

Deanship of Graduate Studies

Al-Quds University



**The Role of the Communist Party in the United States during the Great Depression
in 1930s**

Nasser Ahmad NaserAl-Qadi

M.A. Thesis

Jerusalem-Palestine

1436-2015

**The Role of the Communist Party in the United States during the Great Depression
in 1930s**

Prepared By:

Nasser Ahmad NaserAl-Qadi

**B.A.: in Arabic Language and its Teaching Methods, Al-Quds Open University-
Palestine**

Supervisor:

Dr. Seth J. Frantzman

**A thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for master's degree in
Regional Studies-American Studies**

Jerusalem - Palestine

1436-2015

Al-Quds University
Deanship of Graduate Studies
American Studies Program



Thesis Approval

The Role of the Communist Party in the United States during the Great Depression
in 1930s

Prepared by: Nasser Ahmad Naser Al-Qadi

Registration No.: 21220053

Supervisor: Dr. Seth J. Frantzman

Master Thesis submitted and accepted, date June 17th, 2015.

The names and signatures of the examining committee members are as follows:

1. Dr. Seth J. Frantzman "head of Committee"

Signature

2. Dr. Daniel Noah Moses "external examiner"

Signature

3. Dr. Yasser Abu Deyah "internal examiner"

Signature

Jerusalem-Palestine

1436-2015

Dedication

To my parents who have struggled much for me

To the humanists around the world

To the human rights activists

Declaration

I certify that this thesis submitted for the degree of Master of Arts is the result of my own research, except where otherwise acknowledged, and that this thesis (or any part of the same) has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.

Nasser AhmadAl-Qadi

Signed:

Date: October 3rd, 2015

Acknowledgment

Over the time I have spent studying for my masters at Al-Quds University, I have been involved with very amazing friends and professors by whom I have learned much, identified a new knowledge, and improved my skills. In particular, I have been grateful for my great parents who have offered much and my professors: Professor Mohammad S. Dajani and Professor Seth J. Frantzman. Furthermore, I would like to thank Mr. Carlos R. Fernandez (Florida International University), Mr. Ralph Amelan (The American Center) for their generous efforts for the materials they have sent to me to fulfill this thesis.

دور الحزب الشيوعي في الولايات المتحدة خلال الكساد العظيم في الثلاثينيات

إعداد: ناصر أحمد نصر القاضي

إشراف: د. سيث فرانتسمان

مُلخَص

هذا الدراسة تبحث في دور الحزب الشيوعي على الساحة الأمريكية في ثلاثينيات القرن الماضي.

حُقبَة الثلاثينيات هي حُقبَة بارزة في التاريخ الأمريكي حيث كانت عقداً من الازمات من معر وفاب (الكساد العظيم) عاش فيها الشعب الأمريكي أحلك الظروف والاقتصادية والاجتماعية وحتما السياسية المُتقلبة نتيجة انهيار سوق الأسهم في نهايات عام 1929، شعر الشعب الأمريكي بسبب عجز الحكومة عن مواجهة الأزمة في البداية أو بسبب التوتّر انقيا النسيج الاجتماعي الذين جمعنا الارثوفا العالدين نسبة البطالة، الجريمة، العنصرية ضد السود، وصُعد الراديكالية بكافة فصائلها التي أخذت مواقعها على الساحة السياسية الأمريكية لتتبع دورها كبدل لعجز الحكومة في محاولة إيجاد حلول للوضع المتدهور.

استمرّت الأزمة محتبديّة الحرب العالمية الثانية، خلالها حاولت الحكومة الأمريكية معالجة الأزمة بصياغة عدة مشاريع قانونية قُدّمت من خلال الكونغرس، لم يُفلح الرئيس الأمريكي هربرتهوفر الذي تقلد منصبه الرئاسي في العام 1928 حتى 1932 في إيجاد مشروع عقري يُنهى أزمة الشعب الأمريكي بالرغم من محاولاتها الحثيثة، والتبديد في اتخاذها خلال المشروع والتطويع الشامل في محاولة لتوفير فرصة لتعادلا لأجور.

دخل الشعب الأمريكي حلقَة جديدة من هذا الصرا عحين تقلد الرئيس الأمريكي فرانكلين دي روزفلت منصبه الرئاسي في أيار 1933 لاجدرا بالأزمة على خلاف سلفه.

بلاشكال ريس روزفلت قام بصياغة قرار اتهامه عميلت علن تخفيف الأزمة من أمال الشعب الأمريكي وإن لم تكن حلولاً مُستدامة، فالاتفاق الجديد المعروف فلعلنو غير همنالقول انيخالا لإدارة روزفلت أعطت الأمر لكييناً بملاب مستقبلا وعدنحو التغلب على الأزمة، ولكن فيال حقيقة الأزمة استمرّت تبالرغم من هذا المحاولات.

تُلقي هذا الدراسة الضوء على ما كان يجري على الساحة السياسية خلال هذه الحُقبَة، حيث أخذت مجموعة عاتر راديكالية تنتمي بالخلفيات من عدة بالصُعد وحشد طاقتها للتغلغل في المجتمع الأمريكي من أجل الفوز بتأييد هلبتر امجها السياسية التي كانت تجر على قديم سائل لمساعدة في تخطي الأزمة.

من أبرز هذا المجموعا كان الحزب الشيوعي عياديولوجييتها الماركسية الثورية، الذي أسس من خلال انشاقا حدث عام 1919 عن الحزب الاشتراكي، فقدم هذا الحزب بتجربة مُعقّدة نوا مانتيجة الانشاقا الداخلية خلال العقد العشرينيات، ولكن بموجباً ومرسمية من الشيوعي العالمية الحزب الشيوعي عيحد صُفوفه بعد اتفاقيات ومفاوضات تجر تقياً وقائمّة قطعاً ليصبح هذا الحزب تحت مُسمال الحزب الشيوعي عيالعام 1930.

تكشف هذا الدراسة عن طبيعة العلاقة بين الشيوعي العالمية (الكونترن) والحزب الشيوعي عيالأمريكي. فالشيوعي العالمية هي منظمة شيوعيّة تأسست أيضاً في عام 1919 فيالاتحاد السوفيتي سابقاً، كان هدفها توريامناً جلتو حيدجوهو الشيوعي عييني في جميع أنحاء العالم لنشر رسالة الفكر الشيوعي عيالقا ضية بتقلتجربة الثورة البلشفية (البلوريتاريا)

إلى العالم الآخر جيانسنحتنا الفرصة بذلكو بأوسيلة كانتتشر عية أملا، حيثاستمر الحز بالشيو عيالأمريكييتلقيا لأوامر منهذهال منظمةحتنمحلها بقرار رسميمنتالينعام 1943.

كانالشعار الرسميالحز بالشيو عيو فقاماكانتتلميعليهذهالمنظمة هو أنالراسماليةنظاميقومعلاستعبادالطبقةالعاملةتوي زدربيها،لذافضالنا هو منأجلتحرير هؤلاءالعمالالذينكانوا فيالأساس أسالمُعانة فيالمجتمعالأمريكيويتطلعونبلهفلحم هذهالمعضلةأذاك، فكانتفرصةذهيبةللحز بالشيو عيلممارسة هذاالشعار الثوري، فخلالنشاطاتها الحثيثة قامهذا الحزبب تعميمهذا المنظور الماركسيعلناالشعبالأمريكي، فمحاو لكانتبايسة لقلبالأوضاع العالمتريديّة أنذا كنحو اقتيادهمباتجاهثور قل قلبالنظامو استعادةالنشاطالاقتصاديمنخلالحكمالطبقةالعاملةالذيكانتثياديه، وهذا ما تفرزهذهالدراسة.

هذهالدراسة تتقو مباستكشافتجربةالحز بالشيو عيفيهذا العقودوالتياعتبرهاالكثيرونمثيرة للجدلتستحقالدراسة والتحليلمع رفةأهدافهذالحز بوكيفمارسها، حيثتعرضالطرقالتياستخدمهاالحز بلاكتساحالمجتمعالأمريكييقوتهاذعائية الماركس يةالتيكانيتمتعهاانتشر تخلاللمظاهرات، الإضرابات، أو أيفعاليةأخر بقامتتظيمهاقادةشيو عيونمخضرمونعلناالساح ةالأمريكيةمثلوليامفوستر، إيرلبر او در، جيمس فور د، واسر انيلا متير علالمستوى المحليو الوطني، عدا عنجهودهاالآخر جيةتماشيا معقلباتالسياسةالروسيةالتياستمتبالازدواجية حينبداثثوريةبما تسمى (الفترة الثالثة) هدفتلإطاحةبالراسماليةالتياستمر تحتالانصافالثانيمناالثلاثينيات، ومنثم تغير تهذهالسياسة فيالانصافالثانيمنهذا العقد لتتص بحتنمسمى (الجبهة الشعبية)

هدفتلُمكافحةالفاشية، خلالهذهالسياسة عير الحز بالشيو عيالأمريكيمنخطابهو توجهاتهمكافحةالراسمالية ليتعاو نمعها باتجاهمُعاداةالفاشية فيما بعد اثبتتعدمصداقيتها، فهذهالدراسة تكشف عمقالتناقض فيسياسيةالحز بالشيو عيالأمريكي

علاوة علىذلك، فإنالدراسة تُبرز كيفتمكنالحز بالشيو عيمنا لتغلغل فيالمجموعاتالأخرى كالنقاباتالعمليةوالتجارية، الأحرار بوالمنظماتالسياسيةسواء علالمستوىالراسميأو المجتمعالمدنيالتيكانتتعملتتقديمالمساعدة للأمريكيين فيمحنتمهم، فالحز بالشيو عياستلهمالأمريكيينالكادحينالذينغمر وانفسهمبرداء الشيو عية، أيضا كانللحز بدور فيمكافحةالعنصريةضدال سودمنخلالحملةلحشدجموعالعمالالسودباتجاهالنضالمنأجلحقوقهم، فقدتر كالحز بالشيو عياثرا فيمجتمعالسود فبقضايا مختل فة.

أخيرا، تكشفالدراسةالتحدياتالتياواجههاالحز بالشيو عيسواء تحدياتالبطوة تنبعمنكرهبعضالمجموعاتالأمريكيةللشيو عيةوالماركسيةالذينوصفواهاكمؤامرةكُبرىودعوةالإزاحتها، أو منمجموعاتأحرار اسياسية عارضا للحز بالشيو عيسبب سياسيتهوماكانيجدثعلبالساحةالدولية، وكذلكواجهالحز بعنقبعضالمجموعات المتطرفةالعنصرية نتيجة لجهودها المناهضة للعنصرية ضدالسود.

Abstract

The study examines the role of Communist Party at U.S. arena in the thirties of the 20th century.

Thirties epoch is a prominent in the U.S. history which was a well-known decade called (The Great Depression) when the American people had lived under harshest economic and social conditions, even lived the political instability because of the Stock Market Crash at the end of 1929. The American people felt whether because of the government's inability to confront the crisis at the beginning or

because of tensions in the social fabric that caused by the inflation of unemployment rate, crime, racism against blacks, and the ascendance of radicalism in its different factions that had taken its positions at U.S. political arena in order to play its role as a substitute of the government's disablement in an attempt to find solutions for the deteriorated situation.

The crisis continued until the beginning of the WWII, through that American government tried to tackle the crisis through drafting several bills were ratified by Congress, the U.S. President Herbert Hoover who took the office between 1928-1932 couldn't find a suitable bill to overcome the American people's crisis despite his strenuous attempts that one of them appeared through the comprehensive voluntarism project for providing an opportunity of equal wages.

The American people entered a new episode of this conflict when the U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt took the office hoping he will find a radical solution for the crisis unlike his predecessor.

Undoubtedly and even weren't sustainable solutions, the President Roosevelt shaped an important decisions mitigated the flames of the crisis, and the pain of American people. The a well-known New Deal to the public and other laws through the Roosevelt's presidency had given the Americans a hope of promising future toward overcome the Depression, however, in fact, the crisis continued despite these attempts.

This study highlights what was going on at the political arena through this era, where radical groups that belong to several backgrounds started to rise and mobilize its power to sweep the American society in order for winning its endorsement.

One of the most prominent groups was the Communist Party and its Marxist revolutionary ideology, was established by a cleavage in Socialist Party occurred in 1919. So, the Party had been within a complicated experience because of the interior cleavages throughout the twenties decade, however, according to official orders from the Communist International, the Communist Party unified its rows after agreements and negotiations occurred sporadically to have become titled as the Communist Party of the United States (CPUSA) in 1930.

This study significantly explores the nature of relation between the Communist Party and the Communist International (Comintern), that was a Communist organization established in 1919 in the former USSR, its aim was revolutionary for unifying the efforts of the Communists in the world over to spread the message of Marxist ideology that aims to transfer the Bolshevik Revolution (Proletariat) abroad, in case the opportunity is available, and by any means legally was or illegally, so the CPUSA continued receiving the orders from this organization till was dissolved officially by Stalin in 1943.

The slogan of the Communist Party was at that time based on Comintern's dictations, that Capitalism is a system slaves the proletariat and despises it, so our struggle is to liberate those workers who are basically the summit of suffering in the American society and they are fervently looking toward solve

this dilemma at that time, it was a golden opportunity for the Communist Party to practice this revolutionary slogan. Therefore, through its strenuous activities, this Party popularized this Marxist perspective over the American people, however, it was a desperate attempt to change the deteriorated economic situation at that time to drive them toward a revolution to overthrow the system and retrieve the economic recovery through the government of the proletariat. So it's what this study hypothesizes.

This study explores the experience of the Communist Party during this decade, that many have considered it a controversial deserves studying and analyzing to identify the goal of this Party, it shows the methods were used by the Party to sweep the American society by its Marxist propaganda that was spread through the demonstrations, strikes, or by any other activity organized by its maven Communist leaders at U.S. arena like, William Z. Foster, Earl Browder, James Ford, and Israel Amter, at local and national levels. As well as, its foreign efforts in line with the Russian political fluctuations that characterized by dualism when began revolutionary of what so-called (The Third Period) that continued till the second half of the 1930s aimed to overthrow the Capitalism, and this policy changed in the second half of this decade to be named (The Popular Front) that aimed to fight Fascism, the CPUSA changed its rhetoric and orientations by this policy. This reveals the contradiction in the CPUSA's policy.

Furthermore, this study accentuates how the Communist Party swept the other groups, such as, labor and industrial unions, and political parties and organizations whether at official or civil society levels that worked to offer aid for Americans.

The Communist Party inspired the American toilers who had been immersed themselves by the Communist mantle, as well as there was a role of this Party in fighting racism against black workers, so the Party left an impact into the black community in different issues.

Finally, the study identifies the challenges that faced the CPUSA that represented in the hostility against Marxist ideology by some American groups who described it as a big conspiracy, groups and political parties opposed the CPUSA because of its policy and what was going on at international arena.

Table of Contents

Dedication	I
To my parents who have struggled much for me	I
Declaration	II
Acknowledgment	III

مُنْصَح	IV
Abstract	V
Table of Contents	VII
Definition of Terms	IX
Abbreviations	XI
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND	- 1 -
1.0. Introduction and organization of the study	- 1 -
1.1. Introduction	- 1 -
1.2. Research Statement	- 3 -
1.3. Research Objectives	- 3 -
1.4. Research Significance	- 3 -
1.5. The research problem	- 4 -
1.6. Research Hypothesis	- 5 -
1.7. Research Justification.....	- 5 -
1.8. Research Questions	- 5 -
1.9. Methodology.....	- 6 -
1.10. Research Boundary.....	- 6 -
1.11. Research Limitations	- 6 -
1.12. Literature Review	- 7 -
CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	- 10 -
2.0. Introduction	- 10 -
2.1. Manifesto of the Communist Party	- 10 -
2.2. The ultimate aim of the Communist International-World Communism.....	- 11 -
2.3. The left-wing in the United States.....	- 13 -
2.4. Social conflict theory.....	- 19 -
2.5. Class struggle theory	- 20 -
CHAPTER THREE: THE ROLE OF the COMMUNIST PARTY DURING THE DEPRESSION	- 22 -
3.0. Introduction	- 22 -
3.1. Organizing the mass strikes and demonstrations	- 22 -
3.2. Unemployed Councils	- 26 -
3.2.1. The Boycott Movement.....	- 29 -
3.3. Trade Union Unity League (T.U.U.L.)	- 30 -
3.4. Congress of Industrial Organizations (C.I.O.)	- 34 -
3.5. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).....	- 39 -

3.5.1. The Communist Party's efforts with the Negroes	- 42 -
3.5.2. The Scottsboro Case.....	- 47 -
3.5.3. The Communist Party and anti-fascism (Abraham Lincoln Brigade)	- 50 -
3.6. The Popular Front.....	- 52 -
CHAPTER FOUR: THE CHALLENGES THAT FACED THE COMMUNIST PARTY DURING THE DEPRESSION.....	- 57 -
4.0. Introduction	- 57 -
4.1. Anti-Communism and the crisis of CP in 1930s.....	- 57 -
4.2. The Communist Party's experience with violence	- 59 -
4.2.1. Dearborn Massacre, 1932.....	- 59 -
4.2.2. Bonus Army, 1932	- 59 -
4.3. Ku Klux Klan (KKK).....	- 61 -
4.4. Nazi-Soviet Nonaggression Pact of 1939.....	- 62 -
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION	- 65 -
Bibliography.....	- 69 -
Appendixes	- 74 -

Definition of Terms

Communism: A system of government in which the state plans and controls the economy and a single, often authoritarian party holds power, claiming to make progress toward a higher social order in which all goods are equally shared by the people.¹

¹Farlex, "Communism," The Free Dictionary, (2011), <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/communism>

Comintern (International Communism): The Communist International or "Comintern" was founded in March 1919 on the initiative of the Bolshevik Party of Russia. It united revolutionary opponents of capitalism from diverse origins and with a wide range of viewpoints: Marxists of different hues, revolutionary anarchists, and pioneer fighters against colonial domination. Lenin declared that the Comintern's foundation "heralds the international republic of Soviets, the international victory of communism."²

The Comintern was the masterminded of the political guidance for the Communist Parties in the world over till was dissolved officially by Joseph Stalin during 1943.

Depression: A severe and prolonged downturn in economic activity. In economics a depression is commonly defined as an extreme recession that lasts two or more years. A depression is characterized by economic factors such as substantial increases in unemployment, a drop in available credit, diminishing output, bankruptcies and sovereign debt defaults, reduced trade and commerce, and sustained volatility in currency values. In times of depression, consumer confidence and investments decrease, causing the economy to shut down.³

Leninism: According to some, it is the application of Marxism to peculiar conditions of Russia. This definition contains only part of the truth, not the whole. It is true that Lenin applied Marxism to the Russian situation, and that his application was masterly. But if Leninism were nothing more than the application of Marxism to the peculiar conditions of Russia, it would have a purely Russian and exclusively national character. Nevertheless, as we know, Leninism is an international phenomenon. It is rooted in internationalism, and is not solely Russian. That is why the foregoing definition is too narrow.

Leninism is the theory and the tactic of the proletarian revolution in general and the theory and the tactic of the dictatorship of the proletariat in particular. Marx and Engels lived in a pre-revolutionary period, when imperialism was still in an embryonic condition, when the workers were only preparing for the revolution, when the proletarian revolution had not yet become an immediate and practical necessity. Lenin, the disciple of Marx and Engels, lived in a period of fully developed imperialism; in a period when the proletarian revolution had already under way; in a period when the proletarian revolution had already triumphed in one country, had made an end of bourgeois democracy, and had begun the era of proletarian democracy, the era of Soviets.⁴

The Third Period: Until the birth of the Popular Front, Communists the world over lived in the so-called Third Period of Moscow's game: Capitalism was presumably about to expire, and the faithful

² John Riddell, *COMINTERN: Revolutionary Internationalism in Lenin's Time* (Canada: A Socialist Voice Pamphlet, 2008), p.4.

³ INVESTOPEDIA, "Depression," (2015), <http://www.investopedia.com/terms/d/depression.asp>

⁴ Edward E. Palmer, editor, *The Communist Problem in America, A book of Reading* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1951), p.48-49.

shouted ultra-revolutionary slogans. The Third Period was the policy adopted by the Comintern at the end of the Soviet Union's New Economic Policy in 1928, and remained in place until the adoption of the Popular Front policy in 1935. In the Soviet Union, the Communist leadership announced in 1928 the start of collectivization, which was essentially about establishing major state-run farming associations to always keep the public granaries full. The Third Period policy was based on Stalin's theory of class struggle in which the "First Period" that followed World War I saw the upsurge and defeat of the working class, and the "Second Period" was a time of capitalist consolidation. The Third Period was conceived by the Comintern in 1928 as the time for working class revolution.⁵

Abbreviations

- **AAA:** Agricultural Adjustment Act.
- **AAI:** Amalgamated Association of Iron.
- **ACTU:** Association of Catholic Trade Unionists.
- **AFL:** American Federation of Labor.
- **AFT:** American Federation of Teachers.

⁵John Pike, "COMINTERN Communist International / Third International," GlobalSecurity.org, (2000-2015), <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/int/comintern.htm>

- **ANLC:** American Negro Labor Congress.
- **BDKC:** Burien District of King County.
- **CPUSA:** Communist Party of the United States of America.
- **CP:** Communist Party.
- **CLP:** Communist Labor Party.
- **CIO:** Congress of Industrial Organizations.
- **EPIC:** End Poverty in California.
- **FDR:** Franklin Delano Roosevelt.
- **IWW:** International Workers of the World.
- **IAM:** International Association of Machinists.
- **IFWU:** Independent Factory Workers Union.
- **ISU:** International Seamen's Union.
- **ILD:** International Labor Defense.
- **KKK:** Ku Klux Klan.
- **LSNR:** League of Struggle for Negro Rights.
- **LWS:** League of Women Shoppers.
- **MWIU:** Metal Workers Industrial Union.
- **NAACP:** National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.
- **NIRA:** National Industrial Recovery Act.
- **NLRB:** National Labor Relations Board.
- **NNC:** National Negro Congress.
- **SCUA:** Special Committee on Un-American Activities.
- **SSA:** Social Security Act.
- **STW:** Steel and Tin Workers.
- **SWOC:** Steel Workers Organizing Committee.
- **TUUL:** Trade Union Unity League.
- **TVA:** Tennessee Valley Act.
- **UC:** Unemployed Councils.
- **UCL:** Unemployed Citizens' League.
- **UCWH:** United Councils for Working-class Housewives.
- **UMWA:** United Mine Workers Association.
- **WCP:** Workers Communist Party.

- **WPA:** Workers Progress Administration.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.0. Introduction and organization of the study

1.1.Introduction

The Great Depression was not simply one of the major historical events of the 20th century. It was, of course, an unprecedented economic crisis caused by a well-known Stock-Market Crash event of the 29th October 1929, but it cannot be understood in the economic terms alone. Rather, it was a personal tragedy for millions of individuals of all ages. Its cost must be counted not just in diminished stock prices and lost wages but in feelings of hunger, despair, and self-esteem.

The Great Depression of 1930s stands out as such an event lasting for a decade, the depression and the enormous social, economic and political changes it wrought in ways that no one could have anticipated even as the 1920s were ending.

The collapse of prosperity that followed in the early thirties took an enormous toll. Millions of American workers lost their jobs, with no hope of finding other work that could maintain their livelihoods. In 1933, over 15 million Americans –one quarter of the nation's workforce- were unemployed, for those who were lucky enough to still have a job, the situation was not much better. Employers took the opportunity to push wages lower and lower while simultaneously increasing the number of hours required on the job, thinking their workers were simply too desperate to resist, bosses degraded working conditions to an almost slave-labor status. Following the loss of work ensued lost savings, thousands died from starvation or poverty-related illnesses, hundreds of thousands lost their homes, lost security, lost pride, and lost hope for many who had never before experienced such extreme deprivation. Investors went bankrupt, banks failed, factories closed, farmers lost their farms, sharecroppers lost everything. Politicians initially displayed confidence, but offered no solutions. So, the Great Depression ranks with World War II (1939-1945) as one of the two most important events in the shaping of the 20th century United States.

The nation was crying out for the government to respond, but President Herbert Hoover refused to acknowledge the seriousness of the crisis. "I am convinced," he said in the spring of 1930, "we have passed the worst." As the Great Depression held on for year after brutal year, Hoover began to concede that the crisis was real, but he still refused to provide the sort of relief that was needed.⁶

This economic plight reflected negatively on American society, so the Great Depression transformed the political life and remade governmental institutions throughout the United States where a long era of Republican Party domination came to a close with the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt in November

⁶Adam Cohen, *Nothing to fear, FDR's inner circle and the hundred days that created modern America* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2009), p.2.

1932. With Democrats also taking charge in both houses of Congress, the Roosevelt's administration transformed the capacity of the federal government over the next five years, launching spending programs to aid states and help the unemployed, establishing new regulatory institutions to manage key parts of the economy, and building a new framework of economic rights for most Americans, including the right to join a union and the right to an old-age pension. The New Deal era that began in early 1933 would state a new relationship between the American economy, citizens and government.⁷

This crisis had played a remarkable role in changing the interior political situation as well in terms of political and social mobility by different groups in order to find a solution. Therefore, that era had testified the ascension of new political and social movements especially labor movements that took numerous initiatives for defending workers' rights in American society, this came as a bold reaction and was taken by the disenfranchised categories. Thereby, it led to the attraction of radicalism densely in which the Great Depression was the most significant period of a class struggle that has ever taken place in the United States. The sheer intensity of the struggle led ever broader sections of working class to become radicalized and to begin to generalize politically. For a very short period of time, as the working-class movement advanced - between 1935 and 1937- the level of radicalization was such that on a fairly large scale workers began to realize that if they were to have a chance at winning, they had to confront all the bosses' attempts to divide and weaken the working-class movement.

Thus, the Depression decade marked a key turning point for the working-class movement in the United States. For the first time, the potential existed to build a genuine mass revolutionary workers party. But a revolutionary alternative would have required a forceful revolutionary leadership inside the working-class movement. Instead, there was the Communist Party that espoused anti-racial and revolutionary policies in defending unemployed, the only organization contending for leadership inside a working-class movement during the Depression.

"The American Communist Party saw the Great Depression the fulfillment of Marxist forecasts of doom. The bottom had apparently fallen out of capitalism as well as out of the stock market. Conditions seemed ideal for a proletarian revolution formed the board lines and the unemployment demonstrations. Communist rhetoric urged the American working class to overthrow the United States government, and, given the economic situation and the great distress of many people, such situation was at least thinkable. But the revolution did not occur," stated Carl R. Burghardt⁸

The Communist Party's integration under the fluctuations was extensively, meanwhile, controversial. In turn, it stirs some questions; why did the Communist Party play its role in defending workers' rights initiative in 1930s? What were the surrounding conditions of the Communist Party that gave it

^yJames Gregory, "Politics," *The Great Depression in Washington State*, (2009), <http://depts.washington.edu/depress/politics.shtml>

[^]Carl R. Burgchurdt, "Two faces of American communism: Pamphlet rhetoric of the Third Period and the Popular Front," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 66 (1980): p.357.

revolutionary forecasts, and did this Party get success in this, if not, what were the factors that thwarted its endeavors? Did the Communists get complete support from other parties? Did they attempt to push their own Marxian ideology through a working-class struggle?

These inquiries are going to find their answers through this study, shaping the main argument behind the role of the Communist Party in the United States during the Depression.

1.2. Research Statement

This study is going to examine the role of Communist Party during the unrest of the Great Depression decade in terms of labor movements' struggle, unionism, and anti-racial mobilization, when the workers took their decisive role to speak out and not to be idly. So to analyze this issue, it requires examining the Party's behaviors, its leaders, and background. Furthermore, this study is going to examine this influence either internally or externally. To find the main interpretation behind this Party and if the events at that era were effective to make the Communists pass through smoothly, highlighting on the general periphery that enveloped this Party is also necessary, socially regarding the local dilemmas like the bitter unemployment, racism and other related problems, whilst politically, represents in exploring the government's efforts and its relations with local people, the major political groups and parties that provided a clear image of CP's factual environment. To answer the questions above this study is divided into six chapters linked together by the flow of the research style and presentation. Chapter 1 introduces the research, the aim of study, research problem, hypothesis, objectives, methodology, questions and justifications, the research context and any other background information that informs the study in literature review. Chapter 2 focuses on the critical theoretical framework around the subject of the study. Chapter 3 revolves around the historical background of the Communist Party generally in America. Chapter 4 presents the role of Communist Party and the goals behind its engagement into the Depression Era. Chapter 5 presents the challenges that faced the Communist Party in 1930s, and conclusion in Chapter 6.

1.3. Research Objectives

A- Understanding the historical background of the Communist Party, its establishment and charter before the Depression in America.

B- Identifying how the Communist Party engaged in the political life during the 1930s, and the factors that sharpened this party to play its role by studying its agenda behind this role.

C- Identifying the barriers that encountered the Communist Party in implementing its mission with the workers on their differentiation.

1.4. Research Significance

It will furnish the readers' background with the outcome of this attempt to widen their knowledge in the field of the study. It will provide the readers about the experience of Communists in capitalist America,

specifically in the period of thirties and their struggles to change the unemployed and employed workers' situation and retrieve their rights adopting different ways for this goal.

This research will familiarize the readers with the inferences of the challenges that faced the Communist Party during the Great Depression.

This research is a significant attempt to give the readers an insight on the deep suffering of American people during the Depression and how did they overcome this adversity by their willpower. Furthermore, this research provides more evidence of how was the Communist Party the first political group under white leadership in the U.S. history combined between black and white workers in the same struggle specifically in the southern states, and how got its legality to practice its rights at U.S. arena as a political caucus, in which it reflects the democratic experience there despite the barriers.

1.5.The research problem

The United States was under dark era when the economy was severely collapsed, which led to changing the situation upside down causing political somersault in the government, homelessness, unemployment, crime, and the rise of radicalism and racism in its high rates. The U.S. Government had severe insufficiency to take an equitable stance and tackle such conditions that swept U.S. society massively; however, the American people took bold self-effort initiatives in order to overcome this miserable situation. Different local parties, unions, and groups had been involved for supporting the grumpy social categories like blacks and unemployed workers whom the working-class movements had begun to gather them for unionizing and raising their voices in mass strikes. The Communist Party had found it an attractive environment to campaign through different forms like strikes, demonstrations, allying with other groups, and forming unions where the Communist Party had practiced its maneuvers.

The problem is the deteriorated economic situation caused a general plight in which the American society had been inflicted harshly in many fields coincided with the ingrained racism, therefore, this Depression raises some questions: What should the local people have done? How should they have expressed their suffering to their government? Why the government couldn't find an urgent solution and then led to open the road for foreign-born ideologies to take part in? What are the tools and channels should they have used to fulfill their demands when the government fell apart?

After they felt distressed the reciprocal reaction had taken its track to mobilize themselves through different groups. The Communist Party polarized a huge number of them applying its program in defending workers' rights. Meanwhile, the Party didn't achieve a permanent ascension, then faced criticism and opposition from other groups even violently especially its anti-racial endeavors. The matter of the Communist Party is an obstructive at Depression Era despite its modest accomplishments. This raises more questions around this Party that according to what was going on had offered as much

as possible in order to strengthen the unemployed movements. Moreover its anti-racial efforts were somewhat feasible in many cases, so what could have been done without the Communist Party's contribution regardless of its ideology? What could have been done in case this Party didn't engage? Would the situation of unemployed workers have been stable in case there wasn't a left political party like a Communist that dedicated itself through social mobility to fight ethnic-based employment during the Depression and other efforts in different fields?

Eventually, the Great Depression was an available channel for any inevitable phenomenon as the Communist Party's experience.

1.6. Research Hypothesis

This study hypothesizes that the Communist Party played a role in attempting to change the U.S. political life at different levels proceeding from working-class (proletariat) toward Communism by applying a revolutionary agenda during the Great Depression.

1.7. Research Justification

This topic comes to highlight on harsh period of the 1930s when America was still in isolationism time. Therefore, this study provides an indicator of how Americans had been influenced, how acted, endured and struggled during the Depression toward prosperity using variable tools politically, socially, culturally, and economically. Studying this short but important period of the U.S. history fills the gap to understand obviously this crisis from different angles which forms accumulative knowledge and creates an understandable background of U.S. historical events later.

Furthermore, the Communist Party was a controversial issue to be justifiable for two reasons: the first is: before the Depression decade the Communism was raising its voice in the world over for proletarian struggle after the succession of the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917. The rise of the Communist Party of U.S.A. through combining workers' struggle is an interesting to understand its strategic goal behind it. Then its demise in the capitalist United States later sharpens more inquiries, especially when the International Communism that was represented in "former USSR" had been involved in infamous confrontation with Capitalism that represented in "USA" called "the Cold War" after WWII for many years. Moreover, this study provides an inference to the ties between the CPUSA and Marxism. The second is: the CPUSA didn't achieve its expected goals despite its long struggle.

1.8. Research Questions

The study serves to further break down the objectives of this research in order to simplify them and guide the focus of the thesis. This study is mainly focused on the role of the Communist Party during the Great Depression and raises these main questions:

a) How did the Great Depression occur, how was the CPUSA established at U.S. arena?

b) How did the CPUSA integrate into the Great Depression?

c) Did the CPUSA have an intention to flip the restive situation over to apply its own agenda on workers?

d) What were the challenges the CPUSA faced?

1.9. Methodology

The methodology that used is supported by Marxian theories in working-class struggle and social conflict. In general, the case study will be used in this research to examine the role of the Communist Party during the Great Depression in the United States, particularly in addressing unemployed councils and other unions that teamed up with the CPUSA in organizing mass strikes.

The methodology comes to use "historical criticism approach" to describe what was going on during this historical period of the study, also criticizes these historical events according to scientific and systematic basis to get the facts and information that help us understand the past and the present, and then lead to forecasting the future. The case study aims to find out the nature of the contribution of the CPUSA in the past and will reveal reasons for why and how things happened. Analyzing data to examine the burden of the CPUSA's engagement gives an indication what were the farsighted goals of the CPUSA at U.S. arena in the Depression since its inception.

This a qualitative research, in which the researcher argues that there is a specific relation between the variables, the Marxist ideology of the CPUSA found the Great Depression as a spiritual and attractive environment to engage in for oppressed workers, since there was a huge percentage of stricken and unemployed workers, so the more unemployed workers, unions, and factions espouse the CPUSA's plans in defending their rights, the more advancement in favor of the International Communism that showed the world its credibility in the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917.

The hypothesis will be tested by collecting and examining data around the Great Depression phenomenon. Whether it was an exceptionable prompting the Communists to involve in remarkably or was just a random step taken to verify the extent of the CPUSA's credibility for the workers, kind of "political maneuverability" to serve foreign agendas.

1.10. Research Boundary

This study is restricted by two boundaries: the first is, the geographic boundary, which covers the United States, but I will use some parts of the world as supporting examples for the hypothesis; and the second is the time frame covers the 1930s decade.

1.11. Research Limitations

The first limitation is my knowledge regarding the interior political situation that related in the Communist Party' experience isn't enough, even if it's enough; it requires a profound analyses from

many perspectives, because this phenomenon proved kind of aversion toward it by the U.S. political landscape over the years of this a long experience, not just that, it took other deviations socially and culturally. Therefore, this generates divergent elements interpret it that I couldn't combine and integrate them with the U.S. political culture without long readings, where the matter of time has been a big challenge.

The second, is studying the matter of the Communist Party and the Great Depression before WWII requires reliable and original references away from prejudices given to the staunch endorsement and opposition to the CPUSA at that time, so I haven't found all these resources at the libraries here in Palestine. Furthermore, the most references and articles that written around it aren't new in the archives, so I had to use foreign resources that I have encountered complexities to access.

1.12. Literature Review

There are many books, studies, and articles shedding light on this a prominent era in the U.S. history from different angles, which present different arguments whether refutable or irrefutable to the hypothesis of this research regarding the Communist Party, its role and what was going on in 1930s.

Basically, this study is going to examine one aspect of this wide topic, so it will highlight on what the previous attempts have argued either to add or link the successive knowledge or to refute what has come in these arguments.

- 1- Robert S. McElvaine, *The Depression and New Deal: A history in Documents* (New York: Library of Congress,1996)

This book describes the social, cultural reaction and changes of disaffection during the history of the Depression Era, and the social policy that was adopted by U.S. Government to restore the prosperity, so the New Deal took place and had an impact despite its implications. This book provides a profound insight on the nature of integration between Americans and the Depression time from one hand, and between them and the government that strove to get out from the miserable situation at other hand. This book is a supportive material the researcher adopts on to understand a little bit around the history of the Depression decade.

- 2- David F. Burg, *The Great Depression: An eyewitness history* (New York: Library of congress, 1996).

The author talks about the mechanisms that the U.S. Government used to overcome the deteriorated economic situation over the Depression years that led to repercussions affected the American society in different fields and made Americans feel dissatisfied. It sheds some light on how U.S. Officials acted and planned to find suitable solutions and how their plans helped in changing the situation toward better. However, these plans didn't completely resolve this issue explaining the reasons beyond its

incompetence. As well as this book includes formal testimonies either by officials or local people regarding what was going on and their point of views toward U.S. Government's social and economic remedies during the former President Franklin D. Roosevelt's presidency. The researcher will take benefits from this book that provides some answers to one of the research's questions in terms of the reasons of the Depression.

- 3- Adam Cohen, *Nothing to Fear: FRD's inner circle and the hundred days that created modern America* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2009).

It's a revealing account of the critical first days of FRD's presidency, during the worst moments of the Great Depression, when he and his inner circle launched the New Deal and presided over the birth of modern.

Nothing to Fear, brings to life a fulcrum moment in American history- the tense, feverish first one hundred days of FDR took his oath of the office in March 1933, thousands of books had gone under following the Crash of 1929, a quarter of American workers were unemployed, farmers were in open rebellion, and hungry people descended on garbage dumps and fought over scraps of food. Before the Hundred Days, the federal government was limited in scope and ambition; by the end, it had assumed an active responsibility for the welfare of all of its citizens. This book's idea like the previous book revolves around the U.S. Government's experience but this highly focuses on the former U.S. president's experience at his office, so it does present somewhat an answer to the researcher's question around the background of the Great Depression.

- 4- William Z. Foster, *History of the Communist Party of the United States* (New York: International Publishers, 1952).

The author argues that the Communist Party was the courageous masterminded of supporting mass mobilization during the Depression time, addressing that the oppressed workers couldn't have retrieved their rights without the Communist expansion for defending their usurped rights. Also clarifies with historical proofs about the violent oppression that faced Communists by dissent radical movements describing it as capitalist tools aimed to prevent Communists from practicing their humanitarian role in anti-racial sensation against blacks and unemployed. The author finally, gives an evidence of the Communist Party's credibility through presenting its accomplishments since 1919. This attempt is rich to the researcher to understand this argument in comparison with other.

- 5- Robin D. G. Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists during the Great Depression* (North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1990).

This book talks about the Communist Party's experience in Alabama where the Communist Party organized and led a radical and military antiracist movement in Alabama the center of party activity in

the Depression South. Hammer and Hoe includes the exerted efforts of the Alabama Communist Party and its allies to secure racial, economic, and political reforms. Sensitive to the complexities of gender, race, culture and class without compromising the political narrative, Robin Kelly illustrates one of the most unique and least understood radical movements in American history.

In the South race pervaded virtually every aspect of communist activity, equal wages for women, and land of landless farmers represented a fundamental challenge to the society and economy of the South, it is not surprising that Party's organizers faced a constant wave of violence. Kelley's analysis ranges broadly, examining such topics as the Party's challenge to black middle-class leadership; the social, ideological, and cultural roots of black working-class radicalism; communist efforts to build alliances with Southern liberals; and the emergence of a left-wing, interracial youth movement. He closes with a discussion of the Alabama Communist Party's demise and its legacy for future civil rights activism. Robin proves that the Communist Party had a remarkable influence upon in leading working-class movement.

- 6- Irving Howe and Lewis Coser, *The American Communist Party: A critical History* (1919-1957) (U.S.: Beacon Press, 1957).

This historical narrative to the background of CP, the authors argue neutrally that the Communist Party came as a result of the Socialist dissidents at the beginnings of 1919 passing through 1920s carrying Marxist Ideology, and then present the long detailed experience of this Party highlighting on all the events that either caused by this Party or by other aspects because of its activities especially during the Depression.

- 7- Larry Ceplair, *Anti-Communism in Twentieth-Century America* (Oxford: Library of Congress, 2011).

This book is a critical history provides a panoramic perspective of the types of anti-communists in the United States between 1919 and the collapse of the Soviet Union. It explains the causes and exceptional nature and anti-communism in the United States, and divides in into eight discrete categories. This title then thoroughly examines the words and deeds of the various anti-communists, in each of these categories during the three "Red Scares" in the past century. The work concludes with an unapologetic assessment of domestic anti-communism. This allows readers to more fully comprehend what the anticommunists meant with their rhetoric, and grasp their impact on the United States during the 20th century.

This book gives important information that will answer the research question regarding the challenges that faced the Communist Party during the Depression, since this copy portrays the anti-communist sensation since the inception of CP in 1919 until the demise of USSR.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0.Introduction

This chapter discusses different theories relevant to the Communist Party's ideology and the Manifesto that related to Marxian theories in workers' struggle and conflict. It includes the Marxist interpretation toward the capitalism, racism in labor field, and the predictable perspectives of the Marx, Lenin of the demise of capitalism and the ascendance of the International Communism given an indicator to the American Communist Party's agenda. The implications of the Great Depression prompted the Communist Party to mobilize the labor movements' struggle, are inference to the relationship between Marxian theories and the situation of workers (proletariat) at that time. Karl Marx's theories helped to conceptualize, justify, implement and interpret an investigation. The researcher explores an available knowledge on similar problems, and challenges existing knowledge with a view to create new ideas. The general theoretical context of literature on the Great Depression and the role of the Communist Party during it will be explored to identify how Marxist ideology immersed drastically in this confrontation within a capitalist environment in line with the fresh Bolshevik sensation that had its impact on American social and political landscapes that represented in the ascendance of radicalism in the left-wing. Therefore, this section will analyze this issue to theoretically galvanize this research.

As well as, to more understand the theoretical framework of the Communism toward the involvement in workers' struggle as its practical way on the ground, the researcher highlights on the formal Communist Manifesto that interprets the proletariat from different angles, in addition, explaining the doctrine of the Communist International that is a worldwide network where the U.S. Communist Party was receiving the instructions.

2.1.Manifesto of the Communist Party⁹

Bourgeois and Proletarians

The dogma of the Communist Party since its inception by the founding fathers before of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia was created by revolutionary perception toward different elements that shape any human society that based on conflict between these elements, and this perception wasn't created during or after 1917 Revolution, however, had been derived long years before this a remarkable historical event that its impact has been resonated worldwide.

⁹[The Manifesto was written by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels and published in Germany in February, 1848. It is the first of all the basic documents of communism in all respects. The one most central idea is that of violent revolution. The basis of revolution lies in the class struggle. The existing system of society is a struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeois class. These are the central ideas of Marxism, to which all later additions are merely elaboration. ...]

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels were the first who drafted this perspective which has been applicable and has been adopted for long decades and has become a slogan for liberation that the oppressed groups in any human society have been striving for.

Consequently, we find that Marx and Engels throughout the history classified the society into different classes and had argued that there is a conflict between them called "the class struggle. Therefore, according to them the human society isn't an equal in its various classes, and there is no justice where the oppressed classes that represent the proletariat are tirelessly looking for justice to achieve kind of equality with the groups that belong to bourgeois, they stated, "The entire history of the human society is a history of class struggle. From the ancient times down to the present days, there has existed continually an antagonistic struggle-openly or secretly- between free men and slaves, between the nobility and the common people, between landlords and serfs, between shop owners and hired workers, between the oppressors and the oppressed. Each struggle results either in the triumph of a new revolution or in the downfall of all conflicting classes...."¹⁰

The conflict between these different classes has shaped new classes, new circumstances in the modern society, this conflict is mainly between the bourgeoisie and proletariat (working-class), generates a constant hostility between them. In this case, the proletariat is looking toward liberation from bourgeoisie by a revolution, so according to Marx and Engels, "the first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise the proletariat to the position of the ruling class, to win the battle of the democracy. The proletariat will use its political supremacy, to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the State, i.e., of the proletariat organized as the ruling class; and to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible."

Proceeding from this interpretation Marx and Engels clarified the mechanisms of the Communists in applying this theoretical dogma on the ground, so according to them the Communists should obligatory support the revolutionary movements against the social and political systems that provide coverage for bourgeois through establishing labor movements, groups, unions, and so on.

As well as, they meant that the Communists must mobilize these forces using political and social methods to make the voice of the proletariat or the oppressed groups heard in order to get rid of bourgeois' dominance. Therefore, this is the main agenda of the Communist Party that should carry out its goals based on this Marxist interpretation wherever possible.¹¹

2.2.The ultimate aim of the Communist International-World Communism

The Comintern (Communist International) organization that was founded in 1919 in Russia by Lenin had a crucial role in instructing the Communists in all over the world to spread the Bolshevik

¹⁰Randi Storch, *Red Chicago: American Communism at its Grassroots, 1928-35* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009), p.12.

¹¹Palmer, *The Communist Problem*, p.29-33.

experience abroad through gathering the Communist forces' struggle toward this goal. The main focus is on the capitalist rule where Communism portrays it as a suppressive doctrine to the toiling classes. Therefore, according to what came in the program of the Communist International-Comintern Sixth Congress 1929, "the ultimate aim of the Communist International is to replace world capitalism economy by a world system of Communism. Communist society, the basis for which has been prepared by the whole course of historical development, is mankind's only way out, for it alone can abolish the contradictions of the capitalist system which threaten to degrade and destroy the human race."¹²

The plan that is demonstrated in this statement indicates to how economically the World Communism aimed to wipe out this economic-based system Capitalism, because Communism conceives it as an unfair economic system doesn't provide equality between high and low stratum in the society under this system. The Communist Party has been a well-versed in the struggle for the proletariat existence in every country, hardened in the struggle, disciplined, centralized, and closely linked up with the masses, so it has strengthened the Marxist theoretical revolutionary perspective into factual class-struggle.

This constituted a historic mission of the Marxist-saturated Communist Parties that led to achieve the dictatorship of proletariat, this means the working-class struggle is unified in its goal and indispensable, so the fulfillment of the Communist Party's historic mission had been instructed to strengthen its influence over the members of its own class, including different social categories regardless what they are because they have a pressure to practice, as well as, the mass proletarian groups like trade unions, factories, and other organizations that work in different fields.

In result, the Communist Party can guarantee the loyalty of the majority of the masses under one slogan is a revolution to change the workers situation.¹³

These Communist interpretations were seen applicable in the capitalist countries like USA that has been a drastic goal of these interpretations given to its capitalism and the interior deep-rooted racist-based social conflict between black and white workers, in which the Communist theorists have interpreted this as one of the capitalist weaknesses in protection of workers' rights. As Cottle stated, "Lenin saw the United States not as a virgin bourgeois democracy but as a form of capitalism in which a unique characteristic existed: the Southern sharecropping plantation system worked by former black slaves. This Southern semi-feudal formation held emancipated Negroes in a kind of prison.

Lenin believed the South's semi-feudalism not only retarded capitalist development but also through its peculiar historical and social development rendered "the Negro" as an oppressed nation. American

¹² Mike MacMair, "The Programme of the Communist International. Comintern Sixth Congress 1929," Comintern Sixth Congress, no.2 (1932), <https://www.marxists.org/history/international/comintern/6th-congress/ch03.htm>

¹³ Palmer, *The Communist problem*, p.55-56.

blacks comprised an oppressed nation wedded to the exploitation within the peonage agrarian system of the South."¹⁴

This gives more theoretical evidence on the Communist doctrine in defending workers' rights, and the American society has been within an ingrained race dilemma between whites and blacks for three centuries. The Communism has interpreted this as a weakness in the capitalist system, which gives the Communist Party a pretext to practice its anti-racial agenda among Negro workers whom the Communist Party had played a big role during the Depression.

2.3.The left-wing in the United States

The Communist Party began as an offshoot of the Socialist Party, but of a Socialist Party suddenly diluted by the flow of Slavs and other foreigners (mostly Jews) in American immigrant centers. During the war the socialist membership had declined sharply, because of a deep split on the war question. New recruits came almost entirely from immigrant layers of the population. The astonishing change that had taken place in the Socialist Party by 1919 the year when its growing left wing broke away to form communist organization.¹⁵

The Socialist Party was divided into several rival factions. A right wing identified with the conservative American Federation of Labor (AFL)¹⁶ and generally was suspicious of "revolutionary phrase mongering." The left, in turn, was split into two factions. One group was sympathetic to or active in the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), or Wobblies, as they were called. The Wobblies were syndicalist, self-declared radicals given to verbal violence, who sought to build industrial unions through militant labor struggle. Their contempt for politics and social reform was to have a strong influence on the early history of American Communism. A smaller faction of the Socialist party's left wing was Marxist. Many of the early Communist leaders came from this group.¹⁷

In this matter William Foster states, "Various powerful political forces combined to bring about the split in the Socialist Party at the precise time it occurred. Fundamentally, these were products of World

¹⁴ Drew Cottle, "The color-line and the Third Period: A comparative analysis of American and Australian Communism and the question of race," *American Communist History* 10 (2011): p.122.

¹⁵ Eugene Lyons, *The Red Decade: The Stalinist Penetration of America* (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1941), p.31.

¹⁶ The AFL was primarily out of protest against the predominantly anti-craft-union structure of the knights of labor, the organization's pursuit of policies believed inimical to trade union autonomy, and its lack of concern for the signal importance of the skilled worker. By 1900 the AFL had committed itself, through day to day experience and struggle, to a program of business unionism. The Haymarket bomb and the Pullman strike convinced its leaders of the futility of radicalism and violence. An attempt by the Socialist Labor Party to gain entrance into the AFL was repulsed on the ground that a political party had no right to representation in a purely trade union body. After bitter debate socialist ideas were eschewed. The AFL renounced independent political action and declared itself in favor of nonpartisan use of the ballot by labor.

James O. Morris, *Conflict within the AFL, A study of craft versus industrial unionism 1900-1938* (New York: Cornell University-Ithaca, 1958), p.5-6.

¹⁷ GuenterLewy, *The Cause that Failed: Communism in American Political Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), p.3.

War I and the Russian Revolution. The United States, under its own specific conditions, felt the terrific shock of these basic events which were undermining the whole structure of world capitalism. Among the manifestations of this shock were the break-up of the Socialist Party and the birth of the Communist Party." In result, "A major immediate factor leading to the split within the Party was acute discontent among the rank and file at the way the opportunist Party leadership had met the issue of the war. This was directed not only at the seceding pro-war leaders of the right, but also at the Hillquit¹⁸ group."¹⁹

A pressure was mounting for the creation of a new revolutionary party built upon the Leninist model. In 1919, the left wing of the Socialist Party began publishing the New York Communist. It was edited by the journalist John Reed, one of the first Americans actually to have been to Russia and to have seen the revolution at first hand. Party leaders, primarily right-wingers, reacted to the rapidly growing left wing with strong-arm methods.²⁰

The Communists of 1919 believed piously in the principles of the force and violence, the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the world revolution. They put these principles into practice by propagating them on any and all occasions, and by propagating almost nothing else. If they had to pay the price of illegality for the privilege, they solved the problem by making illegality a principle. After two years of preaching what they believed, they found themselves in the position of a typical radical sect-small, ingrown, harmless. Those who realized the real plight of the party tried to undo the damage by partially revolting against one of the principles-total illegality. But this partial revolt could not be carried out partially. The implications and repercussions were so far-reaching and fundamental that a new type of Communist movement had to develop out of it. The old type had reflected a period considered imminently revolutionary. The new type would reflect a revolution indefinitely postponed.²¹

The formal charter of the Communist Party reflects its vision as came in the Constitution of the Communist Party of the United States, adopted by the founding convention, Chicago, Sept. 1-7, 1919. Contains a preamble and eleven articles, here it is what came into the preamble:

"The Communist Party of the United States of America is a working class political party carrying forward today the traditions of Jefferson, Paine, Jackson, and Lincoln, and of the Declaration of Independence; it upholds the achievements of democracy, the right "life, liberty, and the pursuit of

¹⁸ Morris Hillquit (1869-1933), Russian-born American lawyer and author, figured prominently in the organization of the Socialist Party of America. In 1899 Hillquit emerged as an important Socialist Leader. He and others had become restive under Daniel De Leon's heavy-handed leadership of the Socialist Labor party- known as the "Kangaroo" faction- bolted the party.

Morris Hillquit-Encyclopedia of World Biography,"(2004), "
http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Morris_Hillquit.aspx

¹⁹ William Z. Foster, *The History of the Communist Party of the United States* (New York: International Publishers, 1952), p.158-159.

²⁰ Lewy, *The Cause that Failed*, p.4.

²¹ Theodore Draper, *The roots of American Communism* (New York: The Viking Press, 1957), p.345.

happiness," and defends the United States Constitution against its reactionary enemies who would destroy democracy and all popular liberties; it is devoted to defense of the immediate interests of workers, farmers, and all toilers against capitalist exploitation, and to preparation of the working class for its historic mission to unite and lead the American people to extend these democratic principles to their necessary and logical conclusions ..."²²

The CPUSA traces its lineage to both the Communist Labor Party and the Communist Party, both of which were formed in 1919 as an outgrowth of the disintegration of American socialism. Under the pressure of World War I, the Bolshevik Revolution, and its organizational difficulties, which were largely but not entirely caused by the first two factors, the Socialist party fell apart. The two communist parties emerged from the wreckage and began a bizarre and tangled dance of fusions and split that continued for several years. For much of this time communists were underground apparatus for a few more years. From 1919 to 1921 several communist parties were operating clandestinely, so that information about their leaders is not readily available. Moreover, many of the leaders were members of language federations who returned to Russia in the early 1920s and thus played little subsequent role in American affairs.²³

Obviously, the Party unity in the United States was a burning necessity. The leaders of the Communist Labor Party, from the time of the conventions pressed for a consolidation of the two parties; but the federation leaders in the Communist Party were reluctant.

A further general bar to unity was the fact that, since they were in the process of grasping the great body of Marxist-Leninist thought, there was a tendency in both parties to magnify the importance of every detail of difference, to dispute over minor points with rigidity, and to apply Marxism-Leninism to the United States in a blueprint fashion, rather than the basis of actual American conditions. This sectarian attitude led to secondary splits in the parties during this formative period.

Notwithstanding these differences the two parties, early in 1920, began unity negotiations. Ruthenberg, executive secretary of the C.P., was an ardent advocate of Party unity in that body. Despite these efforts, the unity proceedings dragged on without any results, with each side voting down the proposals of the other. Finally, the C.P. itself split over the unity question, with a large section of that organization, led by Ruthenberg,²⁴ joining up with the C.L.P. segments broke off from several of the

²²Palmer, *The Communist Problem in America*, p.165.

²³Harvey Klehr, *Communist Cadre: The Social background of the American Communist Party elite* (California-Stanford University: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), p.14.

²⁴Charles Ruthenberg (1882-1927): One of the founders of the Communist Party of America in 1919 and first general secretary of the party after it merged with the rival Communist Labor Party. He remained head of the American Communist Party until his death in 1927; He was buried beneath the Kremlin wall in Moscow with a regiment of Red Army in attendance.

Harvey Klehr et al., *The Soviet World of American Communism* (U.S.: Yale University Press, 1998), p.xxx.

federations, and the bulk of the Jewish Federation, led by Alexander Bittelman, disaffiliated from the C.P. and joined the C.L.P.

A unity convention was held at Bridgman, Michigan, in May 1920. As a result, the United Communist Party of American was born. Ruthenberg was elected executive secretary, and the new Central Executive Committee was made up of five members from the C.P. and five from the C.L.P.²⁵

Both parties announced their loyalty to the principles of the Bolshevik Revolution and to the leadership of the newly formed Communist International.

Two American Communist Parties were one too many, and the Comintern ordered the two to merge. In January 1920 Grigory Zinoviev, head of the Comintern, dispatched a courier to America written instructions demanding that the parties unite and giving guidance for the organizational structure of the new party.

In the United States both Communist Parties promised obedience to the Comintern, but personal and organizational rivalries were so intense that the union was repeatedly delayed, as various factions maneuvered for supremacy.²⁶

The year 1921 brought a multiplication of Communist organizations, all of them having one thing in common. Each one presented a particular program which marked it off from the rest, the variation being mainly on how to approach the masses with the Communist message, but there was also the beginning of what may be called a "strategic retreat" on many matters which had been previously accepted as fundamental. The retreat became pronounced as the delirious mood receded in the underground organizations. Before the end of the year these secret organizations were longing for an "open party."²⁷

The Workers Party convention of 1921 constituted a very important stage in the history of the developing Communist Party of the United States. It established the long-sought unity of practically all the Communist forces in the country, and it also marked the conclusion of the founding phase of the Communist Party. It ended the period of almost exclusively Socialist propaganda and initiated the new Party into the beginnings of mass work. It dealt a number of blows at the traditional sectarianism of the left wing by working out an elementary program of immediate demands. It marked, especially, important step in the open work of the Party. In short, the convention registered real progress in the adaptation of Marxism-Leninism to the specific conditions of the class struggle in the United States.²⁸

²⁵ Foster, *History of the Communist Party*, p.177.

²⁶ Klehr, *The Soviet World of American Communism*, p.15-16.

²⁷ James O'Neal, *American Communism: A critical analysis of its origins, development and programs* (New York City: The Rand Book Store, 1927), p.106.

²⁸ Foster, *History of the Communist Party*, p.191-192.

At its 1925 convention the Workers Party changed its name to the Workers (Communist) Party (WCP) and, finally, at its 1930 convention, to the Communist Party of the United States. The winning of its elementary legal rights of free speech and assembly by the Communist Party was an important victory for democracy in the United States.²⁹

The Left, including socialists, Communists, and other groups sought alternatives to an economic system based solely on the pursuit of profit, enjoyed greater success and more respectability during the Depression than any other time in U.S. history. The Depression's apparent discrediting of the capitalist system provided leftists of various persuasions with an opening. For more Americans were willing to give a serious hearing to left-wing critiques of capitalism and claims for the prospective benefits offered by a socialist system.

The Great Depression cast doubt upon the capitalist system in the eyes of observers. Some of them turned to Marxism, which predicted the collapse of capitalism and promised the creation of a utopian society to replace it.

The Communist Party of the United States increased its following substantially in the early years of the depression. (Communist leaders secretly took their orders directly from the Soviet Union, but many members set their own agendas.) The Party made some inroads among the working class it claimed to represent and had more success among minorities by taking a forthright stance in favor of racial equality.³⁰

Bureaucratically, American Communism owes its rise to prominence to the election of Roosevelt as a President in 1932, to the Organization of the Committee on Industrial Organizations in 1935, to the recognition of the Soviet Union by the United States in 1933.

As Benjamin Gitlow states, "Though Roosevelt's New Deal program and organization ranks first in immediate importance to the growth of Communism in the United States, the organization of C.I.O. from the Communist standpoint is much more basic and of lasting importance to the movement, even though the organization of the C.I.O. without Roosevelt's blessing and endorsement would never have taken place. The recognition of the Soviet Union facilitated Soviet and Comintern penetration of the United States and opened wide the doors for the infiltration of the government by Communists and their satellites drawn from growing army fellow travellers."³¹

American Communism of the 1930s, while not considered the totalitarian menace it seemed after World War II or failed ideology of the 1990's, nonetheless remained a suspect movement to most Americans. Yet precisely for that reason, communism appealed to workers, professionals, and

²⁹ Ibid, p.195.

³⁰ McElvain, *The Depression and New Deal*, p.79-80.

³¹ Benjamin Gitlow, *The Wholes of Their Lives: Communism in America-A personal history and intimate portrayal of its leaders* (Boston-Lost Angeles: Western Islands Book, 1965), p.258.

intellectuals who felt frustrated by the failure of traditional politics to alleviate the misery of the Great Depression. For those concerned about mass poverty, homelessness, and starvation, communism evoked a distinct idealism. It held a vision of social harmony-"each according to his needs"- and demanded an unworldly dedication from its believers. But Communist movement always has a practical face. As joblessness spread around the land, the Communist Party provided the impetus and backbone for mass unemployment demonstrations that not only gained popularity but also won tangible benefits for those out of work. When landlords evicted impoverished tenants, the boys and girls of the Young Communist League defiantly carried the furniture back inside, saving a shelter until the next sheriff's order arrived. And when racists went on a spree of lynching or false arrests, the Communist Party's International Labor Defense organized teams of lawyers to demand justice in the courts. Such militancy was generally appreciated, to be sure; Communists wore their credentials with arrogance and expressed a savage hostility to dissenting opinion.³²

Joseph Starobin in his book on the Communist Party USA believed that during the thirties of the Communists under Browder "had built the strongest, most influential radical movement in American history"- a very mistaken notion. The CPUSA, in its unrelenting drive to convert its Party into a duplicate of the Party Stalin and Lenin had built in Russia, ran rough shod over every left opposition political group, concentrating particularly on the Socialist Party which in 1932 polled more than 900,000 votes for its Presidential candidate Norman Thomas. The CPUSA almost never ceased to label the Socialist Party as "Social Fascist," to its severe damage.

Although the American Communist Party in the thirties gained considerable influence and respect it did so at the expense of the rapidly disappearing Socialist Party as a political factor.³³

The scope of Comintern control over the CPUSA is illustrated by Moscow influence on party involvement in the trade union movement. For Communist, trade unions offered a prime area of activity because Marxism-Leninism taught that industrial workers were the key to the revolutionary transformation of society. Communists needed to build and expand their influence in the labor movement if they were to make use of it, however, and they devoted their greatest resources to the task. From 1919 until 1935, Moscow dictated the CPUSA's labor policy and oversaw its implementation. But although American Communists in the mid-1930s began to take initiatives of their own, they still needed to present them to Moscow for Comintern approval.³⁴

Lenin himself had marked out the strategy. He declared that since the communists were the vanguard of revolution, they needed belts to transmit power to be backward masses. In the United States, where the very word communism was anathema to the overwhelming majority, this strategy of multiple

³² Peter N. Carrol, *The Odyssey of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade: Americans in the Spanish Civil War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), p.13-14.

³³ Philip J. Jaffee, *The Rise and Fall of American Communism* (New York: Horizon Press, 1975), p.13-14.

³⁴ Klehr et al., *The Soviet World of American Communism*, p.48-49.

disguises was especially useful. It enabled the vanguard to make contact with various layers of the population without revealing their own identity. "The proletariat," Stalin once asserted, "need these belts, these levers and this guiding force."

The Communists owed their relative strength in the late 1930s to a number of factors. First, the Soviet Union enjoyed a growing prestige in the West, both for the apparent ability of its planned economy to avoid the vicissitudes of the Depression, and for its advocacy of collective security against fascism, expressed most concretely in the aid it provided to the loyalist government during the Spanish Civil War.

Second, by a happy coincidence for the Communists, the 1935 Congress of the Communist International made it legitimate for the American CP to moderate its political position at about the same time that Franklin Roosevelt was moving to the left to build popular support for the New Deal. The Communists began to identify themselves as party of the political coalition that supported the New Deal's domestic programs, while enthusiastically welcoming every move by Roosevelt Administration that could be interpreted as favoring collective international security. The Communists argued that their own political program corresponded to Roosevelt's true intentions, which, they said, were frustrated by a reactionary Supreme Court, Congress, and press.

Third, the Communists out-organized their left-wing rivals. When the Socialists agreed to unite with the Communists quickly gained effective organizational control, recruiting some of the most talented Socialist cadres into their own ranks, without disturbing the surface appearance of friendly coalition.³⁵

This theoretical interpretation of the Communist doctrine that includes its perspective toward capitalism specifically the American society generates the major Marxist theories that conceptualize and explain the Communist Party's plans in working-class revolution. These theories are represented in the social conflict theory, and class struggle theory, as following:

2.4.Social conflict theory

Marx shaped his own perspective toward the hostility among the different denominations that constitute the society as a constant conflict cannot find its radical solution without struggle that might restore the stature of toiling classes in the society into a theory called social conflict theory, so according to Kimberly Moffitt, "Social conflict theory is a macro-oriented paradigm in sociology that views society as an arena of inequality that generates conflict and social change. Key elements in this perspective are that society is structured in ways to benefit a few at the expense of the majority, and

³⁵ Maurice Isserman, *Which Side Were You On? The American Communist Party during the Second World War* (Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1985), p.3-4.

factors such as race, sex, class, and age are linked to social inequality. To a social conflict theorist, it is all about dominant group vs. minority group relations."³⁶

Thus, the social conflict theory states that groups within a capitalist society tend to interact in a destructive way that allows no mutual benefit and little cooperation. The solution Marxism proposes to this problem is that of a workers' revolution to break the political and economic domination of the capitalist class with the aim of reorganizing society along the lines of collective ownership and mass democratic control.

2.5. Class struggle theory

Marx's conception of the class struggle is taken as an axiomatic that "the history of all existing societies is the history of class struggle." In any society which is not communist – that is, in any society founded upon exploitation, in any class society there is held to be a necessary struggle between the exploiters and the exploited. In most general terms possible, the underlying categories which relate to this struggle are those of the surplus product and the control over its extraction. The surplus itself is defined as that part of the social product which, rather than going to fulfill the needs of the producers, is appropriated instead by exploiters. In other words, it is a category defined by the exploitation by one social group of the productive activity of another. And clearly the extraction of this surplus must be subject to some sort of control.³⁷

According to this view, ever since human society emerged from its primitive and relatively undifferentiated state it has remained fundamentally divided between classes who clash in the pursuit of class interests. In the World of Capitalism, for example, the nuclear cell of the capitalist system, the factory, is the prime locus of antagonism between classes -between exploiters and exploited, between buyers and sellers of labor power- rather than of functional collaboration. Class interests and the confrontations of power that they bring in their wake are to Marx the central determinant of social and historical process.

Marx predicted at the same time that the future society will be a classless, in which the proletariat must organize a political party of its own; the Communist party that eventually becomes the "ruling class" after having accomplished its task of leading the proletarians to prevail over the property owners.³⁸

Marx's advocacy of class struggle is based primarily on the assumption that it can be carried in the capitalist society. The two major classes -the bourgeoisie and the proletariat- do exist in the capitalist

³⁶Kimberly Moffitt, "Social Conflict Theory in Sociology: Definition, Lesson & Quiz," Study.com, (2003-2015), <http://study.com/academy/lesson/social-conflict-theory-in-sociology-definition-lesson-quiz.html>

³⁷Neil C. Fernandez, *Capitalism and Class struggle in the USSR: A Marxist Theory* (1997), p.14.

³⁸Ibid, p.12.

society. The creation of an antagonistic struggle between the two major classes is but as abnormal phenomenon of the capitalist society when its evolution comes to a stand-still.³⁹

³⁹ Ibid, p.117-119.

CHAPTER THREE: THE ROLE OF the COMMUNIST PARTY DURING THE DEPRESSION

3.0.Introduction

The Communist Party has left a remarkable legacy at U.S. arena since its inception in 1919, so this legacy accentuates its role that varied according to different factors internally and externally. This chapter is going to examine this role during the Depression time through applying its agendas on workers' unions, political coalitions, interracial and anti-racial organizations, and other tools where the Communist Party took a place within in 1930s.

3.1.Organizing the mass strikes and demonstrations

The economic depression was reaching active its peak. Unemployed figures mounted. On March 6, 1930, Communist parties throughout the world organized their dramatic "hunger marches." The American Communist Party demonstrated violently on New York's Union Square. Foster, Robert Minor, and Israel Amter (communist leaders) were sentenced to six months' imprisonment, which they spent in the New York penitentiaries on Welfare, Island, Riker's Island, and Hart's Island. The United States Communist Party organized the unemployed councils throughout the nation.⁴⁰

By 1931, leaders such as Gebert believed that the city's Communists Party was on the verge of a mass influx of members that would mark the beginning of a second American revolution. Although in hindsight this vision seems overly ambitious, at the time his prediction had some basis.

That August, party activists successfully organized a demonstration where one hundred thousand black and white workers protested against Chicago's police, whose officers had shot and killed three African Americans, unemployed activists. Proudly recalling the attendance at the event, Geber hinted at the local appeal of Chicago's party.

Those demonstrations were not all unemployed, he remembered. Instead, "Many of them are employed and many of them probably never came to any of our meetings before. They came as a result not only of our protest against shooting but as a protest against evictions, unemployment, wage cuts, because this demonstration signaled all this."

Gebert found inspiration in the fact that employed people, with what he imagined were broad political interests, had found their way to a party demonstration. He hoped that improvements in the party's structure would result in increased recruitment among these employed workers, a category whose party

⁴⁰Palmer, *The Communist Problem in America*, p.127.

leaders in New York and Moscow believed, once radicalized, would serve as the vanguard in the upcoming workers' revolution.⁴¹

S. Kirson Weinberg, a student of the prominent University of Chicago sociologist Ernest Burgess, headed into the Jewish neighborhood of Lawndale to study its generation of youth drawn to the political left in response to government's and business's inability to solve the problems caused by the Depression. Weinberg came across one young man who explained: "I lost my job two years ago. Since then I've only worked a few days. I need money for clothes, to see a show, to help my family, to go to school. ... The someone told about Communism. It was what I looked for. I went to a meeting. I began to think. There was no more righteous thing in the world. Why shouldn't a worker who produces an object have a share in the profits? The bosses get it all. ... The caused the Depression and they're causing their own doom."⁴²

Hunger marches to Washington were staged in 1931 and 1932. Membership figures mounted. The party had some 9.000 members when the depression began in 1929.

The mass strike movement that got under way in 1933 varied widely from the traditional craft pattern of the A.F. of L. It reflected clearly the principles, strategy, and tactic that had been so vigorously propagated by Communist Party and the T.U.U.L. The strikes penetrated the hitherto closed fructified industries-steel, auto, aluminum, marine transport, etc.; they were industrial in character; they embraced Negroes, unskilled, foreign-born, women, youth, and white collar workers; they struck a high rate of solidarity between employed and unemployed; they used mass picketing, shop delegates, broad strike committees, sit-down strikes, slow-down strikes, and other left-wing methods; they took on an increasingly political character; and they developed over the opposition of reactionary labor officials who wanted to stifle them.⁴³

By 1933, as Roosevelt entered the White House, this figure had nearly doubled. The party was becoming more and more radical in its approach, in accordance with the resolutions of the Comintern's American Commission. Molotov, speaking for this commission, had told the Tenth Conference of the Comintern's executive committee the United States Communists had been urged to create "conditions of real Bolshevik development of the party and a reinforcement of its authority among the working masses."⁴⁴

⁴¹ Randi Storch, *Red Chicago: American Communism at its grassroots 1928-35* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009), p.31-32.

⁴² *Ibid*, p.187.

⁴³ Foster, *History of the Communist Party*, p.299.

⁴⁴ Palmer, *The Communist Problem in America*, p. 127-128.

The extremist-revolutionary Third Strategy was expressed with frankness and clarity in William Z. Foster's book *Toward a Soviet America*. There, in 1932, he outlined a blueprint for a Communist government of the United States, as follows:

"The American Soviet government will be organized along the lines of the Russian Soviets. The American Soviet government will join with the other Soviet governments in a world Soviet Union. The American Soviet government will be the dictatorship of the proletariat."

Foster specified that "in early stages of the revolution, even before the seizure of power, the workers will organize Red Guards." He also said that "under the dictatorship of the proletariat, all the capitalist parties- Republicans, Democrats, Progressives, Socialists, etc. will be liquidated, the Communist Party alone functioning as the Party of the toiling masses." According to Foster, the establishment of an American Soviet government will mark the birth of a real democracy in the United States, and he characterized the right to vote and all the current talk about democracy as only so many screens to hide the capitalist autocracy and make it more palatable to the masses.

In the same year 1933, more than 1.1 million workers engaged in strikes and lockouts, triple the number of 1932. The Communists launched a renewed effort to popularize the Workers Unemployment Insurance Bill. The Unemployment Councils lobbied municipal governments, labor unions, and fraternal organizations for endorsements. Yet sectarianism plagued the Party's efforts. Browder displayed the problem dramatically when he addressed three thousand workers (including many women) who had struck Detroit's Briggs Company, an independent manufacturer of auto bodies for the Ford, Chrysler, Hudson, and Graham Paige corporations. Although workers and organizers represented nearly every shade of radical opinion, Browder boasted that the CPUSA deserved full credit for the walkout.⁴⁵

The great general strike in the San Francisco Bay area, embraced 127,000 workers, took place during July 16-19, 1934. It grew out of a coastwise strike of 35,000 maritime workers. The Communist Party, which had a strong organization in California, gave the strike its full support and its influence was of major importance in the struggle. The historic strike gave an enormous impetus to the whole American labor movement.

The key to winning the great San Francisco strike was to spread it all over the coast, and still farther. This extension was indispensable in order to checkmate the coordinated attempts of the government, the employers, and the A.F. of L. leadership to localize, isolate, and strangle the strike. The

⁴⁵ James G. Ryan, *Earl Browder the failure of American Communism* (Tuscaloosa and Landon: The University of Alabama Press, 1997), p.63.

Communists and the other left and progressive elements, despite numerous minor mistakes, were quite aware of this imperative need to spread the strike, and they tried to do just that.⁴⁶

The year 1934 saw three explosive strikes that gripped national attention, the San Francisco general strike (July 16-19), the first general strike in America since 1919 Seattle general strike; the Toledo Edison and Toledo Auto-Lite strikes (April 13-June 1); and the Minneapolis truckers' strikes (February-August.)

Minneapolis had a ferocious industrial war in 1934. On one side the protagonists, before other actors entered in efforts to settle it, were a Trotskyist group (the Minneapolis branch of the Communist League of America) and its allies in a teamsters local, General Drivers Local 574, and the Minneapolis labor movement. Thousands of workers served picket duty. Dozens of businessmen took to the streets as police deputies to engage the pickets. When the war was over, before Labor Day of 1934, two workers were dead and several dozen wounded from police gunfire. Two businessmen, including a member of the Citizens Alliance executive board, had been clubbed to death on Mel'ee Street.

There were three strikes, the first was local, encouraged in part by the new national labor policy and the growing electoral strength of the Farmer-Labor Party. It was mainly about wages and hours.

In the second, the strikes insisted on employed recognition of the union. The third strike, the longest and bloodiest of the three, was again about employer recognition of the union. The first of three strikes, in February 1934, resulted from a decision by Trotskyist trade unionists in Minneapolis to organize an industrial union. These were former Communists, and before that Socialists and Wobblies, who during the 1920s were also active in the Farmer-Labor Party. In the early 30s, with apparently very little coordination from New York City, national headquarters of their organization, the Communist League of America, these trade unionists carefully picked trucking as the general industry they could work in.⁴⁷

The 1933 Hormel Strike was settled in favor of workers. This settlement encouraged the Communist League's leaders, but they also knew that Minneapolis was not Austin-organization meant a direct challenging to the Minneapolis economic elite and to the city's republican mayor, who supplanted the Farmer-Labor mayor who served from 1931 to 1933.

Communist League leaders believed, in fact, that there would be class war. Their expectations were a little premature, for the first strike was an easy affair. It came on 7 February 1934, when Local 574 called a strike of the city's coal yards, demanding higher wages, shorter hours, and direct bargaining

⁴⁶Foster, *History of the Communist Party*, p.300-302.

⁴⁷Richard M. Valley, *Radicalism in the States: The Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party and the American political economy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1989), p. 103-105.

between employers and the union. Luck would have it that Local 574 called the strike the day an extreme cold spell hit Minneapolis.⁴⁸

As late as spring of 1935, Communist coal miners tried to mobilize rank-and-file support for a national coal strike on April 1, which had been strongly opposed by UMWA president William Mitch. The April 1st movement never materialized in Alabama, but two months later the UMWA officially endorsed a national bituminous coal strike. The strike led to a new Appalachian agreement between coal operators and the UMWA in most states affected, but Alabama coal operators refused to adhere to the new settlement and the strike lasted there until November 20. The miners returned to work after Governor Graves persuaded coal operators to give them 50 percent of the requested wage increase.

Over the next several months, Communists continued to aggravate Alabama labor leaders by supporting demonstrations and wildcat strikes on WPA projects in Walker and Jefferson counties. The ASFL, whose officers had agreed to discourage relief workers' strikes on federal projects, left the Party's actions were disruptive and embarrassing.⁴⁹

Everywhere the Communists were active. In Detroit, the Communists tried out a new technique in industrial warfare.

Benjamin Gitlow claimed, "The Communists seized the factories by staging sit-down strikes. The country was treated to a preview of things to come, of how the Communists intended to seize the factories by occupying them from the inside and converting each factory into a fortress of the Communist revolution. The Communists were not innocents in trying out this tactic. The plans for seizing American factories when the time is opportune have been stored away in the minds of the Communist leaders and in reports filed away for safe keeping in the Comintern archives."

New years, 1937, the Communists celebrated by occupying the motor plants, twenty-six thousand workers went out on strike in the plants of General Motors and occupied the plants.

Before the week was up, 100,000 men were out on strike. In two more days, the number jumped to 135,000 and plant after was occupied the largest plants, all of them monuments to American engineering genius and enterprise.⁵⁰

3.2.Unemployed Councils

The overall success of those demonstrations led to some important consequences both for Communists and for national awareness of the problems of the unemployed. Nationwide coverage of the demonstration illuminated the plight of unemployed, dispelling Hoover's optimistic forecasts and

⁴⁸ Ibid, p.105-106.

⁴⁹ Robin D. G. Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists during the Great Depression* (Chapel and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), p.136.

⁵⁰ Gitlow, *The Wholes of Their Lives*, p.282-283.

predictions. The inescapable fact that the demonstrations had been organized by the Communist Party was a considerable propaganda success. The Party as well as many of its opponents saw its accomplishment in rallying the unemployed as proof that there was a real possibility of the CPUSA becoming the focal point of a mass movement and that prediction of the radicalization of American workers had been confirmed.

Benjamin Gitlow a Communist leader portrayed the unemployed in America arguing, "The Communists pounded into the heads of the unemployed that the Capitalist world was against them that the police; the courts, the armed forces; Congress and the President of the United States were the enemies of the unemployed and hostile to the demands of the jobless for adequate relief. Communist speakers and organizers harangued the unemployed with the idea that if they wanted to eat and to work at decent wages they had to fight. The Communists marched up and down the streets in demonstrations of unemployed shouting in union without stopping. "Starve or fight! Starve or fight! Starve or fight!"⁵¹

Obviously, in his statement Gitlow argued that the American capitalist leadership was a barrier to the toiling classes to pursue their ambitions for equality; this statement comes to add more elaborations on the Communist tactics in revitalizing the class-consciousness through spreading this kind of criticism against existing social and political orders.

In the wake of the demonstrations, the councils were given a national organization. In early July 1930, 1,120 delegates met at the National Unemployment Convention in Chicago to establish the Unemployed Councils of the United States. The convention elected a Party member, Bill Mathieson, at its national secretary while Foster, Minor, and Amter, and then still in jail, became honorary members. In an apparent attempt to provide the Councils with a broader base of support, the new organization decided it would not affiliate with the TUUL. The Party would later claim that the Councils gained over 75,000 members.⁵²

The program for relief aid proposed by the Unemployed Councils served a dual purpose: first, to provide direct and substantive aid to the unemployed, and second, to mobilize disaffected workers to support the Communist Party and prepare for the coming world revolution.

The cornerstone of the Unemployed Councils' relief program was the Unemployed Insurance Bill, which sought to provide full union wages for all work relief at the expense of government and big business. The plan for National Unemployment Insurance was to drastically expand opportunities for relief work, to put the unemployed back to work on valuable public works projects, to keep unemployed individuals and families from falling into desperate poverty by providing living wages, and to cultivate the class-consciousness of unemployed workers in preparation for world revolution.

⁵¹ Ibid, p.215.

⁵² Fraser M. Ottameli, *The Communist Party of the United States: From the Depression to World War II* (United States: Library of Congress, 1991), p.32.

The Unemployed Councils were instrumental in resisting evictions of unemployed workers and in organizing unemployed strikes to pressure the state and local governments to expand relief aid and work. For example, in March 1933, the Unemployed Councils played a role in organizing an unemployed strike of 1,900 families in the Burien District of King County, Washington to protest the dispensation of relief. Councils succeeded in delaying the eviction of the Blonder Family of Bellevue, Washington for a week following a confrontation with law enforcement officials.

This practice of infiltrating and guiding social movements was especially important given that the Unemployed Councils were not the only organization in Washington State attempting to mobilize the unemployed. In July 1931, C. W. Gilbreath, Carl Branin, and Hulet Wells of Seattle's Labor College, founded a network of self-help cooperatives in Seattle to provide aid to the unemployed. Within the course of a year the Unemployed Citizens' League or UCLs had become a major social force in the city, with twenty-two commissaries distributing food, firewood, clothing, and rent credit to thousands of city residents. The UCL were also active in municipal elections and attempted to win the passage of legislation extending relief aid and unemployment insurance to the jobless. This rival organization, which came to be identified with and influenced by Seattle's Socialist community, rapidly eclipsed the Unemployed Councils in the mobilization of the city's jobless.

The leaders of the CPUSA and its affiliated organizations attempted to ideologically distance themselves from this rival organization. Herbert Benjamin, a prominent national leader of the CPUSA and the head of the Unemployed Councils, denounced the UCLs as social-fascist organization intent on betraying the workers. Benjamin instructed the Communists to oppose the UCL, and focus on building up the strength of the Unemployed Councils.⁵³

Even as the Party was bringing social insurance to the attention of the country, it was failing in its objectives to create a strong unemployed organization under Communist leaders. What were the reasons for this failure? As Daniel Leab has argued, the attempt by Communists to inject into the movement for the unemployed their own slogans and programs, such as its call for "Defense of Chinese Soviets" or against "Social-fascists," alienated many jobless workers.

It is essential, however, just as with the case of labor, not to exaggerate the extent of this revolutionary posturing nor, most importantly, to underestimate the difficulties inherent in organizing such a heterogeneous group.

In his perspective Fraser M. Ottameli demonstrates that, "the unemployed were a mobile group, they were weakly bonded to each other and their demands tended to be broad and diverse-hardly the most favorable circumstances in which to instill class consciousness or to achieve organization. As a group

⁵³ Marc Horan-Spatz, "The Unemployed Councils of the Communist Party in Washington State, 1930-1935," *The Great Depression in Washington State* 353, (2012), http://depts.washington.edu/depress/unemployed_councils.shtml

they lacked stability, moving on when the search for a job proved futile. Councils grew rapidly when they were viewed as the best and most effective way of solving the grievances of unemployed, but, as hard times persisted, many unemployed either resorted to other means or resigned themselves to inaction."

Furthermore, the new wave of strikes and the revival of activism among labor in 1933 raised once more for Communists the primacy of shop organization. The Unemployed Councils survived until April 8, 1936, when they merged with the Socialist-led Workers Alliance and a number of other smaller groups⁵⁴.

In fact, the story of the CPUSA and UCL was one of the critiques exposed the Communist Party's policy that finally led to its failure during the Depression in acting with workers, organizations, unions, and parties either bureaucratically or otherwise. Therefore, the Communists didn't accept other side in terms of rivalries through imposing their own ideology and attacking others in multiracial society like America under capitalist system.

3.2.1. The Boycott Movement

The Communist Party supported the boycott movements as well. For example, the 1935 meat boycott, and the Communists who participated, appealed to housewives as political activists and democratic participants. The American Communist Party recognized the working-class home as a site of class struggle. Within Communist doctrine, family relations mirrored capitalism; therefore, socialist revolution began in home. Women leaders in the Party insisted that housewives were vanguard in the struggle, writing for the Party's women's magazine *Women Today*.

The CPUSA provided tacit encouragement to organize housewives and consumers. The Party recognized that during the times of hardship this female space could be transformed into a site of resistance in support of the workplace and the family. Female leaders took the initiative to engage in Party work. Many times these campaigns operated outside Party authority. The meat boycott during the spring and summer of 1935 was one of such campaign.⁵⁵

After 1935, the Party's Central Committee encouraged female cadre and the UC to organize housewives. The UCs were transformed into United Councils for Working-Class Housewives (UCWH), which formed alliances with working women's organizations. That same year, beginning in Los Angeles, local women's groups began a boycott to protest inflated meat prices. The UCWH used the Los Angeles example and brought similar boycotts to New York and eventually Detroit.

⁵⁴Ottameli, *The Communist Party*, p.35.

⁵⁵Denise Lynn, "United We Spend: Communist Women and the 1935 Meat Boycott," *American Communist History* 10 (2011): p.35-36.

After the New York City boycott, a group of women that had been involved formed the League of Women Shoppers (LWS). The LWS eventually became a national organization. With explicit ties to the CUPSA and members from prominent members and contact with New Deal organizations. The LWS was also asked to intervene in strike mediation by the National Labor Relation Board (NLRB) on more one occasion.

Communist women like Clara LemlichShavelson, Rose Nelson, and Party leaders Detroit served as an impetus behind housewives campaigns. Communists pushed women to usurp gender expectations in the home and become political leaders in their own right. The housewives' campaign brought the working-class home into class struggle, and no doubt many women into Party circles.⁵⁶

3.3.Trade Union Unity League (T.U.U.L.)

The TUUL began during what so-called the "Third Period" strategy of the Communist Party, it lasted until 1935. It was a revolutionary period, characterized in the U.S. by a few spectacular TUUL-led strikes, but otherwise it made a scant impression upon the labor scene. In following this pattern, the American Communist movement was in harmony with Communist practice all over the world. Social Democrats were called "social fascists," and new red trade unions were formed to compete with existing organizations. Among the new unions so formed were the National Miners Union, the Building Trades Industrial League, the National Textile Workers Union, and the Needle Trades Workers Industrial Union.

With the rise of the Nazis in Germany and the growing realization that the Hitler regime was not an interregnum before the Communist revolution but rather a real threat to the Soviet Union as well as to a free Europe, the line began to waver, the period between 1933-1935, therefore, was a transitional one toward the creation of a "United Front."⁵⁷

In 1929, a few cities, including Chicago, created an early form of Unemployed Councils, but it was a year before the Communist Party worked out its nation-wide structure. The initial councils borrowed from the pre-revolutionary Russian model, grouping people in revolutionary centers based on where they worked. Since work was the center around which these councils would organize, it made sense to party leaders to place them under control of the Trade Union Unity League, a Party-created union structure formed in 1929 to organize workers, employed or not. In Chicago, Party leaders created a steering committee within the TUUL composed of section leaders, trade-union activists, and nationally-group leaders.

These men and women wanted a mass movement. Resolutions passed at citywide Communist gatherings suggest optimistic directives ordering Chicago Communists to join TUUL through their

⁵⁶ Ibid, p.40-52.

⁵⁷ Max M. Kampelman, *The Communist Party vs. The C.I.O.* (New York: Frederick A. Rraeger, 1957), p.10.

former or present places of employment. "It is precisely the building of the TUUL," party leaders believed, "which will become one of the most important means of closing the gap between the growing political influence of the Party and its organizational isolation."

The limited nature of the TUUL dashed these inflated hopes, however, instead of working to build a mass movement uniting the city's employed and unemployed workers, early council leaders focused on workplace issues and the membership of small, revolutionary unions.

Occasionally delegates from fraternal groups, homeless workers, and residents of flophouses joined elected delegates from the TUUL to discuss the unemployment situation, but concrete action rarely followed. Unemployed Communists were supposed to work in TUUL councils, but few party or non-party unemployed workers were attracted to them through mid-1930.⁵⁸

Communists believed they would simply need to explain how the TUUL differed from more mainstream labor organizations, and Depression conditions would ensure that workers would flock to the revolutionary unions. Through the TUUL, Communists were to organize the widest masses of the workers on the basis of struggle to improve their conditions and to resist the attacks of the bosses on their wages, hours, conditions, etc.

Year after year, party trade-union strategy sessions pushed the same goal of getting out the message, but results were not what party leaders had hoped. One problem was that rank-and-file Communists were not unified behind the TUUL's goal of organizing unorganized workers into revolutionary unions; some opposed dual unions, others preferred working with Unemployed Councils rather than with revolutionary unions, and still others were unwilling to do the difficult daily work of union organizing.⁵⁹

Labor unrest during the Depression led, in the early 1930s, to the explosive growth of independent unions, company-sponsored unions, and AFL unions. But despite high expectations, the TUUL unions remained small.

Clearly frustrated, the Comintern demanded a change of strategy, in February 1934 the Comintern decided that the American Communists should help form a new independent trade union federation that would bring together three groups: the affiliates of the TUUL, various independent unions, and unions in the AFL that were headed by progressives unhappy with the AFL's moderate leadership. The CPUSA quickly responded: in April the party publicly announced that its union organizations would struggle for an Independent Federation of Labor. But in June, before much had been done along these lines, the Comintern modified its strategy still further by ordering the CPUSA to put greater emphasis on work within the AFL.

⁵⁸ Storch, *Red Chicago*, p.103-104.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p.131-132.

The CPUSA did not change course as rapidly as Moscow wanted, and the Comintern showed its displeasure. On 28 August 1934 the Daily Worker published an editorial criticizing John L. Lewis and the AFL leaders who were urging the AFL to organize the millions of unskilled and semiskilled workers in the steel, auto, and other basic industries. Since 1929 the CPUSA had insisted, in line with Comintern policy, that this effort would be fruitless if undertaken under aegis of the AFL, with its moderate unionism. But after the Comintern policy changed, the American representative to the Comintern informed his comrades that the Comintern was sending them an article "correcting" the Daily Worker editorial, explaining that it was now Moscow's view that with regard to Lewis and the AFL "our position must be that the industrial union would be a step forward for the workers."⁶⁰

The year 1933 signaled the growth of the worker agitation in the United States. The communist Trade Union Unity League (TUUL), which grew rapidly and proportionately more than the American Federation of Labor, was unable to keep in step with the increased radicalism of its members and the leadership necessary for a true revolutionary party of the masses. By late 1933 the Communist Party was vigorously supporting its old policy of "boring from within." The National Executive Committee of the TUUL proposed in October of 1934 to unify all unions, ultimately leading to the dissolution of the TUUL and many other independent unions. The entrance cause of the breakup of the union movement and the eventual formation of the Committee for Industrial Organization, thus, representing the first determining role ever played by the Communist Party in the workers movement.⁶¹

Nonetheless, it soon became clear to the Party leadership with the newly activated workers. Not the revolutionary TUUL but the old-line unions or improvised organizations helped by the old-line unions stood at the head of the big organizing drive. Writing in the Communist International in the fall of 1934, one "Kutnik" acknowledged this fact:

"In March 1934 ... it was found that the TUUL organizations were pushed into the background by the unions belonging to the AFL. ... The Red textile Union did not participate in the leadership of the numerous strikes of this period. ... At the present time it has only 1000 to 1200 members. ... Among miners the revolutionary union led only one percent of the strikes. ... In the same way the revolutionary union succeeded only in winning the leadership of two percent of the strikes in the automobile industry. The revolutionary miners' union had only 1000 members now and the revolutionary automobile workers union only a few hundred."⁶²

Although it displayed some sectarian and dualist tendencies, TUUL nevertheless played an important and constructive role in the labor movement. All through the great economic crisis, when A.F. of L.

⁶⁰ Klehr et al., *The Soviet World*, p.51-52.

⁶¹ Gail A. Schachter, editor, *The Great Depression: A historical bibliography* (U.S.A.: Library of Congress, 1984), p.117.

⁶² Irving Howe and Lewis Coser, *The American Communist Party, A critical history* (1919-1957) (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), p.268-269.

militancy was at its lowest point, the TUUL did heroic and effective work, as we have seen, in leading the employed and unemployed workers in struggle. Its militant advocacy of industrial unionism over several years was highly educational in the workers. The contacts it had established in the basic industries, together with the shop units of the Communist Party, were fundamental factors in developing the great C.I.O. organizing campaign of the next few years. The Party was basically correct in supporting the TUUL as it did.⁶³

In his article "A revolutionary Trade Union Unity League (1929-1934)," Victor G. Devinatz states, "In December 1934, the Comintern Executive Committee called for the elimination of the revolutionary unions, leading the CPUSA Central Committee to order the remaining TUUL affiliates to join their respective AFL unions under any conditions. In February 1935, the MWIU closed shop and its members entered the International Seaman's Union; that same month, the NTWIU's fur workers section began discussion with the IFWU and merged with the union in the summer of 1935. The Metal Workers Industrial Union (minus its steel section, which had joined with the Amalgamated Association of Iron (AAI), Steel and Tin Workers (STW) in the fall of 1934, went into the International Association of Machinists (IAM) in the spring of 1935."⁶⁴

The Communist leadership told all Communists, everywhere to ally themselves with antifascist groups in hopes of winning allies to their side, the Communists ended up succeeding socially in one end and that was the National Labor Act (the Wagner Act of 1935). The Wagner Act finally gave workers and laborers the right to organize and gave federal protection to workers exercising that right. For the first time in American history the masses of workers could become unionized and many of the masses of workers including the industrial workers that were long ignored by the AFL craft unions could now be organized and protected.⁶⁵

Communists had succeeded in inserting the majority of their TUUL cadres and membership into the American Federation of Labor. One of the oddities of the history, however, is that no sooner had Communists entered the AFL than the industrial unionists decided to get out. Led by Lewis, AFL leaders who supported an aggressive drive to organize the mass-production industries formed the Committee for Industrial Organization in November 1935 and were soon in direct conflict with the AFL's craft-union leaders. Within two years the renamed Congress of Industrial Organizations had become a powerful rival union center, sweeping millions of industrial workers into new unions.

In yet another policy shift, American Communists followed CIO, and in 1937 the American representative to the Comintern, Eugene Dennis, announced that the CPUSA had achieved "decisive

⁶³Foster, *History of the Communist Party*, p.304.

⁶⁴Victor G. Devinatz, "A revolutionary of the Trade Union Unity League (1929-1934)," *Science & Society* 71 (2007): p.53.

⁶⁵Louise G. Silverberg, editor, *The Wagner Act: After Ten Years* (Washington D.C.: The Bureau of National Affairs, INC., 1945), P.12.

political influence" within twelve newly organized CIO unions and "important influence" in four others.⁶⁶

Although the TUUL left its marks on the labor movement, it couldn't overcome vulnerabilities that it had been within. In this regard Harvey Klehr in his book, *The Heyday of American Communism: The Depression Decade*, in his perspective addresses that, "The improvement in the TUUL's condition was caused by the New Deal's labor policies. When the league experienced a mild upsurge in 1933-1934, its own exertions and qualities were less responsible than those of the NRA. Once the Communists saw how poorly they had fared in comparison with the A.F. and L. and the independent unions, they moved inexorably toward liquidating their creation and did so just as soon as the Comintern have its approval. The influx into the TUUL, relatively small as it was, did give the Communists something to bargain with as they slunk back into the A.F. and L. If the Communist trade union line had changed in 1932, the TUUL would have disappeared without a trace and the Party's isolation from the union movement been almost complete. When the Communists put their auxiliary to rest in 1935, they had in hand dozens of capable union organizers."⁶⁷

3.4. Congress of Industrial Organizations (C.I.O.)

The organization of the C.I.O. owes much to the Communist Party. By driving a wedge into American Federation of Labor, the Communist hoped to gain a dominant position in the trade unions of the C.I.O. and the leadership and control of millions of workers in the nation's basic and mass production industries.

Benjamin Gitlow outlined, "The origin of its organization goes back to Lenin's time. It has already been shown that when Lenin sensed an immediate proletarian revolution was not imminent in Western Europe, he abandoned the call for immediate insurrection and directed the attention of the world's Communists towards political action and the capture of the conservative and reactionary trade unions, a direct assault upon the reactionary trade union fortress, which was the Communist policy in the United States."⁶⁸

The big labor struggle of the early New Deal years came to a sharp climax with the Committee for Industrial Organizations (C.I.O.) in November 1935. This body was originally composed of representatives of the coal miners, textile, ladies' garment, men's clothing, printing, oil-field, cap and militancy, and metal miners' unions, with a combined membership of about one million.

⁶⁶ Klehr et al., *The Soviet World*, p.53.

⁶⁷ Harvey Klehr, *The Heyday of American Communism: The Depression Decade* (New York: Library of Congress, 1984), p.133-134.

⁶⁸ Gitlow, *The Wholes of Their Lives*, p.276.

The Committee's purpose was the unionization of the almost totally unorganized millions of workers in the basic trustified industries. It was truly a momentous development, and the Communist Party gave its most active support from the start.⁶⁹

The building of C.I.O. unions was the greatest stride forward ever made by the American labor movement. It changed the whole situation of the trade unions and brought the working class to new high levels of industrial and political strength and maturity. In this historic movement the Communist Party played a vital and indispensable role. It acted truly as the vanguard party of the working class.⁷⁰

The Communists made their most striking gains in influence in the organizational drives of the new Congress of Industrial Organization (CIO). CIO's President John L. Lewis had no sympathy for Communists' political goals, but respected the experience and dedication of Communist union organizers. Lewis allowed Communists to remain in control of half a dozen important CIO unions and to hold powerful positions in regional and national offices in exchange for the contributions they made to the CIO's success.⁷¹

Robert H. Zieger argues, "During the first year of its existence, the CIO simultaneously exhibited both the pageantry and idealism of a great liberation movement and the determination to foster responsible contractual unionism in the mass production sector. These two aspects of the early CIO were complementary, for the ability of American workers both to endure the hardship of raw confrontation and to create and sustain vehicles for the regular conduct of ordinary life in a complex corporate order were equally vital. The success of the CIO depended in large part on its ability to fire workers' imagination, dramatize its goals through public epics, and maneuver through the maze of changing legal and political boundaries to build an organization that would embrace a great diversity of workers while surviving in a hostile environment."⁷²

Document 13 offers a detailed account of early CIO-CPUSA relations, one that resolves much of the mystery about it. The document is a transcript of a September 1936 report delivered by Clarence Hathaway to the Mary Secretariat of the Comintern, reviewing the history of CPUSA involvement in the CIO. From the report's content, and even more from its tone, it is clear that American Communists, rather than Soviets, initiated the move to the CIO. Although the Comintern had allowed the CPUSA to proceed on this course, the Soviets still had doubts about the change. Consequently, Hathaway did not merely report on the party's actions but defended its decision to back the CIO.⁷³

⁶⁹ Foster, *History of the Communist Party*, p.305.

⁷⁰ Ibid, p.340.

⁷¹ Isserman, *Which Side Were You On?*, p.4.

⁷² Robert H. Zieger, *The CIO 1935-1955* (North Carolina, 1995), p.22.

⁷³ Klehr et al., *The Soviet World*, p.55.

The events of the year after Roosevelt's reelection put the CIO over the top. Breakthroughs in the automobile industry and the steel industry early in 1937 brought industrial unionism at last to the heartland of the economy.

In addition, unionists in other mass production industries and key service sectors, notably electrical appliances, meatpacking, and transportation, made significant advances. The victories unleashed a wave of organizing that made the CIO a household word seemed to vindicate the bold initiative that Lewis and his cohorts had launched in 1935.

There were many reasons for CIO's success in auto, steel, and other industries, and as many for frustration and failure in these and other sectors.

The CIO surge drew its strength from the deterioration of industrial workers to achieve greater security and dignity in their workplaces. It was aided by a broadly pro-worker constellation of political forces as demonstrated in the labor-backed victories not only of FDR but of governors in the large industrial states. It drew upon the astute leadership of Lewis and his colleagues who ally combined behind-the-scenes negotiations with fiery appeals to an aroused working class.⁷⁴

The dramatic origins and spectacular successes of the early CIO resonated throughout working-class America. During the period 1936-38 the CIO supported or launched organizing initiatives among longshoremen, electrical appliance workers, metal miners, textile workers, packinghouse workers, food and cannery workers, and others. While Pennsylvania-to-Michigan industrial corridor remained central to the CIO's emerging identity, these initiatives brought the industrial union body forcefully into the urban centers of the East Coast, the manufacturing and shipping centers of the West Coast, and the miners and factories of the South as well. The diverse local's circumstances brought the CIO into contact with a range of ideological, racial, gender, and sectional concerns that often posed new and difficult problems for the men who had organized the CIO and who conducted its affairs. The necessity to respond to unexpected and diverse organizing opportunities impelled the CIO's founders, in effect if not in name, to formalize their break with the AFL and to adopt increasingly elaborate institutional structures.⁷⁵

The Communist Party directed all of its attention early in the new "United Front" period to the AFL. This drive continued even while and after the CIO was breaking away from the AFL and becoming independent, in spite of the fact that the CIO's program for industrial unionism agreed with the traditional Communist trade union policy, for almost two years the Communists ignored, chided, and opposed the efforts of the young CIO. Unity within the AFL had been the declared slogan of the CP Convention and its Central Committee in 1935 and unity within the AFL it would be, said the

⁷⁴Zieger, *The CIO*, p.42.

⁷⁵*Ibid*, p.66.

Communist trade union leaders, regardless of the CIO. This lasted until May, 1937, by which time the CIO had also become attractive bait.⁷⁶

Max M. Kampelman in the matter of the integration of the Communist Party actively with CIO addresses that, "it was not too difficult for the Communists to become an integral party of the CIO organization, particularly since most of them disguised themselves as liberals or as American radicals in the democratic tradition. The Communist party itself, as we have seen, encouraged disguise in the interests of building a democratic front. And even though the Party proclaimed its allegiance to the Communist International and to the establishment of Socialism according to the scientific principles enunciated by the greatest teachers of mankind, Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, it's open appeal was increasingly an American one designed to be in harmony with the interests and locate of American workers. At its 10th national convention in New York City, May 26-31, 1938, the Communist party called for unity of all trade unions into a single, united, powerful American labor movement."⁷⁷

Communists were already acting as a caucus within the CIO and had begun doing so in 1937. Michael Quill, head of the Transport Workers Union and a member of the Communist caucus during this time, later reported that Communist Party representative always met with that CIO caucus and was assigned to dish out the instructions.

Quill testified that from 1937 "the left-wing bloc was and is controlled by the Communist Party of the United States. ... They got their instructions and have voted down the line almost 100 percent every time they got their instructions." This control even extended to the assignment of speaking roles in debate at the CIO convention.

By 1938, Communists had obtained positions of trust, responsibility, and authority giving them complete or partial control in at least 40 percent of the CIO unions, including the United Automobile Workers; the Transport Workers; the American Communication Association; the Newspaper Guild; the United Electrical Workers; the Federation of Architects, Engineers, and Technicians; the State, County, and Municipal Workers, the National Maritime Union; the Office and Professional Workers, the Woodworkers of America; and the Cannery, Agricultural, Packing, and Allied Workers.

Just as significant, Communist influence extended itself to Lewis' own kitchen cabinet, Lee Pressman, CIO general counsel, and Len De Caux, editor of the CIO News, were quite influential with Lewis and became prominently identified with the pro-Communist fact in the CIO.

Pressman, in fact, who from the first CIO convention in 1938 was secretary of the important resolutions committee, became known as one of the key Communists in the labor movement of this country, and a member of the Communist party since the early days of the New Deal when he was a

⁷⁶Kampelman, *The Communist Party*, p.14.

⁷⁷Ibid, p.17.

member of a Washington, D.C. unite of the party while employed with the federal government, Pressman and De Caux, in addition to exerting personal influence over policy within their jurisdiction, were also able to place people elsewhere in the CIO structure and with many of the internationals. Through Pressman, for example, even so anti-Communist a union as Sidney Hillman's Amalgamated Clothing Workers, engaged as their general counsel John Abt, "a member of the Communist Party of long standing. Mr. Abt's wife and sister are also Communists, each of whom holds an important spot in the Communist movement."⁷⁸

These rapid changes in policy placed and added strain on the relationship between the Communist and non-Communist forces within the CIO. In a measure, even though each position of the line attracted sympathizers and allies who agreed with the particular policy of the Communist group at the particular time, the constant changes tended to label Communists those who served with the Communists at every turn of the road, and also tended to remove doubts as to the primary loyalty of the Communist group to the USSR.

However in 1939, the foreign policy of the Communist Party seemed in harmony with the general isolationist position which permeated America and the labor movement as well. Opposition to war, therefore, and opposition to steps leading to war, was an easy cause to sell.

Sharp differences between Communists and anti-Communists thus did not express themselves through foreign policy debates. Nevertheless, the Communists within the CIO took no chances and thoroughly prepared themselves to be effective at the 1939 CIO convention.⁷⁹

Saul Alinsky around this issue states, "In these receptive circumstances, the Communist Party was welcomed into many quarters. Their issues and actions appealed to countless Americans. Then the Communist program of the United Front enabled them to work with all groups. The Communists worked indefatigably, with no job being too menial or unimportant. They literally poured themselves completely into their assignments. The Communist Party gave its complete support to the CIO."

The CIO was waging economic war, and as do all organization and nations in time of war, it welcomed allies wherever they could be found. The fact is that the Communist Party made a major contribution in the organization of the unorganized for the CIO.⁸⁰

The collateral effects of the CIO's institutionalization, is a sense developed among AFL's national leaders that the federation should strike back at CIO as hard as possible, for many CIO organizers were Communists. In helping to institutionalize the CIO, the NLRB helped the Communist Party to acquire significant new links to the American labor movement. This was because John L. Lewis chose to use

⁷⁸ Ibid, p.18-19.

⁷⁹ Ibid, p.21.

⁸⁰ Saul Alinsky, *John L. Lewis: An unauthorized biography* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1949), p.135.

seasoned Communist organizers to build parts of the CIO, such as the steelworkers unions. Also, before the NLRB began operating, many Communist organizers had already worked to build the nuclei of various industrial unions. Either way, an unprecedented level of Communist influence among the trade unions emerged, to the AFL's considerable alarm. As far as the AFL was concerned, the CIO's institutionalization not only implied dual unionism but also meant Red unionism.⁸¹

3.5. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)

The NAACP and the CP have markedly different historical roots. The former was organized in 1909, eight years before the Bolshevik Revolution and a decade before the tortured birth of the CPUSA. Moreover, the NAACP's ideological and organizational antecedents go back even further to the Niagara Convention, and abolition movements, not one of which was grounded in comprehensive socialist philosophies or led by people with binding commitment to either a socialist or a Communist international apparatus. In 1909 the goals of the NAACP were-as they remain today- quit modest by communist standard; achievement of Negroes of those rights and responsibilities generally available to other citizens of the United States would scarcely have stirred Lenin to enthusiasm.

Compared to the NAACP, the Communist Party was a late arrival on the American scene. Organized and led primarily by first and second generation immigrants whose old-world ties were strong, it had few native roots, although it tried, as some students have overemphasized, to align itself with native radical traditions and organizations. From the very outset the CPUSA was Soviet-oriented and Soviet-controlled, although it was not until the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International in 1928 that the CPUSA finally eliminated the sharp factionalism in the American section and made of it a disciplined adjunct to the larger apparatus. "Stalinization" having thus been effected, the CPUSA forfeited any semblance of grass-roots ferment, surrounding its already limp autonomy with little protest.⁸²

A new era in relation between the NAACP and the CPUSA was introduced in the late 1920s and early 1930s. It was precipitated by two developments: (1) a drastic shift in the Communist Party's program in general and on the Negro question in particular, growing out of directives from the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International in 1928, and (2) the onset of the great American depression, whose impact was felt particularly by Negroes, most of whom were in marginal economic positions. The changes in the Communist Party program had wide implications for its approach to and work among Negroes, fostering militancy which the NAACP could not take lightly. On the other hand, the depression, initially at any rate, confused and weakened the NAACP and precipitated problems, organizational and programmatic, with which it was poorly equipped to deal. Since an understanding of these two novel elements in the American racial scene is essential to a grasp of the detailed relations of

⁸¹Valley, *Radicalism in the States*, p.125.

⁸²Wilson Record, *Race and Radicalism, the NAACP and the Communist Party in Conflict* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1964), p. 6-8.

the CP and the Association during the interval from 1929 to 1935, it might be well to examine the elements in some detail.

Generally, the new anti-racial program required development or revolutionary, dual organizations in all areas CPUSA activity. The targets included industrial workers, intellectuals, sharecroppers, tenants; nationality groups, Negroes, and such other potentially dissident elements as might be brought for whatever reasons, under Communist influence. The old in-boring apparatus was dismantled; instead of trying to capture indigenous protest groups from within, the party began a program to try to drain off members from those groups to swell the ranks of the new party organizations.⁸³

The Party developed a systematic analysis of the American Negro question for the first time. A new program, "Self-Determination for Negroes in the Black Belt,"⁸⁴ was adopted by the Communist International over the skepticism of the American Communists who having made little headway among Negroes in the previous period.

For the first time Communists became active among Southern Negroes. Their efforts were directed along several lines and aimed principally at organizing branches of the party itself, revolutionary unions in steel, coal, and textiles through the TUUL, revolutionary associations of tenants and sharecroppers, and protest councils among the unemployed. Outside the South the Communists tried to organize revolutionary unions and affiliate them with TUUL local councils of the unemployed, and for Negroes specifically, the League of Struggle for Negro Rights. In the South as well as in the North attempts were made to establish the organizations on an interracial basis. Action on the immediate needs of each group was urged, but always with the understanding that it must contribute to the larger revolutionary goals.⁸⁵

Therefore, the most forthright clashes between the NAACP and the Communists came in order spheres, specifically when the Association confronted the League of Struggle for Negro Rights and the International Labor Defense. The LSNR was organized in November, 1930, for the purpose of aligning

⁸³ Ibid, p.52-53.

⁸⁴ According to Marxist interpretation, this means that the corrupt rule of monopoly capitalism and its allies in the Black Belt must be supplanted by the democratic rule of the majority, that is, of the Negro people, with the full participation of their allies among the disfranchised white minority

Without governmental and administrative control in the hands of the most oppressed section of the people, fundamental agrarian reform is impossible as has been universally proved. Only government institutions that represent and express the special interests of the preponderant Negro population, and enjoy its confidence, can effect a radical change in the structure of Southern landownership, so urgently needed by the bulk of the Black Belt's people and southern whites generally.

The principle of self-determination applies fully to the situation of the Negro nation of the Black Belt. Once the Negro community there is conceded to a nation, the recognition of its right to self-determination logically and inalterably follows.

Harry Haywood, "The Negro Nation," Negro Liberation, (1948), <https://www.marxists.org/archive/haywood/negro-liberation/ch07.htm>

⁸⁵ Record, *Race and Radicalism*, p. 55-57.

a broad cross section of Negro groups behind a comprehensive race program under the firm control of the Communist Party.⁸⁶

A depression, or even a limited recession, is a different kind of crisis. The NAACP rolls withered rather fattened during the early years of the depression decade. Marxist theory might have it that the ranks of the poor should close and tighten in unity when capitalism falters and economic catastrophe strikes; correctively, prosperity might be supposed to dispel unity as proletarians find they can make it alone. In the actual case just the opposite is true. Unions and other ameliorative organizations have waned in boom and waned in slump, at least in the United States. When the economy is healthy and opportunity levels are high, prodding and pressuring by reformist groups get results; dissenters' hopes are high; and there is money to pay dues. When a Great Depression strikes, the problem of survival is so pressing as to blot out other issues, and the gradualist, piecemeal programs of groups such as the NAACP fall into ineffectuality⁸⁷.

During the Depression it became increasingly clear that the race's economic problems would have to be dealt with primarily by political means. Whereas the Association's political participation had been spotty in the past, by 1932 the plight of Negroes was so desperate that a reluctance to use politics on a systematic and sustained basis was largely overcome. The Association was concerned not only that Negroes have the right to vote but also that they use their franchise to support reform measures of benefit to lower-strata groups generally and to Negroes in particular. While maintaining its nonpartisan pose, the NAACP strongly supported Roosevelt and most of the ensuing New Deal and employment measures from which Negroes benefited disproportionately because they had been hardest hit. Here was an indication of firm commitment to pragmatic, and often liberal, political action. Again, however, the development was sparked not by the Communists or other Marxian-oriented groups, or by radical ideologies, but by day-to-day experiences of Negroes and the Association's need to come up with a program adequate for the challenge.

Indeed, until about 1936 the CP was a vociferous critic of Roosevelt and his reform measures. The Communists believed rightly that the man in the White House and his wife had cut much of the ground from under the party's propaganda appeals to Negroes. The Communist's opposition to the early New Deal, which brought Negroes their first real measure of relief, was based partly on a recognition that colored citizens would turn to radicalism only as a last desperate measure. The Communist shift in 1935 moved the Stalinists' immediate political outlook closer to that of the average Negro-not the other way around. Although Negroes at last had broken with the Republican Party, which could exploit the Lincoln legend only so far, they did not move to the opposite extreme and identify with radical political movements.

⁸⁶ Ibid, p.59.

⁸⁷ Ibid, p.69-70.

Even where Negroes did response tentatively to the Communist organizations among the unemployed, sharecroppers, workers, and intellectuals, there was a pronounced tendency to conceive objectives in immediate, pragmatic terms, definitions which the party momentarily accepted and acted on. In contrast to the moderate organizations, the Communists were willing and to some extent able to work among the lower-strata Negroes on a grass-roots basis, organizing unemployed councils, relief demonstrations, hunger marches, and protests.

Without doubt, the CP influenced the NAACP in a number of indirect ways, as indeed, it was to influence other organizations, for example, the trade-unions. The shifts within the Association were in part a response to the party's challenge, had they occurred sooner, the party's influence, such as it was among Negroes, would have been even more limited. Here and there the Party demonstrated that lower-strata Negroes could be aroused and organized around immediate issues. It showed that radical discontent could be turned to political account, particularly when underscored by economic catastrophe. Although the Party was unable to build a mass Negro following, it approached a stratum of the race frequently regarded by the NAACP as the middle-class Negro's burden. More sophisticated than their rank and file and having a personal identity with the Association, NAACP leaders showed little inclination to sever old ties to join a movement was as unpredictable as it was radical. Significantly, no top or intermediate leader of the Association, as far as has been determined, defected to the Party during that period, and no Communist held any position of consequence in the national office.⁸⁸

3.5.1. The Communist Party's efforts with the Negroes

Negroes and their issues were considerable for Communists, as Wilson Record claims that, "Negroes in the United States were deemed by the Party to meet every criterion of the nationhood. They were a distinctive racial and cultural group a historically evolved, stable entity, defined by language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture, a definition suggested by Stalin, presumably drawn from Lenin's works on nationalism. If American Negroes were a nation, they should be approached on the same basis that Communists had approached oppressed, racially homogeneous, colonial peoples elsewhere. Moreover, it logically followed that American Negroes had the same right to self-determination, which would presumably lead to the establishment of an independent Negro republic in the area of black majority in the South."⁸⁹

Consequently, the Communist Party appeared among the Negro masses practicing its revolutionary political agenda as the vanguard especially during the first half of the Depression decade to overcome their adversity, and this Party had enough aware of the importance of the Negro question at U.S. arena where this issue had been deliberated to practice pressure on U.S. government. Therefore, Communists

⁸⁸ Ibid, p. 74-76.

⁸⁹ Ibid, p.55.

had won a wide respect among Negroes during their anti-racial activities to revive this oppressed community.

However, the basic program "self-determination" demanded the confiscation of the large farms of the South and the establishment of the state and territorial unity of the Black Belt under Negro control. Self-determination meant "the complete and unlimited right of the Negro majority to exercise governmental authority in the entire territory of the Black Belt as well as to decide on the relations between territory and nations."⁹⁰

John Pepper, a representative of the Communist International and a former general in BelaKun's revolutionary Hungarian Army. He declared:

"The Negro Question in the United States must be treated in its relation to the liberation struggle of the proletariat against American imperialism. The struggle against white oppression of the Negro masses is a part of the proletarian revolution in America against capitalism. The American working class cannot free itself from capitalist exploitation without freeing the Negro race from white oppression. ..."⁹¹

The resolution further stated that the Communist Party could not make its stand for self-determination dependent on any specific conditions, even on the hegemony of the proletariat in the national Negro revolutionary movement, the establishment of a separate Negro republic was not required by the Party, but Negroes should be free to erect a state if they so desired, and it was the responsibility of the Party to see that this choice was possible. The resolution added, however, that Negroes probably would not want to secede in the event a proletarian dictatorship was established in the United States.

In order to implement this policy the Party was to undertake the following seven-point program:

- 1- Link immediate demands for alleviation of the Negro's condition with the ultimate goal of self-determination.
- 2- Bring the wide masses of the Negro people into "at least partial struggle" by adopting the kind immediate goals which the Negro could understand.
- 3- Select such immediate demands as would be in keeping with the revolutionary slogans to be advanced.
- 4- Fight in the forefront of the Negro mass liberation movement, and completely dissociate the Party from reformist and bourgeois elements in the field of race relations.
- 5- Develop a solid Communist Party and a revolutionary trade union movement among workers, Negro and which in the South.

⁹⁰Wilson Record, *The Negro and the Communist Party* (North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1951), p.62-63.

⁹¹Wilson Record, "The Development of the Communist Position on the Negro Question in the United States," *The Phylon Quarterly* 19 (1958): p.324.

6- Link the struggle for Negro rights in the North with the national liberation movement in the South, giving national scope to the Negro struggle.

7- Expose and criticize bourgeois Negro leaders and brand them as apologists of white reaction.⁹²

The TUUL took position that under no circumstances would concessions be made to the biracial pattern in the organization of revolutionary unions, Negroes were to be admitted on an equal basis, and the league was to fight for their rights both on and off the job. While emphasis was to be placed on the building of new, militant workers organizations, the Party functionaries in existing unions were to continue their fight for the equitable admission of Negroes. The establishment of the new radical unions was to be characterized by the formation of Negro shop committees whose function it would be to win over all Negroes in the plants. To facilitate closer cooperation with larger groups including white militants, which would in turn assume overall responsibility, this program's parallel with that of the later-established a special Negro section, with James W. Ford as Negro Organizer.⁹³

These years marked a great political advance by the Negro people. The Negro masses battled militantly against job discrimination, Jim Crow,⁹⁴ and lynching; they forged ahead and won national distinction in the fields of science, literature, the theater, and sport; they broke down the segregation walls of the labor movement and laid the basis for the present splendid army of a million Negro trade unionists; they stood in the front ranks of the democratic masses generally in every sphere of the class struggle.

This rising spirit of struggle among the Negro people during these years reflected itself in the National Negro Congress, organized in Chicago, February 14-16, 1936. The N.N.C. grew out of a conference held previously under the auspices of Howard University and the Joint Committee on National Recovery.

The National Negro Congress -the main front organization in Negro community during the Popular Front period- had originally been set up by such prominent Negroes as Ralph Bunche, A. Philip Randolph, and Lester Granger, who were neither party members nor fellow travelers yet felt at the time, that it was possible to work with Communists. An aggressive movement speaking for the Negro community seemed a genuine need; the NAACP did not answer this need; consequently enjoyed a greater self-confidence and a higher morale than it had had for some years, partly because the New Deal

⁹² Record, *The Negro and the Communist Party*, p.63-64.

⁹³ Ibid, p.75.

⁹⁴ Jim Crow was the name of the racial caste system which operated primarily, but not exclusively in southern and Border States, between 1877 and the mid-1960s. Jim Crow was more than a series of rigid anti-black laws. It was a way of life. Under Jim Crow, African Americans were regulated to the status of second class citizens. Jim Crow represented the legitimization of anti-black racism. Many Christian ministers and theologians taught that whites were the Chosen people, blacks were cursed to be servants, and God supported racial segregation. David Pilgrim, "Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia," Ferris State University, (2012), <http://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow/what.htm>

had improved the life of the Negroes, partly because thousands of Negro workers had gained a new awareness and hope during the organization of the CIO.⁹⁵

The Communists played an important part in the organization of this significant Congress. The idea for the Congress was suggested two years before by James W. Ford, a well-known Communist, in a debate with Oscar De Priest and Frank Crosswaith. Party forces also spent much effort in popularizing the Congress and in doing the extensive organizational work to bring the convention together.

The National Negro Congress, a broad movement uniting Negro workers and middle class elements had local councils in many cities. It became a vehicle for the expression of the leading role of the Negro working masses in the general movement of the Negro people. During the next years it was to prove an especially important agency for building the C.I.O. and for promoting trade union organization generally among Negro workers.⁹⁶

African-American women had taken part through Community Party's polarization, and many prominent black females raised their voices within this Party, so African American women joined the CP during the Great Depression for a variety of reasons. The socioeconomic conditions created by the economic collapse exacerbated employment problems for African Americans and women and pushed some towards leftist reform. Even before the national economic collapse, many African Americans were already plagued by high rates of poverty, poor living conditions, low wages, and race, gender, and class discrimination. With implementation of Franklin D. Roosevelt's (FDR) New Deal programs, many African Americans hoped that the plans for economic recovery would result in increased employment, equal treatment, and social progress.

Many working-class black women looked to the CP and other militant groups for assistance in confronting the day-to-day problems of unemployment, unfair relief distribution, and persistent race-based discrimination.

Some African American women were attracted to the CP because it actively fought to alter the conditions of the working class and the poor. They were drawn to the CP's campaign against racism, inadequate relief payment, as well as the Communists' commitment to uniting black and white workers. Maggie Jones, a CP organizer in Cleveland, declared, "We unemployed workers stand always ready like soldiers, for the many hard battles ahead, looking to the Communist Party for its leadership and a better equipment to fight our enemy the capitalist class."

Williana Burroughs's attraction to the CP and Marxism was also fueled by personal experience, most notably her trip to the Soviet Union during the mid-1920s. While the specific reasons for Burroughs trip to the Soviet Union remained obscure, she did reveal that her visit had a profound impact on her

⁹⁵ Howe and Coser, *American Communist Party*, p.356.

⁹⁶ Foster, *History of the Communist Party*, p. 308-309.

views of Marxism. She noted that "the successful way the race problem had been solved in the Soviet Union inspired her to put her heart and soul into the work for a new society, which would be devoid of suffering and race hatred," armed with this experience, Burroughs entered the revolutionary movement to the Communist Party, thru the medium of the American Negro Labor Committee in 1926.

League of struggles for Negro Rights and the Unemployed Councils formed in 1930s, the League of Struggles for Negro Rights replaced the CP's defunct American Negro Labor Congress (ANLC). African American women in the LSNR played a leading role in mobilizing black residents around issues such as housing evictions, job discrimination, and reduced relief allotments. They organized rallies and open-air meetings, picketed, and coordinated mass demonstrations in the streets of many northern cities.

In 1933, the CP nominated Burroughs to run for Comptroller of New York City and for Lieutenant Governor of New York State in 1934. She was the running mate of gubernatorial candidate and CP organizer Israel Amter and they developed a diverse political platform that included jobs and insurance for the unemployed, and anti-lynching bill, and the right of workers to organize unions and fight for higher wages.

While Burroughs's social and political activism was well known in New York City, she also worked as a teacher for the New York City Board of Education. Burroughs was a committed teacher who continuously fought on behalf of children, the poor, and workers' rights. In 1933 she was dismissed from her teaching position at Public School 48 in Queens, New York. According to Burroughs, "I was expelled from the New York school system, you know, for conduct unbecoming to a teacher. I was angry, of course, because the expulsion was the usual cowardly punishment for radical activity."

After her firing, Burroughs continued to be one of the Harlem's most influential leftist activists. She became the director of the Harlem Workers' School in 1933. Established by James Ford, black communist leader and the CP's 1932 vice-presidential candidate, the school was created to train African American workers in Marxist theory and revolutionary principles.⁹⁷

Despite many challenges and obstacles, African American women became central figures within the CP during the Depression years. As historian Nell Irvin Painter suggested in her account of Alabama CP worker Hosa Hudson, African American women, like men, "made the Party their own." They became leading local, national, and international leaders within the CP and used leftist politics to confront racial and gender oppression. Most importantly, African American women's CP activism reconfigured dimensions of the politics of respectability and challenged prevailing bourgeois approaches to racial uplift. By transcending middle-class notions of respectability images of female

⁹⁷Lashawn Harris, "Running with the Reds: African American women and the Communist Party during the Great Depression," *Journal of African American History* 94 (2009): p.23-35.

reform, and demonstrated their willingness to embrace radical strategies for relieving the suffering that workers -male and female, black and white- experienced during the Depression decade.⁹⁸

3.5.2. The Scottsboro Case

The Scottsboro case, which emerged from rural Alabama in 1931, was a godsend.

Nine Negro youths, were accused of raping two white girls while traveling in an open freight car through northern Alabama. Although the girls were of bad repute and gave testimony which did not hang together, a local court overrode the boy's protestations of innocence, found them guilty, and sentenced eight of them to death. The long legal struggle that followed dramatized more than any other experience of that period the inherent differences between the NAACP and the I.L.D.; moreover, it brought into major battle two organizations and ideologies which therefore had merely skirmished.

When it entered the Scottsboro case, the NAACP knew it would be bucking the white reactionaries of the South; it did not anticipate that on that particular issue it would be fighting the Communists as well or that so long a struggle would ensue. The NAACP was disconcerted not only by the violence of southern reaction to the alleged rape of two white girls by nine Negro boys but also by the swiftness and the resourcefulness with which the party moved into the case.

For the Party, on the other hand, Scottsboro was an opportunity of the first magnitude. For the first time the I.L.D. had an issue on which it could make an effective bid for Negro attention; the case was loaded with propaganda possibilities, the like of which not even the most imaginative party devotee could have foreseen. Here was a chance not only to carry its message to the Negro masses but also to link racial injustice to the very foundations of the bourgeois order. Finally, the Scottsboro case provided grist for the world-wide propaganda mill of the Comintern, which was committed to undermining the capitalist hold on colored peoples.

The death penalty-all within a period of less than three weeks- the NAACP intervened and attempted to handle the defense against obviously overwhelming odds. During the period from 1931 to 1935 the Scottsboro case received almost continuous attention in the Communist press; the Party never let pass any opportunity to belabor the NAACP and its leaders for their insistence that non-revolutionary approaches to the courts were the essentials-in fact, the only-path to racial justice. The invective heaped on the Association and its leaders reached a new high in volume and intensity.

By 1935, however, the I.L.D. was prepared to make overtures to the NAACP and other Negro organizations concerning the Scottsboro case, which was still plodding through the courts while the accused remained in prison. The move was dictated not by a belief that some cooperative endeavor of two factors that have not been accorded the attention they deserve in the voluminous literature on Scottsboro. These were the beginning of a shift in the Communist Party line from dual, separatist,

⁹⁸Ibid, p.40.

revolutionary action to non-direct, nonviolent, united front endeavors in concert with moderate leftist movements, and the fact that the law of diminishing political and propaganda returns had set in for that particular issue.⁹⁹

For the Communist Party in the 1930s, May Day was the focus of all public mass demonstrations. Under directives from Central Committee, demands for the release of the Scottsboro boys became the key slogan of the celebrations throughout the country.

At rallies from San Francisco to Boston, "the speakers all dwelt on the Scottsboro Case, exposing its vicious frame-up nature and calling upon the workers to join the fight to save the boys ..." declared the Daily Workers. Huge banners screamed denunciations of the "NAACP Bourgeois Reformists" and "Murderers of Negro and White Workers."¹⁰⁰

One overriding conviction dominated the thinking of American Communists as they began their defense of the Scottsboro defendants. "Precisely because the Scottsboro Case is an expression of the horrible national oppression of the Negro masses," said the Daily Worker, "any real fight ... must necessarily take the character of a struggle against the whole brutal system of landlord robbery and imperialist national oppression of the Negro people." The fight for the Scottsboro boys' freedom would be inextricably joined with the class struggle. The constant linking of Scottsboro with the Sacco-Vanzetti case¹⁰¹ by Party publicists often gave the impression that the nine defendants had been not only class conscious members of the proletariat, but also revolutionary activists. In general, however, the Party leaders made more modest claims. "The issue of the oppression of Negroes is obviously an economic question," said one official of the International Labor Defense. The bourgeoisie, terrified at the growing solidarity of the Negro masses with their white co-workers, had decided to execute the nine defendants in order to crush this new black and white militancy. Rape was simply the charge most useful in separating the two races. In the face of such tactics, freedom for nine could be gained only by successfully waging the class struggle.

The Communist Party, acting through the ILD, accepted the need for legal action, but Party leaders repeatedly stressed the futility of relying upon capitalist justice. The courts were instruments of national and class oppression, and it was therefore the Party's duty to destroy all democratic and legalist illusions among the masses. Any appeal to the high courts of Alabama and the United States

⁹⁹Record, *Race and Radicalism*, p.63-66.

¹⁰⁰Dan T. Carter, *Scottsboro: A tragedy of the American South* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), p.61.

¹⁰¹In 1921, Nicola Sacco and Bartolommeo Vanzetti, both Italian-Americans, were convicted of robbery and murder. Although the arguments brought against them were mostly disproven in court, the fact that the two men were known radicals (and their trial took place during the height of the Red Scare) prejudiced the judge and jury against them. On April 9, 1927, Sacco and Vanzetti's final appeal was rejected, and the two were sentenced to death. Felix Frankfurter, then a professor at Harvard Law School, was considered to be the most prominent and respectable critic of the trial. He was appointed to the Supreme Court by Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1939. Felix Frankfurter, "The Case of Sacco and Vanzetti," *The Atlantic*, (1927), <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1927/03/the-case-of-sacco-and-vanzetti/306625>

had to be subordinated to the development of revolutionary mass action outside of courts and bourgeois legislative bodies. Mass action, the two words invoked a profound response from American Communism in the 1930s.

The struggle to free the Scottsboro boys and other political prisoners went beyond the particular case and at hand. It was an exercise in education for the masses and a catalyst for transforming them into a class-conscious proletariat. Critics assumed from this that the ILD was willing to sacrifice the boys for the revolution. But, if the Party stated assumptions were intellectually honest, the mass appeals were indispensable for victory. Since the capitalist ruling class controlled the state and federal judiciary, the struggle for the complete freedom of the Scottsboro boys could succeed "only if linked up with the struggle against the whole system which breeds similar Scottsboro."¹⁰²

Ostensibly, the Communist Party's intervention in the Scottsboro case proves the deep extent of how the Communists were tirelessly attempting to oppose their own Marxist revolutionary agenda on the American people wherever and whatever the tools. Therefore, the Communist Party had been criticized during its campaign for Scottsboro boys, as such:

The contention that Scottsboro boys were victims of "class" dismayed and disturbed American liberals. The World Tomorrow, a Protestant-Socialist publication, predicted sadly: "Communist doctrine makes it inevitable that the fate of the boys will be made subservient to the case of dramatizing the class struggle in America." Depiction of the condemned youths as "victims of capitalist injustice" was both pathetic and ominous, argued the Christian Century. In fact, it would be impossible to misinterpret more completely the entire case. Here were nine Negro youths, eight of them illiterate and all completely baffled by their predicament. To describe them as conscious participants in class conflict "is to ignore all the elements in the case which made it appeal to those with social conscience-their friendlessness, their ignorance, their bewilderment." The class struggle thesis aroused "unreasoning prejudice," said the New Republic. Along with The Nation, the New Republic called for subordinate the main issue-the guilt or innocence of the boys-the Communist Party's struggle for proletarian hegemony.¹⁰³

In his interpretation Guenter Lewy claims, "The Communist Party and its auxiliary the ILD were determined to use the case for their own political purposes, and they initiated a campaign of mass protests in which they accused the NAACP of being bourgeois reformists who followed legalistic tactics and were helping to lead the boys to electric chair."

¹⁰² Carter, *Scottsboro*, p.137-139.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

At other hand, bourgeois liberals, warned the Daily Worker in June 1932, would use fairness and justice of the boss's courts. "Small wonder that in the eyes of many blacks and whites at the time the agitation of the Communists did the nine boys more harm than good."¹⁰⁴

However, the International Labor Defense had succeeded in winning eight of the Scottsboro boys of numerous predictions that a commutation of life imprisonment was the most that could be expected. But winning a new trial was only the first hurdle. But the Supreme Court's decision placed responsibility for the lives of the nine boys upon the ILD. "We are hopeful that you will be free in a few months," William Patterson wrote the Scottsboro boys.¹⁰⁵

Although initially hostile to the Communists and wary of being involved in the touchy issue of black men raping white women, the NAACP ultimately joined with the CP and other civil rights organizations to form the Scottsboro Defense Committee.

Eventually, one of the white women, Ruby Bates, came forward to repudiate her testimony, acknowledging that she and Price had been pressured into falsely accusing the Scottsboro Boys, and she became part of the campaign to save their lives.

The case went to the United States Supreme Court in 1937, and the lives of the nine were saved, through it was almost twenty years before the last defendant was freed from prison. The trial of the Scottsboro Boys is perhaps one of the proudest moments of the American radicalism, in which a mass movement of blacks and whites-led by Communists and radicals-successfully beat the Jim Crow legal system.¹⁰⁶

3.5.3. The Communist Party and anti-fascism (Abraham Lincoln Brigade)

One of its endeavors at U.S. arena either to apply its agenda through sweeping the masses or to implement Russian's policy, the American Communist Party worked within another channel to raise its voice, this time with fighting fascism.

To fulfill its role of fighting fascism, the American Communist Party in the fall of 1933 organized one of its most successful front organizations –the American League against War and Fascism- as the American branch of the International League against War and Fascism, organized previously in Amsterdam by Romain Rolland and Henri Barbusse. The American League, led by the Party "... openly but without infringing upon its broad non-Party character ...," at one time claimed seven and a half million adherents chiefly through group affiliations. Throughout the entire nation there was a

¹⁰⁴Lewy, *The Cause that Failed*, p.34.

¹⁰⁵Carter, *Scottsboro*, p.173.

¹⁰⁶Jessie Kinding, "Scottsboro Boys, trial and defense campaign (1931-1973)," *BlackPast.org*, (2007-2015), <http://www.blackpast.org/aah/scottsboro-boys-trial-and-defense-campaign-1931-1937>

growing hatred and fear of fascism. The group affiliations to the League by no means indicated support for American communism as the Communist Party pretend to believe.¹⁰⁷

The importance to many American intellectuals of the Spanish Civil War of the mid-1930s was a good example of how the left helped give meaning and purpose to individual lives. The war in Spain pitted the fascists of Francisco Franco (who was receiving support from Hitler and Mussolini) against the existing republican government. It attracted a substantial group of young Americans -more than 3,000 in all- who formed the Abraham Lincoln Brigade and traveled to Spain to join in the fight against the fascists. The American Communist Party was an instrumental in creating the Lincoln Brigade, and directed many of its activities.¹⁰⁸

Gary Kern, the author of *A Death in Washington: Walter G. Krivitsky and the Stalin Terror* (2004) argued, "The Americans, who were grouped in the Abraham Lincoln Battalion, were overwhelmingly students and Communist idealists without military experience, died in droves, more than 6,000 of the 40,000 volunteers were killed; of the 3,000 American volunteers as many as half lost their lives and many of the survivors sustained multiple wound."¹⁰⁹

The willingness of young radicals to journey overseas to fight against fascism also reflected a prophetic aspect of American Communist that emerged dramatically during the 1930s: its unequivocal opposition to racism.

In the Spanish war, black volunteers would serve as equals and feel for the first time in their lives a freedom from racial oppression; and whites would experience a racially mixed community they seldom knew in America. The interracial nature of the Lincoln brigade had its roots in the color-blind agenda of the Communist Party. No one played a more important role in developing that agenda than the young theoretician Harry Heywood, who had returned from the Soviet Union in 1930, just League of Struggle for Negro Rights, dedicated to expanding Communist influence among blacks.

Peter N. Carrol adds, "A tireless advocate of the Party line, Haywood remained nonetheless aloof from the rank and file-a personal trait that would affect his performance in Spain. Yet he had a rigorous technical mind, an ability to place isolated political phenomena within the broad theories of Marxism, Leninism, and Stalinism, true to Comintern principles. Haywood vociferously advocated "national self-determination" for the black majority living in the southern states, including when necessary, the confiscation of white property."¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Mirris Dickstein, *Dancing in the Dark: A cultural History of the Great Depression* (New York: W. W. Norton Company, 2010), p.441-442.

¹⁰⁸ Alan Brinkley, *The Unfinished Nation: A concise history of the American people* (Columbia University: McGraw-Hill, 2004), p.665-666.

¹⁰⁹ John Simkin, "Abraham Lincoln Battalion," *Spartacus Educational*, (1997-2014), <http://spartacus-educational.com/SPLincoln.htm>

¹¹⁰ Carrol, *The Odyssey of Abraham Lincoln Brigade*, p.38-39.

Although the Party met with only limited success in its efforts to penetrate or cooperate with the established Negro organizations during this period, it was instrumental in the building of several new ones in which it exerted a marked, and ultimately a preponderant influence.

One of these was the Negro People's Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy. With the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in the summer of 1936, organizations of varying political orientations initiated programs to aid the loyalist government. Numerous liberal, Socialist, radical and trade union groups, bound together to oppose fascism and support a foreign policy of collective security; these loose federations were quickly involved in raising funds, obtaining and shipping medical and other supplies, and in the recruitment of personal for the Spanish Republic.

The Communist Party of the United States was among these organizations. It was especially active in the political field, and in the recruitment of nurses, doctors, technicians and soldiers. The Party not only solicited from its own ranks but also obtained a number of non-Communist volunteers.

In carrying out its program the Party employed all the existing organizational apparatus at its command. In addition it established a number of special committees on a united front basis.

In an effort to reach the maximum number of people, it set up organizations among American ethnic, national, and racial groups. The Negro People's Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy was the organization through which it worked in approaching American Negroes. The committee was established a few months after the outbreak of the war; it functioned through 1937 and 1938, and was not disbanded until sometimes after the end of hostilities.

In holding this organization the Communists were able to enlist the support of a number of non-Party Negroes. However, upon James W. Ford fell the responsibility of carrying out much of organizational work. Ford visited Spain in 1937. Upon his return he addressed numerous Negro groups, many of which, of course, met under Party auspices. Ford emphasized the contribution being made to the Loyalist cause by American blacks, while suggesting that their efforts be broadened and intensified. "The intervention of fascism in Ethiopia, in Spain, in China, and the threat of reaction to labor and progress in our country," he declared, "requires a joint policy, on the part of the Negro people, with all of the forces of progress in our country and in the world."¹¹¹

3.6. The Popular Front

The International Communist Movement emerged from the wave of revolutionary enthusiasm that swept outward from St. Petersburg after 1917. It took many years of painful experience before Western Communists learned that revolutionary enthusiasm did not require strict imitation of the Soviet model, longer still until they learned that part of their duty as revolutionaries would understand and criticize the limitations of the first triumphant socialist revolution.

¹¹¹Record, *The Negro*, p.150-151.

The Popular Front permitted many Communists to begin to take seriously their own arguments about the absolute value of democracy. It also gave American Communists an opportunity to develop an alternative to the catastrophic model of revolution. Although, theoretically, the Popular Front only postponed the day of the final reckoning when the working class would overthrow its exploiters and establish Soviet power, it raised implicit questions about the role Communists should play in democratic societies.¹¹²

A key transition came in 1935 when the Communist Parties, on a signal from Moscow, made a worldwide shift from radical and revolutionary program to a Popular Front of all progressive forces against the rise of fascism. Only a year earlier, Communists had been deadly enemies of social democratic movements, disrupting their meetings and blocking their programs, even developing parallel unions that prompted with existing labor unions.

Now they made common cause with Socialists and liberals, and even gave qualified support to the New Deal programs and to FDR himself as the New Deal entered a more radical phase. As a result, membership in the American Communist Party ballooned in these years to over 100,000.¹¹³

Kenneth C. Burt in his article "The American Communist Party' Spanish Bureau: Third Period activities and some subsequent impact," demonstrates that, "The Party's decision to discontinue its revolutionary rhetoric and to disband the Communist-led unions in favor of joint work with liberals and socialists gelled around twin objectives: fighting against fascism abroad and for economic and racial justice within the context of President Roosevelt's New Deal. The new groups organized during this period, known as the Popular Front (which lasted from 1935 to 1939)."¹¹⁴

In the United States the situation was radically different from that of the European countries. Despite the depression, politics was not as fierce or ideological as in Europe; there was no serious immediate threat of fascism; and the Communist Party was very far from being a mass party. Yet in its modest way the Popular Front strategy, particularly through its appeal to the emotions of anti-fascist fraternity, was extremely successful in this country. It was the first approach the CP had found that enabled it to gain a measure of acceptance, respectability, and power within ordinary America life.¹¹⁵

Between 1935 and 1938, American Communists reinterpreted the precise meaning of the Popular Front as it related to third parties, Roosevelt's New Deal, and organizing strategies. And yet their overall emphasis on antifascism resulted in successful local coalition building in antifascist campaigns, unemployed organizing, industrial union drives, civil rights activism, and a surge in Party membership.

¹¹² Isserman, *Which Side Were You On?*, p.12-13.

¹¹³ Dickstein, *Dancing in the dark*, p.441-442.

¹¹⁴ Kenneth C. Burt, "The American Communist Party's Spanish Bureau: Third Period Activities and some subsequent impact," *American Communist History* 11 (2012): p.279.

¹¹⁵ Howe and Coser, *The American Communist Party*, p.325.

In important ways, the Popular Front unleashed practical politics and tactics even Communists acted within Marxist-Leninist confines. The party's call for a Popular Front sanctioned activities that some Chicago Communists had begun in the Third Period and created new opportunities to further an agenda the party increasingly shared with liberals: radical, equality, progressive coalition building, advocacy for the Soviet Union, and a belief that industrial union building through the CIO and the New Deal were important agents of social change."¹¹⁶

Rank-and-file Communists were proud of the increasing votes their candidates attracted, but party leaders were convinced that their real strength lay in the support they could mobilize on behalf of non-Communist candidates. Browder told a radio interviewer after the 1938 congressional elections: "We Communists helped to build the united progressive and democratic front everywhere, and collaborated with Republicans as well as Democrats and third party and labor groupings. ... We are learning how to take our place within the traditional American two-party system."

As the American Communist Party launched the presidential campaign of 1936, candidate Earl Browder unveiled the latest ideological turn: "Communism is twentieth-century Americanism." The slogan epitomized the Party's Popular Front, the Communist strategy that promoted political cooperation with non-Communist workers' groups and with the middle-class liberals. Although the program and its rhetoric hardly hastened Browder's entry into the White House, the Popular Front succeeded brilliantly as a scheme to unify American radicals. Communists also welcomed the opportunity to participate in the American mainstream. "We began feel like we were really part of the American scene," recalled student leader George Watt, who would serve as an officer with the Lincoln Brigade in Spain. "We were looking for some kind of legitimation of our feeling about becoming even more American." To be a Communist, a radical no longer had to feel like a pariah. Equally important, the Popular Front appealed to native -born Americans- especially the assimilated children of immigrants, that generation of 1910 who saw no contradiction between their patriotism and the party line. The effect was immediately apparent, party membership surged by the tens of thousands.

But the influence of the Popular Front reached even further. By linking a radical outlook to familiar American values, the Communist movement literally popularized awareness of the dangers of fascism to world peace. Indeed, most future Lincoln volunteers joined the Communist Party or one of its affiliated groups during the era of the Popular Front. Americans who might otherwise have shunned identification with a foreign ideology drew closer to the anti-fascist camp. George Watt, for example, helped plan a merger with the Socialist Student League for Industrial Democracy and other youth groups, creating the Popular Front's American Student Union, from which numerous college students

¹¹⁶Storch, *Red Chicago*, p.214-215.

went to Spain. Similarly, the Communist unemployed movement now embraced Socialists and liberals to create the Workers Alliance in 1936.¹¹⁷

The Communist Party was now in its Popular Front stage, this involved working with and organizationally reinforcing existing left-wing organizations, such as the Farmer-Labor party and the CIO. The Popular Front also promoted new mass organizations such as American Youth Congress, Unemployed Councils, and the League against War and Fascism.

Through links to existing organizations and through new organizations the Popular Front would advance its domestic political goals. These deliberately resembled the goals of existing reformist and non-Communist left-wing organizations. Such a resemblance and portrayals of communism as simply a variant of "Americanism" would legitimate a mass Communist presence in American society. According to the theory of the Popular Front, a significant Communist presence would consolidate American democracy's achievements, most notably the New Deal. This would prevent fascism in the United States. Also, a mass Communist presence would enhance the Comintern's ability to influence American foreign policy, an ability that serve the Soviet Union's geopolitical interest in curbing Nazi expansionism.¹¹⁸

The Popular Front was a Soviet political maneuver had influenced other non-Communist political parties in America, which had immersed into this policy alongside with CPUSA, Harvey Klehr addresses, "the exact reach of the Party's writ during the People's Front era was significant. Besides its own avowed membership, secret members occupied positions of influence in a variety of groups. Many non-Communists willingly accepted Party's guidance, while others had no qualms about cooperating with Communists on particular issues. The Communists had always used discipline and energy to exercise disproportionate organizational influence. What had changed from the early 1930s was that the views their auxiliaries and members now espoused no longer branded the Communists as strays from American politics."¹¹⁹

Therefore, a drastic transformation in other major groups that had been influenced by this a new policy during the Depression decade, for instance, the Farmer-Labor Party that shifted its policy towards the Popular Front despite the consequences.

Between January 1937 and November 1938, the Farmer-Labor Party's top leadership somewhat successfully pushed the Farmer-Labor program forward. Governor Elmer Benson, however, worsened the problems that the national political environment posed for the party.

¹¹⁷Carrol, *The Odyssey*, p.49-50.

¹¹⁸Valley, *Radicalism in the States*, p.128.

¹¹⁹Klehr, *The Heyday of American Communism*, p.385.

Benson also made a decision with enormous negative consequences for the Farmer-Labor Party. He turned his administration into a Popular Front government, somewhat like Leon Blum's Popular Front government in France.

First, Benson let Communists and Popular Fronters into the Farmer Labor administration, giving them bureaucratic. Also, his executive secretary was quite sympathetic to the Communist Party. Second, Communists had considerable influence in designing the Benson Administration's strategy toward the state legislature. Third, Benson showed sympathy for strong relationship between CIO and the Communist Party in Minnesota. Finally, he supported the Communist Party's foreign policy.¹²⁰

The success of the Popular Front depended most of all on a wide diffusion of its political and cultural style: a few simple slogans, such as "democratic unity" and "anti-fascist struggle," were to be spread across the consciousness of large numbers of people who did not conceive of themselves as Communists or Communist sympathizers. That is why the Popular Front phase of American Communism thrived upon the "front organization" and the "front psychology": it required the creation of a mood of un-focused fraternity among liberals and "men of good will" a mood of this kind that had arisen since the victories of fascism in Europe.¹²¹

¹²⁰ Ibid, p.139-141.

¹²¹ Howe and Coser, *The American Communist Party*, p.332.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE CHALLENGES THAT FACED THE COMMUNIST PARTY DURING THE DEPRESSION

4.0.Introduction

In its own eyes the CPUSA had two main commitments: to support and advance the USSR, and to promote the establishment of Communism in the USA, this interpretation means that there are challenges have encountered the Soviet Union on one hand, the same that faced the CPUSA on the other in these commitments. Therefore, the chapters of this study prove that the policy of the CPUSA, of course, is a carbon copy of the Soviet policy. For a long time, indeed, the Party was described as the American section of the Communist International. Undoubtedly, this represents a big challenge in the capitalist countries like USA where different ideology, so what are these precise challenges that faced this Party during its experience in 1930s. This chapter is going to identify these challenges and how had contributed in weakening its argument.

4.1.Anti-Communism and the crisis of CP in 1930s

The Communist Party was criticized during 1930s due to its mutable policy and the non-acceptability of others from different political and social movements. The Communist Party had been genuinely performing at U.S. arena at first glance when exploring it; however, its efforts hadn't been to build something for Americans themselves more than serving a foreign agenda as many aspects were portraying it during 1930s' unrests.

In a statement on the debate to the head of Socialist Party Norman Thomas's support to the idea of an alliance with the Communists, Louis Waldman,¹²² the official spokesman for the Old Guard, criticized Thomas for engaging in a united front activity without first obtaining the consent of the Party local to which he belonged. More basically, Waldman rejected the very idea of cooperation with the Communist Party saying:

"We regard unity with the Communists, either on specific or general issues, as suicidal from a tactical standpoint and as thoroughly dishonest as a matter of principle. The Socialist Party has traditionally and constantly adhered to the principles of democracy and freedom. The Communist Party believes in dictatorship and the suppression of civil rights. Between the two there is an unbridgeable gulf."

¹²² Louis Waldman: was born on 5th January, 1892, near Kiev in the Ukraine. He immigrated to the United States in 1909. Soon afterwards he found work as an apprentice garment lining cutter in New York City. Waldman became active in union activities and in 1910 took part in the 11-week New York clockmaker's strike. He was eventually sacked and blacklisted for his union work. Waldman graduated from the Cooper Union for the Amalgamated of Science and Art in June 1916.

Waldman was admitted to the New York State Bar in 1923 and became counsel for the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America. He also stood as the Socialist Party candidate for Governor of New York in 1928, 1930 and 1932. During this period Waldman was seen as the leader of the "Old Guard" faction, which supported working with the union movement.

John Simkin, "Louis Waldman," *Spartacus Educational*, (1997-2014), http://spartacus-educational.com/Louis_Waldman.htm

Norman Thomas continued to favor cooperative action on specific issues. In the spring of 1936 he agreed to a joint May Day meeting with the Communist Party in Union Square in New York City.

In protest the Old Guard left the Socialist Party and formed the Social-Democratic Federation. But even after being free from the restraining influence of the Old Guard, Thomas continued to reject the idea of "organic unity" with the Communists saying:

"The differences between us preclude organic unity. We don't accept control from Moscow, the old Communist accent on inevitable violence and party dictatorship, or the new accent on the possible good war against Fascism, and the new Communist opportunism. We assert genuine civil liberty in opposition to the communist theory and practice in Russia."¹²³

Frank A. Warren in his book *An Alternative Vision: The Socialist Party in the 1930s* (1974), addresses that: "The Old Guard moved away from socialism and toward liberal New Deal reformism in the late thirties, its anti-Soviet Union and anti-Communist attitude became not simply a realistic description of conditions there, but a hysterical attitude that could temporize with the Dies Committee and find merit in almost any kind of anti-Communist critique, whether from a socialist perspective or not."¹²⁴

Barrington Moore, Jr. describes the Communist Party, "As the agent of a deliberate attempted at the diffusion, in the anthropological sense, of a new set of social and economic institutions. After that, it evolved into a mere pressure group and propaganda organization working on behalf of a great power, the USSR." And he continues saying about its revolutionary aims, "the Party's revolutionary aims and conspiratorial character were described in one of its official publications, as recently as July, 1935-in a pamphlet by one J. Peter, *The Communist Party; A Manual on Organization*, which has become a favorite source for investigative and legislative bodies, such as the Dies Committee, anxious to prove the party's revolutionary character." As well as Moore, Jr. refers to that the revolutionary dream of this Party is far-fetched, "From the point of view of the social scientist, the most significant feature of the development of the Communist Party of the U.S.A. is the disappearance of its revolutionary appeal as it became the appendage of a successful great-power state. The success of revolutionary Marxist in Russia spelled its death in the United States, and in varying degrees in other parts of the world."¹²⁵

Why this criticism and rejection, and why the Communists had been under this critical status during the Depression, was it because of its Russian affiliation? Some historical remarkable events have the answer to this question. So it was caused by external and even internal factors as following:-

¹²³Lewy, *The Cause that Failed*, p.21-22.

¹²⁴Frank A. Warren, *An Alternative Vision: The Socialist Party in the 1930s* (Bloomington & London: Indiana University Press, 1974), p.137.

¹²⁵Barrington Moore, Jr., "The Communist Party of the USA, An Analysis of a Social Movement," *The American Political Science Review* 39 (1945), p.32-41.

4.2.The Communist Party's experience with violence

4.2.1.Dearborn Massacre, 1932

In March, 1932, Detroit was seething with labor unrest, much of it directed against the Ford Motor Company. On March 6, a crowd of three to five thousand unemployed workmen organized by the Communist Party, marched from downtown Detroit to the Ford plant in Dearborn. They intended to ask for jobs for all laid-off Ford workers, immediate payment of fifty percent of their wages, a seven-hour day, the end of the production-line speed-up, two fifteen-minute rest periods, equal hiring rights for Negroes, and free medical care at the Ford hospital. The Mayor of Dearborn, a cousin of Henry Ford's, ordered the Chief of Police, a former detective on Ford's payroll, to halt the marchers at Dearborn line. The marchers ignored the order to halt, and managed to reach the Ford plant; there firehouses, pistols, and a machine gun were used to drive them off. Four were killed and a score or more injured. On March 12 the murdered men were laid in coffins under a huge picture of Lenin, and a banner proclaiming that "Ford gave Bullets for Bread."

Over thirty thousand people attended the funeral. Sid the Detroit Times: "The killing of innocent workmen ... is a blow directed at the very heart of American institutions."

"Nearly 3,000 of Detroit's unemployed with Communists in their midst, took part in a riot today at the gates of Ford Motor Company's plant in Dearborn. Their demonstration culminated in a furious fight in which four men were killed and at least fifty others were injured.

The demonstration by the unemployed, who had planned to ask Ford Company officials, through a committee to give them work, started quietly, but before it was over Dearborn pavements were stained with blood, streets littered with broken glass and the wreckage of bullet-ridden automobiles and nearly every window in the Ford plant's employment building had been broken. ... The march, plans for which were competed on Sunday evening, according to one of the wounded demonstrators, was orderly at the start."¹²⁶

4.2.2.Bonus Army, 1932

In 1924 Congress authorized a bonus for World War I veterans, to be paid away years later. In the depths of the Depression, when local and state measures to combat unemployment and hunger were proving futile, veterans' groups began to demand immediate of jobless men, most of them veterans, went to Washington to demonstrate for immediate payment. The Bonus Expeditionary Force, as it came to be called, eventually numbered over 20,000, and included many veterans' families.

The Washington Police Department, under the sympathetic leadership of Chief Pelham D. Glassford, helped them to build a community of shacks on Anacostia Flats. On June 15, the House passed a Bonus

¹²⁶Richard Hofstadter and Michael Wallace, editors, *American violence, a documentary history* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), p.357-358.

Bill, but on June 17, as 12,000 men waited outside the Capitol, the Senate overwhelmingly rejected it. Disappointment, the men went peacefully back their shacks, but refused to leave Washington. President Hoover persuaded Congress to authorize loans to pay for transportation back home, but only a few men left. Weeks passed, and Hoover became increasingly uneasy; he seems to have feared a Communist-led insurrection.

His anxiety was increased by the War Department, Army Intelligence insisted that a veterans' riot would be the "signal for a Communist uprising in all large cities, thus initiating a revolution." Only July 28 Hoover ordered troops under the command of General Douglas MacArthur to clear the riot area and return the veterans to their camps.

There, under Army guard, they would be investigated to identify the Communists. Hoover assumed was responsible for the disorder. MacArthur, however, ignored the President's order, and told Glassford "We are going to break the back of B.E.F." Assisted by Dwight D. Eisenhower and George S. Patton, MacArthur led a force of four troops of cavalry, four companies of steel-helmeted infantry with fixed bayonets, and six tanks to the Bonus Camps. They used tear gas to force the men out, and burned the camps to the ground. A baby of eleven weeks died, an eight-year-old was partially blinded by the gas, and several people were wounded by bayonets or sabers.

Hoover was angered and dismayed but decided to accept full responsibility for MacArthur's actions, and insisted publicly that many of the marchers were Communists and criminals. MacArthur issued his own statement, declaring that the mob "was animated by the essence of revolution." If the Administration had waited another week, "the institutions of our Government would have been severely threatened." The press thought otherwise. Many who had visited the camp said rather that the men had been crushed by the Depression and joined the march to flee from the realities of hunger.

Mauritz Hallgren found no spirit of revolt, "no fire, and not even smoldering resentment." Communist Party leaders had organized a front group, the Workers Ex-Service Men's League, which had tried to convert the march into a revolutionary striking force; but the leaders of the Bonus Army, particularly Walter W. Waters, who were vehemently anti-communist, organized squads of veterans to beat up the radicals. The radicals did have an impact on some summandout to demands for unemployment insurance, and toward a deeper questioning of the roots of Depression.¹²⁷

Following the suppression of the spring 1932 Bonus Army march in Washington D.C., Hoover urged the executive branch to heighten its anti-radical operations. Hoover was convinced that the Bonus Army march-an attempt by veterans of World War I to shame the U.S. government into paying them a promised bonus-heralded a new strain of subversion, which threatened the national security of the United States. His efforts were supported by the new President, Franklin D. Roosevelt, who believed

¹²⁷Ibid, p.361.

that his duties as commander-in-chief of the armed forces required his to investigate all organizations that might be disseminating any information or teachings contrary to the democratic ideals of the United States. In 1934, Roosevelt authorized Hoover to investigate the activities of Nazi sympathizers; two years later, he broadened Hoover's power to investigate any subversive activities, particularly those Communists and fascists. In response, Hoover immediately ordered all FBI field offices to "obtain from all possible sources information concerning subversive activities." In November 1938, Roosevelt approved the widened scope of activities of the FBI's General Intelligence Section.¹²⁸

4.3.Ku Klux Klan (KKK)

The popular perception of Communists as "foreigners" and "nigger lovers" whose sole purpose was to wage a race war in the South created a huge working-class communities, no matter how many white Southerners agreed with the Party's program, the Reds were still outsiders who had no roots among white Alabamians.

As the harsh winter of 1931-1932 gave way to spring, it became increasingly clear that the Party's future was directly tied to black working people, particularly the unemployed. Several months later, local Communists made good Burton's promise. The November 7 demonstration was the largest Communist-led demonstration in Alabama's history, attracting an overwhelmingly black crowd of five to seven thousand.

In October Birmingham's radicals hastened a Communist campaign meeting to be addressed by non-other than William Z. Foster. Some leading white citizens regarded Foster's appearance as an indication that Birmingham was becoming a target for a Communist takeover.

The Klan sent Foster a chilling warning in the form of a brief telegram stating, "YOUR PRESENCE IN BIRMINGHAM ALABAMA SUNDAY OCTOBER 9TH IS NOT WANTED. SEND NIGGER FORD."¹²⁹

In Birmingham, the Klan which had declined substantially in the late 1920s rode the crest of anti-labor and anti-Communist sentiment in 1934. In that same year, forty-four new Klaverns were organized in northern Alabama alone, and a local fascist movement affiliated with the Klan began publishing the Alabama Black Shirt. The Klan's rebirth was signaled by the appearance of thousands of leaflets warning Birmingham's blacks to stay clear of the Communists.

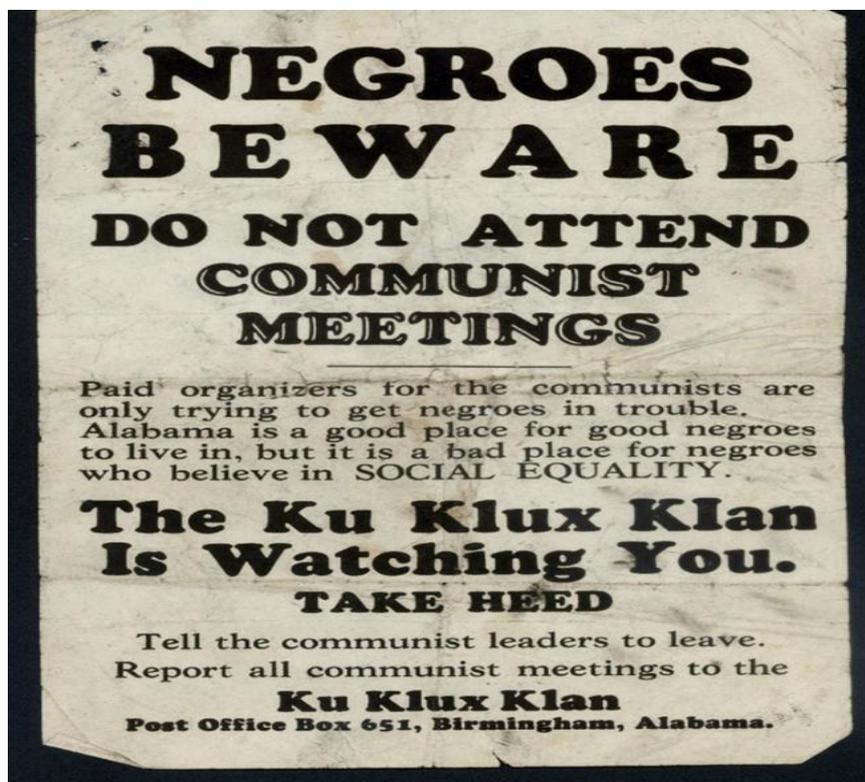
The parades, literature, and other symbolic gestures were intended to intimidate activists as well as to build support among whites, but these public displays of white supremacy failed to silence Alabama radicals.

¹²⁸Larry Caplair, *Anti-Communism in Twentieth Century in America: A critical history*(Praeger and Oxford: Library of Congress, 2011), p.30-31.

¹²⁹Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe*, p.30-32.

Indeed, black ILD organizers occasionally responded with their own leaflets, such as the one warning "KKK! The Workers Are Watching You!" The vigilantes' real influence lay in extralegal acts of violence, unusually perpetrated with the assistance of local law enforcement agencies. The number of vigilante assaults on Communists and suspected Communists rose rapidly during the strike wave and continued well into 1935. In the aftermath of the ore miners' strike Clyde Johnson survived at least three assassination attempts. Black Communist Steve Simmons suffered a near-fatal beating at the hands of Klansmen in North Birmingham, and a few months later black comrade in Bessemer, Saul Davis, was kidnapped by a gang of white TCI employers, stripped bare, and flogged for several hours. These examples represent only a fraction of the anti-racial terror that pervaded the Birmingham district in 1934.¹³⁰

Here it is one of these leaflets were published for terrorizing the Communists because of their anti-racial activities and Negro mobilization into their plans:-



4.4.Nazi-Soviet Nonaggression Pact of 1939

On 23 August 1939 Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union signed a nonaggression treaty that divided General Europe between them and facilitated the Soviet Union's supply of fuel and raw material for the German war machine. Although officially neutral, the Soviet Union became a de facto nonbelligerent ally of Nazi Germany. When Hitler followed this pact by invading Poland on 1 September, American Communists found themselves faced with what seemed to be an ideological impasse. Since 1936, the CPUSA had been calling for an anti-Nazi alliance comprising Britain, France, the United States, and

¹³⁰ Ibid, p.73-74.

the Soviet Union to oppose Hitler, as well as for a domestic center-left alliance behind President Roosevelt and his New Deal program. The Popular Front had been a tremendous asset to the growth of the American Communist movement. At a time when most democratic leaders seemed reluctant to confront Hitler, Communists appeared to stand as moral exemplars in the fight against fascism.

There are few more telling illustrations of the loyalty of American Communists to Stalin than their reaction to the Nazi-Soviet Pact. There was never any question that the CPUSA would support the pact; the only problem seemed to be an initial confusion over how to show that support, for the Comintern had not given the rest of the Communist world any advance warning, nor had it laid the groundwork for the Soviet Union's abrupt reversal of policy.

The Nazi-Soviet Pact severely damaged the CPUSA's alliance with New Deal liberals. Many of the Popular Front organizations collapsed when the Communists insisted that the groups support the pact.

The Party itself also suffered a significant loss of members. The CPUSA was often secretive or vague about actual membership, and the opening of the Moscow records provides a much needed documentary base for assessing its size. But even with these records it is difficult to develop a consistent set of figures because the party used different definitions of membership at different times.

Shortly thereafter, CPUSA leaders received a series of messages that instructed them to make a sharp break with past policies. **Document 15** is one of these messages; in the Comintern informs Browder of the new CPUSA stance toward the war.¹³¹

One of these scenes that the opponents of the CP believed that the final collapse of American Communism was at hand, the bitterly anti-Communist social-democratic newspaper the New Leader declared in its September 2 addition:

"The Communist Party is virtually smashed, although it will take a few weeks for optimists in its ranks to understand the full extent of the damage. It is at present like a decapitated chicken running wildly around the barnyard."

Resignations began to pour into Popular Front organizations. The American League for Peace and Democracy, which had the promotion of collective security as its primary function, was especially hard hit.

One former ALPD officer estimated that the group, which had about twenty thousand members in August, lost about a thousand members a month until its disbandment early the following year. The League of American Writers was also ravaged. W.H. Auden was one of the first to leave, declaring in his letter of resignation:

¹³¹ Klehr et al., *The Soviet World*, p.71-74.

"Whatever excellent reasons there may be for the Nazi-Soviet Pact, it has destroyed the Popular Front in the Democratic Countries. Liberals like me were eager for collaboration between the Soviet Union and the Democracies because we hoped the both would profit, the latter find its reactionary elements weakened, the former feels less need for a dictatorship which, we believed, was in some measure due to the hostility of the democracies. The hope was proved vain. ... The American League of Writers was founded, I understand, as a Popular Front body. As in most such organizations, the liberals were lazy, while the Communists did all the work and, in consequence, won the executive power they deserved. This did not matter much so long as the Popular Front was a reality, now it does."¹³²

Moscow then sent orders to the American Communist Party to abandon the Popular Front and return to its old stance of harsh criticism of American liberals; and Communist Party leaders in the United States immediately obeyed-although thousands of disillusioned left the Party as a result.

Hostility toward the Communist Party, in particular, was intense at many levels of government. Congressional committees chaired by Hamilton Fish of New York and Martin Dies of Texas investigated Communist influence wherever they could find (or imagine) it. White southerners tried to drive Communist organizations out of the countryside, just as growers in California and elsewhere tried (unsuccessfully) to keep Communists from organizing Mexican-American and other workers.¹³³

In October 1939, Dies released the names of 563 U.S. government employees who were members of the American League for Peace and Democracy and demanded that they be prosecuted as Comintern agents.

Other members of Congress used the German-Soviet treaty as a motive for attacking the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), which had played a major role in the establishment and survival of industrial unions, and was widely rumored to employ a significant number of Communists.¹³⁴

In his book *White Collar Radicals: TVA's Knoxville fifteen, the New Deal and McCarthy Era*(2009) Aaron D. Purcell argues: "These catastrophic events were too much to bear, as result, large numbers of CP members in the United States renounced their membership and quit the Party. The Pact fractured numerous New Deal alliances, especially those between organized labor and the CP. The agreement between Stalin and Hitler marked the end of the glory days of the CP in the United States."¹³⁵

¹³² Isserman, *Which Side Were You On?*, p.37-38.

¹³³ Brinkley, *The Unfinished Nation*, p.665-666.

¹³⁴ Larry Caplair, *Anti-Communism in Twentieth-century America: A critical history* (Praeger and Oxford: Library of Congress, 2011), p.54-55.

¹³⁵ Aaron D. Purcell, *White Collar Radicals: TVA's Knoxville fifteen, the New Deal, and the McCarthy Era* (Tennessee: University of Tennessee Press, 2009), p.69.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

American Communism since the inception of the Communist Party constitutes a long and an eventful experience at U.S. political arena deserves to be highlighted on, that's why I've chosen it.

The Great Depression decade came into an end at the beginning of WWII in 1940 when the American government had decided to take part in this war where an enormous number of Americans who were sent to fight with British coalition, so this initiative helped the government significantly to overcome the Depression through engaging millions of Americans in military sector, led to downsize the unemployment rates.

However, the Communist Party had remained viable and able to take the lead to delve into a new era of political confrontation with capitalism, the most prominent scene is after WWII when the fierce global confrontation has begun between USA and former USSR, and it was infamous episode of Capitalist-Communist relations that so-called the "Cold War" lasted until the demise of USSR in 1990.

During the 1950s that named "McCarthyism," the Americans had been within a new era of fighting Communists internally more violently after the Congress drafted a bill for eliminating the Communist Party and its activities in a step was taken for security claims especially regarding the Espionage Act against them.

Undoubtedly, the Communist Party and its revolutionary Marxist-based ideology have played a remarkable role in an attempt to flip the capitalist regime over and erect a Communist instead of.

The Communist Party was receiving constant orders from the Comintern (Communist International) as a political guidance toward different and variable issues since its establishment in 1919 till it was dissolved in 1943 and this led to create the feeling of exasperation against it in America as a tool for the Soviets.

So the Communist Party had to shape its policy according to the Soviet's foreign dictations regardless acceptable or not in the capitalist country and without considering the nature of conditions there, that made it susceptible to the American opposition from different aspects. This accentuated its intentions throughout the years of its strenuous efforts.

When Stalin in his formal speech in the late 1928 and at the beginning of the revolutionary "Third Period" predicted that the capitalist system is going to deterioration, he was right when the American nation had entered into one of the harshest periods in its history just a couple of months after Stalin's prediction, who saw it's a unique opportunity for the Communist ideology to play its strategic revolutionary role in this restive time. However, his revolutionary promise had been vanished.

The Great Depression was a clear-cut episode of fluctuations and political somersault that had prompted various conflicting elements to play their roles at that inflammable period, the Communist Party was at the left-wing in this conflict.

Consequently, these facts and what came in this study of how the Communist Party swept the American society through many political and social apparatuses, substantiate its hypothesis that the Communist Party aimed to create a revolution between the ranks of the oppressed workers during 1930s in line with what happened during the Bolshevik experiment.

I stated how they were able to gain political traction through labor unions and later on with blacks who for quite a long time even after the Scottsboro incident still remained unattached mostly from the Communist Party due to the class struggle they preached about even though blacks fought for race equality and not class quality. They were able to root out Unions Leaders and put themselves in a position to organize many labor strikes in the early part of the 1930s and able to make a political impact on American society. Democrats and Republicans were suspected of themselves being Communists. Therefore, the circumstances on the ground made the Communist plan a figment of imagination.

In this study I traced the path of the Communist Party and my argument of the Communist failure refers to some factors:

First, the fluctuation of Soviet strategic policies changed the situation upside down, these multifaceted policies from the "Third Period" when the CPUSA had worn the revolutionary mantle, to the "Popular Front," the Party was ordered to leave the last one and to begin collaborative efforts for fighting the Fascism to find itself within a complicated spiral of controversy when suddenly Soviets signed a nonaggression pact with Nazis after remarkable efforts and campaigning organized by the CPUSA to reach this unexpected result by its masterminded in Russia. Of course, at that sensitive time these contradictory policies were destructive to the CPUSA's credibility, moreover, the disillusionment of Moscow's trial contributed somewhat in undermining this credibility.

These were Soviet political maneuvers, but considered as deception for the Soviet's promises. At that time, then Stalin ordered the CPUSA to leave the "Popular Front" policy and return to the old revolutionary policy.

Certainly, the interior environment proved the lack of receptivity to the Communist Party in the American society, this not from the lack of effort, indeed, there was a prodigious outpouring of Communist activity and discourse throughout the 1930s. If effort and devotion alone could have achieved success, American Communists would have achieved their goals. The easy answer, one frequently offered is that Communist ideas and practices were somewhat repugnant to the American

mind; this perception was created mainly by the vilification campaigns organized by racist groups due to its anti-racial efforts, as well as Soviet-Nazi pact played a big role.

To prove it more, reading and analyzing the information that I have in this research; there is a clear answer for me, the revolution that came from 1917 and the leadership of Lenin that changed Russia from the Tsarist regime. The ideologies of Marx and Lenin came together with Stalin. These ideas would permeate the culture of America. The change that was brought about in Russia would scare those in the United States, not because of war but because of American fear of unknown, as a result, the Special Committee of Un-American Activities (SCUA) was founded for the purpose of fighting Communist activities.

Those anti-communists that quickly formed knew only of what had been sent to the United States. It showed the idealism that pervaded a change in American mainstream. During the Great Depression people looked at the Communist Manifesto and Marxism as a means of explaining what had happened to the stock market and the collapse of the economy. People looked for answers and had many questions; the political system in the United States gave no real answers or headway about what to do about any of it. Communism did not have the answers either but it provided an understanding to some of it. It promoted thought and the class struggle with an intricate struggle of moral values and ethical values thrown in.

The American people were not prepared to accept the message of revolutionary Marxism regardless of what its form. Unlike many of the country's intellectuals, who judged Capitalism by its performance and Communism by its promises, as GuenterLewy claims, "the overwhelming majority of the American workers, even at the height of the Depression, were not prepared to embrace the idea of the class struggle and the utopia creed of a stateless and classless society. Because they were both anticommunist and radicals never received as much attention as their conservative counterparts, conservative anticommunism often relied on name-calling and unsubstantiated charges that, while less reliable, gained publicly and support from the man in the street concerned with the niceties of Communist doctrine."¹³⁶

As well as, American Communist Party was newly at U.S. arena to be a strong tool to overthrow the Capitalist system and drive America toward a revolution, moreover, had not a huge number of members and supporters within its rank and file system despite it's a well-rooted political charisma between the millions of American masses who hadn't enough attention of Capitalism or Communism, but their central concern was to find the solutions for the stagnation, unlike in Western Europe where the Communist Parties close to the Bolshevik sensation and Russian iron fist.

¹³⁶Lewy, *The Cause that Failed*, p.55-56.

Bureaucratically, the Communist Party wasn't enough democratic to act in pluralistic society as American, this had been appeared during its endeavors in order to revive the depressed society and interracial when refused to accept the other in joint projects, even if accepted it, it was just to implement its Soviet policy in certain matter. In result, the Communist Party believed in unilateral ideology (supremacy) that should be imposed upon the masses regardless what they think.

Therefore, American Communist leaders took pride in their faithful adherence to instructions coming to them from the ideological and organizational center of the Communist movement.

The CPUSA followed the Moscow-inspired analysis of Capitalism and propagandized against it, even had used the dilemmas of the American society during the Depression to attack the Capitalism. For instance, the CPUSA's efforts with black people whom the Party applied the Marxist perspective upon to accentuate to what extent the black people are oppressed in the United States because of Capitalism, and to what extent those black masses their polarization is smooth in the line of the Party, furthermore, the Communist Party was the only political group under white leadership combined between whites and blacks during the harsh agitation against blacks in USA, however, in fact, the racism against blacks hasn't been Capitalist-based issue. So, I addressed the big role of Communists within the Black Community as a supportive dilemma to serve their agenda.

This dependence inevitably created a picture of a Party loyal to its Russian masters than to the homeland of its members; this created the sensation of despising the Capitalist ideology. In this regard, there is a well-known story of Israel Amter, a leading American Communist, opening a meeting in New York with the greeting: "Workers and peasants of Brooklyn." In the Communist circles in Moscow as well as the United States, the idea of American "exceptionalism" was a political anathema. The American worker was described as a down-trodden slave of Capitalism who could become free only by becoming a follower or supporter of the Communist Party.

In addition, there was a bitter opposition inside the American society against the Communist presence in the political and social life, like the Catholics and other groups and political congregations; they exposed the Communist threat and propaganda aimed to exploit the breakthroughs that caused by the Depression to implement the Russian plans against American people.

Bibliography

- Alinsky, Saul. *John L. Lewis: An unauthorized biography*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1949.
- Brinkely, Alan. *The Unfinished Nation: A concise history of the American people*. Columbia University: McGraw-Hill, 2004.
- Bennett, David H. *Demagogues in the Depression: American radicals and the Union Party 1932-1963*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1969.
- Cohen, Adam. *Nothing to Fear: FDR's inner circle and the hundred days that created modern America*. New York: Penguin Press, 2009.
- Carrol, Peter N. *The Odyssey of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, Americans in the Spanish Civil War*. Standford: Standford University Press, 1994.
- Ceplair, Larry. *Anti-Communism in Twentieth-century America: A critical history*. Praeger and Oxford: Library of Congress, 2011.
- Carter, Dan T. *Scottsboro: A tragedy of American South*. London: Oxford University Press, 1969.
- Chueh-yuan, Wang. *Communist Theories and Tactics of class struggle*. Republic of China: China Chapter: Asian's peoples Anti-communist, 1974.
- Draper, Theodore. *The Roosts of American Communism*. New York: The Viking Press, 1957.
- Dickstein, Mirris. *Dancing in the Dark: A cultural history of the Great Depression*. New York: W. W. Norton Company, 2010.
- Foster, William Z. *History of the Communist Party of the United States*. New York: International Publishers, 1952.
- Fernandez, Neil C. *Capitalism and Class Struggle in the USSR, Marxist Theory*. No place, 1997.
- Gitlow, Benjamin. *The Wholes of Their Lives: Communism in America-A personal history and Intimate Portrayal of its Leaders*. Boston: Western Islands Book, 1965.
- Howe, Irving, and Lewis Coser. *The American Communist Party: A critical History (1919-1957)*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1957.
- Hofstadter, Richard, and Michael Wallace. *American Violence: A documentary history*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970.
- Isserman, Maurice. *Which Side Were You On? The American Communist Party during the Second World War*. Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1985.

- Ingle, H. L., and James A. Ward. *American History, a brief view since the Civil War*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1978.
- Jaffee, Philip J. *The Rise and fall of American Communism*. New York: Horizon Press, 1975.
- Klehr, Harvey, John Earl Haven, and Kyrill M. Anderson. *The Soviet World of American Communism*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.
- Klehr, Harvey. *Communist Cadre: The Social Background of the American Communist Party*. Stanford University-California: Hoover Institution Press, 1978.
- Klehr, Harvey. *The Heyday of American Communism: The DepressionDecade*. New York: Library of Congress, 1984.
- Kampelman, Max M. *The Communist Party vs. The C.I.O. a study in power politics*. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1957.
- Kelley, Robin D. G. *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists during the Great Depression*. Chapel and London: University of North Carolina, 1990.
- Lyons, Eugene. *The Red Decade: The Stalinist penetration of America*. New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1941.
- Lewy, Guenter. *The Cause that Failed: Communism in American political life*. New York: Oxford University, 1990.
- McElvain, Robert S. *The Depression and New Deal: A history in documents*. New York: New York University Press, 2000.
- Morris, James O. *Conflict within the AFL, a study of craft versus industrial unionism 1900-1938*. Ithaca-New York: Cornell University, 1958.
- Ottameli, Fraser M. *The Communist Party of the United States from the Depression to World War II*.USA: Library of Congress, 1991.
- O'Neal, James. *American Communism: A critical analysis of its origins, development, and programs*. New York: The Rand book store, 1927.
- Palmer, Edward E. *The Communist Problem in America: A book of readings*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1951.
- Purcell, Aaron D. *White Collar Radicals: TVA's Knoxville fifteen, the New Deal, and the McCarthy Era*. Tennessee: University of Tennessee Press, 2009.
- Record, Wilson. *Race and Radicalism, the NAACP and the Communist Party in conflict*. New York: Cornell University Press, 1964.
- Record, Wilson. *The Negro and the Communist Party*. North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1951.

- Riddell, John. *COMINTERN: Revolutionary Internationalism in Lenin's Time*. Canada: A Socialist Voice Pamphlet, 2008.
- Ryan, James G. *Earl Browder the Failure of American Communism*. Tuscoloose and Landon: The University of Alabama Press, 1997.
- Storch, Randi. *Red Chicago: American Communism at its grassroots 1928-35*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009.
- Silverberg, Louise G. *The Wagner Act: After Ten Years*. Washington D.C.: The Bureau of National Affairs, INC., 1945.
- Valley, Richard M. *Radicalism in the States: The Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party and the American political economy*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989.
- Warren, Frank A. *An Alternative Vision: The Socialist Party in the 1930s*. Bloomington & London: Indiana University Press, 1974.
- Zieger, Robert H. *The CIO 1935-1955*. North Carolina: The University of North Carolina, 1995.

Journals

- Burgchurdt, Car R. "Two Faces of American Communism: Pamphlet rhetoric of the Third Period and the Popular Front." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 66 (1980): p.375-391.
- Burt, Kenneth C. "The American Communist Party's Spanish Bureau, Third Period activities and some subsequent impact." *American Communist History* 11 (2012): p.265-283.
- Cain, Timothy Reese. "Unionized faculty and political left: Communism and the American Federation of Teachers on the eve of Second World War." *History of Education* 41 (2012): p.515-535.
- Cottle, Drew. "The color-line and The Third Period: A comparative analysis of American and Australian Communism and the question of race." *American Communist History* 10 (2011): p.119-131.
- Devinatz, Victor G. "A revolutionary of the Trade Union Unity League (1929-1934)." *Science & Society* 71 (2007): p.33-58.
- Doody, Golleen. "Crapping with Secularism: Anti-Communism and Catholicism in Cold War Detroit." *American Communist History* 10 (2011): p.53-71.
- Harris, Lashawn. "Running with the Reds: African American women and the Communist Party during the Depression." *Journal of African American History* 94 (2009): p.23-40.
- Lynn, Denis. "United We Spend: Communist women and the 1935 meat boycott." *American Communist History* 10 (2011): p.35-52.

- Record, Wilson. "The Development of the Communist Position on the Negro Question in the United States." *The Phylon Quarterly* 19 (1958): p.306-326.
- Moore, Jr., Barrington. "The Communist Party of the USA, an analysis of a Social Movement." *The American Political Review* 39 (1945): p.31-41.
- Murray, Philip. "American Labor and the Threat of Communism." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 274 (1951): p.125-128.

Websites

- Bancroft, Angus and Sioned Rogers. "Karl Marx-Class Theory." *School of Social Sciences: Introduction to Sociology*, (2010), <http://www.cf.ac.uk/socsi/undergraduate/introsoc/marx6.html>
- Farlex. "Communism." *The Free Dictionary*, (2011), <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/communism>
- Frankfurter, Felix. "The Case of Sacco and Vanzetti." *The Atlantic*, (1927), <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1927/03/the-case-of-sacco-and-vanzetti/306625/>
- Gregory, James. "Politics." *The Great Depression in Washington State*, (2009), <http://depts.washington.edu/depress/politics.shtml>
- Haywood, Harry. "The Negro Nation." *Negro Liberation*, (1948), <https://www.marxists.org/archive/haywood/negro-liberation/ch07.htm>
- Horan-Spatz, Marc. "The Unemployed Councils of the Communist Party in Washington State, 1930-1935." *The Great Depression in Washington State*, (2012), http://depts.washington.edu/depress/unemployed_councils.shtml
- INVESTOPEDIA. "Depression." (2015), <http://www.investopedia.com/terms/d/depression.asp>
- Kinding, Jessie. "Scottsboro Boys, trial and defense campaign (1931-1937)." *BlackPast.org*, (2007-2015), <http://www.blackpast.org/aah/scottsboro-boys-trial-and-defense-campaign-1931-1937>
- MacNair, Mike. "The programme of the Communist International. Comintern Sixth Congress 1929." *Comintern Sixth Congress 1929*, (1932), <https://www.marxists.org/history/international/comintern/6th-congress/ch03.htm>
- Moffitt, Kimberly. "Social Conflict Theory in Sociology: Definition, Lesson & Quiz." *Study.com*, (2003-2014), <http://study.com/academy/lesson/social-conflict-theory-in-sociology-definition-lesson-quiz.html>
- Pilgrim, David. "Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia." *Ferris State University*, (2012), <http://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow/what.htm>

- Pike, John. "COMINTERN Communist International/ Third International." *GlobalSecurity.org*, (2000-2015), <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/int/comintern.htm>
- "Morris Hillquit." *Encyclopedia of World Biography*, (2004), http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Morris_Hillquit.aspx
- Simkin, John. "Abraham Lincoln Battalion." *Spartacus Educational*, (1997-2014), <http://spartacus-educational.com/SPlincoln.htm>
- Simkin, John. "Louis Waldman." *Spartacus Educational*, (1997-2014), http://spartacus-educational.com/Louis_Waldman.htm

Appendixes

Orders from COMINTERN:

The Communist International has sent thousands of written instructions to the Communist Party of the United States of America since its establishment till was dissolved in 1943. Some were short, only a paragraph or two, while others went on for pages. Some were general enough to allow American Communists to interpret them to suit local conditions, while others were highly detailed, leaving no room for variation. To be sure, not all the Comintern's orders were carried out. It was not unusual for Moscow to order the CPUSA to do something, or even to do many things simultaneously, that the Party did not have the personnel, the resources, or, most important, the popular support to accomplish.

Document 1

From M. [Mikhail] Kobexky, secretary of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, 17 March 1921, RTsKhIDNI 495-1-26. Original in English. The document was printed on a small, thin swatch of silk for easy concealment by the courier who took it to America.

The Executive Committee of the Communist International having listened to the reports of the United Communist Party and the Communist Party of America hereby declares that the further postponement of the unification of the two Communist groups is a crime against the Communist International.

At the moment when the great economic crisis [four millions unemployed] and the savage persecutions prevailing in the United States are creating a most favorable ground for propaganda and organization, at that moment a few thousand Communists are wasting their time in inter-organizational squabbles which have no political significance and only result to the injury of the authority of the Communist International.

Should two groups fail to unite by the time the Third Congress is convened, the Executive Committee will propose that neither of the two groups be allowed representations at the Congress. The Executive Committee hereby welcomes the desire for unity expressed by the rank and file members of both parties, and calls upon the comrades to unite in spite of the leaders should the latter continue to sabotage the cause of unity.

The executive Committee further declares that the present representation of the American parties in the Executive Committee will be regarded as void till the time the union of both is brought about.

Secretary Executive Committee Communist International:

Moscow, 17/III-21.

M. Kobezky

Document 2

From the ECCI "To All Members of the Communist Party of America: After hearing the Claim of Comrade Moore," RTsKhIDNI 459-1-26.

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF AMERICA

After hearing the claim of comrade Moore, that this group should be recognized as the Communist Party of America, the Executive Committee of the Communist International decides as follows:

- 1-The Executive Committee of the Communist International recognizes as its American Section, only the Communist Party of America of which Lewis is at present Secretary, Marshal-returning delegates, and Carr-representative in the E.C. of the C.I.
- 2-The E.C. of the C.I. repudiates, the actions of the Minority Group, headed by Moore, Henry, and Dow, and severely reprimands them for their refusal to abide by the decisions of the C.I. and their destructive breach of Communist discipline.
- 3-The E.C. of the C.I. specifically prohibits this group, or any of its followers, from using the name of C.P. of A., section of the C.I., OR THE Communist emblem, and prohibits them from issuing any further literature purporting to represent the C.I.
- 4-Regarding the threat of appeal to the Fourth Congress, the E.C. of the C.I. states that only members of a recognized section of the C.I., who obey its decisions, have a right to appeal. Those that place themselves outside the organization cannot appeal to the International Congress.
- 5-The E.C. of the C.I. approves the action of the Majority of the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party of America in forming a legal Party in harmony with the Theses of the Third Congress and the Theses on this subject, adopted by the E.C. of the C.I. last November, and sent to the American Party as an instruction.
- 6-The E.C. of C.I. instructs all members of the faction led by Moore, Dow, and Henry, who desire to remain members of the Communist International, to put themselves in good standing in the C.P. of A. organization, at once. This means, that every member must pay dues through the regular Party channels, and must comply with the decisions of the C.E.C. of the C.P. of A., and the Theses of the C.I. in regard to joining also the Legal Party.
- 7-All members that comply with this instruction within thirty days from the time that this is sent by the C.E.C. of the C.P. of A. are to be accepted as members with full membership rights immediately, including the right to participate in the election of delegates to the C.P. of A. Convention this spring.
- 8-The C.P. of A. Convention must be held on such a date, that the members and branches, which comply with the above, can participate within their Sections in the choices of electors for picking the Convention delegates.
- 9-Any members of this minority that don't place themselves in good standing in the regular C.P. of A. within the time specified, are expelled from the Communist International, except as new members.
- 10- Moore is instructed to return to A. at once and do this best to help carry out these decisions.

Document 3

Ruthenberg to Amter, 18 February 1924, RTsKhIDNI 515-1307.

Dear Comrade Amter

You will find enclosed herewith the minutes of the meeting of the Central Executive Committee of our Party for February 15th and 16th from which you will see that a very deepening differences of opinion has developed in our Committee in reference to our Labor Party policy, which is made more dangerous for our Party in view of the factional situation which has developed as indicated in the minutes of this meeting.

The C.E.C. has decided to send a delegation consisting of Comrades Popper, Cannon, Foster and Ruthenberg and a representative of the Anti-Third Party tendency to Moscow immediately to present the whole question to the Executive

Committee of the C.I. in an effort to secure a decision and avoid a factional controversy in our Party which would endanger the work and our achievements of the past year.

The points to be brought before the Comintern are the following:

1-Are the policies outlined in the November thesis of the C.E.C. in regard to our relation to a Third Party correct?

2- Is the decision of the minority that we must take a decisive stand immediately for organizational crystallization of the class farmer labor forces thru a convention on May 3th so that the class farmer labor forces may act as a unit in relation to the July 4th Third Party convention correct?

3- The protest of the minority against removals of Party workers for factional reasons.

I don't know just how soon the delegation will be able to leave but we will hasten the matter in every way possible. I hope that the delegates can be gotten off within two or three weeks' time.

We are writing you in advance of the arrival of our delegation so that you can bring the whole matter before the E.C. of the C.I. and have the necessary preparations made so that we can present the case as quickly as possible. It is very essential in view of the critical situation in regard to our Labor Party policy and the general situation in regard to the Farmer Labor movement that some of the members of the delegation return to this country as quickly as possible in order to participate in the various conventions which are planned for May 30th and July 4th and in the negotiations in relation to these conventions.

It is not likely that all of our delegation will be able to remain for the meeting of the enlarged executive committee owing to the situation as outlined above and it is our request that preparations be made to act upon the controversy immediately upon the arrival of the delegation in Moscow.

We have sent you the minutes of our various committee meetings from time to time and also various documents and we trust that these are on file in Moscow as that they will be available in submitting the controversy to the Executive Committee of the C.I. We will send today additional copies of the various documents so that all the papers will be available.

Fraternally yours,

Executive Secretary

Document 4

Korelov to CPUSA, "C.I. Decision ...," 1924, RTsKhIDNI 515-1-255.

C.I. Decision: Must carry on sharp campaign against LaFollette, Magnus Johnson. Not for publication: Go June 17th Workers Party warn workers and farmer against all alliances Third Party. Must strive form Farmer-Labor Party. Nominate Communist President, vice-president. If rejected propose reliable worker president, working farmer vice-president. Program should contain demands of city rural workers and toiling farmers. If proposals rejected Communists support LaFollette only if breaks with capitalist parties and makes clear declaration accept full farmer-labor program and

control, come to convention, accepts farmer-labor control campaign funds. In case split C.E.C. decide if masses leaving with us warrant campaign under farmer-labor workers Party. Must nominate candidates and make energetic campaign in important states of industrial workers and exploited farmers.

Lore position repudiated. Comintern severely reprimands Lore. Kolerov. Bill arrives about June 4th. ***** sent with Bill. Page four line [] sixteen change word third into petty bourgeois. Line seventeen change combine into make alliance with.

Document 5

Kuusinen cable, 27 April 1927, RTsKhIDNI 515-1-929. Otto Kuusinen, a Finn, was a leading Comintern official who headed its American commission for several years.

WOPAT

CHICAGO

WE ARE OF OPINION THAT THE PLENUM OF CENTRAL MUST BE HELD IMMEDIATELY AND BEFORE DEPARTURE OF DELEGATION STOP HOWEVER THE DECISIONS OF CENTRAL OLENUM ARE NOT TO BE CONSIDERED AS FINAL WITHOUT RATIFICATION BY E.C.C.I. AND SHALL NOT BE PUBLISHED BEFORE SUCH RATIFICATION STOP OUR DECISION ABOUT COMPOSITION OF DELEGATION AS TELEGRAPHED TO YOU REMAINS IN FORCE UNCHANGED STOP CONSEQUENTLY OTHER COMRADES THAN THOSE WHOM POLBURO DECIDED UPON WITHIN THE RIGHT WHICH WAS GIVEN IT IN LAST TELEGRAM OF E.C.C.I. SHALL NOT COME STOP COPIES OF THIS TELEGRAM TO ALL MEMBERS POLBURO STOP E.C.C.I. KUUSINEN

From: Department [O]MS.

Mochowaja 16.

27.IV.27.

Document 6

Presidium of the ECCI to Workers Party, 6 May 1927, RTsKhIDNI 515-1-929.

Telegramm

WOPAT CHICAGO

PRESIDIUM ECCI FIRST PRESIDUM HOLDS TO BE INCORRECT THE CENTRAL PLENUMS MAJORITY CONDUCT ACCORDING TO TELEGRAPHED COMMUNICATION OF POLBURO COMMA PUTTING AS FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS INTERNAL PARTY PROBLEMS COMMA INSTEAD OF THE MOST VITAL PROBLEMS OF WAR IN CHINA NICARAGUA ETC STOP SECOND PRESIDUM DECIDES OF WAR IN CHINA

NICARAGUA ETC STOP SECOND PRESIDUM DECIDED COMMA BECAUSE OF SPECIAL PRESOLUTION OF CENTRAL PLENUM COMMA TO INVITE WEINSTON AND CANNON TO SESSION ECCI THIRD PRESIDUM DECIDES TO CALL THE PARTY CONVENTION FOR JULY TENTH STOP THIS THIRD CAN BE PUBLISHED STOP COMMUNICATE CABLE TO ALL MEMBERS OF POLBURO STOP PRESIDUM ECCI.

Fr: Dept. OMS ECCI

Mochowaja 16 Moskaw

Document 7

"Decision of the Secretariat of the ECCI," 2 February 1938, RTsKhIDNI 459-20-509.

Decision Of The Secretariat Of The ECCI

Considering the political line of the CPUSA in the main correct and placing on record the successes achieved by the Party in its work both in the trade union movement as well as in the development of a wide political front of all democratic and progressive forces against reaction and fascism, the Secretariat of the ECCI resolves:

1) To approve in the main the following drafts submitted by the delegation of the CPUSA: (a) on building the Democratic Front against the Danger of Fascism; (b) On Congressional Election of 1938; (c) On building a Mass Party of the CPUSA with the condition that these drafts will be made the basis for the decisions of the coming CC Plenum. On this basis the Party must with all its energy continue to carry out the line of the VIIth Congress of the CI, at the same time carefully watching all changes and events which may arise in connection with the development of the economic crisis and the sharpening of the international situation.

2) To call the Party's attention to the necessity of avoiding a one-sided evaluation of Roosevelt's policy in the sense of representing his home and foreign policy as being consistently progressive and genuinely democratic. The Party must clearly and openly point to the difference between Roosevelt's progressive and democratic statements which he repeatedly made in the recent period, and the actual policy of his administration. While boldly supporting the really progressive and democratic slogans advanced by Roosevelt, the Party must simultaneously come out with business-like criticism of every step of his administration which contradicts these slogans and must call upon the masses of people to demand from the Government and from Congress that the demands of the democratic anti-fascist front program be carried out in life and by means of joint mass struggle of all progressive forces and organizations to ensure the carrying out of such a program both in the home and foreign policy of the USA.

3) To consider it necessary in the interests of unity and collective work of the CC CPUSA to fully liquidate all political differences which have recently cropped up between Comrade Foster on the one hand, and Comrade Browder and the majority of the PolBureau on the other. In these differences Comrade Foster gave expression, in the opinion of the Secretariat of the ECCI, to certain remnants of sectarianism, i.e., to a certain fear of involving the Party in a broad joint movement with the Party will lose its independence and purity in questions of principle; at the same time these differences were sharpened and deepened by Comrade Browder having displayed a certain inclination towards a one-sided and exaggerated evaluation of Roosevelt's political role and of the democratic character of his policy. Comrade Foster was not correct in accusing the Party leadership of tailism in respect to movements and organizations adhering to Roosevelt, but the danger of tailism undoubtedly exists in connection with the Party's mass policy and the Central Committee in its documents must warn the Party of this. The main danger in the present stage does not however consist in this, but in a possible isolation of the Party because of remnants of sectarianism. The danger consists also in that all

sorts of leftist and Trotskyite elements in the American labor movement try to utilize the remnants of sectarianism among members of the Communist Party for their own splitting and counter-revolutionary aims.

4) To call the attention of the Party leadership to the necessity of a fully critical attitude towards the weaknesses and shortcomings in the work of the Party and the Central Committee. Although the Party has recently achieved considerable successes in comparison to the past, not for a moment should it forget that the tasks confronting it as well as the possibilities for the movement in the USA are so enormous and complicated, that they require the overcoming of even the smallest manifestations of self-satisfaction, require constant improvement in the Party's work and the systematic mobilization of all its forces for making the most energetic efforts in carrying out the tasks confronting the Communist movement of the USA.

5) The Secretariat of the ECCI considers the proposal of Comrade Browder and others to call a Convention of the Party for the first half of 1938 advisable and recommends that the CC conduct the most thorough-going preparations for this Convention, as a Convention which in the name of the entire working class should show the way and means of establishing the broadest democratic front against reaction and fascism and ensure the further rapid development of the Party and the consolidation of its positions in the ranks of the mass working people's movement of the USA.

Document 8

Bloomfield to Dimitrov, 12 August 1938, RTsKhIDNI 495-47-466

Dear Comrade Dimitroff:

A short while ago I was called in by Comrade Panamarov who told me to inform the comrades back home about the attitude here to the slogan of the C.P.U.S.A., "Communism Is Twentieth Century Americanism."

I told Comrade Panamarov that I would write to the comrades and convey to them the information, which I did. I also told him that while I surmised the reason for this attitude, I would however, like to have a little more clarification, which could come from a discussion of the matter, and I would particularly like to hear your view.

I inform Comrade Panamarov that this is one of our popular slogans which has influenced large masses. It serves as the main theme under which the Party claims and carries forward the revolutionary and democratic traditions of America. This slogan can be found in all our literature and agitation since the 9th Party Convention of June 1936. This slogan has fired the imagination and revolutionary idealism of the movement and the wider masses supporting it. On the basis of this slogan or the ideas implied by it the whole movement was spurred on to Americanize itself in the spirit of the 7th World Congress of the Communist International.

For these reasons I asked for more information in order to be more clear. However, I think that the reason for the position taken here against this slogan is that it is unscientific. Communism is the classless society in which the exploitation of man has been abolished; in which the state has withered away; in which the economic and other material conditions of life are on such a high level that the relations between men are on a high idealistic plane based upon the contribution of the individual to society according to his ability and from which the individual receives according to his needs; that Communism, which is the highest development of Socialism [which can be realized in one country] is universal. Now, since Americanism has not yet shown any sign of any society higher than capitalism, and since even in

its development in one country, the most it possible could develop to, would be Socialism, therefore, to call it Communism [regardless of which century] would be incorrect from a Marxian standpoint.

I have had no adequate explanation for the position here on the slogan. Therefore, I can only conclude that what I have here stated as the possible reason for objection is correct. Perhaps the comrades in the U.S.A. will also think as I do in search of an explanation. A further explanation would clear up matters.

Comradely yours,

Sidney Bloomfield

Referent, CPUSA,

Secretariat, Marty.

Document 9

"Information on Candidacies Nominated for the PB CC CPUSA," signed "M" [Andre Marty], 7 February 1936, RTsKhIDNI 515-1-3966. "PB CC CPUSA" stands for Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPUSA. The Trade Union Unity League was radical trade union arm of the CPUSA in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

1. FOSTER, William-mem. PB

2. BROWDER, arl-mem.PB

3. FORD, James-mem.PB, nominated member of new PB. Negro, b. 1893, in party since 1926, was a worker/steel founder, then postal clerk, no party penalties, a leader of Negro comrades, currently secretary of a Negro area of New York, Harlem, has acquitted himself well in that work, his candidacy raises no objections.

40 STACHEL, Jack-mem.PB, nominated member of new PB. A Jew from Poland, born in 1899, in the party since 1923, was a worker/hatter, until 1929 one of the chief leaders of majority fraction, was second secretary of Trade Union Unity League, a leading party comrade, now practically the second secretary of the CC, no objections to him.

5. HUDSON, Roy-mem. PB, nominated member of the new PB. American, born in 1901, in the party since 1930, worker seaman, was secretary of a revolutionary sailors' union. Was promoted to the CC and the PB at VIII party conference in 1934. His promotion was put through by way of the workerization and Americanization of the CC and the PB. But as yet it has not sufficiently justified itself. Hudson has no special popularity and brings nothing essential to the work of the PB. However it would be inexpedient, in view of the same considerations that motivated his promotion, to leave him at present outside the PB. At the same time it definitely must be recommended to the CC to change Com. Hudson's position by giving him one of the coastal districts, where he can both develop and prove himself, and demonstrate whether he can continue as a member of the PB.

6. HATHAWAY, Clarence-----candidate for the PB, nominated member of the new PB. American, born in 1894, in the party since 1919, was a worker. A leading party comrade, was secretary for several critical party districts, has for several years been chief editor of the "Daily Worker," a strong worker, drinks a bit, with occasional lapses in his

responsibility toward his duties. However, at the "D.W.," H. is carrying on tremendous work, and if not for a single-true, an unverified-moment [in his record], then his candidacy would raise no doubts whatsoever.

7. BITTELMAN, Alexander-mem. CC, nominated mem.New PB. A Jew from Poland, born in 1891, in the party since 1919, by profession an engineer, until 1929 was one of the chief leaders of minority fraction, then worked out of the country, currently the director of agitprop for the CC and editor of "Communist." B. is a leading party comrade, politically capable and full of initiative, however his knowledge of the masses is inadequate, he suffers somewhat from abstractness, is often ill. It is inexpedient to promote him immediately to membership in the new PB. One may concur with promoting him to candidate of the PB. Subsequent experience will show whether he can remain at all within the staff of the PB and become a member of the PB.

Instead of Bittelman it is expedient to promote the PB member Krumbein, currently nominated candidate for the PB.

8. KRUMBEIN, Charles-mem. CC, nominated candidate for the new PB, American, boen in 1894, in the party since 1919, was a worker. One of the leading party comrades, Recently was secretary of the largest New York party district and acquitted himself well at that work. At present temporarily in prison in connection with passport issues raised by his work along our lines outside the country. His candidacy raises no objections.

If Bittelman's candidacy to PB membership falls away, and no other candidacy is found, then Com. Krumbain is perhaps the best candidate for membership in the PB, and in that case it would be expedient to promote him from candidate for PB, as he is currently nominated, to membership in the new PB.

9. GREEN, Gilbert-candidate for PB, nominated, as before, candidate for the new PB as well. A Jew, b. in 1906, in the party since 1925, was a worker, secretary of Young Communist League USA and ECCYI [Executive Committee of the Communist Youth International], his candidacy raises no objections.

10. BERRY, A. V.-nominated candidate for the new PB. Negro, born in 1902, in the party since 1929, was a worker, currently secretary of sectional organization in the Chicago district. Even disregarding the experience with Com. Hudson, who was promoted to the PB without sufficient preparation, this promotion of Com. Berry to the PB is still inexpedient. Com. Berry is a comparatively young member of the party, without broad political experience or the experience of serious leadership work, and, of course, he does not possess the corresponding authority either within the party or in the country. If the American comrades have not yet developed a different pair of new comrades for promotion to the PB, that is no grounds for premature promotions to an institution like the PB. If Com. Berry is a developing comrade of PB staff caliber, then it is expedient, bearing this in mind, to give him more important work than he has now, to help him develop further and show himself capable of being in the supreme governing organ of the party, and later promote him to the PB.

The American comrades must be advised either to select a different Negro comrade as a candidate for the PB or to promote one of three or four proven party workers of stature like [John] Williamson, secretary of the Cleveland district, [Robert] Minor, [Max] Bedacht, or Jack Johnstone. In view of certain considerations also of an internal party nature, it is inexpedient, perhaps, for the time being to put forward the candidacy of Com. [William] Weinston, who has acquitted himself well as secretary of the Detroit district and is a proven comrade, politically capable and full of initiative.

Document 10

"Re Proposal Polburo ...," 11 February 1936, RTsKhIDNI 515-1-3951.

USA

Re proposal polburo we accept Foster Broweder Ford Stachel candidate Green stop Hudson remain polburo but be assigned an important maritime district stop if polburo is to be enlarged our opinion ass Krumbein and candidates comrades from nearby district characteristics popular with masses American able organizer stop re Hathaway we propose he remains candidate stop Bittleman remain only as member CC because not American mass leader consider Berry too new for polburo first needs experience CC and more leading work avoid too rapid unprepared promotion stop if convention postponed we desire opportunity better discussion with Earl Bill.

Give back to [illegible]

Document 11

Gulyaev and Statsenko to Dimintrov, 26 November 1939, RTsKhIDNI 495-47-472.

The "Michigan group" refers to socialists in Michigan who helped found the Communist Party of America but who withdrew in 1920 to form the Proletarian Party. "Kautskian" refers to the doctrine of Karl Kautsky, a German Marxist theoretician whom Lenin scorned for not being sufficiently revolutionary. "AUCP [b]" stands for the All-Union Communist Party [Bolshevik], the official title of the Soviet Communist Party. "ILS" stands for the International Lenin School. Cannon and Dunne were James Cannon and William Dunne, prominent American party figures in the 1920s.

To the General Secretary of the ECCI

Comrade Dimitrov:

As you know, the candidate for the Politburo of the Central Committee of the U.S. Communist Party, the editor of the "Daily Worker," Clarence Hathaway, was not elected to the Politburo by the last Congress of the U.S. Communist party because of violations of party ethics.

Comrade Hathaway was warned that if such actions were repeated in the future, he would be expelled from the Central Committee of the U.S. Communist party.

After joining the Communist Party in 1919, comrade Hathaway was expelled in 1920 for his support of a group that deserted the Comintern line. In the same year his membership was reinstated, however, he lost his [illegible]. From 1919 to 1922 he supported the so-called Michigan group that founded the still-existing Kautskian "proletarian" party.

In 1923 he took part in Moscow in the ILS, Hathaway, being a member of the AUCP[b] received a strict reprimand with a warning from the Khamovniki AUCP[b] Committee for drinking and for beating a militiaman.

According to his autobiography, in 1912 Hathaway volunteered and joined the National Guard of Minnesota, the main reserve of the regular army, which was used for suppressing workers' riots and as strike breakers during strikes. After

being a member of the National Guard for three months. Hathawy quit. Hathawy's first wife, whom he left with three children [now all adults] claimed in one of her letters to the wife of a member of the U.S. Communist Party Central Committee, comrade Bill Dunne, that Hathaway was a police agent.

According to the information given by the comrades who recently arrived from the USA [for example, Comrade Keller, a responsible member of the U.S. Communist Party], Hathaway's behavior did not improve. We consider it necessary to suggest that the U.S. Communist party Central Committee should consider the issue and decide whether it is possible to keep Hathaway in a leading party position in the new circumstances.

THE DIRECTOR OF PERSONNEL, ECCI, Gulyaev [GULYAEV]

THE SECRETARY OF PERSONNEL, ECCI, Stetsebko [STETSENKO]

26 November 1939

No. 29/SS

Document 12

Losovsky [Lozovsky] to TUEL, Browder, and Bellam, 18 May 1929, RTsKhIDNI 534-6-138. "Bills return" refers to William Foster, who was then in Moscow but preparing to return to the United States.

TELEGRAMME

TUEL NEW YORK BROWDER BALLAM

EXECUTIVE CONSIDERS NECESSARY FOR BETTER FEDERATION POSTPONE TUEL CONVENTION
SEVERAL MONTHS FINAL DATE WILL BE FIXED AFTER BILLS RETURN

LOSOVSKY

Document 13

Ecerpt from Clarence Hathawy, "Report of Situation in U.S.A. and Work of Party," given to a meeting of the Marty Secretariat, 15 September 1936, RTsKhIDNI 515-1-3967. The remainder of the report deals with CPUSA activities in the 1936 elections.

MEETING OF SECRATERIAT OF COMRADE MARTY.

Sebtemper 15, 1936.

Speaker: HATHAWY- Report of Situation in U.S.A. and Work of Party.

I propose to take up only two major questions-the question of the situation in the A.F. of L., and the election campaign.

I would say at the outset that I only received word last night that the report was to be delivered today at 12 o'clock, and for that reason, my report will not be organized in a form that would ordinarily be the case, but will rather be a more general discussion of our problems that I think will bring out the main points and will open the way for questions.

I shall start with the situation in the AFL. I don't think it is necessary here to go into the general background of the present situation. I think all the comrades are familiar with the fact that the unions of the Committee for Industrial Organization have been suspended from the AFL, unions that involve a membership of close to 40% of the entire AFL, and not only that, but are unions that embrace the mass production industries of the country.

This is the result of a long struggle in the AFL that began at the San Francisco convention two years ago and came to a head at the last convention in Atlantic City, following which the CIO was organized, a bloc to carry on the fight for industrial unionism and for organization of the unorganized. The chief problem before us now is what to do in the present situation. The C.C. of the Party is fully agreed that it is our job and the job of all militants in the trade union movement to develop the broadest and most aggressive fight for the best that fight for reunification can be carried on.

In order to discuss that question, I think that, at the outset, we must bear in mind that we are not dealing with a division in the ranks of the AFL or in the trade union movement that is comparable with the division that existed when the left wing had their own unions outside the AFL. If we were to consider this in the sense of Communist or left unions being outside and the main body of the workers inside, and approached it from the viewpoint of our past tactics and strategy, we would be making a most serious mistake in this case. We must bear in mind that in this case unions have been suspended, and ones most decisive in the American trade union movement. To begin with, there is the United Mine Workers, in the most basic industry, with 400,000 members, the largest in the AFL. The other unions are the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, the International Ladies' Garment Workers, the United Textile Workers, Rubber Workers, Automobile Workers, etc. This gives a character to this struggle quite different than previous struggles for unity within the AFL.

Secondly, we must take into consideration the issues around which the suspension of these unions took place. At the AFL convention, these unions had put the issue squarely, first, of the organization of the unorganized in the mass production industries. It was their contention, and correctly, that the American trade union movement could not be a power until the basic industries of the country were organized, and they charged the Executive Council with responsibility for the matter of organization in these industries and insisted that a course be pursued of bringing the workers in those mass production industries into AFL. They furthermore pointed out, on the basis of experience, that these industries could not be organized except on the basis of industrial unionism.

The AFL convention rejected such a policy and, immediately following the convention, these unions formed a bloc in the AFL to independently carry forward the drive to organize the unorganized on the basis of industrial unionism. In the period of the CIO was organized, it has achieved very great results in doing what the AFL had itself failed to do. To their credit, the Automobile Workers' Union was definitely established as an international union in the AFL, and has been built up to some 45 or 50 thousand members, as compared with a scattered group of federal locals at the time of the Atlantic City convention. In the case of rubber, there also, the federal locals have been crystallized into an international union and tremendous gains had been made in organizing the unorganized. In a number of other instances, there are very direct gains to be shown as a result of the activities of the CIO.

The biggest task set by the Committee was the drive to organize the steel industry. There, after a long battle with the reactionary officials of the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers, they finally forced its leadership into line, succeeding in setting up a special committee to organize the steel industry. They put up \$500,000 for the beginning of the campaign, set up committees in steel and have since put on a large staff of organizers, and the campaign at present is well under way with substantial achievements to be recorded. This shows very clearly that, in approaching this present division in the AFL, one can only approach it in relation to these basic questions-organization

of the unorganized, and one must bear in mind the successes the CIO has already achieved and the aggressiveness with which they are pushing forward the policy it adopted at the AFL convention.

In approaching the question of the policy, there are a number of other things that must be taken into consideration, including the role played by the various groups in the AFL during the period preceding the actual suspension order on August 5th. We had a number of discussions in the P.B. on the question, and following those discussions, we also had discussions with Lewis and Hillman, the two outstanding leaders of the CIO.

During the entire period following the Atlantic City convention, the CIO had made their struggle entirely within the framework of the upper bodies of the AFL. At no time had they directed any appeals to the local unions, to the central bodies, such as the Federations of Labor, etc., that is, appeals of a public character, calling upon them to join with the policies of the CIO and against those of the Executive Council. We were of the opinion that the CIO should have made such appeals, and we took it up with them. I should be pointed out that the Party, throughout the entire period, had appealed to the local unions, to the central bodies, the State Federations of labor, and had introduced resolutions in these bodies calling for endorsement of the steel drive and of the general drive to organize the mass production industries and against the threats of a split being made by the Executive Council.

In placing this question before Lewis and Hillman, they took the position that it was quite all right for us to issue appeals, that they appreciate the efforts we were making to rally the lower organizations of the trade unions, but their contention was that if they undertook to make these direct appeals to local bodies, it would further prejudice their case and give a weapon to the Executive Council that it was unnecessary to give them. Whether or not this policy on their part was correct is, of course, a matter of debate, but at any rate, they insisted, and pursue consistently a policy of limiting their activities to setting up of organizing committees, building of unions, etc., to the fight at the top of the AFL, without such appeals at the bottom.

As the question approached a climax, when they were summoned to appear before the Executive Council to answer charges of insubordination, dual unionism, etc., there again, the question arose as to the tactics that should be followed. We had discussions in the P.B., and at the outset, there were some who thought that we should publicly urge the CIO to accept the summons, appear before the Executive Council, make their fight there, and, in that way, try to prevent the expulsion from taking place, or, at least, to arouse sentiment against the suspension. This also was discussed with Lewis and Hillman and they were absolutely opposed to such a policy. They contended, and correctly, that if they appeared before the Executive Council in response to the summons issues, it would already legalize the proceedings being carried out by the Executive Council, would indicate on their part acceptance of the whole procedure being followed, and that, under the constitution of the AFL, the whole action of the Executive Council is quite contrary to both the letter and spirit of the constitution. The constitution specifically states that no union can be suspended or expelled from the AFL except by a two-thirds vote of the convention, and it was their opinion that, to go before the Executive Council and there argue the case, was already to grant that the Executive Council had power that the constitution specifically failed to give them, and also that, considering that the Executive Council is stamped so completely against them, with only one vote for the CIO group, despite the fact that they have 40% of the membership, and that there are about 13 or 14 for the reactionary group, it is clear this would have prejudiced their case completely.

Secondly, there was the question as to whether or not the CIO would already declare its intention of going to the convention in Tampa, that will be held at the end of November, and there carry on a fight for a seat in the convention, despite the suspension order, or whether they will ignore the Tampa convention. There again, in our discussion, there those of us who took the position that one cannot lay down the rule lay down the rule as a dogma that, in any and all

circumstances, the fight must be carried at the Tampa convention; that it is something that will have to be determined by the relationship of forces, by the response in the local unions, in the state conventions of the federations of labor, in the various international unions, etc., and the fight is carried to Tampa only providing there is a real opportunity there to develop the fight on a basis that will further the movement and discredit the policies of the Executive Council.

There were some comrades, particularly Comrade Foster, who thought we must come out and criticize the CIO for not already declaring its intentions of taking such a course. Then, there was the question of legal action. There again, Comrade Foster was of the opinion that we should publicly call on the CIO to throw the whole thing into the courts, challenging the power of the Executive Council to carry out its suspension order, and undertaking to win such a court battle. Without in any sense being against court action as a matter of principle, we were against any public declaration that would already put us in the position of appearing to attack the CIO leadership at the very moment that the Executive Council was attempting by every means to justify this suspension order by placing the blame on them.

We discussed this entire question with Lewis, and we discussed also a declaration that had been made by David Dubinsky, one of the CIO leaders, that could only be accepted as implying a determination on their part to set up a new center, a new parallel AFL. On the first question, the question of going to Tampa, Lewis took this decision-that they were going to do nothing that would commit them to Tampa, nor would they do anything that would prejudice their fight at Tampa, if such a fight could be made. He said that it was their intention to strive to influence every convention that was held between the date of the first suspension order and the Tampa convention, and in each case they would exert the maximum of their influence to get this convention to go on record against the action of the Executive Council. If in this work prior to the convention, it appeared there would be those forces which would have a voice in the AFL who would carry forward the fight there against the suspension order and for their reinstatement, they would consider sending all of their forces there to join in such a fight from the outset, but he said, if those developments did not take place, and we are outside the AFL would not be given a voice on the floor of the convention and would never get our people inside the hall, if we go to Tampa then and stand around the corridors for a few weeks, every capitalist newspaper in America will ridicule us and say we came to Tampa, stood around in the corridors begging to be heard, were laughed at by everyone, and finally picked up our bags and started to walk back to New York. He said this would discredit us in the eyes of large masses of workers and make it appear that, instead of being powerful unions that could stand on their own feet and dictate terms to this group that is deliberately wrecking the unions, we would be in quite the opposite position-of begging them in a most unprincipled manner to get in. He did not think, under such circumstances, that it would be the correct policy to follow.

Secondly, as to legal action, he pointed out that in this case it could be taken any time up to within six months after the convention of the AFL took place at Tampa, and that certainly they were not closing the door to possibilities of such action, but there again, they were not going to take the position of throwing this into the courts at this time because, in doing so, in their opinion they would hamper the development of their struggle inside other unions, because the Executive Council could declare, they are taking an inner-union controversy into the courts and attempting to settle it there without giving the convention membership an opportunity to make their decision.

As for the question of setting up a new center, I think we should understand that if this split continues, inevitably the Lewis group will set up a new steps that would be taken now-whether this center would be set up immediately in this period, thereby closing the door to a great extent to the development of struggle inside the AFL, or whether this would come as the culmination of a real struggle for reunification of the movement on the basis of the principle issues the fight started over.

Lewis suggested that we should not lose sight of the fact that, with the suspension order by the Executive Council, the fight only began in the AFL; this was in no sense the culmination of the fight, but the beginning, and then he went on to illustrate practically what he meant by this declaration. He pointed out that the Executive Council will have to go before the convention and there submit its whole policy for ratification; that, in the convention, regardless of the form it takes, there will be a big battle there; he doubts whether the CIO will be able to get a majority against the Executive Council in the convention, but, majority or no majority, there will be a big fight on this issue.

I might say in parenthesis that, since the suspensions took place, the international union of Hotel & Restaurant Employees met in Rochester, N.Y. It is a union that has not been associated with the CIO and was considered one of the more conservative unions in the AFL. This union, with only one dissenting vote, went on record against the policy of Executive Council and for withdrawal of the suspension order against CIO.

The Teachers' Union met in Philadelphia and took similar action, so, at least those two international unions which met since the decision had both gone on record against the Executive Council. As for the State Federation of Labor, some 18 had met before I left and 16 of these had gone on record against the policies of the Executive Council and for the policies of the CIO.

If one considers the central bodies, then the biggest central bodies in the country, in all decisive cities, have gone on record endorsing the policies of the CIO, except in New York, but even there the CIO is making an approach to the leadership, as is shown by the fact that they met with the president of the State Federation of Labor, and with Joseph Ryan, secretary of the Trades Assembly, both of whom came into the American Labor Party and are working there with the CIO.

In such circumstances, it is clear that Lewis is absolutely correct in emphasizing the fact that, quite from the position the CIO unions will occupy in relation to Tampa, whether there in person or not, there will be a tremendous fight at the convention around this issue, but he points out that even at the convention around this issue, but he points out that even at the convention, assuming it endorses the policy of the Executive Council, the fight is by no means over, because the Executive Council must then proceed to instruct every central body, every State Federation of Labor, to purge itself of those unions that have been suspended. Lewis also points out that just as soon as they go down to the lower ranks, to the local central bodies, State Federation of Labor, etc., there a purge will not and cannot take place. He points, for example, to Pennsylvania, which is a state controlled by the United Mine Workers, the Amalgamated, International, etc., etc., and if you purge those, they have no more labor movement left in the state. The same is true about Indiana, Ohio, Illinois, Kentucky, and whole mining regions in the South, etc. The same is true of New York-if there is a purging of all the Needle Trades Unions, they have not much of a labor movement left there. So, if you consider it just in that sense and try to push this policy, and must go to the lower bodies and rank and file, they will meet with obstacles they cannot overcome.

In this connection, you must bear in mind the strength and influence of the unions they are attempting to expel, but you must also bear in mind that the unions, the leadership of which is trying to carry through the expulsion, are themselves split wide open on this question.

A few illustrations, for example, the Painters' Union in New York, which is one of the bodies that would be called upon to purge itself; also the Needle Trades Workers, but the whole Painters' District Council is under our leadership and is committed to left policies, in opposition to the national leadership, take also in New York a local like the Musicians' Union, which is one-half the membership of the National Musicians' Union. This local in New York is committed 100% to our policy, and the other half that controls the national administration is allied with William Green and the Executive

Council. And so it is in union after union. In no case are these unions solid in support of the policies of the Executive Council, but it is safe to say that the unions of the CIO are solid in support of their policies, which is evidenced by the conventions held of the Miners' Amalgamated Clothing Workers, where, to a man and with tremendous enthusiasm, the unions rallied in support of their policies. This I think is of tremendous importance in determining the perspectives of the struggle.

One other point of utmost importance to bring out, and that grew out of conversations with Lewis, is that Lewis emphasized that there was another thing that had to be taken into consideration in connection with this whole fight-and that was the election campaign; that the reactionaries of the Republican Party, the Liberty League campaign, by attempting to show that a victory for Roosevelt would be a victory for the Lewis group in the AFL and would virtually mean the policy of the administration in destroying the Executive Council leadership. He said, for that reason, they were consciously trying to avoid taking any course that would sharpen the struggle to the point where William Hutcheson, Matthew Woll and some individual Republicans in the Executive Council would be able to line up the whole Executive Council for their policies.

At any rate, he stressed that in considering the question of legal action, in that kind, they were doing this always with the election campaign in mind and with the objective of avoiding an issue that would throw votes away from Roosevelt to Landon. Incidentally, the correctness of emphasizing this at the outset was made very clear by the speech of Landon on Labor Day, when he went out of this way to express his regrets at the division that had taken place in the AFL., his hopes for a united AFL, etc. It is well worth looking up this speech to see how cleverly they exploited it at the first opportunity.

Another point Lewis emphasized, which we think is of decisive importance, is that under no circumstances must this inner-fight in the AFL be permitted to take on a character, or to overshadow the carrying forward of the steel campaign. He pointed out that the whole success of the CIO, a thing that would determine whether it won or lost its fight, would not be a mere battle, or whether or not they appeared at the Tampa convention, but it would be determined or not they organized the steel industry. If they were successful in their steel campaign, it did not make any difference what the sheer weight of the developing mass movement around a successful steel campaign. But if, on the contrary they failed in their steel drive, this would defeat them in the AFL more decisively than any action that might be taken by the Executive Council, and they could then justify their entire policy. He pointed out that the greatest danger was that a course be pursued to transfer all energies and attention to the inner fight to the neglect of carrying forward this campaign. He pointed out another thing in this connection, namely that if among the unorganized workers in the steel industry, in auto, rubber, etc., the whole issue became the AFL is right or whether the CIO is right, and became not a fight mainly against the steel corporations around the conditions of the workers, but carrying the battle between the different groups in the AFL, this would have a confusing effect among the workers and set back the whole thing.

I cite this to show that both in our considerations of the question, in our discussions with the leaders of the CIO, the problem of the tactics being followed was approached not from the viewpoint of just unity in the abstract, but in relation to the indications of the whole fight, which includes the election campaign, the drive to organize the steel industry, the carrying forward of the principle fight in the AFL for class policies, etc.

After these discussions, we discussed the thing in the P.B. and we came to this conclusion-that the fight for the reunification of the movement must be carried on in a manner that could in no way contribute, directly or indirectly, to giving weapons to the Executive Council; that we would not make any calls for Lewis or Hillman or the CIO as such to do this, that we were attacking the general line of the CIO in the fight. It is our opinion that, in the main taking into

consideration the position of this group, they have waged a generally correct fight since the Atlantic City convention; that our fight is chiefly that of reaching the local unions, the central bodies, State Federations of Labor, building up of the militant forces in the various conventions that take place, and in each case working in cooperation with the forces of the CIO in carrying on to the fight.

It is our opinion also that, under no circumstances should we advocate a policy directly or by implication that would mean the giving up of the issues of the organization of the unorganized, of industrial unionism, or the liquidation of the CIO. There, the question was discussed: should we advise a course that would mean the liquidation of the CIO as an organized bloc in the AFL. We came to the conclusion-No, because if you liquidate the CIO and turn back to the Executive Council, the job of carrying on the work of organizing the unorganized on any basis, we know from many years of experience, that not one single step would be taken in that direction, and through the dissolution of the CIO, you would make it impossible for any of the unions which are now carrying forward that fight to continue.

So, it is our opinion that that the fight must be to win the AFL membership and carrying forward of this campaign of organizing the unorganized on an industrial union basis. We believe that any other course would weaken the whole fight and play into the hands of the Executive Council. If you ask our perspective, we say quite frankly that we believe that we are due for a period in the U.S. when there will be a divided trade union movement. We do not believe that the Executive Council, made up of the Greens, Wolls, Hutchesons and that group, will yield; we do not believe they will accept the CIO unions, because these people are fully conscious that if the CIO unions carry forward their present policy and are successful in organizing these basic industries, it means the political death of these people who are in control of the AFL. There is no doubt but that the suspension was carried through because they knew they were reaching the end of their rope, where they would be destroyed as the leadership, and they are perfectly willing to split the movement in two, or even further, if by doing so, they can hold on.

I do not think any maneuver that will be carried through can overcome such a situation as that and that the fight for a unified trade union movement can best be served by boldly and aggressively going along with the drive the CIO is making. The one thing we should be on guard against and should press Lewis, Hillman and the others to avoid, is that in the setting up of a center that will inevitably follow during the course of the next 6 or 8 months that will unite those unions that are suspended, we must avoid any policy that will mean the bringing of all forces of the AFL from the other unions out into this bloc. For example, if in Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania State Federation of Labor refuses to purse itself of the CIO unions, the question there is: should Lewis Hillman, etc., take the whole Pennsylvania labor movement, which would include carpenters, plasterers, barbers, etc., into the CIO, thereby bringing about a split in every international union of the CIO? We say, No; that inside the unions still in the AFL, unity must be maintained and the fight carried on inside these unions and inside the AFL as well for unity, on the basis of the carrying forward of the policies that the CIO at the moment typify. Certainly, under no circumstances, would we pursue a policy of indifference when our holding them together.

Document 14

Mingulin to Dimitrov, 25 August 1936, RTsKhIDNI 495-14-55aGeorgiMikhailovich! [D]

You have probably read Browder's telegram about the situation in the AFL.

I agree completely with your answer to my note concerning Comrade Hathaway's coming here for discussion of the work of the D.U. (USA). In fact, that will be hard to do without discussing other issues with the Central Committee delegation. But in connect with Comrade Browder's telegram: we are, as it were, forced to follow in Lewis's footsteps

and have linked ourselves too closely. It is possible that this is not completely the case, and also that party policy in this matter is completely correct. But we do not have sufficient information.

The delegation from the Central Committee will be able to be here only after the elections, i.e., at the beginning of December. This is after the AFL congress, the most important congress in the AFL's history. For there to be a maximum guarantee of correct policy in relation to the AFL, I think it would be essential to make use of Hathaway's trip to Europe and listen to his information about the situation in the AFL and our tactics.

This also relates to the development of the Farmer-Labor Party. This matter seems to have really gotten started with the formation of a workers' party in New York by the trade unions. The right wing of the Socialist Party has already entered this party. This party is also the work of Lewis's movement, and the plan is that after the elections it is supposed to become a party of national dimensions. For now, it will put up candidates for Congress and others from New York; in 1938, candidates from other states; and in 1940, a presidential candidate. The party decision makers declare that they will not allow Communists in. Our comrades are urging the trade unions to join this party. Browder asks us in print, one cannot get a full picture of the situation; Hathaway would be able to give information about this issue as well.

Thus I propose that Hathaway come here exclusively for information, which is extremely necessary. In September it will have been half a year since Browder and Foster left, and we still have another three or four months until the next delegation; for this reason, and in view of two or three important issues on which it would be extremely useful and urgent to receive detailed information, a trip by Hathaway for this purpose would be useful. These are my thoughts in brief. I await your instructions.

Mingulin

Document 15

To Browder, "Despite the Fact That Since Our Telegram . . .," RTsKhIDNI 495-74-469/September 1939.

Dear Comrade Browder:

Despite the fact that since our telegram you have taken some steps to correct the erroneous position of your party as regards to European war, your speech in Cleveland demonstrates that you nevertheless remain a captive of tenets that were correct before the European war but are now incorrect. It is not simply that we Communists characterize that war as imperialist, but rather that the war is bringing about such radical changes in the entire international situation, changes that compel Communists of all countries to make a radical shift in the tactics of Comparties. What these changes? First, the war plunges the capitalist world into a state of acute and profound crisis. At issue here is only fascism, but the very existence of the entire capitalist system. The issue of fascism is secondary; the main and fundamental issue is the struggle against capitalism, against bourgeois dictatorship, irrespective of which political guise it assumes or which hypocritical slogans it employs to conceal its imperialist aims in both the belligerent and the neutral countries.

Second, war is the most virulent manifestation of imperialist dissipation and reaction. In wartime the bourgeoisie of so-called bourgeois-democratic states pattern their own regimes after fascism [consider, for instance, the dispersal of the Communist Party in France]. The bourgeoisie of these countries have now assumed a stance toward the Soviet Union [literally, the land of Soviets] more hostile than that of the fascist states. The ruling classes of the belligerent states are equally waging an imperialist war, equally acting as both the defending and the attacking parties in that war, equally stepping up bourgeois-dictatorship terror campaigns. Consequently, any basis for contrasting "bourgeois democracy" and fascism is disappearing. By the same token, the prerequisites for a democratic front have been undermined. Don't

think that the US will be an exception in this regard. Even remaining neutral, the USA with its powerful financial oligarchy take the same route as belligerent Europe-the path of intensified reaction, if for no other reason than that its bourgeoisie realizes that the war jeopardizes its continuing dominance.

Third, workers can now contemplate prospects far broader than simply defending the remnants of bourgeois democracy. "We would be pendants, rather than revolutionaries, if we were to cling to the old slogans of a "popular" or "democratic" front at a time when the very underpinnings of capitalism are vulnerable to the consciousness of the masses, the faster the higher-ups of the so-called democratic American Communists is now to realize a militant unity of proletarian activities, to strengthen proletarian union with the farmers by independently mobilizing the masses against reaction and the intensification of capitalist exploitation.

We therefore think that the CPUSA should stop following Roosevelt's lead and instead take independent positions on all fundamental domestic and foreign policy issues. American Communists are against involving the American people in the war because they do not want the masses to die to benefit their imperialist exploiters. But is this position really identical with the American bourgeoisie's position of "neutrality"? Is "neutrality" really anti-imperialist? This neutrality was dictated by the predatory aspirations of American capital to use the European war to strengthen its own imperialist positions, to drive its competitors out of the market, to dominate the seas and oceans, and to become the all-powerful ruler over nations ravaged by the effects of the war. The American bourgeoisie are lifting the embargo because they hope to get rich off the poverty of other nations. But you, Comrade Browder, in your Cleveland speech, showed solidarity with this position instead of exposing its greedy imperialist character. You did not even find it necessary to remind the audience that the American bourgeoisie, proclaiming the defense of "democracy" against fascism, are Japan's primary military suppliers in its imperialist war against the Chinese people. We also feel you should take a more independent position with regard to John L. Lewis. We do not at all recommend that American Communists behave in such a way that they begin to be excluded from industrial trade unions. On the contrary, you must do everything in your power to thwart the reactionaries who wish to throw Communist out of industrial trade unions. But Communists should firmly defend their principled views and appropriately criticize the half-heartedness of the industrial trade union higher-ups, making clear to the masses the differences between the Communist Party and Lewis.

In a few days, we will publish our position on the war and the changes in Communist party tactics. The arguments developed therein will allow you to understand the new tactical aims, which come down to the following:

- a) The current war is imperialist, unjust, and equally reactionary for all warring capitalist powers. This is not a war of democracy against fascism, but a war between reactionary imperialist Germany and the reactionary imperialist states of England, France, and Poland. Who started the war is not an issue here. What is fundamental is that this war is being waged by states run by imperialist cliques. This is a war for imperialist supremacy.
- b) This war is a continuation of the struggle between the rich powers (England, France, the USA), which are the backbone of the entire capitalist system, and the cheated states (Germany, Italy, Japan), who in their struggle for a new world order deepen and aggravate the crisis in the capitalist system.
- c) The bourgeoisie of England and France rationalize this war of pillage by claiming it to be antifascist in character; Germany, by claiming it is fighting against the unjust remnants of the Versailles peace.
- d) Poland was a reactionary multinational state built on the oppression of Ukrainians, Belorussians, and Jews. It decayed because of the corruption of the ruling classes. The international proletariat has no interest in the existence of such a parasitical state.

e) The Soviet Union in coming to the aid of the western Ukrainian and Belarusian workers, saved 11 million people from a capitalist hell, brought them into the ranks of socialism, assured their national and cultural development, and with all of its might secured them from foreign enslavement.

f) The war has created a new international order. As a result, the tactics of a single workers' and people's front loses its significance.

g) At the present stage of the war the Communists' task is to boldly, as befits Bolsheviks, fight against the war, vote against credits in belligerent and non-belligerent countries alike, concentrate their fire against the bourgeoisie dictatorship in their own countries, mercilessly expose social democracy, which has crossed over to the camp of imperialist reaction; in the neutral countries (above all the United States) to expose the bourgeoisie as profiteers and marauders of war and to hold high the banner of proletarian internationalism.

That's all for now

Shaking your hand

