

How Alive is the Party?

By JAY LOVESTONE.

"Those to whom the work is 'dull,' 'uninteresting,' 'incomprehensible,' who turn up their noses and are liable to panic, or who intoxicate themselves with declarations regarding the absence of the 'old spirit,' the 'former enthusiasms' had better be released from work and retire so that they may not harm the cause, for they do not want to understand or are incapable of understanding the peculiarities of the present stage of the struggle."—From Lenin: The New Times and Old Errors in New Form.

THE party is now finishing the reorganization campaign. Except for certain isolated sections, the whole party has been reorganized on the basis of shop and street nuclei. Of course, it would be foolhardy for any one to claim that every one of these nuclei is already functioning well. It would be ridiculous for any one to contend that each one of these new units is a vigorous, energetic and active, living unit of the party. Nor would any one honestly dare make such a claim for the old territorial language units of our party.

Our Party Healthier.

NO doubt much effort and considerable energy will have to be expended to make of these units living units of the party. But we already see many increasing signs that the reorganized party is much more virile and much more healthy at bottom. This is true, not only organizationally, but also politically. We now have not only a more effective apparatus in the class struggle, but we have sloughed off many dead elements which weighed down the whole party life, not only the membership books of the past.

Unquestionably we have lost some of the old members. We may have lost some members because of the fact that we have made errors in our reorganization campaign. Our campaign was far from perfect. We were confronted with the most difficult task of any section in the Comintern insofar as party reorganization is concerned. Comrades speaking eighteen languages were to be welded into one party. Previously we, in reality, tho not in form, actually had eighteen parties. Every federation was a party unto itself in many respects.

The Communist International is quite satisfied with the progress of reorganization made by the Workers (Communist) Party of America. It is particularly satisfied with the energy and system with which we went about the whole campaign. This is true despite the fact that we have unquestionably made numerous errors in our reorganization efforts.

It will take a little while yet until the party liquidates the reorganization crisis and other difficulties in which we have found ourselves for the last months. Still it is only the petty bourgeois skeptics and opportunist pessimists who fail to see the upward trend in the development of the party, who fail to see that despite all its difficulties the party has been moving forward and is now on a much more sound, a much firmer basis politically and organizationally than it has been before.

Pessimism—An Opportunist Malady

COMRADE Lenin's quotation mentioned above certainly characterizes the attitude of these pessimists and cynics, most of them fortunately out of the party by this time. Instead of participating actively in party work when they were in the party, these opportunists, these skeptics who have no faith in the virility of the International Communist movement have always been spending their time saying: "What shall we do? What is the party doing? The party is not sufficiently alive."

Being dead themselves in the party work, they have never seen the party in any other condition but that of death. Being paralyzed themselves insofar as their participation in party campaigns and activities is concerned, they never saw the party in action, the party in motion, the party in contact with the non-Communist masses.

It is not my purpose to hide our weakness or our errors. The best way to overcome mistakes is to take energetic steps, honestly and openly, to correct these mistakes. The plain, objective facts speak much more forcibly than do illusions born out of disappointments or unwarranted optimism. I have asked myself recently, "How alive is the party now? How alive is the party in this critical period of the completion of the reorganization and the liquidation of factionalism?"

This is not the occasion to consult the official proceedings or party minutes in order to answer these questions. Let us examine the files of THE DAILY WORKER. I have before me the issue of February 5. A perusal of the columns of the front page of this paper will give an adequate answer to all the skeptics and doubters now outside of our ranks and to the few still remaining in our ranks as to how alive the party is after reorganization. We will consider THE DAILY WORKER columns and then explain the party's relations to each particular movement of the working class or oppressed peoples.

"Gera Workers Join Passaic Textile Strike."

FOR some time the party has been talking about taking steps to organize the unorganized. The thousands of workers employed in the textile industry are ruthlessly exploited and brutally oppressed because of their lack of organization. Despite numerous difficulties in the path of organizing the textile workers, the party has thrown all of its energies into arousing the textile workers in Passaic to the need of unionizing their ranks. The New York district is giving a good demonstration of how the party can function so as to become the leader of the non-Communist workers. The party is the very steel rod in the strike in Passaic involving more than 8,000 workers.

Little would be gained from advertising the role of the Communists in this spontaneous mass revolt against the textile barons. Here, as in every other case, the road to Communist success and to party leadership of great masses of workers is to be found in the slow, careful, daily work, in the energetic struggle of the Communists for the immediate and most elementary needs of the workers. The Communists participating in the Passaic textile strike have convinced hundreds of workers that the Communists are today the only ones fighting not only for the overthrow of capitalist society, but for even the most basic, everyday needs of the working class. This method is the best method for establishing the Communist Party as the real vanguard of the American proletariat.

"North Dakota Farmers for Class Party."

IN the growing left wing movement among the poor farmers in the Northwest, centering in the states of North Dakota, Montana and South Dakota, it has been the Communist fraction that has been furnishing the vitality and the drive for the clear political line. It has been the Communists who have been doing everything to unify the ranks of the discontented farmers and to organize them for effective struggle. Here the party has contact with and influence over considerable numbers of exploited farmers.

"Trade Union Educational League Plans Fight Against New Company Unions and Class Collaboration."

THE rapid growth of American imperialist development has hastened the pace at which the American trade union bureaucracy has been developing into an integral part of the apparatus used by the bourgeoisie to exploit and oppress the great masses of unskilled workers in the basic industries. Hundreds of thousands of workers have been forced to join company unions and have been prevented from becoming bona fide trade unionists. The trade union bureaucracy in many instances not only does not fight against these moves of the bosses, but

actually joins hands with them in order to destroy genuine trade unionism and thus cripple the chances of developing a revolutionary spirit in the ranks of the working masses. It has been our party which for some time has been the best organized expression of opposition to this movement towards company unionism and the other frauds of class collaboration sanctioned by the officialdom of our trade union movement. The party has been investing considerable energy, and very properly so, in helping the T. U. E. L. to mobilize the maximum number of workers possible against these schemes of class betrayal by the high-priced leaders of our organized labor movement.

"Miners' Grievance Committee Demand John L. Lewis Stand by Tri-District Meet Decision."

THE only semblance of opposition organized in the anthracite field against the black sell-out in the last strike is that of the growing left wing movement in this section of the coal fields. The Communists have been the most energetic force in the front ranks of this growing progressive movement amongst the anthracite miners. It is true we have not been able to prevent Lewis from putting over his five years' enslavement contract. We have, however, laid a basis for developing a strong Communist organization in this territory which has been one of the almost impregnable strongholds of John L. Lewis in the United Mine Workers of America.

"Lecture on China by Anna Louise Strong Sunday Night."

CHINA may be far away from the United States, but the Chinese problem is an ever-pressing problem of major importance growing nearer and nearer to the interests of the American workers. There are now American gun-boats and destroyers in Chinese waters. The American imperialists have been trying to undermine the rising influence of the Soviet Union in the Far East. Camouflage, hypocrisy and money have been the main weapons of the Yankee imperialist agents. The party has made considerable propaganda to expose the true character of America's role in the Far East, particularly in China, and has done a good deal to make clear to the American workers the fact that the hopes, not only of the Chinese, but of every other oppressed people lies in the growing strength of the Soviet Union.

"New Filipino Mission is On Way to America."

WITHIN the last year the party has intensified its anti-imperialist activity. Nearly two years ago, the Filipino labor unions, in their annual congress, sent a message of greetings to our party in recognition of the campaigns waged by the Communists for complete Filipino independence from the clutches of American imperialism. Since then we have established firmer contact with the Filipinos. Our start in this respect has been small so far, but the direction in which we are travelling and the results which we have already attained are correct and encouraging.

"Lewis Officials and Prosecutor Confer on Jury."

SOME of the most valuable work of the party in recent months is to be found in the activities of our comrades in the Zeigler trial. Here we have a case where the trade union bureaucracy functions openly and brutally as part and parcel of the strike-breaking state machinery. The party has won many new friends amongst the miners thru its activities in showing clearly how the trade union bureaucracy, the Lewis machine, the operators and the government have formed an unholy alliance, an unholy trinity against every progressive worker in the Southern Illinois coal fields. Such party activities are not purely propaganda activities. They are bound to translate themselves with little delay into concrete organizational advantages for the American section of the Communist International.

"Zeigler Miners' Trial is Attempt of Farrington Machine to Crush Opposition to Class Collaboration."

THE fruits of class collaboration are to be found in the recent conviction of eight progressive miners in the trial at Zeigler in Southern Illinois. The party members have distinguished themselves in arousing large numbers of non-Communist masses working in the coal fields to the great danger that confronts them in these convictions.

We have a long road to travel yet in order to achieve our goal of convincing these miners that it is high time that they kick out the Farrington machine which is as much responsible as the coal operators or the government of the county for the conviction of these progressive workers. But the fact that our party was at the very center of these activities is the best guarantee that increasing support will be developed to secure adequate defense for these miners who have been sentenced to serve in the state penitentiary from one to fourteen years on the charge of assault with intent to kill.

It must be remembered that the Zeigler trial is one of the most significant events in the recent developments in the American labor movement.

"Forty Miners Entrapped in Burning Mine."

THE party has been strengthening its influence among the coal miners in Western Pennsylvania. Recently when certain non-union miners went out on strike, it was only party speakers who could appeal to these workers and succeed in getting these workers to join the United Mine Workers of America.

On one occasion, when the miners were burying one of their brothers who was a victim of the coal operators' greed for profits in the mine explosion, the local union in this section of Pennsylvania called upon the party office to arrange to deliver the address at the funeral in behalf of the organized miners. These incidents in themselves may appear small, but in reality they are straws indicating which way the wind is blowing for our party in this very important industrial section of the country. It is precisely thru active participation in the every-day so-called "small" struggles of the workers that the party can sink deeply its roots into the masses and thus establish its influence over increasing numbers of the American proletariat.

"Cleveland Forms Committee to Aid Striking Anthracite and West Virginia Coal Miners."

THE movement to secure relief for the anthracite miners who were in the struggle against their exploiters for nearly six months has taken on considerable proportions in the last few weeks. In New York, Detroit and Cleveland, our party members have engaged with special vigor in mobilizing labor organizations to come to the aid of the heroic anthracite miners. Realizing that the miners will be in dire straits for a few weeks yet despite the settlement, our membership is continuing the miners' relief campaign with renewed vigor. These efforts are winning new friends for the party not only in the anthracite field, but in other labor centers.

From the above it is clear that the party is very much alive today. Of course, there is considerable room for improvement. The party must be still more alive. Our party can never be too active.

We are on the right road. Let us continue to smash to smithereens the hopes of the black seers who have turned their backs on our movement. Slowly but surely the reorganized party, the party based on the shop nuclei and street nuclei is moving forward towards becoming indeed the vanguard of the American proletariat.

We are moving forward in the spirit of Lenin. What better guarantee can we ask for our success in hurdling the numerous obstacles and the countless difficulties still in our way?