

WORKERS
OF THE
WORLD.
UNITE

THE MILITANT



Weekly Organ of the Communist League of America [Opposition]

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.

PRICE 5 CENTS

VOLUME IV, NO. 20 [WHOLE NO. 79]

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, AUGUST 22, 1931

Losovsky Unloads the Blame...

The Lesser Losovskys in their Old Role of «Whipping Boys»

When a false policy and a bureaucratic regime end as they must in the ditch of disaster—select the scape-goats and cast the whole responsibility upon them. This is the sacred creed of Stalinism. Losovsky, the General Secretary of the Proletarian and consequently a wheel-horse in the Centrist machine, is a very adroit practitioner of this odious method. Things have come to such an appalling state in the American Left wing unions, despite the most favorable objective conditions, that some kind of an explosion could not be avoided. In a properly administered movement the situation would be reflected by an upsurge from below. Since that is forbidden we usually get as a substitute the horse-play of “self-criticism” from above. Losovsky performed this sickening ritual in his speech at the Eleventh Plenum of the Comintern. Speaking on the American unions there as reported in the *Impreco*, he unburdened himself of the following remarks:

“What is the fundamental weakness of our American trade unions? They do not know how to intervene in the economic struggle of the toiling masses, and when they do intervene, they frequently do it bureaucratically. Our trade unions lack internal life and trade union democracy; every union has the ambition of going in for high politics, instead of concerning itself with the every day needs of the workers. Party leadership consists in the fractional nuclei substituting themselves entirely for the trade unions; the trade union members suddenly hear that since such and such a date not X, but Y is chairman or Secretary of the union.

“Functionaries are removed and appointed behind the scenes, as if this did not concern the rank and file members, party and non-party, organized and even unorganized workers who follow us. Workers to whom membership in revolutionary trade unions is connected with their privations, with the risk of losing their jobs must have faith in their unions. They must know where they are going and whom they are following. One cannot therefore reduce the trade unions to a few officials and circular instructions. Such a trade union cannot grow. A trade union can grow in the midst of struggle, it can grow through the development of trade union democracy, it can grow, if every worker, every member, knows well his elective leading organ: the union will grow, if the leadership will carry every question to the masses. Nothing of this kind is as yet to be seen in the United States, and it is not surprising that the Seamen's and Miners' Unions have lost most of their members.”

This is rather plain talk about the state of affairs in the unions directed by the Communist Party of the United States, and every word of it is true. There is nothing new however, in the revelation. And if Losovsky speaks openly about the situation only now, it is not because he was in the dark about it before. Every one of the monstrous practices he condemns in the speech at the 11th Plenum has been concretely exposed time and time again in the *Militant*. Of course, our exposition of the evils that are sapping the life out of the Left wing unions was “counter-revolutionary slander.” But every militant engaged in trade union work knew the truth and could testify to it out of his own experience. The little Losovskys could confuse the issues with bluster for a time, but they could not prevent the policy from bringing forth its inevitable fruit. The tragic results of Stalinist administration of the trade union work have accumulated on every side to such an extent that the truth cannot be covered up any longer. Matters stood at this pass when the General Secretary of the Proletarian which distinguishes all the apparatus men when they criticize others, took occasion to tell what everybody already knew.

What Losovsky said is true enough but he did not tell the whole truth. To be honest with the Communist workers he would have to say that the Minks and similar Overguards, to say nothing of the Sazers, who have been having their fun with the Left wing unions, did not arrive at their positions by their own independent efforts and means. They are merely the office boys who have been appointed to these functions because of their unfeeling readiness to do what they are told. The monstrous excesses they have committed against the revolutionary labor movement only represent the natural working of the nefarious system in which they have small and inconspicuous parts. To single out these inconsequential errand boys for attack while leaving the system and its apparatus which they represent untouched, and to pass that comedy off as a serious remedy for the prevailing evils, is to practise deliberate fraud against the workers' movement.

Communist workers who nourish

the hope that Losovsky's speech signifies a better course in the trade union work are sure to be the victims of another terrible disappointment. The maneuver is designed to delude them and to head off their threatening mutiny. It may have a temporary success, as has been the case before. The Communist workers are long-suffering and patient. They have a great faith in the Comintern which has been disloyally and shamefully abused by the usurping apparatus under Stalin. But the day of reckoning draws near. The very fact that Losovsky has been driven to make these astounding revelations is an indication of its approach. No Losovsky, unloading the whole responsibility for the debacle on the little Losovsky, can affect the slightest cure. Centrist bureaucracy is the real disease. Losovsky and Company are its fountain head. The revolutionary workers must recognize this and direct their blows at it.

—J. P. C.

Trotsky's Letter to the Pravda

Pravda, No. 180 of July 2, publishes an article by Yaroslavsky under the heading: “A New Assistant of Pilsudsky”. According to this paper, I am supposed to have written an article for the *Kurier Codzienny* of Warsaw against the Five Year Plan, against the Soviet power, etc., and this article or some other—Yaroslavsky is not very exact—is supposed to have made the rounds “of a considerable part of the bourgeois press of America, of England, of Poland, of Rumania” . . . Leaving aside the political and other commentaries of Yaroslavsky I confine myself strictly to the material side of the affair.

I have given no article at all to the *Kurier Codzienny*, I have no relations of any sort with this journal and I learned of the very existence of the article published under my name in the *Kurier* from the famous “Zinoviev letter” and other similar documents. From the information of friends, the *Kurier* continues to publish counter-revolutionary articles attributed to me.

I know absolutely nothing of what “a part of the bourgeois press of America, of England, of Poland, of Rumania” publish under my name. I have given no article to any journal of these countries on the Five Year Plan. Thus, in this case too it is a question of a forgery or what is most probable of a reprint of the article in the *Kurier*.

The *Manchester Guardian* is the only bourgeois journal to which I have given an interview on the Five Year Plan. This interview is devoted to showing the enormous historical importance of the Five Year Plan and of the necessity of collaboration between England and the U. S. S. R. This interview therefore pursues an aim directly opposed to that which is attributed to me by the forgers who have long ago established themselves in Warsaw, Riga and other places.

By Yaroslavsky's article, *Pravda* leads millions of readers into error. I believe that *Pravda* is obliged to publish my denial—out of respect for the millions of workers of red soldiers and sailors, of peasants, of students and of other citizens of the U. S. S. R. deceived by it. Kadikoy, July 15, 1931.

—L. TROTSKY.

78 Trotsky Votes in Santander

We have received the following interesting report from Spain:

In the city of Santander during the elections to the national Cortes, 78 of the ballots were demonstrably filled out with the name of our comrade Leon Trotsky. What lends added interest to this report is the fact that in Santander there is neither a Communist party organization nor one of the Left Opposition. No Communist election propaganda, consequently, was carried on in the city. The spontaneous and demonstrative action of the 78 workers is therefore so much more significant.

The Revolution in Spain

Conflict of Tendencies in the Ranks of the Working Class

THE FORCES OF THE SPANISH PARTY

The membership of the Spanish Communist Party has grown considerably in the past two months. The bureaucracy has seen in this flow of new elements a motive for renewing a violent series of attacks against the Communist Left. Our Stalinists are very zealously seeking to confuse us with the “splitters” of the Agrupacion de Madrid and the Catalonian-Balearic Federation and accuse us of having created a second Communist party. Everybody knows, and above all the Stalinist bureaucrats, that the same differences separate us from the Federations of Madrid and Barcelona. In spite of this the argument is employed in order to create confusion in the Spanish working class and they assert that the party is growing and progressing in spite of the Trotskyist maneuvers.

But in spite of all the scoundrelism of the Stalinists, we are defending the organic and doctrinal unity of the Spanish C. P.

The S. C. P. has had the number of its adherents increase and in spite of this, it has admitted into its midst dubious elements of the petty bourgeoisie and unscrupulous adventurers. For example, it has admitted an individual who, during the Primo de Rivera dictatorship, sent from the prison where he was confined a letter in which he renounces his Communist ideas and promises to be a “good boy” in the future. This individual has subsequently been entrusted with the management of one of the party organs.

Another typical case: it is not very long ago that the party expelled a bourgeois journalist, Antonio Espina. Four days later, this bourgeois journalist was made civil governor of a province by the Minister of the Interior, Maura, and our good journalist accepted with a smile; today he is ready to have every worker assassinated who does not defend the bourgeois republic.

Such cases could be cited by the dozens. Evidently, we are enemies of what the bureaucrats call “progress” of the S. C. P. We want the union of all the Spanish Communists to cleanse the party and make it stronger, but not that anti-working class and bourgeois elements should inject themselves into the ranks of the working class party.

PANIC IN THE TWO INDEPENDENT FEDERATIONS

The Comintern has sent the C. P. of Spain a delegation in order to settle the internal crisis of Spanish Communism. They have taken some very adroit steps around the Federation of Maurin by proposing the dispatch of a delegation

MINE STRIKE CALLED OFF

Opportunity for National Movement Missed by Party Blunder

Confronted with the fact that the striking miners of Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia “and their ranks reduced from an original 40,000 to a present 10,000”, the National Miners Union has issued a statement which is tantamount to the calling off of the strike in the fields mentioned. No one even slightly acquainted with the conditions of this heroic battle can fail to see the correctness of this step. The miners fought courageously and unitedly, driven to bitter desperation by conditions in the

The Heavy Odds

mine fields which human flesh and blood could stand no longer. That they rallied under the banner of the Left wing miners' union is tribute to their instinctive feeling that to strike under the besmirched and treacherous flag of Lewis would be equivalent to no strike at all.

But the odds have proved too great for the moment. Against the miners were mobilized not only the bloated wealth and power of the coal barons, but also the power of their police, of their state and federal machinery, of their injunction judges ready for any arbitrary act, and—not the least of them—the John L. Lewis machine. Physical exhaustion from within, induced by years of unemployment, deprivation and in some cases downright starvation conditions, and physical assault from without, in the form of police clubs guns and tear gas bombs—these are the powers which, in the first instance, relentlessly drove the miners back to the pits. Out of the thousands who came out during the high point of the strike, only a small and not decisive minority remained. The call for a return quite properly acknowledged the existence of this indisputable fact and is the first measure to be taken to conserve the remaining energies of the coal miners in preparation for the struggles that are coming with the sureness of tomorrow.

to Moscow. But the delegates of the Comintern proposed a delegation which did not have the confidence of the ranks and which the latter deemed inadequate. The representatives of the C. I. having set themselves against a meeting of the Maurinist Federation, the rupture of relations was brought out.

As a result, *Mundo Obrero* has published a resolution of the E. C. C. I. finally expelling Maurin and all those in solidarity with him. The resolution declares that the C. I. disapproves in toto of Maurin's policy, but that it can admit into the ranks of the C. P. of Spain all the militants of the Catalonian Federation and the Madrid Grouping who request it individually or collectively. Nevertheless, they will have to disavow the policy of Maurin and naturally of the “Trotskyists”.

The maneuver could not be more hypocritical. It aims at the disorganization of the ranks of the Catalonian-Balearic Federation by invoking a pretended good will of the Stalinists for the unification of the party. But the E. C. of the official party reserves to itself the right to call all those whom it does not want to readmit “Trotskyists”. Thus, the unity will be a fraud, a remedy without any effect. Maurin has deceived the rank and file militants of his Federation by speaking clearly of technical and not political differences. This could well have been the beginning of the struggle for the destruction of the unprincipled bloc of Maurin. But there can be no doubt that the best Communists will not be admitted by the Stalinist bureaucrats. They will be called “Trotskyists” and will join the Spanish Left Opposition. Maurin runs the risk of being left all alone. We recognize that his conduct was courageous when he demanded from the representatives of the C. I. the representation of the Madrid Grouping in the delegation. We cannot agree with Maurin, but it would be wrong and we would not be recognizing our duty as the genuine defenders of the unity of the S. C. P., were we not to denounce the attitude of certain Madrid leaders who abandoned it.

For that matter, the unification of the S. C. P. cannot be made by “royal decree” from Moscow, nor by sending to the U. S. S. R. a delegation which is dictatorially prepared and imposed, but by the organization of a national congress which will re-establish the Communist unity shattered by the bureaucrats of Stalin. It is the comrades in the ranks who must designate the delegates to go to Moscow and the crisis must be solved for us in Spain.

(Continued on Page 2)

SPANISH OPPOSITION PRESS FUND INCREASING

The internationalist spirit of the Left clearly and concretely to the fore in the campaign we are now conducting to raise a fund for our comrades in Spain which will enable them to start with the publication of a weekly paper. The contributions, received from all parts of the country, are—were ardently hope—only a beginning. Every American revolutionist must bear in mind that the situation in Spain is pregnant with magnificent revolutionary possibilities. In the midst of the torn and confused Communist movement of that country, our militant Opposition group alone is holding firmly to the banner of Lenin and Trotsky of Bolshevism, which they have unfurled. Acute as is the need the *Militant* feels today for financial support to maintain itself, we are nevertheless urging all our friends to make an exceptional effort to make the most generous contributions possible to the movement in Spain.

Our appeal has already born gratifying results. At meetings we have held on street corners, at least in New York workers in the audience have contributed generously to the Spanish Opposition

Press Fund. In Toronto, comrade Quarter approached a number of Spanish-speaking workers in a cigar factory who responded immediately, with money and a warm letter breathing the spirit of international solidarity. From London, the Marxian League sends a money order for an English Pound, an answer to the call issued by the *Militant*. The response of our English friends is especially welcome. In their letter, the British comrades write:

“Enclosed herewith is a money order for five dollars—a contribution from the League to the fund you are collecting for the Spanish Opposition Press.

“We are following the movement with intense interest and are thirsting for details regarding the precise position and the chances for the future.

“We are asking to send our greetings and tell them that since an uprising in Spain would have a deciding effect on the world proletariat in general—the C. I. in particular—their task is a noble one and we are hoping for the very best news.

“Max Nicholls, secretary.”

Our fund has already passed the one hundred dollar mark. But this can only be considered a small beginning. Our Spanish comrades are making the greatest sacrifices to advance the movement. The very least that we can do in this country is to support them with our financial aid. Do not forget that difficult as is the economic position of the American workers at the present moment, they are still in a relatively better state than are the terrifically underpaid Spanish workers. The American dollar (we do not say this out of national pride!) goes a long way when translated into Spanish pesetas. An accumulation of American dollars sent to our Spanish comrades means that so much more of the long road to proletarian victory is cleared for the forward march. Do not forget, further, that money sent now is doubly valuable, for this is the time to strike the hardest blows at reaction and confusion in Spain. All funds should be addressed to comrade A. Gonzales, c/o *The Militant*, 84 East 10th St., New York, N. Y.

Funds received since the acknowledgment

ments made in last week's issue are herewith recorded with thanks (unless otherwise noted the donations are from New York):

James P. Cannon: \$5.00—Winie: .50—James Gilday: 5.00—S. M. Rose: 5.00—Nathan Berman: 5.00—A. Gomez: .15—G. Sartori: 1.00—Hilda F.: 3.00—Alm ando Nacio: 2.00—Jose Vargas: .25—A. Diaz: .25—J. Salazar: .25 P. Gomez: .25—Sol Sarachik: 2.00—Minneapolis branch: 3.55—T. Bolsner, Los Angeles: 5.00—Boston branch: 3.00—Toronto branch (Opposition and C. P. members): 9.25—Toronto Spanish-speaking sympathizers: 2.40—Marxian League of London: 4.85—YOUNGSTOWN: Denis Plarinos: 1.00—S. Frank: .50—Jos. Gottlieb: .25—Sym pathizer: .25—P. Solis: .25—Frank Cheloff: .50—Christ Harris: .25—F. Altman: .50—A. Canas: .50—Gabriel Hierro: .50—Guillermo Coria: .50—M. Villalba: .15 Total this week: \$62.85. Previous contributions: 81.91. Grand total to date \$144.76.

W. W. has always been to “transfer the strike to the job.” Such a “theory” only serves to spread deception and fatal illusions among the workers, especially in the present situation. The “new” plan is only a variation on this exploded theme. To encourage the dissipation of the remaining strength of the returned strikers in futile, isolated “struggles around individual mines” right after the defeat of the strike on a tri-district scale, is a thoroughly blockheaded and—worse yet—a criminal course for Left wing leaders to advise.

Speak Out Frankly!

An honest, revolutionary leadership must tell the coal miners: “A heroic and militant fight has been fought. We were overwhelmed by great odds. In addition, we made the following mistakes: one, two, three four. Now we must go back in the most orderly retreat possible, for this strike was only the beginning. Conditions will not improve. Therefore, we must conserve our strength, spread the foundation of our organization as widely and solidly as we can, and then, armed with greater forces, we shall fight again to wrest some of our demands from the coal operators.” Unless the miners are told this the N. M. U. will again be sunk into the sectarian slough from which the strike raised it.

But that is not all. In addition to the external factors combining to crush the strike, there is another factor which played a really tremendous role in injuring the struggle. The N. M. U. statement explains that “only a lack of organizing forces due to the youth and weakness of the N. M. U., prevented the immediate spread of the strike to include at least several times as many miners”. What pitiful leaders are those who seek to explain their failures by anything and everything except an analysis of the policy they pursued. The truth of the matter is this:

The leadership of the N. M. U. and of the Communist party had an unparalleled opportunity to spread the strike. They could have sustained the movement by spreading the strike to other fields and thereby prevented three-fourths of the men from returning in despair of the outcome, a despair induced precisely by the fact that the strike was not spread. The *Militant* proposed the only effective manner at the moment of spreading the strike. The Stalinist leaders, incompetent through and through and concerned chiefly with the preservation of their bureaucratic prestige, rejected this possibility of spreading the strike. In this way, they light-mindedly threw away one of the best opportunities yet offered the Left wing movement to set into motion vast masses of workers.

Our Proposals

What did the *Militant* propose, not (Continued on Page 4)

Try 35 Kentucky Miners

Red-Baiting Is Prominent Feature of New Frame-Up Attempt

In the midst of a fierce reign of terror to crush the fighting spirit of the miners in Harlan, Kentucky 35 miners have gone on trial for their lives, charged with the shooting of Deputy Sheriff Jesse Pace. Raids by deputy sheriffs and company gunmen on the miners continue unceasingly. Numerous arrests

have been made on the flimsiest pretexts. Jesse L. Wakefield, representative of the International Labor Defense, and Arnold Johnson, of the American Civil Liberties Union, have been jailed, Boris Israel, correspondent of the Federated Press was forced into an automobile driven out of the city limits and shot in the left leg.

The attempt to frame-up the 35 miners and send them to the electric chair is proceeding in an atmosphere of lynch terror. The court room and vicinity is dotted with company gunmen armed with rifles, machine guns and tear gas. The Judge, D. C. Jones, delivered a tirade against the “Reds”, telling the jury that “Communism and law and order cannot sleep in the same bed . . . We have our sins of course, but never until these snake doctors came here from New York and taught these doctrines, have we been troubled by Communism.” The States Attorney, W. A. Brock, threatened the miners with the “cold chills of steel.”

Workers everywhere must support the defense of these 35 miners faced with capitalist justice and death in the electric chair for struggling to improve their starving and miserable conditions. The mass pressure of the workers is the only method which can rescue these workers from the clutches of the coal barons.

♦ ♦ ♦

SEE PAGE FOUR for comrade Leon Trotsky's thorough analysis of the latest speech delivered by Stalin before the conference of the industrial managers and economists.

IN THE INTERNATIONAL OF LABOR

Reviews and News of the Working Class and Revolutionary Movements

GERMANY

Communist Suppression

The financial crisis in Germany has continued to become more acute in the last week. In spite of all the measures (closing of the Exchange, restriction of bankers' activity, etc.) new crashes have taken place. The National Bank of the Rhine Provinces and the Shreider Bank of Bremen have gone bankrupt. Both are banks of great importance. There is no doubt that the crushing of the Danat Bank will involve the bankruptcy of other banks.

The hope of the German bourgeoisie in a prompt assistance on the part of America, England and France, under the form of a large loan, has not yet been realized. The trips of Curtius and Bruening to Paris and to the London conference yielded only meager results and it is only now that the question of aid to Germany is posed effectively at the same time as the guarantees which Germany can give in exchange. It is clear that it is not a question of guarantees of security.

The Hoover moratorium was undoubtedly a victory for the German bourgeoisie, while for France it was the beginning of the liquidation of the reparations and of the Versailles Treaty. The French bourgeoisie knew that it would be compelled to capitulate before American capitalism in the question of the moratorium. But at the same time it knew that Germany is on the threshold of financial collapse and that the prolongation of the parleys is putting the German bourgeoisie into a difficult position. It is now seeking through the lips of its representative, Laval, to exploit the situation in Germany to repulse the demand of German imperialism which looks, in the first place, towards the suppression of the reparations and the Versailles Treaty. It demands guarantees in order to have the possibility of keeping in leash the imperialist appetite of the German bourgeoisie. The success of all these plans of the French bourgeoisie depends above all on the position of America and England. It is nevertheless clear that the German bourgeoisie will be compelled to capitulate, entirely or in part.

In spite of all the decrees of the Bruening government, the state of industry has again become worse. Every day, they proceed to new closing down of factories and the discharge of workers and employees. Almost the whole textile industry of Saxony has closed its factories, not having the possibility of procuring the necessary raw materials from England with the present mark. The car shops at Werda (Saxony) have closed at the same time that Krupp has shut down part of its shops together with Ford who did the same in his new factory at Cologne. It is probable that if the situation does not change, these measures will take on unimaginable forms and the army of four millions of unemployed existing today will be increased by a new mass of jobless. The need of paying social insurance to new hundreds of thousands will render the financial situation still worse.

The crisis in German capitalist economy has now attained its highest point. The collapse of the banks and the financial situation will certainly evoke industrial collapses on a greater scale. The productive apparatus of German economy cannot be maintained upon the basis of world economy with its present capacity and scope. It will be obliged to retrench. Even if the large loans succeed the situation will not change much by this fact, and the situation obtaining before the crashes will not be re-established.

Unemployment will increase in the future. One can also foresee great struggles; what will be the results? This will depend above all upon the attitude of the masses and the policy of our party. The bourgeoisie is preparing for this; it has begun by a widespread attack upon the proletarian press.

ABOLITION OF PRESS FREEDOM

On July 17, the new decree against political excesses went into effect. This decree is in actuality the abolition of the freedom of the press in Germany. Of the Weimar constitution, there now remains not a trace so far as the freedom of the press is concerned.

Even the *Berliner Tageblatt* is compelled to speak out a few harsh truths on

the subject of these decrees. In its evening edition No. 305, it says: "The right to express freely one's opinion is today practically abolished in Germany."

And every new article, every position of principle is threatened with the confiscation of the paper; it is clear that all these measures are in the first place directed against the Communist press. Even if the leaders of the German socialist party defend this decree under the pretext that it is directed against the Fascist press, every German worker knows that, in fact, it is aimed at the revolutionary proletariat and only at it. With the aid of this decree, the bourgeoisie succeeds in stifling for a long time the Communist press and by systematic prohibitions to destroy it completely.

And the offensive of the bourgeoisie finds no resistance for the moment. The fight between the police and the workers at Gelsenkirchen and Essen, at Leipzig, Trier, etc., are still isolated incidents and touch only a small part of the proletariat. These struggles can have importance, but they are not struggles of the masses of the German proletariat against the policy of dictatorship and hunger of the Bruening government and of the German bourgeoisie. If the situation is such, the fault lies with the Centrist leadership. But there is still time. The favorable situation in Germany has not yet passed. A winter of great class struggles is still before us. The future development will depend upon the fighting capacity of the party. A radical change of its policy on the basis of the tactic of the united front is the indispensable pre-condition for it.

To the extent that our party draws closer to the social democratic workers, it will also draw closer to the seizure of power.

—ROMAN WELLS

Opposition at Boston I.L.D. Conference

BOSTON—

On Sunday, August 16, the New England Amnesty Conference called by the I. L. D. was held at the Ambassador Palace Boston. 34 organizations were represented by 64 delegates. The composition of the conference was much broader than previous conferences of a similar nature, though the representation from the fraternal organizations was not as strong as it could have been. Delegates came from all sections of the New England area. There was a good percentage of Negro workers present.

After the report of the Credentials Committee, all the delegates, including the representative of the Boston Branch of the Communist League of America (Opposition) were seated. McCarthy was chairman of the Conference and Cantor, the main reporter.

Comrade Cantor dealt at length with the numerous cases of capitalist repression and imprisonment facing the I. L. D. at present and stressed the need for a broad amnesty campaign for all class war prisoners, regardless of their political affiliation. He called for the co-operation of all the organizations represented to help make the campaign effective.

In the course of the discussion on the report, comrade Weiner, a delegate from the Needle Trades Workers Industrial Union and a member of the Opposition, took the floor and spoke especially in connection with the victims of the Pennsylvania Flynn Anti-Sedition Act mentioned in the report, and stressed the fact that two workers, Leon Goodman and Bernard Morgenstern, members of the Philadelphia Branch of the Communist League of America (Opposition) were also victims of this act and that they had been denied a class defense by the I. L. D. The delegates from the N. T. W. I. U. related the history of the case, told of the arrest of the two Oppositionists for distributing Unemployment leaf-

lets issued by their organization and for calling upon the Philadelphia workers to join the February 25 demonstration of the unemployed, called by the Communist party. Comrade Weiner also told of the repeated attempts made to have the I. L. D. take up their defense and of their failure to date. She then called upon the I. L. D. to live up to its principles of class defense for all working class prisoners and demanded that the two Oppositionists be put on the Amnesty List together with all the others. The speech was greeted with the applause of a majority of those present.

In his reply to comrade Weiner, the reporter claimed ignorance of the facts in the case and once more reiterated the policy of the I. L. D. to defend all class war prisoners without distinctions of affiliation.

Comrade Cooperstein spoke in the name of the Boston Branch of the Communist League of America (Opposition). The Opposition delegate hailed the seating of the Opposition at the Conference as a good step forward and as a sign that a real effort was being made to extend the class defense front of the I. L. D. Comrade Cooperstein offered the complete cooperation of the local branch of the Opposition in the Amnesty campaign, started the ball rolling for a campaign fund with a contribution, pledged all the financial and practical aid possible and offered to provide a speaker from the Communist League of America (Opposition) at the disposal of the Amnesty Committee. The workers present demonstrated their approval with applause for our representative and elected her as a member of the Amnesty Committee.

After the discussion, the organizations represented were called upon to contribute to the fund, to hold meetings, to affiliate with the I. L. D., to distribute leaflets and to prepare for the equally important Anti-Deportation Campaign. With that, the Conference was concluded.

The British Scene

The Bankruptcy of British Stalinism

the imperialist agents in the Trade Union Council, sensing the danger, have on two occasions come out in criticism of the "labor" government. It protested the government attitude to the report of the Royal Commission on Unemployment; it protested the liberal-labor agreement to the bill of repeal of the anti-trade union act. But these are merely the efforts to construct if possible a safety valve for reaction. Yet the Communist party has not at all been able to supply leadership in this situation of rich possibilities.

Pollitt Recites the Failures

At the Eleventh Comintern Plenum, Harry Pollitt, the most perfect prototype of a Stalinist third rate functionary, presented a tragic picture. His lamentations were: "The trouble is that our comrades do not differentiate between the workers in the I. L. P. and their leaders and because of this we build up a great barrier between ourselves and the workers in the other parties... the attitude of nine members out of ten in our party to a new worker, and particularly to an I. L. P. worker is that if they are not prepared to swallow the whole 21 points of the Comintern program they are social fascists... Today we have a big strike move in England which has not been headed by the party and the Minority Movement... we are not able to develop the independent forms of struggle, the independent forms of leadership, so that we are not in a position to be able to give the call—Strike on—we are not able to get the lead of the strike movement. The reformists are able, on the whole, to call the workers out and call the strikes off."

A dismal picture of failure indeed, particularly when one considers the objectively favorable situation. But do these leaders attempt seriously and thoroughly to account for the reasons? Not at all. One may go further and ask: What does the present Comintern leadership propose to remedy the faults? From the shameful combinations of the Anglo-Russian Unity Committee, which served to give the reactionary Trade Union Council a Left covering and subjected the Minority Movement and the Communist party to these "Left" representatives of the Trade Union Council, the Comintern commanded the party to execute a sharp turn to "class against class". It instructed the party to assume "independent leadership" in the "Third Period" style; not because of specific factors of the objective conditions which were then particularly favorable to the reformists, but because of the proclamation of the "Third Period". It became naturally translated, not into struggle to prove the superiority of the Communist program, but by arbitrary division of separate strike committees, of separating and isolating the militant minority from the trade unions for creation of new independent unions. Thus the blundering stupidity of the British party leadership must, of course, first of all be traced to its roots of the Stalin policies in the Comintern, and a correction must first of all begin with a decisive condemnation of these false policies.

The Party Leadership Views

The opportunist nationally-limited position inevitably flowing from the reactionary theory of "socialism in one country" invented and applied by the Stalinized Comintern leadership has found its particularly crass expression in the whole concept of the British party leadership. In the cardinal question of the Indian revolutionary perspectives, the party leadership confines itself in the main to

demanding independence for India, that is it calls upon the British workers to demand for the Hindus the same national liberty which they have. This allows for no distinction whatever from the position of the "Left" I. L. P. But what is yet worse it fails entirely to establish the intimate connection which is so essential between the British workers and the Indian proletariat and poor peasantry. The continued subjugation of India remains one of the main pillars of the British empire, and just as much so is the development of the revolution in India—not merely its national liberation—one of the main pillars of the proletarian revolution in England. A correct orientation on this question thus becomes a cardinal task of the British Communist Party.

However, the opportunist nationally-limited position of the party leadership applies also in a full measure to its views of the situation of the British working class. The axis of its present propaganda and activities is the fight for shifting the burden of the growing crisis from the working class to the bourgeoisie. To this end it advances, as is for example contained in the program of the "Charter movement", the slogans of the partial demands for an increased dole at the cost of the owners of industry, the seven hour day, housing for workers, reduction of rents, a guaranteed minimum wage, repudiation of arbitration, release of class war prisoners, repeal of Trades Disputes Act, against tariff attacks upon workers' standard, added to which are the slogans, for fight against imperialism and for the defense of the Soviet Union, etc.

"Simplifying" the Problems of Revolution

These leaders have arrived at an altogether too simple rationalization of the power and resources of imperialism and the problems of the working class. Their conclusions are that since capitalism in its present declining stage cannot grant the necessary reforms to the workers hence every struggle for reforms becomes a revolutionary struggle. But the problem is not quite so simple. While struggles for reforms have a different significance today than during the period of organic development of capitalism; while reformism could then lay a progressive role but today will definitely have to choose between the paths of proletarian revolution or organic support of capitalist reaction, and invariably chooses the latter, nevertheless, for the Communist party, there still remains the problem of giving the struggle for reform needs and democratic demands a revolutionary content. Above all, there remains the problem for the party of building the forces which under its leadership in the struggles must consciously select the road toward the revolution. The party must establish itself as the vehicle of the revolution.

The British party write voluminously about the growing capitalist crisis and the debacle of the MacDonald gradualness. It quite correctly endeavors to unmask the "Left" of the I. L. P. and usually draws the conclusion formulated in blanket statements to the effect: These experiences will prove to the British workers that the Communist party is the only party fighting for their interests. This, however does not at all follow. That is, it does not and cannot follow unless the party also succeeds in proving its worth as a revolutionary leader.

What did Pollitt have to offer, at the Eleventh Comintern Plenum, as a solution for the present party difficulties? Of course, one must not expect a serious examination of possible fallacies of past

and prevailing policies and directives from self-contented bureaucrats. And so, Pollitt, also remained true to the established style of empty platitudes. He recommended "... to intensify work ... to lead workers' economic struggles ... to build broad union front activities from below ... activities against growing tendencies of fascism against growing war danger, etc." The particular possibilities for this, Pollitt saw in the Charter Movement.

Alas, in the Charter Movement the deceptive practice of, in view of all the failures, to appear stronger prevailed from its inception. In conformity with the "Third Period" style the party leadership set out to drum up a large delegation at the initial charter conference. It became a substitute for the reality of mass influence which the party still has to win. 788 delegates were secured, but only 68 representing trade union branches 51 the unemployment movement branches (a movement hardly existing in reality), 31 representing the party and Y. C. L. the balance were supposed to represent various miscellaneous mass meetings sports clubs. Minority Movements groups etc. This undoubtedly becomes its first fatal weakness. The revolution cannot be organized by deceiving the workers. Secondly one cannot yet notice any visible effort to correctly connect the economic needs and demands of this movement with the political issues. Thirdly, being borne out of the conception of finding a substitute for the ill-fated Minority Movement and a short cut to mass influence, the party's problems have not been brought nearer its solution. Essentially these problems remain as before.

The Future Holds Great Possibilities

The future orientation of the party still remains intimately bound up with the lessons of the past from which it has not yet drawn the necessary conclusions. Particularly so with the lessons of the 1926 general strike and the Anglo-Russian Unity Committee. Pressed by the growing workers discontent, today, similarly as prior to the general strike, "Lefts" are again coming forward from the reformist ranks to serve as a shield for the reactionaries to endeavor to defeat the struggles growing out of the discontent and to return to their original camp when this "danger" again blows over. The Communist party is yet cut off. There is therefore a great danger that the struggle of the discontented masses, which marks the developing revolutionary forces, may be swallowed in this "Left" reformist swamp. The party cannot prevent it by its so-called "united front from below" coupled with the perfidious practices of what is called independent leadership. This will only mean to substitute deception and cunning for the actual unification of the workers. Moreover it always leaves the door wide open for the other desperate alternative,—that is, to attempt to overcome the isolation which will ensue by alliances behind the backs of the workers with these Left coverings. In other words to repeat the shameful alliance with the "Lefts", the Hicks, Purcells and Cooks in the Anglo-Russian Unity Committee.

These "Lefts" in England have considerable experiences precisely in deception and cunning. The party has nothing to gain by attempts to emulate them. It has therefore become so much more an imperative duty for the British Communist Party to conduct an extended discussion to enable it to draw the proper lessons of 1926 so that it may arrive at a position of correctly estimating the future perspectives, correctly work out its orientation for genuine unification of the British workers which will in reality mark the end of "Left" reformist deception and lay the basis for Communist leadership.

—ARNE SWABECK.

MADRID LETTER

The Revolution in Spain

(Continued from Page 1)

THE NATIONAL CONGRESS OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY

On July 10 the extraordinary congress of the Spanish social democracy was held in Madrid in order to establish its position in the present political situation. The June 28 elections to the Constituent Cortes gave the most powerful parliamentary minority, from the point of view of numbers, to the Spanish Socialist

Party. This fact puts the Spanish social democracy before the dilemma of holding back from or of accepting full power in a fairly short time. In this respect, the declarations of the socialist minister of finances, I. Prieto, are already very significant when it pointed out that the social democrats will not give their adherence to a government presided over by the present minister of foreign affairs, Lerroux, leader of the minority closest to the socialists numerically.

Following I. Prieto, the socialists will not vote for a Lerroux government. The socialists express it from the lips of one of their most representative men at the same time that they declare that the compromise reached at Saint Sebastian over the collaboration with the present government was a mistake of their party.

On this problem, the congress will have to pronounce itself on July 15 when it is opened up by the treacherous chiefs of Spanish socialism. What is most probable is that they will adopt a vague formula in order to elude responsibility.

The Madrid organization of the soc-

ialist party has held numerous meetings which ended with no concrete result. Everything was left to the congress.

The Spanish social democracy fears greatly to take the power absolutely into its hands and at the same time is afraid of continuing to form a part of a government which assassinates the socialist workers. The problem is thus pretty complicated and the worker masses are precipitously deserting the social reformist camp.

The C. P. of Spain must utilize the situation in order to denounce the treason of the Spanish social democracy. The best means is to push the socialists to the taking of power. It is the most effective means of unmasking them.

Needless to say that nothing practical will come out of the congress.

THE COMMUNIST OPPOSITION IN THE N. C. L.

The Spanish Communist Opposition has begun to work practically and actively in the National Confederation of Labor.

Immediately, we have begun to register successes. In Madrid the painters have named a trade union leadership composed entirely of comrades of the Opposition, Francisco Garcia Lavid among them.

After the intervention of our comrades at a meeting, our comrade Garcia Lavid was named for the leadership by acclamation. So were two other comrades by a great majority. The anarcho-reform-

ists were put in the minority.

The successes of our friends are disturbing and irritating the anarchists who made a great scandal and, assisted by anarchists from other organizations, went so far as to attack our comrades.

At the present time, the anarchist groups of Madrid have met in order to remove our friends over the heads of the painters' organization, under the fraudulent pretext that Garcia Lavid was a candidate in the last elections.

Our comrades were accused of belonging to the Committee of Reconstruction of Seville and violently expelled from the local of the N. C. L. Naturally, the painters will have their word and, against the advice of the anarchist groups, will ratify the nomination of our comrades.

The following fact must be pointed out: it is the first time that Communists have won in Madrid an organization attached to the N. C. L. and also the first manifestation of our trade union activity.

The triumph of our painter friends in Madrid shows how the Communists have to act in the N. C. L., but also shows the anarchist phobia against Communism a phobia provoked in large measure by the Reconstruction conference of Seville, convoked by the Stalinists. The struggle is very difficult. It must be said that a Stalinist present at the meeting showed his agreement with the anarchists so as not to give his vote to our friends of the Communist Left Opposition.

At the same time that we obtained this success at Madrid, our comrades have

obtained the direction of the People's House of Llerena (Badajoz). The Left Opposition is beginning to reap successes on the trade union field.

NEW PERSECUTIONS AGAINST US

The news we receive from the provinces are more serious every day. Many comrades do not receive *Comunismo*, in spite of repeated mailings. The republican police confiscates (steals, for it does it illegally) the copies of the review. Many letters from our comrades arrive only after a long delay or do not arrive at all. *La Verite* and *La Lutte de Classes* come to us irregularly or "are lost" ... by the General Management of the Republican Police. The struggle and the persecutions continue.

OUR PROGRESS

The second number of *Comunismo* has been given a much better reception than the first. Groups of comrades constantly arise throughout the country. At Salamanca, the republican and political bosses' chief an important group of the Spanish Communist Opposition has been constituted.

At Bilbao, our group has doubled its membership. In Estremadura, new groups have been formed. At Segovia, the official party group is on our side.

The second pamphlet by comrade Trotsky which our "Communist Publishers" has just put out is receiving an excellent reception and comments. The Spanish Communist Opposition is showing itself to be the only representative of Marxism in Spain.

—HENRI LACP

Madrid, July 1931

TWO NEW PAMPHLETS For the Pre-Conference Discussion

by LEON TROTSKY

THE SPANISH REVOLUTION IN DANGER

64 pages — 15c per copy

Special Rates in Bundles

PROBLEMS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE U. S. S. R.

48 pages — 15c per copy

PIONEER PUBLISHERS

84 East 10th Street
New York City

DISCUSSION ARTICLES

Reforms and Immediate Demands

I take advantage of an incorrect formulation in the thesis in order to raise more vital questions dealing with its content. The thesis labels the practical needs of the day, reforms. It says, "It is the Communists who are the most ardent and willing defenders not only of their broad historical interests (the social revolution) but of most narrow, limited and practical needs of the day (reforms). It is in this way of linking the struggles for daily needs with the final aim, of having the former pave the way for the latter, that the struggle for reforms can be carried on in a revolutionary sense that is it can be directed against the reformists." Not only is it improper to use the word or impression "fighting for reforms" but the way the problem is formulated the relation of immediate demands with ultimate demand, is wrong.

Can we Marxists use the word reform in this sense? No, I think we have been playing with this word long enough and it is time we start a thorough discussion in the Left Opposition, not on the word reform, but what is more important and behind it—the understanding of immediate demands and practical needs of the class.

The Position of Negation

All working class organizations claiming to fight for the class have stumbled on this problem to a greater or lesser degree. Outstanding in the Marxian camp are De Leon and the S. L. P., which, unable to find a way out, just threw the whole thing overboard and denied it all. But since practical needs of the class today are material things and not ghosts their denial was to no avail. The P. P., to this day, is following the footsteps of the S. L. P., on this vital class question. Both of these organizations have taken a negative position while the S. P., swinging to the opposite direction, has transformed every struggle for immediate demands into reforms of the worst kind. In the Communist currents, said to say, we find them handling the question with kid gloves.

The three main currents of Communism take a correct abstract position on the question of immediate demands but experience has proven that the Right wing and Stalin Centrist are muddled and confused when the question descends to the sphere of practical life.

Experience has shown that the Left Opposition understands what is meant by immediate demands and its relation to the social revolution. Events which have followed the programs tactics and strategy we presented for these class battles vindicate our current; but the way the thesis handles the question does not come up to this standard.

We Marxists cannot borrow many dictionary words and use them to define things and conditions in the class struggle. The word reform is one such word. Considering how the word is used in the thesis (and not what you mean) I can follow it to the logical conclusion and add, the bigger and better and more reforms we fight for and gain the closer we will be to the social revolution. But facts prove this is far from the truth.

Is there any difference in the material gains or practical needs of the day for our class "given" by the bosses or their labor leaders or won by our class in struggle? To every Marxist (and the writers of the thesis have said such time and again), we know there is a fundamental difference for our class position. But the expression in the thesis does not say this. Only by understanding the class forces and causes for the way our class receives these material gains from "day to day" can we (after explaining) use it in a "revolutionary sense". This understanding enables us to label the kind of material gain to denote reformist or revolutionary action in the struggle for immediate demands.

False Abstractions

If the practical needs of the day are "given" by the bosses or their government they are reforms; if they come from the bosses' labor leaders, trade union or political, they are social reforms and if these gains are won by our class in struggle led by its vanguard they are sparks for revolution. Practical needs of the day for our class cannot be abstracted from the class struggle and the organizational and ideological position of the class. If we could abstract these immediate demands or gains from the position of battle of the class forces we could say all these gains are reforms. But such an abstraction is false while other abstractions, such as are explained in "Capital" are not false.

We know that reforms or social reforms do not come from the big kind

hearts of the bosses and their flunkies. We know they are granted from above because the class pressure from below compels them to relinquish this material gain for our class in order to stem the tide and check the growing opposition. It is more profitable to "kill with kindness" than to kill through white terror, providing the position of the bosses enables them to carry out the former. The degree of class pressure determines, in the majority of cases if the practical needs will be direct from the bosses or from their flunkies or from the class itself through correct leadership. Reforms can be said to result from class pressure but class pressure without, or lack of, or wrong pressure of the class vanguard means a disproportion in the relation of class and party.

The growth and decay stage of capitalism will cause a big variance in this proportion. In the growth stage of capitalism, the objective factors favor the capitalist and naturally reforms while the decay stage gives the objective factors to the revolutionist to a far greater degree. This brings to the fore the subjective factor, the vanguard as the vital determining factor of the problem as Trotsky points out, not only in revolutions but also in the struggle for immediate demands.

The degree of class pressure does not always determine the success of reformism, as the above will indicate. The stage of capitalism we live in as well as its ebbs and flows, and also its uneven capitalist development, is no abstraction in the class struggle. In the growth stage of capitalism, crumbs in respond to class pressure were the least evil for the bosses, because the very expansion and new markets more than made up for the loss. In the decay stage reforms are bitter concessions from the capitalist, knit to a higher degree not only to the class pressure but more so to the policies of the vanguard.

When Bosses Grant Reform

If capitalism grants reforms (beats us to our point of advantage) this has its ideological influence upon our class or section of the class as well as a negative organizational result, scattering our forces and at the same time driving these class forces into some form of capitalist controlled organization.

Such prevents the crystallization of our class ideology and unless the vanguard is wide awake and capable we lose even the possibility of retrenching ourselves for the next struggle. In this sense, as a class problem and not as an abstract material gain our class, which only learns by experience, has lost by the bosses' coup and with it the vanguard loses. Do not material gains even void these above mentioned factors, gains and a step toward revolution? No.

With the capitalist coup in reforms, the class line reforms with the bosses at a more advantageous position than before. A material gain given by capitalism as a reform is just so much labor power (controlled by capitalism) spent as it would be spent on the battlefield in destruction of the enemy forces by shells and ammunition. But the comparison does not hold water. Because a material gain even in relation to the capitalist is just so much spent, in relation to the workers it is a material gain. Let us see. If the vanguard of the workers moves up and intrenches the class behind the material gain (reform and not a spark) it is already a NEW PROBLEM and especially a total different struggle if the capitalists try to retake it. If the capitalists try to retake what they gave, and not what we won, it is no longer a question of reform in the sense of immediate demand (offensive struggle) but a problem of defensive struggles of our class.

How many material gains (regardless of how they came) were retaken and are being retaken by the capitalist in the present crisis? Any thinking worker can answer this fairly well. In this case if the vanguard does not measure up to standards we can say, the greater the number of these gains through reforms and social reforms, the easier it is for capitalism to retake them and the numbers that come to us as material gains as sparks toward revolution the harder it is for the capitalist to retake.

One only has to look at the sick coal industry (favorable to the capitalist) with past gains primarily through class struggle and compare it with other healthy capitalist industries (favorable to the workers) where gains were mainly reforms and realize the difference between the two. A comparison will show reforms are relinquished easier than the gains through class battles unless the

vanguard's right or wrong policy alters the problem.

The Communist Task

Can we, the Communists, lay down definite plans to prevent our action from following the reformist camp? We can lay down principles in general, but it is impossible to lay down a line of march that is fool-proof. Each concrete struggle must have its tactics formulated on the basis of Marxian analysis. A line of demarcation between reformist action (reforms) and revolutionary action can be made in every struggle but every developing struggle will have forces and action of both. It is up to the Communist to move these struggles out of the channels of REFORM into the channels of deeper class struggles. A simple struggle (made in the office of the bureaucrats) is just as wrong (isolation)

1. The Meaning of the American Crisis

The thesis for the pre-conference discussion states that the American crisis may show a decisive upward swing some time after 1932, and that "whether or not the United States in the next period will reach the peak it attained toward the end of the last decade cannot be determined in advance." "The vast resources of the United States," it says, "its unique post-war position its gradual displacement of England as the leading factor in world economy and politics . . . are still effective enough to warrant its ability to extricate itself out of its present crisis by shifting the burden of it not only upon the working class at home, but upon the nations of Europe . . ." Nevertheless it sets forth the perspective for the American working class movement of "rapid development" and the "prospect of struggles ahead that will increase in breadth and depth and militancy." The long-range political conclusion does not follow from the economic premise; we believe it to be sound and believe that a restatement of the economic premise will prove it. It is not enough to state an immediate prospective of struggle; it must be integrated into a longer-term perspective of political activity.

The thesis nowhere indicates that the present crisis of American capitalism is to be understood in any different light from such past crises as those of 1893, 1907 or 1921, from which American capitalism in each case rose to new heights. To understand the present crisis mechanically, as the bourgeois economists of the "business cycle" do, to regard it as a mere repetition of a pattern of rise and decline and rise, is to deny the validity of the dialectical method of historical materialism. For a Marxist the question must be posed as an alternative: "Have the developing contradictions within capitalism reached a new stage, or are there still forces of growth and stability within capitalism which will enable it to overcome these contradictions and prolong the period of pre-revolutionary capitalist stabilization?"

New Facts At Issue

The answer to the question will determine the correctness of the political and strategic departure, and therefore this answer must be based on ascertainable fact. It cannot be based on a general belief in the power of survival of capitalism, in the American or in the world sphere, or on mere impressions or hunches. The fact that there are many unknown factors in the economic outlook is no justification for a Marxist to avoid the clear and provable implications of many of the known factors, but places on the objector the responsibility of proving the existence, direction and strength of the sustaining and stabilizing forces of capitalism.

In contradistinction to the statements of the thesis quoted above, this article will present facts leading to the following conclusions.

1. The best that American capitalism can hope for as the outcome of the present crisis is a temporary stabilization on a lower plane.

2. While the economic contradictions of capitalism will in all probability lead to the classical solution of imperialist conquest of markets the unique position of America, as distinguished from the older imperialist powers, will not enable it to obtain the unmixed benefits of imperialism as did England in the nineteenth century. Therefore imperialism war while a logical outcome of the crisis, will not solve the crisis, but will merely shift the center of gravity of American capitalism increasingly to foreign countries, while aggravating the crisis at home.

Theories of Self-Cure

As to I. A. Some bourgeois economists, and we regret to say, some Communists, have advanced the theory that this crisis like preceding ones, will cure itself when stocks of consumption goods (shoes, shirts, hats) in the hand of consumers and retailers decline to a point where replacement demand is greater than the reduced volume of production prevailing at the bottom of a crisis. This will cause greater manufacturing activity, more jobs, and the beginning of the recovery. This theory is incorrect—(1) because the demand itself keeps decreasing through unemployment and wage cuts, and the mere necessity for a worker to buy a pair of shoes by no means guarantees that he will be able to pay for them—the appetite does not make the dinner. (2) More important—consumption goods are purchased out of income, not out of capital. The crisis is a crisis of capital and its most significant feature is the inability of capital to find markets which permit it to exploit labor at a profit. Crises historically have been solved by the increased production of capital goods, not consumption goods—in Marxian terminology, by an increased outlay of constant capital not of variable capital. In the past, this has meant the construction, by capital-

as to enter movements which are organizationally part of the enemy forces (Parliamentary action—charity organizations, etc.), the latter will not be isolation from numbers but will be isolation from the role of the Communist as the vanguard toward revolution.

Has not the Militant time and again pointed out through dozens of struggles, the action of the Stalinist Centrist and Lovestone Right wingers which was a reformist and not a Marxian action of class struggle? These are facts and correct demarcations between reforms and sparks, which the theses, in its formulation, does not live up to. Our relation to the U. S. S. R. is reform and to American imperialism it is revolution but the road to revolution does not lead through reforms.

—HUGO OEHLEH.

ists, of goods of large capital value, which are only slowly used up houses, railroads, industrial plants mine developments, even automobiles. A capitalist, seeing a situation where money materials and labor are all cheap, constructs a house, a railroad or a factory, out of capital, not income, anticipating a competitive advantage because of low construction costs and financing charges.

At the present time, this solution of the crisis is not available. Railroad mileage has shown no significant increase for thirty years; because of speed-up and "rationalization" the record railroad traffic of 1929 amounting to 447 billion ton-miles against 339 billions in 1922 was hauled by 56,936 locomotives and 2,277,464 freight cars in 1929 against 64,140 locomotives and 2,293,389 freight cars in 1922. In the first six months of 1931 the railroads placed 6951 new freight cars in service, compared with 49,208 in the first half of 1930, and on July 1, 1931, had on order 8,963 new freight cars compared with 24,649 on the same date last year. It is therefore clear that additional demand for capital goods by the railroads is not tending to bring about recovery.

In industry, most branches are over-equipped not by standards of the crisis alone, but even on the basis of actual demand in 1929 and the years immediately preceding. The soft coal industry is equipped to produce 800 million to a billion tons a year, against actual output of 567 million tons in the best year in its history. The automobile industry can produce 8,000,000 cars a year against 5,600,000 in 1929, the record year. The steel industry began 1931 with a capacity of 62,000,000 tons, against a production of 56,000,000 in the boom year 1929, 5,000,000 tons more than the previous record and this year for purely competitive reasons, is adding an additional 4,000,000 tons of capacity, knowingly adding to the excess capacity. Copper mines, producing at an average cost of 8.63 cents a pound against a market price of 7 and a half cents, are not adding to their productive facilities least of all in the face of an imminent and eventual increase of 200,000 tons per year from Canada and 400,000 tons from South Africa to the record 1929 production of 2,000,000 tons. In scores of other industries the story is the same—production facilities are too large for even a boom-time demand, and will certainly not be added to now. Perhaps electric refrigerators, washing machines, cigarettes, moving picture studios and the like are prospering, but serious large-scale industry has had its fill of expansion, and will contribute no demand for more production facilities to help end the crisis.

Building construction has been notoriously overdone throughout the United States, following on the post-1922 boom, and this industry began having its own private crisis as early as 1928. It is still in the early stages of readjusting its rents and financial burden to the lowered purchasing power of the country and is in no position to attract additional fixed capital. The building boom that began in 1922 to make up for construction deferred during the war and the high-interest period up to 1922 was one of the potent factors that ended the crisis of 1920-21, but is not in the perspective now.

One great force that ended past crises is therefore not available to end the present one—the investment of large amounts of constant capital (not income or variable capital) in producers' goods (not consumers goods).

The Agrarian Crisis

3. The increasing sharpness of the agrarian crisis constitutes another difference between past crises and the present one. An alleviating factor in past crises was the ability of the farmers to raise their purchasing power through increasing the size of the crop. Since 1919 this has no longer been the case. In that year, the total agricultural output was no larger than in 1915, but the higher average prices created the largest crop values in American history. In 1926 the crops were larger than in 1919, but the contradictions of the world agrarian crisis had reached a point where the declining prices caused by the larger crops nullified the effects of increasing output and resulted in lower crop values. In the same way the bumper crops of 1928 brought in less purchasing power than the smaller crops of 1927. At the present time 50-cent wheat has brought the question of farm mechanization decisively to the foreground. One authority estimates that 1,000,000 farm families will be displaced within the next few years by mechanized farm corporations able to raise 20 bushels to the acre and having a present acreage of 10,000,000 acres, that is, able to turn out 20 percent of the biggest wheat crop ever made in America.

The permanent army of the unemployed will be increasingly swelled by re-

cruits from the farm, unable to stand the burden of mortgages and taxes with their low technical level of efficiency as compared with giant corporations, and unable to exist on 50-cent wheat.

Increased crops in the future, even if possible, will not mean increased purchasing power for farmers, but merely an increased export surplus for large farming corporations to dispose of in competition with Russia, Canada, Australia and the Argentine. This way out of the crisis is closed.

C. Capitalism, to protect its profit margins (or surplus value), unable to extend its markets and consequently its production in the immediate, will extend and deepen its assaults on wages. From the international viewpoint, capitalism in one country under Hoover is as fallacious a slogan as socialism in one country under Stalin. With increasing technical and economic development, both must become ever more deeply involved in inextricable ties with the outside world. High tariffs and State control of foreign trade do not alter this situation. In relation to wages, capitalism can either pull European wages up to the American standard, which is a futile dream, given the nature of capitalism, or it can tear down American wages toward European standards, which is what capitalism is actually engaged in

doing. This involves it in a major contradiction—to maintain profits it cuts wages, and as it cuts wages it reduces purchasing power and hence the possibility of profits, whence follow further wages cuts, less profits, more wage cuts, etc. But this is only the reverse of the ascending spiral of capitalism in its stage of growth and stability—more wages, more profits, more wages, etc. Wages were not seriously cut in past crises, not even in the 1921 crisis after commodity prices had fallen 40 percent, and bourgeois economists were shouting the necessity of "adjusting wages to prices". At that time prices had risen sharply. During the boom period, and wages with them. In the 1929 boom, neither prices nor wage levels rose to anything like the extent of the 1919-20 boom, but the crisis has already resulted in sharp wage cuts, and more and deeper ones are likely to follow.

From this standpoint, we have further reason to believe that the century-long upward curve of American capitalist development has passed its peak and that the present crisis is distinguished from all past American crises, not by its planetary character, as the thesis states, but by the fact that it is the first of the crises on the downward swing of American capitalism.

—B. J. FIELD.

Shortcomings in the Youth Thesis

The thesis on the youth question on the whole treats the problem well. However, in trying to be concise and to the point, a number of things were either omitted or insufficiently explained.

1. We must always remember that although, because of the special characteristics of youth, we approach the youth of the working class on a special basis with special issues, they nevertheless form an important part of the working class as a whole. Our aim is always not only to appeal to the youth of the working class on their particular problems as young workers, but also to link their struggles with those of the whole class, to bind together the young and the old. This the thesis fails to take cognizance of treating the youth as though it were some queer product of society complete in itself, and having no relation to anything else.

Equal Pay for Equal Work

2. An excellent slogan that has its appeal for both the young and the old, that can help cement their cooperation in the class struggle, is the slogan that the Y. C. L. has advanced—equal pay for equal work. We see over and over again the displacement of older workers, better paid, by young workers who are still further speeded up and given a lower wage. The fight for equal pay regardless of age means a fight against wage-cuts, against speed-ups, against the playing off of one section of the working class against the other, a relative security for the older workers, a material advantage for the younger workers.

The promulgation of this slogan and the actual fight for it is of course based on the actual activities of the Communists young and old, in industrial and trade union life. The reason why the Y. C. L. has made no headway with it is that they have not prepared the ground for any kind of slogan, for any kind of mass following, by actually entering into the life and struggles of the working class. The worker is not held by the Young Communist League, its members are not given the education essential for correct participation in the day to day life of our class. No matter how correct one isolated slogan may happen to be, the general approach to the young workers makes even the correct slogan worthless.

It is important that our Opposition youth comrades should join the union of their trade, take part in its activities, and there carry on the fight for equal pay for equal work. The thesis correctly puts the additional task of the young Communists in the unions the one of fighting for equality in union conditions for the young and the old—this also includes the youth of the opposition.

3. The thesis takes the position that the formation of youth auxiliaries to the various organizations (I. L. D., I. W. O., etc.) is not only superfluous, but actually harmful to the League. With this I disagree. Even as the auxiliaries are conducted now absolutely controlled by the party and the Y. C. L., they attract young workers who would not otherwise be brought to the Y. C. L. Properly conducted, these youth auxiliaries should become a recruiting field for the Young Communist League. The young worker who enters the League is ready to associate himself with a Communist organization under the direct leadership of the Communist party; he is ready to accept the policies of the party, and is anxious to train himself to take his place in it. The auxiliary organizations will draw in young workers in whom the first faint stirrings of class consciousness are felt, but who would not come to the Y. C. L. direct, who are not ready to declare themselves Communists. The nucleus of Leaguers in these various youth groups—these nuclei should of course always be present, and should consist of experienced and trained young Communists—should serve as the recruiting officers for the League.

A Nucleus in the League

4. The thesis sets forth as one of our immediate tasks the formation of a nucleus in the Young Communist League. But we have always been advocating that, as well as the building of nuclei in the party. The question has been, and remains, how is this to be done? We can gain contact with members of the Young Communist League by participating in these youth auxiliary groups by taking up the tasks of an active member of the group, and meanwhile attempting to get our policies across, especially to

discuss the problems of the movement with the members and sympathizers of the Y. C. L. whom we find in the youth groups. Another way of "boring from within" is to send our youth members who do not come from the League into it. This of course depends a great deal upon not only the external conditions, but upon the ideological maturity, etc., of the comrade. But wherever it is found possible, this method of colonization should be followed. Thirdly, we should make a very serious attempt to draw in members and sympathizers of the Y. C. L. into our classes. The classes held in New York were attended for the most part by members of our own branch. In addition, of course we should follow the usual methods of approaching Communists and Communist sympathizers in general. We should issue leaflets, from time to time expressing our views on current problems.

5. More emphasis should be placed on the need of our group to carry on education for the youth. (Of course, the adult Communists are certainly not to be cut off from these undertakings—they often need just as much education as the youth!) Especially because of the failure of the Y. C. L. to supply elementary Marxian training, it is necessary for the Opposition to conduct a fundamental education among the Young Communists. We cannot approach the greatest number of young Communists with essential international questions and get them to support our platform because they lack the necessary background of Marxian understanding. We must, wherever our forces permit, institute classes not only on the issues of the factional struggle, but also of the most elementary Communist education. We must attempt to issue pamphlets on the latter subjects. The Young Vanguard should deal largely with such education. We must bear in mind that in order to judge of the correctness of one or the other platform a certain minimum of Communist knowledge is indispensable, and we must therefore help to spread and popularize Communism in its most fundamental form among the members of the Young Communist League. All this means that much more of a chance to establish nuclei within the Y. C. L.

6. Our work is not restricted only to the Y. C. L. Just as with all other work, our youth work takes place in the class as well as in its vanguard. Participation in trade unions in youth clubs, spreading of the first steps of Communism, etc.—in other words, we should apply the formulation of the role of the Opposition elaborated by comrade Oehler (in his discussion article) and translate it into terms of youth work. Our range of activities is naturally limited because of the lack of sufficient youth forces. But youth work is not carried on only by the young. The general activity of the Opposition is calculated to affect not only the party but the League.

Youth Clubs

7. A youth club should not be attempted until there is a basis for it. That means we must carry on the activities indicated above, and when sufficient following has been gained, both among Young Communists and sympathizers, and among workers influenced directly from the shops, schools, etc., then and then only should we launch such a group. The group will concern itself with sports and cultural activities but should be a recruiting ground for members of our classes, should be a training and recruiting field for Communists and Oppositionists. Most likely New York will be the only section for a long time to come that can offer real possibilities for such a group. Youth comrades should be definitely assigned to take part in it, this being just as important a task as any other.

8. We cannot set any definite time for the issuance of a youth paper. This also depends entirely on what basis we have for it. When we have really begun to base our paper on, then only should a separate youth paper be begun. However, the suggestion for an internal youth bulletin is a good one, and should be put into effect as soon as our finances permit.

—LILLIAN BORD.

READ AND SUBSCRIBE TO
THE MILITANT

Subscribe!

With the Militant now appearing weekly there should be excellent possibilities for all of our supporters to enlist new subscribers. If you agree with us you will want to extend the Militant circulation. You will want to keep your own subscription paid up to date. If the number on the wrapper of this issue is less than 75, it means that you should renew your sub. Next you should endeavor to get other workers to become subscribers. For convenience use the blank below.

THE MILITANT,

84 East 10th Street, New York City.

Please enter me for a subscription one

Name Address

City State

year, \$2.00; six months, \$1.00.

EDITORIAL NOTES

BERNARD SHAW ON RUSSIA

The Russian revolution is making its way in the world. After fourteen years it has received the honor of a ten-day inspection by George Bernard Shaw and Lady Astor, and that in itself—as Amos and Andy would say—is “somethin’”. It is not every revolution that wins such signal honors and passes the inspection with such flying colors. If Lady Astor, as befits one of her exalted station, repressed her emotions and said little, the great play-writer gave a flattering endorsement to the Soviet enterprise. The revolution got a fifty-fifty break in the examination.

But if you will pardon us for saying so we are not entirely satisfied with the report. When Shaw sums up his conclusions with the advice to young men in the Western countries to “go to Russia and settle there”, we beg leave to break into the happy party with an objection. And once having disturbed the atmosphere of mutual felicitations with the well-known Opposition quarrelsomeness, we may as well speak bluntly. The whole idea is reactionary nonsense.

Russia is not a separate planet, which can develop a socialist society while the Western countries are surrendered to capitalism. Russia is bound up inseparably with them. The struggle for socialism is not a national but an international struggle — as Marx and Engels said. The Russian revolution marks only the beginning of the international revolution and will find its fulfillment in it—as Lenin and Trotsky said. The big task is yet ahead, that is, to make the revolution in the capitalist countries. The workers of the West must do this at home. This is the only way that can help Russia and also help themselves.

No matter how it is camouflaged with big talk about working for socialism, emigration to Soviet Russia represents—in 99 cases out of 100—a flight from the class struggle at home. On the part of so-called revolutionists it is little less than desertion. Who will organize the revolution if everybody runs away?

The appeal of George Bernard Shaw for this exodus from the West is regarded by shallow-minded people as a sign that the Fabian has become a Communist. It is nothing of the kind. He has only become an advocate of socialism in one country. And that is much nearer to Fabianism than to Communism.



DEBATING THE DOLE

The debate over the question of unemployment insurance has held the center of the stage in recent days in the camp of the capitalist politicians. An important session, headed by Governor Pinchot of Pennsylvania, has come out in outspoken advocacy of the federal dole for the unemployed. On the other hand, the dominating elements of finance capital—represented by President Hoover—have taken a number of measures to dramatize their opposition to federal insurance and to set in motion a counter-propaganda. Outstanding in these maneuvers was the conference with the head of the national Chamber of Commerce and the resultant statement in favor of a handling of next Winter's problem by the states and cities through emergency appropriations and charity. The leading newspapers of the bourgeoisie support this view. The Times spoke for it, citing the “unreasonableness” of the federal machinery which could not be wheeled into shape in time to meet the winter crisis; and the *Herold Tribune*, in its issue of August 17th, argued against the federal dole from a principle standpoint. As matters stand now, the opponents of national insurance for the unemployed have the upper hand and it is hardly within the range of probability that the next Congress will pass such a measure.

But the matter does not end here. All the arguments against unemployment insurance are predicated on the assumption that mass unemployment is a temporary phenomenon. The spokesmen of the ruling class see the black shadow of the Winter crisis. But they do not see beyond it. They think their problem consists in the feeding of hungry masses for a brief period. Beyond that they do not see and do not calculate. And just because their premise is false they will be compelled to revise their conclusions.

In our opinion the ruling class of America in the last resort will not be able to avoid the establishment of a federal system of unemployment insurance. Their blind opposition to it at the present moment is only a reflection of the hopeless anarchy of capitalist production out of which not even their wisest men can see an issue. They are stalling for time in the hope that something will happen to free them from this terrible contradiction which has arisen

out of the very nature of the system and cannot be exorcised. If we take the most probable development of the next future—a further deepening of the economic crisis then it becomes obvious that the stop-gap policy of state and municipal relief “for the Winter” will fall to pieces. Or, if we grant the prospect of a slow recovery—and that is the most optimistic hope expressed by any serious economist in the capitalist camp—it implies a further rationalization of industry and a residue of unemployed workers running into the millions. Sporadic charity will not be able to cope with such a situation. Either the federal government will feed them or they, to quote the words of Engels, “will take matters into their own hands”. Faced with this alternative the masters of America will most probably reconcile themselves to a system of unemployment insurance.

They will do this all the sooner if the class movement of the workers presses upon them, organized and menacing. The prospect that the ruling class will resort to this remedial measure in any case does not in any way argue against the necessity of a working class fight for unemployment insurance. On the contrary. The harder the fight of the workers the sooner will they wrest this concession. And the more will their morale be strengthened by the victory. Moreover, the passing of an unemployment insurance law—which, as has been said, we believe to be in the cards—in itself means little. The fight will take place over the nature and extent of the relief provided by it.

In the last resort the reformists, who are shouting now for unemployment insurance, will support a law which gives the shadow without the substance. It will be the duty of the Communists to organize the masses for a fight to compensate the unemployed millions with an insurance relief which will afford them an existence under the conditions which capitalism has forced upon them. The fight for unemployment insurance as such at the present time and for adequate relief under its provisions at the time of its enactment, remains a central issue of the revolutionary vanguard. This goes hand in hand with the struggle for real and immediate relief in the present situation.

—J. P. C.

Miners' Strike Is Called Off

(Continued from Page 1)

once but many times, from the very inception and during the course of the strike? Speaking of the danger of having the N. M. U. movement separated from the Kentucky movement, from the Keeney movement in West Virginia and the rank and file rebellion in Illinois, we issued the “warning that unless swift and resolute measures were taken to overcome the prevailing disunity, the strikes would be threatened with the poison of slow disintegration and defeat.” We proposed that the N. M. U. “take the initiative to address the organizations conducting the strikes and rebel movements with the proposals for a joint conference to unify them all. This, together with agitation in the ranks everywhere to have the workers exercise pressure upon their leaders, is the first real step towards a genuine united front, desperately needed by the miners” (*Militant*, 8-8-1931).

Three weeks before that, making the same imperatively needed proposal, we said: “Strike while the iron is hot . . . The worst thing the Left wing can do is to grow intoxicated with an inflated idea of its own strength or position. It is not leading the whole miners' movement but only a part of it. It can win its way to leadership if it pursues the right policy now—and not after the strike in the ‘self-critical’ articles of the press. The Left wing dares not be deceived by cheap phrases, by boasting, by ruinous self-contentment with the big achievement it can legitimately record now . . . Will the party have to draw up its balance sheet when the coal strike is concluded with the limping apologetic remark that ‘a small measure of organizational success was secured’ . . . The party is pursuing a course of conceit, of separatism, which is false and unworthy of Communists. Its leadership of the miners can not only be extended but made firm and lasting. The tens of thousands of miners in West Virginia, in Kentucky, in Illinois—and the other sections which can be won on the basis of the appeal for unity and solidarity, must not be ignored.” (*Militant*, 7-18-1931).

The party “strategists” rejected these proposals with a lofty contempt. These people who make a profession out of being wrong on every important question were too infernally wise to adopt the course we proposed. Their policy of isolation was advanced as vastly superior to ours. The vials of scorn were poured upon the “counter-revolutionary Trotskyists” who, “together with the Lovestonites ‘wait for the return of the ‘good old united front’ with the ‘progressives’ [and] unite in labelling the real united front from below of the workers as ‘sectarianism’” (Browder, August Communist). Following Browder, Foster (who has his own differences with the former over the “counter-offensive character of the strike”) announced that the Stalinist policy “provides a means to unite the various disconnected strike movements and rank and file upheavals in the U. M. U.” (Foster, August Communist), and proclaimed that the fundamental “if not the decisive” weakness of the

(Continued from Last Issue)

SOCIALIST ENTHUSIASM AND PIECE WORK

Nine-tenths of the new program of Stalin amounts to the re-establishment of piece work. All the rest, in the meantime, has an extremely confused character and, in part, only serves to mask the turn to the right.

Stalin makes his new turn depend upon the “new epoch” and the “new tasks” which require “new methods”.

But that is too crude a deception. We have seen, in a whole series of questions of the world labor movement that the turns of the Stalinist bureaucracy flowed in no way from the changes in the world situation but, on the contrary, they were very often accomplished in opposition to these changes and flowed from the preceding errors of the bureaucracy itself.

We believe the same thing today. We were told that at the third year of the Five Year Plan, the Soviet Union had entered into socialism. If this was right, we should have witnessed a tendency towards the gradual equalization of wages. This tendency should have justified itself and be supported more and more by socialist emulation and by shock brigades. Absurd as it may appear, it was nevertheless we, the Left Opposition, who were accused by the Stalinist bureaucracy of lack of confidence in the socialist enthusiasm of the Russian workers. By the power of inertia and in order to preserve the seeming continuity Stalin today repeats the empty formulations of bureaucratic idealism. “Do not forget,” he says, “that the vast majority of the workers have accepted these conditions of the Soviet power (discipline, tension, emulation, shock brigades) with enthusiasm, and they fulfill them heroically.” Now, if this is true if we have entered into socialism, if the “vast majority” (mark it well: the vast majority!) of the workers fulfill their tasks “with enthusiasm” and even “heroically”, one asks himself why this same “vast majority” wander from one factory to another in the search for fortune? And why are they obliged, precisely now, after all the successes obtained to pass over to the system of piece work which is, after all, the most refined capitalist method of the exploitation of the workers' forces?

“The principle of the Left Opposition

is to say what is,” declares our platform draft.

The proletarian revolution has no need of the bureaucratic hotch-potch of idealism. We want the truth.

To be sure, the enemy will rejoice over the obscure sides of this truth. It is obvious that it will seize upon certain elements of our criticism, like it seizes upon certain sections of Stalin's revelations today. When the enemy uses fragments of truths in order to weave a system of falsehood it is not serious. But when the workers themselves do not know the truth and do not know where to seek it, that may have tragic consequences.

Heroic enthusiasm can draw behind it the masses for relatively short historical periods.

A small minority is capable of manifesting enthusiasm for a whole historical epoch: it is upon this that is based the idea of a revolutionary party as the selection of the best elements from the class.

Socialist construction is a task for decades. One cannot guarantee the solution of this task except by the systematic raising of the material and cultural standard of living of the masses. That is the principal condition, more important than the gain in time in the construction of a Dnieprostroy, of a Turksib or of a Kuzbas, because with the fall in the physical and moral energy of the proletariat, all the gigantic enterprises may remain without a tomorrow.

Stalin relishes his bearers with quotations from Marx and Lenin, according to which the differentiation of wages is inevitable for the period of the passage to socialism.

Tomorrow Stalin will quote to us Marx and Lenin to show that during the passage to socialism the small producer of commodities, the peasant, inevitably gives birth to the kulak. These general truths are indisputable, it is precisely we who recalled them during the “dizziness” which, unfortunately, is not yet at an end today. But it is precisely the Stalinist bureaucracy which contrary to us, posed for itself as a practical task the liquidation of the kulak, that is, of the differentiation of the peasantry, within the limits of the Five Year Plan in four years. Contrary to ourselves the Stalinist bureaucracy affirmed that the essential difficulties on the road to socialism are overcome that we had already entered into socialism, that the realization of the Five Year Plan automatically improved the conditions of the workers, and that one could “outstrip” the Five Year Plan in four years. How, then, could the question of piece work be posed with such acuteness at the end of the third year? There is a question which every conscious worker will put to himself.

On July 7, *Pravda* quoted the following lines from the organ of the People's Commissariat for Labor: “The development of technique and the growth of the role of transports of electrification, etc. narrow the field of piece work.” Is this not a Marxian truth? But *Pravda* calls this truth a “Trotskyist assertion”. This strange conflict between the official organ of the People's Commissariat for Labor and the official organ of the Central Committee of the party is explained by the fact that the second number of *Questions of Labor* appeared before Stalin's speech, while No. 185 of *Pravda* appeared two days after the speech. Why was *Pravda* obliged to transform this simple truth of Marxism into a “Trotskyist” heresy? Because the new turn of Stalin does not flow at all from the development of socialist construction, but from the acute contradiction between the erroneous course of the bureaucracy and the vital needs of economy.

Piece work wages are not in principle contradiction with the conditions of transitional Soviet economy; it would be stupid doctrinarism to oppose them. But the abrupt turn towards piece work and the extreme accentuation of the capitalist features of this system present today, in the summer of 1931, at the end of the third year of the Five Year Plan after the uninterrupted successes, after we have “entered into socialism”, one of the harshest blows against the workers, from the material as well as from the moral point of view. It is not surprising that the weather-cocks and the chameleons of the press are obliged to denounce the elementary positions of Marxism in the field of wages in order to cover up, be it but for a day, the blow dealt to illusions.

That the old method of wages was bad from every point of view, has been obvious to us for a long time. One cannot work out a rational, living and progressive system of wages without the collaboration of the masses themselves. The trade union bureaucracy is no better than any other bureaucracy. Collective contracts and wage scales are elaborated in the offices and imposed upon the workers like all the other decisions of the infallible center. Without the rebirth of workers' democracy, a correct policy of wages is absolutely unrealizable. “Collective contracts,” says the Platform of the Russian Opposition, “must be submitted to a genuine and not a fictitious discussion at the workers' meetings. The work of the trade unions must be determined above all by the defense of the economic and the cultural interests of the workers within the framework of the given economic possi-

—THE MILITANT.

bilities. The trade unions must fulfill their functions on the basis of genuine election, submitting everything to the control of the trade union members giving accountings, bearing the responsibility at every degree of the hierarchical scale. An article must be inserted into the Penal Code punishing as an offense against the state any persecution, direct or indirect, open or concealed, of a worker for his criticism, for his independent proposals, for a vote.” How vengeful are these words today!

But the sharpness of the present turn towards piece work is the result not of a system of wages, but of a more profound reason of the lack of material wealth to satisfy the needs of the workers. The wrong method of the plan the incorrect adjustment in the course of its realization, the absence of genuine control of the masses, the absence of the party, the struggle for abstract figures of the plan in the name of prestige, the administrative commandment under the lash, braggadocio, blustering, the stifling of criticism—all these combined have led to a false distribution of the forces and the means and has created—in view of the extremely rapid growth of the number of workers—the intolerable contracting of the real wage funders. That is why the workers do not feel at ease. That is why they run from one factory to the other. The excessive pressure on the one hand and the degeneration of the trade unions on the other, have provoked the anarchic reaction called the fluctuation of labor forces. Stalin has shown us the enormous extent of this reaction. “You will find few enterprises,” he says, “where the personnel is not renewed every half a year, and even every quarter by at least thirty to forty percent.” There is the threatening extent attained by the disease which the bureaucracy has sought to bring to an end. The shifting from one factory to another, from one town to another, means moreover the enormous waste of productive forces, the needless loss of time for the shifting itself as well as for the adaptation to the new working conditions. That is the principal reason for the fall in returns and the increase in the net costs. But the greatest danger of the fluctuation—in the hunt for fortune!—consists of the moral wear and tear on the proletariat.

The mere aggravation of piece work settles nothing. It can only create a stratum of more favored workers. The tendency toward creating a labor bureaucracy in the factories could not correspond better to the procedure of the Stalinist bureaucracy. From this angle, piece work is a purely political means. As a panacea, it completes the evolution of Stalinism. The tradition of Bolshevism is a tradition of struggle against the aristocratic castes within the working class. On this basis is erected the structure of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The program of the Stalinist bureaucracy leads it inexorably to the necessity of supporting itself upon the ever more privileged labor aristocracy. Here lies hidden the immediate political danger for the dictatorship of the proletariat!

A PERSONAL REVELATION
The new policy is decreed in the same way as the old policy: as a personal revelation. Stalin informs us that the interrupted working week was introduced “too precipitately and without the preparation of appropriate measures”. What were the results? Stalin is compelled to point them out: “lack of a spirit of accountability for the work, neglected maintenance of machinery, considerable accidents to the machines and absence of stimulation for raising the productivity”. Stalin generalizes it all in a single phrase: “Nobody is accountable for anything”. A terrific avowal, or rather a disavowal of his own policy. “Nobody is accountable for anything”—that always happens when a single individual wants to be accountable for everything.

The uninterrupted week was introduced too precipitately. But who introduced it? The General Secretary. Was the interrupted week discussed among the working masses before its introduction? Not at all. Everything was prepared secretly. The masses accepted the uninterrupted week “with enthusiasm”, according to the official communications. And are things happening differently now? Just yesterday, all these calamities of which Stalin speaks today were not dealt with at all in the press. We have already said and written more than once that among the Stalinist bureaucracy everything proceeds marvelously five minutes before everything begins to proceed very badly. In enumerating the disastrous results of the bureaucratic interrupted week Stalin touches in passing upon the most ticklish and the most dangerous question. It is beyond doubt—he says—that our directors understand all this very well. But they hold their tongues. Why? From all evidence, because they are afraid of the truth. But since when have Bolsheviks begun to fear the truth? Since the Stalinist apparatus, by its cretinism, by its lack of ideas and principles, stifled the Bolshevik-Leninist faction. Precisely since that moment! The directors, according to Stalin, “fear the truth.” What a perfidious formula! It is not the truth they fear; they are afraid of falling victim for the truth because Rakovsky, Sosnovsky, Muralov, Eltsin, Gruenstein, Kasparova, Kossior and together with them, hundreds and thousands of the best Bolsheviks—the very ones who do not fear

the truth and know how to defend it—populate the prisons of Stalin and the places of deportation and exile. There lies the knot of the problem of the party.

After having crushed the Left Opposition, the Stalinist bureaucracy has stifled the party. It no longer exists, this animated, sensitive, supple and flexible organization which lived the life of the masses, which saw all, which criticized which generalized, which signaled the dangers in time and collectively elaborated the new roads. “Now that the Centralist bureaucracy has strangled the party,” says the draft platform of the International Left Opposition, “that is, has remained without eyes and ears, it moved along gropingly and determines its path under the direct pushes of the classes, oscillating between opportunism and adventurism.” Even more within the apparatus itself, the fear of the lower functionary for the superior functionary has reached such a point that nobody dares any longer to look facts in the face and to point them out to the superiors. At the lower rungs, they acquiesce in everything asked of them at the higher rungs and the latter regard it as the voice of the ranks themselves. In order to work out the measures for applying the new policy, the Plenum of the Central Control Commission has been convoked. They seek to give this event an exceptional significance, for this time not only the members of the C. C. C. are called, but also the representatives of the regional organs and of a series of rank and file organizations. In other words, the superior functionaries call to their aid the inferiors. Both are designated from above. Both are united by subordination and mutual responsibility. And this council of functionaries is represented as the supreme expression of democracy!

Does not the new abrupt turn justify the convocation of an extraordinary congress of the party? But the regime of personal revelations (each time after a delay of a few years) does not tolerate the regime of party democracy, nor the existence of the party itself. Then are the “Bolsheviks really afraid of the truth?” The name of the Bolshevik who today most fears the truth is Stalin. Otherwise he would not fear to consult the congress, that is the party, in this new abrupt turn in policy.

In recent months, we have received a number of letters which relate conversations which our correspondents have had with party bureaucrats at various degrees of ossification. They are for the most part terribly frightened people. They see and understand a great deal, but their will is broken. Their philosophy is the philosophy of adaptation. Here is what they say most frequently: “You speak of the party regime. To be sure, it is very heavy. Everybody feels it. But you must know that it cannot be otherwise. Without an iron hand we would not overcome the difficulties. Your criticism of Stalin's mistakes is right on the whole, and the events have confirmed it. We have no illusions about Stalin. Of course, he will never set the Thames on fire: from the intellectual point of view, he is a mediocre man, with an inadequate theoretical preparation without broad perspectives. We frequently feel these defects on our own backs. But he has indispensable positive qualities: firmness, tenacity, perseverance. Besides, he is entirely bound up with the apparatus. And whatever you may say, the apparatus now is everything.” Thus speak many bureaucrats. It seems to them that the stifling of the party, painful though it is, is justified by the circumstances and later . . . oh well! later socialism will come and will change everything.

Here lies the fundamental mistake. Socialism is no ready-made system which can spring full panoplied from a head, even the most gifted one. The task of the rightful division of the forces and means of production can only be solved by means of constant criticism, by verification by the ideological struggle of the various groupings within the proletariat. If we reject formal democracy which, in the framework of capitalism, means to hand over the keys to the enemy armed to the teeth, we affirm, on the other hand, that without class democracy we will not only not succeed in building socialism but we will not even maintain the dictatorship of the proletariat. Stalin's zig-zags cost more dearly every time. Only fools and blind men can believe that socialism can be vouchsafed from above, that it can be introduced by the bureaucratic way. Louder than ever before, we warn the advanced workers of the U. S. S. R. and of the whole world: The new zig-zag of Stalin, regardless of the manner in which it will develop in the next period, will lead inevitably to new and still sharper contradictions at the next stage. We must begin with the revival of proletarian democracy. That is now the decisive link in the whole chain. The problems of economy must be put for discussion in their full scope before the party and the trade unions. For this it is necessary that the Bolsheviks cease to fear to speak the truth. This can be attained only by removing the chains from those who fought and still fight for the right to speak the truth. The Left Opposition (Bolshevik-Leninists) must be re-admitted into the party. A discussion must be opened on the fundamental questions of economic and politics. A new party congress must be prepared upon the basis of party democracy!

—L. TROTSKY.
Kadikoy, July 15, 1931

THE MILITANT

Vol. IV, No. 20, August 22, 1931

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

Editorial Board

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

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