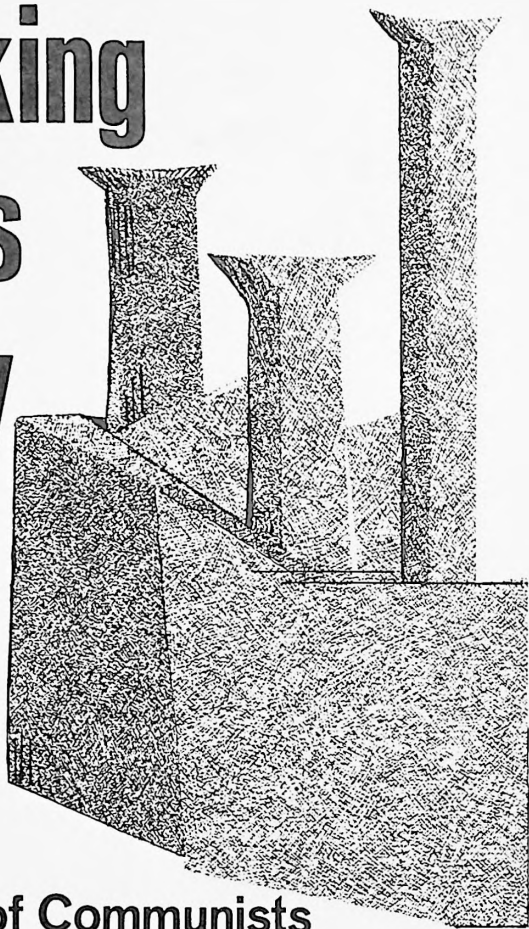


# **Working Class Unity**



**The Role of Communists  
in the Chicago Federation of Labor,  
1919 - 1923**

**Phil Bart**

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

PHIL BART has devoted many years to the trade union movement and the Communist Party. In his early years he worked in the printing trades. Later he went into the furniture trade and was Secretary of Local 76 of the Upholsterers' International Union in New York City. He was a member of the New York Central Trades and Labor Council.

He fulfilled varied responsibilities in the Young Communist League and the Communist Party. In the early 1930s he was Labor Editor of the *Daily Worker* and later functioned as its Business Manager. From 1941 to 1945 he was Organizational Secretary of the Illinois District of the Communist Party. During those years he established many contacts among trade unionists and progressives in Chicago's labor movement. Subsequently he was National Organizational Secretary of the Party and held leading positions in the Party in Ohio. From 1970 to 1973 he served in Prague as U.S. representative to the Editorial Council of *World Marxist Review*.

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## WORKING CLASS UNITY

### The Role of Communists in the Chicago Federation of Labor, 1919-1923

Phil Bart

#### Formation of the Communist Party

A political party is a political, social force in society. It is made up of human beings. It is influenced by them and is shaped by their interests. The composition of a party, its membership, its devoted supporters, as well as its past history and current activities, tell much about it. Who belongs to its organization? Who are its leaders? This defines its character—the class which shapes its policies—the kind of a party it is.

The twin parties of capitalism—Democrats and Republicans—are not eager to reveal their true past. They even prefer to hide their present operations. It is preferable to relegate it to yesterday's newspaper columns or let it rest on dusty shelves of libraries. What capitalist politicians want to reveal the machinations in their party? They often prefer to hide under the cover of "independent." It is not advantageous to be bluntly associated with the interests of the class they represent.

But the Communist Party's past history is a part of its actions today—of its uncompromising struggles in the interests of its class, the working class, and of all opponents of monopoly capitalism. Its fundamental objective for social change is the abolition of the capitalist system and the establishment of a socialist society free of exploitation and oppression of the working people. The party's record is one of association with every struggle to improve the conditions of the working class—and of the vast majority of people who are victims of the monopolies. It is proud of its contributions and participation in the Black liberation movement from its early days. Its struggle for a fundamental change has significance only if it is part of the movement for everyday needs. Much has been written about the Communist Party.

I will deal with one phase—one area—of its past history, during its formative years. While it always was a national organization, reaching into many areas of the country, it always strove to make its base in the

major industrial regions. The Socialist Party (SP—its predecessor) had been confined to the North, but the Communist Party (CPUSA) recognized that it could only be a national revolutionary party by also entering the South. It was the first Marxist party in history to do so. This made it mandatory that it break with the compromising and unprincipled racist theory and practices of the SP. The SP was bogged down by racist ideology and could not establish a sound base for Black and white unity. Although the newly established Communist Party was still hampered by some ideological hold-overs of the past, it started to direct its attention to Black-white unity against racism. It sent its forces into the south. While lynching was rampant it raised the slogan, "Death to Lynchers!"

The formation of the Communist Party was the culmination of a long ideological and political struggle waged against the reformism of the Socialist Party leadership and anarcho-syndicalist tendencies within the Socialist Labor Party and the Industrial Workers of the World. It was founded by revolutionary Marxist forces from the SP and the SLP and militant trade unionists including leaders of the IWW.

The birthplace of the CPUSA can be claimed by one city. It can claim that it holds its birth certificate. It is the city of Chicago—the mid-western metropolis of large industry and transportation. The area surrounded by vast prairies which supply the nation's food. The city where the 8-hour day struggle was born. The city of which the poet Carl Sandburg sang:

Hog Butcher for the World,  
Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat,  
Player with Railroads and the Nation's Freight Handler;  
Stormy, husky, brawling,  
City of the Big Shoulders

It possessed the big shoulders of its working class. For it attracted the farm hand who had no work, the foreign born who arrived in large numbers, the skilled and the unskilled. The Black sharecropper driven from his plot of land in the South. They all came in search of work in the packing plants, in the steel mills and on the railroads. It had a magnetic attraction because the city and its environs were dotted with huge industrial plants, while its surrounding prairies absorbed a large share of agricultural workers. They came to be absorbed in the most

intensive exploitation and remained to participate in the great, historic struggles which contributed to the advance of the nation's working class.

## Organizing the Unorganized in Chicago

William Z. Foster, brilliant organizer in railroad, packing and steel, who was a long-time leader of the Left and progressive forces in the trade union movement, and later served as National Chairman of the CPUSA, saw the opportunity of establishing, in Chicago, a national base for the organization of the unorganized. This had been a long-time perspective of the revolutionary and Left forces in the labor movement. The project could be crowned with success if it established close ties with the representative body of the labor movement—the Chicago Federation of Labor (CF of L) and its outstanding leaders, John Fitzpatrick and Edward Nockels, president and secretary, respectively. Foster described the CF of L, which then represented a half million organized workers, as “the most progressive central labor union in the United States.” Other observers concluded that this was always a key area for an organization drive. In the CIO drive during the 1930s a leading representative, who was closely associated with it, recalled that “Chicago was the center, the hard core of the United States.”

What was this city of Chicago? What was its relation to its sister industrial centers throughout the nation?

It was and remains the transportation hub of the nation. All major railroad lines and other forms of transportation converge within its limits. From east, west and south they meet in this national transportation web. It was the main base of the 21 railroad unions. Here was one of the most powerful financial-industrial combines, with which the 21 craft unions had to contend.

Anna Rochester wrote that “No section of American industrial life has reached a more advanced stage of capitalist development than the railroads. Here we find highly developed monopoly and an open and far-reaching use of the state on behalf of corporations.” This industry which led the campaign for the Open Shop (against trade union organization) was the first to be tackled. Foster brought to this task his own experience as a railroad worker and member of the Carmen's Union. Unlike basic industries, the railroad workers had well established unions and the Left and progressive forces were effectively organized.

Already at the close of the nineteenth century, Eugene Victor Debs, the great revolutionary fighter for militant industrial unionism and socialism, led the great general strike of over 100,000 railroad workers in 1894. Debs was the precursor of that breed of trade union militants who later, for a time, organized and led the left and progressive forces in the Chicago Federation of Labor.

The first step was to win support from the CF of L to participate in the formation of the Chicago Railroad Council. This was the foreunner of similar industrial councils in other basic industries. It served to coordinate the craft unions around a single objective. The railroad workers faced not only attacks on their living conditions, but attempts to destroy their unions. The Council led the national strike of 250,000 railroad shop workers in 1920.

The railroad council and subsequent bodies were not confined to top representation only. A strong rank and file base gave the assurance of a progressive direction for the councils. Foster, organizer of these councils, summarized his experiences: "Militant actions within such councils can achieve a solidarity theoretically impossible under the union constitutions. This was amply demonstrated in the great packinghouse movement. The Chicago Stockyards Labor Council was an instrument of real unity for the unions comprising it. Likewise the close knit councils that were developed in all important steel centers during the steel campaign of 1918-19. Still another instance that may be noted (of the many on hand) was the well known Chicago District Council of railroad workers, which, in the hey-day of the shop unions, was a powerful center of rank and file propaganda and action notwithstanding the bitter opposition of the railroad officers." By the establishment of councils in major industrial communities, they helped shape the direction of this movement.

### **Militant Railroad Strikes**

The railroad workers continued to face new threats of this giant monopoly, which to this day operates with special privileges disadvantageous to its workers while obtaining government benefits which swell its profits. The baleful system of injunctions was a direct weapon of the government to break strikes and block organization. It was used in 1922 by Federal Judge James H. Wilkerson, who had a direct interest in the industry, to break the strike. U.S. Attorney General Harry M.

Daugherty flagrantly declared: "I will use the power of the United States Government to prevent labor unions from destroying the open shop." (Quoted in *The New Majority*, Official Organ of the CF of L, September 16, 1922.)

The defeat of the militant 1922 shopmen's strike led thousands to return to their jobs without a contract. The handicap of craft division was compounded by racist clauses in the constitutions of many craft unions. The Communist Party was a vital force in this industry. Otto Wangerin, a railroad worker, a Communist, a leader in the Chicago District Council, recalls vividly the activities of the CPUSA. The Party, he said, had a membership of 52 railroad workers with clubs on the Illinois Central, New York Central, Chicago and North Western, and others. "The Party was the spark plug of the progressive movement on the railroads," is the point underscored by Wangerin.

Wangerin recalled a national rank and file railroad conference held in Chicago in 1924. The International Association of Machinists (IAM) had its members on the railroads and was therefore affiliated to the railroad unions' organization. This conference made anti-discrimination on the railroads a central point. Some delegates opposed this position, but the conference was uncompromising in its stand. When the IAM convention met in Buffalo, it was decided, by the conference, to have the word "WHITE" removed from the constitution. "I prepared the resolution to knock out 'white' from the union's constitution," Wangerin said. The resolution was unanimously adopted. This was a significant development in the trade unions. Of course, Wangerin added, the adoption of this resolution did not assure its immediate, universal application. Where the left and Communists were strong in a local union, the resolution was applied. In other lodges it died in the breach.

### **The Meat Packing Industry**

A major objective in organizing the unorganized was the packing industry with its base in Chicago. Here, unlike railroad, there were no established unions, with the exception of a craft group. This group was inept and ill-equipped to effectively tackle the organization of the giants in the industry—Armour, Swift, Wilson and others. To launch a successful drive required the united effort and support of the CF of L.

The move to organize the packing industry attracted some of the

most experienced and effective organizers. Foster was joined by Jack Johnstone, Joe Manley, Bill Herrin, Sam Hammersmark and others. They later all joined the Communist Party and held leading positions in the organization. The success in packing would open the gates for the organization of the steel industry. This opinion was shared by Foster and Fitzpatrick.

The industry reflected demographic changes in the city's population, as in industry generally, prior to and following World War I. Following the foreign born, the Black population with its large southern emigration, reached a substantial figure. And they were a significant force in the packing industry. The Chicago Committee on Race Relations reported a 250 percent growth of Black population in 10 years (1910-20). The packinghouses employed about 20 percent Black workers. They were a part of the industrial working class, a factor which had to be considered. A Marxist-oriented cadre could assure that this key question would be dealt with.

The campaign was inaugurated while anti-unionism was at a high point, reaction was rampant, and race riots against Black communities swept the country. The "open shop" was synonymous with "Americanism." Trade unionism was treason. To project an organization drive in basic industry was tantamount to introducing "Bolshevism" into a plant. It was a time of unconcealed ties between government, corporations and criminals. It could be considered a prelude to Watergate, 50 years later. Al Capone, the Chicago-based national underworld character, contributed to the crusade to save the nation from "communism." He considered his contribution as no different from that of any other businessman. Or, we may add, from that of any official in government.

This was acknowledged on his release from prison when he was interviewed by *The Chicago Tribune's* reporter, Genevieve Forbes Herick. Her conclusions were that "Capone probably never considered himself a criminal. His practices were, after all, only slightly rougher than those then prevalent among respectable big businessmen, such as the stock manipulators who bilked the public of millions or the industrialists who hired thugs to beat up labor organizers." It was not only labor organizers but workers and their families who were beaten, shot and imprisoned. The Rockefeller labor policy was an outstanding example of this practice. Monopoly was never averse to using criminals in its ventures. A U.S. Senate Committee, chaired by the late Estes



Kefauver, while investigating the drug industry, confirmed that there is, in some instances, a thin line separating outright criminal control from "respectable" monopoly interests.

The Stockyards Council was established with Fitzpatrick as chairman and Foster as secretary. The workers responded immediately to the organization drive. It was the first serious challenge to the powerful Meat Trust. The council was faced immediately with serious obstacles. Among them: rampant racism in an industry with a large preponderance of Black workers; Slavic groups domiciled near the packing plants—the Back-of-the-Yard community; chauvinist propaganda generated by the companies and press. It was an explosive situation threatening the workers generally, and a direct challenge to the Marxist forces. The insidious propaganda, followed later by race riots, was met effectively by a combination of left and Marxist leadership as I will demonstrate later.

The strike was effective. The plants were shut down. The demands went to arbitration before Federal Judge Altschuler. Fitzpatrick "urged all delegates who could attend the hearings" to respond. This helped in the involvement of affiliated trade unions to support the strike. The wide support, the concentration of an industry in one city (unlike steel) lent added assurance for victory. The Altschuler decision was a significant victory for the packinghouse workers.

They received a substantial wage increase and established the 8-hour day in the industry. An appendix to the agreement declared that "There shall be no discrimination against any employee or prospective employee because of race, color or nationality." (Minutes, CF of L meeting, March 3, 1918.) The inclusion of this appendix was of historic importance for a trade union at that time, although in practice there still remained a gulf between word and deed.

The stockyards strike was a serious test in the struggle to eradicate racist ideas among the packinghouse workers. Its success would contribute to organizational efforts in other basic industries because they were where a large number of Black workers were to be found. Aside from rampant chauvinism encouraged by capitalist ideologues, the labor movement was hampered by right-opportunist ideology which ignored the national character of the Black liberation movement and its relations to the Black working class. It saw the problem as only one of "class," as a problem which would be resolved only with the abolition of class society. Consequently it argued that no special measures affect-

ing Black workers should be undertaken. Actually this only led to an accomodation to racism in working-class ranks.

But militant leaders, especially those influenced by Marxist ideas (although the CP had not yet been formed) performed a vital role in the struggle against white chauvinism. James W. Ford, a postal worker and a member of the CF of L (who was later the first Black candidate for Vice-President of the U.S. on the CP ticket) wrote: "In 1919, the Stockyards Labor Council, led by Jack Johnstone, William Z. Foster and other militant trade union leaders, opposed the agents of the bosses with a program of organization of the Negroes and a guarantee of equal rights. The Stockyards Labor Council carried on a militant struggle in the unions against barring Negroes, and forced the abandonment of all discrimination. This struggle for equal rights culminated during the race riots in Chicago in the adoption of a resolution by the Stockyards Labor Council expelling all who refused to accept Negroes on the basis of equality." (James W. Ford, *The Negro and the Democratic Front*, International Publishers, New York, 1938.)

This opinion was confirmed by many rank and file participants who fought and pioneered to bring about Black and white unity among workers. Ralph Turner, a retired railroad worker, recalls the leading role of Bill Herrin, a Black Communist who worked in Armour's Chicago plant. While the company engendered racism, Herrin fought to unite Black and white workers. Herrin, who was a leading force in the 1918-19 strikes, was, says Turner, "most loved by all packing workers for his activities." Otto Wangerin's brother Walter, a white railroad worker and charter member of the Communist Party, pioneered in advancing Black workers in an industry where racism prevailed. He cites that on his initiative a Black laborer "was advanced to the job of counter-man who has the responsibility of handling tools for yard workers and is in charge of the store department where the tools are kept." This was the first break in this department, which now has a majority of Black workers. Many such early experiences were documented during a discussion with retired workers.

The chauvinist stench persisted, especially in leading trade union circles, and continues to the present time. The *Chicago Defender*, a Black newsweekly, whose columns contained little labor news during that period, reacted correctly, however, to the racist policies of the AF of L leadership. It demanded a change. In an editorial addressed to AF of L President Samuel Gompers entitled "Come Now, Lord Gompers!"

it insisted that it is "resolutely opposed to its infamy (Jim Crow) in church and state, and we are immovably pledged against it in the labor unions, whether North or South." It ended: "THERE IS NO COLOR LINE IN THE HANDIWORK OF LABOR AND THERE SHOULD BE NONE IN THE COUNCILS OF LABOR." (Capitals in original—*Chicago Defender*, February 23, 1918.) This editorial appeared during the heat of the packinghouse organization drive. It was probably influenced by the growing number of Black workers in basic industry and their participation in the organization drive. It was correctly addressed to Gompers who, together with the Executive Council, condoned racism in industry and in the unions. George Meany today is a true disciple of Gompers.

Of historic significance during the 1919 race riots was the initiative taken by the Stockyards Labor Council, under left leadership. It was unequivocal in its struggle for Black and white unity. It demonstrated its standpoint in both communities. The CF of L reflected chauvinist influences in the trade unions and, at best, its actions were halting and compromising. Yet, despite the deep prejudices prevailing, it is essential to point out that it directed its main thrust against the packing monopolies, the instigators of the race riots.

The CF of L acknowledged that attempts were being made "to blame the race riots on labor, saying that labor is probably the cause of the riots. When as a matter of fact, labor has done everything in the Stock Yards and held out its hand to the Negro and established organizations and invited the Negroes into the white man's unions."(!) (CF of L *Minutes*, August 3, 1919.) It had to plumb the depths of white chauvinism to come up with a generalization of "white man's unions" and particularly in an industry where over 20 percent of the workers were Black. This is what the left had to contend with—and react they did.

The *Minutes* concluded that "The packers and the vested interests are responsible for the race riots that we are now confronted with and they are trying to shift the blame. The military and police officials 'investigating' the situation are meeting in Armour's office with the other packers and don't want to give the representatives of the workers a chance to present information they have on the matter, and it seems the packers have overplayed their hands and are trying to get out from under." (*Minutes* of the same meeting.)

Here is a combination of blatant white chauvinism and confusion. The outright racism of having "invited the Negroes into the white

man's unions" deserved condemnation. While twenty percent of the packing workers were Black, they were denied membership in most craft unions. Yet the CF of L had to direct its thrust at the packing companies who were in collusion with the police. The class character as to the real instigators of the attacks on the Black people, to a limited extent, penetrated the racist smog.

### **Communist Leadership in the Struggle Against Racism**

Independent activities of Marxists and the left indicated a clear stand. Initiative was taken by the Stockyards Labor Council to halt the riots and crystallize unity of all workers. Jack Johnstone, who had replaced Foster as Secretary of the Council (Foster turned his energies to the steel campaign), was the leader of this move. Marches and demonstrations were arranged uniting the people in both communities. A dramatic demonstration of Black and white workers was a high point of these activities.

A recent publication cites one of these developments. The author grudgingly acknowledges: "Black and white workers paraded through the black belt on Sunday, July 6, and congregated in a playground near the yards. Brass bands led the way, and marchers waved miniature American flags and carried placards, on one of which was printed, 'The bosses think because we are of different colors and different nationalities that we should fight each other. We're going to fool them and fight for a common cause—a square deal for all.' Union leaders delivered speeches at the playground. The seven speakers, of whom three were Black, did not betray the advertised purpose of the meeting—to organize Black workers. 'It does my heart good . . . to see such a checkerboard crowd' said J. W. Johnstone of the SLC (Stockyards Labor Council) in welcoming the workers. 'You are standing shoulder to shoulder as men, regardless of whether your face is black or white.' " (*Race Riots—Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919* by William M. Tuttle, Jr., Atheneum, New York, 1970.) This historic action demonstrated the initiative of the left under the leadership of Jack Johnstone.

The objective to organize the unorganized is not some new turn for the Communist Party. From its early days every one of its conventions called for "The Organization of the Unorganized." It continues this effort today and lends its support, especially to an organization campaign in the south. Workers cannot be left to the mercy of the most

powerful monopolies in the world without creating united strength in shops and industries. Towards this objective, their class party—the Communist Party—made a great contribution.

It was not accidental that nearly all participants in these historic campaigns were later to join the Communist Party. And they were an able group of men and women—widely known in their unions and nationally. In 1921 “Foster and other T. U. E. L. (Trade Union Educational League) militants joined the Party. This brought in a considerable group of active and experienced trade unionists, among them Jack Johnstone, Jay Fox, Joseph Manley, David Coutts, Sam Hammersmark, and many others.” (William Z. Foster, *History of the Communist Party, U.S.A.*, International Publishers, New York, 1952.) They associated their experience and working class ties with those of the Party’s founders, C. E. Ruthenberg, its first General Secretary, John Reed, Alfred Wagenknecht, Charles Krumbein, Dora Lifshitz, Margaret Krumbein, and many others.

### **The 1919 Steel Strike**

Prior to the consummation of the packinghouse strike, Foster had already turned his efforts to the organization of the steel industry—for here was the headquarters of the most powerful exploiters, who set the pattern for others. The steel industry was dominated by the biggest financial pirates in the country. Elbert H. Gary (Judge Gary) had nearly a decade previously established the sprawling company town and named it for himself. From Chicago to Cleveland, Pittsburgh to Baltimore, hundreds of thousands of steel workers were working a 12-hour shift and a 7-day week. The farsighted initiators of this campaign saw that its success would help break through the anti-union domination in basic industries.

The tremendous task of organizing steel was compounded by the obstruction and do-nothing policy of the AF of L bureaucracy and its president, Samuel Gompers. A CF of L resolution to the Executive Council for the organization of steel workers was ignored. Therefore at a subsequent meeting of the CF of L, Resolution No. 1 was again introduced by a number of local unions, among them the Railway Carmen which Foster represented. This resolution directed “that the delegate of the Chicago Federation of Labor to the St. Paul convention of the AFL . . .” call for “the organization of the vast armies of wage earners employed in the steel industries (as) vitally necessary to the further

spread of industrial democracy in America." (Minutes, CF of L Meeting, May 19, 1918.) Foster was elected by the CF of L as its delegate to the convention.

Foster wanted Fitzpatrick as the delegate so as to use the full prestige of the CF of L to mobilize support for this colossal undertaking. When the resolution was adopted unanimously, he telegraphed Fitzpatrick that a conference was to be held during the convention to implement the resolution. Fitzpatrick replied that he would come. He never did and it was therefore left to Foster to carry the burden.

Gompers called a meeting of the international leaders during a lunch recess and perfunctory support was decided upon. A subsequent conference, which was addressed by Gompers, had the same fate. Most of the support during the strike, with the exception of a couple of unions, was nominal. The strike of 365,000 steel workers started on September 22, 1919. It was a bitter struggle, with the corporations using every instrument of violence, murder and police terror to break the strike. The strike was broken. But the steel mills were no longer the same.

The same month—September, 1919—also witnessed the birth of the Communist Party, in Chicago. This was a period of great historic upheavals, in part influenced by the Russian Revolution, affecting workers in Europe and other continents. Its reverberations were felt in the United States as well. It was a time of great ferment, with national strikes in a host of basic industries (packing, steel, coal, railroad.)

The Socialist Party (SP), the party of right-wing opportunism, felt the widespread opposition from its membership. They were disgusted with the opportunist policies of the party, which was dominated by a middle class leadership of lawyers, other professionals, liberals and reformist trade union officials. A majority of its membership were severely oppressed foreign-born workers, many of them from Slavic countries. They were a predominant factor in the basic industries. They could be found in packing, steel, coal and as laborers on the railroads.

They responded with enthusiasm to the first socialist revolution. Many had left native lands where they were persecuted by terroristic regimes. They were uncompromising opponents of the first imperialist war (1914-1918). Consequently they were attracted to the left and were essential to any organization drive in basic industry. These workers contributed a large share to the organization of the unorganized industries, in creating a viable left in the trade union movement and in the formation of the Communist Party.

The SP leadership found these foreign born workers a threat to their control of the party. Their only solution was a mass expulsion of the membership. As a result, as cited by Foster, "The National Executive Committee, in its May 24-30, 1919, meeting arbitrarily expelled the Michigan state organization with 6,000 members, and it suspended (expelled is used in the original source—P.B.) the Russian, Lithuanian, Polish, Lettish, Hungarian, Ukrainian, and South Slav federations, with a total of over 40,000 members." (*The Revolutionary Age*, June 7, 1919. Cited in *History of the Communist Party, U.S.A.* by William Z. Foster.)

This criminal act of the SP leadership occurred four months before the steel workers walked out of the mills. The need for the greatest support and labor solidarity was well known to the SP leadership. The monopoly press was able to boast of this decision, recognizing it as a service to the steel corporations. The *Chicago Tribune* gloated in a front page headline: "Socialists Read Bolshevik Wing Out of Party." It wrote that "The national executive committee of the Socialist Party expelled 25,000 Slavic Socialists of the 'Soviet breed' from the party yesterday, and then thrust the Michigan Socialists after them." (*Chicago Tribune*, May 30, 1919.) The plaudits for the expulsion came from a source which appreciated the act. The objective, besides ridding the party of its basic workers who were a threat to its policies, was also aimed at gaining favor from the extreme right-wing in the AF of L leadership, who saw the move to organize steel as a threat to their establishment.

The strike was lost. But the 12-hour day and 7-day week in steel were ended. The workers had hardly returned to their jobs when their strike leader summarized the event: "The steel workers are fast recovering from their defeat. The educational campaign is getting results, and the work should be made a permanent institution until the industry is organized. . . . The time is past when a few short sighted officials can block the organization of a great industry." (*The Great Steel Strike and Its Lessons* by William Z. Foster, B. W. Huebsch, Inc., New York, 1920.)

Communists pioneered and helped initiate the drives to organize the unorganized. The Communists possessed the clear-sighted vision and consciousness, and were and continue to be a part of the class which gave it birth—the working class.

### **Capitalist Violence and Repression**

The closing of the second decade of the 20th Century and the opening of the third reverberated with sharp cracks in the world capitalist

system. The Russian Socialist Revolution was a reality. Socialism was here to stay. Capitalism sought solutions in increased violence in the hope of stemming the growth of this new giant. While the imperialist world war was still raging, it launched interventionary attacks against the newly born socialist state. They sent their interventionary forces against Soviet Russia, while sharpening their attacks against the workers at home. The left faced the test of crystallizing greater unity against these new onslaughts.

The thrust of the attack was aimed at the trade unions; particular hostility was directed against the foreign born, and moves made to destroy the newly formed Communist Party. We indicated that the race riots were part of the reactionary offensive. An hysteria against "bolshivism," the predecessor of anti-communism, was the ideological weapon which was used. One anti-labor sheet raved that efforts to establish militant trade unions were an attempt "to overthrow representative democracy and establish the Russian Soviet system." (Editorial in the *Chicago Tribune*, June 2, 1919.) This was reinforced by poisonous racist propaganda, a terminal disease of capitalism.

The newly formed Communist Party became a constant and major target of the government. The Bureau of Investigation (predecessor to the FBI) was headed by strike breaker William J. Burns, who had as his assistant the young sleuth, the ill-famed J. Edgar Hoover, who was later to control the U.S. political police for many decades. When Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer ordered Burns to conduct raids on the foreign born, the dragnet caught some 10,000 victims. Many hundreds were later deported while many were brutally beaten and jailed. This act brought sharp protests from civil liberties groups, but hardly a ripple from trade unions.

The Bridgman, Michigan raid (August, 1922) on the Communist Party's national convention already reflected a new element which is important to record here. The raid on the national convention, which met in a small Michigan community, was preceded by a series of anti-labor acts. It became evident that while the main target was the Communist Party, the rebound would hit the trade unions and, first of all, the progressive forces in their leadership. This was the opinion of the Chicago Federation of Labor, too.

The first to be hit was the Trade Union Educational League (TUEL) which was the national center of the left forces in the labor movement. A raid on its offices was instigated by the Cook County (Chicago) attor-



ney's office with the collaboration of the *Chicago Tribune*. This occurred during a TUEL conference which was raided. Many delegates were beaten and arrested. The conference continued after the raiders left.

Prior to this assault, Foster was followed by state attorney's detectives. The procedure was not novel. The same frame-up methods used against Mooney and Billings were to be applied here. There had been a railroad wreck near Gary, Indiana and Foster was to be arrested and charged with sabotage. This, they figured, would make it possible, with one blow, to destroy the left movement in the AF of L, and simultaneously stymie the development of the new Marxist party. The plot was exposed and failed.

Since this phase of the Bridgman case received too little attention, I will quote extensively from the files of *The New Majority* (Organ of the CF of L) whose contributions were invaluable. Unlike the 1919 Palmer raids, the defense for the Bridgman victims found an immediate reaction in the labor movement. *The New Majority* saw a close tie between the court injunctions against trade unions and the raid on the CP. It associated its own cause with that of the TUEL and the CP. A mass meeting in Chicago addressed by Communist leaders William Z. Foster and C.E. Ruthenberg had as one of its speakers the editor of *The New Majority*, Robert M. Buck.

The CF of L took up the cudgels in this fight. Through the columns of its newspaper and at its meetings this question was under discussion. Here is the story which appeared in *The New Majority* two weeks after the raids: "In a desperate attempt to link recent railroad disasters with the activities of the Communist Party and the Trade Union Educational League of which William Z. Foster is secretary and to turn the blame for wrecks away from the railroad officials who disregard the bad repair into which their equipment has fallen, the *Chicago Tribune* has commenced again the campaign of 'red raids.'" (September 2, 1922.)

The story continues: "Following the raid of Foster's office which occurred a week ago Sunday, exclusively conducted by *The Tribune* and detectives from State's Attorney Crowe's office, detectives trailed an alleged secret meeting of the Communist Party in Berrien County, Michigan, and arrested seventeen men. The prisoners were chained together like a pack of bears and led through the town of St. Joseph, where they are held on warrants under the Michigan criminal syndicalist law. Truckloads of so-called 'red' literature were seized and the detectives are still busy scanning it in search of proof that Foster or the

Communists are responsible for the wreck at Gary." (ibid.) The CF of L newspaper estimates that the police intended to turn the raid on the Communist Party into a "routine" frame-up of train wrecking.

It concludes: "The third act in the Tribune's stage play occurred last Sunday while the first national conference of the Trade Union Educational League was in session at the Scandinavian Labor Lyceum, Hirsch Boulevard. Headed by Detective Sergeant Laurence McDonough of war-time fame, a squad of assistants and police entered the convention hall. The conference adjourned while McDonough arrested thirteen men from among the delegates and visitors and immediately reconvened when the intruders with their prisoners had departed." (ibid.)

The lessons drawn by the CF of L weekly are worthy of the attention of every trade unionist today. In its issue of September 16, 1922 it editorializes: "The recent raids, however, in which more than a score of trade unionists were arrested in Michigan and Illinois, are felt throughout the entire country as a direct attack upon the labor movement as a whole, particularly upon the progressive trade union movement. Where in 1920 the red raids came and passed with hardly a protest from the unions and no concerted action on their part, the 1922 raids find unions all over the country aroused and ready to take action on behalf of the labor men now in jail or facing trial." It concludes that "Now more than ever, it is plain that the cause of the victims of Daugherty's raids is the concern of the labor movement and that an attack on 'reds' is a covert attack on unionism." (The New Majority, September 16, 1922.)

The widely expressed opinion that the series of raids on the CP "is the concern of the labor movement" was sound. It recognized that attacks on the CP are "a covert attack on unionism." This resulted from joint cooperation and experience in struggle. In these confrontations class relations became clear. The trade unions faced the same enemy as the Communist Party. Reactionary trade union leaders have constantly sought to isolate the CP. During the height of unconcealed class collaboration, both capitalists and top trade union leaders were members of the same organization—the National Civic Federation (NCF). This group was established in the 1890s to prevent the organization of mass production industries. When the campaign was launched for an organization drive, the AF of L convention, in 1935, had first to sever its ties with the NCF. They could not conduct a serious drive to build new unions in basic industry and simultaneously meet, in the same organi-

zation, with the monopolists. In sharp contrast, however, the CP was one of the most active forces in the organization drives. Class collaboration remains a strong barrier in the trade unions, to the detriment of the workers. Anti-communism is the strongest prop to class collaboration.

### **Impact of the Russian Revolution**

The alliance of progressive forces was formed around concrete issues. While its main concern was economic problems, it considered other social and political questions as well. In the international arena they observed the same class forces operating. Therefore foreign policy questions had to be the concern of the trade union movement.

The impact of the Russian socialist revolution was felt in U.S. labor circles, expressed in big strike struggles and in other militant forms. The attitude toward the new socialist state reflected the united front relations between the Fitzpatrick-Nockels leadership and the left. The first world-wide imperialist war, in which the United States was involved, was fanned by a frenzy of chauvinism. Opposition to its imperialist policies was met with jailing and terror. When the Russian Revolution removed the new socialist state as an imperialist ally, thereby creating the sharpest crack in the imperialist system, the guns of war were turned against it.

When the war ended in November, 1918, Soviet Russia found itself surrounded by enemies and invaded by armies of occupation. They came to support every counter-revolutionary force they could help establish. The allies of czarist Russia became the enemies of Socialist Russia. The U.S. armies, instead of returning home, were transformed into armies of occupation. The Soviet state faced a military, diplomatic and economic blockade.

Solidarity with the Soviet state found a ready response in the Chicago labor movement. At a regular meeting of the CF of L, Consolidated Lodge No. 113 of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) introduced a resolution dealing with aggression by the then Polish fascist government against the Soviet government. The Polish fascists had been defeated, but further threats existed. This resolution created an intensive correspondence between Gompers and the CF of L.

The resolution declared that "Soviet Russia succeeded in defeating this attack (by Poland) and is now engaged in imposing such conditions upon those that have so brutally and violently attacked her that

will assure the workingmen's government of Russia safety from future attacks, and peace. It resolved that "organized labor of England, France and Italy have informed their respective governments that in case war would be declared against Soviet Russia, they would at once inaugurate a general strike to prevent mobilization and in every way possible paralyze industry and transportation until such time as war against Russia is prevented."

Following this information, the IAM recommended "that we urge upon the American Federation of Labor to call a general conference of representatives of all its affiliated organizations and those not affiliated . . . to encourage and endorse the action taken by the workers of England, France and Italy, with the view of taking such action as will prevent mobilization of military and naval forces . . . as will compel our government to stay its hand against Soviet Russia, should the American government decide on a war against Russia." (*Minutes, CF of L meeting, August 15, 1920.*) It was recommended that this resolution be given the widest publicity and sent to all central labor bodies and other nationally affiliated organizations. A copy was sent to Gompers. In the final resolution all references to a "general strike" were deleted. The sole and major question was the convening of a national conference on this crucial issue. But Gompers decided to make the non-existent "general strike" issue the diversionary point.

Gompers immediately dispatched a cablegram to the International Labor Organization (ILO) to check on the response of European trade unions towards Soviet solidarity. It is well to note that Gompers reached the ILO for his information, but did not get in touch directly with the European trade unions. This was not accidental. Europe was in revolutionary ferment, which was expressed not only in solidarity with the Soviet state, but in the formation of Soviets (Workers Councils) in some countries and in a revolutionary upsurge throughout the continent.

Gompers manipulated the non-existent "general strike" issue on a national scale. The American Federationist, official organ of the AF of L, carried an editorial opposing a "general strike." The national machinery was put in operation to divert a growing movement for solidarity with Soviet Russia.

Gompers addressed a letter to the CF of L rejecting its main points. He dismissed the recommendation of the Chicago affiliate which represented a half million workers. When the letter was read, the delegates

decided that Nockels, as secretary, should send a reply. In pointed language Nockels wrote: "You say in your letter that the resolution of the Chicago Federation of Labor declared a general strike should be called. The Chicago Federation of Labor does not say anything of the kind." (Minutes, CF of L meeting, December 5, 1920.) He then reminded Gompers that European workers would not support an "imperialist war against a neighbor republic."

The letter urged Gompers to call a national conference which would include not only "its affiliated organizations," but would be all-inclusive by inviting "those not affiliated" to the AF of L. Nockels repeated his query: "We do not know whether such a conference will be called. We assume from your letters that it will not." He then pleads again that such a gathering be convened.

Local No. 113 of the IAM followed its earlier resolution with another condemning the blockade to starve the Russian people and called for "friendly realtions . . . in every manner and form." This included the development of trade between the two countries. The resolution "requests the Chicago Federation of Labor to call a mass meeting at an early date for the purpose of protesting in no uncertain way against the inhuman treatment of Russia and at the same time demand of Congress that the United States of America at once declare the blockade against Russia at an end and re-open friendly realtions with Soviet Russia in every manner and form." (Minutes, CF of L Meeting, December 19, 1920.)

We have no record of a mass meeting having been called. But an issue of the labor paper reports a meeting in the Chicago Auditorium on October 8, 1921 where \$3,000 was raised for Russian relief. It was addressed by William Z. Foster who had recently returned from Russia and Louise Bryant, the widow of John Reed.

History, as is well known, does not repeat itself. What occurred in one period may not necessarily be duplicated in another. Yet there are features which occur under certain historical conditions whose lessons are applicable today. This is particularly applicable to the resolution of the IAM. It raises the questions of "friendly relations . . . in every manner and form." This was applied to the need for peaceful relations and trade, an objective which today takes the form of detente between the Soviet Union and the United States. Of course, today we are not dealing with a starving and devastated Russia; we are considering one of the two greatest industrial powers in the world today, the Soviet

Union, which is leading the struggle for peace and against imperialism. But the issue of peace and trade which prevailed then is an essential, historical requirement today. The working class today can demonstrate that it is the vital force for improving relations, expanding trade, thereby creating additional jobs for American workers. The resolution of the IAM in 1922 can be translated and applied to the needs of today.

We have dealt with some of the central questions which faced the working class during and immediately after World War I. They were acute problems not confined to Chicago alone. In some instances there were sharper outbursts in other areas (such as the Seattle General Strike of 1919). The great steel strike (1919) was not confined to a single area; Chicago, however, was the center which attracted a singular group of progressive trade union leaders, whose influence went beyond its confines. We have dealt with salient problems before the Chicago labor movement.

### **Independent Political Action**

We will outline some features of the independent political movement initiated by the Chicago Federation of Labor. This development was also reflected in sharp public debate with Gompers. This helped expose the bankrupt policies of the national AF of L and served to educate the workers.

Many Labor and Farmer-Labor parties came into existence following World War I. In the midwest there was hardly a state in which one could not find some local or state-wide independent labor political organization. The CF of L was the leading force in this movement. Its high point was reached in the 1924 presidential elections, in which the Farmer-Labor Party with Senator Robert M. LaFollette as its candidate polled over 4,800,000 votes.

The Labor Party of Chicago and Cook County was organized by the CF of L. The left forces had a profound influence in the formation and activities of the party. Foster reported that "the T.U.E.L. developed cooperative relations with the Farmer-Labor Party group headed by John Fitzpatrick." This development, he concluded, "was an outgrowth of our joint activities in the packinghouse and steel campaigns of 1917-20." (William Z. Foster, *From Bryan to Stalin*, International Publishers, New York, 1937.)

The 1919 Chicago ticket was headed by Fitzpatrick as mayoralty

candidate. This progressive step was immediately challenged by Gompers. It sharpened the political differences between the national organization and its local affiliate. But this debate, once again, helped to create clarity among the workers.

Gompers had attacked the Indiana Labor Party. This found an immediate response from the neighboring labor organization. The CF of L replied: "Mr. Gompers and the executive council have confessed again and again, the futility and failure of the 'defeat your friends and reward your enemies' (sic) plan whereby Mr. Gompers seeks again to juggle the labor vote around between the old parties." (Editorial, *The New Majority*, February 28, 1920.)

The debate between the national organization and its city affiliate was pointed and gave the readers of *The New Majority* occasion to contrast the two positions. It contributed towards the education of the active forces in the Chicago labor movement. The bluntness of the discussion helped maintain healthy relations between the left and progressive coalition.

In dealing with the rigid stance and inability to adjust to historic changes, the CF of L concluded that the AF of L policy "after forty years experience . . . had not a leg to stand on politically." (Editorial, "Third Party Talk," *The New Majority*, December 23, 1922.) It took the opportunity of this discussion to expose the harm of this non-class, actually anti-working class policy. It exposed the political trap of endorsing candidates who operate under a liberal label without even a pretense of commitment to the labor movement, and then gloating about the "victories" achieved.

The editorial charges: "Consider the case of Hiram Johnson, senator from California. . . . Mr. Gompers has issued a report for the AF of L Nonpartisan Political Campaign Committee, saying that the Committee supported Hiram Johnson and he was elected. And so with other groups also. They all claim a 'victory' in the election of Hiram Johnson." (same editorial.)

We know from current experiences that liberal candidates may gain support from progressive groups—and in the labor movement. But such support can never be uncritical, unconditional. The needs of the movement require that the electorate wrest concessions and establish guarantees before making its commitment to any candidate.

The Johnson election was in the midst of the campaign for Tom Mooney's freedom. In dealing with Gompers' boast of Johnson's victory

the editorial concludes vividly: "Some victory, we'll say! There is no one more responsible than Hiram Johnson for the fact that Tom Mooney still is in jail. He could have had him out any time he crooked his little finger. But not he." (italics added). Following Johnson's "victory" Mooney and Billings remained in jail. They were released by Governor C. L. Olson in 1939, having served 23 years of a life term on a frame-up charge of bombing.

### **Communists and the Chicago Federation of Labor**

It was in an international climate of great social upheaval, while at home masses of workers were breaking the anti-union barriers, that the CP was born. Prior to 1919 there was a strong and effective left force in the SP. They were a significant factor politically and in leadership in trade unions. Many were founders of the new Marxist party, while others were attracted soon after its formation. It was a group of men and women with long experience and matured by years of struggle. They were themselves workers and had close ties with the organized working class. They inherited the pioneering spirit which opened up with the historic struggle for the 8-hour day at the close of the nineteenth century. This group was trained in the class battles against some of the most powerful financial-industrial pirates who "opened" the west for monopoly exploitation and consolidated their power in this midwest industrial metropolis. Lucy Parsons, widow of the Haymarket martyr Albert Parsons who was hanged with three of his co-workers in 1887, had been a member of the Syndicalist League and later became a member of the Communist Party in Chicago.

This well organized left group, conscious of maintaining an effective organization in Chicago, consistently maintained close ties with other groups nationally. Most came from shops and were in the leadership of their local unions. National ties took the form of industrial conferences which were followed by a national meeting in 1922 in Chicago for the establishment of a national left center—The Trade Union Educational League.

Chicago was a city of great industrial combines. Just as it was the area which attracted militant working class forces, so it also served as the directing center for the big open shop operators. It was the city where the monopolists got their first victims in the fight for the 8-hour day; but it was honored as the city which contained the first general staff to



organize and lead strikes in the railroad, packing and steel industries.

The CF of L was the most progressive central labor body in the country. Although under control of leaders from craft unions, it included a basic left corps with experience in organization and ties with the workers. This force did not attempt to challenge the craft union leadership. It found forms of cooperation on basic problems in which they could reach common agreement. There were obstructions and delays. There was resistance from narrow craft representatives. But this was overcome through unity, which embraced the dominant groups, through consistent struggle and in daily experiences.

The advanced position of the CF of L was not the result of the left and Marxists alone, although their contributions remain exemplary in creating unity in this important labor body. Ideologically there were sharp differences of attitude to world events, socialism, the role of unions, etc. In practice, however, there was a coalition which included Marxists and the left, and in its majority honest militants concerned with establishing a viable trade union organization. Politically there were strong ties to the two old parties, but they were receptive to discussion and, most important, influenced by the course of events. The left contributed towards creating a strong rank and file, thereby helping to shape the course of the organization. This was seen in the conferences of left forces in various industries and in the formation of a national coordinating center.

Anti-communist historians, specialists aided by corporate funds, devote considerable attention to producing works on the Communist Party. They attempt to define the "motivation" of the CP. Some bring as their credentials to this work a "trace" of personal experience—a "brief sojourn" in the CP. One of these Communist "experts," Theodore Draper, with the aid of the Fund for the Republic (Ford Foundation), adds his contribution. His credentials are as an observer of "the Communist movement, inside and outside." Quite a performance to start with. He then assures his readers that "he broke with the movement entirely in an early stage of World War II." His observation was a fling of "youthful experience" which he easily discarded with the aid of the Fund for the Republic.

His "Roots of American Communism" is sub-titled, "The untold story of the formative years of the Communist Party in (sic) America." We shall deal here only with one point in the book. In dealing with the "formative years" he is not inhibited by the need to examine all facts. If

an exaggeration helps, all the better.

Draper states that Communists "talked and wrote about the trade unions with vast authority but had little contact with them." The contact and direct participation in the CF of L, however, was no empty gesture. It was a fact of life. He writes that the AF of L in 1919 had three million members. Surely the half million members in the CF of L were no small part of the national organization.

Draper totally ignores the tens of thousands of foreign born workers, a large number of whom had been expelled from the Socialist Party. They were under Communist influence and played no small role in the organization of the packing and steel industries. What this historian deliberately neglected, the steel corporations fully recognized. That is the special importance of the foreign born workers and their influence on the organization drive. The Gary Tribune carried special articles against the steel workers and used special means to attract the foreign born. These attacks "were run in a full page editorial in English, and repeated in a special eight page supplement containing sixteen languages, a half page to each. Many thousands of copies were scattered broadside." (William Z. Foster, *The Great Steel Strike*, B. W. Huebsch, Inc., New York, 1920.) This was written immediately after the strike when the full impact of these militant and Marxist influenced workers was still fresh. The steel trust recognized the influence of the Communist Party among these workers, even if the Fund for the Republic historian cannot see it a half century later.

To top it off, Draper says that Foster "conceived of an even more ambitious operation (than the organization of the packinghouse workers—P.B.) to organize the great open-shop, mass production industries, starting with steel." (Theodore Draper, *The Roots of Communism*, The Viking Press, New York, 1957.) This is true. The drive to organize the mass production industries was no sinister objective. It was not a secret plot of Foster to take over the whole labor movement. So Draper conjures a "dream" for his anti-communist diatribe. After the steel strike was defeated, Draper writes, "Foster's dream of taking over the whole AF of L was shattered." (ibid.) The whole history of the organization of packing, steel and other industries had but one objective: to establish the united strength of the working class. This has been demonstrated in every struggle in the past, as it is today.

Draper's credentials as an anti-communist specialist would be incomplete unless he could come up with a "communist conspiracy." So

he dishes up the old canard that Communists conspired to take over the whole labor movement. Having nothing to confirm it, he weaves a "dream" as his proof. But this old fable is pretty stale and getting harder to sell. The record of Communists in the CF of L and in the struggles in packing, steel and railroad, as shown above, repudiates this whole lie.

The coalition was a loose combination of forces which was under constant pressure. The Marxists, left and progressives developed through consistent association, and in struggle, a coalition which advanced the interests of the workers not only in Chicago but nationally. There were unremitting pressures to create splits and isolate the left. The national AF of L leadership used every device to encourage a break-up of the alliance. Threats were made to withdraw the charter of the Chicago Federation of Labor.

To this was added the pernicious influence of racism as a divisive and harmful ingredient. Compromises with white chauvinism, which led to alienation of Black workers, prevailed in the unions. Furthermore, while Black workers were recruited in large numbers in the organization drives, they were often denied membership in the craft unions. This fact received the constant attention of Marxists and sections of the left.

### **The Lessons of Anti-Communism and Racism**

While no exact date can be set, the coalition came to an end by the close of 1923. A full study of this question is not possible here. But the factors which influenced this transformation included: temporary economic stability; consolidation of the right wing leadership in the trade unions; setbacks in the organization of basic industries; division and inadequate rank and file strength of the left; ideological, sectarian weaknesses in the CP and an inadequate estimation of the new situation in the country. All took their toll in undermining the unity in the CF of L. No doubt the Fitzpatrick group yielded to the pressure of the Gompers clique to break with Foster and the left and progressive forces.

Chicago, where many historic struggles were initiated, a region close to the heart of the nation's working class, was the logical birthplace of the Communist Party. To carry out its mission it devoted its energies to a policy of industrial concentration—that is, directing its major attention to the basic industries. Among the achievements under Foster's

leadership was the abolition of the 12-hour day in the steel industry, just as the Communist Party today is leading in the efforts for the 6-hour day.

During the late '20s, following the earlier defeats in the organization drive, an ebb was caused by the total abdication of the AF of L leadership. The Communists and left continued to organize, never forgetting that the United States has the lowest proportion of organized workers among highly industrialized countries. Struggles were carried on in coal mining, automobile, electrical, needle trades and others. The campaign reached into the south, especially among textile and tobacco workers. These activities contributed to the successful drive of the CIO.

The anti-communist attacks in the 1920s had their effects. Many Communists were ousted from trade union posts to which they had been elected. Some lost their jobs. But we need to recall that in the 1950s when McCarthyism swept the nation like a plague, the Communists were once again in the eye of the hurricane. They were the first target. But as the hurricane swept across the land it hit many others. In its rubble it left a number of anti-labor, anti-democratic laws.

In all anti-communist tirades, wherever and whenever they occur, they must be seen as anti-working class and anti-democratic. It is important never to forget the position of the Chicago Federation of Labor a half century ago. It holds as good today as it did then. When the Communist Party convention was raided in Bridgman, Michigan in 1922, *The New Majority*, official organ of the Chicago Federation of Labor, declared: "*The recent raids, however, in which more than a score of trade unionists (who were Communists—P.B.) were arrested in Michigan and Illinois are felt throughout the entire country as a direct attack upon the labor movement as a whole, particularly upon the progressive trade union movement.*" (italics added.) The time must come when every progressive trade unionist will carry this resolution—at all times—in the shop and in the trade union.

Cynics and professional anti-communists would prefer to forget this splendid past of the Communist Party's history and its ties with the progressive leadership of the half-million strong CF of L. They would like to consider it a passing phase of long ago. But they cannot eradicate the indelible facts. It is an episode—not from musty files, but a continuous part of today's reality.

A half century separates today's progressive and rank-and-file movement from its earlier period. A powerful trade union organization

has come into being. The monopoly dominated industries have been organized and new conditions established. Social security has been written into law and recognized by the corporations. These achievements were made through difficult, often bloody, struggles. When steel workers were shot down in the infamous South Chicago Memorial Day Massacre in 1937, in which 10 workers died, Communists fell by the side of their fellow martyrs. But today this area has a strong and militant trade union organization.

Today we are up against new challenges. The past gains are vital to move ahead today. The working class can move forward precisely because of its previous gains. It takes many skirmishes and battles to move forward against the most powerful, reactionary capitalist class. But the American working class can look back with pride, though not with respite. The hard-won gains must be maintained. But a new initiative is required to resist the new offensive of monopoly and make new gains.

The Communist Party has made considerable advances over this period. It has been in the thick of some of the greatest struggles. It is now in a stronger position and equipped to participate in and give leadership to the new struggles ahead.

Born in Chicago, the Communist Party was cradled by the revolutionary working class nationally, for it belongs to them. The pride in its past is only a promise of greater struggles, of greater achievements for our class, for our country. This is the direction for the transformation to a socialist society, without profiteers, without exploiters.

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