

# What is Social - Fascism?

Radek has his novitiate to serve. Towards this end, he writes long-winded feuilletons in *Pravda* on "social fascism". "What is this, a rope?" as the philosopher said among the Chemnitz folk. And since the trouble is the readers of the numerous articles on "social fascism" disastrously forget all the excellent arguments of the previous investigators, it is up to Radek to begin from the beginning. To begin from the beginning means to declare that Trotsky stands on the other side of the barricades. It is possible that Radek had to insert this sentence upon the special request of the editorial board, as a moral honorarium for the publication of his article.

But still: what does the essence of "social fascism" consist of? And wherein lies its difference from avowed Fascism? It appears that the difference lies in the fact (who would have thought it?) that social fascism is also "for the carrying out of the fascist policy, but in a democratic way". Radek explains in long words why nothing remained for the German bourgeoisie than to carry out the fascistization policy through parliament "with an outward retention of democracy". Then what is the matter in question? Up to now the Marxists were of the opinion that it is democracy which is the "outward" disguise of the class dictatorship—one of its possible disguises. The political function of the present social democracy is the creation of precisely such democratic disguises. In nothing else lies its difference from Fascism which, with other methods, other ideology, in part also with another social basis, organizes, insures and protects the same dictatorship of imperialist capital.

But—Radek seeks to prove—it is possible to maintain decaying capitalism only with Fascist measures. In the long run, this is entirely correct. From this, however, does not flow the identity of social democracy and Fascism, but merely the fact that the social democracy is compelled in the long run to clear the road for Fascism, during which, reaching the end, it does not deny itself the pleasure of battering in a considerable number of Fascist heads. Such objections, however, are declared by Radek to be an "extenuation of the social democracy". This terrible revolutionist apparently thinks that to rub out the bloody tracks of imperialism with the brush of democracy is a higher and more eminent mission than to defend the imperialist coffers with blackjack in hand.

Radek cannot deny that the social democracy clings to parliamentarism with all its feeble power, for all the sources of its influence and welfare are bound up with this artificial mechanism. But, protests the inventive Radek, it is nowhere said that Fascism requires the formal dispersal of parliament. Just look! But it was precisely that political party which, in Italy for the first time, destroyed the parliamentary machine in the name of the Praetorian Guard of bourgeois class rule, that was called Fascism. This means nothing, it appears. Fascism as a phenomenon is one thing, its essence is another. Radek finds that the destruction of parliamentarism is, apparently not the kind of democracy taken as such. "What is this, a rope?"

But since he feels that this does not pass off so smoothly, Radek adds with still greater inventiveness: "Even Italian Fascism did not disperse the parliament right away (!)". What is true, remains true. And yet it did disperse it, without sparing even the social democracy, the finest flower in the parliamentary bouquet. With Radek it looks as though the social fascists dispersed the Italian parliament, only not right way, but after reflection. We are afraid that Radek's theory does not quite explain to the Italian workers why the social fascists live in the emigration. The German workers, too, will not easily grasp who it really is in Germany that wants to disperse the parliament: the Fascists or the social democrats?

All of Radek's arguments, like those of his tutors, imply that the social democracy is in no way an ideal democracy (that is apparently not the kind of democracy that Radek saw in his roseate dream after the reconciliatory embraces with Yaroslavsky). The profound and fertile theory of social fascism is not built upon the foundation of a materialist analysis of the particular, specific function of the social

democracy, but upon the foundation of an abstract-democratic criterion which is peculiar to the opportunists even when they want to or must occupy the extreme wheel of the extreme barricades (here they usually turn their backs to the wrong side and hold the weapon at the wrong end).

There is no class difference between social democracy and Fascism. Fascism as well as social democracy are bourgeois parties, and not bourgeois in the general sense, but such as protect sinking capitalism, which sustains itself less and less, not only with democratic forms, but also with the least firm legality. That is precisely why the social democracy is condemned to sink down to nothing, giving way to

## Who Is «Betraying» Labor Defense Unity?

In the *Daily Worker* (September 29-30, 1930), Sam Darcy, one of the Stalinists, appointed to ruin the International Labor Defense, vents his feeble spleen at the Opposition for having joined with the I.W.W. in New York to commemorate the death of James McInerney, the I.W.W. Centralia prisoner who recently died in Walla Walla, Washington penitentiary while serving his term with the other Centralia men.

It would be time wasted to engage in a dispute with this individual who knows little and cares less about the struggle for the class war fighters whom capitalism snatches out of the ranks and confines in its penitentiaries—if it were not that Darcy's whole outlook is so typical of the wrecking crew the I.L.D. has had foisted upon it.

Against what does Darcy direct his dull shafts? Against those who for the narrowest factional reasons sabotaged the united front for labor defense? Of course not. That would mean an attack upon his own masters in the Central Committee of the official Communist Party. He strikes out instead, against the Left Opposition for having sent a speaker to the New York memorial meeting for McInerney, arranged by the local I.W.W. which Darcy—either through inexcusable ignorance or deliberate malice—pretends to identify with the reactionary "Emergency Program" section of the I.W.W. (now outside its ranks) which controls the Central Publicity Committee.

At a time when the I.L.D. flourished, and was recognized by every honest worker in the labor movement as a genuine united front for the defense of class war fighters, the I.L.D. had to fight and did fight successfully against those elements its struggle was in quite a different direction in the I.W.W., in the Socialist Party, among the anarchists, who sabotage the class unity of the workers' defense movement. This struggle, carried on essentially in the interests of the working class and its victims, was successful. In this fight for unity, the I.L.D. was built and strengthened. Look at the former National Committee of the I.L.D.—when it was headed by precisely those comrades of the Opposition whom Darcy now calumniate—and one will find, for example, the best representatives of the I.W.W. (as well as other groups) functioning on it (Gurley Flynn, Cline, Fred Mann, Ralph Chaplin, Charlie Gray, Dick Brazier, etc.) despite the hardly concealed antagonism to the International Labor Defense displayed by reactionary elements within the I.W.W. at that time. Then look at the "national committee" of the I.L.D. today under the direction of Messrs. Bowder, Engdahl, Darcy and associated incompetents, and every one of its 20 members is a Communist of the Stalin brand!

Darcy writes: "While in the C.P., Cannon, the leaders of the Trotskyites, for years correctly fought against the syndicalist conceptions of the I.W.W." But this did not prevent—rather it assisted—from uniting in one defense front with the revolutionary elements in the I.W.W. Now, however, the agglomeration of Darcy's "fight syndicalism" so "correctly" that it has succeeded in alienating every syncretist with the Communists in the labor defense movement.

But the impression should not prevail that Darcy's Marxism is outraged at the idea of speaking at one meeting with I.W.W. members. The truth of the mat-

Fascism at one pole and to Communism at the other.

The difference between blondes and brunettes is not so great, at any rate substantially less than the difference between men and apes. Anatomically and physiologically, blondes and brunettes belong to one and the same species of life, can belong to one and the same nationality, also one and the same family, and finally, both can be the same scoundrels—and notwithstanding, the skin and hair coloring has its significance not only in the police pass but in living relations as a whole. Radek, however, in order to earn the hearty applause of Yaroslavsky, wants to prove that the brunette is at bottom a blonde, only with dark skin and black hair.

There are good theories in the world which serve to explain facts. So far as the theory of social fascism is concerned, it is only fit for serving out the novitiate of capitulators.

—ALFA

ter is that when Herbert Mahler, of the New York I.W.W., telephoned the I.L.D. National office for a speaker at the McInerney meeting, he was told that the I.L.D. "can get along all right with the I.W.W." but they wouldn't speak from the same platform with "the Trotskyites and Lovestoneites who are stabbing us in the back". The anarchist and S.P. representatives' presence did not disturb the Darcys; but they were ready to hurt still more the name once gained by the I.L.D. if only it soothed their factional rage against the "counter-revolutionary Trotskyists".

The I.L.D. can never regain its prestige until it has rid itself of these miserable masqueraders.

## Besmirching the IWW

We have received a copy of a leaflet issued on the Philadelphia waterfront in English and Polish, signed by the "Marine Transport Workers of the I.W.W." In the last paragraph we read:

"The I.W.W. is now as it was then, against any politician's attempt to organize LABOR Unions to war against Churches and governments and this is the hidden program of the Communists."

One would have to go far and wide to find a similar pronouncement in any of the literature issued by the I.W.W. in its long career. In fact, it contains the word and spirit of the most reactionary elements in the American labor movement, and has not the slightest thing in common with the whole tradition of the I.W.W. To the contrary. A glance at the past publications of the I.W.W. will show that they conducted a systematic campaign of education "against Churches and Governments"—the latter as the political instrument of the capitalist class and the former as the befuddler of the working class. It is quite true that no labor union can make "anti-churchism and anti-governmentism" a pre-requisite for membership; but a trade union that calls itself class conscious and revolutionary must carry on a daily campaign of enlightenment among the backward workers to explain to them the reactionary role of capitalist government and its whole system of religious superstition.

The leaflet in question does precisely the opposite. It plays down to the most reactionary and mystical prejudices of the backward workers. Its author sinks to the lowest levels in the proletariat, instead of remaining on class conscious grounds and endeavoring to enlighten these workers. The I.W.W. should condemn the leaflet and its author or authors out of hand. We are convinced that there are still sufficient militant, class conscious elements in the I.W.W. to see to the repudiation of this whole reactionary business. That sort of thing should be left to the capitalist agents in the A.F. of L. on whose lips it sounds more customary.

### PEARLS OF PRICELESS PURITY

"The Workers' Unemployment Insurance Bill is the center of our Party's election campaign. Every worker is either unemployed or threatened with unemployment. Every worker should be made to feel that ONLY BY ELECTING COMMUNISTS TO CONGRESS can a REAL battle be waged for unemployment insurance." (*Daily Worker* editorial, 9-20-1930, our emphasis.)

## A Case of Base Ingratitude

A piteous wailing is being heard from the editorial offices of the *New Masses*. Teeth are being gently gnashed, and hair artistically torn. The bald and toothless sit around the wall and reflect philosophically that in this world at least there is no justice, and worse yet, no gratitude. The more politically minded artists are advocating the passage of a law. The more violent among them are urging individual terror. Bedlam reigns over the recent article in the *Daily Worker* by Max Bedacht, M.A.\* entitled "The 'New Masses' and Proletarian Literature".

Says Bedacht, in reply to Michael Gold's recent musings on the lack of American "proletarian literature":

"There may be an underproduction of so-called 'light' proletarian literature in America; but this is due primarily to the barrenness and sterility of the self-styled 'American proletarian writers'. Most of what they produce does not breathe the spirit of the proletariat. Most of these writers do not understand the worker, and do not know the workers' thoughts. They cannot reproduce and interpret in literature the American worker, his world and his aspirations, and the process of revolutionary transformation of them. If the publishers and editors of the 'only magazine dedicated to proletarian literature in America' would study a little more intensely and follow a little more closely the contents of the literature published by the 'stodgy and unenterprising' International Publishers\*\* it might fecundate the proletarian quality of their literary productions, as well as their literary style."

We will generously omit commenting on how the proletarian quality and style of Bedacht's productions have been "fecundated". But we cannot refrain from asking why the temperate Swiss barber should launch into such a tempestuous assault upon a loyal group of artists like those in the *New Masses*? Is this the gratitude the Party polcom shows to Michael Gold, who worked so hard in the sewer to bespatter Trotsky in one issue and sock Lovestone in the next? Isn't this the same Gold who told us, while Bedacht and the other Browders nodded benign approval, that it is Trotsky who doesn't understand the workers, that he is . . . an aristocrat? Yes, yes, it is the very same Gold and the identical *New Masses*.

We cannot honestly say that this attack, conducted with the fury that only a Bedacht is capable of, takes us by surprise. Only two months ago we wrote in the *Militant*, warning Gold that the raw deal meted out to another Stalinist valet, Barbusse, would soon hit him, too. We said of Barbusse: "The Stalinists have now rid themselves of that embarrassing baggage. Were Gold one-tenth the sage in politics he imagines himself, he ought to be able to read handwriting when it is written on the wall." As we see, he wasn't able to or didn't want to. He has only himself to blame. Or maybe he doesn't give a hoot. It's not at all impossible that "Jews Without Money" has relieved Gold of the necessity of worrying about what all the Bedachts multiplied by two control commissions say about him in the Party press. He who lives will see.

\*Master of Agit-Prop.

\*\*Free advertisement by M.B.

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