
Statement of Party Activies.

(prepared by William Z. Foster and uanimously adopted
by the CEC of the WPA, March 18, 1924)

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At the present time some controversy exists in the Workers Party relative to the general propositions of education, organization, and Party strategy. This is because the Party has not yet established a clear-cut, well-balanced program for the schooling, building, and functioning of our organization. Various groups lay greater or lesser stress upon one or another of the several activities necessary to the development and life of our Party, some overstressing education, others attaching too much importance to bare organization, and still others devoting themselves almost entirely to actions and maneuvers of the Party, to the neglect of education and organization. The consequence is much confusion, wasted effort, and one-sided development. Only by a clarification and unification of the membership's conception of the questions can this intolerable condition be remedied. Hence the C.E. [Central Executive Committee] feels the necessity for the following statement upon the general proposition of Party activities.

In the development and utilization of the Workers Party in the class struggle, it must be constantly borne in mind that it is a Communist party. This means that it must be thoroughly educated, firmly organized, and possessed of a militant strategy. It must be a revolutionary fighting [organization], the membership of which understands not only the ultimate goal of communism but also the everyday program of the movement; it must be a compact, centralized, disciplined, mass body; and it must take a leading part in all the political and industrial struggles of the workers. The

building of such a well-rounded, balanced Party must be our aim. Only a Party which carries on simultaneously the necessary work of education and organization, and which is animated by a militant strategy, can be in fact, as well as in theory, the vanguard of the proletariat.

Education.

Educational work is one of the basic features of the general activities of the Workers Party. This must reach not only the circle of sympathetic workers about the Party, but especially the members of the Party. In addition to the fundamentals of Marxian theory, this educational work should include an intensive instruction regarding the practical policies and everyday life of the Party. Thus the stream of new members constantly entering the Party will be assimilated and equipped for active party life. The Party must lay greater and greater stress upon its educational program, systematizing it and institutionalizing it as it develops. But this does not mean that the Party shall be allowed to become merely an educational body, as some in our ranks think it should. Such a course would condemn it to a sectarianism like that of the Socialist Labor Party and the Proletarian Party, and would eliminate it as a vital factor in the class struggle. Our Party must first of all be a fighting organization and its educational program must be calculated upon the principles of bringing forth the Party's greatest virility and fighting strength. When thus connected and coordinated with the everyday struggles of the working class, the Party's educational work will be lifted above the

academic atmosphere and made a dynamic factor, at once reinforcing the Party in the class struggle and being itself vitalized and stimulated by the Party experiences in the battles of the workers.

As things now stand, the educational work of the Workers Party, both for the masses in general and for the members in particular, is still in a primitive state of development. It is the intention of the CEC to remedy this condition as rapidly as possible, and to develop an effective campaign of educational work. A lead idea in this campaign will be to establish systematic routine that will constantly bring the educational work before the Party committees for attention and action. Within the CEC itself an educational committee is being established to coordinate and stimulate this phase of Party work everywhere. It will put into effect the educational program, published in *The Worker* of November 3rd, 1923, as rapidly as resources will permit. That program is, briefly, to provide definitely in the Party budget for the educational work which shall be developed along the following lines: [1.] Selection of a national Educational Director; [2.] founding of "Lenin College," a central school for Party workers; [3.] establishment of classes in various cities, organized in circuits and covered by professional teachers; [4.] extensive tours for lecturers on theoretical subjects; [5.] publication of popular theoretical pamphlets and books; [6.] periodic discussions at branch meetings of current events and decisions of the CEC on Party policy. The beginnings so far made, in the establishment of a circuit of study classes in Dist. 8 [Chicago] and Dist. 1 [Boston], a Party school in New York, the projected publication of the "Lenin Library" of 10 volumes, all a part of the national educational system, will be supported and extended until every member of the Party and every sympathizer has full and complete opportunity for sound education in every phase of the international communist movement. The youth movement shall be utilized more and more in this same field.

Organization.

The Party organization must be gradually and systematically transformed from its present territorial basis to that of shop and factory units. Special articles, communications from the CI, and plans for this reor-

ganization work will be published in the near future.

In the meantime, all educational and political activity must be closely followed by organization. The Party must absorb and make use of all the workers brought into sympathetic contact with the Party through education or common participation in the struggle. Organization is a question of life and death to a communist movement; our activities of every sort must receive special organizational attention, they cannot be allowed to drift along in a vague and uncrystallized form. The Party is the organizational center for the entire movement, and must therefore have first organizational attention. Many thousands of workers are ideologically prepared now for membership in the Workers Party, and it is a major task for us to reach them and bring them into the organization. From the Workers Party as the center must radiate a complete network of auxiliary organizations, crystallizing all communist activity and permeating the masses in all fields of struggle. In every case where communists are active, organization and the party must follow closely behind, the object of constant and energetic attention.

Our campaigns for amalgamation, the Labor Party, and other issues of immediate appeal to the workers, must be followed up closely by the organizing machinery of the Party so that the elements made sympathetic to us shall be absorbed into the Party. Every action supported by non-party elements must be made the basis for an appeal to them to join the Workers Party as the instrument that made effective action possible. Every party unit must have a permanent committee on recruiting new members. Party members must be systematically instructed in organizational methods and plans for work within trade unions, fraternal societies, etc. Only when system and order, with definite and authoritative organizational forms, follow all communist activity, will the full result of our work be obtained.

On the other hand it must be pointed out that just as a one-sided emphasis upon education at the expense of other sides of Party activities produces sectarianism, so does undue stress placed upon organization (the tendency to organizational fetishism) produce sterility and political bankruptcy. Organization alone is futile. Thus the Socialist Party once had 100,000 members, quite an organizational showing, but because it had [neither] solid educational basis nor

possessed of a sound and militant strategy in the class struggle, its organization melted away overnight. The problem of organization for a Communist Party is the problem of keeping pace at all times with Party education and Party strategy, without allowing organizational work to become an end in itself.

It is the intention of the Central Executive Committee to intensively develop organizational methods and activities, to constantly survey and appraise the working of each unit of our organization, to stimulate lagging sections, to correct errors and abuses, and to draw the movement more tightly together everywhere. This it also lays down as the basic organizational duty of every Party committee.

Party Strategy.

Party strategy is the systematic and planful application of fundamental Communist principles in the class struggle. It is "The Party in Action," functioning as the leader of the working masses, organizing and educating them, crystallizing their revolt, giving them direction for immediate and definite actions, establishing a proletarian fighting morale, and occupying the front ranks in every struggle against the capitalist system, against the employers, and against the agents of capitalism within the labor movement. Party strategy is that expression of our organization that makes of it a communist party.

Party strategy, to be fully effective, requires the intelligent participation of the entire membership. While it is particularly the responsibility of the Central Executive Committee, and the District Committees under its lead, to give direction and control, yet the whole party which puts that strategy into effect in the life of the working class must be permeated with a deep understanding of what the party is trying to do and the methods of doing it. The Party as a whole must follow the strategy from point to point in the struggle, must pass judgement upon it, must criticize and correct it from time to time. Successful Party strategy is thus based directly upon the understanding of the membership (education), and upon its facilities for united action (organization). To the full extent that education and organization have laid the foundation the Party strategy must be extended and developed.

The capacity of the Party, measured by its un-

derstanding and organization strength, is thus of equal importance with a realistic valuation of the objective facts of the class struggle. That strategy which correctly judges the power of the Party, and which throws the Party energetically and intelligently into the struggle to the limit of those powers, is the successful strategy toward which we must strive.

Our Party is faced with a tremendous responsibility. It finds a working class from which all other leadership has abdicated. The so-called progressives, by their cowardly retreats and surrender to Gompers have left the labor movement with none but the Communists to lead the struggle for the Labor Party, amalgamation, and for even the mildest reforms. It is the duty of the Workers Party to accept this responsibility, and to participate in every action of the working class, leading it on step by step to our goal. Those few individual comrades who object to this constant and active participation in the everyday struggle and who call for a life of quiet study and peaceful organization of the communists, show that they do not understand the function of a Communist party.

On the other hand the Central Executive Committee is determined to guard against the other danger, the tendency to wild maneuverings, to running ahead of the Party membership, to ill-conceived actions that defeat our primary purpose by creating distrust among the workers. Our Party strategy must be so soundly based upon the fundamental interests of the working class, and so clearly explained to the workers, that it will at all times retain that mass support necessary to give it power. Strategy shall never be allowed to degenerate into political maneuvers having no relation to the real facts of the class struggle and the relative strength of the party.

In the immediate future the Workers Party will be engaged in most important political battles in which the Party strategy will be supremely important. Smooth and rapid adjustment of the entire Party to each development so that the Party may strike quickly and with its entire power is a supreme necessity. The Central Executive committee is informing the membership from week to week of its political estimate of the situation, the Party press is day by day carrying the story of the immediate struggle, the party position is being explained on each issue that arises, the full power of the Party is being exerted within the working class

movement.

The CEC expects to intensify this active participation in the whole political life of the working class, which will become more complex and heated as the Presidential campaign develops and the Farmer-Labor movement comes to expression. More than ever it is necessary for all Party members and all Party units to study and understand the Party strategy, and put it into effect with all their ability and energy, constantly keeping before the eyes of the workers the ultimate aims of the class struggle, i.e., the seizure of power and the proletarian dictatorship.

A Balanced Program.

Our supreme objective, our fundamental conception in the period immediately before us, must be the building of a mass Communist party. That means that the activities of our Party must be developed upon a balanced program of education, organization, and strategy. Education through intensive, systematic effort, hooked up closely with organization and action, will give our Party a sound foundation without leading to sectarianism or scholasticism. Organization of all activities, definite in form and reaching out to embrace the workers prepared for our movement and its work, will put firmness and backbone into both edu-

cation and Party strategy, steering clear of both organizational fetishism and jellyfish-like helplessness. Party strategy, based upon education and organization, correctly adjusted to the resources of the Party and the facts of the class struggle, will act as a stimulus to all other phases of Party life, as an instrument of education and organization, and at the same time it will fulfill the responsibilities placed upon us, and will put our Party in its proper position as the vanguard of the proletariat, the leader of the working class.

The Central Executive Committee calls upon the entire Party to establish this conception of a balanced program of activities as a central and leading idea in the Party life. Let each of our work be developed together and in harmony, without artificial differentiation or one-sided emphasis. Each is necessary and is intimately connected with all the other; they are but different faces to the one reality, the Workers Party, which is the collective organization of every phase of Communist work in America. With consistent and systematic study, with thorough and well-disciplined organization, and with intelligent and energetic action, our Party will leave behind all the remaining vestiges of factionalism, opportunism, infantile disorders, and sectarianism, and will march forward to its proper place as a mature and responsible section of the Communist International.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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