

# Party Defeated in I. W. C.

## Stalinist Policy in Independent Workmen's Circle Ends in Bad Retreat

BOSTON

The logical outcome of the Communist Party's desperate policy in the Independent Workmen's Circle has now been reached. The dispute between the Right wing and the Left, hanging fire in the capitalist courts for weeks, has been temporarily settled by an agreement reached between representatives of the National Executive Committee (controlled by the Stalinists) and the Board of Appeals (composed of Right wingers). The agreement, signed by both sides, is an unmistakable defeat for the Party's whole line in the Jewish fraternal labor orders and marks a retreat far beyond positions which the left wing, led by the Party, had long ago won in the organization.

The magnitude of the defeat marked by the agreement can only be visualized if the recent "strategy" of the Stalinists is briefly outlined.

### Progress in the Past

For years the Party and the Left wing has been making substantial and steady progress in the Workmen's Circle, containing some 70,000 members, the majority of whom are workers. At times, the struggle for influence between the Left wing and the Right wing became so violent that the Right sought to drive out the Left with the basest provocations which were so successfully resisted and overcome by the Left that it succeeded in remaining on the inside and consolidating its position.

At the same time, the Left wing made great strides forward in the Independent Workmen's Circle, a smaller organization of some five to seven thousand members with a membership concentrated largely in the New England and Eastern states. In fact, the progress of the Left wing in the I. W. C. had gone so far that by and large the I. W. C. was considered a "Left" organization in the contradistinction to the W. C., controlled as the latter was—and is—by the most reactionary elements of the socialist party, (Baskin, Weinberg, and the rest of the Forward gang.) The I. W. C., and particularly its branches, supported all Left wing institutions and campaigns pretty systematically. It was an excellent recruiting ground for the Communist movement and the Party was steadily becoming the dominant factor—ideologically as well as organizationally—in the order.

All this was before the advent of the "new line" and the "third period" which are the tattered banners under which every idiosyncrasy marches. Not satisfied with its "slow" progress in both organizations, the Party conceived the grandiose "maneuver" whereby it was to kill at least two birds with a single shot. The entire line of attack by the Party generals was conceived after the expulsion of the Communist Opposition in October 1928, and jointly approved, as we now learn from an article by M. J. Olgin in recent issue of the Morning Freiheit, by both the Lovestone and the Foster factions in the Political Committee. The plan of campaign was as follows:

### The Punitive Expedition!

First trench: Capture the Chicago convention of the I. W. C. at all costs.

This was done in typical Stalinist style by flooding the convention with delegates from small, recently formed branches, all out of proportion to their strength or representation in the membership. "One hundred percent Communist" resolutions were mechanically and arbitrarily foisted upon the convention. A water-tight, Party-dominated national executive committee elected. The Party, its unions and its official organs were all endorsed, and the order officially "bolshhevized."

Second trench: Withdraw the Left wing from the Workmen's Circle at all costs and affiliate them to the now Party-controlled I. W. C., thereby having a fraternal order of a larger size with a stronger Party control and no Right wing, no Baskin, and

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Weinbergs to fight against for influence.

But here, as we pointed out in our last issue, a couple of stumbling blocks were encountered. Firstly, the Left wing masses in the W. C. did not understand this "brilliant" maneuver, which came virtually like a bolt from the blue. The result was that an insignificant few thousand Party members and very close sympathizers followed the Party's call to leave the W. C. Secondly, the Right wing, of which the Party thought itself rid when it quit the W. C., bobbed up in the most "unexpected" place—in the I. W. C. and began to put obstacles in the way of the Stalinists' "cunning" strategy. So ruthlessly did the Party carry through its "bolshhevization" of the I. W. C. that the Right wing, which has never had much influence or say in the councils of the organization, suddenly took shape and formidable proportions, and taking advantage of the situation created by the Party, opened an attack upon it.

### The Latest Agreement

The details of the struggle were published by us in our last issues. It is sufficient to say here that the Party was unable to mobilize the membership of the order to its banner. All the claims to the contrary fade into pitiful bombast in face of the agreement which has now been made. The agreement provides that:

All members (who left the Workmen's Circle at the Party's call to affiliate with the I. W. C.) who have taken their medical examination and those to take it in the next few weeks, are to be accepted into the I. W. C. But not a single one of these is permitted to vote in the coming elections for the emergency convention of the order to be held in Boston on January 12, or in the referendum on convention decisions to follow.

The convention is to consider only two points: 1 Whether the order shall endorse any political party, any labor union (Left or Right) or any official organ. The Right wing naturally opposes such endorsements now, and there is every indication that their viewpoint will carry in the convention as well as in the subsequent referendum. That is the extent to which the Party has alienated the sympathies of hundreds of members! Should this point carry, it can be reversed in the future only by a vote of seven-eighths of the membership. 2. A new

# The Party Cliques Are Still Busy

The situation in the Communist Party, pointed out in The Militant a few issues ago, has not been improved; it has become worse. The two features of its internal organization, which reflect its political line and in turn react upon it, remain the sharpening of the clique struggle which does not even pretend to principles, and the financial crisis. The latter has become extremely severe. The suspension of Labor Unity for a few weeks is only one sign of it. Another is the fantastic money-collecting campaign for the Daily Worker.

Add to all this the general disgust of the Party membership, the fact that they have been mulcted until their bones are dry in order to maintain an enormously top-heavy bureaucratic apparatus, the failure of the present conglomeration that calls itself the Party leadership to inspire any confidence, and a faint idea of the financial straits of the Party may be had. The radical remedy for the situation—the drastic slicing down of the Party and auxiliary apparatus—is not even thought of; all the apparatus men are in a cohesive faction on that point.

We hope soon to complete a survey, which we are now conducting, of the actual number of Party and auxiliary paid functionaries, to be printed in detail in a coming issue of The Militant. Preliminary figures already indicate that there is practically one paid functionary out of every five members in the Party! For the moment, it will suffice to say that the Russian Party, which runs a State, trade unions, cooperatives, industry, etc., etc., has a lower proportion of paid functionaries and Party members employed outside of industry than the American Party! Party financial crises are inevitably permanent under such conditions.

As for the factional situation in the Party, it has not been eliminated, except in the records for public consumption. The cliques are in existence and striving for power, jockeying for position, carrying on a whispered agitation. Not a single comrade of the Party can be

national executive committee and a board of appeals are to be elected at the emergency convention. Here too, there is every indication that the Party will lose control of the order—again due to its martinet methods and its brutal disregard for proper relations of a revolutionary party to the non-partisan organizations of the masses.

The previous agreement made between the national executive committee (Party-controlled) and the national committee of the Left wing W. C. branches (also Party-controlled) is nullified—and so is the Party's third period strategy.

The net result of the Party's series of coup d'Etats is a big setback for Communism and the Left wing movement and a great impetus to the Right wing. The Party called upon the workers to quit the W. C. on the basis of its having become "social fascist"—i. e., controlled by the Right wing. What will the Party do now if the same stripe of Right wingers gain control of the emergency convention, for which there is every likelihood? Will the Party proceed to form a brand-new organization? That is the logic of its present position.

Where are now the brave, the notoriously brave words of M. J. Olgin, who recently poured wormwood and gall upon our heads for opposing the Party's inane policy? Where are now his mouthy claims of the great victories for the Party's policy in I. W. C. and W. C.? In the face of the dark realities, of the humility of the Stalinists now, all the frothings and rantings of these people who only discredit the cause of Communism in the eyes of the masses are revealed in all their political and intellectual poverty.

### Against Fake "Impartiality"

Nevertheless, it is precisely in this difficult period that it must be made clear that the Right Wing in the W. C. is playing a reactionary game. Its proposals against endorsements of any political parties mean in real life, a free hand for the Socialist Party and its capitalist allies, just as the cry of "No politics in the unions!" on the lips of the labor fakers has always meant "No politics in the unions except capitalist politics!" The present Stalinist machine is destroying the name and cause of Communism. The members of the I. W. C., however, must not fall victims to the plan of the Right wing and reject Communism and the Communist movement. Not a fight against Communism and a Communist Party is required, but a relentless struggle against the false and ruinous policies of Stalinism and a total rejection of the Right wing. The conscious militants in the I. W. C. will pursue this course at all times.

### New Shift of Functionaries

Only a few weeks ago we recorded a big shift of district organizers, with each clique (Bedacht-Stachel; Browder-Johnstone, etc., etc.), aiming to insert its functionaries into strategic positions in the event of the coming convention, for which, by the way, no one of the cliques is yet prepared. In the brief period that has intervened, a new shift of functionaries has taken place—unannounced in the Party press, moving in on their respective districts like wraiths in the night only to disappear in a few weeks and leave the masses leaderless! Through Bedacht's maneuvers, his old crony Amter has been made D. O. in New York, taking the place of Weinstein who made such a splendid showing in the New York elections and the Party organization.

To strengthen Amter, Benjamin has been yanked out of Philadelphia and made organizational secretary, in place of Pasternak who, alas! is off to "represent" the American Communist movement in the Comintern organization department. To counterbalance the two Bedacht men, one of the old Foster wheel-horses, George Siskind, has been moved in as industrial organizer. The trio watch each other like one-eyed men.

In Benjamin's place as District Organizer of Philadelphia, Bedacht succeeded in shifting one of the professional Party wreckers, Emil Gardos, who recently bolshhevized the California district into a quivering wreck. His place, in turn, is being taken by William Simons, erstwhile head of the erstwhile All-America Anti-Imperial League, who now goes to sun himself in the land of fruits and nuts.

Boston is to be blessed with Roy Stephens of Kansas City, who replaces Carl Hacker. Hacker made such a noble mess of things in Boston that he has been sent to cool his heels again in his native habitat of Cleveland. (In passing, a tip to any clique that wants it: Stephens' support can be won by a promise of a trip to Moscow. It is his life's ambition.) Stephens place in K. C. has been taken by the noted master of arts (Lenin School degree), Dave Gorman, who was run out of the anthracite district by Lovestone's hatchet men. (How these Stalin school boys vanish from the scene!) In turn, Gorman's place has been taken in the anthracite by the inveterate, incurable letter-writer, Phil Frankfeld.

To cap the list is the appointment of the Great Bimba (not to be confused with the Great Gabbo) as district organizer in Cleveland. As Bimba looks back from the days of his former splendor as spokesman for the Bolshevik leadership of Lovestone and company to his present golgotha he must surely reflect that there really is no god. Well, what Amter didn't finish off in Cleveland, Bimba will. But the district will be made safe for Bedacht—or so he hopes.

Foster has taken the opportunity to skip off to the Profintern for a while, so that his hands are washed of any bungling or collapses in his absence. He may be expected back with a "new" trade union line. And while the cat is away, Browder builds his fences from his seat in the national office, where he acts as watchdog over Bedacht and vice-versa. Browder is bending efforts to "put a political basis" under the coming open fight by finding differences which should not be a difficult task for Browder, with Bedacht, Minor and their crew of dejected, if reformed Lovestoneites. A new shift has put Minor into a controlling position in the Daily Worker, and those who would give much more than a fig to replace him, fume and fret at the lifeless, stupid, blundering sheet he gets out. But fuming and lamentation never moved even a heap of mud.

And the Party as a whole? It is steadily crumbling. The members are imbued with the greatest passivity and disillusionment. But they have not yet found the way out. The clique struggle most certainly offers them none.

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## A Report on the Russian Situation by the Moscow Correspondent of the Daily Worker

"Moscow, November 26.—The recantation of their Right heresy" by Rykoff, Tomski and Budharin, its three leading exponents, has great political importance at the present juncture. Although no one has questioned the trio's good faith or personal devotion to the Bolshevik cause, their apostasy, as Ivestia and Pravda editorials today make abundantly clear, was more than a mere divergence of opinion, but, in the final instance, an expression right in the heart of the Communist Party itself of bourgeois anti-Communist sentiment aroused by the administration's sternly socializing policy in town and country. . . . It is this fact which explains the immense, and it often seems to outsiders, unnecessary stress laid by Joseph Stalin and the party majority on the danger of the 'Right heresy' . . . Their recantation, the sincerity of which, be it noted, neither Pravda nor Ivestia questions as it questioned similar declarations by Trotsky and his followers, is therefore infinitely more important than a victory of the opinions of the majority over the minority." Etc., etc.

—Dispatch from Moscow to the New York Times by comrade Walter Duranty, unofficial member of the Political Committee of the Communist Party of the United States.

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## PROSPERITY AS USUAL

A report from Chattanooga, Tennessee, informs us that 1,000 children in the city are so raggedly dressed that they can no longer attend school. A drive has been opened—among the workers, of course—to raise sufficient funds to clothe these children. Mr. Hoover's Tennessee disciples conveniently forget that it is precisely because the workers in the city are in bitter straits that their children are without decent clothing. Additional signs of Hooverian prosperity in this city are the discharge of 1,500 out of the total of 3,000 workers employed in the large marble plant. The small business man has been hit between the eyes also. Numerous two-by-four shops and stores are shutting down.