

T.U.U.L. and Amalgamated

By ALBERT ORLAND

The policies of the Left wing in the Amalgamated Clothing Workers have gone through a zig-zag and finally entered a blind alley. With the organization of the Men's Clothing Branch under the Needle Trades Workers Industrial Union and the liquidation of the T. U. U. L. group in the Amalgamated after the second convention of the N. T. W. I. U. held last June, the Left wing forces in the clothing industry have been dissipated. Only a very small fraction, consisting of the most docile elements and loyal Stalinists joined the new union. The great majority of the sympathizers and supporters of the Left wing, not in agreement with the new line, were left to shift for themselves.

The Left wing in the Amalgamated has thus completed its last cycle of the "second period." The old leadership of the Amalgamated T. U. U. L. was expelled as Right wingers for their insistence upon maintaining the Left wing in the Amalgamated and the application of the so-called "united fronts." The new union by decision of the convention, pledged itself to the adoption of a more revolutionary form and policy adapted to the "third period", namely, the organization of shop committees and the formation of the real united front from below to conduct struggles for economic conditions under the leadership of the N. T. W. I. U.

However, the work of drawing members into the new union and of organizing the shop committees soon proved too difficult for the weak forces of the Amalgamated Section and the confusion in the ranks of the Left wing and the broad masses of the clothing workers condemned all their attempts to futility from the beginning.

The Left Wing at Low Ebb

The Left wing during its entire period of existence in the A. C. W. has built itself a record of unprincipledness and incompetence through its false and confusionist policies. Its adventurist united fronts with Hillman in the years of its greatest influence in the New York organization and later on with all sorts of careerists who used the Left wing in order to climb on its back to paid offices in the A. C. W., has destroyed the confidence of the workers in it and their hope for a change in their conditions. The activity of the Left wing in the A. C. W. at the time of the organization of the Men's Clothing Section of the N. T. W. I. U. was at its lowest ebb. The new section did not come as a result of the radicalization of the clothing workers and as the culmination of their struggle with the A. C. W. leadership, but was merely an act of servility on the part of the "third period" bureaucrats to the Stalinist apparatus. Indeed, the organization of the Men's Clothing Section was rather belated. Had it not been for the Right wingers in charge of the T. U. U.

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ever to those expelled to the Communist workers in the Party ranks. Likewise, we can have nothing in common with the standpoint of those who, instead of fighting in the M. W. I. U. to safeguard its unity and correct its course, yield to provocation and run away from the fight against Mink, Johnstone & Co. to form an absolutely artificial organization which has neither a basis in the class struggle nor any possibilities for extended life.

As far as the members of the Left Opposition and their collaborators are concerned, no provocation by bureaucrats can divert them from the course we mapped out long ago. We will continue to fight on the platform of Communism. Any diversion from this path plays the game of the Minks, temporarily at least, for it consolidates their position even if upon the basis of a still narrower union. Their hold, of course, remains a precarious one, for they will run their heads into the wall of their own mismanagement as before, arousing the rank and file revolt which will strengthen the influence of the revolutionary movement among the marine workers and weaken the hold of those who so systematically cast shame and discredit upon our cause. This rank and file movement, absorbing the lessons of the recent events in the M. W. I. U., we will continue to support, and assist to a triumph that is equivalent to the victory of the revolutionary cause over that of opportunist-adventurism.

L. in the Amalgamated, the Left wing would have been abandoned a year before and the Amalgamated members urged to join the new union.

Is it any wonder that under such conditions the work of the Men's Clothing Section could not make any headway in spite of its revolutionary tactics, that their talk about shop committees and united fronts from below have remained empty phrases? Having given up contact with the masses the Left wing deprived itself of the opportunity of regaining confidence among them and participating in their struggles. The few isolated shop committees of picked Left wingers do not reflect the mood of the masses in the shops and are still less capable of stimulating mass struggles.

Here is clearly demonstrated the ruinous effect of the "third period" policy in the trade union movement.

The Workers Do Not Follow

The necessity for the organization of the new unions two years ago was explained by the T. U. U. L. leadership by the readiness of the masses to leave the old unions and their fear of lagging behind the masses. But where are the masses in the clothing industry today? Has there been a sudden change in their ideology or their conditions that they have so cruelly disappointed the bureaucrats? Surely, nothing of the sort happened. Simply, they do not seem inclined to play the game of the Stalinist faction in the Communist movement in the latest change of policies and leadership.

The tactics of working within the old unions that was given expression in the organization of the T. U. U. L. a few years ago was based on the conception of the trade unions as organizations embracing the broad masses of the workers in a given industry. The conservative or reactionary character of a trade union was explained by that very fact, because the workers as a mass are not class conscious as yet. It was the duty of the Communists, as the class conscious vanguard, to penetrate these mass organizations and by participation in their struggle, gain influence and leadership there. This tactic ac-

Social Reformism in the United States

Those who hold the position that reformism must develop in the United States are wrong. Trotsky pointed out that America does not have to pass through a period of reformism but this does not mean America will not. When conditions cause a Leftward movement in America today both reform and revolution gain but the ratio depends to a large extent upon the tactics and strategy of the Communists.

Most likely a period of reform will develop but it will be distinguished from European reformism because historical conditions (decay of capitalism) will limit it to a short duration. Developing capitalism in the past could offer reforms through pressure of the workers and the reformist parties but in this period even American capitalism and its reformist parties have little of material value to offer the workers. Decadent capitalism, internationally characterized by keener competition, intensified contradictions, mass production, rationalization, organic unemployment disintegration of the skilled strata, etc., are the objective conditions which narrow the material base of social reformism. But from this we cannot conclude, as the Stalinists do, that "the 'third period' policy, which they up to prove the 'fascization' of reformism 'socialist fascist' and that the road in America is a sharp line of demarcation of 'class against class', 'revolutionary upsurges' and the radicalization is a continuous Leftward swing.

Reform Parties and Reform

Reform parties and reforms are two different things. Reform parties grow on reforms but the former can outlive the latter just like antiquated structures of the past exist today and will be carried over in the future. Their growth and living force depends upon material conditions but structures, customs and ideologies are used by reaction after the material conditions are swept away and before new conditions and new generations move on.

When Capitalism can not rule as a bourgeois republic it uses reform (Socialist, etc.) as long as possible and when

policies were applied. It was the opportunist application of the united front by the T. U. U. L. leadership of the "second period" that was responsible for the losses in the old unions, but not the idea and the united front policy as such.

The pernicious "third period" policy did not, however, fail to produce—on the other hand—some awakening in the minds of a great many Left wing workers. The Centrist leadership has already realized that its new "revolutionary" policy brought disastrous results and made a swift turn backwards into the opposite direction. This new turn has already been applied in some of the branches of the Needle Trades Workers Industrial Union and notice of it has been served upon the Men's Clothing Section.

At this writing, the full implications of this turn are not yet clear to us. It has not yet gone through the Party factions, and is naturally causing new confusion in the ranks. Judging from the past, however, it is to be expected that this turn will be a repetition of the old zig-zag in a new cycle unless an awakening takes place in the minds of the Party members to the real problems involved in changing revolutionary tactics and the trade union movement, and they act accordingly.

The latest turn in the trade union tactics is not an isolated phenomenon in the official Communist movement. It is a reflection of the general turn in the tactics of the C. I. noticeable in all fields and organizations under its control. The "third period" ideology has given way under the stress of reality and forced the official party leadership not only to change policies but gradually to abandon the terminology and the talk about the "third period" itself. But as with all the changes made by the official leadership in the past, without a frank analysis and criticism of the mistake made.

Under such conditions it is difficult to believe that the Party membership will learn anything from their latest experience with the "third period" policies and their origin, and the official leadership will be given a new lease of life to continue on their worn-out zig-zag path that has caused so much injury to the Communist and revolutionary movements. At any rate, this will be the result unless a thorough analysis and a fundamental criticism is forced through in the ranks.

Litvinov at Geneva

The den of thieves and pirates located at Geneva is once more bustling with "disarmament" activity. This time it is the regular meeting of the Preparatory Disarmament Commission, in which, like all its prototypes, the various imperialist powers gather in an attempt to secure by agreement a more favorable position in the armed camp presented by the capitalist world today. No simpler and more final reply to the deceit of these innumerable conferences can be made than the fact that there are more men under arms today than there were before the world war; that bourgeois statement can declare without shocking anybody that Europe is closer to "convulsions now than at any other time since 1914"; that since the above-mentioned commission was established, the five largest imperialist powers have increased their arms budgets by 27 percent.

The Soviet Delegation

At the present session of the Commission, there is a Soviet delegation with Litvinov at its head. We have had occasion in the past to point out the opportunist tenor of the whole foreign policy of the ruling faction in the Russian Communist Party. It rings out brazenly in the conference under discussion. We quote from an "irreproachable" source (Comintern cablegram to *Daily Worker*, November 7, 1930) the remarks made by Litvinov, which would delight the heart of a Left social democrat, or even an honest bourgeois pacifist of *The Nation* type, but which are repelling to a revolutionist who has learned from Lenin:

"The Soviet Union, Litvinov said, considered the war danger indissolubly connected with capitalism but believed it possible to minimize (?) the danger by real (!) disarmament, and therefore presented two proposals, one of complete disarmament, and an alternative of partial (!) disarmament."

Lenin, while not being so "clever" a statesman as Litvinov, not to speak of the latter's master, Stalin, was nevertheless content with replying to both of them in advance:

"The Kautskyan preaching of 'disarmament', which is addressed chiefly to the present governments of the imperialistic great powers, is a vulgar piece of opportunism, of bourgeois pacifism, actually calculated—in spite of the good intentions of the gentle Kautskys—to divert the workers from the class struggle. For such a propaganda is calculated to inspire the workers with the thought that the present bourgeois governments of the imperialistic powers are NOT bound by thousands of threads of finance capital and tens or hundreds of corresponding (i. e., predatory, greedy, preparatory to imperialistic aggression) SECRET TREATIES between themselves." (The Disarmament Cry, *Sbornik Sozhdemokrata*, December 1916).

The Stalinist press, in this country as elsewhere, grows positively purple with enthusiasm at the petty bourgeois conduct and policy of Litvinov-Stalin. Lenin's teachings on the reactionary-utopian slogan of "disarmament" under capitalism, have been entirely lost to the Stalinists. Like the petty bourgeois press, it helps to foster the most dangerous pacifist illusions in the minds of the workers. In "Notes on the Problems of Our Delegation at the Hague"—a document also directed at establishing the Bolshevik conception of the struggle against war—Lenin writes:

"The press of the dominating class obscures the issues by spreading lies about it in vast numbers of copies against which the weak socialist press is entirely powerless, the more so that in the time of peace they maintain a radically wrong attitude towards this very question. The Communist press in the majority of countries also disgraces itself."

The Stalinist course at Geneva, and the panegyrics of the *Daily Worker* do not detract from, but rather emphasize, the truth of these words, all of which, particularly the last sentence, are fresher today than ever.

their duration and even alter their quality. Since the objective conditions favor us, the battle between reform and revolution now primarily rests upon a Marxian party of dialectic revolutionists, not only to explain correctly the conditions but to present the program, and the program of action to remake them, connecting today's activity with our goal. The Communist can only be equal to this task by basing himself upon the program of the Left Opposition and we of the Left must intensify our activity and concretize our program. —OEHLER.