

EDITORIAL NOTES

MORE TREASON TO THE MINERS

Events of the past week in the Illinois coal fields provide another striking illustration of the rôle of pseudo-radicalism as a come-on for reaction. The great revolt of the miners there, which broke out of the bonds of Lewis and his outspokenly reactionary policy, was corralled more than a year ago by the Fishwick-Walker-Howat faction and diverted from its purpose. They could not do this by talking as Lewis talked. In order to head off, and tame, and finally break the uprising of the miners the Illinois leaders were obliged to put on the mask of "progressivism". They appeared to express in words the militant aspirations of the insurgent workers. By this means, and with the help of the entire national movement of counterfeit progressivism, they deceived the miners and led them into a blind alley. Now, after having broken and disorganized the revolt, they have put the crowning touch to their betrayal.

Press reports from Springfield carry the news now of the liquidation of their sham outfit with Lewis. They have signed a court decree recognizing the Lewis faction as heads of the International Union, and have issued a statement calling upon Lewis to join in a move with them to "end all warfare". With the miners once more at the mercy of the coal operators, nothing remains except a division of spoils between the reactionaries and their progressive whips.

To the very end the latter ran true to form. It is all in the interest of the miners. "To continue this fight," their statement says, "would mean the absolute destruction of the United Mine Workers of America." Which is their way of saying: The miners are defeated—what is there left to fight about?

This shameful betrayal of a really magnificent movement of the miners was made possible by the policy of the official Communist party. Driven by events and the criticism of the Opposition to a break with the opportunist course they followed in union with Lovestone, the Fosters plunged—in the characteristic manner of unprincipled Centrism—into a policy of wild adventurism that had no relation to the facts of the situation. They disrupted the party and Left wing forces by their mad campaign against the best revolutionaries within them. They "boycotted" the convention where Fishwick and Walker, with the help of Howat, were consolidating their movement. The false radicals were thus left a free hand. All the rest followed from that.

In the tragic experience of the Anglo-Russian Committee there was written, as in gigantic letters on a vast canvas, an example and warning for all time of the perfidious function of reformism, and particularly of its "Left" section. Every concrete experience, such as that of the Illinois miners, only serves to reiterate that warning. Reformism is bourgeois poison in the labor movement. The workers can be victorious only in irreconcilable struggle against it.

'AGAINST EXAGGERATION.'

If you live long enough, they say in Missouri, you will see everything. The proverb is not without merit. It affords a sort of philosophic protection against apoplexy from shocks and surprises. No doubt there were many who remembered it gratefully in that sense the other day when they read the front page editorial in the *Daily Worker* entitled "Against Exaggeration". In that editorial it was promised that henceforth there is to be no more padding of figures regarding attendance at party demonstrations. And to make it more authoritative a day or so later "Red Sparks" himself promised to tell the truth from now on. He acknowledged that "exaggeration" is a "bad habit"; and he pledged himself, with all the fervor of a man who has come to Christ late in life, that he also would overcome it. Later followed articles on the subject. The movement against "exaggeration" has become a campaign.

Is this a moral regeneration? Have these people given up the idea that they can lie the capitalist system out of existence, and with it 120 million "fascists"? Such hopes are optimistic and exaggerated. The whole thing has a political explanation.

During the "third period" which was alleged to be characterized by a "revolutionary upsurge of the masses" it was necessary—in order to substantiate the theory

—to have huge crowds at all demonstrations organized by the party. And if the masses didn't exist at the demonstrations it was necessary to invent them. That is why the crowds which marched through the streets were always outnumbered, five or ten to one, by the legions marching through the columns of the *Daily Worker*.

Now it is different. The "third period" theory is being dropped (without saying so) and the party leaders are marking out tactics for a two-and-a-half period. Adventurism is giving way to minimal reformism. The swing from fighting the police and capturing the streets to knocking on back doors with modest petitions requires different reports about the attitude of the masses. If the "third period" needed exaggeration in this respect the present period calls for the opposite. The crowds must grow smaller as the slogans and demands become more moderate. This is the explanation of the campaign against "exaggeration."

MILLER'S MANIFESTO

The poet Goldsmith in "The Deserted Village" drew an immortal picture of the schoolmaster whose assorted knowledge was the marvel of all men. His listeners—who didn't understand him—stood open-mouthed before his display of wisdom, fascinated by the spectacle. Goldsmith tells it, if memory serves:

"And still they watched and still their wonder grew
That one small head could carry all
he knew."

Goldsmith's pedagogue perished ingloriously with the doomed village of the poet's lament. But his undying spirit rises from the dust and finds reincarnation in a school teacher of our own day, one whose head is also crammed with knowledge that is hidden from other humans.

We refer of course to Bert Miller, the Trotsky-killer, who has leaped into the white light of fame with a discovery which he has proclaimed to the world in a manifesto. This unique document was printed in the March 7th issue of *Lore's* paper, the *New York Volkseitung*. And with an unerring newspaper instinct the editor ran it in the department headed "Of Interest To Everybody." Miller has been looking around—prospecting, so to speak—for a grouping that can serve as the center and directing force for the Left wing. He has found it he says, not in the Communist movement but in the *Muste* organization—the C. P. L. A.—and with the enthusiasm of the 49'er, who found gold in the gravel bottom of a shallow creek, he shouts aloud his discovery.

What are the merits of the reformist organization of *Muste* and Co. which entitle it to replace the Communist movement as the organizing center of the workers' vanguard? Miller lists a number of them. Among other things, "it is distinctly American in its approach". As we know, the C. P. L. A. has been fighting the Communists.

But this slight defect—if it can be called a defect—is more than compensated for by the fact that "it provides a common ground for cooperation with Leftward moving elements such as the 'Militants' in the Socialist party".

Miller, it is clear, is no "sectarian". And he is not one of those who learn nothing and forget nothing from experiences and defeats. It is true he analyzes defeats in his own peculiar way—in order to repeat them. The international experience of the Communist movement under the Stalin-Bucharin leadership has not passed without carving its mark on Miller's brain. The fact that the C. P. L. A. has a political character, as a wing of social democracy, does not deter him. He asks the rhetorical question, "Is it permissible for Communists to join middle-of-the road political, non-Communist organizations?" And, instructed by the catastrophic defeats suffered by the Comintern in the East, he answers, Yes! "It is not only permissible", he says, "but it is absolutely necessary". And how does he know? Because it has been shown by our experience with the Indian Nationalist movement, the Kuo Min Tang and the British Labor Party.

He might have added that it is also shown by the large number of people who have passed over in recent times from the Right wing of Communism to the social democracy. This step, as we have pointed out before, is the culmination of Right wing logic. The fact that Miller, and with him a group of nine others from the Lovestone camp, are jumping ahead of the faction as a whole in this respect does not signify a conflict in principle.

Miller, like Goldsmith's hero of the same profession, is a man of learning, and like all savants, a bit of a philosopher. Communism, as he sees it now, is a nebulous thing in America, while social reformism, like truth, is concrete; and its slogans, as *Muste* formulates them, "are well suited to the present stage of development of the American labor movement." If he is rushing where Lovestone still fears to tread, it is merely a question of tempo. The philosophers of movements are always in advance of the politicians and organizers. Lovestone will catch up. Give him time.

A GREAT STEP FORWARD.

Slowly but none the less surely the Communist League forges ahead. As this number of *The Militant* goes to press we are able to record another signal achievement in the publication of the English edition of the *International Bulletin of the Left Opposition*. For an organization of our limited resources even such an accomplishment, involving additional technical and editorial labors and expense, is worthy of note. And we should value it all the higher because of its paramount political importance.

The Left Opposition is first, last and always the faction of revolutionary internationalism. In the name of internationalism we have taken our stand and under its banner we conduct our fight. Stalinism, with its circumscribed outlook of national socialism, has dealt powerful blows to the international movement of the workers' vanguard and is still dealing them. We will not accept the caricature it attempts to

substitute for the international organization of the proletariat projected by Lenin, and before him by Marx. Neither will we adopt the Brandler idea of platonic relations between independent and autonomous national sections. We have broken forever with the spurious internationalism of bureaucratic command. But all the more are we obliged to replace it—in the policy we defend before the entire movement and in our own work—with a living internationalism consciously and deliberately achieved.

We do not believe in the theory of socialism in one country. And no more do we believe the various national sections of the world Communist movement can live isolated national lives and solve their problems exclusively by their own resources. This conception holds for the faction no less than for the party.

The internationalism toward which we strive is the fraternal union of the Communist workers of the entire world under one single flag. We strive for a reconstitution of the international Lenin army, imbued with a common ideology and regulated by international discipline. In anticipation of this, and in order to make our work fruitful for its realization, the international faction of the Left Opposition must be so organized. The Left, that is, the Marxist faction is and must be at once the fundamental nucleus and the advance guard of the reconstituted Lenin International.

How will we guarantee this? Not by say-so merely, and not by trusting to the ability of the various sections to work out a correct line on national and international problems without mutual assistance. Sad experience has already spoken on this point in the most emphatic manner. No, we must push forward at all cost toward the consolidation of the Left Opposition on an international scale into a single organization, and function as such. Real progress has already been made, as we know. The conference of last year and the constitution of the International Bureau were historic milestones along this path. It is a self-evident necessity to cooperate heartily with the International Bureau and strengthen its authority.

But that is not enough. All sections must steer a deliberate course toward real participation in the affairs of the others and in the common international tasks. This duty is particularly insistent for us because we inherit from the past a certain insularity and we are hampered by barriers of distance and language. All the more necessary, therefore, is a conscious struggle to surmount them. The translation of the *International Bulletin* and its publication in English creates the primary conditions for the success of this struggle. We have no doubt that the members of the Communist League will recognize the importance of this event and make the most of it.

It will be remembered in this connection that the publication of the *International Bulletin* was listed as one of the items in our program of expansion for the current year. Its speedy realization has been made possible by the prompt response of the New York branch to the campaign for the two thousand dollar fund to finance this program. The other items in the program will follow in order as the other branches get in step.

—J. P. C.

Our Subscription Drive

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