

fully anticipate that the next time, if capitalism thinks it necessary, we will be met with bayonets. What about that, Mr. Shoemaker?"

"Well," said Shoemaker, "if it comes to that, I'm willing to take a bayonet."

"Where, Mr. Shoemaker," asked the professor, "in the belly?"

When the laughter subsided, Shoemaker said rather diffidently, "I mean I'm willing to fight then."

"It will be too late!" chorused the left wing of the argument.

"When that time comes, Mr. Shoemaker, we'll have fascism right on our necks," said Ashe. "The only thing to do is to warn the workers right now of that probability and to prepare them to cope with it when it comes."

At this distinctly embarrassing moment of the soiree, Mr. Shoemaker was rescued by the tactful invitation of his hostess to a buffet supper. General discussion was over, but sporadic argument, punctuated by coffee and sandwiches, continued.

During the course of the evening, Shoemaker made this statement, illuminating in connection with his announced intention to "fool 'em": "Of course, you understand that I won't tell all these things when I speak at my mass meeting tomorrow afternoon at the Hollywood Bowl."

True to his word, he did not mention "all these things" at his mass meeting.

The Bowl event was sponsored by the National Economic Congress, a "crackpot" organization of potential fascist tinder, which promulgates the theory that the economic ills can be cured by revision of the monetary system to what they call "dated money." Sherman J. Bainbridge, executive of the congress, told the crowd of some 4,000 that their presence was "proof of your loyal Americanism with deep-seated confidence in the government." He also revealed that

identical meetings were being held in Detroit, with Father Coughlin, Senator Nye of North Dakota and Senator Thomas of Oklahoma, as speakers, and in Des Moines, Iowa, with Governor Olson and Huey Long as speakers.

Taps on Three Wrists

Significant was the fact that Shoemaker delivered his two-hour speech entirely extemporaneously, save for one section which he read, indicating that the previous evening had awakened his political acumen to the fact that playing with the evanescent nominal leadership of these organizations was futile. This section of his speech read:

"Before I came on the stage, someone stopped me and said, 'I hope you are not falling for fakirs like Huey Long, Father Coughlin and Dr. Townsend.' I was asked to state my position in regard to these worthy gentlemen, and I give credit to them for their sincerity.

"To Huey Long, I say, that your plan of every man a king is okay, provided you are willing to abolish the Kingfish of Kale. But are you, Mr. Long? Incomes of \$2,500 yearly per family can easily be obtained, but not under the profit system. Mr. Long, are you for or against the profit system?

"To Father Coughlin, I say, your denunciations of banks and banksters are sweet music to my ears, but are you willing to change the system where bankers rule the roost to a system where no bankers are allowed on the roost?

"To Dr. Townsend, I say, that old age pensions are feasible and your movement has my sympathy, but it can't be worked by robbing Peter who works part-time, for Paul, too-old-to-work.

"To all three of you, individually and collectively, let me say, gentlemen, you have the rods, the sinkers and the bait, but as long as you don't produce the hooks to snag

the fish, why you just ain't talking sense."

Testimony as to the effectiveness of his demagogic tactics was the manner in which he swung the crowd, which had enthusiastically applauded reference by previous speakers to Father Coughlin and Huey Long, to the position where they just as enthusiastically applauded his mild questionings of these same "gentlemen."

Equally effective was his politic attack on Upton Sinclair, who now dreams nightly of capturing the national Democratic Party. In this supposed stronghold of Sinclair, Shoemaker accomplished this strategic attack without in any way alienating his audience.

In all fairness to Mr. Shoemaker, it must be stated that he is an infinitely superior demagogue to Mr. Sinclair or any of the other self-appointed leaders of the masses on the California scene. It is quite possible that he may be able to develop a considerable following in California for his third-party movement, which must inevitably lead the masses into the same *cul de sac* that the German workers were led into by the Social Democracy, a position which will strengthen the possibility of fascism in the United States. On the other hand, it is very unlikely that such a third party will gain the degree of mass support that Upton Sinclair momentarily obtained for his gubernatorial campaign. The California situation has taken a healthier turn the last six months, and the masses no longer respond with fanatic zeal to the would-be demagogues and their organizations controlled from the top. Rank-and-file control is the increasingly heard demand of the California workers and farmers.

The seeds of a genuine Labor Party based upon the trade unions and organizations containing the exploited—of *all* political shadings including the Communists—are present in California, ready to grow into a body that will truly represent the demands of the working class.

What Is Communism?

How the Communist Party Works

EARL BROWDER

IT IS now time to give attention to a flood of questions from our readers relating to the Communist Party and how it works. We quote representative questions from a variety of letters:

Does the Communist Party take orders from Moscow? . . . How is the leadership of the Party chosen? . . . What is the Third International and how does it work? . . . Is the Communist Party supported by Moscow gold? . . . Who is eligible to membership in the Communist Party? . . . What is the size of the Communist Party and how fast is it growing? . . . Why doesn't it grow faster?

No, the Communist Party does not "take orders" from Moscow. The very placing of such a question becomes absurd when we remember that a political party, even so small as the C.P. still is, can live and grow only to the extent that it directly represents, leads and organizes the struggle for the needs of the masses whom it would win.

The Communist Party is the modern continuation of the revolutionary socialist movement, which has a continuous history of organization of fifty-five or sixty years. It has gathered into itself all that is healthy of the

formerly scattered and split revolutionary trends and currents from the Socialist Party, the Socialist-Labor Party, the Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.) and even the proletarian elements of the former anarchist movement. But it has brought them together, not as a loose federation of groupings, each retaining its old ideas, but by a drastic remolding and remaking of them all, melting them down and recasting them into the single mold of a unified, uniform party.

This Communist Party is organized on the principle of *democratic-centralism*. That

means, that the leadership of the party is elected from below, from the membership units of the party, in a delegated party convention, which is the supreme authority of the party. The convention adopts the program and elects a Central Committee, which exercises full power of direction of the party between conventions. Below the Central Committee, and subordinated to it, are some twenty-seven District Committees, elected by District Conventions; the Districts are similarly subdivided into Sections; the Section Committees are based directly upon the membership units (or nuclei).

This system of democratic-centralism accomplishes two vital aims of Communist organizations; it achieves a united party, motivated by a uniform strategy and tactic, uniting thousands of wills into a single will, concentrating into one great proletarian fist that multitude of individual forces that would otherwise cancel one another in disunity and confusion; and secondly, it achieves this not by blotting out the individual participation and initiative, but by broadening and deepening inner democracy, by *organizing* it.

The Communist Party of the United States is, in turn, united with the parties of all other countries (about sixty of them) into a World Party, organized on the same principles. This is the Communist International (sometimes called Comintern, for short), headed by its Executive Committee (E.C.C.I.), elected at the World Congress. The Communist International is also known as the Third International, to designate its lineal descent from the International Workingmen's Association or First International, founded by Marx and Engels, and the Second or Socialist International, which continued the tradition of Marx until the World War, when it collapsed.

That hoary old legend of "Moscow gold," which the Hearsts of all lands constantly repeat, is only an effort to hide the fact that Communist Parties grow naturally out of the class struggle in each country. They would like the masses to believe that Communist Parties are mercenaries, bribed and bought by the Moscow Bolsheviks to "make trouble" in the capitalist countries.

No, the C.P.U.S.A. receives no "Moscow gold." Its finances come from the workers and sympathizers in this country. But that is not to deny that Communists send money from one country to another to help those who are in the most difficult positions. For example, the C.P.U.S.A. itself pays "international dues," which it collects from its members, amounting to about \$20,000 per year, and of which about 80 percent goes to help the Communist Parties of Germany, Ireland, Cuba, Philippine Islands, Canada and Porto Rico. During 1934, the C.P.U.S.A. sent over \$12,000 to the German Party. The C.P.U.S.A. gets no financial help from the outside, because it is still working under what is comparatively the most favorable conditions, opportunities for open work, etc., but

must itself help the others, especially in fascist and colonial countries. Such amounts spent on international solidarity are comparatively small, but politically are of great importance. They serve to emphasize and give concrete weight to our conception of a World Party, the embodiment of the stirring Marxian slogan, "Workers of all lands, unite!"

Any man or woman is eligible to membership in the Communist Party who subscribes to its program, who actively participates in its work under the direction of the party organization and who subordinates himself to the party decisions.

Growth of the C.P.U.S.A. for the past six years is shown by the following approximate average dues payments. (Members pay dues each week on a graduated scale, beginning at two cents for unemployed, ten to twenty-five cents for those with incomes up to \$25, two percent for those with incomes of \$25 and above, with higher assessments on incomes over \$50).

Average membership in 1930, 7,000; in 1931, 9,000; in 1932, 14,000; in 1933, 18,000; in 1934, 26,000; in 1935, 30,000.

Membership in mass organizations of various kinds, not affiliated to the party but in general sympathy with its program on the main issues of the day, numbers about 600,000. Hamilton Fish, the Red-baiting Congressman, recently estimated that this figure should be 1,200,000, but he does not use such strict organizational standards for his judgment as do the Communists. We have no interest in over-estimating our own strength. On special issues, such as the campaign for the Workers' Unemployment, Old-age and Social Insurance Bill, H.R. 2827, we have associated with us in the broad united front on this single issue about 5,000,000 of the membership of various organizations.

Is the Communist Party satisfied with this growth? No, not by any means, no more than our questioner who impatiently asks "Why doesn't the party grow faster?" We are constantly studying the problem, and in part beginning to solve it, of how to become a mass party.

But in solving this problem, we know that the suggestions of many of our correspondents that we copy the methods of Huey Long and Father Coughlin, will not help us. These correspondents are impressed with the huge claims of ten or more million members in the Share-Our-Wealth Clubs and the Union for Social Justice and would like to see us making similar claims. We, however, could not obtain any comfort from such a "membership" even though we counted it in millions. These demagogues have a following almost, if not quite, unorganized; we dare not fool ourselves by claiming the strength of unorganized following for our strength comes only from organization capable of action and struggle. They get their following by irresponsible promises of all things to all men; we can promise nothing but mass struggle

and the fruits of mass struggle, based upon a realistic program which we can and will actually carry out when the masses are behind us. They obtain enormous financial backing from capitalists, by using their mass influence demagogically obtained, for special capitalist interests; we can win from the capitalists only their undying hatred and ever fiercer suppression, and must rely for finances upon the poverty-stricken workers, with a trickle of funds from middle-class sympathizers. The half-fascist demagogues cannot teach anything of value to us by their type of "organization"; if they should ever come to really serious mass organization in the U.S., it will be they who are copying us and not we them.

The Communist Party is, however, driving toward a more rapid growth, with the ambition of becoming in this period a real mass party. We will not consider that a serious beginning has been consolidated until we have 100,000 members. That is the next goal we are striving toward.

How will we get there?

Chiefly, and before all, by making the Communist Party known to the millions of toilers as the best fighter for their immediate interests. Examples of how we do this are the campaign for the Workers' Bill, leadership of the struggles of the unemployed, strike leadership (best recent example being the Pacific Coast marine and San Francisco General Strike) and similar work in every field of mass endeavor. We take pride in the unwilling testimonials of our enemies that we are becoming successful in this field. For example, Fortune magazine recently, in an article on the Communist Party, concluded an article replete with inaccuracies and misinformation with the following sound observation:

Not long ago a government official toured the country, penniless and clothed in tatters, to see for himself how unemployment relief was being handled. He learned a great deal. "Even the Communists taught me something," he told reporters. "I learned the power that the Communists have is gained principally because they will listen to people who are down and out and will work for them and fight for them."

That is true. But it is only part of the truth. The Communists do something else, without which we could never have become as much of a power as we have and without which we can never move forward seriously. That something else is that we always and everywhere give these immediate struggles a higher goal than the mere winning of the demands of the moment. We fight to win these demands, certainly, but we fight even better and more uncompromisingly because at the same time we show the workers how, by building ever stronger class organizations for this fight, we are preparing for bigger fights that can end only by the final defeat of the capitalists and the establishing of the workers in full power in the state. We give the workers the visions of the socialist society and show them the road to attaining it. We

rally around the workers all other oppressed people and all those intelligent enough to cast in their lot with the future.

It is as a part of this last and most important task, in the building of the mass Communist Party, that this series of articles on

"What is Communism?" gains whatever significance it may have.

In his eighth article, next week, Earl Browder will discuss "Americanism—Who Are the Americans?"—THE EDITORS.

Questions from Readers

EARL BROWDER

(Replacing for this week the "Question and Answers" are some representative discussion letters and brief comments thereon.)

The Lawyers Are Doomed

Earl Browder,
c/o NEW MASSES

Although I am a member of the legal profession and for that reason alone, if for no other, I should fight tooth and nail to perpetuate or at least prolong the status quo, I cannot but see the handwriting on the wall pointing unmistakably to the inevitable doom of the capitalist system.

But you seem to hold out no hope for the lawyers. You say in your fifth article on Communism: "The only group in this series we can hold out very little hope for is the lawyers. God only knows what they will be good for in a socialist society."

In the legal profession there has always been a small group who serve the very rich and a larger group who cater to the middle class, the smaller business man. The means of livelihood of the average lawyer were derived from the middle-class business men. While the capitalist system was functioning, when business was booming, when the butcher, the baker, the grocer, the tailor were buying real estate, investing in mortgages, in building operations, etc., there was business for the average lawyer and he had no difficulty in making a living. With the coming of the era of combinations, consolidations and mergers, resulting in the concentration of huge wealth in the hands of the few big bankers and industrialists, there was inaugurated a process of elimination—the elimination of the smaller business man from the field. 1929 and the years following gave that process of elimination a big push. Equities and investments in real estate and in mortgages, stocks and bonds were wiped out and thousands upon thousands of small business men were impoverished and made bankrupt, with the result that at this time we find on the one hand a small group of lawyers, those on top serving the big bankers, the big industrialists, large wealth and reaping a harvest beyond their fondest dreams and imaginations; on the other side, there is that larger group of lawyers who formerly catered to the middle class, the smaller business man, but who, today, are without business, without any source of income, due to the impoverishment and bankruptcy of the smaller business man. There are today thousands of lawyers whose existence is more precarious, more hopeless and helpless than that of the unemployed. Why then, could not this group find itself in a new society and fit into it so as to become useful?

A READER.

Comment: Our legal friend didn't quite get our point. We were not condemning those persons, now unfortunately lawyers, to be eliminated from participation in a socialist society—we spoke of the elimination of the *legal profession*. Certainly there will be no use for lawyers, as such, under socialism. This is in sharp contrast to other professions, such as engineers, technicians, doctors, etc., whose profession, far from being injured by a socialist revolution, will only begin to bloom and expand under socialism. For the lawyers, we can only promise the opportunity of re-education to become useful citizens in some other capacity. In the meanwhile, so long as

capitalism exists, even lawyers can make themselves useful in their professional capacity. The International Labor Defense has around it hundreds of excellent lawyers, who give their services self-sacrificingly; their efforts are highly appreciated. But even this cannot win any perspective for the legal profession, as such, after the revolution. It is a doomed profession.

Exploiters Who Are Exploited

Earl Browder,
c/o NEW MASSES

Your article on the relation of the middle class to the revolution is excellent, as far as it goes. But I feel that it is not complete. You (and other writers on the revolutionary potentialities of the middle class) neglect a group of the petit bourgeoisie which is quite numerous and important, particularly in New York City, and which has an especially difficult problem to face in connection with its political and economic alignments. I refer to the small manufacturers or contractors, men who exploit workers, but who are themselves exploited under the capitalist system.

I know several such men rather well. One of them employs about forty people. Needless to say, he works them as hard as he can and pays them as little as he can. Nevertheless, he is making no fortune. On the one hand, the bigger concerns in his field reduce his gross receipts by employing price-cutting tactics and offering services with which he can hardly compete. On the other hand, the workers raise his expenses by organizing for shorter hours and higher wages.

He himself works very hard. An intelligent and alert individual, he does all the buying and selling for his enterprise, takes care of all correspondence, writes and inserts advertisements in various trade journals, plans in detail all the products he manufactures and supervises the filling of all orders.

A forty-hour week is something which he dreams of but is unable to achieve personally. He never works less than 10 hours a day, six days a week. In his busy season, it is not unusual for him to leave his home at five in the morning and return at midnight. A vacation in the summer (or at any other time, for that matter) is simply out of the question.

The income he draws from his business is a sum which is insufficient to secure for his family a great many things which every worker would have in a socialist society. Proper medical and dental attention, college educations for his children, adequate recreation and vacation facilities, are things which he cannot possibly give his family without skimping on necessary allotments for food, clothing and housing. He himself is in need of a minor operation which would incapacitate him for several weeks. But he has neither the time nor the money to give his ailment the attention it requires.

In addition, his present source of income is extremely insecure. The activities of large competing organizations and of a strong union threaten daily to crush his enterprise. There is only one practicable way for this man to save his business organization and even such salvation is only temporary. That way is to fight the union. And that is just what he does.

At this point, it is necessary to emphasize that the individual in question is well aware of the na-

ture and implications of the class struggle. He traces the progress in the U.S.S.R. with enthusiasm and, theoretically, is in favor of Communism. But, by virtue of his position, it is impossible for him to put his theories into practice.

To make his acts consistent with his ideas, this individual should, of course, give up his business enterprise at once. However, he has no other source of income and no other resources on which to fall back. Present conditions make it seem highly improbable that he would be able to get a job in private industry. And even if he did get a job, his earnings would be so small that his level of living would immediately fall sharply. His family would experience privations and want.

So the man uncomfortably tries to rationalize his actions and justify his practices. But such rationalization does not solve his problem. Eventually, of course, the intensification of the class struggle and the crystallization of the classes will force most of the small business enterprises out of existence and the path of such individuals will be clear. But in the meantime what are they to do?

J. DAVIS.

Comment: This correspondent has given an indication of the tragic situation of the small "capitalist," who is in reality only a slave-driver on a commission basis for the real capitalist. The same arguments could, with small change, fit the case of an intelligent policeman assigned to strike duty, hating his work, but determined to support his family in their accustomed manner. It is very difficult to give any helpful advice to such individuals and groups. Their situation is tragic because there is no solution, except that provided by the inexorable conclusions of capitalist decay and the final victory of the working class.

Whose Bill Is H. R. 2827?

Earl Browder,
c/o NEW MASSES

I have been an avid follower of your series of articles in THE NEW MASSES. For the benefit of my Farmer-Labor acquaintances, will you please clear up the question of who formulated the Workers Bill, H.R. 2827, sometimes known as the Lundeen bill? Ernest Lundeen being a Farmer-Laborite, it has been repeated quite frequently that the Farmer-Labor Party must take credit for originating the bill.

I would like to have full information on this question, published in THE NEW MASSES if possible.

BEN C. HAGGLUND.

Thief River Falls, Minnesota.

Comment: Mr. Lundeen is entitled to full credit for introducing and fighting for H.R. 2827, but his Party has not been active in this regard and did not originate the Bill. On this question of whose bill it is, I spoke at the Unemployment Congress in Washington, January 6, 1935, as follows:

It is true that the Communist Party worked out this Bill, after prolonged consultation with large numbers of workers, popularized it and brought millions of Americans to see this Bill as the only proposal for unemployment insurance that meets their life needs. But that is not an argument against the Bill; that is only a recommendation for the Communist Party—for which we thank Mr. Green most kindly even though his intentions were not friendly. We Communists have no desire to keep this Bill as "our own" private property; we have tried to make it the common property of all the toiling masses; we have tried to bring every organization of workers (and also of farmers and middle classes) to look upon this Bill as "their own." Thousands of A. F. of L. locals, scores of Socialist Party organizations, dozens of Farmer-Labor Party locals, claim the Bill as theirs. That is good, that is splendid; the Communist Party, far from disputing title to the Bill with anyone, agrees with everyone who claims the Bill. We are ready to support any better proposal, no matter who should make it. Of course the Bill is yours; it belongs to the entire working class, to all the toiling masses of America. In this fact we find our greatest triumph.