the sake of much larger profits. This will be done by investing more capital in order to increase the productivity of labor and may very well result in new and revolutionary technical developments”. Revolutionary

technical developments increase the production capacity of the plants, while the lowered standards of living of the workers make it impossible for them to buy all the goods produced. The very same discrepancy between production capacity and purchasing power which brought about the crash of 1929 is in full operation under the New Deal. The decline of production in the last quarter of 1933 is proof of that.

The New Deal was supposed to improve the conditions of the farmers. Roosevelt placed a "processing tax" of 30 cents on a bushel of wheat which, combined with the bad crops, drove the prices for wheat up. Roosevelt ordered 3.5 million bales of cotton destroyed in order to boost the cotton prices. Prices of commodities soared. Whatever benefits the farmers got from the price increases were wiped out by the increase in the prices of manufactured goods they had to purchase. The New Deal certainly has not done away with the crisis in agriculture. It has only aggravated it for the bulk of the farmers, while helping the food speculators (food trusts) and the larger landowners to make new millions.

When we Communists speak of planned economy we do not mean a plan similar to that of the N.R.A., which leaves everything in the hands of the individual owners. We do not mean a plan which leaves all the wastefulness, all the inefficiency and all the criminal parasitism of capitalism untouched, only increasing the power of the big industrialists and bankers by openly abolishing the non-enforced anti-trust laws and by fostering price-fixing by united manufacturers. We do not mean a system where, like at present in the U.S.A., the oil industry competes with the coal industry and both of them with the electric power industry, where the rayon industry competes with the cotton industry and both of them with the silk industry, where the lumber industry competes with the steel industry as building material, the railroad industry competes with the motor bus and both of them with water transportation, and so on.

We do not mean a system where the big industrialists swallow up the small and middle industrialists and where the big banker gobbles up everybody and everything (see the record of the House of Morgan as partially revealed at the recent Senate hearing).

### **Economic Planning That Is Real**

When we Communists speak of a society organized on the basis of planned production and distribution we mean something entirely different. What we have in mind is very simple. It is clear-cut. Do away with production for profit. Make a survey of all available resources, plant and man power. Figure out how much of the products of each industry can be produced, say, in a year. Fix the annual consumption of the population at this rate. When you do so you are sure that nobody will go hungry or without a roof over his head. But this is not sufficient. Make it your purpose to increase production. Employ the best services of scientists to improve your machinery and your methods of work. Encourage scientific research to advance science for the purpose of improving life. Extend this improvement not only to industry and agriculture but to all realms of life. The output of industry is sure to increase. Distribute the fruits of increased production among all the members of society. Improve their well being. Increase production still more by

further improving machinery and methods according to the latest data of science. Distribute the benefits of the increased production again among the population without exception, always heightening the technique of production to enrich the economic and cultural life of all the members of society and to ease their labor. Continue this process indefinitely. When you do so there will be no crises, no unemployment, no exploitation, no wars, no fear of the future.

Is this impossible?

We do not even have to refer you to the experiences of the Soviet Union where this is actually being accomplished. We refer you to the experiences of these United States. The total national income of the U.S.A. for 1928 was estimated at about 89.4 billion dollars. This would have meant \$750 for each of the 120 million of the population of the United States, man, woman and child, or over \$2,000 a year for a family of three, if it were not for the fact that more than one-half of this national income went to owners of land and capital — and don't forget that this was a year where mass earnings were rather high. Under a system of Communism nothing would go to the private owners of land and capital because there would be no such owners, and everything would go to the working people because everybody would be a worker. But Communism would not content itself with a national income equal to that produced under capitalism. Communism is an incomparably higher organization of society than capitalism. If the Soviet Union, an industrially backward country, was capable of increasing the output of industry 300 per cent in five years, an industrially more highly developed country like the U. S. A. would be able to increase its output at least five times in five years. Assuming then that the national income of the American Soviet was originally equal to that of 1928, the income of a family of three after the first American five-year plan would be more than \$2,000. If we add the use of all the cultural facilities, all the buildings and all the playgrounds now denied the working class, the income in terms of utility would increase still faster. In ten years, even at a moderate rate of industrial development, working only about five hours a day, a family of three would have a standard of living measured today by, say, \$20,000 a year. And that would be only a beginning, for human inventiveness knows no limit and the progress is unending.

The application of science to human society was the slogan of the technocrats in the heyday of their propaganda. But the technocrats proposed to busy themselves with production without reorganizing the foundation of society. This is why all their recommendations remained suspended in the air. In one respect, however, they were correct: they showed what immense possibilities for the satisfaction of human wants are contained in the achievements of science and in its future growth.

Communism compared to capitalism is like capitalism compared to the economy of the native Indian population of three centuries ago. Communism builds. It encourages scientific advance on a colossal scale. It makes man complete master of nature and of the social system. It reduces human labor to the easy task of supervising machinery a few hours a day. It leaves mankind free to engage in the higher intellectual pursuits. It makes every worker a highly cultured being and everybody responsible for the welfare of all. It inscribes on its portals: Let everybody work

according to his ability; let everybody receive from the common stock of goods according to his needs. In the lower stage of Communism, called Socialism, the rule is that everybody receives according to his work; but here too there is no exploitation, no oppression, no insecurity, no poverty, but everybody is working and work is made the badge of honor. Life is made humane. With this begins the great ascent of man.

But isn't it a utopia? Aren't those Communist dreams? We propose to show that the Communists are the greatest realists, that the program advanced by them is not only capable of fulfillment, but that the forces that will realize it are already in operation.

### **Utopia and Social Science**

Speaking about realism. The year of grace 1928 certainly was a year of prosperity in America. Everybody hailed the new era. Professors advanced ingenious theories to show that the progress of industrial expansion could not be checked. Newspapers hailed the great organizers of industry, who, in their judgment, made this unprecedented progress possible. Preachers and scenario writers, vaudeville singers and Senators, generals and Salvation Army lassies — everybody gloried in America's powerful upswing. And the leaders of the Socialist Party, who are supposed to be against capitalism, declared that capitalism in America was on the upgrade, that its constructive forces were growing and that the only way radicals could expect to accomplish anything was by pleading with the powers that be for some concessions to alleviate certain social evils.

It looked all sweetness and light. But there were those stubborn Communists who refused to share in the general hallelujah. Those fellows were equipped with the *Marxian method*. Some clever guys in the American labor movement made light of that "old German scholar" Karl Marx, who, they said, spent his life in the British Museum and knew nothing about America of today. Yet what Marx did was to provide revolutionary workers with a *method* wherewith to analyze society, and that method can be applied to every society whether Marx himself is alive or not. The Marxian method was further advanced by *Lenin* who applied Marxism to 20th century capitalism, the era of the rule of finance capital, which he called imperialism. Lenin was thus able to predict, not only the World War, but also the Russian revolution.

The method of Marx and Lenin made it possible for the Communists of America to foresee what all the thousands of learned professors and practical industrial leaders failed to see: the coming of the crisis in the U.S.A. Why was it possible for them to predict the coming disaster? Because they analyzed the basic forces of capitalist society, they understood the maturing contradictions, they did not let themselves be fooled by the superficial progress. They were the only realists in America. Compared with them, such men as Ford and Morgan, Mellon and Dawes, Hoover and Mills, looked like shadow-hunting fools.

Or take the realism of Soviet achievements. When the Communists (Bolsheviks) seized power in Russia in November 1917, all the wise men of the world, statesmen and professors, socialists and liberals, predicted the imminent downfall of the new regime. Yet the Communists believed it



could succeed. Here and elsewhere, the Communists were equipped with the Marxian analysis. They were under the leadership of Lenin. They knew what all the theoreticians of the capitalist countries refused to understand: that within the working class there had come into being a new power, a new consciousness born out of the new freedom, a new driving force that could not be crushed. Were they dreamers? Far from it. They were scientists, social scientists. The Communists are the only social scientists in the world today.

A scientist is not against dreaming, but his dreams are real. A scientist has before his mental eye the whole structure he plans to erect before the first foundation stone is laid. Is he dreaming? Not at all. He is equipped with the understanding of the laws of nature; he knows his material; he knows how to arrange it; he visualizes all the processes which his material will have to go through until it is shaped to form a building. He knows the machinery and the other equipment necessary to carry his plan to completion. And yet, he is the biggest dreamer in the world because he dreams of things that can be made to exist. His dreams are not shadows. They are forecasts of realities to come.

In the very same way, Communists are dreamers. But they are practical dreamers. They see the forces of present day society at work. They see the trend of this work. They realize the absolutely unavoidable outcome of the clash of social forces. They realize what has to be done in order to hasten the unavoidable outcome. They have before their mental eye a complete picture of the fundamentals of society to be erected on the ruins of capitalist society. They see the social instruments whereby this stumbling block of a capitalist system can be cleared away to give room to the new, the Communist, society. They apply their forces at the most advantageous points to achieve the greatest results.

While the final goal, the Communist Society, is always kept in the Communists' mind, *they have a practical; and realistic program for every day*. They do not expect you to sit idly by and wait until a Communist Society has fallen into your lap like a ripe apple off a tree. They formulate for the working class a program of action through struggle, based on the needs of the workers and exploited farmers at the present time.

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## Chapter IV — The State

### I. Economic Struggle

We have surveyed the economic system of capitalism. Let us now examine its political structure, the State.

You have been taught that we live in a *democracy*, that the institutions of this country are bulwarks of freedom, that the government of the U.S.A. is a government by, for and of the people. From time to time you are allowed to cast your vote, and on this occasion you are told that by universal suffrage the “sovereign will of the people” is expressed.

Yet, somehow or other, you as a worker and millions like you have *small chance with the State*. Take such an issue as unemployment insurance. A law to guarantee every unemployed worker a certain subsistence minimum is a vital necessity for the workers. Four years have passed since the beginning of the crisis. Numerous laws have been passed to protect the bankers, the real-estate owners, the mortgage holders, the railroad magnates — but not a single law to alleviate the sufferings of the unemployed through direct State aid. Apparently the State is not there to aid the workers.

Or take another example. There are laws and courts and jails for the criminals — and you were told that all citizens are equal before the law. But you know perfectly well that a big swindler, a banker who robbed a great many poor people of their savings, a racketeer who is extorting hundreds of thousands from innocent people, seldom lands in jail, and if he does, he is soon pardoned or else his imprisonment is turned into something like a vacation in a country club. But if you, a worker, steal a loaf of bread to satisfy your hunger, the law will be after you and there will be no mercy.

### A Rich Man’s State

The truth of the matter is that this is a rich man’s State and a rich man’s government. The State is there to act on behalf of finance capital and to protect its interests against the people. The government is the executive committee of the big trusts.

You, an American worker, may be shocked to hear such a statement. You have been fed so much “democracy” bunk that you think it almost sacrilege to reveal the true nature of the State. This is exactly what your masters are after with their propaganda. They want you to believe that the State is holy and that its high functionaries are like saints surrounded by halos. All the pulpits, schools, newspapers, radio, lectures, moving pictures and other sources of information controlled by big business are engaged in giving you false notions about the State. Yet consider for a moment the simple fact that 1 per cent of the population controls nearly two thirds of the nation’s wealth, — and it will not be difficult for you to realize that the individuals composing this one per cent must have vastly more power than the individuals composing the 87 per cent of the population who own, together, only 10 per cent of the national wealth. Compare your own

influence with the influence of the big banker of your community in dealing with the precinct policeman, the police captain, the judge, the prison warden, the governor, the legislature. Why, a plain worker doesn't count at all when it comes to what they call the seats of power.

The State is an instrument of power in the hands of the big industrialists, bankers and landlords, who by this token are the ruling class. The State is there to effect the exploitation and oppression of the workers and the poor and small farmers, and also of the subjugated colonial peoples, by the ruling class. The Constitution, the government, its laws, its agencies: the army, the militia, the police, the courts, the jails, the legislatures — all are there to effect the exploitation and oppression of you and millions like you.

We know you, an American worker, may hate to call yourself “exploited” and “oppressed.” You have been taught false pride, not the pride of refusing to be exploited, but the pride of refusing to *admit* that you are exploited. Your refusal, however, does not change the fact that the coal barons squeeze the last drop of your life blood for the sake of their profits and that when you go out on strike the State sends its deputy sheriffs and militia to crush your resistance. Here, in labor disputes, you can easily recognize the State *as the executive committee and the strong arm of entrenched wealth.*

We Communists do not like the expression, “labor dispute”. It suggests a disagreement among people on an equal basis. It suggests a friendly bickering of parties to an agreement who happen to disagree on a certain point. It suggests an amicable and perfectly lovely settlement of mutual grievances. What a false and misleading notion! There are no labor disputes. There is the wish of the capitalist to press some more sweat and blood out of the workers, and there is the wish of the workers to fight their enemy, who feeds on them.

There is war. It is class war. It is waged by the representatives of one class, the oppressors, against the mass of another class, the oppressed. In this war, the State is always and invariably on the side of the oppressors. Some of its representatives may try to achieve the ends of capital by cajoling and wheedling. But they always keep the big stick ready. The State — that is the big stick of the owners of wealth, the big stick of the big corporations.

This is the only realistic view of the State. Everyone who tries to persuade you that the State is your friend, your defender, that the State is impartial and only “regulatory,” is misleading.

We hear Roosevelt saying that the State is there to protect both industry and labor. But under capitalism you cannot protect both “industry” (meaning the capitalists) and labor (meaning the workers)! When you protect “industry” you give it freedom to exploit “labor”. When you protect labor you make it possible for labor to get more out of industry. You cannot keep fire and water reconciled.

In reality the State under Roosevelt is a more efficient instrument at the service of big capital than it was under Hoover. In the name of creating jobs it has instituted inflation which has cut the value of the dollar. Under the pretext of raising wages it has raised prices of consumers' goods to such an extent that the actual earnings of the workers in terms of goods have been slashed. Under the pretext of aiding the farmers it has made secure the mortgages for the

mortgage holders, while making the farmers foot the bill under administration control. Under the pretext of saving the credit structure of the country it has allowed the big banks to swallow a number of small banks, and the latter to swallow the savings of numberless workers and farmers. Under the pretext of security for commerce it has launched a tremendous program of naval construction. Under the pretext of regulating industry it has made it possible for the big corporations to gain additional power at the expense of the small businessman and particularly the worker.

The State under Roosevelt is working overtime. All these administrators, adjusters and consolidators are nothing but agents of the State serving the interests of big business. The States locally are especial instruments of the capitalists. The militia is rampant everywhere. Sheriffs are breaking up strikes. Policemen are carrying out evictions. Militant workers are being imprisoned for strike activity. Unemployed workers and their leaders are being clubbed and jailed for demanding relief. Negroes are lynched under the benevolent guardianship of the State.

The State is active indeed, and if you, a worker, fail to realize that these bluecoats and district attorneys, judges and prison wardens, governors and presidents, generals and admirals together with the gentlemen in the legislatures, State and Federal, are nothing but a corps of agents of big capital, you are merely reacting the way these gentry wish you to.

The Communists are the only group in present day society who recognize the basic nature of the capitalist State. The State may change its appearance and its appendices. It may use the parliamentary system, with a limited freedom of speech to opponents — as long as this opposition is not too dangerous. It tightens the screws and tries to silence the opposition when the situation becomes disturbing for big capital — as this was done under Wilson during the war. It may do away with parliamentary procedure altogether and institute an open reign of terror when danger to capitalism becomes particularly acute due to the rising tide of the revolutionary labor movement, as was done in fascist Germany. The forms change. The phraseology differs according to time and place. The essence remains. The essence of the capitalist State is service in the employ of capitalism for the preservation of capitalism.

### **The Other Political Parties**

On the question of the State the Communists naturally and unavoidably come into clash with other political parties. The question is put squarely: Can the workers achieve their liberation by merely taking over the state machinery of capitalism? To this question the liberals answer in the affirmative; the Laborites answer in the affirmative; the Socialists answer in the affirmative; the Communists answer in the negative.

The liberals are dissatisfied with the functions of the State. They point out its “shortcomings.” They do not close their eyes to the fact that there is inequality. They know the war-breeding nature of the capitalist State. But what do they propose to do? They propose a little tinkering here and there. Direct primaries were one act of such tinkering. The abolition of the lame duck session

is another. The initiative and referendum is a third. But that has nothing to do with the very nature of the State as a bulwark of private property and capitalist exploitation.

An improvement in the electoral laws, an extension of the freedom of the press, no matter how important for the working class, does not touch upon the fundamentals of the capitalist State, namely, its being an instrument of power in the hands of the big owners of wealth. Improve the State — and you have made it more flexible, more capable of adapting itself to circumstances; you have made it a better instrument of oppression.

The American labor leaders of the William Green, Matthew Woll and John Lewis type, do not wish to have a revolutionary political party organized to defend the interests of the working class. They are not opposed to the capitalist system even in words. They propose to support such representatives of the Republican and Democratic parties as are willing to introduce reforms on behalf of labor.

Not much breath need be wasted on the program of the labor leaders of “punishing enemies and rewarding friends.” The Republican and Democratic parties are the parties of big capital. They may fight one another at the elections for the control of the administration, but they differ little from each other and they do the bidding of the big trusts. Their treasuries are filled from the coffers of the big industrialists and bankers and, quite often, their chief leaders are, themselves, big industrialists or bankers or both (Andrew Mellon, Charles Dawes, Dwight Morrow in the Republican Party; Owen D. Young, John Raskob, Bernard Baruch in the Democratic Party). To expect that the gentlemen of these parties will help the workers achieve their end is to expect that the leopard will change its spots.

The Socialists, on the other hand, have their own political party and they claim to be opposed to the capitalist system. They sometimes wax eloquent in denouncing the evils of the capitalist system. But what do they propose? They propose to “improve” the capitalist State so as to make it an instrument for doing away with private ownership of wealth. In other words, they preach the nonsense of turning the exploiters’ club, by the power of prayer, into a rosebush. Since this “theory” appears in the garb of Socialism and since there are a number of workers who lend it their ear, it is necessary to dwell on it a little longer.

### **No Need of Revolution?**

The Socialists say there is no need of a revolution. They say democracy has prepared for the workers all the means necessary to achieve Socialism. Let the workers use universal suffrage, they say, to send Socialists into the legislative assemblies. Let the Socialists form a majority in these assemblies. When this is done, the road is open to pass laws abolishing the capitalist system. Of course, there is the Federal Constitution which prohibits the confiscation of property by legal procedure, but this, says the leader of American Socialists, Mr. Norman Thomas, can be overcome. Let us have a Constitutional Convention to amend the Constitution so as to permit Congress to enact Socialist legislation. Let Congress then enact a law which orders the big corporations to cede their industrial establishments and all their property to the State. Let us not

expropriate them, say the Socialists, not by any means! Let us pay them with bonds issued by the government and redeemable in thirty years. This will mean introducing Socialism by pacific methods. No revolutions; no seizure of power; no infringement upon the law; no mass action; no expropriation of the exploiters. Everything lawful. Everything in a gentlemanly fashion. The electoral law works. The citizens vote. The legislators assemble. They count noses and find a Socialist majority. The Socialist majority, both in the House of Representatives and in the Senate, passes a law. Capitalism passes out. The big trusts bow before the “will of the people.” “Gentlemen, you are the lawful heirs of our system,” they say politely, and leave the stage for the Norman Thomases and their associates.

What a sweet picture! And how deceptive! We are sorry to mar such an idyllic scene. But we Communists are realists, and we do not wish to be carried away by fancies, especially when these fancies are beneficial to the capitalist system as they tend to keep workers from fighting the capitalist State.

Let us not argue at length about the ingenious invention of paying the owners of industrial establishments with bonds, which means recognizing that the exploiters are entitled to their monopoly of the means of production and that, if they are to give them up, it is to be only through sale. It is not really difficult to see that if you pay your exploiters with bonds, you continue their exploitation in another form. You may have taken over the factories but you still continue working for the profits of the former owners. Everybody can see that. Let us rather examine the proposal of introducing Socialists by means of the ballot.

What does the State consist of? It consists not only of the legislative assemblies, which, by the way, play a lesser and lesser role as big monopoly capitalism grows. It consists first of all of the army with its commanding staff, the militia, the police force and the executive branch of the government which uses the armed forces to achieve the ends of capitalism. Is it possible to get a majority of Socialist Congressmen? Even assuming that such a miracle would happen, it still wouldn't spell Socialism. Even before there is any danger of a majority of Socialists actually ready to legislate Socialism, the electoral laws can be changed to prevent such an emergency. Even were a Socialist majority to convene, their decisions may not be carried out. One squad of soldiers is sufficient to disperse an entire legislative assembly, the way this was done in Italy, in Germany, and in many other countries.

In case of a Socialist majority, we have before us one of two possibilities. Either the capitalists are certain that the Socialist leaders are harmless to capitalism — as was the case on numerous occasions in Germany and England when power was in the hands of the Socialist leaders; in such a case they will rather be glad to have them carry the burden of government for capitalism; or the capitalists do not like that Socialist majority for one reason or another — and then they will have every means to get rid of the unwelcome legislators.

Remember that the Socialists are against revolutionary methods. Remember that they are against using force against force. Remember that they do not appeal to the masses to offer resistance against brutal capitalist oppression. And do not forget that capitalism is *armed to the teeth* and

that it will use its armed force to secure its domination. Capitalism never gives up its wealth and power voluntarily and it has little respect for its own laws when it comes to defend its rule.

He who says that you can use the capitalist State to abolish capitalism verily resembles one who says you can demolish the enemy fortress by the sounds of trumpets.

It would seem at first glance that the Socialists are merely engaged in day dreaming.

Unfortunately, it isn't as harmless as that. The activities of the Socialist leaders are actually harmful to the interests of the workers.

What is the real role of the Socialist leaders? We have no quarrel with those rank and file workers who are at heart revolutionists and Socialists but do not see through the fog of Socialist phrases. But we are obliged to point at the pernicious role of the Socialist leaders. At a time when it is necessary for the workers to understand the real nature of the State as an instrument of exploitation and oppression, they tell the workers that the State, as constituted at present, can be a means of liberating them from exploitation and oppression. At a time when it is necessary for the workers to gather strength and fight against the capitalist State and its laws, the Socialists preach to the workers a reliance on this very State and its laws. At a time when it is necessary for the workers to develop the will to power which shall ultimately crush the capitalist State and make the workers and farmers the ruling power in a State of their own making, the Socialists tell the workers that nothing of the kind is needed and that they have to remain within legal limits prescribed for them by the ruling class.

Do not be surprised if you hear Communists uttering harsh words against the Socialist leaders. Here we have anti-working-class activities carried on in the name of Socialism; destructive tactics parade here as means to liberate the workers. A class-conscious worker can find no words harsh enough to characterize such line of action.

### **Vital Problems Involved**

Our dispute with the Socialists is not a dispute in words. It is a clash in politics. Perhaps we need not go so far as the summer of 1917 in Russia, when the Socialists, holding power, refused to ally themselves with the workers and peasants organized in Soviets against the exploiters and their State, but rather entrenched themselves in the capitalist State together with the exploiters *against* the workers and peasants, until they were dislodged by the November, 1917, Revolution, under Bolshevik leadership, which crushed the capitalist State and established the Soviet State as the organ of power of the workers and poor peasants.

Perhaps we need not go back to 1918 and 1919 in Germany, right after the November, 1918, Revolution, when the Socialists, taking over the power in the capitalist State, actually crushed the uprising of the workers, flooded the country with workers' blood and thus secured Germany for capitalism. We have facts of the more recent past which are no less illuminating. For fourteen years the Socialists held power in Germany. There is a cruel logic to the situation of a Socialist leader becoming a defender of the capitalist State. Once you defend the State there is no reason why you should not become a member of the Cabinet in the government of that State. The

Socialists became ministers, chiefs of police, judges, prison wardens, executioners. This was the case not only in Germany, but also in Great Britain, in Austria, in Belgium, and elsewhere. Once you are part of the machinery of the capitalist State, you of necessity do the bidding of the owners of wealth. Such is the nature of that State. The Socialists everywhere fought against the revolutionary labor movement which was trying to secure higher wages, shorter hours and better working conditions. They suppressed workers' demonstrations by force of arms. Remember Wedding and Neukoeln, sections of Berlin, where a Socialist chief of police, using Socialist policemen, fired machine guns point-blank at workers celebrating May First by a street demonstration, and where scores of workers were killed. Remember a Socialist air minister in the Socialist MacDonald cabinet of Great Britain sending military airplanes to drop bombs on Arabian villages in territories in which an oppressed nation arose against foreign rule. Remember a Socialist war minister in the same Cabinet sending troops to India to crush the struggles of the workers and peasants for Indian freedom and thus to secure India for the British capitalist exploiters. Remember the activities of the German Socialist leaders in cutting the wages of the workers, in cutting the unemployment insurance of the workers, in voting appropriations for the construction of battleships and allowing the Fascists full freedom of propaganda, organization and action. When the Fascist danger became acute, the Socialist leaders, instead of agreeing to united action of all the workers, whether Socialist or Communist, against Fascism, made common cause with von Hindenburg, appealing to the workers to vote for him as the savior of "democracy." The German Socialist leaders did not defend the interests of the workers but they defended the interests of *the capitalist State* in its democratic form. They allowed the Nazis to grow strong and to seize the power of State.

There is blood on the hands of the Socialist leaders, blood of the workers. Do not call us vindictive when we say that the Socialist leaders are traitors to the working class. We merely call a spade a spade. We are realists.

We have discussed the war danger. What is the stand of the Socialists towards the war danger? In 1912 the Socialist parties of the world met in Basle, Switzerland, at an extraordinary congress of the Socialist International, and passed a resolution pledging everybody to fight for Socialism in case of war. But when the imperialist world war came, in 1914, each Socialist party leadership joined hands with its capitalist government in delivering the masses to fight the war for the profits of the capitalists, for colonies, for markets, for plunder. Since then the parties of the Socialist International have been instrumental in preparing the war and in carrying out the war policies of their capitalist overlords.

An extraordinary international Socialist Conference met in Paris at the end of August, 1933. The Socialist leaders discussed the question of Fascism, the question of war and peace. Did they suggest any effective remedy against Fascism? There is only one such remedy — a revolution of the working class to overthrow capitalism by first destroying the capitalist State. The Socialist leaders again talked "democracy" instead of revolution. They talked League of Nations and disarmament conferences instead of a real mass struggle against war, a struggle which must



culminate in transforming the imperialist war into a war against the home exploiters and oppressors. What was the actual achievement of the Socialist conference? It spread illusions among the workers to the effect that by using the instrumentality of the capitalist state, they can abolish the evils of capitalist oppression and by using the instrumentality of capitalist international institutions like the League of Nations or the Hague Tribunal, they can abolish wars.

What holds true of Socialists generally, holds true of various groupings of Socialism. Socialists are divided into “Conservative” and into “Radical” groups (in the U.S.A., the Musteites). What unites them is their fight against the revolutionary movement of the workers and their support of and belief in the capitalist State. We in America have not seen Socialists in the role of Cabinet members or Senators. But we have seen Socialist Congressmen, Socialist mayors (Milwaukee, Reading). Socialist judges and Socialist chiefs of police. Were they in any way fighting the capitalist State? Not at all. A Socialist Congressman during the imperialist world war gave his consent to all the military appropriations. Another Socialist Congressman later gave his consent to the predatory Versailles Treaty, the venomous child of the war. The Socialist city administrations were as adamant in refusing to introduce unemployment insurance as were the Republican and Democratic city administrations. Workers demanding home relief and unemployment insurance were just as brutally beaten up in Milwaukee and Reading under a Socialist mayor, as were their class brothers in Pittsburgh and New York under Republican and Democratic mayors. A Socialist mayor in Milwaukee was no less prompt in cutting the wages of city employees than was his Democratic master in the White House in cutting the wages of the federal employees. And just as the Socialists of every other country condone and support the wage-slashing actions of the capitalists, so the Socialists of the United States condone and support the National Recovery Act which is a concerted attack on the living standards of the masses.

The Socialists of the United States are not in the Cabinet, but they have “arrived.” They are treated by the capitalist masters with respect. They are “good”. They are peaceful. They are loyal. They are held up as a shining example in opposition to the dissatisfied militant Communists. The labor baiter, Mr. Grover Whalen, one time chief of police of New York and now N.R.A. administrator for that city, appeals to the Republican, Democratic and Socialist politicians alike to help him in the blue eagle drive. Time is not far distant when the Socialists will be called to governmental positions — to stem the tide of rising workers’ revolts by means of sweet phrases about achieving Socialism by the power of the ballot.

The capitalist State is a glaring fact. It is flesh and blood of the capitalist system. It stands in the way of the workers’ progress towards a new, free life. Can it be abolished by gradual transformation? Those who say it can are the staunchest supporters of the capitalist robbers and the most active promoters of imperialist wars. Their theory is not harmless, indeed. It is a poisonous theory. It is a smoke screen behind which cruel capitalist exploitation is hiding.

We Communists say that there is one way to abolish the capitalist State, and that is to smash it by force. To make Communism possible the workers must take hold of the State machinery of capitalism and destroy it.

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## Chapter V — A Program of Action

### 1. Economic Struggle

How can it be done?

Once you agree that this State is your enemy the answer to the question is not difficult. Once you have freed yourself from the democracy illusion your road is clear.

Watch the State. Try to understand every one of its maneuvers. The State is often used by the capitalists not only as a big stick but also as poison gas or as an anesthetic, as is the case under the New Deal. Quite often you are told you are given privileges at the same time that your pockets are being picked. Analyze the functions of the State. Try to understand the forces behind its actions. And remember that if it ever yields anything to the workers it does so under pressure. This leads us to the road along which the working class can arrive at the destruction of the capitalist State: *revolutionary struggle*.

The working class is placed in this capitalist society in a position where to live it must fight. This fight, to be effective, must be aimed not only at the capitalists but also at the State. And once the fight is effective enough it must inevitably lead to the smashing up of the State. This is the logic of the class division of today. And this indicates the program of action for the working class for today and tomorrow and day after tomorrow until the final reckoning with the capitalist system has arrived.

The fight begins in factory, mine, and mill. It is first of all a fight for higher wages, for shorter labor hours, for better working conditions. It is a fight for unemployment insurance, for social insurance generally, by which is understood that the State pays a minimum wage to those out of work, to the sick, the injured, and the aged. Capitalists love to indulge in humanitarian phrases. History has proved, however, that they never grant anything to the working class unless forced to do so by the fight of the workers. This is why the very existence of the working class is under the sign, *Fight*.

Every fight, however, demands its own organization. The working class has long created agencies for the *economic struggles*: the labor unions and the unemployed councils, the former to fight for better conditions for those employed, the latter to fight for those who are unemployed. We call these struggles economic because their main purpose is to secure for the workers a larger share of the products created by their own labor. They challenge the economic power of the ruling class.

Not much acumen is needed to realize that economic struggles can not remain purely economic. When you strike, when you form a picket line, the State in the shape of policemen and armed thugs rushes to the aid of the employers. When you demonstrate for social insurance you are again confronted with the armed force of the State which is busy “dispersing the crowd”. We are living now under the blue eagle. The National Industrial Recovery Act promised the workers pie in the sky. But under this new dispensation one injunction after the other is issued against the

strikers. The very aim of the N.R.A. is to crush the resistance of the workers. It is therefore inevitable that whenever the workers are bent on actually defending their economic demands they are forced to fight the State.

We Communists hold that every class struggle is a political struggle. When you demand social insurance you address yourself both to the capitalists and to the State. When you demonstrate for home relief you present your demands to the city or State government which is a political body. When you fight for the eight-hour work day or the abolition of child labor by law you are defending an economic demand by directing your struggle against the State. When you fight for higher wages to be gotten from the owners of a plant or a mill you always confront the agencies of the State not only as policemen but also as injunction judges, as “mediators”, “arbitrators”, and other kinds of official “peacemakers” who have the interests of the employers at heart. This is why we say that every class struggle is a political struggle.

### **The Communists and the Reformists**

And it is here that we Communists come into the sharpest clash with the leaders of the American Federation of Labor and similar organizations, including the Socialist unions, all of which we term “reformist”. It is a foundation stone of the policy of such labor leaders to cooperate with the State. These leaders claim to defend the interests of the workers but they also claim that they have no quarrel with the system. The most they admit is that they have “labor disputes” with some “unfair” employers. The State to them is always fair. The majority of capitalists, they believe, is also fair. The minority of recalcitrant employers, they say, must be either cajoled or persuaded or else frightened by public opinion to fall in line. Once this is accomplished, they contend, nothing remains for the workers but to “cooperate” with their employers and the government for the common benefit of all.

Again we have before us a rosy picture. And again we must remain realists. We must see those leaders in action. We must unmask them before the workers.

At first, however, we call your attention to the very outlook of those leaders, to what is called in scientific language their ideology. They proceed from the conception of unity of interests between employer and employee. By this alone they deceive the workers. There is no more unity between the employer and employee than there is between the robber and the robbed. There is a clash of interests. There is an eternal antagonism. There can be no peace and no unity between the exploiter and his victims. The capitalist strives to secure for himself as much of the workers’ product as he can get by force or fraud or both; the workers, resisting exploitation, strive to get as big a share of their own product as they can force the boss to yield. That is fundamental. That is the law of capitalist society. It is the division of classes. It is the never ending class conflict as long as capitalism lasts. This conflict may not always break out in violent actions, like demonstrations and strikes, but it always smolders underneath. Capitalist society is a battleground and the workers are an army on the march against the enemy.

He who says then that there is unity of interests between employers and employees is committing treason to the working class.

Needless to say, the State is not “neutral”. At best the State only pretends to be a friend of the workers. Under the N.R.A. you are told you have equal rights with your employers and that the State is in partnership with both. What this guarantee is worth could be seen by the fact that when 60,000 miners in the bituminous coal fields went on strike in defense of their fundamental rights, the government in league with the leaders of the A. F. of L. did their damndest to crush the strike. The truth of this statement is revealed in the shooting and killing of pickets in Philadelphia, in the calling out of militia with artillery and machine guns against the striking miners in New Mexico and Utah, in the injunctions against peaceful picketing of bakery workers, furniture workers, and shoe workers in New York City. When a labor leader of the reformist type tries to persuade the workers that the State is equally fair to employer and employee, he is blinding the workers and undermining their resistance.

This is exactly what those “labor leaders” have been doing for many years. They have been preventing the workers from realizing their own strength. They have been putting every obstacle in the way of their fighting to secure better living. They have practically discarded the strike — that instrument of power by which the workers can force concessions from their exploiters. They call the strike an “expensive” and “barbaric” method of struggle. They are so much concerned about the well being of the employers that they are afraid of some damage to their profits as a result of a successful strike. They have discouraged many a strike which broke out spontaneously because the workers could stand their conditions no longer. Wherever these leaders call a strike because they are forced to do so by the militant spirit of the rank and file, that strike is a sham, a subterfuge, a maneuver to avoid a real struggle. Instead of broadening the strike, calling out neighboring industrial establishments and spreading the struggle over a wide area, instead of firing the strikers with confidence, with enthusiasm, with a consciousness of their strength, the leaders smother the movement by underhand machinations with the bosses. The leaders are happy when they secure something like an arbitration to settle the dispute.

And what is that board of arbitration which is to decide over the destinies of the workers? As often as not it is composed of an equal number of representatives from the workers and the employer. Those who represent the employer know very well how to defend his capitalist interests. The reformist leaders who represent the workers do not defend their interests because they do not believe there is a fundamental clash between capitalism and the working class. They are submissive. They are servile. The two parties to arbitrate agree on an “impartial” chairman who is to decide between them. The impartial chairman is either a lawyer or a capitalist politician. Under the N.R.A. the “arbitrator” is often a blue eagle State agent, which is often worse than an “impartial” chairman. The fate of the workers is left in the hands of people who belong to the enemy class.

Nor is this all. The reformist leaders are guilty of having broken innumerable strikes. They are guilty of having imported strike breakers to break the resistance of what they choose to call

“outlaw strikes”, which in reality were strikes in defiance of the cringing policies of the reformists. They are guilty of having called the sheriffs and the militia to force dissatisfied strikers into submission, which means to force them to work for a hunger wage. They are guilty of trying to crush every working class protest arising against their policies within their own organizations.

Nor is that all. Under the N.R.A. the reformist leaders have been incorporated into the administration as members of the innumerable advisory boards. They work hand in glove with the greatest labor baiters, open shop bosses, and such individuals as the former chief of police of New York City, the notorious forger of anti-Soviet documents and killer of working class demonstrators, Grover Whalen. They rush to every place where the workers, dissatisfied with their starvation wages, demand a living wage. Like real State agents they threaten and use force; like betrayers from within; they deceive and split the workers’ ranks.

You will not be surprised if we call these reformists traitors to the working class. They are that. And there is no fundamental difference in this respect between reformists belonging to the Republican or Democratic parties and the reformists belonging to the Socialist Party. William Green or John Lewis, Matthew Woll or David Dubinsky, Edward McGrady (now raised to the post of Assistant Secretary of Labor for his good services to the bosses) or Sidney Hillman — no matter how different their coloring may be, they are all birds of a feather.

They claim to be pure and simple unionists and their slogan is “No politics in the labor movement.” What a lie! They themselves are steeped in politics. They are mixed up with the State. They are part and parcel of the machinery of the State. They are not free of politics; they are only engaged in *rotten politics*, in capitalistic politics, in politics that tend to deliver the workers bound hand and foot to their masters.

But, you may ask, Why labor unions? Isn’t the Communist Party a political party? If so, what has it to do with labor unions?

### **What Is Revolutionary Unionism?**

We Communists are in favor of labor unions because every kind of struggle requires its own organization. Moreover, we Communists are the only political party that takes the labor unions seriously. To us the struggle for higher wages, shorter work hours, better conditions, unemployment insurance, is the fundamental struggle of the working class. We say this struggle has to be conducted with unity and strength. We say the workers who are unorganized must organize into strong industrial unions based on shop committees and mine committees elected by the workers themselves and must have a leadership rooted in the masses. These unions must educate the workers to understand their class interests. They must teach them the lessons of unity and concerted action and must lead them into strikes and other class battles against the bosses. We say that the workers organized in the reformist unions must form a revolutionary opposition which will head the struggles of the workers against the will of the leaders. The more the

workers fight, the more their strength grows. The stronger they become, the more successful is their fight.

We Communists give our full and unqualified cooperation to the revolutionary unions that are affiliated with the Trade Union Unity League, because they are the only real unions in this country: they adhere to the principle of *industrial unionism*, which means uniting *all* the workers of the same industry in one union, as against the principle of narrow *craft unionism* pursued by the reformist unions; they adhere to the principle of the *class struggle* as against the principle of class peace pursued by the reformist union leaderships; and they are rank-and-file unions where the workers themselves manage and lead in close co-operation with committees freely elected from their midst. At the same time we Communists give our support and endorsement to the revolutionary opposition within the reformist unions. We try to lead the workers in every one of their economic struggles and we try to develop a mass struggle of all the workers, no matter what their party or organizational affiliation. If confronted with an injunction we say, "Smash the injunctions by mass violation." If confronted by hired thugs attempting to break the picket line, we say, "Don't yield, offer resistance. If the police are sent by our exploiters to crush our fight, stand solid, put up a mass front." This may not be in accordance with the law — boss law — but it is in accordance with your sacred class interests.

We have mentioned social insurance. We want to say a few words more about it. There are about 17,000,000 unemployed at the present time. They must live. This vicious system has excluded them from productive work, but all the goods accumulated in this country are the fruit of their labor. They are entitled to all the wealth. They insist on their right to live. The working class cannot allow its members to perish because the exploiters have created a system that cannot work any more. The capitalists are determined to grant no social insurance, which includes unemployment insurance. In 1932, Roosevelt in his campaign speeches promised unemployment insurance. He has long forgotten his pledge. It was never meant to be redeemed. The leaders of the A. F. of L., after opposing unemployment insurance as a "dole", finally came out in favor of it — in words. In action, however, they try to break every struggle of the workers for social insurance. The Communists alone have led numerous fights for unemployment insurance in the form of demonstrations, hunger marches, delegations to the Home Relief Bureaus. The Communists were instrumental in organizing the Unemployed Councils, which, working hand in hand with the revolutionary unions, are fighting for unemployment insurance and immediate relief. It may be said with full assurance that whatever aid has been obtained by the unemployed is due to the militancy of the workers under Communist leadership.

While these struggles are fundamental, there are a number of other struggles which are no less important and which in their entirety form the class struggle of the workers against the capitalist system.

## 2. THE STRUGGLE AGAINST IMPERIALIST WAR

War is inseparable from the capitalist system. The Great War of 1914-18 was fought for the redivision of the world. In the fifteen years after the conclusion of the first imperialist war all the contradictions of capitalism are much sharper than they were prior to 1914. More rivalries among nations, more armaments, greater international tension, sharper conflicts, as the conflict between the U. S. A. and Great Britain (“the war of the dollar against the pound”). War appears to the capitalists as a way out of the crisis. War is a great feast for the robbers. It means huge war orders, an orgy of speculation, an accumulation of unheard-of fortunes which may look like the overcoming of the crisis, temporarily at least. War offers to the capitalists the prospect, or at least the hope, of victory over the other imperialist powers and in consequence gigantic indemnities, seizure of territories, extension of colonial possessions, and otherwise an increase of markets, spheres of influence and other gains. War, to be sure, means squandering the wealth and the manpower of the nations; it means actual devastation of provinces and countries and death for great masses of the people; but these “costs of war” have never deterred the capitalists from plunging the countries into that bloody mess.

Witness the dismal failure of all the so-called international conferences to settle disputes among the imperialist nations. Not only have all the conferences of the last years ended in fiasco, but they have actually led to a sharpening of all contradictions that rend the capitalist world asunder. There was the *Lausanne Conference* where the greatest European imperialist powers tried to settle the reparations problem. It seemed to be settled, but the settlement was shipwrecked on the rocks of America’s refusal to yield on the question of war debts. The Lausanne agreement has remained suspended in the air.

There was the question of *Manchuria*, invaded by Japan. The League of Nations made the gesture of trying to settle the dispute. It sent the Lytton Commission to study the problem. In reply Japan quit the League of Nations. War in the Far East has not stopped for over two years. The *Geneva Conference* met for months and months. It was supposed to reach a disarmament agreement. The result is an increase in armaments throughout the entire imperialist world. There is only one class of industries that is prospering in the capitalist countries: war industries. Naval armaments are making tremendous progress. Swanson, the Secretary of the Navy, advanced the “second to none” program for the American navy. This program is being carried out with great dispatch. The Japanese imperialists and the imperialists of Great Britain have replied with a gigantic naval construction plan. There is a race of armaments between the French and Italian imperialists.

The *World Economic Conference* was a total failure. The result is a sharpening of all international rivalries “Economic nationalism,” promulgated by the leading imperialist nations, is a method of economic warfare; at the same time it is a method of preparing the economic system of the imperialist countries for the coming armed conflict. Never has the question of *markets* for



the capitalist countries been as acute as it is at present. The question of markets is nothing but the question of *redividing the globe* among the imperialist nations. And that means war.

The forces that produce war are more powerful in 1933 than they were in 1913. The only country that stands for peace and that tried to promote a program of peace, disarmament and unhampered world economic intercourse in Geneva and London is the Soviet Union.

War against the Soviet Union is a fundamental policy of capitalism. Between 1917 and 1922, the U. S. A., England, France, and Japan fought the Soviet Republic with arms. They dispatched armies of intervention into the Soviet territory and they financed the counter-revolutionary generals that were trying to overthrow the new workers' rule. When intervention and counter-revolution collapsed before the irresistible onslaught of the workers and peasants organized in the Red Army under the leadership of the Bolshevik (Communist) Party, and the foreign armies had to be withdrawn, there began the economic war against the Soviet Union.

This war continues to the present day. But not this alone. There have been innumerable attempts at military intervention. In 1929, an army was actually sent into Eastern Siberia through the Manchurian war lord, but this attempt was frustrated by the quick and decisive action of the Red Army. Over and over again Soviet embassies and trade missions in the capitalist countries have been raided and Soviet representatives imprisoned. Over and over again officially sponsored campaigns were conducted in the capitalist countries against the Soviet Union. The Fish Committee is still fresh in the workers' minds. It was a Congressional committee supposed to investigate Communism in the United States. It did not investigate Communism; it made no attempt to study Communism as a social phenomenon. Instead it made it its specific business to disseminate the most malicious propaganda against the Soviet Union. Nor was the Congress of the United States alone guilty of fabricating insidious lies against the Workers' Republic. Cabinet members and politicians in high standing degraded themselves by spreading tales about Soviet "dumping." The "forced labor" story was widely circulated and made the basis for discrimination against Soviet imports.

Whether openly hostile or pretending official "friendship"; whether recognizing the Soviet Union, as this was finally done also by the U. S. A., or stubbornly refusing recognition; whether concluding non-aggression pacts or severing commercial treaties or even severing diplomatic relations, the attitude of the imperialist countries towards the Soviet Union remains that of an enemy camp. There is not a secret confab of the imperialist powers in which conspiracies against the Workers' Republic are not hatched. The recognition of the Soviet Union by the U.S.A. has not changed that.

### **Roosevelt and War**

We live in an atmosphere of imminent war. All national policies are now directed towards the preparation for war. What are these so-called conservation camps if not training grounds for the future army to be used in the war? What is this militarization of the schools and colleges if not preparation for war? What are these numerous "war games" on the water and in the air, on the

land and in the sea if not preparations for war? What is this mobilization of the industries of the United States, with administrators ready in every section, with a machinery so timed as to make it possible to put the whole country on a war basis within a few hours? What are these repeated declarations by cabinet members that the navy was needed for the purpose of “expanding American commerce”? What is this modernization of the army, modernization of battleships, and the huge increase in the aerial forces of the United States, if not preparation for war?

Roosevelt’s government is a war government. And it is in order to screen these war preparations from the public view for a while that pacifist phrases are used. Roosevelt talking of world peace! Socialists applauding, trying to make the people believe that Roosevelt is an angel of peace. Reformist union leaders singing in unison with Roosevelt’s apostles of peace. A mutual admiration society for laying a smoke screen. Gabriel over the White House. While this hosannah is being sung the munitions plants are working overtime; poison gas is manufactured in huge quantities; tanks and armored cars are turned out by the thousand; dozens of new formidable battleships are being feverishly constructed to make the navy “second to none”; the bulk of the public works appropriations is turned to military purposes; three hundred thousand youths are being drilled in the “conservation camps” under army officers; a militarist propaganda under the slogan, “Stand behind the President”, is in full swing and reminds one of war time under Wilson; plants that do not at present work for the war are mobilized to begin such work at a moment’s notice; and the entire war machinery is being perfected by the application of the latest inventions. The administration of the N.R.A. is backed by the war industries and administered by leading warmongers. The N.R.A. has the slaughtering industry uppermost in mind. The N.R.A. means war.

Here as elsewhere we Communists remain political realists. We say to the workers, Words are chaff; they mean nothing; they mean less than nothing; deeds count. The deeds of the Roosevelt government are war deeds.

We say the workers must fight against war. The workers must realize that war is against their interests. There is only one war that is just — and that is the war of an oppressed class for its liberation or the war of an oppressed nationality for its independence. All other wars are predatory wars. Wars of imperialist powers among themselves or against the Soviet Union, wars for the seizure of territories or the securing of colonies are wars for the profits of the exploiters, but they are fought with the bodies of the workers and farmers. The workers and farmers must resist. We cannot stop war altogether. It is not possible to prevent the coming of war as long as capitalism lasts. However, war can be postponed. We can hold a threat over the heads of the ruling class preventing them at least for a while from plunging us into the carnage. The time element counts. Workers’ organizations may grow in the meantime. The Soviet Union may increase its power. The working class may become a greater factor internationally, forcing the governments to refrain from immediately carrying out their war plans.

The fight against the war danger is a political fight. The working class must be aroused. There must be protest meetings, mass petitions, demonstrations, strikes. The powers that be must be

given to understand in an unmistakable way that the workers and farmers are dead set against war. This spirit must be communicated to the army.

If this fight has been carried on with sufficient determination, the ground is prepared for action when war comes. The workers do not realize that it is in their power to postpone war. It is. Workers in ammunition plants, go on strike! Shut down your plants! Prevent governmental strike-breakers from resuming work! Railroad men, refuse to handle war materials or to transport troops! Keep guard over your railroad yards and depots lest transportation facilities be used by governmental agents. Marine workers, do not load either men or ammunition! Truck drivers, refuse to assist in war work! Workers of other industries, help the strikers. Farmers, refuse to give your foodstuffs and raw materials to be used for the slaughter!

If the workers rise in this way against war, the capitalists with their armed forces will try to break the deadlock. There will be attacks on strikers. There will be bloodshed. The workers will have to offer resistance. We Communists do not close our eyes to the fact that this means *civil war*. But when the masses are organized and fight in great numbers under revolutionary leadership the victory is assured. Part of the army is certain to waver and to join the people. There may be victims, but their number can not be compared to the losses in life and limb that the workers would suffer in the imperialist war.

Victory in the civil war spells the doom of the capitalist State.

We Communists do not say to the workers that they have to begin the civil war today or tomorrow. We say that the civil war is the inevitable outcome of long and arduous struggles against the capitalists and their State and that these struggles must be made the every-day practice of the working class.

### **3. THE STRUGGLE AGAINST FASCISM**

We have mentioned above that the capitalist State changes its form and tactics in accordance with the interests of the ruling class. When social conditions are more or less stable, when no great mass movements threaten to overthrow the rule of the owners of wealth, the State allows itself to appear democratic. You are told then that “the people” are the actual rulers of the land. But even when the State appears in its democratic guise it is democracy for the owners of wealth and a dictatorship over the masses. The system in the United States is a democracy for the Morgans and Mellons, the Rockefellers and the Fords, and everybody that “counts” inasmuch as it carries out their will. But what about the striking miners that are being gassed? What about the hunger marchers that are being clubbed? What about the textile workers that are being shot down in cold blood? What about the milk strikers that are being surrounded by squads of deputy sheriffs, beaten and jailed? What about the legal weapon of injunctions used against strikers fighting for a bigger crust of bread? What about those numberless cases of workers’ blood being spilled for the sole reason that they are trying to defend their right to live?

Democracy for the rulers, dictatorship over the workers; terror, legal or extra-legal, is always used against the workers even where the semblance of democracy is preserved.

This semblance, however, is easily and eagerly removed whenever it suits the interests of the rulers. The system we are living under in the United States can hardly be called a democracy even in name. Even the pretense of representative government has been abandoned. Congress has ceded its prerogatives of lawmaking to one man, Roosevelt, who is a virtual dictator acting through a number of boards appointed by him. All this vast economic legislation that has been introduced now is not of Congressional origin and has not received Congressional approval. In foreign policies Congress has long become nothing but a rubber stamp, while the treaty power is in the hands of the President and his advisers. There was once prevalent in America the theory of the “balance of power” between the legislative, judicial, and executive branches of the government. It is no accident that the executive branch has gained ascendancy over the rest. This is in keeping with the interests of Wall Street. It assures quick action. It makes for quiet “deals” away from the glaring light of publicity. It makes it unnecessary to dicker with numerous legislators who may have to reckon with the moods of their electors (although by and large it has not been difficult for Wall Street to keep Congress in line). It clears the ground for further developments along the road of an open dictatorship.

Wherever capitalist democracy is displaced by open capitalist dictatorship for the primary purpose of crushing the revolutionary labor movement that threatens capitalist rule and for the purpose of fusing the State with big business in order to overcome the crisis of capitalism, there we have fascism. Fascism is brute force against a rising working class which begins to challenge the capitalist power. Fascism at the same time attempts to organize industry and commerce on behalf of the owners of wealth. The iron hand that is used against the workers and poor farmers is aimed to force them to accept lower wages and worsened working conditions in order thus to secure greater profits for the employers. Government regulation of industry and commerce, government subsidies and aid from the treasury, *i. e.*, from the taxes squeezed out of the masses of the population, also have the purpose of increasing the profits of the great industrialists and bankers. Fascism is a form of government which reduces the overwhelming majority of the population to abject poverty and degradation so that a few heads of large corporations may prosper.

Fascism uses both the strong arm of oppression and the method of the crassest demagogy. In order to beguile the dissatisfied masses, fascism sometimes uses anti-capitalist phrases; it thunders against exploitation; it promises the abolition of classes; it poses as a friend of the small man. All the time it tries to divert the attention of the exploited from the real cause of their misery by arousing their nationalistic prejudices, by promising them prosperity as a result of national aggrandizement, by persecuting national minorities. Such has been the case in Italy, Hungary, Poland; such is the case in Germany where we have fascism in its sharpest manifestations.

Fascism, however, may assume different forms and may appear in varying degrees. We in the United States witness the growing fascization of the State. Those attempts to prevent workers from striking; those N.R.A. codes supposed to organize industry and commerce by State

regulation; that “partnership” between government and industry and government and labor that has been proclaimed as the policy of the Roosevelt administration; that reign of terror that is sweeping the strike areas of the country — what is it if not the manifestation of fascist tendencies? That dictatorship of one man so eagerly acquiesced in by everybody, except, of course, the revolutionary workers — what is it, if not something very much akin to fascism? That propaganda of super-nationalism which comes from high places in Washington, especially after the collapse of the London conference, is it not reminiscent of fascist tactics? We have no clear-cut fascism yet in this country. But we certainly have a fascination of the governmental apparatus, and there is being developed an atmosphere where fascism may quickly become the order of the day. The trend towards fascism was clearly analyzed at the Anti-War Congress which met on September 29, 1933, with over 2600 delegates from various workers’ and other organizations. The Congress organized as a permanent body the League of Struggle Against War and Fascism.

### **The Negro People**

One of the major policies of American capitalism is *the oppression of the Negro people*. The Negroes as workers or farmers are more exploited and more cruelly oppressed than even the white workers and farmers. The Negroes are paid less for the same work; they are discriminated against in the matter of jobs; intellectual Negroes are not admitted altogether to certain occupations. And this holds true not only for the South but also for all parts of the country. In order to maintain and perpetuate this economic inequality — which means additional profits for the landlords and manufacturers — the white ruling class is subjecting the Negro people to a system of *political and social* inequality and degradation. Jim Crow segregation is iron-clad in the South, but it is also used in other sections of the country as evidenced by the rigid color line drawn in New York around Harlem. Most of the Negro people are disfranchised. The South especially does not recognize any political rights for the Negroes, but elsewhere the Negroes are not much better off politically or socially. To insure this double inequality the white ruling class conducts the most vicious propaganda among the white masses against the Negro peoples presenting the latter as an “inferior racer” “unfit for civilization”. To back up this system in the interests of the blood-suckers they use the specific American weapon of lynching.

We Communists say to the white and Negro workers Comrades, understand the meaning of this system as established and maintained for the benefit of the bosses. When they speak about the “purity of the white race” they in reality mean the profits of the white exploiters. When they speak about the white race as being a “master race” they are in reality concerned with piling up more millions for the masters. When they tell white workers not to assemble in the same hall with Negro workers, they try to prevent the white and Negro workers from uniting to fight against their common bosses. When they say, “The Negro must know his place”, they mean he must allow himself to be worked to death for a pittance and to be hounded without any aid from his white fellow toilers. When on behalf of the bosses the labor bureaucrats refuse to admit

Negro workers into the labor unions they are out to prevent a coming together and a mutual understanding between white and Negro exploited. When the bosses together with their police and court officials organize lynch orgies they are out to terrorize the Negro people in order to prevent them from offering resistance. And when they persecute and torture and kill the Negroes they have in mind not only the extra blood and sweat they can get out of Negro toil but also the greater freedom to exploit the white workers and farmers. For they know full well that when you set one part of an enemy camp against the other you weaken both. By their terrorist activities against the Negroes — comparable only to the activities of the German fascist bands — they weaken not only the Negroes *but also the white workers and farmers*, because they forestall their united action against the common foe.

Another chapter of American capitalist rule is the *oppression of colonial and semi-colonial peoples*, like those of Hawaii, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, Cuba, and many others. Wall Street capitalists are taking the cream off these countries, leaving the workers and the poor farmers in servitude, poverty and starvation.

### **How the Fighting Is to Be Done**

We Communists say it is the duty of the workers to fight against capitalist terror, against manifestations of fascism, against the oppression of the Negroes, against the imperialist domination of other peoples. We say it is in their interests to fight. We appeal to the class interests of the workers and the other exploited masses of the population. Stand guard. Offer resistance to capitalist terror. Fight for your right to organize, to assemble, to strike. Break the capitalist dictatorial rules directed against you. Do not submit. Strike back. Join hands with the oppressed nationalities groaning under the iron heel of American imperialism. Above all things join hands with the Negro members of your class. Remember: the class ties are the strongest of all ties. You are exploited by the same set of robbers, the ruling class. You are persecuted and oppressed by the State acting on behalf of the same class. You can liberate yourself only when you join forces against your oppressors. In unity is your strength. Black and white, foreign-born and native worker — your interests are the same and they are directly opposed to the interests of your rulers.

Freedom must be fought for and this fight cannot wait. It is a matter requiring action right now and every day. Your employers try to prevent you from organizing: organize! They will try to fire your organizers: stand pat, defend them! They will try to discharge more answer by calling a strike; picket the plant! They will send policemen and hired deputies to break up your picket line: stand firm, don't yield! They will send a reformist union leader to persuade you to accept boss arbitration: drive him out like a yellow cur! They will put some of your leaders in jail: demonstrate, protest, fill the courtroom with hundreds of workers, demand the release of your comrade, picket the courthouse, picket the judge's house, call other workers to help you in your struggle; make your struggle the struggle of great numbers of class conscious workers!

Your masters send marines against a Latin-American country as was recently done against Cuba when 29 warships were mobilized to crush the workers' and farmers' revolution. Armed intervention in Cuba is an actual fact. Your masters always aid the local exploiters against whom the masses have risen. Their aim is to maintain in the Latin-American countries a puppet government, submissive to Wall Street because Wall Street is getting hundreds of millions out of the toil of the local masses. Remember that you cannot be free as long as the colonial and semi-colonial masses are oppressed. Remember it is the same enemy you are fighting and the same struggle will liberate all of you. It is for this reason that the workers have to fight against every step of American imperialism, extending a brotherly hand of aid to the peoples of the oppressed countries.

The bloody anti-Negro terrorism is cutting into the very vitals of the working class. Resist. Violate the Jim Crow rules, both in the North and in the South. Unite with the Negroes in the same unions, in the same cultural and social organizations. Negro and white, fight side by side. Stop the lynch crimes. Organize; teach the lynchers the lesson of unified resistance. Make them feel in their very bones that one can not murder members of your class and escape unpunished. Once a strong united front of white and Negro workers and poor farmers meets the lynchers in the proper manner, they can put an end to these murderous attacks.

Remember that by fighting for full economic, political, and social equality of the Negro people the workers are fighting for their own liberation.

When we Communists say freedom, we mean it. You white workers must show your colored brothers that you are in earnest about Negro equality. How can you prove it? The proof is not in words, but in action. The reformists pay lip-service to Negro rights. But they don't mean it; they have never fought for Negro rights. We Communists are the only Party that has introduced Negro equality in the practice of our organizations and our everyday fights. We say to the white workers: to prove your sincerity about Negro freedom you must fight *for the self-determination of the Negroes in the Black Belt*. By this we mean the right of the Negroes, if they choose to do so, to establish *their own State* in that territory of the South where they form the majority of the population. The Negroes are a nation like any other nation and they are entitled to their own State.

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We have enumerated the basic struggles of the workers. There are many more struggles. Each day brings its own tasks. Each step the capitalists and their State demands new struggles of the workers. These struggles are not separated from each other. They are intertwined into a united whole. One struggle helps another. One victory makes others more easy. All of them strengthen the working class. All of them weaken the capitalist system. The struggle is always for immediate demands, but it inevitably implies the ultimate goal: overthrow of the capitalist system. If you keep your eyes open you will soon realize that only those who are for the overthrow of the capitalist system actually fight for immediate demands. The reformist labor

leaders and the Socialists, who are not fundamentally opposed to capitalism, are not really fighting for immediate demands. Take the instance of the strikes or of the struggle for unemployment insurance. Whatever fighting has been done in the last few years for higher wages and unemployment insurance and relief was done under a revolutionary leadership with the closest participation of the Communists, who are in favor of the overthrow of the capitalist system by force.

These struggles have not been invented. They are a necessity. They are an outcome of existing conditions. They are vital to the very existence of the workers. With the deepening of the crisis, with the increase of the number of the unemployed, with the increase of the war danger, with the increase of the capitalist attacks on the standards of living of the masses, with the increase of the fascist danger, with the increase of lynch terror, mass struggles of the workers have become a greater necessity than ever. These struggles will be the more effective, the greater the masses that participate in them and the stronger their unity and will to fight. This is why the Communists advocate the *united front of action*. By this we mean that all workers, no matter what their organization or party affiliation, shall unite for specific actions. To take one instance: the struggle for unemployment relief could be much more successful if great masses of workers, whether Socialists or Communists, whether member of red unions or reformist unions, were to unite in their action in support of that demand. The same holds true for the fight for Negro rights. The same holds true for the fight against the war danger and for any other line of struggle. We therefore appeal to the workers to unite. We explain to them the vital necessity of united action. We say: You may belong to any party, or to any labor union or you may belong to none; you may or you may not have disagreements with the Communists on certain issues; what we urge you to do is to unite and fight on the issues that are of basic importance for the working class. In calling you to a united front we have no other interests at heart but the interests of the working class. If your reformist leaders disagree, use your own judgment. If possible, force these leaders to yield to a united front. If they are so entrenched in the service of capitalism that they do not heed your demand, overrule them and join the united front.

We propose that the united front activities should be carried out under the leadership of specially elected committees representing all sections of the workers united for particular action.

Much malicious gossip has been peddled around by the reformists about our united front tactics. They say we are trying to “capture” this or that organization to make it serve our “Communist purpose”. Above all things they complain that we are criticising them, “abusing” them while we are seeking to unite with them in a united front. The truth is we have no other purposes but the purpose of carrying through a successful fight. We do not wish to capture anybody or anything by maneuver, although we are eager to influence workers and to attract them to our ranks by making them realize the correctness of our program and tactics. As to criticism, we always criticise those organizations which, while pretending to defend the interests of the workers, do not follow the line of the class struggle and thus betray them. We agree to suspend our criticism of the reformist leaders in connection with the united front action if they faithfully carry out their



pledges in this united front. If they try to sabotage the united front, if they continue to betray the interests of the workers in connection with the united front, then it is our duty before the workers to expose their betrayal. The more clearly we do that, the sooner will the workers free themselves from the damaging reformist influence and join the united front of action.

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## **Chapter VI — The Revolutionary Overthrow of Capitalism and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat**

The overthrow of the State power, and with it, of the capitalist system, grows out of the everyday struggles of the workers. One is historically inseparable from the other.

As the organization of the workers grows, as their struggles become fiercer, while many non-proletarian elements like farmers, intellectuals, and exploited members of the lower middle class join the revolutionary movement, the final onslaught on the fortress of capitalism draws nearer. These struggles are the reaction of the masses to the misery wrought by the crisis of capitalism. The capitalists try to overcome the crisis by putting additional burdens on the shoulders of the masses, but they cannot cure the incurable disease. There comes a time when large sections of the population say that this simply “cannot go on”. The government seems to be entirely inept to cope with the political and social difficulties. The belief of the population in the wisdom and all-powerfulness of the “men higher up” is shaken. These risen are losing their confidence. The confidence of the masses in their own strength is growing apace. The struggles of the masses meanwhile become broader and deeper. The government tries suppression. It does not succeed in crushing the spirit of revolt. It cannot stem the tide. The previous struggles of the workers count greatly. The clearer the class-consciousness of the workers, the more steeled they are in fighting, the better the revolutionary leadership they have developed in the course of years, the greater the number of friends they have allied with themselves from among the other oppressed classes, the more capable are they to deal the final blow.

It is not necessary that this final blow, *i. e.*, the revolution, should come in connection with an imperialist war, although this is most likely. Capitalism will seek to prevent a revolution by plunging the country into war. War is to serve not only as a way out of the crisis but as a means to arouse the patriotism of the masses, to increase governmental terror (martial law), and to divert public attention from internal affairs. War, under such conditions, for a while retarding the revolutionary movement, may hasten it later when the war sufferings begin to tell on the masses. A time comes when there is demoralization above, growing revolt below; the morale of the army is also undermined. The old structure of society is tottering. There are actual insurrections; the army wavers. Panic seizes the rulers. A general uprising begins.

Workers stop work, many of theirs seize arms by attacking arsenals. Many had armed themselves before as the struggles sharpened. Street fights become frequent. Under the leadership of the Communist Party, the workers organize Revolutionary Committees to be in command of the uprising. There are battles in the principal cities. Barricades are built and defended. The workers fighting has a decisive influence with the soldiers. Army units begin to join the revolutionary fighters; there is fraternization between the workers and the soldiers, the workers and the marines. The movement among the soldiers and marines spreads. Capitalism is losing its strongest weapon, the army. The police as a rule continue fighting, but they are soon silenced

and made to flee by the united revolutionary forces of workers and soldiers. The revolution is victorious.

Armed workers and soldiers and marines seize the principal governmental offices, invade the residences of the President and his Cabinet members, arrest them, declare the old regime abolished, establish their own power, the power of the workers and farmers.

### **Historic Examples**

Can it be done? It has been done more than once. A workers' revolution broke the backbone of tsarism in Russia in 1905, but was soon defeated. A workers' revolution abolished tsarism in March 1917 when a provisional revolutionary capitalist government was established. A workers' revolution was accomplished in Russia in November 1917 when the Soviet Government, which is the government of the workers and peasants, took power to hold it to the present time. A workers' revolution took place in Germany in 1918, in Hungary and Bavaria in 1919, in China in 1927, in Spain in 1932. In most of these revolutions the workers were betrayed; they were either deprived by shrewd capitalist politicians of the fruits of their revolutionary struggle or defeated in armed combat, with the Socialists aiding the exploiters. In Russia the revolution has survived first of all because the workers had a strong, well organized Bolshevik (Communist) Party that headed their fight. The defeat of the other revolutions does not argue against the eventuality of revolution. In fact, revolutions are inevitable. They are a natural outcome of the existing system. Our time is a time of workers' revolutions. If not all of the revolutions of the last 15 years succeeded in securing the workers' rule, this was due either to the absence of a strong Communist Party entrenched among the workers, or to the absence of other strong working class organizations, or to the intervention of foreign imperialists, or to some of these causes combined. And in either case, the reformists were playing the role both of enemies within the working class betraying the revolution and of leaders of the capitalist forces from without the working class against the revolution — all in the name of “democracy” and “freedom”.

Can a revolution be won? Capitalism creates a situation where large masses of the people are dissatisfied, embittered, emboldened by intolerable hardships. Capitalism itself prepares the conditions for its cataclysm. If under conditions of a severe capitalist crisis the majority or even a considerable minority of the working class is ready to wage a determined armed fight for the overthrow of the capitalist system, then the revolution may be victorious, provided there is in existence a mass Communist Party recognized by the workers as their leader in struggles against capitalism.

A standard reformist argument against the revolution is: “The weapons of warfare are so strong in our days that the workers have no chance of winning in open conflict.” The wish is father to the thought of the reformists in this respect. Because they hate a revolution of the workers, they maintain that a revolution cannot win. What is true is that a revolution cannot win unless the armed forces, or at least *part of them*, join the workers. But, once they join, the workers have not only rifles and cannon but also airships and poison gas and battleships to fight the bosses. Poison

gases are destructive, to be sure, but their destructive power can be turned also against the old system. There is no reason why the workers should not use them against the enemy when the final conflict has arrived. In all revolutions throughout history the armed forces of the old system were at the beginning *stronger* than the armed forces of the revolutionists.

### **The Question of Force and Violence**

“But this is force and violence,” somebody will contend. “Don’t you Communists know that the use of force and violence is wrong?” We reply to this, first, that if being a “red-blooded American” means anything, it means that you must not take punishment lying down, that you must offer resistance; secondly, that it is not the workers but the capitalists and their State that start the use of force and violence. When you wish to stay on in your place of work and the employer who wants you “fired” sends for the watchmen and has you thrown out, it is he that uses force. When you wish to stay on in the apartment of a house you and the like of you have built, and the landlord calls the sheriff to evict you, it is he that uses force. When you go out on a demonstration in the open in front of a governmental office and the government sends the police and armed thugs to beat you up and disperse you, it is the government that is using force. When you are thrown in jail for refusing to transport ammunition in time of war, it is the government that is using violence against you. Force and violence are the daily bread of the exploiters and their government in dealing with the exploited. Force and violence are the very essence of the State. When the warehouses are bulging with foodstuffs you and the like of you have produced while you, the hungry, are kept from them by the armed force of watchmen and police, force and violence are used against you. How can you live and breathe if you do not resist? How can you defend your fundamental interests if you do not defy boss restrictions? To defy boss restrictions, to resist the attacks of the enemy class is just as natural for the working class as it is for a red-blooded human being not to take punishment lying down.

What a picture! Those who live on your sweat and blood tell you it is not “right” to resist this robbery. Those who hold the big stick over you tell you to be meek as a lamb. Those who make the oppressive laws against you preach among you about the sanctity of the law. This is boss law, boss justice, boss ideas of right and wrong. If the workers were to submit they would not be able to live; they would be reduced to something worse than chattel slavery.

We Communists say the workers cannot have respect for boss law and boss morality directed against them. The class interests of the working class — these are the supreme law for the workers. Defending their lives and their future they must inevitably come into conflict with boss law. Defending their very lives they are driven to stand up against boss force. Fighting against the boss system they are defending not only their own class interests but the interests of mankind. For capitalism has reduced mankind to a state of chronic misery, poverty, insecurity, fear, periodic carnage, insane luxury for the few, hunger and degradation for the many — a state that simply cannot continue if mankind is to progress. Capitalism is decaying and, to save humanity, this putrid wound on its body must be removed.

When you fight capitalism you are doing what is right and just and lawful from the point of view of your class interests and of the future of humanity. You are not “outlaws” the way the capitalist world brands revolutionary fighters. You are fighting for a higher morality and a higher law that will forever abolish exploitation — the morality and the law of the social revolution.

Having crushed the capitalist state the social revolution, acting through armed workers and soldiers, will establish the Soviet State as the instrument of the workers’ and poor farmers’ power.

### **The Soviet State**

The Soviet State was first established in Russia, but it was later introduced wherever workers seized power in Bavaria, Hungary and large sections of China. The Soviets are composed of Deputies elected at the places where men and women work. In cities, the Soviets are elected by the workers in factories, plants, offices and educational establishments. In villages, the Soviets are elected by all working peasants. Each person engaged in any kind of work is entitled to a vote. Owners of wealth, capitalists, land-owners, and other exploiters, as long as they have not yet been turned into useful citizens working for the community, are excluded from suffrage. They have no voice in the administration of public affairs. On the other hand, suffrage is extended to vastly greater numbers of working people than is the case under capitalism. The Soviets of Workers, Soldiers and Peasant Deputies form the local government everywhere. Representatives of the local Soviets form the central Soviet which is the government of the country.

The Government of the Soviets is a government of those who work. It is elected in the places of work from among those who work, and it is responsible to those who elected it. It consists exclusively of workers and peasants, which means that it is the greatest democracy in the world. It is a real government of the rank and file. Exploiters are barred from it. Its deputies and other officials are paid no more than the average wage of a skilled worker. Its deputies are subject to instant recall by their electors. Under the Soviets the workers and peasants are armed, and police and judicial functions are carried out by the workers and peasants themselves.

This government has the great task of taking away from the owners the plants, factories, railroads, banks and turning them into public property to be administered by the workers for the common benefit of all. In other words, it is the task of the Soviets *to abolish private property in the means of production and to establish Socialist production and distribution.*

This cannot be accomplished peacefully. The exploiters won’t give up their loot even after their State power is crushed. They will have to be routed. The Soviet government will have to *expropriate the expropriators by force.* The latter will conspire and plot against the new system; they will organize counter-revolutionary uprisings. The Soviet State will have to crush these with an iron hand. The former exploiters will be given no quarter. The old system of robbery with all its rubbish will have to be cleared away. This means that the Soviet State must be ruthless; it must destroy the counter-revolutionary forces — the quicker the better for the workers and for

the future of mankind. This is why the Soviet State is named *Dictatorship of the Proletariat*. It is the reverse of capitalist dictatorship. It does not pretend to be a government treating all on the basis of equality. It openly declares itself to be a *class* government directed against the former ruling class. It uses force and violence against that class. It is avowedly an instrument for the expropriation and suppression of the former exploiters and oppressors. It is a government of the formerly exploited and oppressed. *And it does away with exploitation and oppression forever*. As soon as private property is abolished, as soon as the industrial machinery of the country has become socialized, as soon as the individual farmers have been induced, for their own advantage, to unite in collective farms, exploitation of man by man ceases to exist. That means freedom. With the workers coming into their own, the road is open for economic and cultural progress undreamed of under capitalism. Production is rapidly increased. Standards of living rise higher and higher. Education, letters, art, invention blossom under proletarian rule. Exploitation of man by man is abolished, although some inequality between the earnings of skilled and unskilled workers still lingers for a while. Later this remnant of old times is also wiped out. Differences between farmers and workers disappear. Minority nationalities, oppressed and kept backward under capitalism and granted self-determination by the revolution, rapidly develop. The whole country becomes one big working community on a high plane. The rule is soon established: "let each person work according to his ability; let each person receive from the common stock of goods according to his needs." This is Communism.

Man himself changes under such conditions. Soon the State is no more needed. In a *classless society* there is nobody to suppress or keep in check. Highly cultured men and women, bred in a spirit of collective life, masters of nature and of their own society, do not need the big stick of the State. They manage their affairs without the State force. Mankind is free, forever.

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## **Chapter VII — The Communist Party**

The Communist Party is the vanguard and general staff of the workers (and poor farmers) in their struggle against the old system, in their revolution against it and in the upbuilding of the new system.

The Communist Party is a political party, which means that its concern is the struggle of the working class as a whole for State power. Whereas the primary concern of the revolutionary unions is the economic struggle for better conditions; whereas the primary concern of the Unemployed Councils is the fight for unemployment and social insurance; whereas the fraternal organizations concern themselves primarily with mutual aid and the struggle for social insurance (none of these struggles is isolated from the others and all of them must be fought on a political basis), the Communist Party concerns itself with all phases of the movement, unifying them, giving them direction, filling them with the spirit of the class struggle, orientating them towards the ultimate overthrow of the capitalist system.

The Communist Party is a political party. Its aim is to effect the seizure of political power by the workers. It therefore looks upon every activity of the workers (and poor farmers) from this point of view. But there is no contradiction between the ultimate aim and the immediate interests of the workers. Whatever contradicts the political aim of the workers is also harmful to them at present and therefore rejected by the Party. The outlook of the Communist Party is wider and more all-embracing than the outlook of the other working-class organizations, even those that assume the point of view of the class struggle.

The Communist Party not only draws into its ranks the most advanced and most militant workers, but it gives them political training. It teaches them Marxism-Leninism, which equips the worker with a thorough understanding of the society he lives in and of the historic task of the working class. The Communist Party looks upon its members as upon leaders in the struggle and it trams them to be fit for this work. The Communist Party is a school of the class struggle in every one of its phases.

At the bottom of all the activities of the Communist Party lies a clear and exhaustive analysis of the social forces in the society of the present. The Communist Party watches very carefully every turn in the development of the country, whether economic, political, social or cultural, and at every turn it points out to the workers what they have to do in order finally to achieve the maximum results, the overthrow of capitalism. This plan of struggle for the working class is called the Party line. The Communist Party is the only political organization that works out a line of activity for every branch of the labor movement at every given moment.

The Communist Party is active directly as an organization and indirectly through its members within other organizations. The Communist Party leads political as well as economic struggles, like the fight for the liberation of political prisoners, the fight against high taxes levied upon the workers, the fight for better housing, free lunches for school children, the fight against imperialist war and for the defense of the Soviet Union, the fight against governmental terror, the

fight against the Jim Crow system and lynchings, the fight against fascism, the fight for the liberation of the oppressed colonial peoples, and many others. These fights are conducted through literature, through mass meetings, through demonstrations and, in extreme cases, through open mass combat with the police in the streets.

The Communist Party also participates in the election campaigns as a separate and distinct political party. It nominates its candidates for federal and local offices and it solicits votes. It is anxious to have its representatives in the legislative bodies. But its election campaigns and its activities within parliament are fundamentally different from those of, say, the Socialist Party. We Communists are not here to help the capitalists govern the masses. We are here to help the masses press their masters, get from the capitalists and their government a maximum of concessions. We do not spread the false notion that there can be cooperation between the exploited and their exploiters. On the contrary, we go to the legislatures to prove to the workers that such cooperation must not be because it is good only for the bosses. In other words, we go to the legislatures — and we conduct our election campaigns — in the spirit of the class struggle. We use the platform of the legislatures, from which our voice can be heard better than the voice of private citizens, to help organize the workers and help them conduct all their daily struggles. At the same time we try to force the law-makers to pass legislation that would bring relief to the workers. We do so, not by pretty speeches, not by telling the law-makers, who are servants of the big money bags, how fine and noble they are, but by heading great movements of the masses which would make those gentlemen sit up and take notice. In other words, while the Socialists solicit votes in order to reform the State and thereby to make it more effective for the capitalists, we Communists practice *revolutionary parliamentarism*, by which is meant strengthening the working class and weakening its enemies. We go to the law-making institutions, not to tinker them up for the benefit of the capitalists, but to be a monkey wrench in their machinery, preventing them from working smoothly on behalf of the masters. We use, while there, every step of those agents of the capitalists to expose them before the people, to show what these so-called representatives of the people and what all these so-called democratic institutions actually are.

### **The Party Unit**

Aside from these political activities directly conducted in the name of the Communist Party, every Communist is obliged to be active in the organization to which he belongs and in the place where he works. Wherever there are three or more Communists, whether in a factory or in a mine, in a union or in a fraternal organization, they have to get together and form a group; or Communist nucleus. This nucleus discusses the problems of the shop or the organization and instructs its members to act in the best interests of the working class. A good Communist is a worker who thoroughly understands the problems of his place of work or his organization and who develops activity more energetic than his fellow workers. A good Communist is a social being who has the interests of his fellow workers at heart and who is devoting his best energies



to advance the cause of the workers wherever he happens to be. A good Communist is a man or a woman who by virtue of these qualities becomes a leader amongst his fellow workers — not a leader by dint of some mechanical control, but a leader by dint of better understanding, more courage and superior organizing abilities. Communists are trained to be that way. This is why a small number of Communists will often achieve more than greater numbers of unorganized workers pulling in different directions. What is important to remember is this, that Communists have no interests other than the interests of the working class, the improvement of its life at present and the destruction of capitalism in the future. You have undoubtedly heard about the “sinister plots” of the Communists. There is nothing sinister about the Communist organization. Here are a dozen Communists working in the same shop. It is natural for them to get together and form a shop nucleus. It is natural for them to constitute themselves as a *permanent body*. They may use secrecy to avoid the spying eye of the employers; but this again is most natural under capitalism; the workers would be foolhardy to expose their plans of activity to the bosses. A Party nucleus holds its meetings regularly every week. Our shop nucleus will discuss at nearly every meeting how to organize the struggle of the workers against the employer in that particular shop. The shop nucleus will not keep itself isolated from the rest of the workers. On the contrary, it will be the duty of every Communist to be in closest touch with the workers, to be part of the workers, to understand every issue of their shop life. The Communists will distribute papers and pamphlets among the workers. If need be, they will publish a local paper which will expose the evils of the shop and organize the workers for struggle. The Communists will keep secret from the management and the stool pigeons but not from the workers. They will invite nonparty workers to their nucleus meetings to discuss certain problems. They will gain the confidence of the workers just because they have a well-thought-out and fitting solution for the pressing problems and because they show resistance in dealing with the boss or with the foreman. They have got to stand up as fighters or else they cannot be Communists. They will soon become known to the workers as a militant group. Many more will join. The influence of the Communist Party will grow.

The time comes when the Communists head an open struggle against the employer or the State. It may be a strike for higher wages. In this case the Communists will help organize a *strike committee* from among the rank-and-file workers, this committee to consist of Party and non-Party workers and to act under the direct leadership of the revolutionary trade union of that industry. It may be a mass demonstration for unemployment insurance. In that case the Communists will help organize a local rank-and-file *Unemployed Council*. It may be any other act of struggle. In either case the Communists will not force their will upon the workers. On the contrary, they will see to it that they share the initiative with as many workers as possible. They are not here to give orders. They are workers themselves who suffer like all the other workers but give a clearer voice to the protest that is brewing among the workers. The more workers participate in preparing an act of struggle the greater the chances of victory.

In such struggles some of the workers will move to the front as more clear-sighted, more active, more able to express the needs of the workers, and more quick-minded in finding a solution to an emergency problem. These will become the *mass leaders*. Some of them will be Communists, some non-Party workers, but in the long run every fighting mass leader will find his way to the Communist Party because they will realize its advantages for the workers' struggle.

Thus the Communist nucleus will establish itself as the fighting organization recognized by the workers. It will lead. It will put fear in the heart of the boss. It will put confidence in the hearts of the workers. It will become the vanguard and the leader of the local workers.

The Communists who, for one reason or another, are not members of a shop nucleus (or mine or mill nucleus) organize locally in the place of residence into a street nucleus. The street nucleus is composed of the Communists living in the same neighborhood. It may consist of from ten to thirty, but rarely more members, because a large nucleus becomes unwieldy. When a street nucleus grows too large, part of it is organized into another nucleus and given another territory to work in. The *street nucleus* organizes and leads the workers' struggles in its territory. Suppose there is a shop in that territory and the workers are unorganized. The street nucleus concentrates on that shop. It organizes open air meetings in front of the shop just at the time when the workers finish work. Some of the workers stop to listen, become interested, receive papers and pamphlets distributed around the meeting place. The nucleus repeats this action until contacts are established with the shop. Once there is a group of sympathetic workers inside, the task of organizing the shop workers to defend their interests becomes much easier. One street nucleus may concentrate on a number of local shops. It also concentrates on unemployed work. It makes a canvass of all the unemployed in its territory, organizes from among them an Unemployed Council, fights together with it for unemployed relief; if need be, the street nucleus calls a demonstration in front of the local Home Relief Bureau to insist on aid for those discriminated against. The street nucleus heads many other workers' struggles in its territory. The fight against the eviction of unemployed, the fight for free gas and electricity for the unemployed, the fight for the release of imprisoned local workers, assistance to strikers' pickets, local demonstrations against the oppression of Negroes in the neighborhood—all these and many other activities are the almost daily tasks of the street nucleus.

Both the shop and the street nuclei, thus, exist not for themselves, not for "Communist interests," as you are so often told, for there are no Communist interests outside of the interests of the working class. The Party nucleus is a center of fighting workers, in a shop or neighborhood. That is a bad nucleus which stew in its own juice. A good nucleus is one that is in various ways connected with the workers in the shop or neighborhood, is recognized by them as a fighting unit, is supported by them, is continually increased by the joining of new workers, and is proved as leader in many class conflicts for the benefit of the workers.

Not the least among the functions of the shop and street nuclei is the distribution of the Communist papers, magazines and pamphlets. After all, the press is a good propagandist and a good organizer. Its influence can be great, if the workers are induced to read it and to spread it.

The Communists make it their business to talk to non-Party workers, explaining to them the meaning of the Communist press as the workers' press, and offering to provide them with a paper or magazine. In the same way they distribute pamphlets and books. Once a worker has begun to read a paper or pamphlet explaining to him the class struggle, he soon recognizes the truth of that explanation which he can supplement by numerous facts from his own experience. Reading about the class struggle, recognizing the correctness of the class struggle, is a step to actual participation in the class struggle.

Here as elsewhere there is a deep gulf between us Communists and the Socialist reformists. They say the American workers are difficult to move and that there is no hope of workers putting up a stiff fight in this country. We say, but let the American worker recognize his class interests, and he will fight in great working-class militant organizations for his life, for his freedom, for the final liberation of his class and all oppressed.

Aside from shop (mine, plant) nuclei and street nuclei of the Communist Party, there are *Party fractions*. The Communists belonging to any organization form a special fraction which discusses the problems of its organization and makes decisions for its members. This enables the Communists in a reformist union or fraternal organization to follow the same line. The Party fraction advocates militancy and strives to transform the whole organization into a real fighting unit.

It is quite obvious that Communist activity requires training. Every Party nucleus is in fact a training school in the practice of the class struggle. It also gives theoretical classes to its members. It conducts discussions on current questions. Its most capable, militant members are sent to special training schools. The whole Party is engaged in raising, as we call it, the theoretical level of its members.

You will now understand what there is to those tales about "Communist plots". The Communists have a good organization and a uniform line; they plan work and they carry it out. The bosses certainly dislike such a method, when used by the workers. You will also understand why the enemies speak so much about "rigid Communist discipline". They would like the workers to be undecided, without unity and cohesion. That would be good for the capitalist interests. When they see a party of revolutionary workers organized, enlightened, trained to do revolutionary work and acting in harmony with one another in accordance with a preconceived plan, they decry it. In this plan, unity and cohesion, however, is the strength of every workers' organization, including that of the Communist Party. We discuss problems, we study them carefully, but once a decision is made it is binding for every member. We are a democratic organization because every member has a vote and every rank and file is entitled and invited to criticize the activities of the organization or of individual leaders. We are at the same time a centralized organization because we work according to one plan and because decisions of the higher Party bodies are obligatory for the lower bodies — from the center down to the units. The Communist Party is thus built on the basis of *democratic centralism*. That makes for unity of action.

## The Party in Action

Let us now have a look at the Party as a whole. At the head of it is the Central Committee elected at the national convention. In the Districts there are District Committees elected at district conventions (the country is divided into 20 districts). Each District is divided into Sections and each Section comprises a number of units, *i.e.*, shop and street nuclei. Under the District and Section Committees are the various *fractions*. All these members have thoroughly discussed every issue that comes up in the life of the working class. They have discussed in each unit what every member has to do in the coming few days. Directives have been given from the center to the districts, from the districts to the sections and the units. Everybody is prepared. Everybody understands the meaning of what is to be done. Everybody is obliged to assist one another. There is complete unity of purpose and unity of action. Tomorrow each one of these Party members will plunge headlong into one or the other realm of work. One will confront the boss with the demand of the workers in his shop; another will lead a group of unemployed workers to the Home Relief Bureau to demand immediate relief for those that have been discriminated against; a third will participate in the picket line facing the clubs of armed thugs; a fourth will be active in putting back into an apartment the furniture of an evicted family; a fifth will be cautiously speaking to a group of marine workers, trying to affiliate them with the Marine Workers Industrial Union; a sixth will be speaking to a group of workers engaged in an ammunition plant trying to make them understand the necessity of organizing in order to be ready to stop work in case of war; a seventh will distribute leaflets calling for a demonstration to protest against U. S. imperialist intervention in Cuba; an eighth will be leading the miners out of a mine in protest against the refusal of the N.R.A. to recognize the National Miners Union; a ninth will be speaking in the open air in favor of the local Communist candidate for mayor; a tenth will be showing the workers a Soviet film in which the free life of the workers under the proletarian dictatorship is vividly depicted. All these Communists will be animated with one ideal. They will all work along the same line. They will work hand in hand with all the workers they are connected with, trying to make them understand the better ways of struggle and to make their struggle more effective. All these Communist units, forming concentration points of the workers' struggle, will be engaged in practical everyday work, the more practical the better, but at the same time they will never for a moment lose sight of the ultimate goal of the movement — the destruction of capitalism.

When you observe the Communist Party in action you cannot fail to compare it with the blood-stream of the human body. Like the blood-stream it brings life to every section of the body of the working class. Like the bloodstream it helps build up every tissue. Like the bloodstream it makes the organism live, act, grow.

There can be working class movements without the Communist Party, but there can be no real movement for the liberation of the working class without the Communist Party. There can be no ultimate overthrow of the entire capitalist system without the Communist Party.

Hand in hand with the Communist Party and under its guidance functions the Young Communist League, the revolutionary organization of the young workers, and many other organizations. There is a Communist Party in every country of the world. All of them work for the same end, and all of them adapt their activities to conditions existing in their country. Delegates from each Communist Party gather once in a few years to an International Communist Congress (there have been six of them so far). The Congress meets for two or three weeks and discusses thoroughly the international situation and the situation in every country. Experiences of a world-wide struggle are shared and a general line of further struggles mapped out. The Congress elects an Executive Committee which is the governing body between one congress and the other. The decisions of the Executive Committee of the Communist International guide the activities of the parties. The Executive Committee meets at intervals of a few months. Its meetings very much resemble a small congress. Between one meeting and the other a smaller body called Presidium is conducting the affairs of the organization. The organization is called the Communist International and expresses the common purpose and common decisions of all the Communist Parties of the world. The Communist International (Comintern) gives unity of policy and leadership to the entire revolutionary movement of the world. It is the general staff of the world revolution of all the exploited and oppressed.

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union is affiliated with the Communist International. It is the most influential but not the only influential, party in the International. It is one part but not the whole of the International. Its advice is highly precious because it has long accomplished what the Communist Parties of the world are only striving at — the proletarian revolution. The advice and experiences of the other parties, however, is also of great value in determining the policies of the Comintern. The seat of the Comintern is Moscow because this is the capital of the only workers' and peasants' government in the world, and the Comintern can meet there freely. As the workers become the rulers of other countries, the Comintern will not have to confine its meetings to Moscow alone.

The Communist Party of the U.S.A. is thus part of a world-wide organization which gives it guidance and enhances its fighting power. Under the leadership of the Communist Party the workers of the U. S. A. will proceed from struggle to struggle, from victory to victory, until, rising in a revolution, they will crush the capitalist State, establish a Soviet State, abolish the cruel and bloody system of capitalism and proceed to the upbuilding of Socialism.

This is why every worker must join the Communist Party.

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## About the author:

### **Olgin, Moissaye J. (1878-1939)**

Moissaye J. Olgin was born in 1878 on *shtetl* near Kiev. After attending a traditional Jewish *cheder* he entered the University of Kiev, where he began his career as a revolutionary. In 1901 he was elected chairman of the Student's Central Committee, while also being a member of the revolutionary group, *Freiheit*. In April 1903 the Czarist regime ordered his arrest for his role in the formation of Jewish self-defense groups, at which point he moved to Vilna, Poland.

In Vilna he was a member of the Jewish Bund, and was arrested for his activities there. He was in Vilna during the 1905 revolution, and authored all the proclamations issued by the Bund during that period.

From 1907-10 he had studied at Heidelberg, and was in Germany when World War I broke out. Unable to return to Russia, he emigrated to the U.S. in 1915, where he immediately became a contributor to the Yiddish Socialist daily the "Forward."

In 1917 he authored an early book on the Russian Revolution (*The Soul of the Russian Revolution*) and when the Jewish Socialist Federation split in 1921 he severed relations with the "Forward" and was a founding member of the Workers Party. He was an early organizer in the Jewish section of the Party, and was a founder of the Yiddish Communist daily the "Morning Freiheit," which he edited until his death. He was also a member of the National Committee of the CPUSA for many years.

Aside from his countless newspaper articles and editorials, he wrote many books, and was responsible for translating several volumes of Lenin's *Collected Works* into English, as well as Yiddish translations of Engels' *Peasant War in Germany*, John Reed's *Ten Days that Shook the World*, and Jack London's *Call of the Wild*.

He died on November 22, 1939. His photo appeared on the masthead of the "Freiheit" decades after his death, until the newspaper folded in 1988.