

COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE

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For Theory and Discussion

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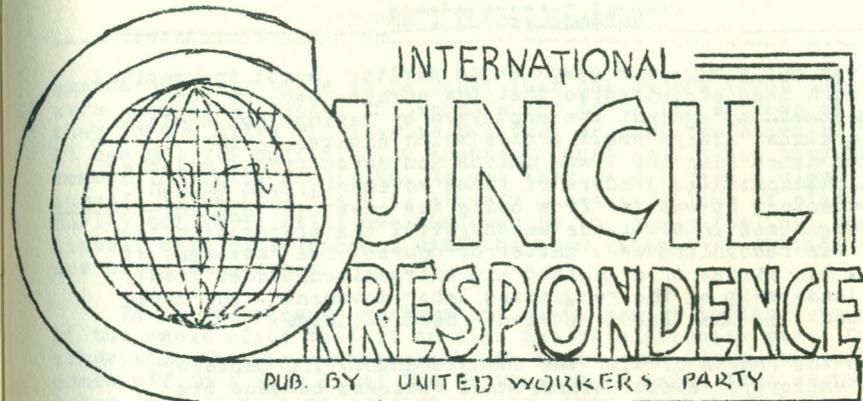
PARTY OR "WORK GROUP."

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***THE RISE OF A NEW

LABOR MOVEMENT***

THE IMPOTENCE

The labor movement presents a picture of the greatest confusion. Numerous organizations and tendencies combat each other, while ever, anew the hunger whip of the owning classes scourges the broad masses. And after each blow of the whip, the confusion in the ranks of the workers increases. Apostles of unity entreat the workers to end the internecine conflict and take up jointly the struggle against the owning classes. They haven't the slightest inkling of the whole situation. They think that the working class is powerless because of its disunity, while in reality the still increasing fragmentation arises from the ever more manifest impotence. With each new lash of the whip the owning class demonstrates to the working masses that the labor movement built up in the last 50 years in the course of painful and self-sacrificing struggles has no value whatever as a weapon against Capital. The old labor movement reveals itself--in the words of H. Gorter--as a toy sword against a steel armor.

How does it happen that the old labor movement is no match for the capitalist class? Whence arises the impotence of the old movement? In this connection we point for the present to two causes. In the first place, the old movement is wholly directed to step-by-step amelioration of the workers' situation within the framework of capitalism. The trouble here is that there can be no more thought of amelioration when the various capitals fail to yield sufficient profit, a condition which, as we know, becomes general in the crisis. In that case the impotence arises not from the weakness of the labor movement, but from the 'natural' impossibility of trying to get something where there is nothing to be had. The second cause lies in a different sphere: it is the mighty power of Capital.

This was not always the case. At an earlier period the capitalists were much less organized, so that the workers were able to accomplish something against the employers by laying down tools. Thus it was almost always small groups which engaged in the struggle, and hence also the trade unions and occupational associations were the indicated leaders of these movements. Even though on these occasions it was far from being the case that all workers were organized in the trade unions, still the trade-union leadership was recognized as a matter of course. The "movement of labor", i.e. the strike of organized and unorganized, placed itself under the leadership of the "organized labor movement". The "movement of labor" and the "labor movement" here coincide.

But in the course of time the scene changes. The employers combine in employers' associations, small business becomes big business, and these big business combine again into larger economic organizations such as syndicates, trusts, cartels and monopolies. In this way, Capital forms such a mighty block that the workers' strikes which were limited to single occupations hammered against it in vain. The trade unions accordingly tried to avoid strikes; they saw their task more and more in negotiations and cooperation with the employers' associations, and this cooperation finally thickened to the "working partnership" (Arbeitsgemeinschaft). They no doubt had to take this course, because there was nothing more to be accomplished with the old manner of struggle on the basis of occupations.

Still the "working partnership" between Capital and Labor can not fail in the long run to have as its consequence that the workers' standard of living is sacrificed to the interests of Capital. And because the trade-union leaders, as actual owners of the trade-union organizations, were simply not in a position to oppose anything of equal value to the power of Capital, they had to conform in everything. But even when the workers paid no attention to the contracts and agreements of the "working partnership" and themselves took up the struggle in wild strikes, the defeat followed with equal certainty. For the cause of the defeats is to be sought in the fact that an occupational group is much too weak to cope with Capital.

The possibility of an unfolding of power as against Capital would be present only in case the strikers make the attempt to break through their limited occupational front, when they extend the movement without regard to occupational or organizational limits. --when they draw into the struggle along with them the entire class. Not until they develop from the "occupational front" to the "class front", --it is then for the first time that they unfold power.

THE CLASS " IN ITSELF " AND THE CLASS " FOR ITSELF "

In the coming development, this growth to the class front will come about. Or otherwise expressed: in the future the workers, driven by the conditions themselves, will truly find for the first time their cohesion, their coming to consciousness as a class. For if we have a mind to see things as they actually are, we must be clear on the point that at any rate the workers form a class as

against Capital; there is no doubt that the owners treat the workers as a total class. The workers are in so far a class as such; they form a class "in itself". But they are not conscious of this; it has not yet sufficiently soaked in that as a class they have common interests and tasks. As yet they do not form a class for itself. To be sure, there is already a vague feeling of class solidarity, but it is still overshadowed by the group feeling; one feels himself more closely bound with the occupational group than with the class in general.

The revolutionary workers are quite easily inclined to assume of the whole class that it is like the revolutionary part. In meetings, when they give expressions to their own ideas, the matter comes off in a form like: The working class wants this or that, it takes this or that standpoint, it says this or that. But in reality the working class says nothing, it does nothing and takes no standpoint. It is neither "for" nor "against". As an active class, it does not exist. It exists like any lifeless thing, hence passively. It does not exist as a living, active being until it comes into motion and to the consciousness of itself.

Naturally, there is no complete and unbridgeable opposition between the class "in itself" and the class "for itself"; one will be right in pointing out that in the course of the past century the working class came forward several times as a class "for itself"; that the working class actually thought something and said something, that it undoubtedly adopted a standpoint. Thus in the parliamentary period, class consciousness expressed itself in the struggle for democratic rights and social ameliorations; it showed itself active in mass meetings, demonstrations and political strikes.

Looked at in this way, it might appear as if our class had developed backward and that a class consciousness is no longer present. Yet that is not the case. A class, too, can set its goals only in accordance with the tasks which are possible of accomplishment, tasks for which its forces are adequate. When great portions of the workers come into action, they do not begin this action with the aim of bringing down Capitalism and ushering in the communist form of economic life, because they know only too well that such a thing lies far beyond our present class forces. The working class does not act for the purpose of actualizing some theory or other, but in order to do away with these or those distressing conditions which have become unbearable. It can accordingly set for itself only limited goals which are within the scope of the class forces. Greater forces make possible a more ambitious goal. The "goal" is not something fixed, no marked-out highway according to which the stream of events has to direct itself, but it grows with the forces available. The goal in the struggle is a function of the unfolding of forces.

And as regards the means which the masses apply in struggle, we find the same relation. The masses are not free in the choice of their means of combat; these vary with the strength of the class. The growth of forces among the workers has as its consequence an extension of the means to be employed. Strength, means and goal stand to each other in mutual dependence and are in this sense inseparably bound with each other.

This mutual dependence between strength, means and goal must absolutely be borne in mind in dealing with all questions. As regards the present state of affairs, it explains the apparent retrogression of the working class, the apparent falling back into a state without class consciousness, and the backward development from a class "for itself" to a class "in itself". The falling back into passivity, the apparently endless patience with which all the suppression and exploitation are borne, can only be explained by way of the inadequacy of the means previously employed in the class struggle, together with the fact that the class forces are not yet great enough for other means. The solution of the burning question with which the working class is faced is not yet within the scope of its forces, and for this reason the workers now have no "goal". But this is not a falling back into a state without class consciousness; it is the preparation for a new building of forces on a new foundation, in order to bring the solution of the question within the scope of their forces. The hopeless confusion and disunity of the working class, the collapse of the old labor movement, is in reality only the preparation for a new leap in the development of the class forces. And in this way the working class will again become a class "for itself".

In the coming period of development, the transition of the workers from a class "in itself" to a class "for itself" will be a growth. Not by way of propaganda of revolutionists, but through the hard practice of life. In future the owning class will make constantly more pronounced and more direct, and for the masses more visible, the power of the state as an instrument of exploitation. In view of this fact, the most innocent resistance on the part of the workers assumes directly the form of a struggle against the state, and that resistance will be met in the same manner as if they were real revolutionists, as if they were class conscious workers. ... The essential point about the coming period is that any real resistance on the part of the workers must be suppressed in blood by the ruling classes. Martial law, abolition of freedom of assembly, prohibition of newspapers and writings; tanks, machine guns, gas bombs and hand grenades become the ordinary means for maintaining "order" or reestablishing it.

The cause, however, of the violent offensive of the ruling classes, who call off the deception formerly practiced by way of democratic pseudo-rights, lies in the critical situation itself. The bourgeoisie has a very good feeling for the fact that the workers have reason enough for becoming insurrectionary. It fears the revolution more than the workers think. Thus the slightest resistance gives rise at once to the fear that it may assume greater scope. For the bourgeoisie there is then only the one possibility: to suppress in the germ even the smallest beginning. The consciousness of its own innerly worm-eaten position makes it distrustful of any resistance, however insignificant.

And it helps in the beginning. The sharpened power of the bourgeoisie creates in the workers a feeling of impotence. To the mighty military machine of the bourgeoisie they have nothing of their own to oppose; they merely feel the inadequacy of the means hitherto employed. For this reason they feel weak and powerless. It is only individuals who then take stock of the new conditions and thus arrive at the conviction that new means and conceptions

are necessary. In vague form a like consciousness then arises within the masses. But it is only until the occurrence of spontaneous revolutionary outbreaks, brought about through great pressure and unbearable misery, that the masses become aware of their own strength, and confidence in this strength begins to grow anew.

The bourgeoisie makes of each resistance a political struggle for power. But in this way the bourgeoisie itself brings the struggle onto a much broader front. For while at first the matter concerned the interests of this or that group of workers, now other groups are drawn into the conflict through the political and military measures of the bourgeoisie itself. The bourgeoisie extends the struggle from the occupational front to the class front. From being a class "in itself", the workers are welded into a class "for itself".

This offensive on the part of the owning class does not by any means take place out of free will. The thing by which the bourgeoisie is moved is the state of capitalism itself. Capitalist production, and hence also the social life, can function only in case it yields enough profit. If the necessary profits are lacking, a greater or lesser part of production drops off. The provision of a new profit basis is therefore the first demand of the owning class. In this connection it is practically the interests of big capital, which are considered in the first instance, because they affect the most important part of social life. For this reason the leadership, too, of the social life is turned over to big capital. Or otherwise stated: The concentration of the economic life finds its political reflection in the concentration of political power in the hands of individuals. And by the side of the concentration of the political power in the hands of individuals, powerful capitalist groups which control the state, there appears the necessity of worsening the situation of the workers in order to reestablish the profitability of capital. This development is a development to Fascism and National Socialism; it is unavoidable in the wake of monopoly capital. It is synonymous with the end of the democratic development of society. The "democratic rights"--right to vote, right to organize, freedom of assembly, etc.--can no longer be tolerated. They are rights accorded only to organizations, groups or persons that subject themselves unconditionally to the policy of monopoly capital.

NATIONAL SOCIALISM

At first sight it would seem as if the workers take an antagonistic position to the urge toward the unveiled dictatorship of big capital. Yet such is not the case. Inversely, it is very probable that large portions of the workers in Western Europe and America are powerfully supporting this development. The thought of the masses is still, on the whole, quite bourgeois, simply because the social relations of human beings among each other are present in bourgeois-capitalistic form. It will not until this social order breaks up in the inevitable future conflicts, when the bourgeois-capitalistic order reveals itself as absolutely incapable

of regulating the social relations of human beings, that the thought of the masses too will change. So long, however, as the owning class, under the leadership of big capital, still keeps up the competitive struggle, so long is that class in its element and drags the masses along with it. The deeper, economic meaning of National Socialism is after all merely this, that it sharpens the order, the organization with which monopoly capital continues the competitive struggle on a higher level. The unity of the nation, the "people's partnership", thus becomes the "lofty goal" to which all special group and class interests have to be subordinated. It becomes the instrument with which monopoly capital conducts its economic and finally also its military campaigns. From each individual is demanded that he work at the building up of the economic life in order to "provide bread and work for everyone". The owners likewise must subordinate their interests to the "people as a whole", and not have their special interests in mind (behind this phrase is concealed the struggle of big capital against the smaller capitals). That the workers too must let their special and group interests slide for the benefit of the "people as a whole" is a matter of course, for: "When it goes well with the whole economy, it can not go badly with the worker". And then, finally, in order to assure the building up of such a "people's partnership", any propaganda directed against that end must be suppressed (abolition of democracy).

This phraseology is obviously in line with the thinking of broad masses. The workers under the influence of the trade unions had ever the "people's partnership" as their ideological basis. The Social Democracy on the other hand, had indeed a language borrowed from Marxism--the science of the class struggle--but their whole theory and practice has finally the "people's partnership" as its central point. All the socialization plans which up to that time had become known--including the "de Man plan" of the Belgian labor party--have the "people's partnership" for their basis. It is certainly not too much to say that such conceptions regarding the people's partnership dominate the thinking of great masses in Western Europe and America. It is only in so far as the bourgeoisie in introducing the new social order abolishes democracy that it meets with resistance, but practice shows that this resistance will not be very great. The younger generation has not yet seen much good of democracy, and will no doubt scarcely raise a hand in its defense. It demands the solution of the day-to-day problems: if that is possible with democracy, or if things go better without it, in either case it is content.

THE STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

What, now, must be the attitude of the revolutionary workers to the abolition of bourgeois-democratic rights? Is it a "stern revolutionary duty" to defend the political rights to the uttermost? We say: No! We are of the opinion that anyone who fights for "democratic rights" is defending a lost cause. Democracy is not in place in a society where capital is concentrated in a few hands. Democracy belongs in a society where small ownership prevails,

which represents in this way its contradictory interests. But when concentration asserts itself in the economic life, this process must necessarily follow on the political field as well. It is a well-known marxist rule that the development in the material foundation of society is mirrored also in its politics. Seen from this point of view, the political dominance of monopoly capital is a necessary development. In view of the dominance of monopoly capital, a return to democracy is impossible, just as a return to small business is at present impossible. Anyone who today fights for democratic rights is trying to turn the clock of history backward, just as did the hand weavers a century ago when they stormed the factories in order to smash the machines. One might just as well found a society for the prevention of solar eclipses.

A forward-driving class can set for itself only such goals as lie in the train of development. The new labor movement must direct its glance in the forward direction. It has no reason to mourn for the lost "good old times"; the new conditions serve for its orientation. It is not justified in harboring any doubt that the bourgeois-democratic period is definitely over, because such a period is not in conformity with the concentration of economy. The beginning of a new labor movement is possible only where it is recognized that bourgeois democracy has become economically and hence also politically impossible and that the working class must win another democracy--the democracy of the working class.

The development to absolute dominance on the part of monopoly capital is a fact, and the abolition of democracy no less, even though various possibilities stand open as to the manner and means by which this is brought about. The big bourgeoisie has laid democracy aside as a weapon which is unserviceable for its ends, in order later probably to bring it out of the lumber room once more. Democracy will be trotted out when the workers march up in mass movements and seriously menace capitalism. Democracy can then once more perform its services, in that it confuses and divides the workers, in order thus to exorcise the menacing revolution. At that time bourgeois democracy will again become of significance for the workers, but not because they come out for its restoration but because they combat it. The proletarian revolution must overcome bourgeois democracy just as well as the absolute dominance of monopoly capital; it can only win under the dominance of the workers' councils, under the democracy of the working class.

The fight for democratic rights under the present conditions bears a utopian character. But not only that: it is also obviously impossible. What is the sense of trying to make a fist when one lacks even a hand? Before high-sounding speeches at meetings, operetta-like mass demonstrations or a strike here and there, with which it is desired to defend the rights of democracy, the bourgeoisie recedes not a single step. For bringing down the big bourgeoisie, other forces are needed.

We must look the bitter truth in the face; namely, that the masses still have to find the new form of struggle proper to them. The old methods of struggle,--the elections, the demonstrations, the meetings of protest, the petitions, the strike limited to occupations (with or without the leadership of the trade unions), the local insurrection of isolated, armed groups, however heroically it may be fought out,--everything has been struck from their hand like a broken sword. They have no greater effect than a revolver bullet against a 40-mm. armor plate. The great mass of the workers is quite well aware of this fact, and so also there is hardly a sign of any sort of resistance, while at the same time the hunger belt has to be buckled ever more narrowly.

No less true is it that in the class struggle of the present and future hundreds of thousands, yes, millions, must come into action if the power apparatus of the owning class is to be shaken. This too is very well known to the great mass, which knows equally well that as yet there is present no spiritual bond, no vital principle by which the millions are thrown as a unit into the struggle.

Here lies the essential difference between the struggle in the period coming to an end and the struggle which now begins. Down to the present time the various groups of workers fought each for itself, and the thing by which they were moved was the safeguarding of their occupational interests as metal workers, longshoremen, transport workers, etc. There was an absence of general class interests, and they had no need of any great unifying principle. An organizational apparatus sufficed for conducting the struggle and giving it direction.

But for conducting the struggle of the millions who must now come out, no organizational apparatus is equal to the task. And yet the millions must move in one direction, must be guided in a common river bed, so to speak, if they are to arrive at common action. And since an organizational apparatus is not qualified for that task, it must be performed in some other manner. That happens when a new vital principle arises in the masses. It does not come about through preaching, it can not be imposed on the masses from the outside, or poured like a liquid into an empty vessel. The great unity of the like-directed class forces grows in struggle and through struggle, and it can be consolidated and remain an enduring thing only when the self-action breaks through from below in new organizational forms, when the organizations arise which in the struggle for emancipation combine the self-action into a total deed; organizations which are a bond of union in the struggle for freedom, and thus give rise to a consciousness that this freedom has as its content the mastery over one's own work, over the means of labor, over social production in general. It is the conversion of the thought world of the suppressed class to Communism. All class-struggle experience directed to the mastery of the class forces leaves in the masses its trace in the form

of class unity, struggle for freedom, communism. There thus arises a new vital principle, through which the masses are more closely joined, are inspired to greater sacrifice and greater courage, know how to exercise more discipline and solidarity, than a fixed, formal organization was ever able to demand of them.

Communism, seen in this way, is nothing other than the self-emancipation of the masses; they must be self-conscious, that is, in this sense communistic. Here the Russian communists and the Third International under their influence separate themselves from the struggle of the working class for Communism. They take the view that it suffices when the masses turn the communist party into the governing party and when this latter, once in possession of the political power, constructs communism. To them the masses are the tool which is employed by the party. Anyone who thinks of communism in this way can also combine it with wage labor, and also finds no fly in the ointment when the Third International is so unprincipled and false as to be bound up in opposition to its own comrades. The new, revolutionary labor movement, however, must again bind up communism with devotion to the class. It has need of loyalty and comradeship; it must assist in the overcoming of wage labor, in that it promotes the mastery of social life through the great broad mass itself. It is only then, at last, that dictatorship as well as the "democracy" of a ruling element has lost its meaning.

CLASS STRUGGLE AND COMMUNISM

A new labor movement will scarcely have further need, in its propaganda, of the word Communism, for the reason that the general concept "Communism" assumes more concrete forms. The general formulation, that it is a new economic system in which private property in means of production is abolished, no longer suffices. The "new economic system" of theory was still an empty vessel, it did not live. It now begins, in the class struggle, when the question is one of mastering the social forces through humanity itself, to fill with concrete things, with life. When up to that time we formed a notion of communism as an economic system, we now see that we had only one side in mind, got only a partial glimpse of the problems involved. Just as natural science by way of technics has subjected the natural forces to society, so must humanity direct and govern the social forces. These social forces which itself creates and by which it is tormented as by blind processes of nature, humanity must learn to know and to subject. The mass of human beings must themselves direct and control all the social forces. To this end, however, it is necessary that all functions in the social life be exercised by the masses directly; the organs shaped by the masses for that purpose are no longer, as special organs of dominance, to be separated from them. They can only be the instrument by which the masses carry out what they have decided upon by taking counsel together. Here we have for the first time

what is involved in the workers' councils. For this reason also the carrying out of communism is at the same time the carrying out of workers' democracy. The control of the economic and social forces appears in this connection, to be sure, as the material foundation of society, but yet as only a part of a communist society, which in its entirety is far more comprehensive.

Seen in this way, the development of communism does not wait to begin until the workers have won the power in society and are establishing the new order in the economic life. It begins even now, the very day when the workers in the class struggle take their fate into their own hands and themselves conduct their struggles. There is born the workers' democracy, which governs the social forces. Thus communism arises in the self-movement of the masses; what we have here is the process of development in which the masses learn to conduct their own class forces and to apply them consciously in view of the goal. And it is only then, when the working class has its own class forces thus in hand, only then is it in a position also to conduct and administer the forces of society. In this sense, too, the saying of Karl Marx, that the new society is born in the lap of the old, turns to truth.

With this there is found for communism the simplest, but also at the same time the most essential formula. It can be understood by any worker forthwith, however much he may doubt of its practical carrying out. At the same time it becomes clear that the so-called dictatorship of the proletariat, before which bourgeois lackeys make the workers shudder, is in truth nothing other than the workers' democracy. But any worker also understands that this workers' democracy has nothing to do with the right to elect members of bourgeois parliaments. To make propaganda for the defense of universal suffrage as a defense of the democratic rights of the working class therefore amounts to nothing other than to work against the recognition of our real democratic rights.

The mastery of our own class forces by way of the mass is not brought about through propaganda; the hard experience of life compels the masses in this direction. The democratic period is practically, and on an international scale, closed. Legal organizations can henceforth merely attempt to check incipient class actions as quickly as possible. In a succession of defeats, the working class frees itself from this leadership.

Under these conditions, the new labor movement arises with quite new principles. It is composed of small illegal groups, which see the essence of the struggle for emancipation in the independent movement of the masses. And so they do not aim at power for their party or group; it is not their organization which shall become strong, but the class.

Meanwhile, the coming to independence on the part of the masses is a tedious process which takes place in a veritable hell. For never yet in the history of humanity has a suppressed class stood confronted by such a powerful enemy, never yet by such a murderous power; never yet was such an extensive, all-embracing task to be accomplished as that of acquiring mastery over the social forces of the world. And yet the working class is bound to fight out this mighty conflict, because it can not be evaded and there is no other power which can do it. For the unchained forces of capitalist society menace all humanity with destruction. All humanity sees with fear and trembling the approaching mass slaughter of war with its poison gases and plague-bacilli,--the result of the uncontrolled social forces released through capitalist production. No one wants this mass slaughter, and yet everyone is convinced that it is already terribly near and that it will finally break loose like an inexorable storm. It is a madness which no one wants and which nevertheless, with the certainty of a natural catastrophe, howls over the world. And because this is so, the battle for the mastery of the social forces must be fought. Even though, in a second world war, entire peoples should perish, the mastery of the social forces still remains as a problem which is unsolved. New and still more frightful catastrophes appear on the horizon. Therefore, the mastery of the social forces through the masses themselves is the problem of today and also of the coming time.

Only the working class alone with its army of millions is capable of fulfilling this task. It is the productive class under capitalism, and as such it alone is in a position to master the social forces of production. That, however, is the most important part of the task; for the productive forces are the well from which all other social forces are nourished.

The working class is here thrown upon its own resources. The Social Democracy and Third International call to the intellectuals and the middle classes for aid in order to tame the productive forces. They are looking for aid where none is to be found. The attempt at mastery over the forces of production through intellectuals and middle strata assumes the form of national mastery over the working class; it ends in National Socialism. The result is not the taming of the productive forces, but that the only force capable of taming them is completely subjected and the contradictions on an international scale thereby sharpened. The oncoming of new world-catastrophes is thereby accelerated.

The working class, which creates the surplus value, is also the only class capable of stopping up the source of surplus value, in that it makes wage labor impossible and introduces new laws of motion for social production. Naturally, the middle strata and the intellectuals also are menaced with extinction by the unmastered social forces. But as a class which lives on surplus value they can form no auxiliary force

where, with the introduction of new laws of motion for special production, the source of surplus value itself is done away with. The existence of the intellectuals and middle strata as a special class rests on wage labor for the working class; they can not be allies when the question is one of abolishing wage labor. But the first precondition for their conversion into allies is that the working class itself becomes a power to be reckoned with. When mighty working masses come forth in struggle and reveal the new, all-mastering power of the working class, it then becomes the magnet which draws to itself the dispersed revolutionary forces from all other strata of the population. Not sooner. The attempt at union with the middle strata or the intellectuals leads for this very reason to the opposite of what was intended. The working class may be proud to inscribe on its banner: Only the working class and only the working class alone! In this way the preconditions are then set for the "coming over" of important groups from the intellectuals and the middle strata. It is class power that we need! Class power!

THE SELF-MOVEMENT OF THE MASSES!

a) Meaning of the mass-movement

Through direct action in the form of the mass-movement the owning class is directly menaced. At present, not yet by reason of the strength or scope of that movement; for the masses are still struggling with tradition, they liberate themselves but slowly from the party and trade-union policy. For that reason the owning class will find it fairly easy for a time to suppress these movements. The danger to this class, for that matter, is not that the power of the owners is directly menaced, but in the fact that no independent movement of the workers is possible without overstepping the legal limits. The independent movement of the workers develops its own laws by which it is guided and acts, and the express tendency of these laws is that the workers shall themselves take charge of the social forces of production. Because the mass movement shows that the mass, when it consciously applies its class power, does so in order to take control of the social forces of production, because the mastery of the class forces includes the administration of the productive forces, for this reason there remains to the owning class no choice. It must suppress these movements instantaneously with the sharpest means at command.

As soon as an independent strike movement arises here or there, the bourgeoisie answers at once with martial law; newspapers, organizations, meetings are forbidden, if they are not in fact suppressed in advance. But when a movement develops, it takes action against such suppression. Meetings are simply held regardless, and newspapers are put out. That, however,

means taking up the struggle against the state power. If the workers draw back before this struggle, the ruling class is then enabled to suppress the movement. But once resistance is offered, the movement then becomes subject to its own inner law. In the strike area, where the workers have something to say, a different law prevails than outside that area. This other law reveals itself, among other things, in the fact that in the strike area the laws for the protection of private property must go by the board. And not because the fighting workers are conscious communists who let themselves be guided by the thought of putting the social forces of production into the service of the working class, but because nothing else is in order, because the struggle itself makes it necessary The mass movements show in the germ what later on will become reality in the whole of society. It is revealed in them that the masses can do nothing with their class force unless at the same time they make the productive forces serviceable to them. Both belong together.

So long as the mass movements are still small and still remain a surface affair, the tendency toward the mastery of all social forces does not come so clearly to light. But if these movements become large, then more and more functions are drawn into the province of the struggling masses, -their sphere of action becomes extended. And in this struggling mass there then comes about a completely new grouping of the relations between human beings and the productive process. A new "order" develops. Those are the essential distinguishing marks of the independent class movements, which are accordingly the horror of the bourgeoisie.

The development of the mass movement is therefore a development which has as its content the progressive mastery of the class forces and hence also of the social life. But this gradual process, this step-by-step development, takes place in the sense that what has once been attained remains as a class heritage, to be built upon further. Such direct successes as are attained are continually vanishing in thin air. What remains is the experience. Each mass movement develops anew on the experience of the previous movements. Thus there arise various measures with reference to the extension of the movements, to the provision of necessary material with which to organize the defense, to the distribution of foodstuffs, etc. These measures then come to be looked upon as a matter of course; they are things which are then no longer discussed, because they have become, through experience, through repeated employment, a part of the thought of the masses. Just as today no great arguments are engaged in any more when the question is one of setting up posts for the purpose of capturing strike breakers, because it "goes without saying", so the masses draw to themselves all functions of the social life, without advising long on the matter.

The suppression of a mass movement is accordingly also only a partial defeat of the working class. For such a defeat reveals by the side of the momentary impotence also the growing power;

it is only the defeat of the young giant, of the strength which has not yet fully matured.

b) Extension of the movement.

One of the first functions which take root in the thinking of the struggling masses is the extension of their movement. Today this question is still vehemently contested, but clarity on this point will be introduced mainly by the power which the movement develops. For a movement either grows rapidly into a genuine movement, or else it is suppressed in the very act of getting under way.

The old labor ^{mass} movement knows two methods by which a movement is extended. Either the trade-union leadership decides as to whether and in what measure this is to take place, and to that end sets the organizational apparatus in motion, or else various parties by means of leaflets etc. issue a call for solidarity on the part of the workers of other enterprises and occupations. In either case the extension is here not a function of the striking workers, but of the "labor movement".

A struggling mass that comes out on its own is first concerned with the taking over of this function. And then not in the sense that the "self-selected" strike leadership issues a call to the other industrial groups, but in the sense that the striking mass itself visits the other enterprises in order to urge their class comrades to solidarity.

Besides, it is quite conceivable that the workers still on the job fail to follow the exhortations of other organizations. The organizations are continually engaged in a struggle among each other, because each organization wants to increase its own membership at the expense of the others. So that the mutual struggle of the organizations is rooted not only in the difference of conception regarding the tactic to be employed, but is also a matter of organizational interests. No worker can finally fail to be aware of this, and so he lends no ear to the slogans of other organizations.

But when the striking workers themselves come up and appeal to the solidarity of the other workers, the matter takes a different aspect. The conflict between organizational discipline and class allegiance then assumes for each individual worker a sharper form, and the "danger" of a fraternization becomes more probable. The ruling class will therefore do everything in its power to prevent this fraternization; to every attempt of the masses to carry out the extension themselves, it will reply with strict military measures. For the present, a strike movement can accomplish nothing in the face of this military power, so that it appears senseless to seek extension in this manner.

And yet it is not senseless. For the workers who then still refuse to take part in the movement are forced to work

under military protection. The military state power which they hate has to protect them against their own class comrades. In this way the psychological conflict between trade-union discipline and class solidarity is sharpened and new possibilities for the extension won.

Even today, that is, in "normal times", when the horizon reveals not a cloud of aggressiveness on the part of the workers, the functioning of extending the movement through the agency of the workers themselves must be placed on the order of the day. Wherever workers come together, this principle must be given the central position. Looked at superficially, this has no direct, practical significance; and as a matter of fact we are not in a position to determine in what measure this principle will find a response--that can only be ascertained in practice. But the practical application of the new principle can only be facilitated by an intensive preliminary work and preparation.

A truly revolutionary propaganda does not, then, consist in the ever renewed calls to "revolution" or in the "release" of all possible conflicts. It consists in the constant, unremitting preparation of the possibilities of extension, so that the inevitably coming class conflicts may embrace the greatest possible number of workers.

c) The mastery of the class forces through the workers' councils

The second function to be performed by the masses themselves is the organic mastery of their class forces,--their "own leadership". Until this time the "movement of labor" coincided with the "labor movement"; the old organizations were forthwith the leaders of the movements. This relation between "mass and leader" was, to be sure, on various occasions, broken through by the struggling workers in connection with revolutionary mass movements; still there was not yet seen in this circumstance any new principle born from the practice of the class struggle, but only a "deviation" from the usual course of events, and which simply resulted from this or that particular situation. The "deviation", however, consisted in the fact that the workers, without the consent and often against the will of the old organizations, took up the struggle, freed themselves from the old leadership and, under their own leadership, actualized a mass goal which had taken form in the masses independently of and in spite of the old leadership. And this "deviation" now becomes the usual form of the struggle when the mass comes into motion for its own class goals.

The conditions with which the class struggle is bound up at the present time leave no other choice. For the very reason that each movement of labor comes into conflict with the state power and departs from the prescribed legal path, because every single struggle must be so conducted as if the question were directly the emancipation of the working class,--for this reason any leadership over the workers is bound to break down, and what remains is only the leadership which proceeds from the struggling workers themselves. And this is not affected by the fact that parties and organizations can for the present still impose their leadership on movements which have arisen independently of them and against

their will. For when they succeed in doing that, it is merely a proof of the fact that such a movement is too weak for further independent unfoldment, -- it is on the decline. This "leadership" then has the task of bringing the movement into "orderly paths"; that is, the movement is so "led" as not to come into conflict with the laws and the state power which stands behind them.

For this reason it is necessary that the principle of "self-leadership of the masses" become the central point of the class movement. This principle is as yet but weakly represented. The tradition that class movements must be dominated and led by way of organizations is still so deeply rooted that new groups are continually arising which set this leadership as their task. When the old organizations can not and will not conduct the class struggle, then they want to set up new organizations which can do the job.

Naturally, there is a kernel of truth in the old traditional conception; namely, that the class forces have to be mastered and led. For when a proletarian mass movement is merely in the form of a spontaneous outbreak, the class forces are, to be sure, unleashed; but when these forces are unmastered, not yet consciously directed, their action resembles that of a thunder-storm which discharges itself without further consequences. The mastery of forces, however, consists in applying them in view of the goal. And therefore these forces must be directed and organized. This is just as true today as it was 50 years ago, and is not antiquated. The new conception consists in the conviction that these forces can not be mastered and led by way of an organization. The functions which have to be performed by the workers in connection with major mass movements are so numerous and extensive, -- they extend finally to the whole sphere of social life, -- that no party is in a position to take upon itself the task of leadership. In the last instance, that can be done only by those who must finally exercise these functions, and they are the workers themselves.

It is precisely here that we have the enormous difficulty of the present process of development; that the forces, so long as they discharge themselves chaotically, without inner connection, are also easily struck down. But from the experience acquired in these struggles grows the unity and coordination of the forces. Some take over these and the others those tasks; this process gives rise to a conscious division of strength and labor, that is, the forces are mastered and organized.

In so far as our experience extends, we have seen that this coordination takes place in the form of committees of action, which in the revolutionary movement of Russia and Germany since 1917 have become known as worker's councils. For the carrying out of measures of a general sort, there is a general workers' council. Thus history tells us, for example, of the "Great Workers' Council" of Hamburg, the "General Workers' Council" of Berlin, of St. Petersburg. The "Central Workers' Council for the Ruhr District", for example, seized (1920) the banks in order to assure payment of wages during the general strike. The Hamburg workers' council, again, had recourse to measures for regulating supply of the whole city area with means of subsistence, and also sought to organize the resistance to the central state power.

Thus the mastery of our class forces, under the present-day conditions, finds its practical form in the council system. As a class, we can consciously apply our forces only in the measure in which we have been able to crystallize them in the workers' councils. In every mass movement the organizational drawing together and coordination of the forces, their conscious application, assumes more fixed forms. In this direction lies also the task of the revolutionists; the aim of their striving must be to make each mass movement more and more into a council movement.

The growth of the mass movement to the council movement shows us in what measure we are learning consciously to apply our class forces.

But after all, we may ask, is it so certain that mass movements will develop into the council movement? Has National Socialism in Germany and Fascism in Italy not brought the masses into a movement which bears no trace of workers' councils, but rather set over the masses an opposite principle, namely, the dominance of the "leader"? And a second question arises: Will the increasing economic distress, the ever intensified exploitation by the ruling class, lead to a struggle for the means of production, to a struggle for mastery over the productive forces by the workers? Has not the experience in Germany and Italy shown that the persistent worsening of the workers' situation has driven the masses not to the left, but to the right? Has there not come over the masses a wave of nationalism and militarism, of destruction of everything reminiscent of the labor movement? In short, is not the thought of the laboring masses more than ever capitalistically oriented? And are we not bound to realize that in the fascist countries the laboring masses do everything in their power to rescue capitalist economy?

In actual fact! We are indulging no illusions that the working class is moving straight ahead toward the mastery of its own forces. But we know, too, that this can not be a permanent state of affairs, that it does not prevent the final ascent of our class to power. We derive this knowledge from the science of the laws of motion of capitalist society, which tells us that capitalism can only maintain its existence by ever greater impoverishment of the broad masses.

Whatever ideas may be present in the masses regarding an "ordering" of capitalist economy, the fact remains that this ordering is dictated by the interests of monopoly capital.

The big capitals which in modern capitalism constitute the determining force in economy must yield profit if the whole economic life is not to be brought to a standstill. They can only live any more from the dying of the masses. The central problem in our present-day society is simply that the productive forces are not only means of production and labor power, but at the same time capital, and that they can produce only when, as capital, they create enough profit for the owning class. That is attempted through constantly sharpened exploitation, leads to the

absolute impoverishment of the broad masses and finally after all comes up against its natural limits.

The problem is therefore not an "ordering" of capitalism, but its abolition. The fact that the productive forces are at the same time capital and as such must yield profits becomes in ever increased measure a hindrance to their application. Therefore, in the interest of the broad masses, the economic life must function even without yielding profit for capital ownership. This, however, is equivalent to saying that the means of production can no longer appear as capital and that the capitalists can no longer appropriate the workers labor through the purchase of their labor power. When the means of production are divested of their capitalist character, they are thereafter only tools with which the free workers produce goods in order to satisfy the need of the hungry mass.

The complete overturn of all economic relations is therefore the problem of our time. The relation of human beings to the means of production, which today is characterized by wage labor; the relation of human beings to the store of goods present in society, on which the workers can draw only provided that and in proportion to the price at which they sell their labor power; the relation of one human being to another, in so far as they belong to different classes, and which appears in the form of master and wage slave, of appropriator and expropriated, of buyer and bought: -- all these relations receive a complete and fundamental transformation. For with the elimination of the quest for profit and hence also of the capital character of the productive forces, the whole circulation of social goods is brought into other channels, while all relations of human beings among each other assume new forms.

Fascism is neither able nor wants to solve this problem, and will accordingly, after it has shown its true face in this decisive question also, be overcome by the masses themselves. The solution of this very problem becomes ever more pressing, and hence also mass movements directed to setting up production for and through the workers are unavoidable.

The decisive point in this connection is that it must come about, -- the will to that end arises from the necessity, -- while the working class is able to do it only when it forms itself to that end in the workers' councils. The conquest of power in a certain district will then not be the greatest difficulty. Much more important still will be the question whether the workers succeed in mastering production; that is, in doing away with the relation of master and slave and, by binding together the various enterprises, in introducing the social regulation of production. That is possible only through the workers' councils. And they must also assure supply of the means of subsistence to the broad masses, in that through social regulation of distribution they make impossible the private appropriation of the products of labor. This regulation, too, is possible only when the working masses are organized in councils.

So that the growth of the mass movement as a council movement is the yardstick with which the conscious application of the class forces can be measured. The idea that the workers' councils arise only in the revolution itself must therefore be rejected as false. In connection with each movement proceeding from the working class, the main concern must be with the forming of workers' councils. The significance of a mass movement consists not so much in the material successes which it attains, but whether and in what measure it succeeds in applying the class forces through their councils.

THE NEW LABOR MOVEMENT

Up to this point our efforts have been directed to showing that the "movement of labor" assumes in the workers' councils the form through which it is in a position to master the social forces. We now turn our attention to the new "labor movement", to the organizational binding together of the still relatively small number of revolutionary workers who have consciously adopted the standpoint of the workers' councils. In this connection it is first necessary to draw a sharp boundary line between organizations which call themselves revolutionary but in reality still belong to the old "labor movement" and those which are developing in the new direction. All organizations which lay claim on the leadership of the struggles, which want to become the "general staff" of the working class, stand on the other side of the boundary line, regardless of how recent may be their date of birth. On the other hand, all organizations which do not want to snatch the power into their own hands but only want to promote class power, which elevate to a principle the self-movement of the masses through the workers' councils, -- all these we count as belonging to the new labor movement.

This new labor movement is already present, but still after all just in the first beginnings, so that as yet it is scarcely possible to speak of a developed organizational structure. For the present, it still appears in the form of small illegal propaganda groups which turn up here and there, are of varying opinion on a great number of practical and theoretical questions and for the moment will no doubt remain so. But even as they are, they are still the organs through which the class strives to come to an understanding of its true situation. In these groups, which remain rooted in the mass, is revealed the reorientation of the thinking of the class. Still spontaneously at first, here and there groups take form which are without much cohesion and hence also with divergent conceptions. But the more this group-forming asserts itself, becomes the general rule, and is finally recognized as a necessary schooling of the working class, the more also will the divergent conceptions be merged into a unity.

Party or "Work Group"

We now have to answer the question whether these propaganda or work groups must also be looked upon as new parties. For these groups have, just as do the parties, a political program; they are

groups with more or less fixed opinions, and with distinctive directives for their own activity as well as for the class struggle in general. So it might appear then that they, like the hitherto known parties, stand aloof from the mass, elevate themselves over it and finally after all once more strive for dominance over the mass. But anyone who judges in this way fails to see that the conceptions advocated by the new work groups regarding the path which the working class must take for its emancipation are directed to the overcoming of all forms of dominance. The content of their propaganda does not convert the groups into organs of domination, but into organs through which the class itself derives the necessary knowledge and thus is in a position to shake off all dominance.

Otherwise with the hitherto known political parties. These want first to win the state power, and then, by way of decrees, ordinances, laws and government measures, put through their political program. This is the usual way in bourgeois class society. But such a policy simply has as its presupposition the class oppositions in society, and is at the same time bound up with them. It can have as its content merely a view to softening the oppositions, of "bridging them over" or "compensating" them. But the opposition between master and slave may be "compensated" as much as one likes, master and slave nonetheless still remain. This opposition, on which the whole structure of present-day society is built, and hence also its government, can not be compensated, not even through the policy of a government which calls itself communist. It can only be done away with, in that the workers, through their councils, directly seize the power, themselves carry out all political (social) measures, and in collective union obtain the disposal over the preconditions for the production of their own living. That, however, can not be accomplished through the policy of a government, but takes place only in the course of a revolutionary process in which the working masses themselves come to maturity and rise to be the social power.

In view of the specific character of dominance which is bound up with the concept "party", whereas the new work groups direct their propaganda precisely against such a character, and also, in so far as they have a political program, are in complete opposition to the known party conceptions; these groups have practically nothing in common with what is understood by "party". They differ from parties essentially, and can therefore not be looked upon as such. For the present we call them "work groups"; as to what name they may finally receive, we must leave that to the further development.

The Work Groups

The task of the work groups, viewed exteriorly, is very modest. The revolutionary phrase, brilliant speeches of great party leaders, tom-tom propaganda and party advertising have here lost all meaning. And yet their importance is much greater than that of the most powerful party propaganda could ever be. So long as only isolated groups sporadically here and there set about, through serious study, making themselves acquainted with the movement of

the social forces, so long the importance of this work does not directly strike the view. But as soon as they become more general, when they form a consciously widespread movement, when work groups arise everywhere for the purpose of imparting to the workers the true (scientific) insight into the social process of life, then the picture is altered. Their task is then no longer small and modest, but gigantic and all-mastering. In the work groups the working class has then shaped for itself the instrument with which it masters the science of the social forces.

The time for it is due, and over-due; unless all signs fail, the development presses in these directions. What remains in Germany, for example, of the old labor movement are small illegal discussion groups in which the workers seek to find their way under the newly formed conditions. It is only in these discussion groups, in fact, that an independent labor movement there under the present conditions is at all possible. And what even today has become reality in Germany will in the near future have its entry also in the other capitalist countries. Then, there too, the time will have arrived when, with the visible collapse of the old labor movement, the new form of illegal discussion and propaganda groups or, as we prefer to name them, of work groups, will become necessary.

As yet such groups arise through the circumstance that various workers come together in order to converse regarding their class situation. They are still weak and uncertain and not yet in a position to come out independently. There is still too little knowledge and skill in order to function as a unit, from which the new principles may pass to the outside. All that must be made up for in painstaking, serious work upon oneself and upon the group. To this end, however, it is first necessary that the groups realize the great importance of their work for the emancipation struggle of the proletariat. When it once becomes clear to the workers that they can here practically and actively work at the maturing of the whole class, each in his locality and each group as the little wheel whose absence is not allowable in the great structure of the working class if the class is to become fit for action, -- then they will devote themselves whole-heartedly to this task. Then, however, what still today appears to many as impossible will become a matter of course. Then the work groups which have gone on in advance along this path and which, basing themselves upon the marxian social doctrine, have recognized the whole breadth and depth of the problem, -- the emancipation of the proletariat -- must call on their class comrades to follow everywhere their example. They must point out the necessity that each group form an independent unit capable of thinking for itself and putting out its own propaganda material. Each new work group must become a radiating center for the idea of independence and the impulsion to the forming of more and more groups. Here a field of labor lies fallow, of such enormous extent that there will not be forces enough for tilling it. But this labor, once begun on a major scale, sets free so many new forces that it will finally arouse the enthusiasm and the allegiance of the whole class.

In the work groups of the new labor movement the soil is

being prepared on which arises our knowledge of and insight into the movement of the social forces. What the individual, left to himself, can not do is quite possible in collective exchange of ideas, first in the work group and then in the connection of the groups among each other, which finally create the spiritual bond throughout the class. The analysis of the constantly changing social phenomena -- in the old movement the monopoly of the intellectuals and leaders -- is here accomplished by the workers themselves.

The very widespread opinion to the effect that such a thing is beyond the capacities of the workers is quite wrong-headed. Inversely: The intellectuals and leaders of the old labor movement are incapable of giving an analysis of the social developments for the revolutionary proletariat. They see the phenomena otherwise than do the revolutionary workers because their goal is different: they today play the part of leaders and want to retain that part in the future also. Their thinking can not be other than required by the function which they perform in this society. They form a special privileged stratum whose function is built on wage labor, economic expropriation and deprivation of rights for the working class; they fight for the maintenance of this function, and to them accordingly also the abolition of wage labor and the dominance of the working class itself must appear a utopia. To the workers themselves, however, nothing stands in the way of taking up into themselves that knowledge which, through scientific investigation on the social field, is present in great fullness. This knowledge, which in the great works of scientific socialism is formulated into social laws of motion and the correctness of which is proved a thousand times over through the process of development of our present society, and at this very time is being more and more confirmed, this knowledge can be understood only by the workers. For this knowledge tells us that the capitalist order of our society with its ever mightier forces of production comes into ever sharper conflicts which it is finally incapable of overcoming. It tells us that only the working class is capable of putting an end to that, in that it rises out of wage slavery. It is only scientific investigation which teaches us to know the whole of society. The method of social investigation, the historical-materialistic one, which has developed in the course of the 19th and 20th centuries and which has been established in the works of Marx, Engels, Dietzgen and others, must now be applied and put into practice by the workers.

This task, however, can only be accomplished by the entire class. It begins wherever groups arise which take as their task the analysis of the social events; groups which develop finally into the common brain with which the class thinks, when everywhere groups have arisen whose bond of union is a similar manner of thought. The task is enormously great, but it will yet finally be mastered by the inexhaustible energy of the working masses, for only thus is the way prepared which leads to the emancipation of the working class.

The "diseases of childhood"

The new labor movement thus arising has, naturally, its "diseases of childhood". These are frequently of such a dangerous

character that most of the newly arisen groups succumb from them at present. In the last five years alone, such groups have arisen again and again, only in order to disappear as they come. The causes of this are mainly two: The most essential one is that they lacked a sufficient theoretical foundation; they were still too much a hodgepodge of traditional ideas and of new ones insufficiently digested. The second cause lies in the fact that under the new conditions collaboration in the groups must have a quite different character than in the old movement. The intellectual qualities required for that purpose are not forthwith present; they must first be learned and acquired in struggle. For these two reasons the problem of group-forming is also much more difficult than appears at first sight.

The insufficient theoretical foundation becomes so dangerous to the new groups for the very reason that it leads to inconsidered and aimless actions. When impatience instead of insight becomes the counsellor of action, one seeks to drive the workers into all possible actions and expects thereby, through the artificial release of actions, that the faith in leaders will surely be driven out of them. This becomes at last a consciously applied method for "revolutionizing" the working class and "educating" it to the class struggle.

And so their language is fearfully "revolutionary"; their description of the ruling class is horrifying and they end in stereotype manner with the alternative: Revolution or decline into barbarism. This gives them the feeling of being very revolutionary and the conviction that they are front-rank fighters in the proletarian revolution. But all that is accomplished by it is that the revolutionary impatience is discharged in strong words and explodes like loose powder, without injury to the ruling class. And when after all, here or there, isolated small groups permit themselves to be driven in this manner into an "action", they merely demonstrate how laughable such a tactic is. The revolutionary language can not replace what the class lacks in the matter of insight. The attempt by such methods to make the proletariat "ripe" for revolution merely demonstrates that these "front-rank fighters" themselves still lack the most elementary insight into the conditions of the proletarian struggle for emancipation.

The other "disease of childhood" consists in the fact that the work in the group must first be learned, that collaboration in the groups has not yet found the form befitting the new tasks, and that even the workers collaborating in the groups have to acquire new intellectual qualities adapted to the new conditions. The most characteristic trait of the old organizations is that their members, who have joined them on the basis of certain principles, are controlled through the organization itself. The individual wants to subject himself to the principles which he holds to be correct; in reality he subjects himself to the organizational apparatus, which in its turn lays down the principles, alters them, determines in how far they are valid in this or that case, etc. and even establishes how the members must act in accordance with these principles. The individual member who through his entry becomes a part of the organization thus subjects himself to

the "leadership" of the organization. This "leadership" is regulated, delimited and defined by regulations and statutes in which the rights and duties of the individual with respect to the organization and inversely are laid down. Anyone who sins in any manner is called to order in accordance with these rules of organization. The democratic constitution of the organization was designed to provide that this leadership should be decisively influenced by the members; but the more the old organization sprouted into a purely bureaucratic apparatus, the more was this sort of influence reduced to a minimum and finally quite thrown overboard.

The labor organizations are thus a faithful image of the political order of bourgeois society in general. The national-socialist party has contributed the final touch to this development, in that it elevates the autocracy of the leadership into a principle; a leadership which is henceforth responsible only to its "God" and its "own conscience". But whether along democratic paths or through bureaucratic decree or finally just through the "God-illuminated" leader, the organizational rules and statutes are yet the basis on which the activity of the individuals in the organization is bound into a whole. In this way they can work together in spite of the fact that they mutually distrust each other's judgment as to the proper course and are ready at any time to discredit their neighbor if he stands in their way in the organization.

In the last few years we have become acquainted with various groups which had retained this mentality from the old movement, and which have disappeared as quickly as they came. It was first attempted to bridge over the mutual differences through the building up of an organizational apparatus. But in small groups that is practically impossible: here the mutual distrust very soon dissolves any organizational bond. The first lesson which may be derived from this is that small groups are capable of working only when their members have at least an approximately like conception of their tasks.

Groups which still today wish to become "big" -- big in the sense that the organization grows big and powerful -- find themselves on the same path that the old labor movement has taken. They still bear the distinguishing marks of the old labor movement, where the organization "leads" as an apparatus and the individual member subjects himself to this leadership.

So that at the present time it is only like-minded people who can combine in small groups. It is better that revolutionary workers in thousands of small groups work on the coming to consciousness of their class than that their activity be subjected in a large organization to the striving for dominance on the part of their leadership. That does not preclude collaboration of the groups among each other, but rather makes it more necessary. If it is shown in practice that such collaboration has been attended with success, then in truth is the smelting together into a great organization of like-minded persons surely accomplished. But this smelting together to an organic unity can only be the result of a process of development.

The groups which are to be the starting point of the new

labor movement must consist not merely of members with like conceptions regarding their tasks. These conceptions themselves must be distinguished essentially from those of the old labor movement. The first and most important of these conceptions is the one which has to do with the member's activity in the organization. It must be distinguished from the old conception in that the member does not subject himself to a leadership, but that he combines in collective comradely manner with others of like mind in order that a "leadership" to which one must subject himself may be made superfluous. The leadership as well as the rules according to which the collaboration in the groups takes place can not be a foreign apparatus ruling over the members, but must proceed ever anew from the absolute devotion of those members. They themselves make ever anew the leadership and the bond that binds them to common action in the group; that is the all-surpassing will to leave personal interests out of account when the fulfillment of the common tasks so demands.

S U M M A R Y

When we bring together a few general aspects of the new labor movement, it is seen that the aims which it sets for itself are very different from those of the old movement. This latter wants, by way of action through the trade unions and through social legislation, to bring about ameliorations on the basis of capitalism. The new labor movement, on the other hand, directs its activities to the attainment of a state of society which has as its presupposition the abolition of the capitalist order. In the mass movement, it wants to bring the mass to self-organization in the workers' councils, so that through these the mass can perform all functions of the legislative and executive power and itself carry out all tasks in relation to production and distribution. The revolutionary workers who take as their task the propaganda for the self-movement of the working masses want to combine them in organizations under their own leadership, in work groups which in all that they do remain completely independent. These work groups have not only the task of propaganda toward the outside; essential at the same time is their own schooling; knowledge is necessary. All the bourgeois professors on earth, even when they are combined into a "brain trust", can not do away with the all-mastering opposition between Capital and Labor. They can not discover the essential cause of the constantly increasing social catastrophes, for that cause -- wage labor -- is at the same time the basis on which arises their privileged function in society. Only the working class alone is in a position to do that, because it must if it is not content to be pressed ever farther down in the scale.

The central problem, which ever more pressingly cries for its solution, consists in the mighty development of the productive forces and the impossibility of applying them. Capitalism continues to maintain itself only by ever anew destroying productive forces or throwing them out of action. This problem stands today in the center of all thoughts; it begins to pursue each individual as well as the mass; it can not be evaded. We must therefore

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make this problem the central axis of our self-schooling and propaganda. Until theory seizes the masses: then theory becomes a material power. And it is only then that we learn to know the full significance of the words:

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