

# “Communism vs. Free Trade Unions”

Herbert Romerstein’s last special report for America’s Survival, Inc.



From left to right: Jane Fonda, Karen Nussbaum, Ira Arlook, Karen Ackerman

Before his passing (August 19, 1931 – May 7, 2013), veteran anti-communist investigator Herbert Romerstein completed a special report on the subject of how communists target labor unions. We are releasing that report at this time, on the eve of Labor Day 2015, September 7, to demonstrate the intensity of the effort to exploit workers for Marxist purposes and to remind people that it has been largely successful. To cite one example, the AFL-CIO had been vigorously promoting “Occupy Wall Street.” Members of the working class have little in common with the left-wing professional agitators running these protests and the tent cities they were erecting illegally in private and public parks in cities such as New York and Washington, D.C. The most interesting part of this story, however, was that one of the AFL-CIO affiliates behind the campaign, the Working America group, is headed by a veteran of the Venceremos Brigades to Cuba, a progressive activist by the name of Karen Nussbaum.



The Venceremos Brigades, which are actually still in operation, were the orchestrated “tours” of the communist island, conducted under the authority and supervision of Castro’s intelligence service. They were designed to create a communist cadre on the soil of the United States. The Brigades were organized in 1969 by Bernardine Dohrn and other members of the Weather Underground terrorist group. “I learned about revolution in Cuba,” Nussbaum has said. Now, she is practicing revolution in the streets of the U.S., armed with the millions of dollars that the AFL-CIO forcibly extracts from unsuspecting workers. Since Castro has outlawed independent labor unions in Cuba, as well as freedom in general, Nussbaum’s fascination with the communist system on the island is a relevant line of inquiry for those concerned about the dangers of socialism and totalitarianism here and the current direction of the AFL-CIO. Karen Ackerman, political director of the AFL-CIO, is another veteran of the Weathermen-sponsored Venceremos Brigades.

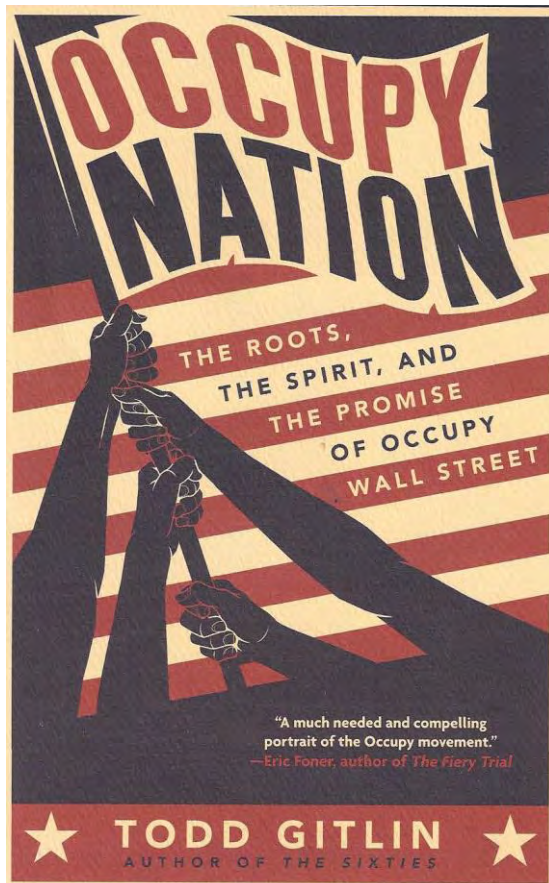


But Cuba wasn’t Nussbaum’s only stop on the communist world tour. She became a member of a local “peace organization” opposed to American involvement in the Vietnam War and traveled to Hanoi in 1973. Nussbaum became a friend of “Hanoi Jane”

Fonda, who was photographed sitting on an anti-aircraft gun used to shoot down American aircraft during the war.

Nussbaum's husband, Ira Arlook, works for Fenton Communications, the firm that has represented George Soros, the communist Nicaraguan Sandinistas, and others of that ilk. Arlook, chief of "advocacy campaigns" for the firm, handles the account of the Soros-funded Moveon.org.

Nussbaum has talked about how John Sweeney, then chief of the AFL-CIO, and Richard Trumka, secretary-treasurer under Sweeney, had worked to "open up" the labor federation to "new constituencies" and had become "more aggressive." Nussbaum was brought into the AFL-CIO as part of this effort, becoming an assistant to Sweeney and running the Working America affiliate under Sweeney and now Trumka, the current president.



# OCCUPY WORLD STREET

A GLOBAL ROADMAP FOR  
RADICAL ECONOMIC AND  
POLITICAL REFORM



## ROSS JACKSON

FOREWORD BY HAZEL HENDERSON

## COMMUNISM vs. FREE TRADE UNIONS

By Herbert Romerstein

Trade Unions have always been the target of the Communists. The plan was to capture the Trade Unions and use them to achieve Communist goals. In a pamphlet written by Lenin, in 1920, in answer to the "left wing" communists who argued that they were too "pure" to work in the trade unions, he explained "We must be able to ... agree to make any sacrifice, and even – if need be – to resort to various stratagems, artifices and illegal methods, to evasions and subterfuges, as long as we get into the trade unions, remain in them, and carry out communist work within them at all costs."<sup>1</sup> It was prepared in pamphlet form in English and sent to the United States to be published as Nicolai Lenin "*Left*" *Communism An Infantile Disorder*. It was published that year by "The Toiler"<sup>2</sup>, which soon changed its name to the "Worker" and later it became the official Communist Party newspaper "The Daily Worker". Copies of these instructions from Lenin were published in every language and distributed in June 1921 at the Third World Congress of the Communist International.

In January 1924 Lenin died. A short time later Joseph Stalin, his disciple, explained why the trade unions and other front organizations were so important. He referred to them as "levers" or "transmission belts". The "directing force", according to Stalin was the Communist Party. He explained "The Proletariat needs these transmission belts, these levers, and this directing force, because without them, in its struggle for victory, it would be a weaponless army...." Stalin went on "The proletariat needs these organizations because without them it would suffer inevitable defeat in its fight for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, in its fight for the consolidation of its own power, in its fight for the building of socialism."<sup>3</sup>

The Communist International (Comintern), a world party of communist revolution, was established in Moscow in 1919. Every Communist Party belonged to the Comintern and received and obeyed its instructions. In 1921, the Comintern established a "Trade Union International". Its official name was the Red International of Labor Unions (R.I.L.U.). The Comintern's instructions were quite specific. A resolution passed at the First World Congress of the R.I.L.U. accepted the Comintern orders, "To establish the closest possible contact with the Third Communist International as the vanguard of the revolutionary labor movement in all the parts of the world on the basis of joint representation at executive committees, joint conferences, etc."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> V.I. Lenin *Collected Works, Volume 31*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1966, p 55.

<sup>2</sup> Nicolai Lenin, "*Left*" *Communism an Infantile Disorder*", The Toiler, 1920. We have one copy published in 1920 by the Communist Party of Great Britain, titled "*Left Wing*" *Communism An Infantile Disorder* by Nikolai Lenin; and another copy dated 1920 in German as *Der "Radikalismus" die Kinderkrankheit des Kommunismus* by N. Lenin, Herausgegeben vom Westeuropäischen Sekretariat der Kommunistischen Internationale, Leipzig, 1920 (distributed by the West European Secretariat of the Communist International). Another version was published by the American Communists in 1921 through the Marxian Educational Society, Detroit, Michigan, and signed N. Lenin. Before Lenin died in 1924, all of his publications were signed either Nikolai Lenin or N. Lenin. After his death, he was always called V.I. Lenin.

<sup>3</sup> J. Stalin, *Problems of Leninism*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1953, pp 164-5. The book published in Moscow contained not only this pamphlet called "The Foundations of Leninism" but other writings on the subject by Stalin. "The Foundations of Leninism" has also been printed as an individual pamphlet by the communists many times.

<sup>4</sup> *Resolutions and Decisions of the First International Congress of Revolutionary Trade and Industrial Unions*, The American Labor Union Educational Society, 1921, pp 17-8.

Both Communist and Anarchist union functionaries were invited to the Moscow conference that established what the Soviets called "The Profintern" or in English "Red International of Labor Unions" (R.I.L.U). Among those invited were William Z. Foster and his assistant Earl Browder. Foster ran a tiny organization called The American Labor Union Educational Society, which soon changed its name to Trade Union Educational League (TUEL).

In 1994, an American academic named Edward P. Johanningsmeier wrote an authorized, i.e. friendly, biography of Foster. Johanningsmeier received permission to examine some of the Communist International archives in Moscow relating to Foster. One of the documents from 1921 that Johanningsmeier found and quoted in his book showed that Foster agreed to accept Moscow's orders. It said, "On all bureaux established by the [Profintern], the Communist party of the same country shall have adequate representation with decisive vote. Where disagreement arises between the party and the bureau, the position of the party shall prevail, pending appeal to and decision by the [Central Executive Committee of the Comintern]."<sup>5</sup> Foster was appointed by R.I.L.U. to be their Special Representative in the United States. According to Johanningsmeier, "To keep an eye on things, Browder, in acting as Foster's assistant, would also function as 'information agent for the Executive Bureau of the R.I.L.U. in Moscow'". Foster and Browder joined the Communist Party. They had previously lived from hand to mouth and what they got from their tiny organization. What Johanningsmeier neglected to say was that these were salaried positions for Foster and Browder as functionaries of the R.I.L.U. Their tiny organization became more important because of Moscow's patronage. The TUEL was run by the American Communist Party. It was anti A.F. of L. but had a policy of "boring from within". They usually had little effect on the A.F. of L. which was the major trade union organization in the United States.

Samuel Gompers had been the President of the A.F. of L. since 1882. Born in 1850 in London, England to Jewish parents, Gompers was brought to the U.S. by his parents in when he was 13. At age 14, he became a cigar maker and helped organize the union in that industry.<sup>6</sup> When the Russian Revolution took place, he was very anti-Soviet. Writing to the magazine *Struggling Russia*, which supported the Russian provisional government against the Bolsheviks, Gompers wrote, "American labor views with heavy heart the terrible curse of Bolshevism forced by the gun and bayonet on the people of Russia and sincerely hopes for the success of their brave and valiant fight to eradicate it forever from their sore ridden land. No more monstrous or degrading government ever was set up anywhere in the world. Its entire existence has been one of terrorism, tyranny and brutal slaying of those who are seeking for a just government."<sup>7</sup>

Gompers had supported the American entry into World War I. In a message to the members of the A.F. of L. in September 1917, Gompers said:

"The United States has declared that she can no longer live in safety when there is stalking throughout the earth this thunderous machine of murder. The United States

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<sup>5</sup> Edward P. Johanningsmeier, *Forging American Communism, The Life of William Z. Foster*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1994, p 164. Quoted from Moscow Archives, Fond 5, Opus 3, Delo 381. (We found the same document in the American Communist Party Collection made available by the Moscow Archives to the U.S. Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Washington, DC. where it appears as Fond 515, Opus 1, Delo 20. The only difference is the word Comintern is spelled out as Communist International.)

<sup>6</sup> *The American Labor Who's Who*, Hanford Press, New York City, 1925, p 89.

<sup>7</sup> *Struggling Russia*, November 22, 1919, p 517.

# Should a Political Labor Party Be Formed?

AN ADDRESS BY

**SAMUEL GOMPERS**

President of the American Federation of Labor

**TO A LABOR CONFERENCE**

Held at New York City, December 9, 1918

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Endorsed and Directed to be Published by the Executive  
Council of the American Federation of Labor  
Headquarters, A. F. of L. Building  
Washington, D. C.



Underwood & Underwood

SAMUEL GOMPERS

SON

SAMUEL GOMPERS  
President

authoritatively has declared that peace is desirable and should be brought about, but that peace is impossible so long as life and liberty are challenged and menaced. The Republic of the United States has cast her lot with the allied countries fighting against the greatest military machine ever erected in the history of the world.”<sup>8</sup>

Under the leadership of Gompers, the A.F. of L. opposed the idea of the labor movement controlling a political party. Article 3, Section 8 of the constitution of the A.F. of L. said: “Party politics, whether they be Democratic, Republican, Socialistic, Populistic, Prohibition, or any other, shall have no place in the Conventions of the American Federation of Labor.” In 1918, Gompers spoke at a labor conference in New York City to a group of labor leaders. Among those present, according to the official pamphlet, were Matthew Woll, President, International Photo-Engravers’ Union of North America, Chicago and John Frey, Editor, *Iron Molders’ Journal*, Cincinnati. Gompers told the story of how he and a delegation from the A.F. of L. had attended a conference in September 1918 in Derby, England. As Gompers told the story to the assembled labor leaders:

“When the Inter-Allied Labor Conference opened in London, September 17, early in the morning there were sent over to my room at the hotel cards which were intended to be the credential cards for our delegation to sign and hand in as our credentials. The card read something like this: ‘The undersigned is a duly accredited delegate to the Inter-Allied Socialist Conference to be held at London,’ etc., and giving the dates.

“I refused to sign my name, or permit my name to be put upon any card of that character. My associates were as indignant as I was and refused to sign any such credential.”

Gompers and his A.F. of L. delegation were finally admitted to the British Trade Union Conference without having to degrade themselves by signing a Socialist credential.<sup>9</sup> Gompers died in December 1924.

His anti-communist work was taken over by the vice president of the A.F. of L. Matthew Woll, who in 1929 wrote to Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson in opposition to U.S. recognition of the Soviet Union. According to Woll, “The American Federation of Labor has not wavered in its position on this question since it was first thrust upon the American people by the forcible overthrow of the Kerensky government.” Woll continued, “The Soviets conduct a world-wide propaganda of vilification and falsehood against the American government and everything American. Their leaders are openly training the Russian people by these falsehoods to hate American institutions and America and are preparing them openly for eventual war against all ‘capitalistic governments’”.<sup>10</sup> Woll won his campaign in 1929 with the Administration of Hebert Hoover.

However, in 1932, Franklin Roosevelt was elected President. To show that both Republican and Democratic Presidents had opposed recognition of the Soviet regime, Woll wrote in a letter dated

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<sup>8</sup> *America’s Fight for the Preservation of Democracy, an Address Delivered by Samuel Gompers At Minneapolis, Minn., American Alliance for Labor and Democracy, New York, 1917, p 10.*

<sup>9</sup> *Should a Political Labor Party be Formed? An Address by Samuel Gompers to a Labor Conference, Held at New York City, December 9, 1918, Endorsed and Directed to be Published by the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor, Headquarters, A.F. of L. Building, Washington, DC, 1918, pp 9-10.*

<sup>10</sup> Press release from Matthew Woll, April 4, 1929.

February 20, 1933 to Bainbridge Colby, who had been Secretary of State to Woodrow Wilson during World War I:

“You have doubtlessly followed closely and are fully cognizant of the attitude of the American Federation of Labor on the subject of Soviet recognition by the United States.

“Ever since the epochal declaration by the Wilson administration that the United States could not accord recognition to the present regime in Russia, the American Federation of Labor has consistently supported the policy then adopted. ... the policy rests upon ... the essential and still asserted hostility of Russia to the government of the United States and the principles upon which it is founded.

“We are today experiencing a recurrence of the paid and interested agitation for a reversal of this historic policy which, in our opinion, is one of the great contributions which the United States has made to the cause of democratic freedom and to that comity of nations which will prevail only if their relations are grounded in mutual respect and good faith. ...

“Our purpose in writing you is to ask whether, in your opinion, there are any new facts which call for a departure from this Democratic policy.”

The retired Colby answered that he was opposed to any change of policy because the facts remained the same. He wrote to Woll, March 1, 1933:

“The argument has little if any merit. The evidence is conclusive that our present policy has afforded ample facility for all the trade with Russia that is economically possible.

“The unhappy experience of Great Britain and Italy, both of whom have decided to cancel trade agreements with Russia, and the equally unsatisfactory experience of France, should silence the clamor of selfish traders who would barter American principles for commercial profit—and a dubious profit, at that. ...

“I cannot conclude this letter, my dear Mr. Woll, without expressing my admiration of the sane and steadfast support given by the American Federation of Labor to our government’s policy toward the Soviet regime. Your organization has made an invaluable contribution to American dignity and consistency in these unsettled times.”<sup>11</sup>

In 1933, President Roosevelt recognized the Soviet Union. Roosevelt had met with the Soviet official Maxim Litvinoff and both had agreed that neither country would support groups in the other country designed to overthrow the other.

On December 12, 1933, the Communist Party USA issued secret instructions to all of its districts and sections. According to this official Communist Party USA document:

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<sup>11</sup> *America Opposes Soviet Recognition, Correspondence Between Matthew Woll, Vice-President of the American Federation of Labor and Bainbridge Colby, Secretary of State Under President Woodrow Wilson*, International Musician Press, Newark, NJ, March 1933, pp 3-4 and 8.



“The basic document in connection with recognition contains reciprocal pledges, which are substantially as follows:

1. To refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of the other country.
2. To refrain, and to restrain all persons directly or indirectly in the employ of the Government, from carrying on propaganda for a change by force, of the political or social system of the other country.
3. Not to permit the formation, or residence on its territory, of any organization or group claiming to be the government of the other country.
4. Not to permit the formation, or the residence on its territory, of any group of organization, or of a representative of such a group or organization, which aims to overthrow by force the political or social system of the other.”

Pretty clear, right! Except that the Communist Party explained to its members why they didn't have to obey this agreement. It said:

“In connection with these undertakings, the important thing to bear in mind is that the CP of the S.U. [Communist Party of the Soviet Union] and the C.I. [Communist International] and the Soviet Government are not one and the same thing, and they have different functions to perform. The function of the CP on a national scale and the CI on an international scale is to lead in the struggles of the masses and to organize them for the overthrow of capitalism, and after the overthrow of capitalism to guide in the most rapid transformation of the old order into the Socialist order. The function of the Soviet Government, which is the organ of the dictatorship of the proletariat, is to consolidate its power within the country, to proceed with the building of Socialism and to defend the country from Imperialist aggression. For this purpose it has to establish relations with the Capitalist countries, utilizing their needs for markets and their conflicting interest to postpone the imperialist attack upon it as long as possible, in the meantime improving its own economy and means of defense, while at the same time the forces of the international revolution mature.”

The American Communists explained to their members that Litvinoff had said to the press, “The Third International is not mentioned in the document; you must not read into it more than was intended.”<sup>12</sup>

Matthew Woll testified on June 17, 1930, before the Fish Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives that investigated Communist propaganda. He presented extensive documentation on communist activity which constituted seven hundred and sixty-one of the hearings pages.<sup>13</sup>

Woll actually knew the history of communism. He knew more than he had time to reveal to the Fish Committee. He knew of the speech by William Z. Foster, who was the Communist Party candidate for President in 1928. Foster said, “No Communist, no matter how many votes he should secure in a national election, could, even if he would, become president of the present government. When a Communist heads a government in the United States—and that day will come just as surely as the sun

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<sup>12</sup> *Recognition and the Task of the Communists*, Central Committee CPUSA, “For Discussion in Units”, December 12, 1933. See Exhibit 2.

<sup>13</sup> *Investigation of Communist Propaganda, Hearings Before a Special Committee to Investigate Communist Activities in the United States of the House of Representatives*, Volume 2, pp 1-761.

CENTRAL COMMITTEE CPUSA

December 12, 1933.

FOR DISCUSSION IN UNITS

ALL DISTRICTS AND SECTIONS

RECOGNITION AND THE TASK OF THE COMMUNISTS

I. RECOGNITION -- A VICTORY FOR THE SOVIET UNION

A. On November 17th, President Roosevelt announced the recognition of the Soviet Government following negotiations with Litvinoff, who came here for that purpose. The act of recognition is a reversal of the policy of non-recognition pursued by the U. S. Government for sixteen years, and it therefore constitutes a victory for the Soviet Union and the working class of the whole world.

C. In Connection with these undertakings, the important thing to bear in mind is that the CP of the S. U. and the C. I. and the Soviet Government are not one and the same thing, and they have different functions to perform. The function of the CP on a national scale, and the CI on an international scale is to lead in the CP struggles of the masses and to organize them for the overthrow of capitalism, and after the overthrow of capitalism to proceed with the building transformation of the old order within the country, to proceed with the building of Soviet Government, which is the organ of the Socialist to consolidate its power and to defend the country from Imperialist aggression. For this is to consolidate its power and to defend the country from Imperialist aggression. For this purpose it has to establish relations with the Capitalist countries, utilizing their needs for markets and their conflicting interest to postpone the imperialist attack upon it as long as possible, in the meantime improving its own economy and means of defense, while at the same time the forces of the international revolution mature.

rises (Applause)—that government will not be a capitalist government but a Soviet government, and behind this government will stand the Red Army to enforce the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. (Applause)”<sup>14</sup> Woll knew that the Communist Party had suffered numerous internal faction fights since its formation in 1919. By 1925 there were two main factions of the Party – the Foster faction, headed by William Z. Foster and Earl Browder, and the Ruthenberg faction, headed by Charles E. Ruthenberg and Jay Lovestone. By August of 1925 the Foster group controlled the Communist Party. At the Party’s Fourth National Convention, the Comintern stepped in as it had done many times in the past. The Comintern ordered that the new Central Executive Committee have fifty percent Fosterites and fifty percent Ruthenbergites. The deciding vote would go to a person called “Green”. That was the Party name for the Soviet Comintern representative, S. I. Gusev. Ruthenberg pointed out in a pamphlet distributed to Party membership, “With the support of the representative of the Communist International, the majority of the leading committee of the Party was given to the Ruthenberg group.”<sup>15</sup>

With Ruthenberg’s death in 1927, Jay Lovestone took over the Party leadership with the blessings of the Comintern. In 1929, Stalin ordered the leadership of both factions to Moscow. Over a period of a little more than week Stalin made three major speeches, both to the American Commission and the Presidium of the Executive Committee of the Communist International. Stalin condemned both groups for engaging in factional struggle, which he called “playing the stock market”. Stalin said “There you have the fruits of the factionalism of the majority and the minority. But, Comrades, the Comintern is not a stock market. The Comintern is the holy of holies of the working class. The Comintern, therefore, must not be confused with a stock market.”<sup>16</sup>

On Stalin’s orders Lovestone and his close followers were expelled from the Communist Party. In August 1929, now called Communist Party USA, the Party published the letters of instruction from the Comintern under the title *On the Road to Bolshevization*.<sup>17</sup> Foster was not made leader of the Party. After a short period of time, Foster’s right-hand man became the Party’s General Secretary. Foster was given the ceremonial job of National Chairman.

In 1929, the Comintern decided that the time was ripe for a new round of wars and revolutions. They called this “the Third Period”. The Socialists, who were the closest ideologically to the communists, were deemed the main enemy. Although the communist policy was secretly “boring from within” the legitimate trade union movement, the new policy was dual unions. In each country the communist parties were instructed to establish rival unions against the legitimate ones. A. Losovsky, General Secretary of the Red International of Labor Unions, issued the instructions to the Trade Union Educational League of the United States. In the October 1929 issue of *Red International of Labour Unions*, published by the TUEL, Losovsky’s letter claimed that “the American Federal of Labour has gone ever so far into the camp of the capitalists and imperialists”. The American Communists were

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<sup>14</sup> William Z. Foster, *Candidate for President, Acceptances Speeches*, National Election Campaign Committee, Workers (Communist) Party, New York, 1928, p12. See Exhibit 3

<sup>15</sup> C.E. Ruthenberg, *From the Third Through the Fourth Convention of the Workers (Communist) Party of America*, published for The Workers (Communist) Party of American By the Daily Worker Publishing Co., Chicago, 1925, p 19. See Exhibit 3. See also, the transcript of the 4<sup>th</sup> National Convention, Workers (Communist) Party of America, Chicago, August 21-30, 1925.

<sup>16</sup> *Stalin’s Speeches on the American Communist Party* published by Central Committee Communist Party USA, circa 1931, p 15. See Exhibit 3.

<sup>17</sup> *On the Road to Bolshevization*, Workers Library Publisher, New York, 1929. See Exhibit 3.

**William Z. Foster**  
Candidate for President

**ACCEPTANCE SPEECHES**

AND  
**Benjamin Gitlow**

Candidate for Vice-President

OF THE  
**Workers (Communist) Party**



NATIONAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE  
WORKERS (COMMUNIST) PARTY

1928

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**STALIN'S SPEECHES**  
on the  
**AMERICAN COMMUNIST PARTY**



15 Cents

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Party of America

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CHICAGO, ILL.



**ON THE  
ROAD TO  
Bolshevization**

instructed to establish a "new centre" for the labor movement. Moscow anticipated that this would grow into an organization of "many millions of the American working class".<sup>18</sup>

The Trade Union Educational League changed its name to the Trade Union Unity League and openly proclaimed that it was the American section of the R.I.L.U. It retained the same office at 2 West 15<sup>th</sup> Street, New York.<sup>19</sup>

With the Socialists and the trade unions as the main enemies, the communists found new allies. In 1932-3, the German section of the R.I.L.U., the Red Trade Union Opposition (R.T.U.O.), organized the transport workers strike in Berlin. It was opposed by both the Socialist trade unions and the city of Berlin government. However, the communists proudly pointed to the support they got from the Nazis. Although they didn't like the Nazi leadership, they were happy to receive support from the "proletarian members of the National Socialist Party". They were even admitted to the Central Strike Committee. According to the communists, "The R.T.U.O. came forward, with the support of the Communist Party, as the sole trade union force in this powerful strike struggle of the Berlin transport workers. The unflinching persistence of the R.T.U.O. and its systematic work on the organization and preparation of the strike explain why it was able to establish the united fighting front of the transport workers. ... Owing to the correct conducting of the strike on the part of the Central Strike Committee, with the support of the R.T.U.O., the Social-Democratic Party and the A.D.G.B., bureaucracy unwittingly exposed themselves as the most dangerous enemies of the fighting united front and thereby demonstrated their true character as organizers of strike-breaking."<sup>20</sup>

In the United States dual unions were formed to oppose the A.F. of L. unions.<sup>21</sup> In New York City the Trade Union Unity League established a Trade Union Unity Council of Greater New York. A letter from John Steuben, a communist activist, to communist leader Earl Browder, dated March 28, 1932, listed the communist dual unions in New York City.<sup>22</sup>

The "Third Period" was a major failure. On April 22, 1933, Earl Browder and his associate, Gerhard Eisler, were in Moscow for a meeting of the Anglo-American Secretariat of the Communist International. Eisler was a member of the German Communist Party assigned as a Communist International representative to the American Communist Party.

The membership card of each Communist Party revealed that it was a section of the Communist International. Until 1937, the American Communist Party membership card showed "Communist Party of the USA, Section of the Communist International". The membership cards of the Russian and German Communist Parties said the same thing.<sup>23</sup> The American Communist Party membership card had an attached questionnaire, called a control card, which was removed and sent to the higher echelon of the Party.

Among the American Party members accompanying Browder and Eisler to Moscow were Max Bedacht, B. D. Amis, Leon Platt, and William Weinstone. The British Communist William Rust was

<sup>18</sup> *The Red International of Labour Unions*, New York, 1929, pp 369 to 374. See Exhibit 4.

<sup>19</sup> See Exhibit 5

<sup>20</sup> *R.I.L.U. Magazine*, London, January 1, 1933, p 951-1960. See Exhibit 6.

<sup>21</sup> See Exhibit 7 which depicts the membership cards for the Trade Union Unity League, Marine Workers Industrial Union, and National Lumber Workers' Union.

<sup>22</sup> See Exhibit 8.

<sup>23</sup> See Exhibit 9.

# THE RED INTERNATIONAL OF LABOUR UNIONS

OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS:

## Letter to the National Convention of the Trade Union Education League

To the National Convention of the  
Trade Union Education League of U.S.A.

**D**EAR Comrades,—Your gathering occurs at a moment which is a turning point in the development of the American labour movement. The American Federation of Labour, has gone over so far into the camp of the capitalists and imperialists that it is now one of their best tools.

Vol. 1                      OCTOBER, 1929

*Published by the Trade Union Education League of  
America at 2 West Fifteenth Street, New York, N.Y.*

The R.I.L.U. considers the present situation in the U.S. as very favourable for the work of the new centre. Capitalist rationalisation, with its merciless and ever-increasing speed-up system, is leading to wide discontent among the unorganised and organised workers. Sporadic strikes break

out in districts and among sections of workers which formerly were relatively unaffected by the class struggle. These pronounced signs of radicalisation of the masses give a real basis for the new centre to become the initiator and leader in the coming mass struggles, growing into an organisation uniting the many millions of the American working class.

Fraternally yours, for Executive Bureau  
of the R.I.L.U.,  
LOSOVSKY, General Secretary.

# PROGRAM

OF

## THE TRADE UNION EDUCATIONAL LEAGUE



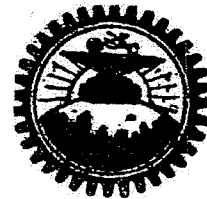
*Adopted by the Third National Conference  
New York, December 3-4, 1927*

PUBLISHED BY  
THE TRADE UNION EDUCATIONAL  
2 WEST FIFTEENTH STREET  
NEW YORK CITY

# The Trade Union Unity League

(American Section of the R. I. L. U.)

*Its Program, Structure,  
Methods and History*



*Published by the*  
TRADE UNION UNITY LEAGUE  
2 WEST 15th STREET  
NEW YORK

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Vol. 2

JANUARY 1st, 1933

No. 23 & 24

952

R.I.L.U. MAGAZINE

# The Strike of the Berlin Transport Workers

By HANS BECKER

## The Nazis

It will be interesting to examine the part played in the strike by the National Socialist Party. Thanks to the correct application of united front tactics on the part of the R.T.U.O. in the period of the organisation of the strike, the National Socialist transport workers were drawn into the united proletarian front. There were even proletarian members of the National Socialist Party on the Central Strike Committee. In view of this fact, and of the circumstance that the strike broke out immediately before the parliamentary elections, the National Socialist leadership was forced to play a double demagogical game. With the object of retaining their influence, not only among the transport workers, but among the oilers in general, the National Socialist leaders were compelled on the one hand to approve of the strike and of the participation in it of members of their Party—this was reflected in their press—and on the other, in conformity with their role in the capitalist State, to attempt to organise strike-breaking.

The National Socialists issued an order to officials to resume work before the Central Strike Committee approved the decision and issued a call to end the strike. They prohibited their members on the Central Strike Committee from taking part in the negotiations with the

management of the Transport Company. More than this, the National Socialist leaders demanded that their members should leave the Strike Committee elected by the workers and tried to form their own committees. But thanks to the resistance of their own members and supporters in the National Socialist Party, these "labour leaders" failed to disintegrate the united fighting front

The R.T.U.O. came forward, with the support of the Communist Party, as the sole trade

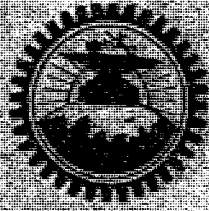
union force in this powerful strike struggle of the Berlin transport workers. The unflinching persistence of the R.T.U.O. and its systematic work on the organisation and preparation of the strike explain why it was able to establish the united fighting front of the transport workers.

Owing to the correct conducting of the strike on the part of the Central Strike Committee, with the support of the R.T.U.O., the Social-Democratic Party and the A.D.G.B. bureaucracy unwittingly exposed themselves as the most dangerous enemies of the fighting united front and thereby demonstrated their true character as organisers of strike-breaking.



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WORKING WOMEN

— 3 —

March 28, 1932

COPY TO DISTRICT SECRETARIAT

Dear Comrade Browder:

It has been brought to my attention that the last letter of the YCI refers to me, by implication, as a "petty bourgeois element". Any one who has the least amount of revolutionary integrity, and especially one who has been in the movement since childhood, would resent such a characterization. Especially is this serious when it is stated in a YCI document.

It is already more than a year and a half since the Central Committee removed me from the leadership of the YCL. Every decision made by the Central Committee, I have faithfully carried out. Furthermore, I can state that I have gone a long way in correcting my past mistakes. My active participation in the mass work of the Party and my closest connections with large masses of non Party workers, has practically changed my whole outlook, methods of work and approach to problems. Just as in the past, so am I now ready to carry out every decision of the Party.

One cannot object to the fact that the YCI points out that my past mistakes were not brought sufficiently before the YCL; but to brand me a "petty bourgeois" is politically incorrect, and I don't deserve it. I do not care to even raise the question as to who is responsible; I leave this to the Central Committee.

I ask the Central Committee to take up this matter in the most serious manner, as it affects a Party worker, who is now holding a responsible post in the movement.

Comradely yours,

*John Steuben*

Communist Party of the U. S. A.  
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von *[Signature]*  
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ATTEMPT BY COMMUNISTS  
TO SEIZE THE AMERICAN  
LABOR MOVEMENT

PREPARED BY THE  
UNITED MINE WORKERS OF AMERICA

AND

PUBLISHED IN NEWSPAPERS OF  
THE UNITED STATES



PRESENTED BY MR. LODGE  
JANUARY 3, 1924.—Ordered to be printed

WASHINGTON  
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE  
1924

also present. Eisler was also called Edwards. The discussion was on the trade union question in the United States. A small group led by the head of the Anglo-American Secretariat Mingulin and including Browder and Eisler drafted the report, which was then sent to A. Losovsky and S. I. Gusev for amendments.<sup>24</sup>

According to Browder's report, "Without a revolutionary trade union movement (red trade unions and the development of a revolutionary opposition within the A.F.L.) which is firmly entrenched in the masses, the Party cannot successfully organize the masses of the workers for these struggles. Without creating channels and transmission belts to the decisive sections of the workers, by means of the revolutionary trade union movement, the Party will of necessity lag behind in the fulfillment of its most important task – winning over and organizing the masses of the workers."

Browder complained that "In 1932 the majority of the strikes were led by the Musteites [the Conference for Progressive Labor Action] and the A.F.L., and the Party and the revolutionary trade union movement did not play any role worth mentioning. ... The chief reason for the weakness and instability of our red trade unions is the failure to understand a real, revolutionary mass policy. This is most clearly seen in the fact that our red trade unions have no basis in the factories in the main industries and also do not make persistent efforts to provide themselves with such a basis."

Browder promised the Comintern "The Pol. [itical] Bureau shall send out instructors to assist the lower organizations in the fulfilling of these tasks and to verify the carrying through of decisions."<sup>25</sup>

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, the communists provided support to a dissident group in the United Mine Workers of America. They opposed the Mine Workers leader John L. Lewis. One of the main enemies of the communists in the coal fields was Lewis. In 1924, he had his union prepare a lengthy report on "Attempt By Communists to Seize the American Labor Movement". This was published as an official United States Senate publication by Senator Henry Cabot Lodge.<sup>26</sup>

At a Communist Party political meeting as early as December 30, 1926, the communists established as one of their main goals "To discredit and drive Lewis out of the labor movement for the principal reason that he initiated the fight on our Party and began the expulsion policy in the A.F. of L. and typifies the anti-Communist forces in the A.F. of L."<sup>27</sup> John L. Lewis remained an important enemy as the communists tried to organize in the coal fields.

In 1932 a communist leaflet issued in Chicago talked about the "thugs and gangsters imported by the coal operators and officials of the UMWA". According to the communists, United Mine Workers was guilty of murder and "wholesale shooting of over one hundred miners". When the strike failed, a communist leaflet for the National Children's Center for Miners' Relief claimed that "Lewis has done a good job for the Coal Barons. He smashed the miners Union, betrayed the strikers and paved the way for more misery and suffering for the miners and their children."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Communist International Archives, Moscow, Fond 495, Opis 72, Delo 204, p 10. See Exhibit 10.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, pp 11, 12, 15 and 26.

<sup>26</sup> *Attempt By Communist To Seize the American Labor Movement, Prepared by the United Mine Workers of America and Published in Newspapers of the United States*, Washington, DC, Government Printing Office, 1924. See Exhibit 11.

<sup>27</sup> Communist International Archives, Fond 515, Opis 1, Delo 619. This part of the Comintern Archives has been reproduced on microfilm and may be found in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

<sup>28</sup> See Exhibit 12.

In January 1934 the Comintern line changed. At a meeting of the Anglo-American Secretariat Mingulin raised the question of dissolving the inept red trade unions and establishing a new labor centre. Mingulin, with the help of the high Comintern official Otto Kuusinen, drafted the resolution which called for the establishment of an "independent federation of labor". The American Communists were warned that they should not allow their opponents to seize control of such a group.<sup>29</sup>

This created a problem for the American Communists. The general line of the Comintern was that the main enemy was the Socialists. John L. Lewis was their main enemy in the labor movement. Now they were being told that at least in the labor field, they had to reach out to anyone who would work with them to establish a rival labor federation to the A. F. of L. In the 1932 plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, S. I. Gusev, an important Soviet leader who had served the Comintern in the United States in 1925 where he ran the American Communist Party under the name P. Green, had instructed the American Communists that "we must direct the main blow against its chief social bulwark, against the chief enemy of Communism in the working class, against Social-Democracy, against Social-Fascism." He went on:

"It may seem that in Germany, at the present time, for example, the chief social bulwark of the bourgeoisie is Fascism, and that, therefore, we should deal the chief blows against Fascism.

"This is not correct. It is not correct, firstly because Fascism is not our chief enemy in the workers' movement, but Social-Fascism is our chief enemy there. What does this mean? It means that to win over the majority of the proletariat, i.e., to prepare the *basic* condition for the proletarian revolution, it is necessary to direct the chief blows against Social-Fascism."<sup>30</sup>

The Comintern paid close attention to developments in the United States. On August 9, 1936, the Comintern having watched closely developments in the A. F. of L. sent Browder a secret radio message which read: "Wire us your estimation of situation and perspective of development of struggle in AF of L in connection executive ultimatum on dissolution of CIO. What will be your position now in struggle for trade-union unity in USA and what are concretely your possibilities to influence development of events in AF of L. Dimitrov."<sup>31</sup> George Dimitrov was the General Secretary of the Comintern.

The American Communists had been watching closely. There had been a fight for a long time within A. F. of L. over the creation of industrial unions by an A. F. of L. faction called the Committee on Industrial Nations [CIO] which were led by John L. Lewis.

At an American Communist Party Politburo meeting of January 30, 1936, Browder pointed to "the threat of a split in the general labor movement" which he attributed to "the reactionary policies" of the A.F. of L. which had called upon the CIO to dissolve. According to Browder, "we will have to be very alert to watch the temp of development and adjust ourselves accordingly. We will have to be

<sup>29</sup> "Minutes Buro Anglo-American Secretariat", Fond 495, Opis 72, Delo 257, Communist International Archives, Moscow; and "On the Work of Forming an Independent Federation of Labor in the USA", Fond 495, Opis 5, Delo 408, pp 161-163, Communist International Archives, Moscow. See Exhibit 13.

<sup>30</sup> *The Next Step in Britain, America and Ireland*, Speeches and Reports by Gusev, Pollitt, Troy and Pringle, Twelfth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. [Executive Committee Communists International], Workers Library Publishers, New York, 1932, "The End of Capitalist Stabilisation and the Basic Tasks of the British and American Sections of the C.I.", by S. Gusev, pp 8-9.

<sup>31</sup> Comintern Archives, Moscow, Fond 495, Opis 184, Delo 24.

prepared to review our position on every new development in the situation, watching carefully to see that our position is adjusted with each new stage of development of the struggle." Browder, who was in constant touch with Moscow, was waiting for the opportunity of a split in the trade union movement to help the splitters organize the rival labor federation that Moscow had ordered.

William Z. Foster opposed Browder on this policy. He said "I think our public policy is wrong on this question, that here the Labor movement has been threatened with a split and we haven't spoken a word against the split. This I think is wrong. In my judgment, Lewis is using the most stupid tactics .... if he had his way about it, he would have split the whole labor movement..." Foster went on "Lewis is a bull-headed autocrat, a dictator, and he is drunk with power at the present time. ... I don't think we can simply follow after Lewis and trust to Lewis on these matters. Lewis is a reactionary and his whole record goes to show it .... I say it is a needless split in the labor movement and we must speak against this split, whether it is Lewis, or whoever it is that is carrying it through because it threatens a major disaster in the labor movement..." Foster claimed that, "even if Lewis was convinced it was necessary to split the organizations, he was going about it in the most stupid possible way and we cannot lend encouragement to any such disastrous movement as this." Foster hadn't gotten the word from Moscow. Browder had.

The next speaker at the American Communist Party plenum was identified as "Edwards". This was Gerhard Eisler, the representative of the Comintern to the American Communist Party. He brought Moscow's word to the meeting. He said, "Objectively, this split can be a progressive move. If we would say to the working class now, do not split, we would have to say what for. We cannot fight against any split in the labor movement. This wouldn't prevent a split, we would only side with Green [William Green, the head of the A.F. of L.]"<sup>32</sup>

In September 1936, Clarence Hathaway, the American Communist Party's trade union specialist, reported to the Comintern "We had a number of discussions in the P.B. [political bureau] on the question and following those discussions, we also had discussions with [John L.] Lewis and [Sidney] Hillman, the two outstanding leaders of the CIO." The American Communists had issued appeals to support the Lewis faction. Hathaway went on "In placing this question before Lewis and Hillman, they took the position that it was quite all right for us to issue these appeals, that they appreciate the efforts we were making to rally the lower organizations of the trade unions..." According to Hathaway, "We discussed all of these questions with Lewis ... that could only be accepted as implying a determination on their part to set up a new center, a new parallel AFL."

In response to a question Hathaway answered:

"Lewis agreed to this in the conversation I had with him less than a week before I left. .... To an increasing degree, during the past period, they have shown a readiness to consult with us and make known their policy. To show the degree to which they have shown friendliness toward us, I can cite a few things. For example, at the beginning of the steel drive, on instructions of the P.B., I met with Lewis and raised the question of the reinstatement of all Communists and militants who had been expelled by the Tighe leadership of the American Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers. He asked for a

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<sup>32</sup> "Minutes of the Polburo Meeting Held January 30, 1936", U.S. Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Washington, DC. [The U.S. Library of Congress was given by the Soviet Archives the files of the U.S. Communist Party that had been sent to the Comintern in Moscow.] Fond 515, Opus 1, Delo 3974.

list of those names. We provided him with it and immediately, all were reinstated. Then, we raised the question of placing a number of Communists and militant workers on the paid organizing staff, contending that only to the degree that militants, who had the confidence of the workers, were on the staff, could the campaign be successful. Here again, he asked us for the recommendations, and a Comrade Statchel estimated, the day before I left, that we now have approximately 45 or 50 Communists on the full-time organizing staff of steel.

“All this shows not only that they have shown a readiness to cooperate in discussions and words, but that they have brought our people in everywhere.”<sup>33</sup>

By August 1937, Eugene Dennis, using the name T. Ryan, reported to the Comintern:

“For instance, in the course of the growth of the CIO movement and recent strike struggles, the Party has not only given maximum political support to the CIO campaigns, but it has actually released hundreds of its best section and unit organizers, as well as many district functionaries, to work as CIO organizers (it has correctly made a heavy capital investment of its cadres in the industrial unions), especially in the Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, and Pittsburgh districts. This policy has not only produced excellent results and helped to widen the base and strengthen the influence of the Party in the CIO and progressive movement, but it has also had its negative effects.

“The taking of large numbers of the most capable and experienced comrades out of direct and open Party work as leaders of Party organizations, created new cadre problems which could not be immediately solved on the scale demanded. This particularly affected and weakened the work and life of scores of key sections and lower Party organizations.”

Despite the complaint by Dennis that the Communist Party had weakened its internal structure by assigning their cadre to the CIO, actually this benefitted the Communist Party. Communist Party functionaries through the CIO had achieved major positions in the trade union movement. In a speech to the Secretariat of the Comintern on April 4, 1937 Browder boasted that “The Pacific Coast Marine Workers’ Federation is under a left leadership. Its chief leader is a member of our Central Committee.”<sup>34</sup> To identify that person we again have to look in the Archives of the Comintern. In 1938, the American Communist Party reported to the Comintern on the people who were members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party USA. They were evaluated by Earl Browder, William Z. Foster, and Eugene Dennis [Ryan]. These included:

1. “‘Rossi’ [Harry] Bridges, CPUSA Central Committee member, President of the Dockers and Port Warehouse Workers Union. He is a strong leader in the trade union movement and a mass worker, but up until now has only domestic Party knowledge and experience.”
2. “‘Donaldson’ [Donald] Henderson, CPUSA Central Committee Candidate Member. National President of the Agricultural and Canned Goods Workers

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, Fond 515, Opus 1, Delo 3967.

<sup>34</sup> Comintern Archives, Moscow, Fond 495, Opus 20, Delo 521.



Union. His political and organizational abilities are developing splendidly. A stable, energetic and sincere comrade.”

3. “Morgan William [Wyndhan] Mortimer, member of the USA CP Central Committee. National vice-president of the Auto Workers Union.”
4. “Johnson, M. [Manning] CP USA Central Committee Candidate member. Trade union organizer in New York. Capable and energetic, a good mass worker who is developing politically, but is sometimes susceptible to the mood of the opposition.”<sup>35</sup>

In an odd way the Communist evaluations were right. In 1939 when the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany became allies, the first three remained loyal Communists and worked in a trade union movement against the United States and Great Britain. They even organized strikes to delay the American effort to rebuild its arms strength. Manning Johnson on the hand, a Black leader in the Communist Party, was horrified by the Soviet Nazi alliance. He broke with the Communists and from until his death in 1959 gave his help to the United States government as a witness against the Communists.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Comintern Archives, Moscow, Fond 495, Opis 74, Delo 467.

<sup>36</sup> Personal admission, from 1950 until his death Manning Johnson was a personal friend of the present author and provided valuable information on Communist activities.

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ON

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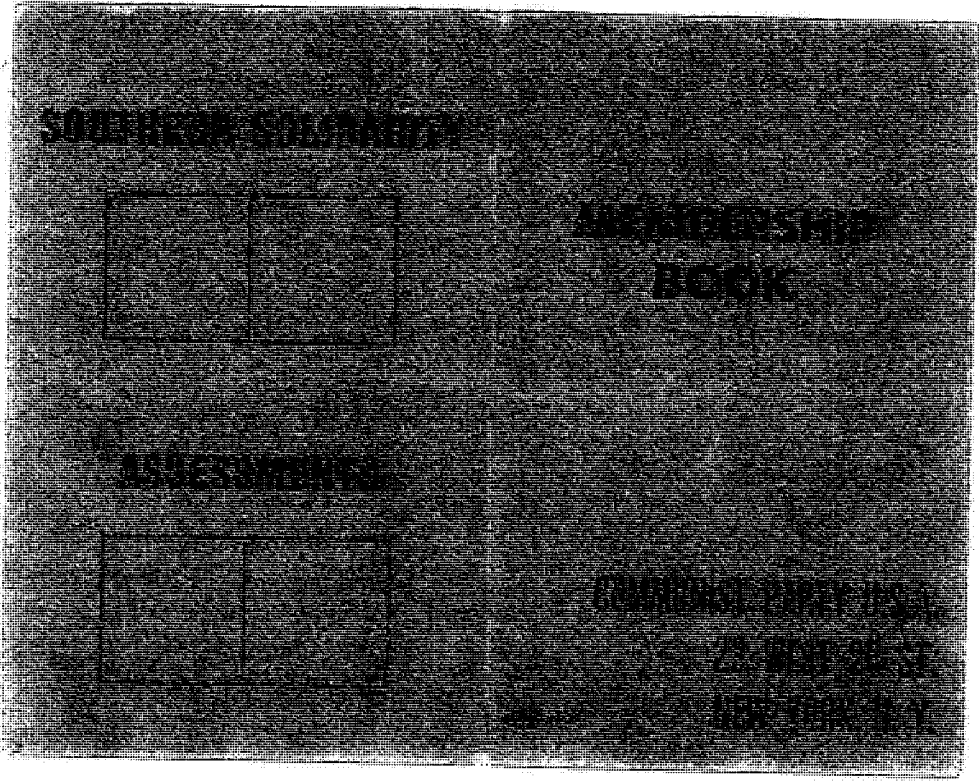
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 SECTION 3. A Party member shall accept the Party program as determined by the Constitution and conventions of the Party, belong to a Party club, participate in club activities, and pay dues. Membership in the Communist Party is a voluntary act of the individual.

SECTION 4. Party members three months in arrears in payment of dues cease to be members in good standing and shall be so informed. Members who are six months in arrears shall be dropped from Party membership after effort has been made, by personal interviews; to bring such members into good standing. They may, however, apply for readmission within six months, and upon approval of the club, be permitted to pay all back dues and maintain their former standing.

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