

The Crisis in the Communist Movement

New Party Forces Continue to Join the Communist Opposition

JERRY HILL FOR THE OPPOSITION

Jerry Hill is a young Negro worker who was elected an alternate member of the National Executive Committee at the last convention of the Young Communist League. He joined the Y.C.L. in 1925 and did Negro work in Jacksonville and Springfield in 1927-28. Comrade Hill was elected a delegate to the Fifth National Convention of the Y. C. L. held in New York City in 1929. He is working at present in Springfield.

I agree with and endorse "Back to Lenin" the manifesto of the Communist League of America (Opposition) which points out correctly the crisis in the Comintern and the American Party.

The Comintern has revised the fundamental principles of Leninism, especially on the question of Building Socialism in One Country. Leninism is internationalism and the theory of "socialism in one country" is impossible in an epoch of world economy. The Chinese Revolution, the British General Strike and the United Front tactic failed because of the wrong policies of the Right-Centrist leadership in the Comintern.

The present objective situation in America—the Wall Street crash—the Atlanta situation—the white terror in the form of lynching Negroes in Sherman, Honey Grove and Bryan, Texas; all offers the Party a great opportunity to organize the workers. But due to incorrect policies and lame and impotent leadership the Party is not only losing ground daily but also it has utterly failed to organize and defend the working class. This condition is especially shown in the Southern Illinois district. Although thousands of coal miners are unemployed and tenant farmers being driven from their homes, practically no work is being carried on, especially among the Negroes living in Southern Illinois. Thousands of Negroes live in Springfield, Peoria, East St. Louis and Rockford yet no effort at all is being made to carry on work among them. The Party must begin to carry work in this so-called "great Abe Lincoln" state upon such burning issues as; Jim-crowism, barring Negroes from mines, factories, unions, theatres and municipal bathing pools. The Party must also fight against the white chauvinism that exists among the Party members as for instance at West Frankfort during the last National Miners Union strike.

The "self-determination for Negroes" theory* of the Party is incorrect because the American Negro is part and parcel of the American working class and not a colonially oppressed people. This theory in America leads away from class consciousness to race consciousness and ultimately into the swamp of white chauvinism.

The Young Communist League in general reflects the failures and mistakes of the Party and further shows the bankruptcy of the Stalinist leadership.

The International Opposition, under the leadership of comrade Leon Trotsky adheres to the fundamental principles of Leninism and the Left Opposition is the true bearer of the International Proletarian Revolution. The unity of the Comintern and the American Party on the line of Leninism is the need of the hour. Therefore, I, as member of the Young Communist League, demand that the first step in this direction must be the reinstatement into the Party of the Left Opposition and comrade Leon Trotsky under whose leadership the Red Army was organized and the October Revolution made victorious and who is today the foremost teacher of World Communism.

—JERRY HILL

* The question of the slogan referred to by comrade Hill was left by the national conference of the Communist League to the discussion and elaboration by the organization.—Eds.

The 7th Convention of the Party - a Debacle

The seventh convention of the C. P. U. S. A. will take its place as one of the most lamentable in the history of American Communism. The current economic crisis constitutes a more powerful indictment of American capitalism and its tinseled "prosperity", than the arguments of a thousand theses. The lash of hunger curves about the bodies of millions of unemployed. In their conference rooms the financiers weave schemes for the reduction of the workers' existence levels. Yet in this crisis the Party claiming to be the revolutionary vanguard reveals a shallowness of political thought, a pettiness of spirit and impotence in action that bring malicious satisfaction to every enemy of our movement. In speaking of the Party, we draw a sharp line of distinction between the membership and the bureaucracy. Where criticism on all but secondary issues is stigmatized immediately as Right or Left "opportunism" and invites expulsion, the bulk of the rank and file still prefer silence. The convention was a formality—the theses had already been drafted and adopted in Moscow.

The New Zig-Zag of Centrism

In substance these theses illustrate all the characteristic features of centrism. Who does not remember Molotov's formulation of the period at the Tenth Plenum as "we have entered with both feet into the realm of revolutionary events". Regardless of time or space, the "third period" strategy of the imminent revolutionary crisis was uniformly applied to all countries. When Stalin's ultra-Left caricature of collectivization and the Five Year Plan brought the Soviet Union to the brink of disaster, the bureaucrat, sounded a panicky retreat and unloaded responsibility for the "excesses" on the ranks. In the Comintern, Stalin's agent, Remmele blamed the membership for the extravagances of the theory of "social fascism".

Accordingly, the Party statement on the convention condemns as "Leftist" those who do not recognize the cyclical character of the economic crisis. The Daily Worker wakes up to the fact that the struggle for social insurance is one of the foremost Party tasks in connection with the unemployment situation. But eclectic substitution for Marxist analysis still prevails. In the same breath, the theses state that "a revolutionary upsurge grips the masses". In the United States? Where, how, when? Only in the lurid headlines of the Daily Worker nonchalantly lying that "thousands of miners have gone out in a mass strike against unemployment". How can a really correct line of political action result from such confusion and self-contradiction.

The Rank and File of Newark Speaks Out

The Worker-Communists in the ranks of the official Party are moving towards the Left Opposition in spite of all the abuse, slander, and suppression practised by the blind Party bureaucracy! This is manifest from the statements of adhesion to our platform which have been appearing in the last few issues of the Militant, and which we expect to continue for some time. The "liquidated Trotskyists" are on the march and nothing can prevent the victory of their ideas. In addition to the statements of support reproduced in other parts of this issue, we are glad to print the following letter from a young rebel in Newark, N.J. It is indicative of the process of development that is taking place inside the Party:

Dear Comrades of the Communist League:

Newark, N. J.

Since the split in the Communist Party and the expulsion of the comrades of the Communist League (Opposition) I have tried to get the real facts of what caused the split. I did not know much about Communism at that time as I only joined the Young Communist League a month before the split. But since then, after reading between the lines, I seem to

consider M. Olgin's report of the convention. Olgin is one of the present ideological Party leasers and editor of the most widely circulated Party organ. In an article in the Freiheit (July 3rd) he calls for a militant alliance between white and black workers "...to lead to a democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants" (our emphasis)—and this not for China or India but for the greatest imperialist power on earth. In other words, the coming revolution in America is not to be proletarian and socialist but bourgeois and democratic. Either the man knows what he is talking about or he is an imbecile. In either case he should be expelled from a Bolshevik-Leninist party.

Bureaucracy versus Bolshevism

This convention in the United States was a pocket edition of the Sixteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Both were simply rallies of the Centrist faction. While Stalin indulged his coarse witticisms amid the Bonapartist adulation of his apparatus pretorian guard, hundreds of Left Oppositionists were being arrested and rushed into solitary confinement and concentration camps in Siberia. Similarly in the U. S. we can record the biggest wave of adherents to our opposition movement since its formation after the Sixth Congress. The bureaucrats cannot stifle the Bolsheviks. Fresh cadres are maturing. We will continue our struggle for the Comintern against both Right and Centrist misleaders.

We shall yet have occasion to recur to the plenum of the Lovestone faction which met about the same time. It is the Lovestones in the Comintern who are jointly responsible with Stalin for the Menshevik corruption of the program and policies of the Communist International. Good elements though there are in the ranks of the group, the Lovestone leadership is the same old self-styled "Marxian trunk". Albert Weisbord criticized the Lovestone misrepresentations of the position of Trotsky on the international questions, the failure to protest the deportation, and the assassination of Blumkin. In answer, B.D. Wolfe came across with the same old fallaciousities about Trotsky's alleged "sectarianism", "conditional defence of the U.S.S.R.", "advocacy of Thermidor" (sic!) Lovestone has persuaded the group to "broaden out". He is prepared to admit all tendencies—"even Trotskyites"—under the hegemony of the "Marxian trunk," of course. The gap between Lovestone and Bolshevism widens.

The names of the 25 elected to the Central Committee of the Party are being (Continued on Page 8)

agree with your line much more than I do with the present Y.C.L. and C.L. line. You seem to think that you have no sympathetic workers in the Party and League. But let me tell you that here in Newark, N.J., the question of the Opposition is discussed very often among Party and League members, but not at meetings. I often try to bring this question up at Young Communist League meetings, but every time I am threatened with expulsion. I am not the only one, there are a few other League members who try to get the real facts of the split, but they are also threatened. They even went so far as suspending one League comrade for a month. Some of our League members received the Militant. They read it with great enthusiasm. Right around the corner of the Communist Party headquarters a newsstand used to sell the Militant. But no more, since they were threatened that they would get their stand broke up. I wish you would do something about this if you can.

If you would only do some work here I am sure that you could win both the Party and the League and establish a Communist League branch right here in this city. Do not make my name public yet —X.Y.

FORMER N. M. U. HEAD FOR LEFT GROUP

The letter of comrade Watt brings to the Opposition one of the best fighters among the American miners. In the Communist movement for many years, he was a leader. In the Left wing fight against John L. Lewis, he was the first president of the National Miners' Union. His opposition to the bureaucratic, mechanical tactics of the Stalinists was sufficient to cause his arbitrary removal from the union and expulsion from the Party.

Springfield, Ill.

I attended a very good meeting here in Springfield which was addressed by comrade Max Shachtman, Tuesday, May 24th, in which he explained the program of the Left Opposition, his meeting with comrade Trotsky and the preliminary Congress of the Left Opposition in Paris. Comrade Shachtman also dealt very effectively with the glaring errors of the Stalinite group in the various trade union and new union movements, dealing separately with their manoeuvres, wrong policies, idiotic schemes and phrase mongering in the Needle trades, textile and mining unions.

To me it was a treat, for not only has it been sometime since I have heard officially of the happenings in the other industries of this country, but also his lecture on the world conditions was clear and free from the exaggerations so commonly used by the Stalinite press, which only serve as their purpose the further muddling of the worker.

Comrade Shachtman was honored (?) by having in his meeting a few Party members, who by their exhibitions of ignorance on fundamental questions facing the Party and the new unions, their Stalinite traits of exaggerations, vilification and slander, made it easy for Shachtman to show to the honest workers in attendance the hypocrisy and sham that has destroyed the Communist Party in the mining fields of Illinois and how impossible it is for the Party under such leadership ever again to lead the workers. One glimpse at the Stalinists present, at their scowling faces, their inexperience in the economic or political phases of the struggle, and the traps they made for themselves and fell into when comrade Shachtman gave them the privilege of asking questions and permitting them to answer, was enough to show to the audience why there is no miners union of the National Miners Union in Illinois, much less any Party branches.

The meeting was significant in several respects. The audience was composed of workers, some coming from many miles to hear the message of the Opposition. We were deeply interested in the program and the also had one colored comrade present who rest of the audience was made up of real progressive elements in the labor movement. It showed the possibilities of again recruiting the progressives and again taking the lead in the struggles now going on. It showed that the workers are interested in the cause of the Opposition, for those workers sat some three hours, very attentive to comrade Shachtman and I predict that from this meeting will develop a strong group for the Opposition, and that the Opposition will be heard from in the coal fields of Illinois.

Personally, it also proved one thing to me, and that was that I have remained too quiet under the lying statements that have been broadcast by the Stalin group in regards to my activities connected with the National Miners Union. I have decided now that I shall issue a statement dealing in detail with my experiences with these Stalinites from the time I got into the movement. This will be illuminating and instructive especially to the mine workers and the Communists and other progressives who have felt the iron heel of these bankrupt "third period", phrase mongering bureaucrats.

—JOHN J. WATT