

The Struggle of the Plumbers Helpers

In 1927, while carrying on the fight for recognition and affiliation of the plumbers helpers to the United Association of Plumbers and Steam Fitters, a section of the A. F. of L., a fight absolutely necessary in their struggle for organization, it was well known that it was led by a militant body with a Left wing program. There is no question that the A. F. of L. bureaucrats were well aware of this. It is one of the main reasons why they did not yield when it came to the question of recognition.

The plumbers helpers as a body began to acquaint themselves with the class struggle and the Left wing movement through their own participation in the conflict, through trade union classes, and their own organ, the American Plumbers Helper.

A Militant Policy

At all the meetings, classes and in all the propaganda carried on within the organization, a definite and set policy was at all times directed towards unity with the plumbers and the rest of the building trades, and affiliation to the "mother" body of journeymen. This policy, which was and is correct, was a stepping stone of the organization.

During this period of organization which was carried on by the A. A. of P. H., much contact was established with the Left wing movement, participation as a mass organization (not as a mere group) at various conferences, not only morally assisting, but also financially at times. One can say that the organization was a militant one fighting for principles of working class unionism.

With the loss of the strike and mistakes committed by the Young Communist League, the organization began to decline. When the dwindling away of the forces of the helpers began there was absolutely nothing done to save an excellent organization from decay.

There was a great opportunity to rally the helpers to battle when the 5-day week was instituted in the building trades in August 1929, which meant that the wages of the helpers decreased from \$22 to \$20 a week, causing many a spontaneous strike which occurred with no effect, because there was no organization to take advantage of such struggles. Admitting that certain factors were not ripe, yet nothing was done by the Left wing group of plumbers helpers within the Y. C. L. due to a number of reasons, one of which was the fear of allowing three young Opposition sympathizers, who were active among the helpers, to gain prestige among their fellow workers.

Due to a strike on the job in January 1930, the helpers again started to organize with eight numbers at the outset. This organization, the United Association of Plumbers Helpers, has 160 members today. With the beginning of this new helpers organization, the definite aim was pushed to the foreground by the helpers who were in the last union, to organize the trade, to carry on with the slogans which these workers had learned were correct. A series of immediate demands were adopted, calling for a living wage, organization with the adult group, double time for overtime, a chance to learn the trade, etc.

The Y. C. L. "Appears"

The Y. C. L., hearing of this revival, set to work by sending in a few ex-plumber helpers to "capture" the organization and model it according to the new "period." A "trade union" fight was incorrect at this time, according to them, an Industrial Pipe League was needed; affiliation to the United Association was wrong, to the T. U. U. L. was right, etc., etc.

In 1927, the T. U. E. L. carried on much activity within Right and Left wing unions through the various industrial groups of Left wingers. There is no question that the guidance and participation of the T. U. E. L. led to many a gain and victory for the workers. Yet the T. U. E. L. was not known to the plumbers helpers, not a single mention by any of the leading members of the organization was ever made of the T. U. E. L., and in fact, it did not bother the leaders of the T. U. E. L. whether there was such an organization of 3,500 helpers fighting for a union, or not.

Today, it is just the reverse. When the helpers are beginning to organize they must be stamped all over with "T. U. U. L.", must accept as gospel truth every word of the self-appointed leaders who are giving mis-guidance to the Left wing move-

ment, otherwise they are only "aiding the labor fakery."

Union plumbers, with whom the helpers must unite, as well as other building trades crafts, still belong to the A. F. of L. and have a craft ideology. Yet by merely saying to them, "Leave your organization and join the revolutionary unions," would have no impression whatsoever upon them.

Still, there is considerable opposition to the bureaucratic leaders of these trades unions, who should be combatted with a concentrated struggle to uphold union conditions and union traditions within the organizations.

A fight for the relief of the unemployed by shortening hours, by unemployment benefits, for 100 percent unionization of the job, amalgamation and other immediate demands, will not only bring the plumbers but also the other building workers into effective struggle for better conditions for themselves.

The plumbers helpers, if they are to organize effectively, must stress these very things, connect their struggle for organization with the every-day struggle of the building trades workers and act as pace-setters in the fight for militant unionism.

—J. SPRAGUE.

The Peasants' International and the Anti-Imperialist League

What is doing with the Peasants' International? It was created by the epigones for the special purpose of showing how people who correctly evaluate the peasantry carry on politics. From the very outset, we considered that the whole contrivance is dead and insofar as it is not dead—it is reactionary. At the Sixth Congress, Bucharin made excuses for the fact that he could not report anything (that is, anything good) about the Peasants' International. He extended an invitation to engage in "helping the Peasants' International to be transformed into a real, live organization." At the Sixteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Molotov, in his report, did not as much as mention the Peasants' International by a single word, just as if it had not existed. Does it mean that there was no success in transforming it into a "live organization?" But this was one of the biggest fruits of anti-Trotskyism!

The peasantry is the least international of all the classes in bourgeois society. A peasants' international is a contradiction within itself, not a dialectical but a bureaucratic one. An independent international union of the peasantry outside of the national sections of the Comintern—we repeat again—either a dead swivel chair invention or a hothouse of bourgeois democratic careerism under camouflage. The Peasants' International should be openly liquidated, drawing from it all the necessary conclusions.

It is worth noting that under the cover of the Peasants' International, work in the village has been almost completely reduced to zero. At the Sixth Congress, Bucharin was forced to admit: "In the peasant districts our influence did not grow but rather declined, and at that, in France as well as in Germany." This took place because "we" approached the peasantry from the viewpoint of the Peasants' International, that is astronomically. In reality, it was transformed into a hunt after the petty property owner as a property owner. The farm laborer and the semi-proletarian peasant were side-tracked. As a result—the weakening of Communism in the village. Molotov, in his report, passed over the work in the village in complete silence.

The Anti-Imperialist League is only a translation of the Peasants' International into the colonial language. Its conferences and work have had a purely decorative character. Munzenberg illustrated with Bengal lights the Left careerists of the Second International and tomorrow's executioners of the toiling masses in the colonies. The Bengalese illumination cost not a little, and left behind it an acrid odor and smoke under the cover of which the careerists, adventurers and candidates for executioners were accomplishing their deeds.

Let us not forget that the friendship of the Stalinists for the Kuo Min Tang

Several weeks ago, the national committee of the Communist League of America (Opposition) elected a national youth committee to aid comrade Albert Glotzer, youth representative on N. C. to carry on youth activity. The national youth committee wherever feasible will form youth committees or youth sections of the branches of the League. Definite steps are to be taken for the organization of a functioning faction in the official Y. C. L. Wherever possible, as for example, in New York City, independent youth activity will be conducted side by side with the struggle against the false policies and leadership of the Communist Youth League. Efforts will be made to expand the Young Vanguard as the voice of the Communist Opposition Youth.

At present the committee is working on a statement which is to be issued in its name to the coming National Convention of the Y. C. L. This statement will also serve as a basis for a youth platform for the coming conference of our organization.

Branch secretaries or comrades responsible for youth work, are asked to send in reports of activities to the national youth committee (care of national office). Youth comrades should also write articles for the Young Vanguard.

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flowed parallel with their intimate block with the strikebreakers of the General Council of the British Trade Unions, and that both these amities were tied into a knot with the Anti-Imperialist League.

In the beginning of 1927, Munzenberg, the impresario of all the rotten and pompous performances, called together a congress of the League at Brussels. On this occasion, the central organ of the Comintern wrote, on February 25, 1927:

"It is no accident that the most active, inspiring (!) and leading role at the congress was played by the main active factors in the Chinese revolution: the Chinese trade unions, the Kuo Min Tang and the People's-Revolutionary army—on the one hand, and the representatives of the British proletariat, to whose share fell the central role of blowing up the intervention—on the other hand." (Communist International, 1927, No. 8, page 5).

"No accident!" It is no accident that at the Brussels conference the "inspiring" role was played by Chiang Kai-Shek's Kuo Min Tang, and the dear allies of the Anglo-Russian Committee!

The Anti-Imperialist League is a reserve Kuo Min Tang on an international scale. The liquidation of the League, as well as of the Peasants' International is an unpostponable measure of revolutionary purification.

Opposition Group in Bulgaria

The International Secretariat of the Left Opposition informs us:

On October 19, 1930, a group of former members of the Bulgarian Communist Party (legal and illegal) adopted a resolution approving a manifesto issued by a group of Bulgarian comrades recently, which gives a Marxist evaluation of the revolutionary labor movement in the country, the situation in the international Communist movement, and condemning the theory and practices of the "third period." These comrades decided, further, to

"constitute themselves into a central Marxist workers' group 'Osvojudenje', taking as their base the ideas of the Manifesto of the International Left Opposition."

The resolution also sends its revolutionary greetings to the victims of the bourgeois repression in Bulgaria and all other countries, and to the valiant comrades of the Bolshevik-Leninist Opposition in the Soviet Union and its leaders, comrades Trotsky and Rakovsky.

The formation of this group in Bulgaria is a country where the collapse of the Centrist leadership has virtually stripped the movement of its power. The Bulgarian Opposition group is the second to be constituted in the Balkans, the first being the Left wing group in Greece. Our hearty salute and wishes for victory!

For You to Study

This announcement is not intended for a certain type of "practical people." We mean the kind who actually excuse the fact that they do not read and study the problems of the working class movement with the argument that they are "too busy doing practical work." Now, practical work is the life's blood of the revolutionary movement. But unless it proceeds from a clear understanding of fundamental principles, unless it is motivated by correct theories, it is just so much barrel thumping: lots of noise but no content. It is our misfortune that this sort of "practical work" (in reality, it is highly impractical) is all too prevalent in the revolutionary movement. So if you are that kind of a "practical" person, don't listen in on this!

We started out with a plan. In our files, we had assembled a pile of material by comrade Trotsky—articles, documents, pamphlets and books—as tall as your leg. Their very publication would be one of the most smashing blows ever dealt to Stalinist opportunist and falsification. A reading of them would advance the Communist movement immeasurably, for they deal with the fundamental problems of the Russian and international revolution from the Marxist standpoint. They are documents suppressed in the literal sense of the word.

But since our paltry income hardly enables us to publish even the Militant, we could not print these works. That's where our plan came in. We believed we could get small groups of comrades to sponsor these publications. That is, a group of militants would donate the money for a special fund to print this or that work by Trotsky. And the plan has met with enthusiastic response and has already borne fruit. The pamphlet on "The Turn in the Comintern and the German Situation" was sponsored by six comrades: Harry Milton, Sol Sarachik, Sylvia Bleeker, Fred Berensmeier, Peter Keppel and Kurt Ahrens. Their donations enabled us to publish it before anyone else in the world and to publish it at a low price.

Now we have another work coming off the press (it will be ready a week after this issue of the Militant appears on the stands). Four comrades: Max Engel, Philip Shulman, Martin Abern and Morris Lewit, gave the contributions that are making it possible to publish this booklet at a popular price. It is "The Strategy of the World Revolution", a masterful analysis of the strategy and tactics of Bolshevism and a criticism of the course of the Stalin-Bucharin leadership since 1923. You will want to read this 100-page booklet, the manuscript of which had to be smuggled out of Russia, because no worker can call himself informed on the great dispute in the movement unless he has read it.

The "sponsorship plan" enables us to sell it at 25 cents a copy, and at 18 cents if you take a bundle of 5 or more (all postpaid). Our editions are limited in number, and you'd better order quickly. It's the kind of a work that shapes the movement, as it was shaped by the gifted contributions of Lenin and Trotsky in the early days of the Comintern.

And by the way, the plan is catching hold! Toronto comrades write in that they would like to be sponsors for another pamphlet, and we don't propose to turn them down. Quite the contrary: we want more. We have on hand enough pamphlets and books to keep our sponsors going for a long time. There Trotsky's pamphlet on "World Unemployment and the Five Year Plan", a section of which the Militant already printed (that was only a taste of what's to appear). Then there is his great work on "The Permanent Revolution" recently written and being translated now. You've heard Stalinists of all shades fulminate against "Trotsky's permanent revolution", but they never told you what the theory really looks like! Well, here it is—a smashing refutation of all the critics of this Marxist theory, and an eye-opening analysis of its relation to Lenin's conception of the Russian and international revolution.

If you're interested (we don't mean only groups of the Opposition, but sympathizers as well) in our plan to publish the Marxist literature of the day at popular prices, drop us a line and we'll let you know the details. But in the meantime, don't wait a minute to place your orders for

"THE STRATEGY OF THE WORLD REVOLUTION"
by Leon Trotsky.