

A NEGLECTED FIELD By MARTIN ABERN

THE Workers Party is today engaged in a campaign to form a class Farmer-Labor Party in the United States, an effort worthy of the full energies of every Party member. In noting the excellent development of our Party, it is well to state that the Workers Party really began to grow and assume influence when it started seriously and earnestly to work within the unions, and when it, at the same time, freed itself from the separatist or dual notions held by some members. It is imperative that we always call upon our membership to get more and more into the general work of the trade unions in order to carry on the work of transforming the existing trade unions into organizations of the class struggle and into revolutionary unions. Because of old dual union conceptions, not by any means yet entirely removed; because of strong opposition against those carrying out the T. U. E. L. program by the reactionary union leaders, lending false strength to dual union thought; and because of Party activity in other fields, we are always in danger of losing sight of or neglecting trade union work.

OUR Labor Party campaign is the Party's biggest campaign today. We are "in politics" with a vengeance. Anti-parliamentary notions are obviously removed as a whole from Party thought. One form of Leftism is evidently corrected. It cannot by any means be said that there is too much emphasis on parliamentary activity or general political activity, such as the Labor Party campaign. Yet it may be said that there is neglect on the part of many of our members in trade union fields. If our members are not opposed to trade union activity in theory, and we do not believe they are, they are opposed, some of them, in practice. They either do not attend their union meetings, or, when they do attend, they do nothing there. A Labor Party, unless made and supported by the trade unions, would have no permanent basis. It would be no real Labor Party. It would not be able to withstand the organizational or propagandistic opposition of the capitalist parties.

IN reference to the Labor Party question, Comrade Foster in his Party convention industrial report declared, "Inasmuch as the Labor Party, in so far as it represents the industrial workers, rests directly upon the trade unions and draws its conventions and other legislative bodies out of their ranks, the extent to which we will have power and influence in the growing Labor Party movement will depend entirely upon the strength and grip we have in the trade unions." As in the case of the Labor Party, so in the rest of the trade union work. Hence, in our campaign for a class Farmer-Labor Party, to insure its success, our members must take a far greater part in union work than even before.

THE economic problems, trade union agreements, strengthening of the unions, amalgamation, all these and more, must be taken up actively by the militant unionist and Party members, and explained in the unions. If we would win the leadership of the masses in the trade unions from the fake labor leaders, and those labelling themselves progressives, our members must be in the trade unions fighting on every issue affecting trade union work and development and thus proving our right to leadership of the trade union movement. In Minneapolis, for instance, the trade union movement is progressive or perhaps even radical. The normal leadership of the trade unions is regarded as progressive and radical. It is doubly necessary that there our Party members shall be active in the trade unions to make clear our stand and differences between the Communist and the progressive unionists. Yet the T. U. E. L. has no organization, unless perhaps it be a very small one and in this very city the T. U. E. L. logically should be strong.

OUR members must not only be for T. U. E. L. and Party union policy

in words; they must not sit within the trade unions in theory, and outside of them in practice. If trade union activity means anything at all, it means, first, being present at all meetings. It means being alive to all wage and strike issues. It means combatting class collaboration policies being put over very cleverly by shyster labor leaders.

Leadership in the trade unions is not only won by political agitation; it is won by contesting every issue before the unions with the reactionary leadership. Trade union agreements are presented which are wrong and bad for the unionists. We must be in a position to expose the fakers proposing them. In his article on the 5th Congress of the Communist International, Comrade Zinoviev says:

"THE question of the Trade Unions once again occupies an important place in the work of the 5th Congress. The more the influence of the Communists in the Trade Union movement grows, the more furious do the leaders of the Social Democracy become in their effort to hasten the split in the Trade Unions. The provocative tactics of the Social Democratic leaders in certain places are very successful. Among the German Left Wing, there is developing a wrong and extremely dangerous attitude towards the ques-

in the trade unions."

It is as if this were being written especially for the American militants and Communists, so aptly does it fit the needs for our Party members and militants continuing and increasing trade union work and carrying on the battle against Gompers, Sigman, Lewis and the rest of the degenerate crew.

RESULTS more than justify the Party and T. U. E. L. industrial policy in the unions. In the recent Pullman strike, great strides were made by the Party because of the intense activity of the Party and the DAILY WORKER in the immediate issues of the strike. The Party established itself among the Pullman workers and strikers. At that, the Pullman Party members were far from taking full advantage of the situation.

THROUGH the activity of the militants in the trade unions, limited even as it was, there are now in "many unions being waged struggles for a better leadership, especially so in the needle trades."

STRUGGLE against the reactionary opposition brings its fruits, however slow. Expulsions, etc., are the proof of the effectiveness of militant and revolutionary work within the unions. The future holds no doubt

voted and intelligent, the Party will reach a position where its advice will be accepted gladly and readily by the unions."

REACTION in the labor union movement is not something which can be overcome over night and without the most difficult of work and opposition and hard knocks. The whole thing must be considered practically and historically. In his book "Leftism, an Infantile Disease," Comrade Lenin states:

"But the development of the proletariat did not and could not anywhere in the world proceed by any other road than that of trade unions with their mutual activity with the working class Party." Further on, referring to the Left German Communists he says:

"They refuse to work in them! They invent new workingmen's unions! This is an unpardonable blunder, one by which the Communists render the greatest services to the bourgeoisie. . . . Not to work within the reactionary Trade Unions means to leave the insufficiently developed or backward working masses to the influence of reactionary leaders, agents of the bourgeoisie, labor aristocrats—bourgeoisified workers."

BUILD the Party by working as Communists should in the trade union movement. In the metal trades, needle trades, building trades, everywhere, get into the work of the T. U. E. L. which is the work of the Party. Our Party has got on the right basis by declaring for trade union work and we must not and can not tolerate for a moment any inactivity in industrial and trade union work. Not out of the unions, but into the unions; don't just accept the program of the T. U. E. L., but get into the unions, get into the work.

IT is to be seen that the problems of the Communist in the trade unions are fundamentally the same all over the world. To become the vanguard of the proletariat, the Communists must attain the leadership of the trade union movement. Despite expulsions and splits, whether engineered by Amsterdam, Gompers, Sigman, or anybody else, our task is to fight for unity in the trade union movement. If our comrades have not been as active as they ought to be in the unions in Chicago, New York, Minneapolis and the hundreds of other cities, let them get more firmly into the work. By fighting all along the line on every issue before the union from wage cuts, strikes, amalgamation, Fascism, Ku Klux Klan, shop delegate system, the Labor Party, to Communism, we can win the fight against the yellow union leadership. In Southern Illinois, for instance, we know that we have the problem of the Ku Klux Klan in the unions and the only way to meet it is for our comrades to be inside of the unions fighting the Klan on all issues.

IF the Revolution is to be conquered, we must conquer the organized Labor movement for this will be the basis of the future economic and social order. Comrade Losovsky says in his book, "The International Labor Movement":

"But one thing is clear: the stronger, the more united, the more elastic and aggressive the revolutionary wing of the Labor movement will be, the more objectively we, the Communists, estimate the relation of forces outside and inside the working class—the more correct will be our conduct, the sooner will humanity arrive at the developed form of a Communist Society."

Unemployed In Detroit.

DETROIT.—Reduction in employment in Detroit was general during the week ended May 10. The number employed by members of the employers' association dropped for the first time this year below last year's peak of 229,971 which was reached May 26. The reduction during the week amounted to 4,054, bringing the total number laid off since Feb. 2, 1924, to 17,005. It is reported that the Ford Motor Co. may drop one night shift or rearrange working hours to reduce output.

Membership of the Leningrad Unions.

THE increase in the number of employed union members in the city of Leningrad, during 1922-23, is one of the best indicators of the economic regeneration of that city. Owing to the concentration of industry and drastic reduction of the staffs by the Soviet institutions, the trade unions had lived thru some perturbations in 1922. By October 1922 the total number of employed union members decreased by 14.6 per cent as compared with January. 299,531 union members in January and 255,832 in October 1922, due chiefly to the great cut (29.8 per cent) in the membership of the unions catering for the government and public institutions (the unions of Soviet Employees, of Educational Workers, of Art, and of Medical and Public Health Workers). The drop in membership of the industrial unions amounted only to 2.4 per cent.

On October 1st, 1923, the working membership of the Leningrad unions amounted to 315,571. This figure represents an increase of 5.5 per cent against January 1922, the industrial unions having raised their membership by fully 32 per cent.

The growth of the membership of the unions of industrial workers is the more significant since the unions of government and public employees lost 11.2 per cent of their membership during the same period.

tion of the future work in the reactionary Trade Unions. The 5th Congress will have to speak with all its authority and determination against the policy of leaving the Social Democratic unions, and at the time it will have to find a practical solution of how to organize those workers whom the Social Democratic leaders have succeeded in expelling from the Trade Unions."

IF the Communist International speaks so strongly in the case of the German Trade unions, it can speak a thousand times more strongly in the case of America and demonstrate the need of greater trade union activity and against dual union ideas.

"Great masses have turned their backs on the trade unions. In the opinion of the Communist Party of Germany, neither abandoning the trade unions nor hastily founding new unions is the right way to overcome the yellow trade union bureaucracy," says the thesis of the Center Group in the German Party, "or to create a broad revolutionary trade union movement. Such modes of procedure only have the effect of aiding the yellow trade union bureaucracy in their purpose of converting the trade unions into blackleg (scab) organizations in the service of capital. In spite of the treachery of their leaders, the trade unions still contain great masses who would be delivered over defenseless into the hands of the yellow bureaucrats if the Communists left the unions. . . . The Communists must organize from below the resistance against the mass expulsion of the whole opposition on the broadest basis

even worse than individual expulsions—perhaps whole union locals and International expulsions and yet the Party policy is proved thereby still proper. We are winning the masses in the unions.

IN his pamphlet, "Bankruptcy of the American Labor Movement," Comrade Foster declares, "A disastrous effect of the systematic demoralization and drawing away of the militants is that it has thrown the trade unions almost entirely into the control of the organized reactionaries. In all labor movements the unions can prosper and grow only if the progressive elements within them organize closely and wage a vigorous battle all along the line against the conservative bureaucracy. Militants must build machines to fight those of the reactionaries."

OUR Party must enforce the rule of every member joining a union. Union comrades shall be active in the Trade Union Educational League or they cannot be said to be fulfilling the Party requirements. Thru actual and continued systematic work in the trade unions, we can win over the majority of the trade unionists to Communism. Without doing that we cannot succeed to the revolution. The thesis of the 3rd C. I. Congress states: "The real test of the strength of every Communist Party is the actual influence it has on the workers in the labor unions. The Party must learn how to influence the unions without attempting to keep them in leading strings. If the Communist fractions persevere, if the activity is de-