

WORKERS  
OF THE  
WORLD.  
UNITE

# THE MILITANT



Weekly Organ of the Communist League of America [Opposition]

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## War and Social Chauvinism

Alarm Signals Against Jingoist Trends in the Communist Party

In the *Daily Worker* we read:  
"In an article in *Izvestia*, Radek said:  
"If challenged, the Soviet Union will have a right to seek temporary allies among the capitalist powers, which at the present stage do not infringe on her frontiers or interests."  
"The article implied that the United States would be the natural ally of Japanese sentiment in America."  
Russia under such circumstances and said that there was a growing 'anti-Japanese' sentiment in America."  
The *Daily Worker*, on its own account, adds in approval:  
"Not rejecting any possibility, no matter how temporary and slight it can be, to utilize the contradictions existing between the imperialists for the purpose of strengthening the position of the proletariat and the oppressed peoples, in their class struggle, this proposal means a new step of the peace policy of the Soviet Union."  
Stalin, *Izvestia*, Radek and the *Daily Worker* advance this reactionary anti-Communist idea in the name of Leninism.  
In 1918 replying to the social patriots of Western Europe, in "What is a Peace Program?" Trotsky wrote:  
"Social patriotism, which is in principle, if not always in fact, the execution of social reformism to the utmost extent and its adaptation to the imperialist epoch, proposes to us in the present world catastrophe to direct the policy of the proletariat in the direction of the 'lesser evil' by joining one of the two groups. We reject this method."  
In March 1918, in his theses on Brest-Litovsk, Lenin wrote categorically:  
"Our policy must be based, not on a choice between two imperialisms, but on the possibility of strengthening the socialist revolution, or at least, on the necessity of enabling it to offer resistance until the other countries join the revolutionary movement. We have always fought our own imperialist, but the overthrow of the imperialism of one country by means of an alliance with the imperialism of another, is a line of action that we reject both on reasons of principle and because we consider it inadmissible."  
There is the answer to Stalinist nationalism, made by Lenin and Trotsky fourteen years ago!—M. S.

The problems of war put all policies and groups to the highest test. The world war submitted the international social democracy to its severest test, and the result of the slow poison of opportunism which had been eating into it during the whole pre-war epoch was revealed in one illuminating flash. August 4, 1914 was not the beginning of the degeneration of the social democracy, it was the culminating point of a process of decay which had set in long before. The pre-war Left wing, whose revolutionary superiority lay in its mastery of Marxian analysis and foresight, traced the flow of social patriotic poison through the veins of the social democracy and sought to check it at every juncture.  
The same task devolves upon the revolutionist today. It is all the more imperative for our Communist movement at the present moment for two reasons: 1. the theory of socialism in one country opens the veins of the Communist parties for the free infusion of nationalistic poison; 2. the sharpening of the world imperialist conflict, which has already broken out in a miniature world war in China, is posing all political questions starkly.

That is why every Communist worker must raise a loud cry of warning against the treacherous proposals advanced in the leading editorial of the *Daily Worker* on April 12, 1932. The editorial, completely devoid of a breath of proletarian revolutionism, is one of the most disgraceful pieces of cynical flattery with chauvinism that has ever appeared in the Communist movement.

Let it be emphasized that we are not confronted here with some accidental "American aberration. The well of inspiration from which the proposals are drawn is the official mouthpiece of the Soviet government, the Moscow *Izvestia*. According to a sensational capitalist press dispatch which the *Daily Worker* reproduces as authentic, Radek, writing in *Izvestia* on April 10, declared: "If challenged, the Soviet Union will have a right to seek temporary allies among the capitalist powers which at the present stage do not infringe on her frontiers or interests. . . . Japan would be insane under such circumstances to create new fronts and arouse against herself a great country which at present stands aside (!) in the struggle that is tearing the imperialist world to pieces."

The article has but one meaning, as is recognized by the capitalist press and the *Daily Worker*: The Soviet Union is warning Japan against overt hostile acts with the threat of an alliance with imperialist America. We may therefore assume that in the event of a war, the Soviet Union would enter into a "temporary alliance" with Wall Street and Washington for the purpose of defending its frontiers against a Japanese invasion and . . . of helping American imperialism in turn to replace the Japanese in the domination of the Pacific and the Orient. Such an alliance, presumably, is "also" in the interests of imperialist America, the country "which at present stands aside in the struggle".

Where is the "temporary alliance" or any other kind of alliance with the American working class, that is, with the only class in this and every other country that provides any guarantee against a successful attack upon the fortress of the proletariat? Where is even an "alliance" with the Chinese people who have a really revolutionary interest in crushing the Japanese imperialists? It does not exist in what the *Daily Worker*, with unconscious omniscience, calls a "new step in the consistent and decisive policy of the Soviet Union". What does exist is an unprecedented, reactionary, unprincipled, "diplomatic" proposal which splits right in the face of what Lenin

wrote expressly on the question of the impermissibility for the Soviets to join hands with one imperialist power for the struggle against another.

But it is not entirely unprecedented. In 1923-24, Bukharin advanced the theory that since Germany, under the Versailles system, had become a "semi-colonial country", it was conceivable for the Soviet republic to make a military alliance with it against the Entente. Even this "modified" version was treated very coldly, and aroused the protest of the Bolshevik elements in the International. But at least Bukharin presented a certain "motivation" for his theory: Germany was a "semi-colony" fighting the imperialist powers; in allying itself with Germany, the Soviet republic would also be helping to "emancipate an oppressed nationality".

But who is to be emancipated in the newly proposed alliance? Is America to be liberated from the Japanese yoke?

## Biased Judge Convicts Marine Workers

The three New York marine workers—Soderberg, Bunker and Trajer—who have been on trial for the past three weeks in the Court of General Sessions, were found guilty by the jury after five hours' deliberation on Monday, April 11. Sentence will be imposed on April 25th. The men were charged with a conspiracy to dynamite barges in the New York harbor in a struggle between the boat owners and the Boatmen's Union. The conviction carries with it a penalty of from twelve and one-half to twenty-five years in the penitentiary.

One of the chief factors in the result of the trial was the flagrant unfairness manifested by Judge Allen in his rulings. Throughout the trial and especially on all the important clashes between the prosecution and the defense attorneys, the bias of the judge came into play to help the prosecution. For all who were present in the court room, the trial, as it progressed from day to day, was a graphic illustration of class justice, and likewise of the fallacy that militant workers can get a fair trial in the courts of capitalism.

But in spite of that, the acquittal of the defendants seemed to be a certainty up until the very last day of the trial. The flimsy case of the prosecution had been hammered down, and its witnesses—consisting exclusively of policemen and stool pigeons—had been thoroughly discredited. Then the prosecuting attorney backed by Judge Allen executed one of the most outrageous and illegal moves that the history of the frame-up game has yet produced. Soderberg, one of the defendants, had testified to the bestial tortures which the police had inflicted upon him at the time of his arrest, and showed to the jury the blood-stained shirt which he had worn at the time of the beating. This testimony, which supplemented that of the other defendants and of the worker Larry Murphy who had been under arrest and present at the time of the beatings, made a tremendous impression in the court room. The mute evidence of the blood-marked shirt spoke loudest of all.

The shirt shown in evidence was light grey in color. The district attorney then immediately introduced the police photograph of the defendant taken on the day of the beating. This photo showed Soderberg wearing a white shirt on that day, and the district attorney then raised a big hue and cry and charged a deliberate attempt to introduce false evidence. At the next session of the trial, just before the case was to go to the jury, the attorneys for the defense, Peter L. F. Sabbatino and Jacob Fishman produced photographs experts who were prepared

## OPEN FORUM

THE NEGRO QUESTION  
AND THE  
SCOTTSDALE CASE

Lecture by  
JAMES P. CANNON  
on  
FRIDAY, APRIL 22, 1932  
at the  
Labor Temple  
14th Street and Second Avenue  
at 8 P. M.  
QUESTIONS and DISCUSSION  
ADMISSION: 25 Cents  
Unemployed Workers Admitted Free  
Auspices: New York Branch Communist  
League of America (Opposition)

And if the war breaks out with a Soviet Russia-United States alliance in existence, what is to be the attitude of the revolutionary proletariat in this country? Logically, it should do everything to remove all obstacles standing in the way of the maintenance of the alliance. It should consequently refrain from disturbing the economic and political relations in the country so that the effectiveness of the American partner in the alliance is not diminished. It is, in a word, to renounce class war and embrace the policy of civil peace with its bourgeoisie. This was the Bukharinist conception, in essence, for Germany in 1923; no meaning can be extracted from the proposal "unofficially" made in the Soviet government organ by Radek.

The *Daily Worker*, entirely consistent with the theory of socialism in one country, which means in practice the abandonment of every revolutionary principle in the alleged interests of defending the Soviet Union from military attack, picks up the Radek thread with all its implications elaborated upon even more shamelessly. Taking Radek's cue, the editorial writer proceeds to address himself to the American ruling class in order to show it that its best imperialist interests lie in a break with Japan and an alliance with the Soviets. Yesterday's blaring headlines which announced to the readers that the United States is behind the whole anti-Soviet move,

(Continued on page 3)

## Biased Judge Convicts Marine Workers

to take the stand to prove that a shirt of the grey color of the one introduced by the defense would show white when photographed. In addition to this Soderberg offered to put the shirt on and be re-photographed by the district attorney's own photographer to prove the contention.

The judge presiding at the trial refused to allow this evidence to be introduced before the jury. The case went to the jury then under the cloud of an apparently deliberate introduction of falsified evidence by the defense. The district attorney skipped over all the other evidence of the trial and concentrated his speech to the jury on the incident of the shirt. He contended that since this piece of evidence has been proven false the rest of the defense testimony could be considered of the same quality. In spite of that the jury was tied up for five hours before a number of its members could be prevailed upon to the verdict of guilty. Since then it has been learned that the exclusion of the defense evidence—confirming the veracity of the defense contention about the blood-stained shirt—was the decisive factor with the jury.

The ruling of Judge Allen on this point is already being talked about in legal circles as an absolutely indefensible and unprecedented one which violated the formal provision of the existing law. From a legal standpoint, a reversal of the verdict on this ground alone is regarded as a certainty if the case is appealed to the higher court. The chief obstacle in the way of an appeal in behalf of the defendants is the financial cost. The Marine Workers Defense Committee is now considering the matter in consultation with the defendants and the attorneys in the case.

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## Crucial Moment Nearing in Germany!

Statement of the National Committee, Communist League of America (Opposition)

The run-off elections in Germany last Sunday revealed another substantial advance for Fascism and at the same time a considerable loss of ground for the Communist party and with it for the German workers. The results of the poll in the second ballot are a danger sign for the entire working class. Although the vote in itself is not decisive for the future of Germany—that must be settled, in the last analysis, outside of the parliamentary arena—the reflection it offers the line-up of the social forces is an alarming indication of the trend of events. If this trend is to continue, it can only mean one thing: a crushing defeat of the German workers in the decisive combats to come.

Hitler received 13,417,460 votes as against 11,389,285 on March 13. Thaelmann, the Presidential candidate of the Communist party, received 3,706,388 votes as against the 4,983,197 votes he received in the March elections. This constitutes a loss of 1,276,809 votes. Hindenburg increased his vote by more than 700,000 and Hitler his by more than 2,000,000.

Hitler received an approximate percentage of 38.6 per cent of the total vote cast, compared with the 30.1 per cent that fell to his share in March. The Fascist gain in Berlin, in Red Berlin, amounted to 200,000 votes, while the Communist total dropped 112,000 from the figures of the first ballot. In other working class districts a similar situation is to be noted. These facts cannot and must not be overlooked. They tell the world in an altogether too clear language that the class enemy is making enormous strides forward at a time when the working class is continually gliding down from one dangerous position to another.

### What Vote Indicates

The vote in itself is an indication that a good many workers voted for Hindenburg with the idea, as a last resort, to stave off the advance of Hitler. The inability of the official Communist party, with its absolutely disastrous policy of the "Red United Front"—which seeks to commit the workers in advance to accept its leadership—to rally the masses for a unified class front against Fascism, left broad layers of workers in despair. The vote for Hindenburg appeared to them to be a way out.

The responsibility of the social democratic traitors in this situation has already been established. It is only natural to expect the co-workers of Noske and Scheideman to create the illusion in the minds of their worker following that Hindenburg will stand up as a bulwark against Fascism. The slander of the Stalinist press that Trotsky and the Left Opposition concur in this and that we urged the workers to vote for Hindenburg is too despicable an invention to deserve any notice at all. The position of comrade Trotsky and of the Left Opposition as a whole is recorded in the pages of the periodicals of the International Left and all the attempts of the Stalinists to distort our position merely have the object of covering up their own criminal policies. It is these policies that are responsible for the terrible setback in the elections, it is these policies that endanger the very existence of the German working class.

The Communist party is the only genuine party of the working class. Its actions, its strategy, its tactics effect the very life of the class as a whole. It is in this sense that we must mercilessly stigmatize the present policy of the German Stalinists, with all the confusion it creates through the theory of social Fascism and all the isolation it has brought the revolutionary vanguard through the slogan of the "Red United Front under the leadership of the Communist party"—which poses before the workers a bureaucratic ultimatum instead of patiently striving to convince them of the correctness and inevitability of the Communist road—as a policy which can only prepare the defeat of the working class. The masses of German workers, alienated by this policy, have been driven by desperation to take refuge in illusions. This accounts for the loss in the Communist vote. The menace of Fascism, with the destruction of the last vestiges of labor organization that it brings with it, is staring them in the face. They feel that Fascism, above everything else, must be beaten off at all costs.

### Growing Resentment of Workers

It can hardly be assumed that all the thousands of workers who have voted for Hindenburg see in him an actual dam against the ravages of Hitlerism. The experiences of the recent raids on the Hitlerite headquarters and the absolute refusal of the Hindenburg government to take drastic action against the provocations of the Nazis could not help but open their eyes to a great extent. The future actions of the government will only continue to enlighten the workers to the true character of the social democrats' new militarist hero. The moment the Communist party takes the step toward the creation of a genuine united front of all workers' organizations in the

fight against the Fascist danger, the social democratic workers will desert the Hindenburg Front en masse and recognize their class duty and the way to carry it out. Their present support for Hindenburg is not a firm support, it is a result of a sentiment of impotence. Only the Communist party, with a sincere class policy, can sweep away this feeling of impotence and make the working class aware of its tremendous strength.

The German bourgeoisie, pushed to the wall by the overbearing economic crisis, surrounded by a chain of hostile capitalist nations equally seized by the crisis, will take the only road that is open to it. That is, the attack all along the line against the working class. The Brüning emergency decrees are only a beginning. To gain succor at the expense of the proletariat, the German bourgeoisie must strip it to the bone. For that it is necessary to make the workers defenseless, to rob them of the possibility of common action, to destroy all their forms of organization. That is the specific task of Fascism. That is why the bourgeoisie is not aggressive against the party of Hitler, against the party which rallies under its banner the hosts of the desperate petty bourgeoisie, the bloody reserve agency of capitalism.

The German workers will realize this more and more in the coming weeks and months. The Fascists, encouraged by their parliamentary successes, will grow more provocative, will move more rapidly toward the open seizure of power. The elections to the Prussian Diet on April 15 the advance toward the planned Nazi coup d'Etat. The more than 7,000,000 votes Hitler has polled in Prussia, the more than 800,000 votes he received in working class Berlin, the capital of Prussia, are alarm signals for the Communists.

Only a sweeping change in the self-destructive policy of the German Communist Party can save the German working class from crushing defeat. That alone can create the possibility for a successful repulsion of the class enemy. Such a change requires a sincere offer to all working class organizations, social democratic, trade union, cooperative, etc., to join in a united front of class action against the Fascist foe, in the factories, in the streets, in militant defense organizations. Such a united front of action will make it possible for the Communists to convince the working classes even in the few short weeks or months that remain, that the only way to resist Fascism is the way that leads directly to the proletarian dictatorship. It will enable the Communists to force the social democratic fakers, who may join the united front under the pressure of their following, to show up their true colors.

Already, under the pressure from their own rank and file, Severing, Breitscheid, Braun and company are forced to feign aggression against the Nazis, to speak sharply to the Brüning government to take steps for the disbanding of the Fascist organizations. But the words of the social democratic traitors will remain empty phrases as long as they succeed in keeping their followers from being confronted by Communist criticism at every step and stage, as long as they can succeed in isolating the masses behind them, from the clear-cut and inspiring proposals of the Communists. This treacherous conduct of the social democrats can be exposed and defeated this urge for decisive action on the part of their rank and file can be given a proper outlet only by the establishment of the real, broad, class united front.

The suicidal policy of Stalinism, the theory of social Fascism which alienates the social democratic workers, the slogan in the form of an ultimatum—the "Red United Front under the leadership of the Communist party" which paralyzes the Communist vanguard—must immediately be cast aside. A united front of all proletarian organizations, which gives each tendency in the working class the opportunity to point out its solution before the workers, must be set up at once. The Communists must take the course of patiently explaining the inevitability of the revolutionary way out for the working class. They must fight for the support of the workers, not demand it of them with a haughty, bureaucratic command. It is not enough to call the social democratic demagogues by their name, it is necessary to defeat them, by exposure in the full view of the masses. It is not enough to claim to be the only party of the working class. It is necessary to prove it to the proletariat in action, in daily struggle with the other tendencies, so that every worker can judge for himself.

The decisive hour is drawing near. The working class has the power to stand the test. The Communists must make them conscious of this power. Victory is attainable if the working class is guided by correct policy. The Communist party is the key to the solution. The present policy of Stalin-Thaelmann presents the greatest danger and the greatest obstacle for the German working class, for world Communism. Communists of the entire world, raise your voice against it before it is too late. Demand that the Leninist policy of the International Left Opposition be substituted for the policy of Stalin and Thaelmann. To guarantee this change of policy. Demand that the Left Opposition be readmitted into the party!

—National Committee, Communist League of America (Opposition).

## Foodworkers Roused Against Bureaucrats

NEW YORK, N. Y.

Some time ago, the Cooperatives in which the C. P. is in control closed their restaurants and stores, allegedly for alterations. Immediately thereafter, the management of the Cooperatives issued a leaflet to all its neighborhood patronizers, in which it announced a thoroughgoing reorganization of the stores and restaurants and promised "better, cleaner and cheaper service".

Last Saturday, the cooperative restaurant on Allerton Avenue reopened. It turned out that some forty workers were fired from the various enterprises controlled by the Cooperatives. The whole force protested against this action, especially in view of the fact that new men had been hired who were not members of the Food Workers Industrial Union.

A meeting was called at which Joseph Zack, of recent date high priest of the New York organization of the T. U. U. L. spoke for the leadership of the Food Workers Industrial Union, urging the workers present to take a "broader view" of the whole question, to consider the advantages for the moment in general if the reorganization was accepted. The workers present could not see things his way. They could not understand why a reorganization for the benefit of the whole movement must necessarily be brought about at the expense of many among them sacrificing their jobs. They could not understand how the abolition of union control in the Cooperatives would aid the movement. Many of those present spoke with passion and protested against the bureaucratic proceedings.

Zack answered with threats of expulsion from the union and warned them that they would meet with the "fate of Trotsky". This only served to stir the indignation of the workers even more. Many shook their fists at the T. U. U. C. representatives, but the latter felt himself protected by many of the newly hired people and continued with his menaces until the gathering adopted the decision to elect a committee for the purpose of appealing directly to the

T. U. U. L. center, to foster. With the committee elected, the meeting adjourned.

The foodworkers of the Cooperatives have expressed their determination to act as union men act against scabs. Many even began to discuss the prospect of picketing the cooperatives. The situation among them is tense. The sentiment against the bureaucracy is at a high pitch. In the Food Workers Union as a whole, this sentiment is quickly spreading, for there is talk that the camps controlled by the party are likewise to undergo a "reorganization". The party bureaucrats are telling the workers to "mind their own business" and that they must have the interests of the movement as a whole at heart. The workers are countering the attitude of the bureaucrats with the cry: "Who built the union?" They do not want to forget the sacrifices, often bloody sacrifices, they made for their union. They feel that union conditions must begin within the enterprises under control of the party and the Communist movement. "How can we ask the bosses to recognize the union" many of them ask, "if our own workers organizations are not to recognize it?"

The final decision of the party and the leadership of the union is still pending. The incident in the cooperatives has showed up the bureaucracy in the Stalinized party and in the revolutionary organizations controlled by it as a full grown menace. It is merely an indication of how saturated the Communist movement is with this disease. The roots of this bureaucratic growth should be exposed. All Communist workers must turn their serious attention to them.

This disgraceful intention of the Stalinist bureaucracy must not be realized. The reaction of the foodworkers to it is a healthy reaction and deserves the support of all sincere Communists. It is high time for the party comrades to stay the hand of the bureaucrats. The outrageous action of Zack and company should be repudiated. A drive must be initiated against bureaucratism all along the line.



## ORGANIZATION NOTES

The ideas of the Left Opposition are making their way despite all obstacles. Our members are learning to swim against the stream and their persistent efforts are bringing substantial, if not spectacular, results. The manner in which the Minneapolis branch carries on its activities is a good example. It is one of our oldest branches which was organized at the inception of the Left Opposition in America.

The Minneapolis branch has certain advantages. Before coming to the support of the Left Opposition many of its members had been deeply rooted in the labor movement. This record affords them respect in the minds of the workers. It means also a degree of experienced leadership already established. Our membership there cannot easily be ignored by the trade union bureaucracy nor by the official party functionaries. The slanders of the latter have therefore also been less effective.

Comrades from Minneapolis have made several trips covering the approximate distance of 150 miles up the head of the lakes. Each time some small measure of progress was made. Now there are more direct results to show. As *The Militant* readers already know, comrade Bloomberg of Duluth became a convinced supporter of the Left Opposition. He set to work ably and energetically, organizing a public meeting and comrades Cowl and Skoglund from Minneapolis made another trip to Duluth to speak together with Bloomberg at the rousing meeting there. Our Minneapolis branch is now considering the project of sending an organizer to Duluth to follow up and build the movement there.

In the present circulation campaign the Minneapolis branch has attained excellent results. The manner in which it carries the campaign through it is about the best. The outstanding feature is the fact that the membership participates collectively, the new members and the younger comrades and the more experienced membership all taking part and scoring their points.

The branch has its weaknesses too. For example, it allowed itself to be too easily out-manuevered by the Stalin petty functionaries from direct participation in a Mooney Conference organized by them. But that only contributed subsequently to the complete stagnation of the Mooney movement in Minneapolis. Such out-manuevering is not likely to happen often. The fact that our members are deeply rooted in the labor movement makes their participation necessary. It has also made possible that they could be the driving force in many serious attempts of the organized workers to guard their interests more effectively. Our comrades played a leading role into local railroad workers' council, as well as in the movement in opposition to the A. F. of L. bureaucrats. The lesson in Minneapolis membership has learned quite well, that is to utilize every opportunity for propaganda for our views. The branch has thereby been able slowly and persistently to increase its membership.

### NEWARK, N. J.—

In this city, as reported, we now have an active functioning branch. It is our youngest and its membership is not yet very large. It has, however, made an excellent start. First of all, it is beginning by sending in prompt remittance of all materials received and for literature distributed. And that is of quite serious account in the revolutionary movement today.

The Newark branch, immediately upon its formation, organized a public lecture at which comrade Louis Basky spoke. That was the beginning. The intention is to follow up with more lectures. Since then it has in a systematic and planned manner visited meetings of workers and of workers' organizations, well supplied with our literature. A regular sale of *The Militant* is being established. New subscribers have been turned in, and already a considerable amount of our pamphlets have been disposed of. The Newark branch has thus made a good beginning.

### N. Y. ACTIVITIES

The past winter months have witnessed a substantial increase in practically all activities of the New York branch. The issuance of *Unser Kampf*, *Young Spartacus* and *Communism* drew a number of the comrades into real active work. Distribution of the papers has meant added burdens for the membership. In spite of that the younger comrades distributed their paper before many Y. C. I. units and other places. The Jewish comrades literally spread their paper far and wide. "*Communism*" created a stir among the Greek workers. Practically all outstanding news stands and meetings of Jewish workers have been covered.

The acquisition of the group of Greek workers, the formation of the Spartacus Youth Club and the *Unser Kampf* Arbeiter Club have attracted new and good elements to the branch. Most of these new comrades have already partaken of considerable activity and helped to some extent to relieve the weight of the whole

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Martin Abern James P. Cannon  
Max Shachtman Maurice Spector  
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work from the comrades who bore it until now. With these additional members, the branch is already planning to increase the number of open air meetings over those held last year. Two years ago the branch was able to hold but one meeting per week. Last year we succeeded in holding two per week, and this year there will be an attempt to have three. Through this medium, much literature was disposed of last summer; expectations are for an increase this summer.

The weekly forums have been quite well attended, some weeks drawing a capacity crowd. The most successful single activity has been the class in the "History of the Communist International," led by comrade Shachtman. While advertised as a class, it has in reality almost become a second weekly open forum, judging by the attendance. From thirty-five to fifty people have attended every session, giving rise to prospects for several classes next fall. The class in Marxism, conducted by comrade Swabeck, entered into a thorough discussion of important works of Marx. Comrades of the class were drawn into a closer study of these works by acting as reporters, thus enlivening interest and argument. From the experiences with classes thus far, the N. Y. branch should be ready to start a "Workers' School of its own, next fall.

The last week added another activity in the form of a special drive for the Marine Workers' Defense Committee. The pledge of the national organization for an additional \$100 has been met. Four open air defense meetings were held by the Youth Club and branch in the past two weeks, with from two to four dollars collected at each meeting; and interest and sympathy with the frame-up victims evidenced at each meeting. On Saturday and Sunday, April 9th and 10th general collections were held. The Spartacus Youth Club members soon found the technique of how to get something in the collection boxes and enthusiastically did their bit. Members are visiting unions and other workers' organizations and getting results—if not always from the leadership at least from the rank and file.

The main problem of the branch remains building up its contact with the Party and sympathizers around it.

## Militant Drive at Half Way Mark

With the issue of *The Militant* the subscription campaign is half over. Although we got under way slowly, we are now moving ahead. Subs and renewals are coming in. Last week we reported 72 subs and renewals. This week the figure stands at 87. The staff of *Militant* builders has risen from 17 to 21.

The standing of the branches is substantially the same as last week:

New York	32
Minneapolis	24
Chicago	7
Boston	4
St. Louis	1
Newark	1
Philadelphia	1
Montreal	1
Miscellaneous	16

New York and Minneapolis branches accounted for fourteen of the fifteen subs reported last week. No other branch reported. What is the matter, Chicago, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Philadelphia, Newark, Boston, Montreal? Are you going to let New York and Minneapolis have it all their own way?

And what is the matter with Cleveland, Youngstown, Kansas City, New Haven, Los Angeles, Pittsburgh? Are you going to be left out of it? There are only six weeks left to June 1st. Get busy.

The race between New York and Minneapolis is getting closer and hotter. Last week the difference between them was ten subs. This week it has been cut to eight. Will Minneapolis make good its promises to give New York a drubbing? (Confidentially—New York is getting worried.) It is understood, of course, that we are strictly impartial.

The Minneapolis team standing (\$1 is one point) for the week ending April 6th was:

Team No 1—24 3-4 points
Team No 2—17 1-2 points.
The branch total is 42 1-4 points. This total does not include the subs the Minneapolis branch is steadily sending in for <i>Unser Kampf</i> and <i>Young Spartacus</i> .

A new bundle order was reported last week from Duluth, Minnesota, by comrade Carl Cowl of our Minneapolis branch. Verily, this is a branch! No other bundle orders were reported. What is wrong, comrades? Newsstands, bookstores, which will carry *The Militant* exist. They must be found out. And then they must be revisited. If comrades will send in lists for their cities, we will run them in *The Militant*. This should help.

No requests from out of town were received last week for bundles of sample copies for free distribution. Yet it is astonishingly easy to make these distributions. In the needle trades market in New York last week four comrades distributed 1000 *Militants*, *Unser Kampf* and leaflets in fifteen minutes. A comrade who went out on another occasion to make a free distribution of back numbers was kept breathlessly whirling around, trying to put *Militants* into the workers' outstretched hands. Last summer in Cleveland hundreds of copies were distributed in this way. And these distributions of back numbers increased the subsequent sale of current issues. Comrades, it can be done. It is being done to some extent. But not enough. Order back numbers now!

Are you comrades taking full advantage, as an inducement for getting subs, of the appearance in *The Militant* of ex-

### Two Reformist Meets

#### MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.

Two state conventions of rival reformist parties were held last week in the Twin Cities—the Socialist Party on April 28th at Labor Headquarters, Minneapolis, and the Farmer Labor Party on April 29th and 30th in the St. Paul Auditorium.

To give a brief political characterization of these assemblies, it can be said that aside from the difference in size and excitement, both have adopted on almost identical program of practical reforms with vague references to a new society.

The Farmer-Labor Party of Minnesota is unique in American politics in being the only third party to elect a governor (Floyd B. Olson), state and congressional officials and a U. S. Senator (Shipstead). It is not surprising, therefore, that the St. Paul auditorium hall was jammed to the doors (about 1200) with a motley delegation of farmers, bankers, lawyers, labor officials and a sprinkling of rank and file members.

The Socialist Party state gathering of about 50 met in Labor Headquarters, Minneapolis. I say gathering advisedly, since it was not a delegated body, there being no functioning units in the state. All those who "consider themselves as socialists" were invited to attend the state "convention."

While the F. L. P. declared for a "new social system," the S. P. called for "the abolition of capitalism." The S. P. demand for "Unemployment Insurance, full cost to the boss," is countered by the F. L. P. "federal and state unemployment insurance . . . the industries, corporations . . . must bear the burden of this protection." The Socialist proposals for a graduated income tax with emphasis on the rich takes the form in the F. L. P. platform of a "graduated, progressive income tax, the proceeds to be used to reduce the present tax burden of the farmer and small home owner." They both declare for the old-age pension and the shorter work day.

The only point of real difference in the two parties is the purely parliamentary one of national candidates. The Socialists endorsed Norman Thomas and Mayor Hoan of Milwaukee for the head

of their national ticket. The F. L. P. leaders apparently plan an election deal with the democrats behind Roosevelt in return for state support of the latter for the F. L. P. candidates. Therefore, when Slonin, late committeeman of the S. P. and delegate to the F. L. P. convention in an unpassioned speech, threatened to withdraw from the body if the "fusion" measure passed, a storm of raillery opened up from the floor. The motion to leave the matter in the hands of the state executive committee finally passed. So the clique in control of this going concern is free to make any deal they care to.

In spite of all the ballyhoo of the liberals there is little indication of a national third party ticket. Julius J. Ketter of Rochester reported a conference of the "National Farmer Labor Party" held at Omaha in February. His heated argument for the endorsement of a third party presidential candidate, or at least, the nomination of F. L. P. presidential electors, fell on deaf ears. The prevailing sentiment, as expressed by numerous speakers, was that the capital of the Party was not to the detriment of the offices already achieved in Minnesota.

Although the S. P. convention elected a state executive, state secretary and state organizer, and some half-hearted speeches were made to stage an S. P. "comeback," there is nothing to indicate that it will not go back to sleep after the elections for another four years . . . at least in Minnesota. The putting up of a socialist ticket in the event of the F. L. P. endorsement of Roosevelt might give it a spurt of life—for the period of the campaign—but little more. I say this in view of the fact that in Minnesota the F. L. P. has completely usurped the functions of the S. P.—in fact, the latter is merely a loose faction of the former.

So much for the news. In next week's *Militant* the writer will attempt to present a political analysis and draw conclusions with regard to the role of the Communists and the Left Opposition.

—CARL COWL.

### Movie Chains Try to Smash Union

#### NEW YORK N. Y.

Sign Writers' Local 230 in New York of the Brotherhood of Painters, Decorators, and Paperhangers of America is a typical A. F. of L. craft union. Its administration is a graft-ridden, business agent-executive board regime. The business agent receives about \$120 a week; the executive board members also receive salaries. A former business agent was expelled because of his open collusion with the bosses; he took money from them and winked at violations of union conditions like an owl which cannot see in the daytime. Such people have no interest in maintaining union wage scales and conditions. Their sole interest is in their weekly checks and in the graft they collect. The workers were aware of this but remained indifferent as long as work was steady. Now they are resentful but helpless and they do not as yet know what to do.

The local has about five hundred members. They are first, second, third, fourth and fifth year apprentices, helpers, mechanics and designers. For the privilege of being an apprentice a worker had to pay the union bureaucrats an initiation fee of from \$5 to \$50; a mechanic \$150; a helper \$500. The union controls about sixty small shops. The other four hundred shops are non-union. Many of the bosses of the union shops are members of the union.

The wage scale was as follows: for apprentices, from the first to fifth year: \$3.15 to \$11.50 a day; for helpers: \$10.50; designers: \$20.00. The helpers constitute a large majority of the workers in the trade.

Through one pretext or another this scale was undercut by the bosses without protest from the workers or the union. The workers did not protest the undercutting of the wage scale because sixty per cent of them were unemployed and those at work were working part time. They were afraid to say so.

This was the situation when the wage agreement with the bosses expired on March 30th. The union proposed to the bosses a renewal of the wage scale. This was nothing but a gesture as the scale was not being enforced. To allay the uneasiness of the rank and file the union bureaucrats proposed in addition to the renewal of the wage scale that helpers be permitted to do part of the apprentices' work. This would enable the bosses to lay off some or all of their apprentices and increase the work of the helpers. It is the old A. F. of L. trick of playing off one section of workers against another. The union further proposed the introduction of split time in the "discretion of the union" and under the control of the union. The time cards of the workers were to be sent weekly to the union headquarters.

To this the bosses replied with proposals of their own. Of the sixty unionized shops some ten or fifteen do work for the moving picture chains: Loew, R. K. O.; Warner Bros., etc. These outfits would like to either employ non-union labor or union labor at open shop rates. Best of all they would like to smash the union. In the present situation they see their opportunity. They have taken the first step.

Upon their instigation the bosses rejected the terms of the union; they want the right to hire and lay-off and fire at will; they want to strike out from the agreement the clause requiring them to get the union's permission for overtime work.

This is important to the shops doing theatrical work. The chains always shoot only by overtime work. The chains propose a 25% wage cut. These terms would reduce the union to a meaningless shell.

The union bureaucrats would have accepted these terms were it not for the dissatisfaction of the rank and file which forced a strike. The strike is now taking place. Picketing is being organized. Acid was thrown on a sign at the Astor Theatre. Twenty shops have settled on the union's terms. But not the shops which get the moving picture chains' orders. They are holding out.

The attempt of the chains to smash the union is reflected in the struggle inside the union. The workers in the shops which get the chains' orders, who are a numerical minority in the union, are more steadily employed than the workers in the other union shops. With sixty per cent of the membership unemployed, this numerical minority almost alone carries the financial burden of the union on its back. It is more outspoken and hostile to the bureaucracy. But the bureaucracy always manages to out-vote it.

The rift between this minority and the bureaucrats supported by a majority of the membership came to a head with the expiration of the wage agreement and the exchange of terms. This theatrical show card minority anxious to continue working was opposed to the strike. It was and is willing to arbitrate with the idea of settling for a ten per cent wage cut. It has no interest in the strike.

It has called a secret meeting to discuss plans for the formation of a separate organization independent of local 230, and for a settlement on the basis of a ten per cent wage cut. This extremely short sighted policy will get these workers nowhere. If realized it will break the union, accomplish the aim of the chains and their own isolation, leaving them to the mercies of the powerful chains who will, of course, proceed to lower their living and working conditions even further through additional wage cuts, speed up and lay-offs.

In the ranks of the theatrical show card writers and in the union generally are several Left wing workers. These workers should immediately work out a program and present it to the union membership.

They must explain to the theatrical show card writers that they have embarked on a suicidal course both for themselves and the union as a whole. They must show their fellow workers that this is playing the game of the chains who alone will benefit from it. Against the split they must propose a fighting unity of the whole union against the chains and the bosses for concrete demands to be worked out by the membership.

To the union membership as a whole they must propose as an indispensable prerequisite for the fight against chains a fight against the bureaucracy in the union and its scheme of setting off one section of the workers against another. Instead of split time they must propose the wholly practicable slogan of the six hour day without reduction in pay. And to this they must add unemployment insurance at the expense of the bosses. They must also propose the elimination of the five categories of apprentices since the introduction of machinery and mechanical methods of production have largely eliminated the necessity for skilled use of the brush. Finally they must propose organization of the unorganized shops. As a prerequisite for this they must abolish the initiation fees.

—T. STAMM.

### BACK NUMBERS OF "MILITANT" WANTED

We are preparing files of the *Militant* for binding. We plan to bind in one volume all the issues from Vol. 1, No. 1 to Volume IV No. 12, the last issue of the semi-monthly *Militant*. We are missing the following numbers: Vol. I, No. 1, November 15, 1928. Vol. 2, No. 4, Feb. 18th, 1929; Vol. 3, No. 31; Oct. 1 1930; Vol. 4, No. 2, January 15th, 1931. Vol. 4, No. 10, May 15th, 1931. Will comrades who have these numbers please send them in at once. Just as soon as we receive these numbers we will be able to proceed with our binding plans and offer the bound volumes for sale.

## IN THE CANADIAN MOVEMENT

### The Turn in the Industrial Union

#### TORONTO, ONT.

Before beginning the discussion on the new turn in the Industrial Union policy it is worth while going back to spend a few minutes on its preceding history. While I am limiting my remarks to the Dressmaker local of the Toronto Needle Trades, it was this Union that was first organized and upon which the greatest hopes and possibilities were placed.

The organization of the Industrial Union closely approximated the defeat of the Left wing in the Amalgamated where for over a year the Lefts were in control. The formation of the Dressmaker local, met with good response. Several hundred workers immediately joined. Due mainly to lack of decision and leadership, the union soon began disintegrating.

A year or so later the union was again reorganized on a very much smaller basis. About this time or soon after third period trade union policies were introduced. Unions under reformist leadership became "company unions," strikes called by the reformists were branded as "fake stoppages in the interests of the bosses"—unity of the workers was limited in the slogan of join our union—boring from within the reformist unions was discarded for fear of activating them.

Disintegration and isolation continued and a year later the third period trade union policies were intensified with the addition of the slogan of unity with the workers in their shops, boycott of their organizations.

The strike called by the union had all the earmarks of adventure and failed. True to their colors, the reformists did their part, by sending their members to replace the strikers. The strike called by the International Union which the Industrial Union sabotaged also landed on the rocks.

The net profit of both strikes was that the workers are disgusted and disillusioned, and ignored both unions despite the very bad conditions prevailing in the trade. Mass meetings called by the Industrial Union have dwindled down to hardly more than local meetings, while the attendance at local meetings is very small. The standing of the International is no better.

The delegates to the last congress of the R. I. L. U. returned with the crepe for the third period policies. Unions under reformist leadership are no longer company unions. Strikes called by the reformists are recognized as strikes that can be developed into real struggles over the heads of the leadership. Boring from within is again accepted. Even the united front from below now includes unity proposals made directly to the reformist unions.

Thus far the new turn would seem to indicate a partial return in the direction of real Communist policies. A real Communist turn on the part of the leadership demands open admission before the whole working class and the union of their previous false policies and premises on which they were built. The broadest discussion and lessons are to be drawn. Finally, the placing of the responsibility on the responsible parties, it is needless to remark that the centrists won't do this. For them it suffices to throw the blame vaguely on "certain local leaders."

What lies underneath this new turn?

### ST. LOUIS, ATTENTION!

On April 22nd, at 8 P. M.

There will be a lecture on

THE WORKING CLASS STUDENT,

THE SCHOOLS AND THE

CLASS STRUGGLE

by

MARTIN PAYER

The Crunden Branch Library Auditorium

14th and Cass Avenues.

ADMISSION FREE

### ST. LOUIS MAY DAY CONFERENCE

The St. Louis branch, Communist League of America (Opposition) has issued a call for a Joint May Day Conference to be held on April 24th, 3 p. m. at the Souldard Library Hall, 7th and Souldard Sts.

All local working class organizations and political parties are invited to participate in arranging a Joint May Mass Meeting.

### CHICAGO OPEN FORUM WILL A THIRD PARTY HELP THE WORKERS?

Lecture by

JOHN EDWARDS

on

SUNDAY, APRIL 24th, at 3 P. M.

at

1435 N. Western Ave.



# IN THE INTERNATIONAL OF LABOR

## Reviews and News of the Working Class and Revolutionary Movements

### What Really Happened at Shanghai

Japanese imperialism has succeeded in breaking the heroic struggle of the Shanghai masses, in taking Shanghai and the surrounding territory. This success was not due simply to the technical and military superiority of Japanese imperialism. The Chinese counter-revolution under the leadership of Chiang Kai-Shek capitulated before the enemy because of the fear that the steadfast struggle of the Shanghai workers would in the end be directed against them. For this reason, Chiang Kai-Shek disarmed the Shanghai workers who were engaged in a struggle against the Japanese army. This is the way the former ally of Stalin fights for the national liberation of China. It is once more made clear that the national liberation of the colonies can only come about by a victorious proletarian revolution.

The entire press, and the Communist press in particular, have continually brought reports of the heroic struggle of the Nineteenth Route Army against the Japanese imperialists. The party papers reported that this army mutinied against the Nanking government and organized the military resistance by itself. According to these same sources the army had become a sort of rallying point for the popular masses of Shanghai. It was also reported that this army disarmed divisions that remained loyal to Nanking.

What sort of an army is it? The entire Comintern press maintained any icy silence on this question. Yet, it is impossible that these facts were unknown to the Comintern leaders. Aside from the information apparatus of the Comintern and the Communist press, there is also a press service of the U. S. S. R. Stalin, Manulsky, Thaelmann and Co. knew very well what was going on in Shanghai.

What happened at Shanghai? What did the Nineteenth Route Army do? To which party did the army appeal? **The Nineteenth Route Army appealed to the Communist Party of China.** Why did the Comintern leaders conceal this joyful news from the Communist parties and the world proletariat? The Nineteenth Route Army was looking for the C. P. of China. **Day after day it was covering the walls of Shanghai with the message: Communist Party, come to our side, we want to join you!** (This news comes from the official reporter of the *Pravda*, and was divulged at a closed session. It does not hail from a "counter-revolution Trotskyist"). All its efforts were in vain, the C. P. did not come to its side. The C. P. could not be found in Shanghai, in the outstanding center of China. What a frightful fact!

It is becoming clear only now, why the Comintern press kept quiet about the actual happenings within the Nineteenth Route Army. Had the Comintern leaders made these happenings known, every thinking Communist would have asked: were the reports at the last E. C. C. I. plenum regarding the strength of the C. P. of China correct? According to these reports, the C. P. of China had hundreds of thousands of members, the Shanghai organization of the party was one of the strongest. The conclusion that every Party comrade must draw is that these reports were abject deception. That is the only answer there is.

The Stalins and Thaelmanns who bear the full responsibility for the disastrous defeat of the Chinese proletariat in 1927, who have wrecked the Communist Party of China, had to conceal the truth regarding the actual conditions of the C. P. Ch. from the party membership so as to make them forget their catastrophic policies in China. And because this policy is being avenged in China, because there is not in fact any Communist Party there to lead the masses in struggle, the Stalinist bureaucracy had to withhold the joyful news that a whole army went over to the C. P. This is one more terrible lesson of the disastrous policy of

the Stalinist leadership which is wrecking Communism.

How much confidence can a Communist have in the data furnished by the Comintern leadership regarding the existence of a Soviet China in part of the country? Who will believe Muenzenberg, the General Secretary of the "League Against Imperialism and Colonial Oppression", an organization which according to the conceptions of the Comintern leaders is to lead the anti-imperialist struggle, when he says at a public meeting: "In China we have a Soviet Republic with 70,000,000 inhabitants and with a Red Army of 300,000 men." We ask:

### Nine Years of the Struggle of the Left Opposition: - 1923

The first struggle in the Russian party, around which the Left Opposition took shape occurred in 1923 between the 12th and the 13th party congresses. It was concerned with four questions of fundamental importance: (1) the relations between the city and the country, the key question for the proletarian dictatorship in Russia which is based upon the alliance of the workers and the peasants; (2) the problem of a plan in the development of economy, which continues to run through all the subsequent internal struggles like a red thread; (3) the question of the internal party regime, which the passage of the years has only rendered infinitely more acute; and finally, (4) the questions of revolutionary strategy raised by the abortive German revolution of 1923 and the Bulgarian insurrection of the same year. The last point we will deal with in our next article. Here we will occupy ourselves with the first three points which are so inextricably intertwined.

To present the dispute of 1923 clearly means to dig under a veritable mountain of thick filth and falsification with which the bureaucracy has covered the true essence of the problem for nine years. It may perhaps best be understood by first giving an account of the situation existing in those days. In this way it will be possible to examine the contending views against their natural background.

#### The Program for Workers' Democracy

As far back as the 10th Congress of the party, when the counter-revolution and the civil war had been liquidated on every important front, a program intended to terminate the atmosphere of "war Communism" in the party and to substitute for it "workers' democracy" was adopted under the leadership of Lenin. "The needs of the current moment," read the resolution of the congress, "demand a new organizational form. That form is workers' democracy. A course of workers' democracy shall be adopted with the same decisiveness, and as energetically carried into execution, as in the period just past the course toward militarization of the party, to the extent that this does not meet an obstacle in the need for struggle with the counter-revolution."

The outbreak of the counter-revolutionary uprising in Kronstadt and the subsequent promulgation of the New Economic Policy (NEP) resulted in the execution of the 10th Congress program being arrested for the time being. But the problem of democracy in the party lost none of its actuality, particularly in view of how matters began to develop in the country as a whole and in the party specifically. The problem was aggravated by the following circumstance:

In the summer of 1923, Russia experienced a severe economic crisis which became popularly known by a famous designation of Trotsky's as "the scissors crisis". The name was derived from the symbol of the widening blades of a scissors, one blade representing the price of agricultural products and the other the price of manufactured objects, one latter of which increased with the decrease

of the former. To draw together the blades of the scissors, that is, to bring the prices of agricultural and industrial products into greater harmony, became the intensely urgent problem of the Soviet power, particularly calculated to establish a corresponding political harmony between the proletariat and the peasantry on the one hand, and between both of them and the Soviet power on the other hand.

Although the 12th party congress in April 1923 had dealt formally with the question, not a single practical step had been taken to solve the problem. To the contrary: the summer and fall crisis was proof that the situation had worsened. Industries, finding it hard to dispose of their products, slowed up their production and consequently found it increasingly difficult to pay wages regularly. When they were paid it was in the form of a depreciated money which could not satisfy the needs of the workers. The number of unemployed was on the increase. Manufactured goods, therefore, were not only unavailable to the peasants, but also to the workers. To add to the difficulties, strikes—a phenomenon rare and alarming under the Soviets—broke out in various parts of the country.

The mounting dissatisfaction of the workers found expression in the party, too. In distorted form, it was reflected notably in the formation of two secret groups, the "Workers' Group", with distinctly Menshevik ideas, and the "Workers' Truth Group", with anarcho-syndicalist ideas. Even when the groups had been discovered and their leaders expelled, the questions nevertheless remained: How shall their appearance be explained? And the answer which met with growing agreement was that these phenomena were the result of the internal party regime of "war Communism" which continued to live after the period of war communism in the country had died out.

#### Trotsky's Intervention

On October 8, Trotsky wrote to the Central Committee to express his opinion on the whole matter. In it he pointed out that repressive measures alone could not solve the problem. The crisis was due to the inadequate application of the 12th congress decisions on the organization of industry, especially with regard to the concentration of industry and the necessity of a plan. (Here, by the way, can be traced the origin of the struggle for a plan in economy which the Bolshevik-Leninists commenced and which the bureaucracy resisted for years afterwards.) Finally, he showed, the crisis was due to the inability of the party masses to exchange views, to exercise any influence upon the leadership, or to participate in the affairs of the state—a condition resulting from a hierarchical and bureaucratic regime in the party with the principal mass of the officials appointed from above instead of elected by the membership.

How serious the bureaucratic distortion of the party had become may be seen even more clearly from the following two incidents. Lenin, desperately ill, was unable to participate directly in the affairs of the party. But even from his sick-bed, he was in a position to see how matters stood and how great was the danger to the party and the revolution. Late in 1923, only a very short time before his death, he drew up one document after another directed against the secret clique of Stalin-Zinoviev-Kamenev-Bucharin which had already constituted itself with the determination to perpetuate themselves in control. It is in this period that Lenin wrote his numerous letters against Stalin, then the letter breaking off all personal relations with Stalin, and finally the famous "testament" in which he proposes that Stalin be removed from the post of party secretary. In one of the documents he wrote at that time, later known to the party as "Better Less and Better", Lenin wrote scathingly about the "Rabkrin" at the head of which stood Stalin: "Our new Commissariat of Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, we hope, will leave behind the quality which the French call *pruderie*, which we may call a ridiculous affectation and a ridiculous self-importance, which is the last degree characteristic of all our bureaucrats, Soviet bureaucrats and party bureaucrats alike. In parenthesis he said that we have a bureaucracy not only in the Soviet institutions but in the party too."

How far the bureaucratism had already gone in the party was described at that time, among others, also by Bucharin, who was one of the leaders in the fight against Trotsky and the Opposition.

C. P. of China? You will not say that such an action was impossible because of technical reasons, and transport reasons. For revolutionaries there are no such obstacles.

Are the data furnished by Muenzenberg correct? Or are they only another link in the chain of deceptive reports? The party comrades must know the truth. Revolutionists do not fear to realize their own weakness. Self-deception is the greatest disaster for the Communist movement. We have had enough disappointments. Think of Lenin, who set up the principle of openly pointing out our weakness before the mass—not only before the members of the party. Therein lay the tremendous strength of the Leninist party and its superiority over all enemies.

—R. WELL.

### Developments in Spain

MADRID, March 24, 1932

The Communist Party of Spain has just held its Fourth National Convention at Seville. The few Spanish workers who even after the regional conferences still believed that the convention would mean the preparation for a strong Communist party and the first decisive step toward Communist unification have seen their hopes shattered. The convention of official Spanish Communism was a real "anti-Trotskyist" gathering. Only that part of the Open Letter of the Communist International, which calls upon the C. P. S. to undertake a forceful attack against the Communist Left Opposition was under discussion. We witnessed there how the leaders of the C. P., without without any transitory topos, gave up their conception concerning the "insignificance of Trotskyism in Spain" and adopted the point of view that Spain is the only country in which the Communist Left is actually important. They declared that it was a serious mistake on their part to disregard the enormous importance that "Trotskyism" had acquired in this country. The regional conferences which preceded the National Convention were dedicated almost entirely to the discussion of the "Trotskyist" problem and the National Convention only presented a resume of the regional conferences.

During the last three weeks "Trotskyism" has been propagated in Spain much more effectively by these self-same Stalinists than by our own work within the last two years. Today "Trotskyism" is being spoken about in Spain, in the working class organizations, in the coffee houses, in the theatres—everywhere. In this sense, we have sufficient cause to be satisfied and we owe thanks to the Stalinist bureaucracy for the good work they have carried on for us.

Nevertheless, it is deplorable that the first convention held by the Spanish Communists since the coup d'Etat of Primo de Rivera in 1923, meeting at a moment when a serious depression is beginning within the labor movement of Spain, should not have taken under consideration any other problem outside of that concerning "Trotskyism"—and that in an altogether superficial and subjective form—especially in view of the tremendous tasks facing the Spanish proletariat and its vanguard in particular.

The Open Letter of the Communist International, assuming the air of a teacher, merely repeats our own criticism of the leadership of the Spanish Communist Party, stigmatizes the mistakes committed but gives no solution for the future aside from demanding a fierce attack against "counter-revolutionary Trotskyism".

Paradoxical as it may seem, the convention of the C. P. S. did not take up the present situation. Sad as it is, we must say this openly. Not a single thesis was presented to the convention, which in itself was a convention for the liquidation of the Communist Party of Spain.

Meanwhile the Political situation lends itself magnificently to the development of revolutionary action and the creation of a strong Communist party. The republican government, although it appears to be consolidated, finds itself in need of resorting to acts of violence in order to maintain itself in power. Bourgeois reaction has been able to readapt itself and to raise its head once more after the panic which had seized it in the first days of the new regime. This is due to the obvious depression that has of late set in within the labor movement. It is undeniable that the Azana govern-

ment, still under the "Leftist" label, embodies the preparation of the coming into power of a government which, apart from being reactionary in general, will be particularly anti-working class in character and at that in a less concealed form.

Unemployment is becoming more acute every day. In spite of the depression within the labor movement, strikes have not ceased to appear, although they give evidence of less intensity than several months ago. The labor crisis will continue to grow from day to day and the workers' movement will very soon re-emerge with even greater combativity than heretofore. The workers will defend their right to live and will engage in struggles of even greater importance and sharpness than those in the past. The anarchists and the anarcho-syndicalists have showed that they are incapable of leading the proletariat to victory. Although the anarchist working class elements have showed an admirable spirit of militancy and heroism. Nothing can be expected from the social democratic traitors. The hope of the working class rested with the Communist party and the latter deceived it in its hope. This is the great responsibility of the Stalinist bureaucracy. This responsibility signifies incompetence and a lack of understanding on the one side; sectarianism, arrogance and the lack of the most elementary notions of responsibility, on the other hand. The Stalinist leaders have not been able to wrest away the masses from the influence of the democratic illusions, denying these democratic illusions and prescribing a leap in one step and without any transition, from the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera to a Soviet regime, although at present they lose themselves in the biggest confusionism with regard to slogans of a democratic character and believe that in order to come to the proletarian dictatorship it is necessary to "pass through the democratic stage of a workers' and peasants' government" (the same slogan that "guided" the Chinese revolution of 1926-27). They are the only ones responsible for the masses turning, after losing all their confidence in the present republic, to the bourgeois "leftist" radicals. The establishment of the "left" radical bourgeoisie as a party defending the democracy is something for which the Stalinist bureaucracy is largely responsible. The leadership of the C. P. S. was unable to explain to the masses the deception of bourgeois democracy. It merely aggravated things, when at the time the masses were intoxicated with the notion of democracy, it demanded "all power to the Soviets", to Soviets that did not exist except in the fancy of the Spanish disciples of Stalin.

It is necessary to destroy the democratic illusions of the masses; it is necessary to wrest them away from the influence of the radical bourgeoisie. The official Communist party has not been able and is not yet able to do this, because its leadership has deserted the correct Bolshevik line. It is precisely for this reason that the C. P. S. is uninterruptedly disintegrating and being destroyed. The best militants of the Communist party keep on moving in the direction of the Communist Left Opposition, are constantly increasing our ranks.

This is the present situation and these are the problems facing the Spanish proletariat at the present moment. Under these historical circumstances, our third National Conference is going to meet. Before this conference there is presented in the form of theses, an arsenal of documents on problems which the Communist Left Opposition will have to solve. Today the Communist Left Opposition is the organization toward which the most conscious proletariat of Spain turns its eyes. A large current of working class opinion is making its way toward us, putting its faith in the Communist Left Opposition of Spain. The responsibility of our organization in this historical moment is the responsibility of the real Communist party of Spain, of the genuine vanguard of the Spanish proletariat. Conscious of our duties and responsibilities, we are going to meet at our National Conference on March 26. The achievements of this conference will be the subject of our next article.

—HENRI LACROIX.

### Imperialist War and Social Chauvinism

(Continued from page 1)

are forgotten as lightly as they were conceived. Instead we read this solicited advice to the American bourgeoisie concerning the recent Tardieu-MacDonald conference:

"At this conference two questions were discussed simultaneously: the situation in the Far East and the common repudiation of paying war debts to the United States. It is also no accident that the 'attack against the dollar' has been strengthened to an unparalleled degree directly after this conference. The American 'economists' are trying to find the routes of this attack in the collaboration between French and English newspapers. It would be better for them to cast a glance deeper and to look into the Quai d'Orsay and Downing Street, where the French and English foreign policies are worked out." (Our emphasis).

With this paragraph, the statesman of the *Daily Worker* seeks to do the detective work for the American bourgeoisie, neither more nor less. "On Guard," he cries in effect, "France and England are planning to repudiate your war debts. This is the conference which strengthened the attack on 'our' dollar. This attack is not being conducted by isolated newspapers. The real enemy is the French bourgeoisie, the English bourgeoisie. They are also ones who back Japan. You would be foolish to tolerate Japan's advances upon the Soviets."

Is this the first concrete result of the new Stalinist "temporary alliance"? Has the American party already become diplomatic adviser to the Hoover government? And has a more treacherous trap been prepared in the Communist movement in recent times than this one?

Now the party demand for the "expulsion of all Japanese diplomatic representatives from the U. S." becomes entirely clear—if it ever was obscure. The American party demands of the bourgeoisie that it take steps against the Japanese which the Soviet Union has refrained from taking. But the expulsion of all diplomatic representatives is only the first of many connected steps. To break off diplomatic relations is usually the prelude to a declaration of war.

The cruel logic of the party's downright chauvinistic position is that, in the event of the consistent sharpening of the conflict, it would only be stopping "unreasonably" half way along its chosen road if it failed to support the American bourgeoisie in declaring war against the Japanese. This is how the mercenaries of Stalinism are slowly converting the great Leninist slogan to make it read: Transform the civil war into an imperialist war!

In his magnificent criticism of the program of the Comintern, comrade Trotsky pointed out that the nationalistic, opportunistic degeneration of the social democracy led inexorably to August 4, 1914, and he warned against the essential similarity with the poison injected into the body of world Communism by the idea of socialism in one country. Of all the rotten fruits it has born, the present is one of the most monstrous. We say openly: this road leads to a horrible catastrophe for international Communism to its betrayal and crucifixion. Stalinism is driving it to the brink of the abyss. The Communist workers must cleanse the movement of the poison before it is too late.

—M. S.

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## EDITORIAL NOTES

### LEFT WING VICTORY OR TREACHEROUS BARGAIN?

The recent elections in Local 9 of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union are an event of great significance for the Left wing labor movement. In these elections the Left wing, under the direct leadership of the Communist Party, elected five delegates to the national convention of the union out of a total of seven. Since Local 9 is one of the largest and most important locals in the union, having approximately 7,000 members (cloak finishers), the momentous import of the election result can be seen at once. On the face of things it would appear that the Left wing has captured one of the main strongholds of the "company union". If this is really so, if the Left wing, which was expelled from the International and compelled to form its own union, and, then, in its convention two years ago, declared the I. L. G. W. U. to be a "company union" and forbade the formation of any organized movement within it, can come out now as the victor in the elections to the convention—then this is indeed an amazing testimony of the strength of the Left wing and of the Communists in the needle trades. If it is a genuine victory it portends momentous developments in the entire movement.

But here we run into a number of disturbing facts which are well known to the workers in the trade and its close observers. There are three groups in the local which have tested their strength in a number of struggles. The strongest group is the so-called "Center", consisting of anarchists supported by the Lovestonites and their sympathizers in a "Progressive Bloc", and its strength is certified by the fact that it controls the present administration of the local. The second group, from the standpoint of numerical strength, is composed of the Schlesinger Right wing forces who have constituted the opposition to the "progressive" administration of the local. The third group, the weakest numerically and one that came to life only recently and has played very little part in the life of the local, is the "Left wing" group directed by the Communist Party.

This is the situation out of which the election "victory" of the Left wing emerged like a miracle. And as we examine another fact the strange story becomes stranger still. Despite the existence of the three clearly-defined groups, there were only two slates in the election. The "Progressives" had their can-

didates, and so did the Left wing. But the Schlesinger group, the black and yellow gang that has been distinguished always by its voracious appetite for office, was overcome with modesty and put up no slate of its own! And when this illuminating circumstance is considered in connection with the result of the election—the victory of the weakest group over the strongest group—there is only one possible conclusion: **the right wing forces voted for the Left wing candidates!**

Already the victory, so bright and alluring at a distance, begins to look bad and to smell worse. However it came about it is the sort of thing which shames and discredits the Left wing movement. The Communist leaders who gained this shoddy success seem to be anxious to avoid discussion of it. Perhaps that is why the *Daily Worker*, which usually screams in big headlines about the smallest accomplishments, real or imaginary, passes the cloakmakers' election off with a two inch notice on an inside page on April 8th. And even that little notice contains an outright lie that cannot possibly deceive any worker who knows about the needle trades. The left delegates were elected, they say, "despite all efforts of Schlesinger and the fake progressive anarchist-Lovestone combination". Do they want anybody to believe that the Schlesinger group voted for the "Progressive Bloc" candidates and that the Left wing defeated their combined forces? That requires more faith in human credulity than even Barnum had. The best that any needle trades worker in the market will say for that explanation is that it is just another lie of the *Daily Worker*, and what's another lie more or less?

The victory was a fake; that much is absolutely clear. But another question remains to be answered: Was it the result of a treacherous horse-trade with the Right wing fakers (Foster and Co. have played that rotten game before), or was the Left wing the victim of favors it did not want? There are people who say openly that it was a bargain. The Lovestonites, as is their custom whenever anything happens, tell about a secret meeting, about which they, as usual have "inside information", between the Right and Left leaders where the deal was made. We can afford to pass this by. There are more reliable means of judging the affair than the dubious gossip of the Lovestonites. The Left wing delegates will have to show by their stand at the convention whether they

are obligated to the Schlesinger gang or not.

### WHAT HAPPENED TO THE "COMPANY UNION" THEORY?

At the convention of the Needle Trades Industrial Union two years ago the I. L. G. W. U. was branded a "company union" and organized work within it was forbidden as an opportunist illusion. At that time, in our comments on the convention, we pointed out the falsity of this theory and the tactical conclusions drawn from it. Our arguments were unavailing and the theory and the tactics had to run their course. This course, strewn with tragedy for the Left wing, is just about finished. The facts of life have spoken their own word against these conceptions. The most revealing fact of all is the election in Local 9. The *Daily Worker's* comments on this event, miserable and scanty as they are, leave very little to be said for the "company union" idea.

If you hide a smile and admit their claim that the Left wing has really carried the elections in a genuine fight what remains of the dictum of two years ago that an organized Left wing struggle in the International is not only wrong, but also hopeless? This Local alone has three or four times as many members as the Industrial Union. To win over a majority of these members for the Left wing, after the very attempt had been forbidden as a deviation, shows a terrible contradiction between the theory and the event.

And that is not all. According to the *Daily Worker*, the victorious left delegates "ran on a program of class struggle, a program against clique control of the International, for a real strike under rank and file leadership". We think the delegates were right in advocating "a program of class struggle". But a company union has never yet been converted to such a program. To advocate such a program in the union is to admit the possibility of reforming its present character. But the Stalinists prohibited organized work in the International precisely on the ground that it was a company union and therefore couldn't be reformed.

Further, the *Daily Worker* says the left candidates had a program "against clique control of the International". Again we say they were right. But if you are against clique control of the International, you are saying thereby that you are in favor of a different control by a different leadership. What has this to do with the teaching that the union is a company union and, consequently, by its very nature, controlled by the bosses and subjected to no change? The program of the left delegates is in fact a direct contradiction to the whole

conception of "company unionism". But still the Party generals continue to mutter the phrase. This is trying to walk north and south at the same time.

A third plank in the program "a real strike under rank and file leadership" is an expression of I. W. Wism that flagrantly violates Communist fundamentals. It deserves a separate discussion.

### WHY DID THE RIGHT SUPPORT THE LEFT?

If one acquiesces Foster of a backroom bargain with Schlesinger the reasons which prompted the black hundred forces to support the Stalinist candidates must be explained. These people are not generous; they don't give something for nothing. And they are not foolish either. Even without a direct agreement they could act in this case, in the way they did, with full deliberation, counting on the policy of the Stalinists to help them as it has in the past. The Schlesinger administration in the International is being pressed hard in the pre-convention campaign by the "Progressive Bloc" opposition. They have observed the present ultra-radical policy of the Party without interest, and certainly not without profit. According to the ruling theory of the Party, the Lenin teachings on the united front are out of date; all groups and factions not under the immediate domination of the Party are lumped together in one "social-fascist" mass; there can be no temporary agreements, even on the smallest questions, with any of them. Seeing this policy—and no doubt agreeing with it heartily—the Schlesinger forces, unable to elect their own delegates in Local 9, set out to cut down the representation of the "Progressive Bloc." To accomplish this they voted for the Left wing delegates.

Did they get a direct promise that the Left wing delegates at the convention will fulfill their expectations that they will confine themselves to phrase-mongering denunciation and take no practical steps to unite the opposition? This question need not be answered in advance. But the Left wing workers in the needle trades have every right to demand that the left delegates clear themselves of this suspicion by their actions. These delegates will occupy the strategic position at a significant moment in the needle trades struggle. Many workers will judge them and the movement they represent, not by what they say there but by what they do there. The Left wing workers have heard enough of the frothy pseudo-radicalism of Stalinism. In the meantime they have been compelled to yield position after position to the Rights, and through them to the bosses. It is time for a decisive turn. The convention of the International is the place for it.

The first duty of the Left wing dele-

## The Mooney Case and the Party

The hypocrisy of Governor Rolph of California is now clearly revealed by the succession of delays in announcing decision in response to the pleas of Mooney's lawyers for a pardon. At first an announcement appeared of a decision to be reached by the end of February. It became next postponed to the middle of March, then to the end of March and now again to April 21. Will there be further postponements?

That Rolph is able to postpone his decision from month to month is damning testimony to the weakness of the movement for Mooney's release. This is the sixteenth year of Mooney's imprisonment. No one so much as dares to question his innocence. It is a universally accepted fact. Mooney is the outstanding symbol of capitalist class vengeance, of the American frame-up system. His cause is dear to the American workers. Yet Rolph can play "cat and mouse with the life of an innocent man . . ."

And the *Daily Worker* can say on April 11, "Governor Rolph has been waiting for a favorable opportunity to hand down an unfavorable decision during a moment of working class passivity. Instead the working class is more alert than ever on the Mooney issue!" This gem of bureau-

cratic optimism appears under the head, "Force Unconditional Freedom of Mooney."

How do the C. P. and the I. L. D. propose to force Mooney's unconditional freedom? The *Daily Worker* says that only a mass movement can force Mooney's release. But do they propose the creation of a mass movement? Do they propose a series of united front conferences to build this mass movement? They do not. They propose merely "This week must see a special burst of protest." What form shall it take? "There must be a rising flood of letters, telegrams, resolutions, to Governor Rolph at Sacramento, California, demanding immediate and unconditional release . . ." And that is all!

Are we for this rising tide of letters, telegrams and resolutions? We are. Will they force Mooney's immediate and unconditional release? They will if they are backed by a united, fighting working class movement. Not otherwise. This must be organized at once. It is not too late. The I. L. D. and C. P. must take the lead. Their leadership is making no move in that direction. The rank and file must make its voice heard together with that of the Left Opposition.

gates to the convention is to frustrate the calculations of the Schlesinger machine and to clear the Left wing of suspicion in the elections. They must raise there the banner of unity in the needle trades, and make the convention the starting point of a new campaign to unite the needle trades workers into a single organization for a common struggle. The slogan of unity is the slogan of the day. It has more power to move the workers than any other because it corresponds most to their needs. By its false policy, the party leadership, which is also the leadership of the Left wing, has surrendered this slogan. That is one of the chief reasons for the defeat of the Left wing and the advances of the reactionaries. The left delegates at the convention of the International, acting in accord with the Industrial union on the outside, have a rare opportunity to turn the tide on this decisive question. That will be a powerful blow to the Schlesinger machine, and a proof that it miscalculated in the elections in Local 9.

The second task of the left delegates at the convention is to bring forward a united front program for the convention struggle. If the Schlesinger people can vote for the Left wing delegates because

they count on their refusal to combine with the "progressive" opposition, then that fact in itself is a sufficient condemnation of the policy. The Party press these days is full of talk about "working within the reactionary unions", but this talk doesn't mean much without a realistic tactic. The united front of progressive and oppositional forces against the reactionary leadership is just a tactic, and a most necessary one. We have no confidence in the leaders of the "Progressive Bloc". But the very fact that they come out as an opposition to Schlesinger and talk in radical terms is a proof of the sentiments of the workers behind them. The Left wing must find a road to these workers.

To do this they must force the "Progressive Bloc" leaders to the wall with proposals of a fighting united front against Schlesinger and his gang. Who gains by the counterfeit radicalism which rejects such a policy? The Schlesinger machine on the one hand, and the anarchist-Lovestone combination on the other. The Left wing and the workers lose all along the line. This is the bitter history of the past few years. Is it not time to turn the helm? The convention of the International is the place to make the turn.

—J. P. C.

# DEMOCRACY AND FASCISM

by LEON TROTSKY

(Continued from last issue)

"As regards 'the class content' there are no distinctions between democracy and Fascism," lectures Werner Hirsch echoing Stalin (*DIE INTERNATIONALE*, Jan. 1932). The transition from democracy to Fascism may take the character of "an organic process", that is, it may occur "gradually" and "bloodlessly". Such reasoning might dumbfound anyone, but the epigones have inured us from becoming dumbfounded.

There are no "class distinctions" between democracy and Fascism. Obviously this must mean that democracy as well as Fascism is bourgeois in character. We guessed as much even prior to January, 1932. The ruling class, however, does not inhabit a vacuum. It stands in definite relations to other classes. In a developed capitalist society, during a "democratic" régime, the bourgeoisie leans for support primarily upon the working classes which are held in check by the reformists. In its most finished form, this system finds its expression in England during the administration of the Labor government as well as during that of the Conservatives. In a Fascist régime, at least during its first phase, capital leans on the petty bourgeoisie which destroys the organizations of the proletariat. Italy, for instance! Is there a difference in the "class content" of these two régimes? If the question is posed only as regards the *ruling class*, then there is no difference. If one takes into account the position and the inter-relations of *all* classes, from the angle of the proletariat, then the difference appears to be quite enormous.

In the course of many decades, the workers have built up within the bourgeois democracy, by utilizing it, by fighting against it, their own strongholds and bases of *proletarian democracy*: the trade unions, the political parties, the educational and sport clubs, the co-operatives, etc. The proletariat cannot attain power within the formal limits of bourgeois democracy; but can do so only by taking the road of revolution: this has been proved both by theory and experience. And these bulwarks of workers' democracy within the bourgeois state are absolutely essential for the taking of the revolutionary road. The work of the Second International consisted in creating just such bulwarks during the epoch when it was still fulfilling its progressive historic labor.

Fascism has for its basic and only task, the razing to their foundation of all institutions of proletarian democracy. Has this any "class meaning" for the proletariat, or hasn't it? The lofty theoreticians had better ponder over this. After pronouncing the régime to be bourgeois—which no one questions—Hirsch, together with his masters, overlooks a mere trifle: the position of the proletariat in this régime. In place of the historical process they substitute a

bald sociological abstraction. But the class war takes place on the soil of history, and not in the stratosphere of sociology. The point of departure in the struggle against Fascism is not formed by the abstraction of the democratic state, but, by the living organizations of the proletariat, in which is concentrated all its past experience and which prepare it for the future.

The statement that the transition from democracy to Fascism may take on an "organic" and a "gradual" character can mean one thing and one thing only and that is: without any fuss, without a fight, the proletariat may be deprived not only of all its material conquests—not only of its given standard of living, of its social legislation, of its civil and political rights—but also even of the basic weapon whereby these were achieved, that is, its organizations. The "bloodless" transition to Fascism implies under this terminology, the most frightful capitulation of the proletariat that can be conceived.

Werner Hirsch's theoretical discussions are not accidental; while they serve to develop still further the theoretical oracle of Stalin, they also serve to generalize the entire present agitation of the Communist party. The party's chief resources are in fact being strained only to prove: that there is no difference between Bruening's régime and Hitler's régime. Thaelmann and Remmele see in this the quintessence of Bolshevik policy.

Nor is the matter restricted to Germany only. The notion that nothing new will be added by the victory of Fascists is being zealously propagated now in all sections of the Comintern. In the January issue of the French periodical *Cahiers du Bolchévisme*, we read, "The Trotskyists behave in practice like Breitscheid; they accept the famous social democratic theory of the 'lesser evil', according to which *Bruening is not as bad as Hitler*, according to which it is not so unpleasant to starve under Bruening as under Hitler, and infinitely more preferable to be shot down by Groener than by Frick." This is not the most stupid passage, although—to give it due credit—stupid enough. Unfortunately, however, it expresses the gist of the political philosophy of the leaders of the Comintern.

The fact of the matter is that the Stalinists compare the two régimes from the point of view of vulgar democracy. And indeed, were one to consider Bruening's régime from the criterion of "formal" democracy, one would arrive at a conclusion which is beyond argument: nothing is left of the proud Weimar constitution save the bones and the skin. But this does not settle the question so far as we are concerned. The question must be approached from the angle of *proletarian* democracy. This criterion is also the only reliable one on which to consider the question as to

when and where the "normal" police methods of reaction under decay capitalism are replaced by the Fascist régime.

Whether Bruening is "better" than Hitler (better looking perhaps?) is a question which, we confess, doesn't interest us at all. But one need only glance at the list of workers' organizations to assert, Fascism has not conquered yet in Germany. In the way of its victory there still remain gigantic obstacles and forces.

The present Bruening régime is the régime of bureaucratic dictatorship, or more definitely, the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie enforced by means of the army and the police. The Fascist petty bourgeoisie and the proletarian organizations seem to counterbalance one another. Were the workers united by Soviets; were factory committees fighting for the control of production, then one could speak of *dual power*. Because of the split within the proletariat, because of the tactical helplessness of its vanguard, *dual power* does not exist as yet. But the very fact that mighty organizations of workers do exist, which under certain conditions are capable of repelling Fascism with crushing force, that is what keeps Hitler from seizing power and impart a certain "independence" to the bureaucratic apparatus.

Bruening's dictatorship is a caricature of Bonapartism. His dictatorship is unstable, unreliable, short-lived. It signals the initiation of a new social equilibrium but the early crash of the old one. Supported directly only by a small minority of the bourgeoisie, tolerated by the social democracy against the will of the workers, threatened by Fascism, Bruening can bring down the thunder of paper decrees but not real thunderbolts. Bruening is fit for dissolving parliament with its own assent; he'll do to promulgate a few decrees against the workers, to proclaim a Christmas truce and to make a few deals under its cover; to break up a hundred meetings, close down a dozen papers, exchange letters with Hitler worthy of a village druggist—that is all. But for greater things his hands are too short.

Bruening is compelled to tolerate the existence of workers' organizations because he hasn't decided to this very day, to hand over the power to Hitler, and inasmuch as he himself has no independent means of liquidating them. Bruening is compelled to tolerate the Fascists and to patronize them inasmuch as he mortally fears the victory of the workers. Bruening's régime is a transitional, shortlived régime, preceding the catastrophe. The present administration holds on, only because the chief camps have not as yet pitted their strength. The real battle hasn't begun. It is still to come. The dictatorship of bureaucratic impotence fills in the lull before the battle, before the forces are openly matched.

The wiseacres who boast that they do not recognize any difference "between Bruening and Hitler", are saying in reality: it makes no difference whether our organizations exist, or whether they are already destroyed. Beneath this pseudo-radical phraseology there hides the most sordid passivity; we can't escape defeat anyway! Read over carefully the quotation from the French Stalinist periodical. They reduce

the question to whether it is better to starve under Hitler or Bruening. To them it is a question of under whom to starve. To us, on the contrary, it is not a question of under which conditions it is better to die. We raise the question of how to fight and win. And we conclude thus, the major offensive must be begun before the bureaucratic dictatorship is replaced by the Fascist régime, that is, before the workers' organizations are crushed. The general offensive should be prepared for by deploying, extending, and sharpening the sectional clashes. But for this one must have a correct perspective; and first of all, one should not proclaim victorious the enemy who is still a long way from victory.

Herein is the crux of the problem; herein is the strategic key to the background; herein is the operating base from which the battle must be waged. Every thinking worker, the more so every Communist, must give himself an accounting and plumb to the bottom the empty and rotten talk of the Stalinist bureaucracy about Bruening and Hitler being one and the same thing. You are muddling! we say in answer. You muddle disgracefully because you are afraid of the difficulties that lie ahead, because you are terrified by the great problems that lie ahead; you throw up the sponge before the fighting is begun, you proclaim that we have already suffered defeat. You are lying! The working class is split; it is weakened by the reformists and disoriented by the vacillations of its own vanguard, but it is not annihilated yet, forces are not yet exhausted. No. The proletariat of Germany is powerful. The most optimistic estimates will be infinitely surpassed once its revolutionary energy will clear the way for it to the arena of action.

Bruening's régime is the preparatory régime. Preparatory to what? Either to the victory of Fascism, or to the victory of the proletariat. This régime is preparatory because both camps are only preparing for the decisive battle. If you identify Bruening with Hitler, you identify the conditions before the battle with the conditions after the defeat; it means that you admit defeat beforehand; it means that you appeal for surrender without a battle.

The overwhelming majority of the workers, particularly the Communists, does not want this. The Stalinist bureaucracy of course, does not want it either. But one must take into account not one's good intentions, with which Hitler will pave the road to his Hell, but the objective meaning of one's policies, of their direction, and their tendencies. We must disclose in its entirety the passive, timidly hesitant, capitulating and declamatory character of the politics of Stalin-Manuilsky-Thaelmann-Remmele. We must teach the revolutionary workers to understand that the key to the situation is in the hands of the Communist party; but the Stalinist bureaucracy attempts to use this key to lock the gates to revolutionary action.\*

—L. TROTSKY.

\*The article "Democracy and Fascism" is an extract from comrade Trotsky's larger work *What Next?—Vital Questions for the German Proletariat*. Others will follow in coming issues.—Ed.