

WORKERS
OF THE
WORLD.
UNITE

THE MILITANT

Weekly Organ of the Communist League of America [Opposition]

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ON THE SPOT

It seems there is nothing new under the sun. We were of the opinion that the Bonus Expeditionary Force bivouacked in Washington set a precedent in American history until Dana Rice enlightened us through the columns of the New York Times. Indeed, in 1783 recruits from Lancaster, Pa., joined soldiers barracked in Philadelphia and marched on the congress of the confederation demanding more pay. Congress refused to be intimidated so it folded its tent and moved to Princeton, New Jersey. The congressional slogan probably was: "Those who spout and run away may live to spout another day."

The Bonusers were to be much impressed with the theory, popular in our best circles that it is an honor to weave through a flock of bullets for one's country. Those who did not see the German bullets until it was too late got a slice of country wherever they fell. Those who blocked them and survived to some extent are enjoying themselves in hospitals; some in strait jackets. Those who are returned, sound in body if not in mind are listening to the epidermis of the stomach singing a hunger ditty. They don't appreciate the music so they are going to Washington to demand their reward for making Wall St.'s billions safe and Holland quite safe for the Kaiser.

The war was a great success for the profiteers if not for the Kaiser. It didn't turn out so bad for the soldiers either. Most any veteran would rather saw a bit of wood with the Kaiser every day to keep his appetite at the proper degree of sharpness than fight bed bugs on the Bowersy and drink coffee until he is ready to declare war on Brazil, the home of the bean. The heroes of 1917-18 are the bums of 1932. They want the bonus which was promised them for killing German workmen in the Kaiser's uniform. But to give it to them would put a price on patriotism! Perish the thought! Patriotism is priceless.

The Bonusers properly call attention to the fact that the federal government made two billions of dollars available to the railroad companies who made tremendous profits during the busy war days. They believe that they are at least as much entitled to the government owes them as the railroads are to what the government does not owe them. The veterans lack a sense of reality. They don't seem to know whose country this is or whose government this is. The country belongs to the capitalists and so does the government. The proletarian ex-soldiers are merely tolerated, if they starve quietly, just the same as the rest of the working class.

The capitalists do not like the idea of this march on Washington. They do not like the idea of giving those fellows a bonus. They have just accomplished the patriotic task of balancing the budget. It was a heart-breaking task but they bore up bravely under the strain. Why impose another load of taxes on them? Many of them are committing suicide. A capitalist with only three million dollars left in his kick feels as insecure as an unemployed worker holding on to his last nickel. Samuel Insull the Chicago utility baron is left with a mealy income of \$18,000 a year. The poor capitalists have their troubles too, which proves that there are no classes in this country.

There are twelve millions of workers unemployed in this fair and free land of ours, including the heroes. There is nothing in sight for them except starvation, slow or galloping. If the war veterans can be bamboozled into the belief that they can get relief from the government by holding themselves apart from their fellow workers in distress who did not have the privilege of fighting for the House of Morgan, then all we can say is that they are meant for another shower of bullets. We read that George Washington, the Father of His Country, threatened to send troops to shoot down the soldier marchers of 1783. We wonder what will Hoover, the current Father of His Country, do if the Bonus Expeditionary Force grows much more formidable than it is now. This is an election year and 1932 is not 1783—not by 149 years. There was no Soviet Union in those days.

Before the panic the leaders were big shots in the capitalist world. Business unionism was in its heyday. Labor ranks flourished, and entering labor fakers went in for coal mining, real estate and pine-apples groves in a big way. Labor was going to lift itself out of a state of dependency by its bootstraps. The workers were going to be saved one by one. Alas, it was not to be. This pleasant road of escape from wage slavery was not strewn with roses but with ground glass. Most of the labor banks have gone the way of all flesh.

Slogans in the Elections Must Link Up Communist Goal with Immediate Demands

The downward trend of the crisis that is throwing increasing layers of workers on the surface of the class struggle offers the Communists the most favorable opportunity in the present election campaign. The trend of economic instability in America and in world capitalism as a whole has created confusion in the top ranks of the master class and has forced them into a position never before faced. The social reformers of all varieties are undergoing a sort of verbal metamorphosis to the Left while their material evolution is proceeding to the Right. This favorable objective situation with its increasing dangers from reaction and "reform" places on the shoulders of the revolutionists the task of clearly pointing to the road of action and its direction.

Left Opposition Excluded
The national nominating convention of the Communist party presented Foster and Ford as standard bearers but has sent them into the field with standards every serious Communist must question. The election offers a wide field for unity of the workers against the capitalist offensive but the Stalinist bureaucrats talk of unity and shut the door to a Marxian United Front policy in the elections by ejecting delegates from the conventions in New York, Chicago and Minneapolis. The Communist League (Left Opposition) sent delegates in order that our organization may give full support to the Communist candidates in the coming elections, to win greater numbers to revolution. In denying the Marxist wing seats in the different conventions, the Centrists closed the door to a Leninist United Front policy.

C. P. Platform Deficient
The platform the convention adopted is not to the credit of the Communist forces; and will leave the party further to the right at the end of the campaign than they are even today. Why do Communists participate in elections? Centrism thinks it answers this by publishing Lenin's article in the *Daily Worker* on this question. This is necessary, but Communism theory must be translated into action; and a Communist campaign woven around six immediate demands, as slogans (which must be questioned) in no way connected with our ultimate demand, results in reformism. We need such a slogan, not an ultimate slogan of action today, but as a slogan of propaganda coordinated with our immediate demands.

The ultra-Lefts who speak in terms of ends only and the reformists who speak in terms of means only are swamps Lenin guarded against. Centrism in America presents demands to which any reformist can subscribe. Centrism presents immediate demands in no way connected with our goal—a slogan for the overthrow of capitalism as the determining factor to distinguish the Communist program from all those of the reformists.

Centrism tries to find a way out of the impasse by speaking of the revolutionary way out of the crisis. The social democracy in every revolution or crisis tells the workers—their road is the revolutionary way out. The latest "revolutionary way out" of the socialists was demonstrated in Spain. What do you mean by "revolutionary way out"? Communists cannot throw out this phrase without concretizing it as a connecting link. To speak of the revolutionary way out and present six immediate demands may signify good intentions but it expresses reformism unless these immediate demands are coordinated with a propaganda slogan for the overthrow of capitalism.

Slogan Is Workers' Government
The Centrist slogan of "Workers and Farmers' Government" must be replaced by the slogan of "Workers' Government". The workers of America must be told that the Communists propose a Soviet United States, as a proletarian dictatorship, which will establish a "Workers' Government". The Stalinists are entering the campaign to obtain votes. We want votes, we want the support of every worker as well as that of our allies, but we only want votes on the basis of a Marxian platform. Voters who understand what relation our immediate demands have to our goal. We want quantity—but not without quality.

The party platform dismisses the reformers with the epithet of "social Fascists". All shades and tendencies of reformism as well as the Right wing and Left wing currents of Communism are catalogued together. This is the most valuable service one could render to reformism. Our election campaign must be conducted by a bitter fight to win the followers from the fakers and this can only be done by exposing from a Marxian standpoint, the position of each tendency and shading and by following this up with proper tests in action.

The party platform presents the slogan of Social Insurance as the central slogan of the campaign and does not in any way raise the slogan of the "Six Hour Day and Five Day Week without reduction of pay." The Socialist party is reaping the harvest of this blunder and in many places is contrasting its immediate

demands with those of the Communists to "prove" that they are more "radical". On the basis of immediate demands, and "incoherent ones at that, we cannot expose reformism unless we clearly define our goal. In spite of the fact that sharp class turns and events throw the slogan of Social Insurance to the forefront in the fight against unemployment, the fact remains that the determining immediate demand from now on in the unemployment situation in America will be the slogan for the shorter work day.

Although Social Insurance is the main demand of the party, the *Daily Worker* has presented it to the background and relegated the struggle for the Bonus as the first order of business. It is correct to exclude the Bonus slogan from the platform, but it is wrong to regulate this auxiliary unemployment struggle above the struggle of all the workers for Social Insurance.

Relief For Workers Also
The platform (point 3) call for emergency relief for the farmers and completely ignores the need of such relief for the fifteen million unemployed workers who are in just as dire straits. The demand must be one of emergency relief for workers and farmers.

The Communist League of America (Opposition) calls upon the workers to vote Communist. To unite the working class against the capitalist reactionaries and reformers. The Communist League will give full support in every way to the Communist candidates but our presentation of why workers should vote Communist will not be on the same basis as that of Centrism. We enter the campaign on the basis of organically connecting proper immediate demands with our revolutionary goal, for the overthrow of capitalism.

Workers in Fight Against Forced Labor in Minneapolis

MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.
Attention of all alert workers must be called to the scandalous system of forced labor which has been introduced by the Minneapolis City Relief Administration. Over 7,000 unemployed on the relief lists are involved, 800 men each day must prove that "they are willing to work", although no wages are paid. If anyone refuses, he is cut off from further relief and finally evicted from his house—which means misery and persecution for his family. On top of all this, the work is done on the property of private real estate dealers, railroads, landlords. All people who could well afford to pay wages for the work done—if they were really sincere and not hypocrites about their slogan of creating jobs for the unemployed—and also on city property, work that can be done by regularly paid city workers!

Resist Forced Labor
The Communist League calls on the

G. O. P. Meets in Chicago Confab

After a four year's intermission, the Republican party convenes in Chicago to put on its grand jamboree—called a convention—to nominate the president of the U. S. A. It meets in the gala holiday atmosphere, that makes it resemble a circus or a field day rather than a serious political gathering to decide the destinies of the nation for the coming period.

We are informed that between the classy hotels where the delegates are lodged and the Chicago Stadium where the convention is taking place, the speakies are doing a thriving business. But despite all this the spirit of four years ago seems to be missing. Gone are the thunderous plaudits that rend the roof and shiver the windows into splinters. Gone is the wild cheering, the mad parading around the convention hall, the insane blaring of brass bands that lasted for hours at a time, that greeted the making of some obscure point that strikes the delegates' fancy.

Even the mention of the nomination of Herbert Hoover which raised a storm of interminable hurrahs, a few years ago was received with a coldness that would make even the eskimos shiver. Now we can account for the large sale of prohibition liquor to the delegates. The moonshine is consumed not so much in the spirit of celebration, but to bolster up the depressed state of mind of the convention delegates.

Three years have passed since the beginning of this bitter and deep-going crisis and it is still getting worse. The republicans are full and good cause for being gloomy and pessimistic. The people, they are fearful, will attribute the crisis to them, and vote them out of office. But, protests the G. O. P., the crisis operates according to immutable laws. Correct. But—these immutable laws. (Continued on page 2)

Brown Shirts Legalized New Decree Forms Part of Anti-Working Class Move

The establishment of the Von Papen government in power has not as yet called forth a wide spread and vigorous move toward united working class defense action. Temporarily on the part of the working class leaders has permitted the Hitler dictatorship to raise their heads ever more arrogantly. Every day brings new blasts of reaction against the German proletariat.

The latest act of the new cabinet is a decree slating to tatters what little is still left of unemployment insurance and relief. It must be remembered that one of the planks of the Von Papen combine before it came into power was—no more emergency decrees. Yet, the new anti-working class measure is based directly on the draft prepared by Bruening before his downfall.

What the Decree Calls For
The manifesto signed by Hindenburg calls for a "reorganization" of the system of unemployment relief and cuts the so-called dole by fully twenty per cent. The annual expenditures for the jobless are in this manner reduced by more than \$119,000,000. But adding insult to injury, the Junker cabinet goes further and declares its intentions of raising the funds required for what still remains of unemployment insurance by levying a new tax—another plank was: no more new taxes—6.5 per cent on the income of "all those gainfully employed!" More than that the exemption in the turnover tax for incomes below 5,000 marks is abolished.

The new decree is a well rounded out attack against the living conditions of all the lower classes. Unemployment compensation is reduced, as the *Times* correspondent remarks, to the level of ordinary poor relief—a bare monthly \$10, on which families of four and more must

attempt to subsist. The wages of the workers still employed undergo a further reduction of more than six per cent. The small shop keepers are taxed still tighter by the turnover tax.

There can be no doubt that the new measure will meet with the greatest indignation by the broadest layers of the population. According to the social democratic *Vorwarts*, one of the first results of the decree was a deluge of protests from workers organizations and other bodies. The shameless action of the Junkers, arousing popular resentment to the highest pitch, makes the possibilities and the need of united working class counter-action greater than ever.

First Signs of United Action
United front activities encompassing the Communist and social democratic organizations have already begun on a local scale. In places like Oranienburg and Bernau, etc., cartels of proletarian mass organizations have already been formed and put into motion. The emergency law promulgated this week should give the necessary impetus toward broadening these united fronts into a centralized, national movement that will break the apathy of the German working masses and bring them forward a good way in their fight against threatening reaction and abject enslavement.

In Oranienburg, in Bernau, the Left Opposition was the one to take the initiative in uniting the workers organizations. The successes achieved will no doubt instigate our German comrades toward a determined and powerful effort to swing the whole party into line behind this genuine movement of united action.

Time is pressing. The Brown Shirts of Adolph Hitler, banned under the Bruening government, have been legalized. Already, the Fascist deputies have donned their uniforms in the Prussian diet. Street processions of Nazis march in celebration throughout the Reich. Clashes between Hitlerites and workers are constantly increasing. The organization of the Fascist coup d'Etat is developing apace.

Clear Words Needed
The new dose of misery which the latest decree has brought for the working class—even a salt tax has been established (Remember the "gabelle"!)—cannot fail to have its sobering effect on the German people. More than ever will all workers feel the need of unity and action today. On the brink of disaster, the masses are straining their attention for a clear word, for a firm command.

Only the Communist party is capable of meeting the needs of the moment. But for that, it is necessary that it cast off with one stroke all the fetters of bureaucratism and ultimatism that have been binding its action. It is necessary that it throw off its isolationist policies—the theory of "social Fascism", of the "red united front under our leadership", etc., etc. It must make a clean breast of the mistakes it has committed and open for itself the road of putting the reformists to the test before the working masses—the road of gaining the confidence and support of the majority of the class.

What is at stake—we repeat—is the fate not only of the German proletariat, but of the Soviet Union and the working class of the world as a whole. Every Communist worker is duty-bound to demand first of himself, and then, of the leadership of the party here and of the Communist International, a clear answer to the question: What is to be done? The Left Opposition has sounded the alarm. Incalculable danger lies ahead. Let every worker Communist realize his task!

Youth Meetings in N. Y.

The Spartacus Youth Club will hold its regular meeting on Friday, June 18th at 8:00 P. M., at the Stuyvesant Casino, Ninth Street and Second Avenue. This week's meeting will be devoted entirely to a lecture by comrade Carter on the extremely timely and important subject, **WAR AND ITS ASPECT TODAY**, which will be followed by a general discussion from the floor.

On Saturday evenings the Club holds its weekly open air meetings at Seventh Street and Avenue C. We have a group of good speakers and interesting topics. All who can, are urged to attend these meetings.

For the following week, we plan a discussion on current events. Plans are being made for a camp-fire, the definite arrangements for which will be announced in next week's *Militant*.

All young workers and students are invited to participate with us in our work and discussions. Information can be obtained by writing to the Spartacus Youth Club, 84 East 10th Street, New York City.

German Paper Interviews Trotsky

The following is the reply of comrade L. D. Trotsky to three questions posed by the Berlin weekly, *Montag Morgen* in a recent questionnaire. The questions were: "Do you believe that the seizure of political power by the National Socialists is imminent? Do you not consider it the urgent command of the hour, that social democrats and Communists, leaving all the conflicts in principle unimpacted, must create a common organization of struggle? Would you be prepared to work for such an organization in your person and with your name?"

1. Yes, I believe that if the most important organizations of the German working class continue their present policy, the victory or Fascism will be assured almost automatically, and in a relatively short interval of time at that. Whether the Centre party will serve Hitler as a sort of strupps or not, can be seen much better in Berlin than here. That is not what is decisive. A bloc of these two parties could eventually constitute a brief episode on the road toward the disruption of the Centre party, beginning with the Catholic trade unions. Hitler's promises to remain on the terrain of parliamentarism (by the way: where is he now?), are of as import as the promises, let us say, of Japanese imperialism, not to employ poison gases in a war. To demand such promises is ridiculous, to hope for their fulfillment—utterly stupid. In reality, those parliamentarians who are discounting Hitler's parliamentary checks are clearing the road consciously, for the fascization of Germany. What this foreshadows for the German people and above all, for the entire proletariat, we do not need to repeat here again.

2. Yes, I believe that the Communist party must propose an agreement for struggle to the social democratic party

and the leadership of the Free Trade Unions, from below up to the very top. In contrast to the decorative and topulent "iron front", the united front of the working class against Fascism must have a fully concrete, practical and militant character. Its point of departure should be: defense of all institutions and conquests of proletarian democracy, and in a broader sense; defense of culture before barbarism.

A bold and frank initiative of the Communist party along these lines would not only increase its authority extraordinarily, but also change the political situation of Germany from the bottom up. The monopolistic bourgeoisie would immediately begin to feel that to play around with a Hitler dictatorship means to play around with the fire of civil war, in which not the paper values alone are in danger of going up in smoke. Among the countless and formless masses whom despair has driven into the camp of Hitler there will of necessity ensue a process of differentiation and decomposition. The relation of forces would sharply change to the disadvantage of Fascism even on the threshold of the struggle. There would open up before the working class and the German people great perspectives.

3. Of course, I stand not only theoretically but even practically, altogether and completely on the ground of the tactics I have developed in many of my pamphlets, particularly the last, *What Next?* Every day only confirms anew the fact that there is no other path for the German working class. The question of the fate of Europe, to the Soviet Union and in a considerable measure, the fate of all humanity for a big historical period. No revolutionary can help subordinating his forces and his fate to this question.

—L. TROTSKY.

May 12, 1932

what is necessary here is more than a manifesto or an article in the press. What is necessary is a concerted drive. This means nothing less than repudiating the sterile factional intrigues which now tie the hands of the Left wing movement. This means the united front. All power to this movement!

Open Letter

A system of forced labor has been introduced by the Minneapolis City Relief Administration, 7,000 men 800 each day, toil on city and private property on pain of losing the miserable charity they receive. None can deny that relief is given out only to keep the worker, starving in the midst of the plenty he has created, from taking it by force. Under the conditions of the present economic crisis, our masters, who still make fat dividends are reducing conditions of labor to that abject slavery, where men work for their board and keep, without pay, in constant fear of punishment by starvation and eviction from their homes.

The work is divided into two classes: (1) Cleaning up nuisances on privately owned property, such as Thorpe Bros., Minneapolis and Southern Ry., and other who can afford to pay wages to have this work done and who pay nothing to the city. Remember, these are the same landlords who evict you for non-payment of rent. (2) Work on City property, instead of Charity work. Many city employees are now working on city property without pay. This plan is being executed with the cooperation of the Farmer-Labor Administration in the Court House.

This vicious system serves a triple purpose: (1) It keeps the unemployed in submission; (2) it displaces and discharges regular wage workers; and (3) it is an entering wedge to permanently smash the wages of those employed by threatening to do their work with charity workers.

Only a short time ago, the bosses raised the cry of "Forced Labor!" in Soviet Russia—an excuse to cut off trade and recognition of the Workers' Republic. On that account, many factories producing goods for Russia were shut down, and we see where workers now enjoy genuine forced labor right here in Minneapolis!

It makes no difference who originated the plan—the Citizens Alliance, the Tax Payers Association or the Farmer-Labor politicians in the Court House. The bald fact is: They who amassed profits from the workers toil are now trying to crawl out of their crisis by smashing labor conditions. In this plan, the capitalists have the cooperation and support of the Farmer-Labor Party.

Capitalist System Real Cause
The present unemployment situation is due to the chaos in capitalist production and distribution. The capitalist system, based on the profit idea, cannot distribute what you workers need, regardless how greatly you need it. The profit system must go. In its place must be put a (Continued on page 2)

LETTERS FROM THE MILITANTS

News from Canada

TORONTO ONTARIO.— An anti-war conference initiated by the Friends of the Soviet Union has been organized in Toronto. The first meeting saw the usual gathering of our old "stand-byes", but the leaders of the conference, in light of the new united front policy, made no attempt to delude themselves on the delegates. The second meeting brought several new faces and plans to go directly to the reformist trade unions. Our comrades were elected on the credential, organization and executive committees. Our motion that the speech of Litvinov in view of its pacifism and incompleteness be referred first to affiliated organization for discussion and recommendation before printing, was rejected. Likewise, our amendment that Tchicherin's and Lenin's speeches at the Genoa conference be considered in its stead. One of the leaders of the F. S. U., who spoke against, said if we accepted Lenin's and Tchicherin's speeches we would be injecting politics. Another delegate said Litvinov was more up-to-date. In the discussion on the anti-war resolution we pointed out the tremendous significance victorious Fascism in Germany would have both for the war against the U. S. S. R. and the new imperialist blood path. The conference is very timely and can do some very good work.

Labor Fakery Have Hot Time

The Toronto police are not going to be accused of making concessions. After allowing a previous anti-war gathering, the second meeting called by the anti-war youth conference was smashed up. The crowd together with those from the rationalist meeting which had also been broken up went up to the Labor Party gathering. To listen to the Labor Party brand of fakery requires more than a conscience and good stomach and before long the Left wing workers began heckling the speakers. "Back to Russia!", answered fakery. "Call the police!", mocked the workers. As matters became hotter, the labor fakery began to appeal to the crowd on the basis of the fight they had carried on for free speech. What this fight was they didn't explain. Police and detectives by this time had arrived and encircled the radical section of the crowd but nevertheless when Comrades declared the meeting over the crowd shouted for "questions". To the surprise of everybody, police included, the fakery, consented to allow questions. The questions were brief and likewise their exposure of the half-dozen question asked. The fakery couldn't answer one and his floundering around must have embarrassed the "Dicks". More of these meetings and the Toronto Labor Party will feel no more use in "educating" the masses. —M. Q.

Party Member Joins Opposition

PHILADELPHIA, PA. Dear Comrades: I did not intend to write this letter, for I believe it is overstatement of oneself to do so. But one of the members of the Left Opposition thought it would be of interest to others. "Intellectuals" who attempt to reveal the bankruptcy of Communism, instead reveal their own lack of knowledge. Perhaps I was one of these so-called "Intellectuals." For in endeavoring to reveal the shallowness of the Left Opposition, of "Trotskyism", the barrenness of Stalinism which masquerades as the Comintern as Leninism, became evident. When I knew nothing except the slanders (I did not know they were slanders) thrown at Trotsky, I felt sure that I could make every "Trotskyite" look like two cents. But when I actually met these "counter-revolutionists", or when I read the literature of the Left Opposition, I could not see any "Menshevik tendencies." I was engulfed not by the shallowness of "Trotskyism" but I was saturated with its depth, with its logic. If it is treason to rebel against Stalin, who has diluted Leninism, I am proud of being a traitor. If Trotsky is a counter-revolutionist for defending the Leninist path, then I must enter the ranks of counter-revolution. But I know that the Left Opposition is not a counter-revolutionary faction. Instead it is an organization which will divert the Communist Party from a Stalinist line back to that laid down by Lenin. Therefore I enter the ranks of the Left Opposition, not by discarding the true voice of Communism, but by striving to have the stiflers of Communism stifled. Within the party I shall fight for freedom of speech, against bureaucracy, and for the unification of all Communists. (Not a unification of Centrists and Lovestonettes).

—PARTY MEMBER.

Workers Fight Bureaucracy

MINNEAPOLIS, MINN. At the meeting of the International Workers Order, Branch 21, following the Minneapolis nominating conference so ably described by a delegate to that conference in The Militant of May 21, Delegate Singer of Branch 21 I. W. O. made his report. It was substantially the same as reported in The Militant. Delegate Singer was almost immediately denounced as an enemy of the workers and a renegade, etc. and finally withdrawn as a delegate of Branch 21. They then proceeded to the election of another delegate to the conference and after several had been nominated and had as quickly declined, the chairman, in desperation, called for volunteers and Meyer Shulberg accepted. We wonder if delegate Shulberg will have the courage to also raise his voice in protest against the bureaucratic actions of the local party leaders and then report the truth back to the workers of Branch 21, of the I. W. O. We sincerely hope so. The above sample of the way the party bureaucrats treat workers who honestly strive to make the party a real Communist party accounts for the stationary membership roll of the party, despite the favorable conditions for recruiting workers into the party. The above is the story as related to me by a member of Branch 21 of the I. W. O. —COOVER.

WHAT NEXT?

With the publication of Problems of the Chinese Revolution out of the way, we are going ahead with WHAT NEXT? The book should be ready in four weeks at the utmost. Very probably by next week, we will be able to announce the exact date of its appearance. Comrades who want copies should order them now as every order we get in advance will enable us to get the book out that much sooner. The price is fifty cents in paper cover and one dollar in cloth.

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The Drug Clerks and the Class Struggle

The Drug Clerks' Union local 581 of the A. F. of L., is conducting a "strike" at Halper's Pharmacy, 180th Street and St. Nicholas Ave. Halpers' refused to sign a collective agreement with the union. The store employs two licensed pharmacists, one union pharmacist, two soda-fountain clerks and a porter. This new experience has already become a decisive factor in the further development of the Drug Clerks' Union and a source from which important conclusions of organizational strategy should be drawn. Picketing is undoubtedly a highly effective weapon in the hands of the workers, if efficiently wielded, to extract concessions from the bosses. But it is no less effective as a means to arouse the dormant class instinct of the worker and put him on the road toward class consciousness. There, on the picket line, he clearly sees the living alignment of the police and judiciary forces and the entire governmental machine with his boss against him and his fellow workers, drawing the class lines of the contending forces in the most contrasting colors. However, these class lines of the struggle are usually blurred under the reactionary leadership of the reformist and reactionary union. The case of the drug clerks, as the writer of these lines has had the opportunity to observe, the enlightening effect of picketing is quite glaringly manifest. It is highly interesting and instructive to observe a drug clerk put on the strike-placard for the first time. He dons it timidly, reluctantly, casting shy glances at the passers-by. For even those drug clerks who have joined the union are still imbued with the asphyxiating idea of "professionalism", which blurs their real position on the social scale of our class society. But after a few hours of picketing a noticeable change in his gait and facial expression takes place. The meek gloomy look disappears and a ray of proud resoluteness lights up his countenance. He notices with fervent admiration that the working class element responds favorably to the pickets and that it manifests a gratifying solidarity. And why shouldn't they? We are also workers", he remarks proudly. A few hours of picketing, an infinitesimally short period in a person's life-time, but what a thoroughgoing change may occur in one's own outlook in so short an interval. I believe that the writer of these lines has not exaggerated when he remarked: "If it were only possible to have every member of the union to do a few hours of picketing, we would have

a strong militant union." Unfortunately, only a few of the members are doing picket duty. The greatest majority of the membership, however, have not only failed to participate in the activities of this so-called union but have generally shown an attitude of indifference and distrust toward the union and its leadership. The reasons for such a state of apathy among the members are to be traced directly to the ideological make-up of the executive board and the manner in which it has been conducting the affairs of the union, which I shall discuss in the latter part of this article. This so-called strike has made quite a commotion in the "higher spheres" of pharmacy. "A labor union has no place in as honorable" a profession as pharmacy. The strike method is particularly "degrading pharmacy to the low level of wage labor," shriek the self appointed peers of the various drug store owners' associations and some backward clerks, who find consolation for their bitter lot in their false pride of being a "professional" man. Yes, gentlemen of the "honorable profession" of pharmacy, "the bourgeoisie has, (long ago) stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honored and looked up to with reverent awe. It has converted the physician the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science into its paid wage-laborers." (Communist Manifesto). Yes, bootleggers of the "honorable profession" of pharmacy, you have not only "lowered" it to the level of wage labor, but you have degraded it to an occupation of the underworld. You "ethical" pharmacists, who are so greatly concerned about the high standards of your "profession", will not hesitate, for the sake of saving a measly penny to deprive the patient of the benefits of a medicine by substituting inferior, therapeutically void drugs, by dispensing moldy, deteriorated fluid extracts, tinctures, syrups and other medicinal preparations. For a measly weekly wage of twenty or twenty-five dollars you exploit your licensed or junior clerk seventy to eighty hours a week. And to qualify for such a lucrative position one has to be, besides, a licensed pharmacist, an expert soda dispenser and sandwich maker; he also is required to wash floors, run errands and other such "trifles". No—it is not the standard of pharmacy that concerns you so greatly—but it is the resultant of the unionization of the drug clerks that you fear so much. The New York Pharmaceutical Conference is acting as the spearhead in the present crusade against the union movement. It pours out torrents of demagoguery and lies against it. Moreover, it has been attempting to behead it by organizing an auxiliary association of drug clerks under the guardianship of the Conference, i. e., a company union in its crystalline form. A serious challenge to the union movement among the drug clerks, however, cannot come from such an anemic organization as the New York Pharmaceutical Conference. Its whole existence has been an expression of impotence of the disorganized and prostrate drug industry. The real danger, however, is lurking from within the boundaries of the present "leadership" of the Drug Clerks' Union. The executive board of the Drug Clerks' Union is composed of politically backward and organizationally inexperienced elements, incapable of giving independent leadership. The membership, naturally, is composed of the same backward elements; their ideology due to the professional veil and business basis of their occupation, is thoroughly petty-bourgeois. Their attitude toward the union is extremely vague and indecisive. It is true that the earnestness of certain leading members of the executive board in the activities of the union is rather questionable. However, these elements, precisely because of the vacillating attitude of the membership toward unionism in general, the backwardness and ignorance of the executive in particular, have not so far been able to exercise any influence upon the membership. Consequently, the conditions for the growth of a militant opposition within the present loose frame-work of the union are highly favorable. (To Be Continued) —I. DREYER.

MILITANT BUILDERS

Two comrades, thus far have won the bound volumes of the pamphlets offered to each comrade who, during the summer months brings in \$4.00 in subs. The two comrades hail, as might have been expected, from Minneapolis. They are comrades Hedlund and Coover. Other comrades who expect to get one of these bound volumes will have to get a move on as they are running out fast. Our comrades and readers, it seems, are determined to carry on the good work they did during the drive. A comrade writes from Youngstown: "Now that I have a little more time to devote to sub-getting I am going to try my best to get enough subs this month to earn that free copy of comrade Trotsky's collected pamphlets. And I'm going to do my bit to get more than enough." The Minneapolis branch passed a motion to continue the sub drive. Everyone familiar with Minneapolis' performance in the sub drive knows what that foretells. Our staff is growing and embracing a larger number of comrades and readers. That is what we started out to accomplish. That is what we need to increase the circulation of the Militant. But it is not yet large enough. Every comrade should set before himself the necessity of going after and getting a certain definite number of subs each month. And of course he should make every effort to realize this self-set quota. By this steady plugging we can build up the circulation of the Militant clostr to what it ought to be. At the moment this is our revolutionary duty. The staff and its record to date follows:

Table with 2 columns: Name and Count. M. Beardslee 5, C. R. Hedlund 4, O. Coover 4, M. Koehler 3, A. Basky 2, M. Basin 2, P. Vovmas 2, J. Elchma 2, C. Curtis 2, A. Ehrlich 2, M. Reiml 2, J. Keller 2, W. Kitt 2, M. Geldman 1

Republican Confab

(Continued from page 1)

laws are of capitalism itself. And the Republicans are the most ardent defenders of the capitalist system. They come in for a thrashing whichever way you look at it. Their three years tenure of office (since the crisis) is enough to convince the most benighted and uninformed worker that not only does capitalism plunge them into misery, but it stubbornly refuses to do anything to alleviate their suffering. Consider the speech of the Keynote, Senator L. T. Dickinson. For more than an hour he prated and boasted of the achievements of the president. He refused unemployment insurance to the jobless workers because it would degrade American manhood and drove them right on the breadlines. No dole—that will unbalance the budget. Then the congress turns right around and grants a subsidy of several hundred millions to the R. R.s to pay off overdue dividends. He maintained the high standard of wages. How? By the famous agreement of three years ago, in which the capitalists gave their promise not to cut wages and the A. F. of L. sold out by its promise not to strike. Result? In the words of Dickinson "wages have been maintained at the high level wherever possible", which is an euphemistic way of calling this vicious wage cut drive that has included all categories of the American working class. "There have been fewer strikes than in any preceding depression", which means the treachery of the labor fakery has been complete. And now this same Bill Green comes crawling back on his belly to the same exploiters who so unceremoniously spit in his face a short time ago, to plead for the five day week, to allay the rising discontent of the working masses!

And what is the big issue at this convention, where everything is decided behind closed doors in luxurious hotel suites? Prohibition. But we don't want to get rid of this camouflage issue too hurriedly, so we'll write a program that is neither wet nor dry, call it "resubmission" and let it hang for three more years. —CLARKE.

Forced Labor in Mpls.

(Continued from page 1)

planned system of production and distribution based on your needs and desires. You are the only useful class in society. Thru organization, both political and industrial, the present system can be done away with, and a Workers' government established. The elections are at hand. Use the ballot to register your nonconfidence in the capitalist system by voting for the candidates of the Communist Party. Stay away from the capitalist primary elections. Sign petitions to put Communist candidates on the ballot in November. Refuse to work without wages! Demand cash wages instead of grocery orders! Unemployed insurance out of bosses' profits! Solidarity of employed with unemployed workers! Long term credits to Russia! Join and help build the unemployed Councils! Stay away from the primaries! Sign petitions for the Communist party candidates! For Communism and a workers' government!

—Communist League of America (Opposition)

Henry Ford Counsels Workers to Return to Feudal Serfdom

Henry Ford has let the cat out of the bag. Why should an employer of labor on an extensive scale worry about workers who haven't got five cents for a head or lettuce? Yet that is what he is thinking about, according to a recent interview written up in the New York Times. When the interviewer questioned the efficiency of Ford's plan for each of his workers raising his own lettuce instead of buying it, Ford replied, "There you go with the same old idea, the money standard of everything; why I know plenty of workers who haven't got five cents for a head of lettuce!" So it happens that Ford of all people is perfectly ready to scrap modern principles of efficiency such as mass production, the division of labor, and specialization of work and skill and evolve instead a system of compulsory gardening for each worker. Of course this system has no connection with his plan of "raising auto" by producing on the farm, goldenrod and muskmelons to be converted into rubber and gasoline. What then is the idea? Simply to make the workers work for next to nothing—And why? Because Ford too is helpless in a "system" of competitive chaos—in a period of relative prosperity he could afford to pay relatively "high" wages, especially since the market for autos had not reached the saturation point—But now the market is ruined, not because everybody has a car but largely because nobody has any money. Since Ford is helpless in this situation, the best thing to do is to force the workers to raise some garden stuff—This of course will not support a family so the worker will still have to work in the factory—for a very low wage. Naturally he doesn't need a decent wage if he raises part of his food himself! This is a long step backward toward feudalism; that is, a subsistence level for the general population, a sort of feed-your-own-face agriculture with no surplus save rent paid to the landlord in the form of labor and produce—No surplus for exchange, no market, no buying public. It is quite conceivable that Ford, a tyrant in management but a typical capitalistic anarchist in relation to social, organized life, may lead the way to a sort of modern feudalism—He makes a virtue of being flexible and alert to circumstances—the usual vice of an anarchistic tyrant—and at the moment he seems to be working on the theory that he must see that his workers get, not good wages, but food! This is just another way of saying that capitalism has broken down. But how far can industrialism go in the direction of feudalism? The world market is disorganized—The buying public is "liquidated". Farmers are being forced to cut their specialized market products and go in for self-subsistence. Workers are being forced to buy shovels and hoes and raise food, and millions have no work at all. One fourth of the state of Mississippi has been sold at public auction in default of taxes. Tenants

are obliged to feed themselves rather than concentrate on staple crops—Corporate farms are increasing. Only the luxury trades have buyers. Yet it remains true that modern industrialism and feudalism are two incorruptible systems—Ford, to finish the feudal parallel, would have to eat his autos! That is consume the surplus produced by the workers. If the workers of the world are to be "liquidated" in respect to wages, who will buy the products of their labor? If practically everybody today, outside of bureaucrat, is a low-paid employee or unemployed,

Back Numbers of Militant Wanted

Some time ago we issued an appeal for missing back numbers of The Militant. As a result of this appeal comrades in different parts of the country sent in what they had and we made up a number of files which are now on sale. We are sure that comrades still have in their possession extra copies of the numbers we need. If they will send them in at once we will be able to make up an additional number of files. We need not emphasize the financial importance of the sale of these files to us. It is obvious. The numbers we need are: Vol. 1, No. 1, November 15, 1928; Vol. 2 No. 4, February 13, 1929; Vol. 3, No. 31, October 1, 1930; Vol. 4, No. 2, January 15, 1931; Vol. 4, No. 10, May 15, 1931. We need all of these numbers, but at the moment we need the last one a little more than the others. A little more than a year ago we made up a number of files of The Militant from Vol. 1, No. 1 to the last issue of 1930. Comrades who bought these files have been waiting for bound files of the subsequent issues. The issuance of the weekly Militant last July in a larger format created a new binding problem. We decided to bind in separate files the few issues of the old format of the year 1931 for those comrades who have the old files, to save them the necessity of buying the new files and duplicating much of what they already have. We need about thirty of the missing issues for 1931. Comrades, don't wait. Send in all of these issues that you have at once.

N. Y. OPEN AIR MEETING

An open air meeting of the New York Branch of the Communist League of America (Opposition) will take place on Saturday, June 18, at 8 P. M. Place: 125th Street and Fifth Avenue. Speakers: Clarke, Capells, George Saul. All New York comrades and sympathizers are asked to be on hand. Note: On account of technical difficulties, the second article in the series on Unemployment and the Crisis by comrade Arne Swaback was skipped this week. It will appear in the forthcoming issue.—Ed.

where will the market be? The backward countries? Possibly, yet their "prosperity" is ruined along with the rest and besides, the best markets have always been found in highly developed countries. The whole business, then, illustrates the suicidal mania of competitive capitalism. Ford would doubtless prefer "high wages" all around but he too is helpless before the competitive chaos of which he is such a characteristic example. When the depression blows over—that is, when capitalism has depressed the workers "sufficiently" and is ready to go to work again—there will emerge new groupings of land, factory and credit capital which will renew the struggle on a new, gigantic level. In the meantime Ford facing a very uncertain market at home and abroad, is trying to save his own neck by a marriage of factory and farm which, on the technical level may be an advance but on the human level simply means a feudal enslavement of the workers. Such is Ford to the popular mind the world over, the personification of modern American production and even of distributive technique! Typical, rather of the limitations of modern capitalists. Of course neither prosperity nor depression is an act of God and neither has a base or bottom unless we put it there, but big business can afford to let things slide toward the bottomless pit until folks in general are willing to work for next to nothing and eke out a purely nominal wage with a home-grown head of lettuce.

With a cud for every camel And a hoe for every weed And a pew for every person And a chuck for every creed— In the momentary lull of "world peace" (stagnation, breakdown, reaction, fake pacifism), capitalist rivalry takes the form of depressing home populations to the bitterest limit so as to gain a new low level of production cost and achieve an initial advantage in the next spasm of world-wide competition for markets.—In this game too the capitalists have cut their own throats by making Germany the sweat-shop of the world and incidentally destroying the middle class which is the best guarantee of capitalism's survival. The result will be either a break with capitalism (a Communist victory) or less a Fascist sweat-shop that will be the envy of other capitalist countries.—Either event will be ruinous to capitalists elsewhere. Feudalism was a rigid system of production and consumption on a small pre-industrialistic pre-industrial scale. Capitalism cannot move in that direction without destroying itself. The very attempt to go backward while world economy is straining to break its national and class bounds for a new form of life on a world scale is eloquent of the death pangs of a corrupt, chaotic, suicidal, competitive capitalism.

Take your choice: "Every man his own head of lettuce" (back to feudalism) or "On to the proletarian revolution!" —GUY SOUTHWORTH

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Pamphlets Wanted If comrades throughout the country will send us their spare copies of The Draft Program, World Unemployment and the Five Year Plan and The Turn in the C. I. and the Situation in Germany we will be able to make up an additional number of Bound Volumes of the pamphlets. To the comrades who send them in, we will give credit against their copies of the Bound Volumes, What Next? or any of the other works by comrade Trotsky. IN PREPARATION: WHAT NEXT?—Vital Questions for the German Proletariat. ORDER YOUR COPY NOW. THE TURN IN THE C. I. IS OUT OF PRINT, BUT IS AVAILABLE IN THE BOUND VOLUMES OF COMRADE TROTSKY'S PAMPHLETS. MANY OF THE PAMPHLETS ADVERTISED ELSEWHERE IN THIS ISSUE CAN BE HAD IN JEWISH, SPANISH, RUSSIAN AND ITALIAN. FOR INFORMATION WRITE TO PIONEER PUBLISHERS, 84 East 10th Street, New York City

IN THE INTERNATIONAL OF LABOR

Reviews and News of the Working Class and Revolutionary Movements

The Situation in Italy and the C. P.

The Fascist Dictatorship in the Throes of the Economic Crisis

Against the background of the world economic crisis which shows a marked tendency toward accentuation, there presents itself a grave appearance, and in spite of the ferocious dictatorship of Fascism, of the explosion of the contradictions deriving therefrom which threaten to break out openly.

The Fascist government succeeded in riveting such shackles for the working masses that it was possible for it throughout long years to carry out a policy of systematic reduction of the workers' wages and equally systematic spoliation of the working peasants and of the middle strata in general. Thanks to such a policy, it was possible during the former years to satisfy to a sufficiently large extent its own requirements and the requirements of the large industrialists and landowners.

But a systematic policy of unlimited starvation of the entire working population could not but lead Italian capitalism into a blind alley. Indeed, the sharpening of the world economic crisis has reduced and limits continually the possibilities of exportation to the foreign markets for the agrarians and industrialists at the same time that the absorptive capacity of the internal market has been reduced to the last limit. Since this problem which is interlinked with others of the greatest importance has attained an intolerable acuteness and as the Fascist government is not in a position to be able to solve it by the habitual police methods, the Italian bourgeoisie manifests signs of a profound uneasiness.

How is it possible to reduce the costs of production if wages have already been slashed to the barest limit, beyond which it is impossible to go? How is the state to meet its payments inside and outside of the country if the provisions of the budget have not been realized and in place of a surplus one finds for the past year a deficit of approximately two billions, the large mass of the taxpayers being constantly less able to pay? How can one meet the growing requirements of industry and agriculture which are going through a sharp crisis, if the state coffers are empty?

These questions are raised by pretty nearly every one in Italy. And over these questions there developed heated discussions in the various industrial and agricultural conferences which in conclusion demand instantly from their Fascist government which in controlling and in intervening, largely holds the entire economic life of the country has already lowered the standard of living of the whole working population to such a degree that it will gain nothing or almost nothing more than at present, while its own requirements (armaments, enormous army, police, spies, provocateurs, militia, bureaucracy, etc.) are constantly increasing. As a result of this, not only is it unable to grant further large credits, but it is forced to address itself to its capitalist masters for aid. The last national loan of four billions floated by the government, which was covered in several days, proves how the Fascist government hesitated charily before embarking on the step. But the economic situation is serious and the requirements of the Fascist government are so great, that other, similar, "voluntary" loans appear to become indispensable, and within the capitalist class the contrasts will sharpen, the uncertainty and panic will beat a path for themselves.

The intensification of the objective situation contributes to the growth of the discomfort and the problems existing in the bourgeoisie, the determination not to endure the infernal situation created by Fascism which is beginning to manifest itself among the working masses.

The orientation of the middle strata together with the persistent and tenacious anti-Fascist attitude of the workers creates an entirely new situation where the outbreak of an open political crisis presents itself as a very probable eventuality in spite of the efforts of the Fascist press to bellow about the solidity of the regime.

The extension of the discontent to all the categories of the working population, and the sudden and even violent explosions arising from this discontent with a growing persistence in all the regions of Italy bring about in the bourgeoisie class those concerns and uncertainties which are characteristic of the moment when the ruling class is no longer certain of the possibility of its governing by the existing method but lacks the courage to change it for fear of instituting something worse. On the other hand the class which stands opposed to it, the proletariat, is not yet conscious of its force to assume the initiative of the revolutionary struggle against the bourgeois regime. It is in connection with such a situation and its duration that the middle classes may succeed in taking the initiative of the anti-Fascist struggle which assumes already especially in the case of the country, a mass character.

Thus we can explain the efforts made at present by the democratic parties of the "anti-Fascist Concentration" which through their movement of "Justice and Liberty" attempt to intervene in the Italian situation with the purpose of organizing successfully in collective manifestations the discontentment of the working masses in order to exert a pressure on these doubtful and worried strata of the bourgeoisie, in order to win them over to their cause and thereby provoke the open political crisis from which they hope to emerge victorious.

The hesitation of these bourgeois layers to resolve upon a change in the form of government derives principally from the fact that ten years of Fascist dictatorship have so much enlarged, so greatly exasperated the class contrast, have raised such a high barrier between the labouring population and the capitalist class, have so radicalized the situation that even the parties of the "Anti-Fascist Concentration" have been forced to move from the moral ground of the anti-Fascist struggle on to the ground of the revolutionary struggle, having as its tendency to overturn together the Fascist dictatorship, the monarchy also. But there can be no doubt that to the extent that the mass movements will develop, and the incapability of the Fascist dic-

center of the C. I., a mere supplement to its disastrous policy of bureaucratization in the heart of the C. I. and the Communist parties. They had already led our party to grave errors in the struggle against the "Trotskyist" Opposition in the C. P. S. U. And they wanted the logic of bureaucratization to be continued in the ranks of the C. P. I. to the utmost degree of servility towards the present leaders of the C. I. Thus the leaders of the C. P. I. have along with understandable hesitations, arrived at the "third period" with all that flows from them. One must recognize that once they crossed the rubicon, our leaders showed an inimitable agility. In fact, in order to catch the ear of Moscow, they cried very loudly that until an hour ago, they were deceived into not seeing that Italy also presented the peculiar characteristics of the third period; better still, that Italy was in the vanguard of the revolutionary upsurge. This, in such a way that all at once the passive masses have been presented as active; the social democracy, an opposing force to Fascism, has been presented as social-Fascist; the large section of the toiling population, who, only a day before said, were bound to be influenced by the social democracy, was presented as having already passed under the banner of Communism. They affirmed that everything was represented by the formula: Fascism or Communism. Consequently the social democracy no longer had any role to play in Italy. They further maintained that the proletarian revolution struck so loudly on the door that our leaders did not know what to do in order to arrive in time to be useful in leading it. And we, Oppositionists, who wanted to restore a over-measured reason to those who over-heated themselves—in the frost, we have been branded as counter-revolutionists.

About one year after our expulsion the C. C. convoked the Fourth Congress of the C. P. according to the usual bureaucratic procedure. This congress met in the beginning of the year 1931 when in the C. I. another turn was already in operation and that no one spoke any more of the third period. In the congress, the leadership of the C. P. I. recognized having committed several errors. The Italian situation was in reality not as advanced as they had judged it to be; the social democracy has not only not ceased to exist, but still is a political force to be reckoned with.

The Congress condemned considering this fundamental strategical object accomplished; the conquest of the masses influenced by the social-democracy basing themselves on the disappearance of the other anti-Fascist parties. . . . In the same way, the Congress warned the party, "that one must not forget that there still exists a large passive mass whom we are as yet far from leading." . . . and what is more "it is necessary to note that if it is true that the party has resisted the reaction and has continued to struggle, it is also true that it has suffered the consequences of the blows inflicted on it by the class enemy and also the fact that the whole working class has been forced into a retreat by Fascism (disbursement and renewing of the cadres, weakness in the industrial centers, temporary interruption of mass work)." And still more, the Congress warned the leadership that the "democratic danger" that is to say, the danger that "sections of the middle class can divert the revolutionary movement of the peasant masses and hinder their political solidarity with the proletarian movement, is in fact particularly serious in these regions (Midi); and it is an error to think that they will be eliminated merely by objective factors. The revolutionary bloc of the workers and peasants can only be the result of the political action of the party in the country." (Theses and Resolutions of the Fourth Congress.)

After the death of Lenin followed the Stalinist political leadership in the C. P. S. U., which was made the leading

center of the C. I., a mere supplement to its disastrous policy of bureaucratization in the heart of the C. I. and the Communist parties. They had already led our party to grave errors in the struggle against the "Trotskyist" Opposition in the C. P. S. U. And they wanted the logic of bureaucratization to be continued in the ranks of the C. P. I. to the utmost degree of servility towards the present leaders of the C. I. Thus the leaders of the C. P. I. have along with understandable hesitations, arrived at the "third period" with all that flows from them. One must recognize that once they crossed the rubicon, our leaders showed an inimitable agility. In fact, in order to catch the ear of Moscow, they cried very loudly that until an hour ago, they were deceived into not seeing that Italy also presented the peculiar characteristics of the third period; better still, that Italy was in the vanguard of the revolutionary upsurge. This, in such a way that all at once the passive masses have been presented as active; the social democracy, an opposing force to Fascism, has been presented as social-Fascist; the large section of the toiling population, who, only a day before said, were bound to be influenced by the social democracy, was presented as having already passed under the banner of Communism. They affirmed that everything was represented by the formula: Fascism or Communism. Consequently the social democracy no longer had any role to play in Italy. They further maintained that the proletarian revolution struck so loudly on the door that our leaders did not know what to do in order to arrive in time to be useful in leading it. And we, Oppositionists, who wanted to restore a over-measured reason to those who over-heated themselves—in the frost, we have been branded as counter-revolutionists.

There is no doubt that between the time of the bankruptcy of the Aventin and the present the Italian situation has been enormously radicalized; this is also proved by the changes that have supervened in the Concentrationist program of action. This fact is of great importance for the Communist Party because there exists a number of infinitely greater possibilities than in the Matteotti period, in order to win the leadership of the mass movements.

But the conquest of the leadership of the mass movements by the Communist Party does not operate naturally, due to the fact that the Communist party is the only party that struggles in the interest of all the toiling population; but it operates only on the condition that the Communist Party can convince the masses that it is, in actual fact, the only party. The conquest of the leadership of the masses by the party is consequently closely connected with the correctness of its policy. Unfortunately the leadership of the C. P. I. is more concerned with reconciling its policy with the disastrous zig-zags of the international leadership than with the real situation in Italy. Also, if the rank and file comrades aided by us do not succeed in causing a radical change in the present policy pursued by the party toward the social democracy and the "Justice and Liberty" movement it is to be foreseen that the party will play quite a secondary role, in the period of preparation preceding the crisis as well as in the period when the crisis will have burst.

(Despite the scandalous campaign carried on at the present time against Bordiga in the party, the policy of the leadership basically maintains his (Bordiga's) ultra-Leftist ideology, of which it is only a caricature.)

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The Organizational Progress of the German Left Opposition

GELSENGIRCHEN.—
Gelsingkirchen: Our comrades, Weber, Klayberg and Meyer of Gelsingkirchen have received the following letter from the district leadership (C. P.) of the Ruhr:

Secretariat: "We communicate to you that you are expelled from the Communist party for disintegrating work and factional activity. Motive: Despite the repeated warnings of the secretariat of the sub district you openly spread Trotskyist pamphlets and you defend Trotskyism which is the vanguard of the counter-revolution. The leading party of the proletariat cannot tolerate such openly counter-revolutionary knaves in its ranks. Continue on this counter-revolutionary path and one day you will find yourself on the other side of the barricade with all the counter-revolutionists in the struggle against your class." Signed: District Leadership of the Ruhr. We publish several extracts from the reply of our comrades:

"From the accusations made in your letter: 'Disintegration of the Party', 'Factional activity and spreading Trotskyist pamphlets', the only one that is true is that we spread the pamphlets and the newspapers of comrade Trotsky and the Left Opposition. (Not seeing any reason to hide what is we will give you the number of pamphlets and newspapers distributed since the tenth of February. They amount to seven hundred copies.)

"The letter speaks of openly counter-revolutionary knaves, who can no longer be tolerated in the ranks of the party. Does this signify that double-faced, secret and hidden knaves are less dangerous and because of that, can still be tolerated?"

"In the 'motive', you counsel us about pursuing 'our counter-revolutionary path.' If this manner of absurd speaking denotes the political and spiritual horizon of the district leadership or of the writer of the letter, we have every reason to admit that the Secretariat does not know what the word counter-revolutionary means. To encourage comrades who have without exception worked for many years in the party, to follow a path that you consider dangerous and injurious—one cannot in all truth imagine anything more counter-revolutionary. Above all, if you think that up to the present time these comrades have demanded and tried in vain to engage in a serious discussion."

BERLIN.—
Meeting of the Members of the Northwest District

The results of the elections was to be taken up. But, the report of Pouke as well as that of the leader of the organization reached such a low level that entire locals "voted with their feet", that is to say, left the meeting. The reporter was often interrupted towards the end. From all the districts that communicate with us now similar manifestations of discontent are produced on the subject of the futile and contradictory policy of the party concerning the election results, of which they are well aware.

LEIPZIG.—
Our position on the past of the C. P. G. in the trade unions and our positive criticism of the isolationist policy of the R. T. U. O. (revolutionary trade union opposition) and of the "Red United Front" have often been expressed in articles and theses in the Permanent Revolution. Experience proves the correctness of our position on trade union work in the practical realization of a true Leninist policy in the mass organizations. Our comrades are registering successes in their interventions in the trade union bodies. The discontent against reformism is favorable for the conquest of the masses, on the condition that we use a correct criticism.

The trade union of the maintenance workers organized a functionary meeting on March 8th, where they dealt with the subject of the "iron front" and where Berkert, general president of Berlin, was present as the reporter. In a report which lasted for two hours he tried to make the workers believe that the "iron front" and the candidity of Hindenburg

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were the methods of proletarian struggle against Fascism. Our comrade, Buechner spoke first in the discussion. He spoke for half an hour before two hundred workers. He demonstrated to the workers in an understandable manner that the policy of the A. D. G. B. (United German Trade Union Alliance—reformist union) has led to the strengthening of the reaction, that the leaders of the iron front are the same ones who support all the attacks of the bourgeoisie against the working class, against wages, against social "rights", etc. That the moment imposes upon the workers unity in an extra-parliamentary struggle against Fascism and that the candidity of Thaelmann for the presidency of the Reich should signify the mobilization of the conscious proletariat for the extra-parliamentary struggle which approaches. Vigorous applause demonstrated the sympathy of the meeting for the political arguments of our comrade worker.

Coal Miners Strike in Czechoslovakia

All the parties, included also the Communist party, were taken by surprise by the outbreak of the North Bohemian mass strike. It was a healthy elementary mass movement. Shortly after the outbreak of the strike the Communist party very ably utilized the circumstance that the reformist leaders would have nothing to do with the strike but exclusively in the sense of the "demagogy of party politics". The Red Trade Unions gave to the movement no orientation, i. e., whatever demands were formulated were purely reformist—"social Fascist" demands. It was Zapotocky, this practical man, trained in all the dodges and artifices of Bubnikism* who was suddenly chosen as leader of the movement. Smeral stood behind him, made a programmatic speech before the large conference of miners at Revier. An old-time, Right-wing trade union bureaucrat could not pass over the question more superficially—that a mighty political struggle had broken out, that above all made it a duty of the Communist leaders to further it towards a goal whereby the opportunity presented itself to raise its political character.

A miners' strike in Czechoslovakia has the greatest significance only if the miners of the Ostrau-District participate in the struggle. The Ostrau mines and not those of North Bohemia are of vital importance for transportation and industry. However, the first ones who retreated in Ostrau and Klaude were the functionaries of the "red union." This was irreparable right up to the end of the struggle. In addition, the whole conduct of the official party, particularly the burlesque speeches of Zapotocky, invites the conclusion that the C. P. did not in the least desire this extension of the struggle.

On the other hand, Smeral and Zapotocky indicated how the united front movement really appears when it for once is formed not by the "Lefts" but the Stalinists themselves. In the leadership of the strike the Communists and the Hitlerites formed a united front. In no city of the world did the Fascists function so openly as henchmen of the work of the old Austria and the present Czechoslovakia. They were and are the party of the yellow strike breakers. It is sufficient to refer to the direct results of the liquidated struggle. Every local election in the German arena ends with an unexpected victory of the Fascists, while the C. P. can only point to entirely weak advances or direct losses. In the united front of the C. P. with the yellow forces it was affirmed by the C. P. that the latter were not yellow strike-breakers but worthy comrades of revolutionary fighters.

The whole argument becomes more valid when one regards the numerical strength of the trade unions. In the German and Czech trade union organizations and in the National Socialist trade unions there is approximately 1,000,000 workers. (The Czech National Socialist trade unions are pure workers organizations; they are basically different from the German National Socialists in their composition and tendencies). In the reformist miners' organizations there is said to be 60,000 workers. The trade unions of the German Fascists number all in all several thousand members. Of these there are at least seventy percent who are confirmed strike-breakers. One might say that the red trade unions are no stronger. That is correct. But the fact is that the Fascists within the large trade unions have not the least influence; nor have they ever had, and on the contrary, the sentiment for Communism, for the Soviet Union, for everything that has a genuine revolutionary ring to it becomes strengthened day by day. So that the red trade unions should have had a thousand fold more favorable position. And the results of the mass struggle? An astounding rise of the party of the yellow strike-breakers, liquidation of the mass struggle on the basis of the most negligible "agreements", while the united strike leadership was not recognized.

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Nine Years of the Left Opposition

The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution

When the full history is written of the second Chinese revolution (1925-1927), it will stand out as an everlasting monument of condemnation to the leadership of Stalin-Bucharin in the Russian party and the International. For the first time in history was it given to the young proletarian of the Orient to take the power into its hands. Such a victory would have extended the Soviet power from the frontiers of Poland to the Pacific coast, brought together close to a third of the world's population under the triumphant banner of Bolshevism, and given such a mighty impetus to the world revolution as it has not had since October 1917. Victory lay within reach of the hand for the Chinese workers and peasants, but something unprecedented in history took place: the leadership, clothed in all the formal authority of the Russian revolution and the Communist International, stood in the way like a solid wall. Stalin and Bucharin prohibited the proletariat from taking power. In the Chinese revolution the epigones played to the end, and with tragic results, the role which Lenin's struggle in the Bolshevik party in April-May 1917 prevented them from playing in the Russian revolution.

The policy of the ruling faction during the most decisive period of the Chinese revolution was, as Trotsky puts it, a translation of Menshevism into the language of Chinese politics. The theory of Stalin, Bucharin and Martynov can be summed up as follows:
The Stalin Theory
They proceeded from the standpoint that China, as a semi-colonial country, was being submitted to the yoke of imperialism which pressed down upon the whole nation, and upon all the classes in it with equal severity. On this ground, the bourgeoisie was conducting a revolutionary war against imperialism and had to be supported by the masses of workers and peasants, in a struggle which was to be carried to victory by the establishment of a "democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants". The "revolutionary anti-imperialist united front" was to be constituted as a "bloc of four classes"—composed of the workers, the peasants, the petty and large bourgeoisie. The embodiment of this "bloc" was the bourgeois Kuo Min Tang, the party of Sun Yat Sen, and after his death, of Chiang Kai-Shek and Wang Chin Wei. The Kuo Min Tang according to Stalin, was a "revolutionary parliament", a "workers' and peasants' party" into which all the Chinese Communists had to enter as a subordinated group. Even after the Shanghai coup d'Etat of Chiang Kai-Shek, Bucharin shouted that "we shall never surrender the blue banner" (that is, the banner of the Kuo Min Tang).

Since the bourgeoisie, according to this conception, was conducting an anti-imperialist war against the foreign brigands, the class struggle at home was considered liquidated. For the workers and the Communists to make any serious attacks upon the Chinese bourgeoisie would be to disrupt the "bloc of the four classes". That is why Stalin compelled the Chinese Communists to submit quietly to the decisions of the Nationalist government which established compulsory arbitration in strike struggles. For the same reason, the peasants movement was checked with an iron hand in telegraphic commands from Moscow. Similarly, the Communists were instructed not to organize Soviets, first, because Soviets are the instruments of power of the proletarian dictatorship and "not of the democratic dictatorship", and secondly because to form Soviets would mean to overthrow the "revolutionary center", as Stalin called the Nationalist government of the bourgeoisie.

The principal arguments of the epigones against the Left Opposition were that "Trotsky did not understand" the "peculiar" position of China as a semi-colonial country where the revolution was "particularly distinguished" by the fact that it was anti-imperialist; further that Trotsky did not understand that this was a "democratic and not a socialist" revolution, consequently that its aim was a democratic and not a proletarian dictatorship; finally, that to "break the united anti-imperialist front" would be to alienate the bourgeoisie and "skip over stages".

This was the guiding line of the leaders of the Comintern. Its practical effects led directly to the victory of the bourgeois counter-revolution and the massacre of the vanguard of the Chinese proletariat and peasantry by the very "allies" whom Stalin had chosen for them.

The "Bloc of Four Classes"
What was the "bloc of four classes" in actuality? It was the form selected by Stalin and Co., in which the Communists, that is, the genuinely revolutionary vanguard, was subordinated, bound hand and foot, and delivered to the Chinese bourgeoisie. In the "bloc" the Chinese Communist Party did not retain a shadow of its own independence. The party, in a joint manifesto with the Kuo Min Tang, announced that it differed with the latter only "in some details", that the "united anti-imperialist front" had to be maintained at all costs, and that the Communists pledged themselves not to criticize the petty bourgeois doctrines of Sun Yat Senism. At the height of the revolutionary storm the Communists played such an insignificant independent role that they did not possess a daily paper of their own, and even their weekly periodicals—we shall say nothing of their contents—were published irregularly. In whole sections of the territory conquered by the Nationalist armies of Chiang Kai-Shek, the Communist party and the trade unions continued to remain illegal. The party, instead of becoming the leader in

arousing and preparing the masses against the bourgeoisie, became the instrument of the bourgeoisie restraining the workers from striking against their bourgeois "allies" and preventing the peasants from rising to take the land and drive out the kulaks. Rendered impotent in the revolutionary situation, Stalin nevertheless left the Chinese party sufficient strength for it to hand over to the bourgeoisie the proletarian and peasant masses it should have led against Chiang Kai-Shek and Co.

What conception did the Opposition defend? It took as its point of departure the fact that the semi-colonial position of China made the struggle against foreign imperialism an immediate task of the democratic revolution. But, it pointed out it is precisely this position with relation to imperialism that makes inevitable the coming agreement between the national bourgeoisie—seeking customs autonomy—and the imperialists, both of them bound together by a common fear of the Chinese masses. The democratic revolution sets the task not only of liberation from the imperialist yoke but also the solution of the agrarian question. In China, however, the country usurer and landowner is so intimately bound up with the urban big bourgeoisie, the compradors, and in the last analysis, the foreign bourgeoisie, that the agrarian revolution can only be carried out in violent struggle against all these elements. Will the bourgeoisie or even the petty bourgeoisie lead the masses in solving this problem? Quite the contrary. Only the proletariat of China can lead the peasantry in the struggle for liberation and the establishment of their own power. In this struggle, it is necessary to establish a bloc with the petty bourgeois masses, but a bloc which is led by the proletariat whose vanguard is organized into a separate Communist party, subordinated to no other party and acting independently.

What guarantees must the Communists establish for the victory of the revolution? Primarily, to rely upon themselves, upon their own armed forces, upon their own apparatus, and in the end, upon their own state machinery. The Canton government is not our government just as the Nationalist armies are not our armies and the Kuo Min Tang is not our party, but the armies and party of the bourgeoisie. The same holds true of the Wuhan government, established by the "Lefts" after Chiang Kai-Shek's coup d'Etat in Shanghai. Everywhere, therefore, the workers and peasants must form Soviets, for which they are already fighting instinctively.

The Smashing of the Opposition
For advocating this course of action, the whole apparatus of the Russian party and the International was converted into a machine to crush the Left Opposition. From Stalin and Martynov down to the last functioning international campaign was conducted to prove that Chiang Kai-Shek was a reliable ally, and after he had drowned the Shanghai proletariat in its own blood, his place of honor in the campaign was taken by Feng Yu-hsiang and Wang Chin Wei. The whole Communist press lauded the bourgeois generals as "our own". The Kuo Min Tang, which the Russian Political Bureau had decided (against Trotsky's solitary vote) to admit into the Communist International as a "sympathizing" party, was presented to the world as only one step removed from Communism. To such lengths had Stalinism gone in the International that when Chiang Kai-Shek's armies entered Shanghai to consecrate in proletarian blood the victory of the counter-revolution, the French Communist party sent him a telegram of congratulations on the formation of the "Shanghai Commune"!

The proposals of the Opposition for an independent Communist party in China were denounced without stint. This meant, cried Stalin and Bucharin, to leave the Kuo Min Tang, to "desert our allies", to drive away the bourgeoisie from the "united front", to "skip over stages". The bourgeoisie had to be supported, they contended, and the bloc maintained. It is true that in the "bloc" it was the bourgeoisie who ruled and the proletariat who served, but this fatal "detail" was overlooked completely in the interests of the "national revolution".

Even after the Chiang Kai-Shek coup (and it was not his first sign of counter-revolutionism), Stalin doggedly maintained his course. Only, in place of support to the "Kuo Min Tang center" of Chiang Kai-Shek which was supposed to be leading the "anti-imperialist revolution", was now put the "Kuo Min Tang Left" of Wang Chin Wei, which was supposed to be leading the "agrarian revolution". After Chiang Kai-Shek had led his troops to Shanghai in order there to join forces with the foreign imperialists against the Chinese masses, the government of the "Left" bourgeoisie was set up in Wuhan. In this case too the ghastly experiment in Menshevism was continued on a "higher scale". Stalin called the Wuhan government of bourgeois politicians the "revolutionary center" of the South. According to Stalin, the Wuhan clique was nothing more nor less than the "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry". And if this was the case, the proposal of the Opposition to form Soviets in the Wuhan territory was, you see, a criminal adventure. For if we already have the "democratic dictatorship" set up, what purpose is there in organizing Soviets, which are organs of power and must consequently be aimed at overwhelming the existing regime? This is how the Stalinists argued.

Stalinist Ministerialism

Into the Wuhan government were sent two Communist ministers, one as the minister of labor and the other, Tang Ping Shan, who had already distinguished himself in Moscow and China in the struggle against "Trotskyism" because it "under-estimated the peasantry", as minister of agriculture. How did this bourgeois government, the "organ of the agrarian revolution", proceed to act? In the customary manner of all bourgeois governments that exist only by grace of the ignorance, disorganization and weakness of the revolutionary masses. It sought to crush the workers' and peasants' movement, and in this task it found the signal support of the two Communist captives who served the Chinese bourgeoisie as ministers under instructions from Moscow. Wuhan proceeded to "organize the agrarian revolution" by sending the Communist minister and anti-Trotsky expert into the countryside at the head of an armed division for the purpose of suppressing the insurrectionary peasants! In this one episode is illuminated the whole counter-revolutionary course which Stalinism pursued in the Chinese revolution. The Communist vanguard was transformed by Stalin into the club with which the bourgeoisie smashed the masses into submission.

It must be acknowledged that Stalin's allies in the camp of the Chinese bourgeoisie proved to be less faithful to him than he was to them. Practically at the moment when he was sharpening the knife for the neck of the Shanghai proletariat, Chiang Kai-Shek was being lauded in Moscow by Stalin, who proclaimed him a loyal ally, and condemned the Opposition for proposing measures against him. Stalin suffered the same inevitable disappointment with the Wuhan government. It followed with almost staked accuracy in the footsteps of Chiang Kai-Shek. The "Left Kuo Min Tang" leaders proved to be not one whit more revolutionary than their Right wing brothers-under-the-skin. The fantastic "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry", which Lenin had kicked into the dustbin of history in April 1917, proved to be, in China of a decade later, a reactionary noose around the necks of the proletariat and peasantry.

With his "workers' and peasants' party", with his "anti-imperialist united front", with his "bloc of four classes", with his "revolutionary parliament" of the Kuo Min Tang, with his "democratic dictatorship" and opposition to the formation of Soviets under proletarian leadership—with all this Stalin played the reactionary part in China which Tseretelli and Chernov sought unsuccessfully to fill in the Russian revolution of 1917. This is the only way in which the tragedy of the second Chinese revolution will be recorded in history. At every stage in the struggle, the Opposition defended the tested doctrines of Marxism, of Bolshevism. The Centrist apparatus crushed the Left Opposition. But in doing so it only crushed the Chinese revolution.

—SHACHTMAN.

The next article will deal with the struggle of the Opposition for the planned industrialization and agrarian collectivization in the Soviet Union.

The Situation in Italy

(Continued from page three.)
The change in policy that took place in March, 1930 and the Fourth Congress which met in the early part of 1931, were not due to a re-examination of the Italian situation but were the result of a general change which occurred in the policy of the C. I. and proved with what lack seriousness the leaders of our party concern themselves with the destinies of the proletarian revolution in Italy. And that what we had occasion to say was equally true, was shown by the fact that at the Fourth Congress, organized by the leadership that expelled us they were forced by the Congress to condemn several false political positions defended by them one year ago against us—and having accepted our position—they have not failed to slander us at this Congress. Nevertheless the fact remains very important for us that at the Fourth Congress, the leadership which expelled us from the party was forced to recognize the political positions defended by us as correct. If we had been able to participate in this Congress we would certainly have demolished the other false political positions which the leadership succeeded in getting adopted. In fact, the full responsibility for the Fourth Congress rests upon the shoulders of the party leadership which organized it after having estimated the situation correctly and after having put the party on guard against the "democratic" danger, for retaining the false theory of "social-Fascism" and following from that, in persisting in the repudiation of the Bolshevik-Leninist tactic of the united front.

The Communist party should become the most powerful motive force in the Italian situation for the mobilization and the unification of all the forces of the movement against the Fascist dictatorship. It can be the center of attraction for all the working masses by aiding them in the efforts they are making to rise against the Fascist dictatorship. And in the course of the large movement which will multiply and gain leadership over it in a firm fashion. "But only on the condition that they do not turn their backs on the problems of democracy" (Trotsky), by giving up the absolutely negative policy towards the other anti-Fascist parties.

By continuing to lead according to the false theory of "social Fascism"; and consequently, by not applying the tactic of the united front as it was taught us by Lenin during the four Congresses

STRIKE STRATEGY

by LEON TROTSKY

(Continued from last issue)

According to the testimony of Communist workers (cf., say *Der Rote Aufbau*), there is a great deal being said in factories to the effect that the sectional strikes have no meaning at present, and that only a general strike could lead the workers out of their troubles. "The general strike" here signifies: the perspective of struggle. The workers are the less apt to become inspired by disparate strikes because they have to deal directly with the state power; monopolistic capital speaks to the workers in the language of Bruening's emergency decrees.

At the dawn of the workers movement, in order to draw the workers into a strike, the agitators often refrained from launching into revolutionary and socialistic perspectives, in order not to scare the worker away. At present the situation bears just the opposite character. The leading strata of the German workers can decide upon beginning a defensive economic struggle only in the event that they are clear about the general perspectives of the subsequent struggle. They do not feel that these perspectives obtain among the Communist leadership.

UNEMPLOYED AND EMPLOYED MUST BE UNITED

In relation to the tactic of the March days, 1921 in Germany (to "electrify" the minority of the proletariat instead of capturing its majority), the writer spoke at the III. Congress as follows: "At the time when the overwhelming majority of the working class takes no account of the movement, does not sympathize with it, or is doubtful of its success; then the minority rushes ahead and by mechanical means strives to drive the workers into strikes, then this impatient minority in the guise of the Party can fall foul of the working class and break its own head.

Does this mean that the strike struggle should be renounced? No, not renounced, but it should be sustained by creating for it necessary political and organizational postulates. One of these is the restoration of the unity of the trade unions. The reformist bureaucracy, of course, is averse to this. The split has hitherto assured its position in the best manner possible. But the immediate threat of Fascism is changing the situation within the trade unions to the detriment of the bureaucracy. The gravitation to unity is growing. Should Leipart's clique try under present conditions to prohibit the restoration of unity, this would immediately double or triple the Communist influence within the unions. Should the union materialize, nothing could be better; a wide sphere of activity would be opened to the Communists. Not half-way measures are urgent, but a bold about-face!

Without a widespread campaign against the high cost of living, for a short working week, against wage cuts; without drawing the unemployed into this struggle hand in hand with the employed; without a successful application of the policy of the United Front, the improvised small strikes will not lead the movement out to the open road.

LUXEMBURGISM—OR BUREAUCRATIC VILLIFICATION?

The Left social-democrats chat about the necessity of resorting to the general strike "in the event that the Fascists come into power." Very likely, Leipart himself flaunts such threats within the four walls. On this account, DIE ROTE FAHNE makes reference to Luxemburgism. This is villifying the great revolutionist. Even though Rosa Luxemburg overestimated the independent importance of the general strike in the question of power, she understood quite well that a general strike could not be declared at one's whim, that it was prepared for by the whole preceding course of the workers' movement, the policies of the party and the trade unions. On the lips of the Left social democrats however the mass strike is more of a consoling myth superimposed over sorry reality.

For many years, the French social democrats had promised that they would resort to the general strike in the event of war. The Basle Congress of 1912 even promised resorting to a revolutionary uprising. But the threat of the general strike as well as of the uprising assumed in these instances the nature of theatrical thunder. What is here involved is not the counter-position of the strike to the uprising, but the still-born, formal and verbal attitude to the strike as well as to the uprising. The reformist armed with the revolution in the abstract—such in general was the Bebel type of social democrat prior to the war. The post-war reformist brandishing the threat of a general strike is again a live caricature.

The Communist leadership, of course, bears to the general strike an attitude that is much more conscientious. But it lacks clarity in this question also. And clarity is urgent. The general strike is a very important weapon of struggle, but it is not universal. There are conditions under which the general strike may weaken the workers more than their immediate enemy. The strike must enter as an important element into

the calculation of one's strategy and not as a panacea in which is submerged all other strategy.

Generally speaking, the general strike is the weapon of struggle of the weaker against the stronger; or, to put it more precisely, of the one who at the beginning of the struggle feels himself weaker against him whom one considers to be the stronger; seeing that I myself cannot make use of an important weapon, I shall try to prevent my opponents using it; if I cannot shoot from cannons, I shall at least remove the gun-locks. Such is the "idea" of the general strike.

The general strike was always the weapon of struggle against an entrenched state power, that had at its disposal, railroads, telegraph, police and army, etc. By paralyzing the governmental apparatus the general strike either "scared" the government, or created the postulates for a revolutionary solution of the question of power.

FOR THE DEFENSIVE OR FOR THE OFFENSIVE?

The general strike is the most effective method of fighting under the conditions where the masses are united only by revolutionary indignation but are lacking military organizations and staffs, and cannot beforehand either estimate the correlation of forces, or work out a plan of action. Thus, one may suppose, that the anti-Fascist revolution in Italy, after beginning from one or another sectional clash, will inevitably go through the stage of the general strike. Only in this way will the present disjointed proletariat of Italy once again feel itself as a united class and match the strength of the enemy's resistance, whom it must overthrow.

One would have to fight in Germany against Fascism by means of the general strike only in the event that Fascism was already in power, and had firmly seized the state apparatus. But so long as the matter concerns the repelling of the Fascist attempt to seize power, the slogan of the general strike turns out to be just so much space wasted.

At the time of Kornilov's march against Petrograd neither the Bolsheviks, nor the Soviets as a whole, even thought of declaring a general strike. On the railroads the fight was waged to have the workers and the railroad personnel transport the revolutionary troops and retard the Kornilov detachments. The factories stopped functioning only in proportion as the workers had to leave for the front. The industries that served the revolutionary front worked with redoubled energy.

At the time of the October overturn there was likewise no talk of a general strike. The factories and regiments already on the eve of the overturn were recognizing, in an overwhelming majority, the leadership of the Bolshevik Soviet. Under these conditions, to call the factories to a strike meant to weaken oneself and not the enemy. At the railroads the workers strived to aid the uprising; the personnel under the guise of neutrality aided the counter-revolution. The general strike of railroad workers lacked any significance: the question was decided by the preponderance of the workers over the personnel.

Should the struggle flare up in Germany through sectional clashes initiated by Fascist provocation, the call for a general strike would hardly meet the general situation. The general strike would first of all mean that city would be isolated from city, one section of the city from another, and even one factory from the next. It is more difficult to find and collect the unemployed. Under such conditions the Fascists, who have no lack of staffs, can obtain a certain preponderance thanks to the centralized leadership. True, their masses are so disjointed that even under these conditions the Fascist attempt could be repelled. But that is already another side of the matter.

The question of railroad communications, for instance, must be taken up not from the point of view of "prestige" which demands that everybody should strike, but from the point of view of military expediency: for whom and against whom would the ways of communication serve in the time of conflict?

It is necessary, therefore, to prepare not for a general strike but for the repulsion of Fascists. This means that everywhere there should be created bases of operation, shock troops, reserves, local staffs and central authorities, smoothly working means of communication and the simplest plans of mobilization.

—L. TROTSKY.

(From WHAT NEXT—Vital Questions for the German proletariat)

*Some ultra-Lefts (for instance, the Italian Bordist group) holds that the United Front is permissible only in economic struggles. The attempt to separate the economic struggle from the political in our epoch is less feasible in our time than ever before. The example of Germany, where wage agreements and workers' wages are cut by means of administrative decrees should instill this truth even in small children.

We shall add in passing that in their present stage, the Stalinists are reviving many of the early crochets of Bordism. Small wonder that the "Prometeo group", which has learned nothing and which hasn't taken a step forward, today, in the period of the ultra-Left zig-zag of the Comintern stands much closer to the Stalinists than to us.

the C. I., at the very moment when the Fascist dictatorship will feel its instability resulting from the fact that it needs to struggle against serious objective difficulties, and against the workers, the peasants and the middle classes of the city, in general, who are seriously beginning to march against it. At the same time, when the social democracy and the other concentrationist parties are pushed by the situation into a "Left" position, that means to lead the party of the proletariat, the Communist party, into isolation and therefore to be able to do nothing serious toward the success of the proletarian revolution in Italy.

—SANTINI.

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