

WORKERS  
OF THE  
WORLD.  
UNITE

# THE MILITANT

Weekly Organ of the Communist League of America [Opposition]

Published weekly by the Communist League of America (Opposition) at 84 East 10th Street, New York, N. Y. Entered as second class mail matter, November 28, 1928 at the Post Office at New York, N. Y. under the act of March 3, 1879.

VOLUME V, NO. 24 [WHOLE NO. 120]

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, JUNE 11, 1932

PRICE 5 CENTS

## The Communist Party's Election Platform

It is to be expected that Communism will become a much more serious challenge in these coming presidential elections than hitherto. That is so mainly because of the vital working class issues of the economic crisis and mass unemployment which is pressing harder every day for a solution, or at least for some measure of relief. There will, of course, be no solution found in the elections under a capitalist regime, and it is not for this purpose that Communists participate. They will foster no such illusions within the working class.

Nevertheless there is an opportunity, by the medium of the election campaign, to advance the development of the Communist movement and strengthen the working class politically. It is in this sense that the more serious challenge is presented.

But the Communists are not the only force appealing in the name of the working class, calling for its support and endeavoring to rally its ranks. Even the bourgeois politicians have not lost any of their power of demagoguery. And, it is well to remember that capitalism still controls all the main avenues of working class influence, propaganda and education. The Socialist party hopes to at least raise itself to its former level of a contending force. It is stepping forward with a brand new platform, but as before cleverly designed to appeal to the working class and to the petty bourgeoisie. The tone and form of a number of its demands have a more radical flavor than usual, even here and there a smattering of militancy. Yet it is so construed that it contains no serious offense—not to speak of danger—to the bourgeoisie. That, of course, is its object. While it will bear more analysis later, it suffices here to say that it is a reformist platform through and through.

For the revolutionary workers the choice presented in these elections is an easy one. Their choice will be the Communist party. It is our choice. To many workers, however, who may be entirely sincere in gaining relief measures for their class, the distinction is not so clear. Many of those will undoubtedly yet have to learn by bitter experience. But even the elections should become a valuable lesson.

It is in view of this that the platform presented by the Communist party assumes special importance. The needs of the workers come more to the fore during election times. Demands for amelioration of their distress become more pressing. The Communists fight for these demands. But they do not expect a solution to issue out of the elections. That is entirely bound up with the revolutionary way out. Immediate or partial demands contained in their platform are there for the purpose of more directly focusing the working class attention, to become the central points for the struggle of today, which must steadily develop toward the revolutionary way out. Hence that latter objective must first of all be clear in the Communist platform.

Is that the case with regard to the platform submitted by the official party leadership? Not at all. It presents the revolutionary way out as a workers' and farmers' government—even in several instances calling it a "revolutionary government". What does this mean? Does it mean the Proletarian Dictatorship? If so, it should be stated so precisely by that term. If this is not meant—and it cannot be under that formulation—it becomes an opportunist adaptation to reformist views. The slogan of a workers' and farmers' government is not an adaptation to American peculiarities, for here the working class constitutes the overwhelming percentage of the population. The term a workers' and farmers' government in the accepted American sense is the reformist sense. When presented that way in a Communist party platform it becomes a mockery on Marxism.

We would, of course, not propose that the Proletarian Dictatorship become an objective for these elections. But as to the revolutionary way out it must be stated in that manner so its definite proletarian and revolutionary basis becomes clear.

Only in this way can there be continuity in a revolutionary sense with the immediate and partial demands advanced. Otherwise they stand alone as mere reform measures.

Among the immediate demands, contained in the party platform, which generally correspond with the working class needs today there appears, however, the one for self-determination for the Black Belt (for the Negroes). It would have been far more in keeping with Marxism to substitute in its place the correct slogan for economic, social and political equality for the Negroes. But is it accidental that there is no demand for the shorter workday? Even the socialist parties in the pre-war period demanded the eight-hour workday, during elections and after. Today the demand should be the six-hour workday without reduction of pay. As a part of the platform it

would become a means of focussing attention upon it as an immediate objective which can be accomplished in building, strengthening and unifying the movement today. Its realization will naturally mean a step forward to a stronger class position.

One proposition in the platform reads: "Even to force concessions NOW from the three capitalist parties, there is no weapon so powerful as a vote for Communism and participation in the daily struggles led by the Communist Party." (emphasis in original). And, it adds the direct inference that the capitalist politicians may grant such concessions to "keep the masses from turning to Communism". This approach has nothing in common with Marxism. We do not ask the workers to vote Communist in order to force concessions from the capitalist parties. We do not ask them to participate in the daily struggles for this purpose. We ask the workers to do so because of our revolutionary objective and to strengthen their position toward finally reaching this objective. Concessions gained are by products of the class struggle, not our aim, and gained only because of our strengthened position against, and over the opposition of the capitalist parties.

If we fail to educate, to organize and to prepare the working class for a clear understanding of, and for the attainment of the revolutionary objectives, temporary concessions gained, instead of becoming partial victories on the way, be turned into retardation of the struggle.

## The Veterans' March on Washington

The march of the world war veterans at Washington has aroused national attention. The tenacity with which the impoverished ex-soldiers stick it out in their encampments in the capital and on their trek serve particularly to dramatize the tragic fate of this section of the American working class, whose life and blood was bled about so lightly-mindedly in the recent slaughter to make the world "safe for democracy".

It is indisputable that the march of these desperate jobless workers, spontaneous in its inception, is called forth not by motives that separate them from the rest of the class, but much rather by the intense suffering they are going through in common with their other unemployed fellow workers as a result of the anarchic crisis brought about by capitalist management and by the savagery of the profit system.

The fact that they march as veterans only testifies to their desperate condition, in which they are forced to resort to any and sundry methods by which they will be enabled to get relief from their misery. This is the reason they resort to the slogan of the bonus, which gains concreteness now by the fact that it is up for action in the legislature of the capitalist government.

The only organized force that understands the plight of the veterans and comes to their sincere support is the Communist movement, which has the interests of all sections of the working class at heart. It is therefore not at all strange that the enemies of the worker ex-soldiers, the capitalist class, its press and its police, direct their foremost attacks against the best friends of the veterans, against the Communists.

## House Passes Anti-Alien Bill

The Dies anti-alien bill, the most vicious piece of anti-working class legislation in years, has just been passed by the House of Representatives. The bill is now in the Senate. That the Senate will act in harmony with their congressional brothers is a foregone conclusion . . . if not enough working class pressure is brought to bear on the case.

There is no time to be lost. The workers must respond immediately. To permit such a piece of legislation to go through would jeopardize the very lives of those foreign class conscious workers in America who are subject to deportation as Fascist countries. The bill is offered as an "economic" bill in disguise. The purpose of the bill is to deport all those workers who have found their way to Communism. The first workers to be affected will be those belonging to the Communist party. The shallow apology of the bill sponsors that those workers belonging to the Communist party "under duress" are not to be intimidated is too transparent a piece of hokum to be deserving of any serious comment here.

No greater opportunity for the party to apply the United Front correctly has presented itself in a long time. This is a fight for the elementary rights of the workers, native and foreign, to organize and join any party they see fit. The issue is too serious to be neglected. And any effort to evade the issue by arguing for a "united front below" can be branded as nothing short of neglect. This can and must become a broad movement of the masses. It is up to the Party to act correctly.

## Fascists Moving to Power in Germany

Events in Germany are moving with alacrity, the press reports from day to day. The direction of this movement is, as has been pointed out, one that tends to extreme reaction, to the immediate preparation of the scene for the Fascist seizure of power.

It is being confirmed daily that the relation between the Von Papen government and particularly its military backbone—the clique around General Von Schleicher—toward the Hitler party is one of a herald to a conqueror. The manifesto issued by the Junker cabinet last week was one long harrange against the last vestiges of bourgeois democracy in the Reich. Even the Bruening government—the government of the dictatorial emergency decree—is dubbed too radical! The whole document is evidence of the fact that the new ministry is blasting the way for the Nazi hordes.

One of the three conditions posed by Hitler with regard to support of Von Papen has already been fulfilled. The Reichstag has been dissolved and new elections are scheduled for July 31. After three high strung election campaigns within the last three months, the extreme nervous tension that a new election brings with it cannot be underestimated. That Hitler should find such a situation highly favorable for his machinations is to be expected. In the meantime feverish preparations are being made by Hitler's allies in the administration to tighten every link in the reactionary chain, to unite all the dark forces for coordinate action under Hitler's leadership.

It is definitely known already that plans are in order to gain full control of the Prussian police force, the only important armed contingent in the Reich that is not at present under the direct supervision of Von Schleicher. The manner in which this is being done is indicated by the recent reports concerning the erection of a dictatorship over Prussia by the Reich government. Since the Prussian state budget is short of fulfillment and since the state officials have been depending upon the federal authorities for aid, the Von Papen cabinet aims to coerce the provincial administration into putting the armed forces directly at the disposal of his minister.

Secret negotiations are also in process to reestablish the Nazi Storm Troops as a legal body. The brown shirts, a dispatch says, are to drop their role of a "private army" and will be enrolled in the government service "under the guise of labor battalions". Their purpose is to be intensified activity to demoralize the workers' organization, especially the trade unions, the "Republican Reichs Banner", etc.

Another form of aid promised the Hitler forces by Schleicher-Papen is absolute freedom of action and propaganda in the coming election campaign. For the first time, Hitler has been granted the use of the radio, which is state controlled. Every effort is being made to insure the success of the contemplated National Socialist seizure of the state.

On the other hand, systematic illegalization of working class organizations is on the order of the day. There are rumors that in addition to the already proscribed Proletarian Freethinkers' Society, the Young Communist League of Germany is to be driven underground. The paper of the Socialist Labor Party of Germany, the Sozialistische Arbeiterzeitung, has been confiscated and its publication suspended. Flank attacks of this sort against the working class are on the

order of the day for the Von Papen government, the government that is clearing the road for Fascism.

All these steps characterize the strategy of the German bourgeoisie at the present class, that of the open Fascist dictatorship which requires the stifling of every shape and form of proletarian democracy to make sure of the least possible resistance of the toiling masses to its attempt at reducing their standard of living to the level of barbarism. Despite the division of interests between the various sections of the capitalist class, that class as a whole realizes that the moment is decisive for it, that a "strong arm" to which it will have to make concessions of a political nature is the only means whereby it will be able to escape destruction at the present stage.

That is the position of the working class in the face of this desperate determination of the masters? In spite of the indisputable natural barriers created within it through the crisis and unemployment, the German working class nevertheless senses the danger confronting it and displays a distinct fighting spirit. The May Day demonstrations this year were far greater in attendance and far more militant in sentiment than has been the case for years. The light-minded disregard of the Fascist menace by the treacherous social democratic leaders and by the confused and disoriented Stalinists has been overcome, in no small measure due to the sounding of the tocsin by comrade Trotsky and the Left Opposition. The working class has been made aware of the entire import of the Hitler movement. It stands alert, it expects to fight.

But for the present, all there is, is the desire to fight, the determination not to let the enemy win without a struggle. The struggle itself has not yet been organized. The social democrats, the splitters and the traditional traitors of the German masses, though their influence has been tremendously weakened by the realism with which the Hindenburg-Von Papen regime has exposed their policy of the "lesser evil", still hold the overwhelming masses of the workers under their sway. The Stalinist leadership of the Communist Party of Germany, by its isolationist theory of social Fascism and by its ridiculous policy of ultimatums, demanding a guarantee of leadership in advance from the workers, has not been able to utilize the miserable position of the social democracy at the present moment so as to give it its death blow.

A great opportunity to sweep into the leadership of the masses disillusioned by reality with their social democratic misleaders, has been missed by the incapable and stupidly bureaucratic Thaelmann regime. But no more time is to be lost. It is a question now of defense in the face of an onslaught. The semi-turn toward a half-hearted united front with local organizations of the reformists, with the lower functionaries, must immediately be transformed into a full turn. The social democratic leaders must be pushed into the alternative of joining with the Communists in the forthcoming struggle or of breaking with the masses still under their control.

An open, sincere, full fledged turn is the need of the day for the C. P. G. and for the Comintern. There is no time to be lost in establishing the united front with the social democratic and reformist

organizations on a centralized basis. The Committees of action against Fascism, proposed by the German Left Opposition must be organized without delay and coordinated for immediate defense against the Fascists. The Fascists are concentrating their troops on the proletarian strongholds. They are preparing to encircle them. The encirclers must be encircled!

The eleventh hour is at hand in Germany. Epoch-making struggles are ahead. The working class has not yet been defeated. It is still disorganized, it is still disunited. Only its fighting unity will stave off the harbingers of a new barbarism in Europe. International solidarity is the task of the working class of the world toward its German brothers. The call for the unity of the German workers is the concern of every proletarian in all the countries. What will happen in Germany will be of decisive place for our workers' fatherland, the Soviet Union. The seizure of power by Hitler, involving a protracted internal struggle which will pose most sharply the question of class against class, will inevitably gain the support of the foreign imperialists in the ultimate.

Bourgeois Germany, under Hitler as well as under all the previous governments, will remain impoverished, bankrupt. It will not be able to carry on without foreign aid against its own working class. In return for this aid, it will have to resort to its attack on Soviet Russia to repay its debts. The advent of a Hitler regime means war against the U. S. S. R. On the day of Hitler's coming into power, the Soviets will be faced with the most direct problem of defending their own frontiers. The Left Opposition, with the Russian Bolshevik-Leninists at their head, will be in the front ranks of this defense.

The struggle in Germany once the question of world revolution comes more in an acute and realistic form. It spells defeat for the reactionary theory of national socialism, it opens up new perspectives of international action for the proletariat. It brings the day of reckoning between Stalinist Centrism and Bolshevik-Leninism very close. The Worker Communists must be on the alert. The fate of Communism, the fate of the revolutionary working class stands before a new test.

## «Socialist» Revolt in Chile

Led by the wealthy landowner and former ambassador to the United States, Carlos G. Davila, a new military junta has come into power in Chile. Utilizing the crying discontent of the Chilean masses as an aid to their demagoguery, Davila and his henchmen shamelessly fooled the workers and peasants into support of their coup d'Etat.

Taking a lead from their social-Democratic half-brothers, Davila and Co., at first issued proclamations of various "Socialist" reforms that the new government was to inaugurate. The first dispatches declared the new government was going to nationalize industry and socialize property. Various other social reforms were to follow. In fact, the dispatches declared, they were going to model their regime after the Soviet fashion!

It is more than likely that Wall Street had something to do with those scare dispatches which were to act as a warning to the military clique in power not to go too far. The latest news emanating from Chile and quoting Davila directly is prompt in denying the "wild rumors about confiscating private property"—and more particularly "nationalizing foreign holdings." The junta had heard its masters' voice. The latest dispatches now tell of modeling the government after the "Socialist" fashion of Spain. A very commendable pattern after which to model a military junta! Paper reforms and oppression is now on the order of the day. Strikes, unless they have the sanction (!) of the government, are prohibited. The universities are to be re-organized so as not to permit student strikes. About the only "revolutionary" demand still left on the plank of this bunch of political hi-jackers is the demand for the pawnshops to return articles pawned without demanding interest!

Like most of the week-end Latin American revolutions, this one too, undoubtedly came about as a result of the conflicting desires of the two most interested imperialist nations in Latin America—the United States and England. The fact that the United States has been forcing England out all along the line is too obvious to require too much mention here. England, from having the foremost investments in Chile prior to the war, now plays a poor second fiddle to the richer and mightier uncle across the sea. The nitrate and copper interests of the United States have practically eliminated England as a serious contender to exploitation of the Chilean workers and peasants in these fields. Davila, the ambassador to Wall Street (sic), will see to it that the northern uncle's property is well protected.

## The Economic Crisis, the Unemployment Situation and the Working Class

With the passing of its two and half year mark, the economic crisis is still on its downward spiral. Now, however, the American government has moved much more actively into its orbit. It has created a number of auxiliary instruments, outstanding among which are the Reconstruction Finance Corporation and the Young Committee, the latter established by the New York Federal Reserve Bank and expected to be followed by like committees in other federal reserve districts. By this is provided a more harmonious blend of interests and purposes of monopoly capitalism and its executive organ at Washington, D. C. But because of its occurring within the framework of the strongest of the world imperialist powers, this mobilization of capitalist resources assumes special significance.

The sum and substance of the proposals made by this combination of forces is the "expansion" of credits and the measures which flow from such an objective. The aims it holds in view are: First, to restore, within capitalism, the confidence in the continuity of the process of production, which is badly shaken by the prolonged crisis. Secondly, an endeavor to increase commodity prices in the hope of extending a contracting market. Thirdly, to neutralize, or at least check the fall in the rate of profit by restoring a rate which will appropriate.

make possible to resume the cycle of reproduction. This latter is to be accomplished essentially and most directly by increasing the intensity of exploitation and depressing wages below the value of labor power, or in other words, to reduce the whole standard of living of the working class.

How well these aims are being realized, or in the process of being realized, with the capitalist measures proposed, it is necessary for us to examine. But we must first of all bear in mind that this crisis, as well as other such crises in capitalism is essentially one of overproduction of capital—an overproduction of the means of production to the extent that they serve as capital, that is, serve for the exploitation of labor. The credit system itself is the main lever of overproduction because of its forcing of the process of reproduction to its extreme limit. Consequently the efforts for further expansion of what already constitutes a superabundance of credits, although largely idle, and—regardless of its immediate results, will, without fail, resolve itself into more acute contradictions in the next historical stage.

This question we propose to take up in detail, but before that, let us take a look at the crisis and its present sweep, still moving downward. To elucidate, the statement of a few fundamentals will be

It is one of the laws of capitalist production, and which its development carries with it, that compared to the total capital which it sets in motion and compared to the constant part of material (means of production and raw materials) there is a relative decrease of the variable part of capital (labor power). In other words, compared to the growing mechanization of industry the need for labor power diminishes relatively. The same number of workers can in the same time produce an ever growing amount of commodities. And, the number of employed workers are continually on the decline compared to the mass of the means of production and the commodities produced. It follows that that portion of living labor which is unpaid and represents surplus value is likewise on the decline compared to the value of total capital invested. This results in the fall of the profit rate. But the increase of the mass of the absolute surplus value, appropriated by the capitalists, or the mass of profit, on the other hand, provides for the growth of the total capital—an ever growing accumulation of capital.

We have not figures available showing the actual relative growth of constant capital over variable capital. But the following figures, once before published in *The Militant*, illustrate the trend of the growing mechanization of industry:

From 1899 to 1929, in American manufacturing industry, the number of wage workers increased by 85.5 percent. While their nominal average wage increased 206 percent, yet their share of the product of their labor declined from 41.4 per cent to 38 per cent due to the fact that during this period the value added by the process of reproduction represented a 556 percent increase. Expressed in monetary form, in 1899 the value thus added amounted to \$1,025 per worker. In 1929 it had increased to \$3,624.

This clearly illustrates the growth of the intensity of production due to mechanization of industry. But it also in a sense gives a picture of the accumulation of capital.

In the process of reproduction the increasing mass of surplus value, or unpaid labor, appropriated by the capitalists, leave an ever growing part to be turned into additional capital. The capitalist mode of production accelerates the accumulation of capital. But with that also the specific capitalist mode of production develops. Accumulation leads to the means of production and a growth of the domain over labor.

The credit system which at first served as a modest helper of accumulation has now become transformed into an immense social mechanism for the central-

(Continued on page 2)



LETTERS FROM THE MILITANTS

A Food Worker Writes About His Union

NEW YORK, N. Y. The situation in the Foodworkers' Industrial Union is very bad. To put it more correctly, it is going from bad to worse. This is the result of the ruinous policy the party bureaucrats have imposed upon the organization...

MILITANT BUILDERS

Our reiterated appeals for subs and for a staff of militant builders continue to bear fruit. Comrades and sympathizers are responding with subs and expressions of their esteem for our Militant. A comrade from Kansas sends us a dollar with the encouraging words: "and must say the Militant is absolutely right..."

In last week's issue we made a mistake which we want to correct. We offered a free copy of the bound volume of comrade Trotsky's pamphlets to each comrade who raised \$10 in subs and donations. It should have read: a free copy of the bound volume to each comrade who raises \$4 in subs...

- C. R. Hedlund 4
O. Coover 4
M. Beardslee 3
M. Koehler 3
A. Basky 2 1-2
M. Bash 2
P. Vovnas 2
J. Elchma 2
C. Curtis 2
A. Ehrlich 2
M. Reim 2
J. Booth 1-2
T. Halligan 1-4

to approach as many bosses as possible and to ask them to allow their workers to join the union without having any conditions in mind. As it was reported by one of the organizers "when they sign up plenty of shops, they'll declare a strike for conditions." A fine policy! It seems they have learned a good lesson from the fakers in the A. F. of L...

On the Financial Question. The financial expenses of the union are extremely high, not due to its activities (because for more than a year, outside of the famous mass strike of fish workers, no other activities have been conducted), but because of the heavy staff of organizers. It is almost unbelievable that 7 full and 3 part-time organizers with 3 office girls should have to make up the staff of a union that has no more than 450 to 500 members in good standing...

\* A programmatic statement on the situation in Foodworkers Industrial Union will appear in The Militant shortly. —Ed.

Pioneer Publishers Notes

With the publication of Problems of the Chinese Revolution announced elsewhere in this issue, we add another weapon to the arsenal of revolutionary internationalism. The Chinese Revolution of 1925-1927 will be as decisive for us today as the revolution of 1905 was for the movement of the last decade. This new work by comrade Trotsky is the first Marxian analysis of the world shaking events of five years ago. It is indispensable to an understanding of the present situation in the Far East. It is a fundamental contribution to the colonial question...

Trotsky Greets 'Unser Kampf'

To the Editorial Committee of the Jewish Paper UNSER KAMF (Organ of the Communist League of America).

Dear Comrades: The appearance of your paper was of itself a very important step forward. The first successes of the paper show that it was a necessity. Yes, and could it have been doubted even for a minute? The Jewish workers in the United States are a large and important part of the whole proletariat of the country. Historical conditions have made the Jewish workers susceptible to the ideas of scientific Communism. The very fact of the dispersion of the Jewish workers in a number of countries should instill in them and does instill in them the ideas of internationalism. In view of just this alone the Communist Left Opposition has every reason to count upon a big influence among the Jewish proletarians in the United States...

The Crisis, Unemployment and the Workers

(Continued from page 1) zation of capital. It caused an enormous extension of the scale of production and of overproduction of capital. The general process of capitalist production brings forward ever more its antagonisms of monopoly, developed productive forces and the poverty and restricted consumption of the masses. In this process, the credit system accelerates the violent eruptions of these antagonisms, the crisis. "The stupendous productive power developed under the capitalist mode of production relatively to population, and the increase, though not in the same proportion, of capital values (not their material substance), which grow much more rapidly than the population, contradict the basis, which, compared to the expanding wealth, is ever narrowing and for which this immense productive power works, and the conditions, under which capital augments its value. This is the cause of crises." (Marx, Capital, Vol. III, page 313.)

Table with 4 columns: Industry, February, March, April. Rows include Pig Iron production, Steel Ingot, Electric Power, Bituminous Coal, Automobile, Boot and Shoe, Zinc, Cotton consumption, Freight car loadings, Combined business index, Combined business.

pressed and disfranchised part of the proletariat: in Poland, in the Baltic regions, in France, evidently also in Palestine. The working class cannot march towards its liberation by command. Revolutionary courage and political will can be strengthened only with the aid of creative ideas which the workers must learn independently through criticism, deliberation and examination by experience. Without this, the very sources of the movement inevitably dry up. And we see in actuality how the largest national sections of the Comintern, in spite of the exceptionally favorable circumstances, suffer defeat after defeat. The workers are capable of withstanding the harshest political blows if they have the possibility of thinking through the reasons for failure and independently to extract from it all the necessary conclusions for the future. But the curse lies in the fact that the bureaucracy of the Comintern is not only incapable of leading the workers to victory, but cannot even permit them to think through the reasons for defeat. After each new blow of the enemies, the Centrist bureaucracy on its part hits the workers over the skull, prohibiting them from thinking, criticizing and learning. This criminal regime becomes the chief source of disappointment and apathy. The first victims of the blows from the class enemy as well as from the Centrist bureaucracy fall, as already said, are the weakest links of the working class. Your paper is the organ of the Communist League. Its immediate task is to gather the Jewish workers in America under the banner of Marx and Lenin. The more successfully this work is carried out the sooner it will rise to an international height, the more the ideas of the Left Opposition will penetrate into the midst of the Jewish workers of the Old World, the U. S. S. R. included. With my whole heart I greet your paper and I shall try to be useful in your work with everything I can. Yours, —L. TROTSKY. Prinkipo, May 9, 1932.

RUSSIA: MARKET OR MENACE?

By Thomas D. Campbell Longmans, Green and Co., New York, Toronto and London 1932. 148 pages. The appearance of this book urging American business men to develop trade with the Soviet Union by the extension of long-term credits, and eventual legal recognition, makes it instructive to draw a balance of the present state of this question in the ranks of the working class and its vanguard. Mr. Campbell is a large scale agricultural capitalist, owner of a 95,000 acre farm at Hardin, Montana, a Mechanical and Agricultural Engineer, special expert and adviser to the Soviet Government in 1929-1930 in the development of large scale Soviet farm organization. He marshals arguments convincing if only from the purely business point of view; for extension of credits: (1) "It has, during the past fourteen years paid all its obligations promptly and in full"; (2) "For many years to come Russia will be the world's greatest consumers' market for all kinds of manufactured goods"; (3) "Will relieve American depression"; (4) "American banking and financial institutions... have sold to the American public since the war, two and a half billion dollars of German securities, a portion of which have been used by the Germans to extend credit to Russia." (5) "Germany has received a flood of orders from Russia including \$75,000,000 worth of industrial equipment since April 15, 1931." (6) Stable Government. "It is my opinion that Russia would not now be the important nation she is, if Joseph Stalin and his supporters had not succeeded in displacing the more violent revolutionists of the Trotsky type... Stalin is a strategist of another sort, a man who can advance or retreat, thrust or parry, denounce or defend, and still advancing towards his ultimate goal." The American bourgeoisie will agree with him. These arguments and others are advanced by Campbell to assure timid businessmen that trade with Russia is a good business proposition, repeating again and again that he is firmly opposed to Communism in any form. That Campbell represents a live view among certain strata of American manufacturers is attested to by the recent resolutions of the Toledo and Cleveland Chambers of Commerce, basing themselves on a three million dollar loss of orders from the Soviet Union due to the "short-sighted diplomatic policy" of the government, they want an immediate cessation of playing with this question, and demand recognition of the Soviet Union as a basis for revival of certain American industries. The cry has been taken up by the Democrats in their anti-administration propaganda and proposals have come before congress. It may become a substantial secondary campaign issue in the coming elections. The slogan of long-term credits and trade with the Soviet Union has a powerful political appeal to workers suffering unemployment in the present crisis. There is shown here an ominous disparity in the much greater drop in total payroll when compared to the drop in employment. This is indicative for the future working class prospects. A permanent, huge unemployed army and a reduced standard of living. But what the working class will do in this situation still remains the decisive question. The return to the "natural" level, as the New York Times so cynically puts it, embodies these prospects for the American working class. The return aims to restore confidence, within capitalism, in the continuity of the process of reproduction, to extend the market and to restore a rate of profit on existing capital on this "natural" basis. But capitalism produces for an unknown market. And, the contradictions between the expansion of capital and the market limitations leads to ever deeper crises. Capitalist production, as a continuous connected process, first of all produces and reproduces the capitalist relations. Henceforth these will be the relations of yet greater concentration of capital—means of production which serve as capital, serve for the exploitation of labor—with greater intensity of exploitation and with an ever growing section of the workers in enforced idleness. "The real barrier of capitalist production is capital itself. It is the fact that capital and its self-expansion appear as the starting and closing point, as the motive and aim of production; that production is merely production for capital, and not vice versa, the means of production mere means for an ever expanding system of the life process for the benefit of the society of producers." (Marx, Capital, Vol. III, page 293.) —ARNE SWABECK. (Note: Another article on the Crisis, Unemployment and the Working Class, particularly dealing with the present efforts for expansion of credits, will appear in the next issue of The Militant.—Ed.)

BOUND VOLUMES OF THE MILITANT

71 Issues of the Old Format From Vol. 1, No. 1 to Vol. 4, No. 12, October 15, 1928 to June 15, 1931, Bound in One Volume. The Number on Hand is Limited. Orders Will be Filled in the Order in Which They are Received. Checks or Money Orders Must Accompany the Orders. Make Sure of Your Copy. Order at Once! PRICE FIVE DOLLARS

Book Review

RUSSIA: MARKET OR MENACE? By Thomas D. Campbell Longmans, Green and Co., New York, Toronto and London 1932. 148 pages. The appearance of this book urging American business men to develop trade with the Soviet Union by the extension of long-term credits, and eventual legal recognition, makes it instructive to draw a balance of the present state of this question in the ranks of the working class and its vanguard. Mr. Campbell is a large scale agricultural capitalist, owner of a 95,000 acre farm at Hardin, Montana, a Mechanical and Agricultural Engineer, special expert and adviser to the Soviet Government in 1929-1930 in the development of large scale Soviet farm organization. He marshals arguments convincing if only from the purely business point of view; for extension of credits: (1) "It has, during the past fourteen years paid all its obligations promptly and in full"; (2) "For many years to come Russia will be the world's greatest consumers' market for all kinds of manufactured goods"; (3) "Will relieve American depression"; (4) "American banking and financial institutions... have sold to the American public since the war, two and a half billion dollars of German securities, a portion of which have been used by the Germans to extend credit to Russia." (5) "Germany has received a flood of orders from Russia including \$75,000,000 worth of industrial equipment since April 15, 1931." (6) Stable Government. "It is my opinion that Russia would not now be the important nation she is, if Joseph Stalin and his supporters had not succeeded in displacing the more violent revolutionists of the Trotsky type... Stalin is a strategist of another sort, a man who can advance or retreat, thrust or parry, denounce or defend, and still advancing towards his ultimate goal." The American bourgeoisie will agree with him. These arguments and others are advanced by Campbell to assure timid businessmen that trade with Russia is a good business proposition, repeating again and again that he is firmly opposed to Communism in any form. That Campbell represents a live view among certain strata of American manufacturers is attested to by the recent resolutions of the Toledo and Cleveland Chambers of Commerce, basing themselves on a three million dollar loss of orders from the Soviet Union due to the "short-sighted diplomatic policy" of the government, they want an immediate cessation of playing with this question, and demand recognition of the Soviet Union as a basis for revival of certain American industries. The cry has been taken up by the Democrats in their anti-administration propaganda and proposals have come before congress. It may become a substantial secondary campaign issue in the coming elections. The slogan of long-term credits and trade with the Soviet Union has a powerful political appeal to workers suffering unemployment in the present crisis. There is shown here an ominous disparity in the much greater drop in total payroll when compared to the drop in employment. This is indicative for the future working class prospects. A permanent, huge unemployed army and a reduced standard of living. But what the working class will do in this situation still remains the decisive question. The return to the "natural" level, as the New York Times so cynically puts it, embodies these prospects for the American working class. The return aims to restore confidence, within capitalism, in the continuity of the process of reproduction, to extend the market and to restore a rate of profit on existing capital on this "natural" basis. But capitalism produces for an unknown market. And, the contradictions between the expansion of capital and the market limitations leads to ever deeper crises. Capitalist production, as a continuous connected process, first of all produces and reproduces the capitalist relations. Henceforth these will be the relations of yet greater concentration of capital—means of production which serve as capital, serve for the exploitation of labor—with greater intensity of exploitation and with an ever growing section of the workers in enforced idleness. "The real barrier of capitalist production is capital itself. It is the fact that capital and its self-expansion appear as the starting and closing point, as the motive and aim of production; that production is merely production for capital, and not vice versa, the means of production mere means for an ever expanding system of the life process for the benefit of the society of producers." (Marx, Capital, Vol. III, page 293.) —ARNE SWABECK. (Note: Another article on the Crisis, Unemployment and the Working Class, particularly dealing with the present efforts for expansion of credits, will appear in the next issue of The Militant.—Ed.)

FILM REVIEW

NOT "ALONE" COMRADE! The film, "Alone", produced by Sovkino of the U. S. S. R. and shown at present at the Cameo Theatre, is a significant portrayal of life in Soviet Russia, not in the heroic days of the Revolution, but at the present time, in the days of struggle against the kulaks and nepmen. Briefly told the story depicts the bleak but enlightening experience of an immature girl just out of Normal School who is sent most unwillingly to teach the children of a backward tribe away off at the edge of civilization in the Altai region of Siberia. Here a village Soviet exists but we are made quickly and convincingly aware that although forms have changed, the underlying reality has not. The rich kulak who has divided his large flock of sheep forming the wealth of this region, among his "poor relatives" (the usual fiction), still wields the power. He uses the very Soviet to exploit the worker-shepherds, helped along by the lazy and inefficient bureaucrat assigned as head of the Soviet. The young Moscow girl, at first bewildered through lack of experience, comes soon to a realization of actualities, particularly when the nepman-kulak invades the class-room to withdraw the older children to make them tend the flock. She comes into conflict with the crafty kulak and when he attempts to slaughter the sheep, the main source of food supply for the village, for his own private profit, her appeal to the head of the Soviet being unavailing, since he has no "instructions", she decides to appeal to the higher-ups at the provincial center. Here she makes the mistake of accepting the help of the class-enemy who offers to drive her in his sleigh and she finds herself deserted, alone, in the trackless waste of snow. However she is found and against the opposition of the bureaucrat the village poor sent an appeal for help to save her life. An aeroplane does the rest. Meantime the village poor are aroused and force the regeneration of the Soviet by holding elections and casting out the bureaucrat. We are informed that this picture of conditions as they now exist kindled a heated discussion in Moscow. Criticism was levelled at the playing up of a "star" as against the picturing of the "masses". Nevertheless, after the usual preview before selected workers to decide whether the film should be released to the Russian masses, these workers voted favorably on it as giving a true picture. In spite of which, the Cameo billboards repeat an announcement that this picture will probably never be seen publicly in Russia. May we not conclude that the criticism as to "star" technique is just a wee bit disingenuous? That actually the bureaucrats felt more than uncomfortable under its too direct exposure of how, although they are not counter-revolutionaries, they play directly into the hands of the class enemies? Yes, aimed at bureaucracy in Siberia, it struck home in Moscow as the workers could not fail to understand. No, the film must not be allowed to give aid and comfort to the Left Opposition! It is too symbolic of our own struggle for the regeneration of the Soviets. We heartily recommend the film to party comrades. —J. WEBER.

CHICAGO PICNIC

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# IN THE INTERNATIONAL OF LABOR

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

### A Letter From England

LONDON, ENGLAND

No doubt you have already heard of the expulsion of J. T. Murphy from the Communist Party of Great Britain. Since the struggle between Murphy and the political bureau of the party began over the question of credits to the Soviet Union, details of the discussion which led to J. T. Murphy's resignation and subsequent expulsion may be of interest to American comrades.

It must be remembered that Murphy is an old member of the party and has been for years on the central committee. He was for two years the British party's Comintern representative, one of the ablest men—maintaining all due proportions produced by the British party, an effective speaker and writer and a capable politician. Murphy was, moreover, foremost in the fight against "Trotskyism". He wrote the preface to the English edition of the "Errors of Trotskyism" and at the party's convention of 1927 moved the resolution endorsing Trotsky's expulsion from the party. It will be seen that J. T. Murphy has an excellent record in the service of Stalin.

In the April number of the Communist Review, Murphy advanced the slogan of "Credits to the Soviet Union". He prefaced this with a vicious attack on the Left Opposition and, having cleared himself of any suspicion in this direction, proceeded to argue that the slogan of "Credits" would be an effective weapon to aid the Soviet Union. The article appeared. Nothing was said. The May issue of the Communist Review contained no suggestion that there was any disagreement save that Murphy was no longer editor.

Then, on May 11, there appeared a statement in the Daily Worker that Murphy was expelled for the propagation of "anti-working class views and the desertion of the working class fight against war, starvation and repression at a decisively critical stage in the class struggle". Murphy's arguments were that the more credits we could obtain, the more trade there would be between Britain and Russia, the less inclined the capitalists would be to declare war on the Soviet Union. The political bureau correctly drew attention to certain statements in the article which would weaken the agitation against the war menace. But on the central point of the quarrel the political bureau was silent. They avoided any definite statements on whether or no the slogan of "Credits" was correct. All they did was to point

to Manchuria and scream about war, to say that such a slogan was not needed at this stage and to condemn Murphy for "moving nearer to the position of the counter-revolutionary Trotskyists".

Murphy has since published articles in the socialist press, admitting that he did advance arguments which tended to cover up the danger of war. His articles fail to explain why the discussion conducted between himself and the politburo was kept secret and why, when attacked, he resigned from the party. The discussion commenced, according to Murphy, in March if not earlier. The article in which he openly advocated credits appeared in April. All those C. C. members who are now rushing into print to denounce Murphy saw it and read it and by their silence accepted it until told by the secretariat—Rust and Polit—to do otherwise. For over two months the politburo and Murphy concealed their differences from the membership and only Murphy's resignation forced the matter into the open. Not open struggle, not education of the membership by open political discussion, but diplomatic correspondence and the covering up of differences within the leadership—this is the line of the political bureau and Murphy.

Murphy started by accepting the theory of "socialism in one country" and built up his arguments for the "Credits" slogan on it. As a result, his tree bore reformist fruits. The politburo, in reply, avoided the question. The U. S. S. R. needs credits, is at this moment

negotiating for them, but the politburo believes with Stalin that diplomatic negotiation can secure more than mass pressure. This, they say, is a matter for the Soviet diplomats—keep the workers out of this.

It is here that our group of the Left Opposition takes up the matter. Making use of comrade Trotsky's pamphlet—**Unemployment and the Five Year Plan**—we are urging in the party that such a slogan can be an effective part of our immediate struggle. Those who argue that the U. S. S. R. is independent of world economy are going to find it very difficult to explain why the Soviet Union is negotiating credits and why we cannot advance it as a main slogan of the present stage of the struggle. But then, clear explanations and the honest facing of political issues is not the strong point of the party leadership. Molotov, Stalin have spoken—means must be found to agree.

—ANGLICUS.

#### TROTSKY'S PAMPHLETS

Draft Program of the Communist International  
Strategy of the World Revolution  
World Unemployment and the Five Year Plan  
Problems of the Development of the U. S. S. R.  
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### Nine Years of the Struggle of the Left Opposition

## The Anglo-Russian Committee and the British General Strike

(Continued from last issue)

#### The Test of Events

The first really serious test of the Anglo-Russian Committee was the British general strike of 1926 which broke out in the midst of the great miners' strike. Just as metals are best tested in heat, so all the assurances of friendship for Russia, of loyalty to British labor and enmity to British imperialism, freely given by Purcell and Co., were subjected to a decisive test in the flames of the general strike. And just as the Opposition had warned, the British General Council, its Left wing as well as its Right wing, revealed its disgraceful cowardice and treachery, its fundamental loyalty to British imperialism, its hatred and fear of the revolutionary proletariat. After nine days of the general strike, in which a revolutionary situation was engendered, in which the strength of the ruling class rested not so much upon its immediate ranks as it did in the strength which the labor leaders, Left and Right, enjoyed in the working class, the General Council deliberately delivered the death blow to the general strike and to the miners whom all the other workers had struck to defend. In face of the extremely militant mood of the workers, in face of the pitiful helplessness of the bourgeoisie, in face of such phenomena as the refusal of numerous armed regiments to proceed against the strikers, all the trade union lackeys of the ruling class rushed to the government buildings to confer with the king's ministers on how to crush the movement. The "red" veneer with which the "Left" labor leaders had coated themselves was wiped off in a patriotic frenzy. The financial aid sent the striking miners from Russia was indignantly returned with the epithet of "the damned Russian gold". The red flag was hastily dropped for the Union Jack. Purcell and Co. proved to be not the "organizational center that embraces the international forces of the proletariat for the struggle", but a most reliable prop of a desperate ruling class. Had the whole affair been played out according to the plot of a stage drama, it could not have presented a more annihilating indictment of the Stalinist view and confirmation of the Opposition's.

And where was the Committee as a whole during these stirring days of magnificent struggle and base treachery? As Kautsky said plaintively about his Second International: It was only an instrument of peace: in times of acute conflict, it was worthless.

More correctly, it was worthless to the revolutionists, to Soviet Russia. But to the British labor fakery it had a distinct value. Purcell, Hicks, Swales and Citrine utilized to the maximum the prestige accruing to them out of their formal and inexpensive collaboration with the Bolshevik representatives in the Anglo-Russian Committee. Instead of helping to emancipate the British masses from the chains of their false leaders, the A. R. C. served these leaders as a "Bolshevik" shield from the blows of the rank and file, and particularly of the British Communists. Purcell could easily defend his treason from the attacks of "his own" Communists by saying: "The Russian Communists are different, as you see, they do not attack me as you do. Quite the contrary, they sit together with us in friendly conference.

The Demands of the Opposition  
What did the Opposition demand? That

the prestige enjoyed among the British workers by the A. R. C. and by its Russian half in particular should be utilized to expose the treason of the British leaders. It demanded a demonstrative break with Purcell and Co. because of their open betrayal, so that the latter could no longer hide behind the Russian trade unions. Stalin and Bucharin violently opposed the break—the same Stalin and his apparatus (it seems incredible!) who today consider it a crime to propose a united front not only to the Purcells but even to the ordinary, misguided "social fascist" worker who still follows the Purcells.

The Committee was now beginning to be justified by Bucharin and Co. on the grounds of "political", of "Soviet", of "diplomatic" requirements. And it is allegedly on this basis that a disgraceful "united front" was maintained with Purcell and Co. for more than a year after the abominable betrayal of the general strike! The Anglo-Russian Committee, it was argued, would prevent British intervention against Russia and thereby enable the Soviet republic . . . to build up socialism undisturbed. This fatal tragedy was played until the Berlin Committee conference in April 1927. What was accomplished then? Did the Committee protest the bombardment of Nanking by British imperialism? No! Did it protest the British raid on Arcos in London? No! Did it say a word about the treachery of its British half during the general strike and the miners' strike? No! Then what did it do? It adopted a resolution in which the Russians declare together with the Englishmen:

1. "The only representatives and spokesmen of the trade union movement are the Congress of the British Trade Unions and its General Council;

2. "Esteems, at the same time, that the fraternal union between the trade union movements of the two countries, in-

### Trotsky on the Labor Party Question

I have reread the theses of the Second Conference of the American League concerning the question of the Labor Party. I find it excellent in every part and I subscribe to it with both hands. I find it necessary to emphasize my full agreement with those theses all the more as my interview to the New York Times of March 1932 gave rise to misunderstanding and misinterpretation, especially on the part of the Lovestone group.

1. What was my idea on the "Labor Party" in that statement? I stated that American politics will be Europeanized in the sense that the inevitable and imminent development of a party of the working class will totally change the political face of the U. S. This is a commonplace for a Marxist. The question was not of a "Labor Party" in the specific British sense of that word but in the general European sense without designating what form such a party would take or what phases it would go through. There was not the slightest necessity in that interview to enter into the internal tactical differences within the Communist ranks. The translation of my interview from the Russian text, which employs the words "rabochaya partia", into the English was defective in that it permitted one to make a concrete and specific interpretation of what should have been general.

2. One can declare that even the general term "party of the working class" does not exclude a "Labor Party" in the British sense. Be that as it may,

However, such an equivocal has nothing to do with a precise tactical question. We can admit hypothetically that the American trade union bureaucracy will be forced, under certain historical conditions, to imitate the British trade union bureaucracy in creating a kind of party based upon the trade unions. But that eventually, which appears to me to be very problematical, does not constitute an aim for which the Communists must strive and on which one must concentrate the attention of the proletarian vanguard.

3. A long period of confusion in the Comintern led many people to forget a very simple but absolutely irrevocable principle: that a Marxist, a proletarian revolutionist, cannot present himself before the working class with two banners. He cannot say at a workers' meeting: I have a ticket for a first class party and another, cheaper ticket for the backward workers. If I am a Communist, I must fight for the Communist party.

4. One can say that under the American conditions a "Labor Party" in the British sense would be a progressive step and by recognizing this and stating so, we ourselves, even though indirectly, help to establish such a party. But that is precisely the reason I will never assume the responsibility to affirm abstractly and dogmatically that the creation of a "Labor Party" would be a "progressive step" even in the United States because I do not know under what circumstances, under what guidance, and for what purposes that party would be created. It seems to me more probable that especially in America, which does not possess any important traditions of independent political action by the working class (as Chartism in England, for example) and where the trade union bureaucracy is more reactionary and corrupted than it was at the height of the British Empire, the creation of a "Labor Party" could be provoked only by mighty revolutionary pressure from the working masses and by the growing threat of Communism. It is absolutely clear that under these conditions the Labour Party would signify, not a progressive step but a hindrance to the progressive evolution of the working class.

5. In what form the party of the working class will become a genuine mass party in the United States in the immediate future we cannot prophesy because the socialist and "Labor" parties differ greatly in the various countries, even in Europe. In Belgium, for example, we see an intermediary sort of party arise. Certainly the phases of development of the proletarian party in America will be sui generis (unique). We can only affirm with the greatest assurance: Especially since the U. S., in the period from 1921 to 1924 has already had an important rehearsal in the creation of a "Labor" or "Farmer-Labor" Party, a resurrection of a similar movement cannot be a simple repetition of that experience but a far more pregnant and more crystallized movement, i. e., either under the guidance of the revolutionary Communist party or under the guidance of reformist elements against the growing Communist party. And if even in 1921-1924 the Communist party did not find great possibilities for independent action inside the organization of an inchoate "Labor Party" it would have less possibility in the new phase of an analogous movement.

6. One can imagine that the trade union bureaucracy and its socialist and left democratic advisers may show themselves to be more perspicacious and begin the formation of a "Labor Party" before the revolutionary movement becomes too threatening. In view of the growing treacherous and provincial narrowness of the American labor bureaucracy and the aristocracy of labor, such perspicacity seems very improbable. The failure of such an attempt in the past shows us that the bureaucracy, so tenacious in its immediate aims, is absolutely incapable of systematic political action on a great scale even in the interests of capitalist society. The bureaucracy must receive a blow on the skull before taking such a "radical" initiative. However, if the creation of a "Labor Party" would prevent, in a certain period great successes of Communism, our elementary duty must be, not to proclaim the progressiveness of the "Labor Party" but its insufficiency, ambiguity, and limitedness and its historical role as a hindrance to the proletarian revolution.

the great new school which searches everywhere for some method that goes over its feeble head.

8. To consider a "Labor Party" as an integrated series of united fronts signifies a misunderstanding of the notions both of the united front and of the party. The united front is determined by concrete circumstances, for concrete aims. The party is permanent. In a united front we leave our hands free to break with our temporary allies. In a common party with these allies we are bound by discipline and even by the fact of the party itself. The experience of the Kuo Min Tang and of the Anglo-Russian Committee must be well understood. The strategic line dictated by the lack of a spirit of independence of the Communist party and by the desire to enter into the "big" party (Kuo Min Tang, "Labor Party") produced inevitably all the consequences of the opportunist adaptation to the will of the allies, and through them, to that of the enemy. We must educate our cadres to believe in the invincibility of the Communist idea and in the future of the Communist party. The parallel struggle for another party inevitably produces in their minds, a duality and turns them on the road of opportunism.

9. The policy of the united front has not only its great advantages but its limits and its dangers as well. The united front, even in the form of temporary blocs, often impels one to opportunist deviations which are frequently fatal, as for example, with Brandier in 1923. That danger becomes absolutely predominant in a situation in which the so-called Communist party becomes a part of a "Labor Party" created by the grace of the propaganda and action of the Communist party itself.

10. That the "Labor Party" can become an arena of successful struggle for us and that the "Labor Party", created as a barrier to Communism can, under certain circumstances, strengthen the Communist party is true, but only under the condition that we consider the "Labor Party" not as "our" party but as an arena in which we are acting as an absolutely independent Communist party.

11. All the resolutions about the British Labor Party must be evaluated not as they were written before the experiences of the Comintern and the British Communist Party: in that regard, but in the light of that experience. The attempt to apply them mechanically now, in 1932, to the American conditions, is characteristic of the epigones' mind and has nothing to do with Marxism and Leninism.

12. It is not necessary to say that the idea of a Farmer-Labor party is a treacherous mockery of Marxism. Prinkipo, May 19, 1932.

—L. TROTSKY.

### June «Young Spartacus» Out

The June issue of the Young Spartacus is off the press. Among its contents are: Japan's War Threat to Soviet Union. Growth of the Fascist Danger in Germany.

A unity appeal of the National Committee of the Communist League of America (Opposition) to the Young Communist League. On Memorial Day and National Youth Day. On International coordination of Left Opposition Youth. Reports of activities of American Opposition Youth. Students struggle against increased fees.

Child Labor Legislation. Review of Foster's Towards Soviet America.

Comrade Trotsky's Appeal to the C. C. of the Soviet Union. The comrades should order bundles of this issue and distribute them to young workers and students. It is particularly necessary to reach the members of the Young Communist League with our unity appeal.

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The National Youth Committee at a recent meeting decided to launch a campaign for the issuance of an eight page Young Spartacus by September. This can be done if the youth and adult comrades will cooperate.  
Get busy on the job. Send in subs and orders for bundles. Form a Spartacus Youth Club wherever a branch of the Communist League exists.

N. Y. SPARTACUS YOUTH CLUB MEETS  
The New York Spartacus Youth Club meets each Friday evening, 8:00 P. M., at the Stuyvesant Casino, 9th Street and Second Avenue. At these meetings a short business agenda is combined with a discussion on current questions or historical and theoretical problems. A beach party is being planned for the near future.  
Young workers and students are invited to attend and participate in these discussions. If more information is desired it can be obtained from the Club president, Herbert Capells, 84 E. 10th Street, New York City.

READ AND SUBSCRIBE TO YOUNG SPARTACUS

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## On the Slogan of «Rank and File Leadership»

Some questions have arisen about the remarks in a recent issue of *The Militant* on the slogan of «Rank and File Leadership» which deserve a somewhat extended answer. The idea has been expressed that this slogan of the Stalinists really has some merits, that in reality it is only a restatement of the old demand of the Left wing for trade union democracy, and that in any case the slogan is not wrong in principle. In our opinion such views are entirely erroneous in all respects, and only add to the confusion. And since the matter has a considerable importance—nothing will bring quicker disaster than a false direction in the trade union struggle—another attempt to clarify the issue will be worth while. The negative manner in which the slogan was discussed in the previous treatment, without reference to an alternative formulation, also came in for criticism and perhaps gave ground for misunderstanding. The present article, therefore, will undertake to deal with the latest trade union slogan of the Stalinists in a more rounded fashion and suggest a positive alternative.

### ANARCHIST CONCEPTION OF LEADERSHIP

Is «rank and file leadership» a new demand of the Left wing or is it simply the restatement of an old one? There are two answers to this question. It is an old idea that permeated the needle trades Left wing more or less before the emergence of the Communist leadership. But its advocacy by Communists is something new—one of the many Stalinist «innovations» which are in reality borrowed from anti-Marxist schools. Before the rise of the Communist influence in the needle trades the Left wing was heavily tainted with the prejudices of anarchism and syndicalism in their various forms. The I. W. W., defeated organizationally in the needle trades, succeeded nevertheless in grafting a part of its ideology onto the militant section of the rank and file. The brilliant idea of «no leaders», of the rank and file leading the rank and file—which is just another way of saying «rank and file leadership»—gained a certain sympathy from the workers who were in revolt against the bureaucracy.

The leaders of the «company union» did not begin their treacherous work yesterday. The workers had good reason to learn about it even before 1919. The old movement against the bureaucrats, which had not yet thought out its problems and formulated a clear program, had a tendency to identify the idea of leadership with the ruling clique and had to a certain extent fell victim to nihilistic conceptions on the question of leadership as preached by the anarchists and the I. W. W. In this respect, but in no other, it can be said that «rank and file leadership» is an old slogan of the needle trades Left wing.

But ten years or more ago the Communists came to the front and soon gained the decisive leadership of the Left wing movement by virtue of their superior policy. One of the first positive steps of the Communist Left wing was to clear up the muddled ideology of the movement and sweep out the anarchistic rubbish which had paralyzed the struggles and strengthened the position of the reactionary bureaucrats. Rank and file demagoguery and formlessness in the domain of organization gave place to the conception of democratic centralism. The old and outworn reformist method of workers' organization makes an artificial division between the masses of the membership on the one side and the ruling bureaucrats on the other. This state of affairs created the conditions for anti-leadership prejudices to gain a foothold. The Lenin idea of democratic centralism fuses the leaders with the masses and removes any ground for contrasting the one to the other. This idea gained the hegemony in the Left wing, and was one of the most important reasons why its fighting capacities grew by leaps and bounds. From a chaos revolving around one spot the Left wing became a real contender for power in the unions, and in some cases achieved it.

In its struggle to break the backbone of the bureaucracy which was throttling the unions the Communist Left wing advanced along the line of principle in all questions, including the organization question. This was its strength. The Communists formulated their fighting slogans precisely and accurately, and in consonance with a general theory of organization. Confronted, then as now, with the sabotaging role of the bureaucrats in strikes, they did not attempt to leap over the difficulty by denying the necessity of an official leadership. On the contrary, they formulated a general demand applicable to the union as a whole, and a subordinate one, consistent with it, applicable to the management of strikes.

### HISTORY OF THE SLOGAN

On the one hand the Communist Left wing raised the demand for honest, militant leaders in the union in place of the corrupt, reactionary fakers. In harmony with that, and consistent with the organization program which the Left wing would apply when it gained the control of the union, it demanded the democratization of the union, and particularly of the strike machinery. (At that time, you see, the Left wing was not conducting a temporary excursion into the reactionary unions; it was aiming to conquer them, step by step, and it formulated its slogans accordingly.) The Left wing did not bluster about rank and file «leadership»; it demanded rank and file control. Moreover, it formulated this demand precisely, so that everyone could understand just what was meant.

In the program adopted at the Third

Conference of the Needle Trades Left wing, September 12-13-14, 1925 the idea is expressed as follows:

«It is only through a strike machinery thoroughly representative of the workers in the shops that the membership can effectively be mobilized for strike activity. . . . Therefore, foremost of our immediate aims during strikes is the democratization of the strike machinery. We therefore demand, pending the democratization of the whole union machinery as provided in this program: (1) that the general strike committees and heads of the strike be elected by the delegates and chairmen from the shops and responsible to them; (2) that all strike assessments be collected as legally due to this strike committee, to be expended only for strike purposes; (3) that secret diplomacy be done away with and negotiations with the employers be conducted on an open basis.»

Have these demands, so clear, so precise and so consistent with the whole general program of the Left wing for the renovation of the union on the basis of democratic centralism anything in common with the latter day mumbling about rank and file «leadership» of strikes? Are the Stalinists perhaps now saying, or trying to say, the same thing in a different way?

### CONTROL OF LEADERSHIP?

In reply to this question it is only necessary to ask: If they mean the same thing that the Left wing meant in 1925, then why did they change the precise and correct formulation of that time for the present self-contradictory mish-mash? The reason for the change is clear enough: the aims are different now and the slogan has a different meaning. In 1925 the Left wing was fighting inside the union with the aim of wresting it out of the stranglehold of the reactionaries. In 1932 the Left wing, under the influence of the proconsuls of Stalin, are still monkeying around with the theory of «company unionism» and are searching for some kind of strike organization outside the existing union.

The fact that they hit upon a slogan that has no real sense or meaning, and that flatly contradicts Marxist conceptions of organization in favor of Wobblism, is nothing to be surprised at. They always do something like this when they experiment with «theory». A short while ago it was «independent leadership of strike struggles». After they had cracked their heads on the rocks with this formula, they quietly dropped it. Now, with a «new» slogan, which is quite different in appearance, they are attempting to accomplish the same design that failed before, namely, to find a substitute for the existing union in the midst of a strike regardless of the attitude of the majority of the workers.

Under pressure of the criticism we have brought against the slogan of rank and file leadership, and no doubt also stimulated by the poor reception it has received from the «rank and file», attempts are being made to interpret the slogan in a different way than was originally intended. Rose Wortis, for example, who strives to avoid obvious absurdities when the Party bosses are not watching, speaks in the *Daily Worker* for May 31st about «a real strike for union conditions under rank and file control.» (Our emphasis.)

### ROLE OF LEADERSHIP IN STRIKES AND UNIONS

«Leadership is a necessary condition for any common action», says the resolution of the Third World Congress of the Comintern. This principle, which does not at all exclude rank and file control of the leadership, implies however a selection of persons for leading functions. And it has the same force whether the persons selected are professional leaders or rank and file workers elevated to leading positions or committees. In every organization and in every action the question arises at once, and inescapably: Who is going to lead? You can answer, this group or that group; this committee or another. But if you wish to be taken seriously, do not say the rank and file is going to lead the rank and file. And do not try to pass the problem off with a statement that the rank and file will control. That is not the same thing.

In every organization certain persons are selected for leading functions or committees. By that fact they become «leaders», regardless of whether they have had previous experience or not. Such leaders, under the principle of democratic centralism, are inseparably fused with the rank and file, they are accountable to and controlled by the rank and file. This is understandable to anyone. But to confuse the leadership with the mass, or to contrast one to the other as the slogan of rank and file leadership does, presents a muddle which no one can understand and for which everyone can have his own interpretation.

### DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM IN UNIONS

Leadership is one thing, control of the

leadership is another Democratic or-

ganization means, in the last analysis, rank and file control. But the Communists who think things out and formulate their ideas clearly do not speak merely of democracy. The organization form they advocate is democratic centralism. And what does that mean? On the one hand it means democracy in the organization. On the other hand—as against the anarchistic and I. W. W. idea of «no leaders»—it means a recognition of the function of leadership. This leadership, in the Communist conception is not some kind of a clerical staff or information bureau. It is invested with real functions and powers, that is, it is given the possibility to lead. But—and herein lies the distinction from bureaucratism—the leadership is selected by the rank and file, is responsible to and, in the final analysis, is controlled by the rank and file. Democratic centralism, the Communist organization principle, therefore presupposes rank and file control, but excludes confusionist and demagogic demands for rank and file leadership. The 1925 program of the needle trades Left wing was permeated through and through with this rounded conception. The slogan of today contradicts it in principle. The Wortis improvisation tries to smooth over the fundamental contradiction. She has had a lot of practice at that sort of business.

It has been said that our previous article on this question confused matters by contrasting the «rank and file» agitation of the Stalinists in the trade union to their bureaucratic regime in the Party. The party, it is urged, is not the same as the trade union, and therefore the comparison is inappropriate. True enough, a distinction must be made between the political organization of the vanguard and the economic organization of the broad mass. They differ fundamentally in many ways, including organization forms, but according to the Lenin doctrine the organization principle of each is the same. Rank and file «leadership» is an absurdity in either case; rank and file control is ultimately necessary in both.

### TROTSKY ON RANK AND FILE CONTROL

Note the remarks of comrade Trotsky on this point in the June 4 issue of the *Militant*: «As the first condition of the party control over the government Lenin put the control of the party mass over the apparatus.» These words will bear a careful reading several times. To shout for rank and file leadership in the union and soft pedal about rank and file control in the party is a double mistake, a howling inconsistency all the way around. Some of the Right wing union fakers, it seems, snatched up our criticism of the inconsistency of the Party bureaucrats and made use of it for their own purposes. But this by no means invalidates the criticism. The corrective for such parasitic exploitation of our exposure of Party errors by the Right wing is not to keep silent about the errors, but to compel the Party to correct them. Let the Party members exert some «rank and file control» in this respect in their own Party. The same task in the trade unions will then be greatly simplified and facilitated.

In order to wage an effective fight in the trade unions today, and to fortify the victory of tomorrow, the Left wing must have consistent slogans all along the line. As a minority it must defend those principles of organization which will govern the union when it comes under the control of the Left wing. It must practice in the Left wing unions under its leadership that same method which it demands in the reactionary unions where it constitutes an opposition. If the Left wing fails to do this, if it shuttles back and forth with a policy of expediency on every occasion, it will lose its principle guiding line, and with it the power to shape and lead a victorious movement of the masses.

This is what has been happening in recent years under the direction of full-blown Stalinism. The results speak for themselves; and in the catastrophic situation of the Left wing in the needle trades they speak with an exceptional force and clarity. The most pressing task of the Party and the Left wing is to throw off this incubus that weights it down and halts its progress at every step. The general fight to liberate the movement from this paralyzing influence has to be supported by a concrete struggle on every point, against every error which contributes to the defeat of the Left wing workers. The slogan of rank and file leadership is one of these errors, the harmfulness of which is clearly demonstrable.

There can be no ground for compromise with such a policy. The Left Opposition, by its criticism, has driven the Stalinists from more than one false position. It must not halt for a moment the effort to do the same in this case. A correction of this error requires no new wisdom. With the aid of the Lenin teaching the Left wing solved the problem in question in its program of 1925. What is needed now is a return to the 1925 formulation.

—JAMES P. CANNON.

### THE MILITANT

Published weekly by the Communist League of America (Opposition) at 84 East 10th St., N. Y.

EDITORIAL BOARD  
Martin Abern James P. Cannon  
Max Shachtman Maurice Spector  
Arne Swaback

Entered as second class mail matter November 28, 1928, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y. Under the act of March 3, 1879.

SATURDAY, JUNE 11, 1932  
Vol. 5 No. 24 (Whole No. 120)

Subscription rate: \$2.00 per year; foreign \$2.50. Five cents per copy. Bundle rates, 3 cents per copy.

# STRIKE STRATEGY

by LEON TROTSKY

In the sphere of the trade unions the Communist leadership has entirely confused the party. The common course of the «third period» was directed toward parallel trade unions. The presupposition was that the mass movement would surge over the old organizations and that the organs of the R. G. O. (The Red Trade Union Opposition) would become the initiative committees of the economic struggle. A mere trifle was lacking for the realization of this plan: the mass movement. During floods in springtime, the waters carry away many a fence. Let us try removing the fence, decided Lozovsky, perhaps the floods of spring will then rise!

The reformist trade unions have survived. The Communist party succeeded in getting itself thrown out of the factories. Thereupon partial corrections began to be introduced into the trade union policy. The Communist party has refused to call upon the unorganized workers to join reformist unions. But it likewise has taken a stand against workers leaving the trade unions. While creating parallel organizations it has engendered the slogans of a battle for influence within the reformist unions. The whole mechanism represents an ideal self-sabotage.

Die ROTE FAHNE complains that many Communists consider meaningless the participation in reformist unions. «Why should we revive the old push-cart?», they declare. And as a matter of fact, why? If one intends seriously to fight for the control of the old unions, one should appeal to the unorganized that they enter them; it is precisely the new strata that can supply the backing for the backing for the Left wing. But in that case one cannot build parallel unions, i. e., create a competitive agency to enroll the workers.

The policy that is recommended from above for work within the reformist unions rests on the same heights with all the other hodge-podge. Die ROTE FAHNE on January 28, laced it into the Communist members of the Metal Workers Union of Duesseldorf because they issued the slogan «War without mercy against the participation of trade union leaders» in the support of the Bruening government. Such «opportunist» demands are disallowed because they presuppose (!) that the reformists are capable of refusing to support Bruening and his emergency decrees. Truly, this smacks of vicious horse-play! Die ROTE FAHNE deems it sufficient to call the leaders names but disallows their being subjected to a political test by the masses.

And all the while, it is precisely within the trade unions that an exceptionally fruitful field is now open for action. While the social democratic party still has the wherewithal to fool the workers by political hullabaloo, the trade unions are confronted by the impasse of capitalism as by a hopeless prison wall. The 200,000-300,000 workers who are now organized in independent Red unions, could serve as a priceless leaven within the reformist brotherhoods.

### CRITICISM AND SELF-CRITICISM

Towards the end of January there was held in Berlin a Communist conference of the factory committees from the entire country. Die ROTE FAHNE printed the report, «The factory committees are welding the Red Workers Front» (February 2, 1932). But you would seek in vain for information regards the composition of the conference, the number of industries and workers represented. In contradistinction to Bolshevism, which painstakingly and openly marked every change in the correlation of forces within the working class, the German Stalinists, following in the footsteps of the Russian, play hide and seek. They are loth to admit that the Communist factory committees compromised less than 4 per cent as against 84 per cent of the social democracy! In this correlation is summed up the balance of the «third period.» Suppose one does call the isolation of Communists in industry, the «Red United Front», will this really help further the matter?

The prolonged crisis of capitalism induces within the proletariat the most virulent and dangerous line of demarcation: between the employed and the unemployed. Through the circumstance that the reformists control the industrial centers while the Communists control the unemployed, both sections of the proletariat are being paralyzed. The employed are in a position to bide a while longer. The unemployed are more impatient. At present their impatience bears a revolutionary character. But should the Communist party fail to find such forms and slogans for the struggle as would unite the employed and the unemployed and thereby open the perspective of a revolutionary solution, the impatience of the unemployed will inevitably react against the Communist party.

In 1917, despite the correct policy of the Bolshevik party and the rapid development of the revolution, the more badly off and the more impatient strata of the proletariat, even in Petrograd, began between September and October, to look away from the Bolsheviks towards the syndicalists and anarchists. Had not the October overturn broken out in time, the disintegration within the proletariat would have become acute and would have led to the decay of the revolution. In Germany there is no need for anarchists; their place can be taken by the National-Socialists who have wedded anarchist demagoguery with conscious reactionary aims.

The workers are by no means immunized once for all against the influence of Fascism. The proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie represent coupled receptacles, especially under the present conditions, when the reserve army of workers cannot but effuse petty traders and hawkers, etc., while the bankrupt petty bourgeoisie effuses proletarians and lumpen-proletarians.

Salaried employees, the technical and administrative personnel and certain strata of the functionaries

composed in the past one of the most important supports of the social democracy. At present, these elements have gone or are going over to the National Socialists. They are capable of drawing in their wake, if they haven't already begun to do so, a stratum of the labor aristocracy. In this direction, National Socialism is penetrating into the proletariat from above.

Considerably more dangerous, however, is its possible penetration from below, through the unemployed. No class can long exist without perspectives and hopes. The unemployed do not represent a class, but they already compose a very compact and substantial layer, which is vainly striving to tear itself away from intolerable conditions. If it is true in general that only the proletarian revolution can save Germany from disintegration and decay, this is especially true as regards the millions of unemployed.

Alongside of the impotence of the Communist party in the factories and in trade unions, the numerical growth of the party resolves nothing. Within a tottering nation shot through by crisis and contradictions, an extreme left party can find new supporters in tens of thousands, especially if its entire apparatus is directed to the sole purpose of capturing members, in the line «of competition». Everything depends upon the interrelation between the party and the class. A single employed Communist who is elected to the Factory Committee or to the administration of a trade union bears a greater significance than a thousand new members, picked up here and there, who enter the party today in order to leave it tomorrow.

But the individual influx of members into the party will not at all continue indefinitely. If the Communist party continues any longer to delay the struggle until that moment when it shall have entirely pushed out the reformists, then it will learn for certain that after a given point the social democracy will cease losing its influence to the Communist party, while the Fascists will begin disintegrating the unemployed who are the chief support of the Communist party. Failure to utilize its forces for the tasks that spring from the entire environment never passes scot-free for a political party.

### WHAT IS A «RED UNITED FRONT»?

In order to clear the road for the mass struggle, the Communist party strives to stimulate sectional strikes. The successes in this sphere have not been great. As ever, the Stalinists devote themselves to self-criticism, «We are as yet incapable of organizing» . . . «We haven't yet learned how to attract» . . . «We haven't as yet learned how to capture» . . . What has «we» got to do with it, it unfailingly means «you». The theory of the March days in 1921, of blessed memory, is being resurrected, which proposed to «electrify» the proletariat by means of the offensive activities of the minority. But the workers are in no need whatever of being «electrified». What they want is that they be given a clear perspective, and be aided in creating the bases for a mass movement.

In its strike strategy the Communist party is obviously motivated by isolated citations from Lenin as interpreted by Manuilsky or Lozovsky. As a matter of fact, there had been periods wherein the mensheviks fought against the «strike frenzy», while the Bolsheviks, on the contrary, took their place at the head of every new strike, drawing into the movement ever increasing masses. This was in response to the period of the awakening of new class strata. Such was the tactic of the Bolsheviks in 1905; and during the industrial upward trend in the years preceding the war; and during the first months of the February revolution.

But in the period directly preceding October, beginning with the July clash of 1917, the tactic of the Bolsheviks assumed another character; they held back strikes, they applied the brake to them, because every large strike had the tendency to turn into a decisive battle, while the political postulates for it had not as yet matured.

However, during those months the Bolsheviks continued to place themselves at the head of all strikes which flared up, despite their measures of precaution, chiefly in the more backward branches of industry (among textile workers, leather workers, etc.).

While under some conditions the Bolsheviks boldly stimulated strikes in the interests of the revolution, under other conditions, they, on the contrary, restrained from strikes in the interests of the revolution. In this sphere as well as in others, there is no ready made formula. But in every given period, the strike tactics of the Bolsheviks always composed a part of the general tactics, and to the advanced workers the connection between the part and the whole was always clear.

How do matters stand now in Germany? The employed workers do not resist wage cuts because they are in fear of the unemployed. Small wonder; in the face of several million unemployed, the ordinary trade-union strike, so organized, is obviously futile. It is doubly futile in the face of political antagonism between the employed and unemployed. This does not exclude sectional strikes, especially in the more backward and less centralized branches of industry. But it is just the workers of the more important branches of industry who, in such an environment evince a leaning toward heeding the voices of the reformist leaders. The attempts of the Communist party to unleash a strike struggle, without changing the general situation within the proletariat, lead only to minor guerrilla operations, which, even if successful, are left without a sequel.

—L. TROTSKY.

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