

In the Party

The Convention Nears

Our Communist Party convention is scheduled to open June 20 in New York. By now, the pre-convention discussion should have been in full swing in the press as well as in the Party units. The whole Party, every member should have been astir with the issues and problems confronting us. And the problems are many indeed. That they deserve discussion, or require elucidation, nobody will deny. In a very short period we "succeeded" to expel from the Party two oppositions, we left behind the "second period", and triumphantly entered the "third and final period", the "period of wars and revolution". Now is the time to make some summaries, to draw some conclusions. After all it was a big jump to take and a very abrupt one. It was virtually overnight that the historic periods were declared changed. Now is the time to count our losses and gains. How many broke their necks in the process? How many were left behind and are still lingering around in the daze of the "second period"? Or can we put the questions differently: How did our policies for this "period of wars and revolution" fare? This is the time to take stock. But there is nothing of the kind.

In one short year we created a widespread net of industrial revolutionary unions, that should make anybody green with envy. As a district representative expressed it at my fraction meeting: "Anyone not joining the T. U. U. L. will be expelled from the Party... Our unions now exist in every field of industry and there can be no excuse on that score". Hasn't any number of .vbgkj cmfwyp cmfwyp story to tell in connection with this great task that was accomplished? Isn't this something to boast about? Or is modesty a requirement of the third period?

Passivity and Indifference

So far nobody has contributed anything to the pre-convention discussion. This in itself is a very alarming sign. The whole Party membership is permeated with a feeling of apathy and passivity. And no wonder. To write the convention theses, Gedacht was sent to Moscow. There was nobody literate enough left in the Party to draw up the theses. The consequence is that no one can open his mouth in criticism of them. To criticize the theses is to criticize the Comintern—but that is the greatest of heresies for which the axe of expulsion descends. The same applies to the policy of abandoning the old unions and the creation of a number of "Industrial" unions on paper—unions with long names, wide jurisdiction, very revolutionary programs, but with only one thing missing—members. If anyone objects to this policy there is no way to express it unless he is ready to be kicked out of the Party. For isn't it a decision of the Fourth World Congress and Sixth Plenum of the R.I.L.U. to talk against that is heresy once more. Facts no longer matter, the crying realities of a situation are meaningless, that magic word "third period" is the all-powerful, most convincing explanation. When somebody dares to suggest timidly that it was exactly this kind of tactics that Lenin ridiculed so convincingly in his pamphlet on the trade unions or his book on infantile sickness, the answer is that Lenin did not write it in the third period.

What is left for the members to discuss? How much remains within the limits of "legal expression"? Evidently not a single issue, where the matter of principles or tactics is involved. The result is very lamentable. Policies are handed down from the top, nobody dares to express his disagreement openly, but the indifference nevertheless accumulate and express themselves in the passivity and apathy on the part of Party members.

Meetings Unattended

This is evidenced in every sphere of party life. The most important meetings are not attended, work assigned is not carried out, and whatever is done is achieved

by the threat of expulsion. And the members do not want to be expelled. They are staying inside the Party and waiting for "better days" to come. All the letters sent out to the Party members calling for the most insignificant meeting, carry with them the warning that if the comrade does not attend he will be called before the control commission. And, by the way, this is now the busiest institution in the Party. The control commission, created originally for the curbing of bureaucratic abuses by the apparatus, has long forgotten its original aim, and become a whip against "heresy" and for spurring up activity by threats.

To cite some examples of this passivity: At the last general fraction meeting of the needle trades at which the future of the union was discussed there was no more than one eighth of the members present. This is the statement made by the chairman, Benjamin. Out of 550 Party members listed in the building trades, there were no more than 55 members present at the last general fraction meetings. I cite these examples because that is where the bulk of the New York membership is. This is the eloquent manner in which the members participate in the Party discussion and Party life in general. —B.T.

THE WEEK

(Continued from page 1)

anti-Soviet bloc and nothing else. These political bankrupts are reducing the Communist movement, as comrade Trotsky puts it, to the role of a frontier guard.

A Tearful Appeal

The Berlin session of the executive committee of the Second International has just issued an appeal to the Russian workers. Its warmth should melt a stone. Messrs. Bauer, Hillquit, Mueller, Vandervelde, Longuet and MacDonald are perturbed by the Russian situation and appeal to the Soviet proletariat to preserve their revolutionary honor and achievements... by giving democracy a chance. The appeal should have been concrete and proposed Herr Comrade Zoergel for Moscow Chief of Police, the Honorable Comrade Thomas for Minister of Labor, and the Most Honorable Ramsay MacDonald as Premier. Then the Russian workers would know what democracy looks like. It should be emphasized that the Second International is concerned with the welfare of the poor Russian slave of the Bolshevik autocracy—so concerned, in fact that it "forgot" to appeal to the British and Indian workers to overthrow the government of comrade MacDonald which is shooting them full of social democratic lead. Just an oversight, we presume.

In the Factories

A Letter From Moscow

We are informed from Moscow: At the factory committee elections of the metal workers, the following demands were put forth: genuine and not bureaucratic elections, genuine self-criticism. Various crafts brought up demands for wage increases, improvement of the food, and an increase in the allotment. These demands arise spontaneously and nobody leads the movement. Alongside of this, there is evident an increase in counter-revolutionary moods. In connection with the "one-man command" there is sharp dissatisfaction. It often rises to the surface. At the "Red Rubber Plant the worker came out at the conference in the name of a whole group, with a demand to limit the rights of the managers and foremen. As is customary, this group was raked over the coals and denounced as lazy, trouble-makers, etc., and they were expelled, some from the Party, some from the unions and some from both. In the Dytirki prison, there are about 200 of our comrades (Oppositionists). —L.

Our National Tour

New York Begins with a Successful Meeting

Despite the threatening weather and brief rain, close to three hundred New York workers filled the Labor Temple on May 15 to hear comrade Max Shachtman report on the revolutionary movement in Europe, the International Conference of the Left Opposition in Paris, and his visit to comrade L.D. Trotsky in Turkey. The meeting was the first since Shachtman's return from Europe, and it led off the national tour which has been arranged by the Communist League branches throughout the country.

Speaks on Five Year Plan

The speaker gave a detailed picture of the present critical situation in the Soviet Union and the viewpoint of comrade Trotsky, as well as an account of the big step forward taken by the Left Opposition at its International Conference in Paris. His analysis of the status and prospects of the Five Year Plan was attentively followed by the whole audience, which included numerous Party members and Lovestoneites.

Questions were asked and answered and an interesting discussion took place. One Party member who made the usual "exposure of Trotskyism" was effectively answered from the platform.

During his remarks, the chairman, comrade Cannon, issued a challenge to the Lovestone faction, which has suddenly become the champion of open discussion to a public debate of the principle questions

in dispute in the Communist movement. Considerable literature was sold and a collection of over \$30.00 taken.

Mass meetings on the same subject are being arranged in other cities, and the schedule of the tour is printed below. Halls and addresses will be filled in as soon as local arrangements are made:

New Haven, Friday, May 30.
Philadelphia, Saturday, May 31, Hancock Hall, 814 Girard Ave.
Boston, Sunday, June 1, C. L. branch meeting. Monday, June 2, mass meeting at 62 Chambers Street.
Montreal, Tuesday, June 3.
Toronto, Wednesday-Thursday, June 4-5.
Hamilton, Friday, June 6.
Detroit, Saturday-Sunday, June 7-8.
Chicago, Monday-Tuesday-Wednesday-Thursday, June 9-10-11-12.
Minneapolis, St. Paul, Superior, Friday-Saturday-Sunday-Monday-Tuesday, June 13-14-15-16, 17.
Kansas City, Thursday-Friday-Saturday June 19-20-21.
St. Louis, Sunday-Monday, June 22-23.
Springfield, Tuesday, June 24.
Cleveland, Wednesday-Thursday, June 25-26.
Pittsburgh, Friday-Saturday, June 27-28.

All information on the tour can be secured from 25 Third Avenue, New York.

After the May Day Meeting in Boston

BOSTON—

The First of May demonstration of the Communist party in Boston was quite well attended but proved that the big crowd of 25,000 on March 6 was a curiosity, excitement-seeking crowd gathered as a result of the shouting of the capitalist press that a big fight was expected on the Common between the police and the Communists. While the police still kept up their idiotic preparation for an uprising (claiming that they were guarding all important places like the telephone exchange, railroad stations, etc.) the papers did not feature the First of May on the front page. Thus only the regular crowd of 3,000 to 5,000 people, which the Communists usually can gather, came—this time in somewhat larger numbers because of the present unemployment.

Harry Cantor, just released from Deer Island was the main speaker. His eight months martyrdom was not played up at all. While one speaker dramatically pointed out the sufferings of a person at Deer Island even during the fifteen minute period, he did not think it necessary to say that the chairman suffered there for the last eight months. Obviously, since the Stephens affair, the Party does not want to push Harry Cantor too much. They probably do not know whether they really can trust Cantor. It seems no one trusts another any more in the Party.

The smaller number of people at this demonstration perhaps helped to cure the Party members of their grandiose illusions which the March 6 demonstration developed to such a dangerous degree. Then they "saw" 50,000 people where average people could see only 15 and 20,000. They claimed 25,000 marching on the streets of Boston where my eyes could see only 200. They reported to the Daily Worker the next day (see March 7 issues) that a fight was going on on the Common "but the workers are still holding the Common"—which is a huge joke to every Bostonian.

This time, they claimed 15,000 around the bandstand. This is not so grossly exaggerated; a comrade well used to large crowds estimated it as 5,000 and those marching from the bandstand to the Charles Street Mall as 2,000 to 3,000 while the Daily Worker claimed 5,000. The differences between imaginary numbers and real ones are not as striking as on March 6. So the comrades of the Party are learning.

A meeting of the executive committee

of Boston and nearby branches of the Independent Workmen's Circle was called last Tuesday to evaluate the results of the fight with the Stalinists who had left the organization to start their own Sick Benefit organization. Their boast was that they would take half of the members with them. Up to the present time about 1200 or 1400 have left the I. W. C.—that is, about one seventh of the membership—and some of these have returned already.

As one of the speakers I pointed out that we should not have been fooled by the slogan taken by the Stalinists, that this is a fight of the Lefts against the Rights. Many comrades were misled by it. It was really a fight of the Communist party officials against a Left wing organization, a foolish, childish fight for they only alienated people who had always supported them. In trying to get mechanical control over a Left wing organization, they made instead an enemy of it. We are the same Left wingers; we believe in revolutionary class struggle; we are for the dictatorship of the proletariat; we all are supporting Soviet Russia; we are against the Party only on the ground of its tactics. Otherwise we will keep up our Left wing work. Hearty applause from the majority of the executives present proved that I expressed their views.

There was a time when Branch 18, I. W. C., was entirely under mechanical Party rule. Trotskyists like myself could not speak there. Now, after losing nine or ten members, Branch 18 invited me as speaker for the May Day celebration. This is significant in proving how the Communist Party has lost valuable ground.

Comrade Schlossburg was invited to speak on May 1 for Branch 27, I. W. C. —A.K.

"MY LIFE"

All readers of the Militant and their friends, who desire to get their copy of of Leon Trotsky, "My Life", should make it a point to order the book directly through the Militant. Shipment will be made the day the order is received, and the cost of the book, five dollars, (\$5.00), covers the postage charge. Send your order, together with money order or cash to

THE MILITANT
25 Third Avenue, New York, N. Y.