

NEW PARTY FORCES FOR LEFT OPPOSITION

THE MILITANT

Weekly Organ of the Communist League of America [Opposition]

Vol. III, No. 24

Telephone: DRYdock 1656 NEW YORK, N. Y. Saturday June 21, 1930

PRICE 5 CENTS

Unemployment and Communist Tactics

The fresh breaks on the stock market June 12 and 16, the most devastating since last November, burst another bubble in the medicine-man tactics of Hoover, the vaunted engineering genius whose election slogan was "Business Administration" Cotton has slumped. Steel production has declined. The index for automobile production dropped June 14, 36.8 per cent below that of last year.

But the obviously well-fed Secretary of Agriculture Hyde maintains his poise. The nation, he declares in a statement, "is back at work... We have suffered from little more than seasonal unemployment... there was relatively little distress..." If you are of a credulous nature you can take his word for it. On the other hand there are the very conservative figures of the official Bureau of Labor Statistics which reports a further decline of 1.6 per cent in employment and 2.4 per cent in payroll totals in the manufacturing industries in April of this year as compared with April 1929.

It may be added that there are indeed "unemployed" who have "suffered relatively little distress" These are the horde of dividend receivers whose nurtured fingers neither toil nor spin but can and do clip coupons. Recorded dividend and interest payments in May of this year were actually \$570,000,000 compared with \$490,000,000 a year ago.

The signs accumulate that the capitalist class will seek a way out of this crisis by a campaign for the "deflation" of the workers' wages. In close collaboration with the social democratic bureaucracy of the General Labor Federation the German industrialists have initiated a movement for a ten per cent wage cut to challenge coal and steel markets of Great Britain and the United States. The capitalists of the United States will not lag far behind. It will be a dastardly betrayal of the interests of the German workers by their "leadership" but nothing that the bureaucrats of the American Federation of Labor cannot emulate.

Government reports indicate that per capita earnings in manufacturing industries in April of this year had dropped 4.5 per cent from the levels of 1929. The textile capitalists, bituminous coal and steel industries, where unemployment is on the increase are beginning to talk openly of wage cuts. The open shop organizations are becoming increasingly active.

The situation requires a thorough overhauling of the present course of the Communist Party. The theology of the "third period" must give place to a Marxist appraisal. The workers of the United States are on the eve not of offensive revolutionary struggles but of defensive struggles to resist the capitalist onslaught. If the Party does not give leadership to the masses, if it fails to develop a concrete program of action, if it refuses to organize a broad united front of the masses, if it blindly adheres to its impotent and blind agitation against "social fascism", the social democrats and the labor bureaucrats will be the gainers; the masses and the Party will be the losers.

The Communist movement has suffered heavily from the present factional regime and its false theories. Thousands of workers have been alienated from its influence. But there is still time to retrace the steps of the Party to a line of revolutionary realism. The great tasks before the Party demand a concentration of Communist forces on the basis of Party democracy.

Defeat the Capitalist Offensive!

Organize United Front Against Unemployment and Wage Cuts!

Equipped with thousands of dollars for preliminary expenses, the Senate has launched its star-chamber "investigation" into Communist "plotting" in the United States. The Hoover government, the National Civic Federation, and the American Federation of Labor are a single united front. With the ghost of the infamous Palmer presiding, cabinet officials, labor fakers, stool-pigeons, hungry politicians and the remainder of the unsavory crew burdening society, will testify to the existence of a "Red Conspiracy".

The Crisis of American Capitalism

Outside, in every city of the United States, members of an army of six million unemployed form in bread line. In the shops, relentlessly driven by the speed-up, workers face the menace of wage-cuts. Master-incited Southern mobs burn and lynch poor Negroes. Militant labor organizers of the unorganized and the unemployed in Gastonia, Georgia, California and New York are imprisoned, sent to the chain gangs, or threatened with the electric chair. But parasitical coupon clippers garner the biggest dividends in years. Congress stamps approval on a Tariff to assure the corporations still vaster monopoly profits. Military expenditures for the next imperialist struggle reach the highest peak in history.

The tribunals of the Spanish Inquisition sat in judgement over bourgeois protestantism. The Czarist autocracy sat in judgement over Russian revolutionaries. The United States Senate "investigates Communism". The past is replete with judgements of the dying over the living, of the forces of reaction over those of revolution. But when have such investigations and judgements permanently halted the advance of history or the development of the class struggle? The spectre of Communism which Marx marked as haunting the European bourgeoisie of 1848 has materialized in the Soviet power of today. Nor could any Holy Alliance, Romanoff Ochraana, massacre of Communards or strategy of Bismarck prevent it.

The Open Conspiracy of Communism

It needs no investigation to establish that international Communism is a greater danger to world capitalism than ever before. Communism is an open conspiracy. "The Communists have always disdained to conceal their aims". We openly conspire to organize the workers for immediate improvements in their living conditions. We openly conspire to avail ourselves of every strike, every lockout, every demonstration to sharpen the edge of the class struggle, to lay bare the process of capitalist exploitation and government suppression.

We openly conspire to rouse the workers to resist the mobilization plans for the next war by a revolutionary struggle for the defence of the Soviet Union. We openly conspire to separate the masses in the American Federation of Labor from their treacherous and bureaucratic misleadership of the William Greens and the Mathew Wolls. We openly conspire to organize the toilers of the United States for the proletarian revolution to overthrow the capitalist system and replace the business dictatorship by a revolutionary Workers' Government.

But as a matter of fact the capitalist class has no illusions about the nature of the Communist conspiracy. The investigation is a cover for something else. The ruling class aims to master the deepening economic crisis and improve its position for a sharper attack on the world market and by an offensive for wage reductions. The employers are fully aware that as a result of the mass unemployment and the wage-cutting offensive, tens of thousands of workers hitherto faithful to the traditions of capitalist politics and the craft prejudices of the A.F. of L. will be radicalized by their experience of misery. They are further conscious that the leaven in the working class is the Communist movement, that the Communists understand the laws of capitalist economy and the fraud of bourgeois democracy. To suppress the Communists, to terrorize these proletarian leaders who croon no pacifist and liberal lullabies, becomes the entering wedge of the capitalist offensive against the whole working class.

The Tasks of the Communist Party

In this situation very heavy responsibilities rest upon the leadership of the Communist Party. Sectarianism in these circumstances would be tantamount to political crime against the interests of the proletariat. The possibilities for the advance of the revolutionary movement are great. But to avail ourselves of this historic opportunity, the Party must give leadership to a UNITED FRONT movement against the capitalist offensive. The Party will not be able to do so until it breaks with its present course of blind factionalism and adventurism. The situation must be soberly analyzed for what it is. There is no immediate "acute revolutionary crisis". There are yet no "offensive revolutionary struggles" on the horizon. The masses have not yet deserted the labor bureaucrats and the social reformists. The capitalist class of this country has not yet lost its confidence and its power to rule. But the defensive struggles of the workers can with correct leadership become the starting point for revolutionary struggles in the future. The Party must weed out the verbiage of the "third period" or the Party will be wrecked for years.

For Communist Unity!

The Left Communists (Communist League of America) are profoundly opposed to the present Party regime and its revisionist theories on an international scale. But in the interests of the promotion of the workers' United Front, we are prepared to support every step that the Party undertakes for a concrete program of action against the capitalist offensive. Once started in this direction, we are confident that the momentum of the class struggle will vindicate to the Party membership the full justice not only of the strategy we advocate for the every-day struggle but the historical validity of the revolutionary Leninist principles which motivate our tactics.

—MAURICE SPECTOR

HUGO OEHLER JOINS OPPOSITION

Through the adhesion of Hugo Oehler to the platform of the Communist League of America (Opposition), the Left Opposition recruits one of the best types of organizers that the American Communist movement has yet developed. Comrade Oehler was the representative of the National Textile Workers Union in its organizing campaign in the South during the Gastonia struggle and thereafter. He was everywhere hailed as a courageous and clearheaded fighter and leader.

Hugo Oehler has held numerous posts in the Communist Party. He was organizer of the Kansas District of the Communist Party, and during the Colorado coal miners strike directed the Party's work in the field. He is well known to all militants, class conscious workers and revolutionists in the West and South, as well as to the Party organization generally. Oehler has presented the statement in the current issue of the Militant to the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party and to the District Committee in Chicago

The pre-convention discussion of the Communist Party, the Thesis to the convention and the Comintern organization letter list the greatest number of shortcomings the Party has ever had presented to any of its conventions. A review of these documents will convince one at once that they are not shortcomings in the nature of a progressing party that is at a higher level but at a lower level in comparison with the past, especially in relation to the increasingly favorable objective situation.

Bankruptcy of the Centrist Party Regime

The Central Committee is presenting to the 7th convention a unanimous thesis and resolutions that have been printed in booklet form (after Bedacht's trip) which means it is approved by our parent body in the International Office. This procedure, following the Comintern organization letter to the convention and the admitted mass of blunders, mistakes and shortcomings means (1.) That our present leadership is not capable of drawing up an analysis of the present situation. (2.) That our international leadership does not trust this task to our American leadership. (3.) That the delegates to the 7th Convention are not trusted with this task.

A leadership not capable of drawing up its own analysis is not capable of leading the revolutionary party. A convention that does not protest this action is a strait-jacket convention and not a unity convention. Leadership of the masses cannot be appointed from the international

office—it can only be obtained and held by actual leadership in theoretical and practical problems facing the working class. Leadership in the Marxian sense cannot sprout from the top like the Peppers, Love-stones and the present incompetents. The thesis presented dealing with the shortcomings does not and cannot deal with their fundamental causes.

The Menace of Revisionism

The Manifesto of the Communist Opposition to the rank and file and the 7th Convention is a document that clears the way for the membership to a correct understanding. The Manifesto points out the roots of the present Party crisis, not only facing us in this country but facing our comrades in the other parties of our International. The revision of Marxism by the Stalin-Bucharin leadership has derailed the movement in the swamp of the non-Marxist, eclectic, utopian, reactionary theory of the "Building of Socialism in one country", the colonial revolutionary policy and the tactics of the "third period". Activity and more activity will not replace correct Marxist theory and these problems first brought up by the Russian Opposition, seemingly remote and of no concern to the class struggle in America are the determining causes of the present chaotic condition in an otherwise objectively favorable situation.

The Communist Party is the instrument of the working class used as the leader and

Continued on Page 6