

# Why Trade Unionists Should Join the Communist Party

By WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

As a worker you realize that conditions are bad, with the streets crowded with unemployed and those who have jobs being compelled to work under miserable conditions for the barest living. You realize that the workers must organize politically against the steadily worsening conditions. You should, therefore, make it your duty to become acquainted with the Communist Party and to join its ranks.

The Communist Party is made up of the best fighting elements in the working class. Its members are to be found in the forefront of every battle against capitalist exploitation and oppression. They are the first-line fighters for higher wages, shorter hours, better working conditions, and every other demand that will protect the workers' interests here and now.

In the center of its program the Communist Party puts the question of the organization of a Farmer-Labor Party based on the mass trade unions and farmers' organizations. It realizes that the old capitalist parties are the enemies of the workers and that the A. F. of L. policy of supporting so-called "friends of labor" in these parties has done more than anything else to hinder the progress of the labor movement. The Communist Party fights for independent political action of the working class, which is fundamentally necessary for an effective defense of their interests. It is bending every effort to further the launching of local Farmer-Labor parties and a national Farmer-Labor Party in time for the elections of 1936.

The organization of the many millions of unorganized workers is likewise of the most basic importance to the welfare of the working class. With only a small percentage of the workers organized—and these mostly into weak craft unions—the workers can make no substantial progress. To organize the huge masses of unorganized we must have industrial unions, based upon the inclusion of every worker in a given industry. The question of industrial unionism has now become a burning issue in the whole labor movement, as expressed, among other developments, by the formation of the Committee for Industrial Organization, headed by John L. Lewis. In the face of bitter hostility from A. F. of L. reactionaries, the Communist Party has fought resolutely ever since its formation in 1919 for the development of industrial unionism, and it will continue to do so until this vital goal is achieved. The Communists stand for a united A. F. of L., based upon industrial unionism.

The Communist Party has also been in the very forefront of the workers' struggle for unemployment insurance and relief. It has stimulated and supported hundreds of mass demonstrations, hunger marches, and other organized movements of the unemployed since the outbreak of the industrial crisis in 1929. It has popularized the Workers Unemployment, Old Age and Social Insurance Bill (H. R. 2627), and has been the means of forcing much relief for the unemployed from

the reactionary city, state and national governments. These struggles were carried on in the face of extreme police brutality, a score of workers being killed and several hundreds of others beaten up and arrested in the various movements.

## Trade Union Democracy

The Communist Party has carried on for many years past an intense struggle against the autocracy and gangster-control in the trade unions. It understands that unless the unions are controlled by the rank and file they cannot express the interests of the workers but must be subordinated to the will of the employers. In this struggle for trade union democracy, large numbers of Communists have had to face expulsion from the unions and the industries by racketeers and reactionary autocrats controlling a number of unions. The Communist Party has always been the main fighter for the rights of Negroes, the youth, and women workers in industry, in the unions, and in society at large.

The Communist Party bases its program on a policy of class struggle. It understands that workers can secure from the employers only those things that they have the power to compel the latter to give up. Ever since its organization, the Communist Party has relentlessly fought against the A. F. of L. policy of collaborating with the bosses, which kills the vitality of the unions. The Communists fought against all such class collaboration schemes as the B. & O. speed-up plan in the Coolidge period, the in-

flaming Hoover "no wage cut—no strike" agreement in 1929, and every other attempt of the bosses through a thousand schemes of conciliation, arbitration, etc., to hamstring the fighting capacity of the workers. When the A. F. of L. and Socialist leaders, following the line of the Roosevelt administration, were calling upon the workers not to strike under the N.R.A., it was the Communist Party alone that pointed out that only if the workers carried on a policy of militant strikes could they secure the rights of organization and the satisfaction of their grievances. And experience proved that the Communist Party was 100 per cent correct.

## Fascism and War

In the United States the wave of capitalist reaction mounts higher and higher. The big bankers and industrialists are determined to force the masses of workers and farmers down to conditions comparable to fascist Germany. They are preparing feverishly for the new world war that is plainly in the making. The Hearsts, Liberty Leaguers and such reactionaries are the mouthpieces of this growing fascist reaction. The Communist Party is in the very center of the struggle against this menacing threat to the living standards and liberties of the American toiling masses. It is leading in the organization of a great people's united front against fascism and war, the central expression of which is the Farmer-Labor Party.

But the Communist Party does more than take an active part in all these present-day struggles of

the working class. It is the Party of the proletarian revolution. All its efforts in these daily battles, all its vast educational work, lead towards one great goal, the education and organization of the masses for the abolition of the capitalist system and the establishment of Socialism. Capitalism is doomed; it can no longer keep the industries in operation or furnish work and food for the many millions of unemployed workers and starving farmers. More and more the capitalists have to turn to fascist terrorism to maintain their hold on the government and rulership over society. The workers in the Soviet Union, under the leadership of the great Russian Communist Party, have blazed the trail that the masses in the United States, as well as in other capitalist countries, under the leadership of their respective Communist Parties, must and will eventually follow in the fight for emancipation.

These are some of the major reasons why you and every other militant trade unionist, why every working class fighter, should join the Communist Party. Whoever realizes the necessity for an aggressive struggle under capitalism to defend the present-day interests of the toiling masses; whoever understands the imperative need to overthrow the capitalist system—his place is in the ranks of the Communist Party. As such a class conscious worker, you should join the Communist Party, the Party of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin.

With revolutionary greetings,

WILLIAM Z. FOSTER.