

THE MILITANT

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LEFT WING NEEDLE TRADES CRISIS

WEEK

Sandino

A few short weeks ago the Daily Worker gave General Sandino, Nicaraguan nationalist, a clean bill of health on the charges made that he had been bought off by American imperialism. It printed the statement of the "League against Imperialism" which said that "the slanderous allegations were spread by agents of Yankee imperialism to discredit a man in the eyes of the working class and peasant masses of Latin America" and so on and so forth. Having been given the O. K. by this Kuo Min Tangesque organization of the Comintern, Sandino promptly proceeded to fire his Communist secretary, Marti, and expel from his army any and all "foreigners". Immediately the Daily Worker discovered (May 19, 1930) that "the denunciation by Sandino of Communists, in the form of his discharge of Marti, appears as a prologue to the equanimity with which his entrance into Nicaragua is observed by the U.S. marines." Yesterday's thoroughly white-washed "noble warrior against imperialism" is thus transformed over night into a tacit agent of imperialism's marines. The capacity of Stalinism for "united front" adventures with bourgeois nationalists seem to be without bottom.

A. C. W. in Toronto

It was not difficult to predict the thorough valuelessness of the Toronto convention of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers. It has never held a more empty meeting. Hillman's big achievement was Philadelphia, where he sold speed-up unionism to the bosses like a farmer sells sheep. Cleveland is to be tackled next—by the same methods. The great statesman of the A. C. W. offers workers to the bosses on this basis: "Let me handle them and you'll be surprised at the economies I can make possible." Needless to say, the Left wing is not present at Toronto: its sectarian policy excludes such a possibility. For that, however, Hillman has made his peace again with Beckerman—behind the scenes. All is now harmony in the A. C. W., with the clothing workers paying heavily for it.

U. S. of Briand

M. Briand has now "concretized" his plan for a United States of Europe and given the liberals another chance to become hysterical with joy. Needless to say that the new plan will go the way of the previous ones—the ash-heap. The British lion looks upon it with a jaundiced eye, and with reason, for it has no intention of letting France establish its formal domination of the continent. Mussolini has already screamed a belligerent reply to it, for this two-by-four imperialist has no intention of letting Briand stick his leg into the Italian boot. And not even a child can be deceived by the polite assurance that the new plan is "not directed against the United States" or the Soviets, or by any illusions about America's acquiescence in this utopian anti-dollar bloc. Naturally Briand will not succeed in establishing this reactionary bloc which immediately run its head into a dozen walls. Only the proletarian revolution in Europe can unite the continent on a socialist basis and throw off the domination of the golden heel from across the sea. The Daily Worker and Co., as usual, see only an

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The Left wing movement in the needle trades is experiencing a severe crisis. With the exception of a handful of blind bureaucrats for whom nothing has changed, the crisis has been realized by everyone. The most superficial glance at the situation reveals the bald facts that while the Left wing, two or three years ago, was followed by the decisive majority of the needle trades workers and was driving back the Right wing office holders on every front, it has today accumulated an unbroken series of defeats, been reduced to the Communist fraction and its most direct sympathizers, and the Right wing has succeeded in re-establishing a large measure of its

control. The picture includes not only New York, but practically every other needle trades center in the country where the Left wing contended with the Right for the support of the workers.

Neither the causes nor the remedies for the situation have yet been given by the official Left wing leadership: on the contrary, an honest and thorough analysis is prohibited by it (that is, by the present leadership of the Communist Party) because it would be the one to suffer primarily from such an investigation. It even seeks to forestall this urgently needed examination by a barrage of criticism directed against its factional opponents in the

union and against the lower functionaries who merely executed orders.

False "Self-Criticism"

That kind of "self-criticism" is best exemplified by the notorious article of Johnstone's which we dealt with in our last number. For the Johnstones' is sufficient to unload their responsibility upon someone else; as for what is to be done in the future so that the blundering past shall not be repeated, they let the blueprints of the "third period" take care of that. But since these blueprints do not improve the situation (on the contrary, they worsen it), it falls to the rank and file workers in the Left wing to review its position and decide upon a proper course of action.

The Left wing is today reduced to a shadow of its former strength. One need only look at the recent "Summary of Minutes of Executive Council Meetings" issued by the Needle Trades Workers Industrial Union to see this truth substantiated. There is not a single gain recorded there; not one step forward is referred to; but in every field there are numerous losses and failures mentioned. And the admissions of the Executive Council are far more to the point than all the gaseous bluff of the Daily Worker and Freiheit.

Out of the thousands that once adhered to the Left wing, the union today has a scant 3,000 dues paying members left in New York (more than one fourth of whom are Party members!) with a worse record in other cities. Out of the irrepressible enthusiasm and spirit of self-sacrifice that imbued the Left wing and won its victories, there is left only passivity and skepticism. Out of the prestige and authority its leadership once enjoyed, there remains only the distrust and suspicion of the workers.

What has happened? There can be no adequate understanding of the causes for the situation unless it is clearly seen that the crisis in the Left wing of the needle trades is part and parcel of the crisis in the whole Communist movement, a crisis engendered by the multiplication of zip-zags known as Stalinism. The apparent inability of the leadership to maintain a stable policy is a reflection of the constant leaps every national Party leadership is compelled to make in order to keep pace with the ruling machine in the Comintern and the Russian Party. Only with this clearly established can we explain how the Left wing leadership passes so abruptly from an openly opportunist line of action to a rigidly sectarian one, from ultra-conservatism to the wildest adventurism, from united front with Sigman to a rejection of the united front with rank and file

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Stalinist Brutalities in Russia

(The editorial board of the "Bulletin of the Russian Opposition (Bolshevik-Leninist)" has sent us the important communications below.)

Dear Comrade:

From a very reliable source we have received the following information: "In the Upper-Urals Solitary Prison, which, as is known, is filled mainly by our Opposition comrades (there are 160 of them), two new mass beatings have taken place. One on February 5 and the other on February

23. On the 23rd, besides the beatings, our comrades were drenched with water from a fire hose—this in the very severest period of February frost. The pretext for the beatings was the protest against the terrible conditions of imprisonment."

These brutal deeds of the Stalinist regime must be denounced in every working class organization and meeting. The heroic fight of our Russian comrades calls for the warmest solidarity from the class-conscious militants in the United States.

A Raid on Rakovsky

We are informed:

"In the middle of February there was a raid at Rakovsky's which lasted for seven hours. Everything was taken away. Among other things it seems that they also took the completed draft of a declaration to the Party. The police agents in charge of the raid declared to Rakovsky: 'You're holding on to our coat-tails.' These ought to go down in history. It is regrettable that right now we are holding on only to the coat tails. But times will change!"

The author of this letter is right. The words of the G. P. U. agent ought to go down in history. Doubtlessly, they are not his own words. They came down to him through a series of stages from the very top. These are the words of the "secretarial genius" (a play on the Russian words for "general secretary", i. e., Stalin.—Ed.) At all the stages, zig-zags and turns of recent years, the victorious, mighty general faction of Stalin did not take a single free step: the "defeated Opposition"—the Left Opposition always pulls at its coat tails. It pulled it from the embrace of Chiang Kai-Shek, Purcell, and the "powerful" middle peasant. It pulled it from the bloc

with Brandler, Roy, Lovestone, Bucharin. Stalin finally decided to turn to the Left so abruptly, so boldly, so definitely, as to break loose from the Opposition forever. But in vain. The Opposition once more seized his "coat-tails" and this time pulled him "backward" from the edge of the precipice. It is unbearable. It must not be tolerated any longer. Then what is to be done? What do you mean, what: Raid Rakovsky, take away his papers, arrest his correspondents. Since they have no thoughts of their own, they have to interfere with the thinking of others.

On Guard!

In one of the villages of the Bysk district there was an uprising, under the leadership of... a representative of the G.P.U.! This is where the real enemies of the Soviet government are. Thousands upon thousands of brutes who beat up our friends in the solitary prisons, who torture them, are in no way different from the above mentioned "representative" of the G. P. U. The Thermidorian scoundrels in the meantime unleash their fury against Communism at the Oppositionists. The insurgents assassinated dozens of their "Party comrades" and then fled to the mountains. This is how matters stand.

WHAT DOES THE OPPOSITION STAND FOR?

The American Left Wing Weakened by Stalinism
Thousands of Oppositionists Imprisoned in Russia
Leon Trotsky Exiled on an Island in Turkey

WHY?

Hear the Program of the Left Opposition Presented by

MAURICE
SPECTOR
Canada

ARNE
SWABECK
Chicago

VINCENT
DUNNE
St. Paul

KARL
SKOGLUND
Minneapolis

NOW IN NEW YORK FOR THE MEETING OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF
THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE OF AMERICA (OPPOSITION)

At STUYVESANT CASINO, 2nd Ave. and 9th St.

On Tuesday, May 27, 1930 - - at 8 p. m. Sharp

Admission 25c

Auspices: New York Branch, Communist League of America (Opposition)

ALL INVIT.