

EDITORIAL NOTES

DANGEROUS SITUATION

The unfortunate results of the dress strike were guaranteed in advance by the policy of the leadership and were easy to foresee. The Left wing union, already segregated in respect of shop organization, to a small corner of the industry, did not succeed in appreciably widening the area of its control. A few hundred workers—more or less—added to the union rolls out of the tens of thousands in the trade can be represented to anybody as a victory. These slight gains in membership, however, have no reason to dispute—are counter-balanced by the loss of wing prestige which derives inevitably from the whole miserable affair.

Under the blows of the united reaction on the one side, and of criminal misleadership on the other, the Left wing in the needle trades finds itself today in an extremely critical position. The spiritless manner with which the most loyal militants went through the strike in which they had no faith, the lost confidence of the masses which the strike figures tell with cruel emphasis, are stern warnings of a dangerous situation; a situation which has within it the possibilities of a real catastrophe.

In that treacherous manner which is characteristic of all opportunists, Lovestone-Zimmerman are seizing the occasion to sow panic and demoralization in the Left wing ranks. They are coming out in the open now with their program for the liquidation of the struggle of the Left wing union. They are trying to set into motion a wild stampede back into the camp of Schlesinger.

We warn the Left wing workers against this panic propaganda. And in doing so we have no need to conceal the desperate position of the Industrial Union. That is incontestable. Nor can we doubt that on its present course the Industrial Union is moving, with accelerated speed, toward liquidation—in fact, if not by formal decision. We must recognize that the Left wing union stands now at a point where the odds are unquestionably against it. The weight of the combined reaction presses down heavily upon it, and the leadership of the bureaucratic incompetents supports the reaction, from the Left. But the issue has not yet come to the decisive settlement. The time has not arrived to haul down the banner of the Industrial Union. That cry is the cry of panic-stricken traitors.

Two or three thousand members organized in the Industrial Union, surrounded yet in spite of all by the warm sympathy of tens of thousands of workers in the industry, represent a power out of all proportion to the numerical relation. What they need is a correct policy and a leadership worthy of the name. The need to put their own house in order. If they will do this in time, and only on that condition, they can yet regain the lost positions and conquer new ones. Let the liquidators of the Lovestone camp desert the ship which they think is sinking. The task of the day for the revolutionary fighters is to fix the leaks and keep it afloat.

"COMMUNISM AND SYNDICALISM"

The new pamphlet, "Communism and Syndicalism", seems to have hit its mark. It has already gained a fairly wide distribution and has enriched the life of the radical labor movement with a fresh and animated discussion of fundamental questions of principle. *Industrial Solidarity*, the official organ of the I. W. W., devotes four columns in its April issue to a review of the pamphlet. And this fact alone bears eloquent testimony to the profound interest which comrade Trotsky's masterful presentation of the Marxist position on the trade union question has aroused within the ranks of the syndicalistic workers.

The Stalin faction in charge of the official party has been attempting to settle the dispute between syndicalism and Communism in the gutter of gang fights. In this they have only succeeded in compromising Communism and playing the game of the reactionary elements at the head of the I. W. W., whose position depends on an atmosphere of confusion, prejudice and unreasoning hostility. The publication of the new pamphlet has served to elevate the question again to the level of ideological struggle,—the plane upon which Marx fought Bakunin, and Lenin fought the Economists. The Opposition demonstrates in this question also that it is the real heir of the great teachers.

The unsigned review in *Industrial Soli-*

arity is written in the spirit of the editor, John Gahan—a petty-bourgeois phrasemonger of the Sandgren stripe—and that is to say it is written from a reactionary standpoint. It begins, in the heading, with a reference to Trotsky as the "author of the Kronstadt massacre" and implies thereby a solidarity with the ill-fated attempt at counter-revolutionary overthrow engineered in 1921 through the medium of the Kronstadt sailors. And this implication goes over to direct expression of the idea in the statement, "the 'dictatorship of the proletariat', which is an instrument of oppression."

The reviewer protests against our reference, in the introduction to the pamphlet, to the "degeneration" which has taken place in the leading circles of the I. W. W. since the war. But how could degeneration, from a proletarian and revolutionary point of view, be more forcibly expressed and demonstrated than by such an attitude toward the Russian revolution? Of the two great camps into which the world was divided, and remains divided, by the Bolshevik revolution—those who are for it and those who are against it—the reviewer takes his place with the latter. And it is not simply a question of "some other country" in which narrow-minded philistines profess a lack of interest. We have here only an advance notice of how the logic of false conception will work out at home. It should not be lost on those who still retain the idea of a workers' revolution in America.

The outspoken opponents of Communism and the Stalinist bureaucrats who distort its meaning and soil its banner have some things in common, despite the noisy and indecent brawl which passes for the "intellectual" struggle between them. Gahan and Co. agree with Foster, Inc. that a club over the skull is more effective than an idea directed to the brain. And in this review they take another leaf from the Foster book and allow themselves just a little misrepresentation. They accuse the writer of the introduction to "Communism and Syndicalism" of saying, "The party is the unified minority group of intellectuals to guide, advise and lead the trade unions." No, we never said that because we don't think that. We believe with Marx and Lenin that the party is the vanguard of the proletariat, the organization of the class-conscious and revolutionary workingmen.

We do not think of the party as a special body of "intellectuals". This idea is falsely imputed to us by the pseudo-intellectuals of anarcho-syndicalism. The whole argument against a proletarian party rests on this shaky foundation. Misrepresentation of the issue and an appeal to prejudice are the sole weapons of the bankrupt leaders of reactionary syndicalism, of Gahan and similars.

It is a miserable armament and cannot stand a real contest. What is needed for such a contest is simply an able presentation of the Marxist position. Comrade Trotsky has made this presentation, from all sides and with incomparable clarity and logic, in his pamphlet, "Communism and Syndicalism". It will make its way.

LYING AS A POLITICAL SYSTEM

An article in the *Daily Worker* of March 17th contains the statement that, in the summer of 1930, the opposition made overtures to the Lovestoneites on the basis of work within the Muste movement and against the Communist party." At the outset it will be seen that there is something wrong here. We have been told so often and so long ago about the unity of the opposition with the Right wing, that the allegation now of mere "overtures" for such a bloc, and only in the summer of 1930 at that, comes like an anti-climax. The first rule for people who bear false witness is that all must tell the same story. The Stalinist Hessians of the Pen, who are in the business, ought to remember that in the future.

However, this discrepancy is bridged over by some brand new testimony which reveals "details" of the great conspiracy just discovered by the Foster G. P. U. "In the summer of 1930," they say, "conversations were held between Cannon and Lovestone. The purpose of these parleys was to work out a common base of struggle." In this statement there is no truth whatever, and no semblance of truth. It is a lie made out of the whole cloth in order to bolster up a position which has been politically exploded. The Opposition made no "over-

tures" and held no "conversations" with Lovestone. And that is not because we reject the idea of talking to political opponents, but because to the leaders of this petty-bourgeois faction we have nothing more to say. The last "conversation" we held with them was at the Plenum in the latter part of 1928 when our expulsion from the party was confirmed. What we said on that occasion was printed in the *Militant*, and our remarks were addressed equally to them and to the Fosterites who stood united with them on the same reactionary platform. We did not have to invent that "alliance". It was open and public and all the world could see it. And it didn't happen by accident. It is to cover up the fact of this alliance that Foster concocts the fiction of the bloc of the Right and the Left and invents "conversations" to support it. Or is there also another reason? All signs indicate the reconstitution of the bloc of the Right and the Center in the Russian party. Is the article of March 17th a part of the camouflage to conceal the preparations for it in America?

If the latter is the case—and the assumption is not without foundation—they are proceeding with it in a characteristic manner. The Centrist bureaucracy reflects the pressure of alien classes upon the movement of the revolutionary proletariat. As such it stands in contradiction to the historic interests of the movement and its existence depends upon systematic deception. Driven by an uncontrollable impulse, they must and they do lie automatically, as a man afflicted with the tic must twitch the muscles of his face.

The struggle for existence also in politics sets its conditions for all forms of life. The bureaucrats of Centrism could not live politically without saying one thing and doing another. And they follow this course with an increasing ease and proficiency as the contradictions and difficulties of their position multiply. An example is the recently proclaimed campaign "against exaggeration", which was immediately followed—as was to be expected—by a veritable flood of bigger and better lies, chiefly against the Opposition. How could it be otherwise? For what purpose would they promise truth except to make falsehood appear more credible?

It is quite obvious that moral indignation is without avail in such a situation. We are confronted here with social and political phenomena which must be appraised objectively and scientifically. In the interests of the proletarian movement we explain and also refute the lies of the bureaucrats. But we cannot and we do not promise to refute them all. The volume is too great for a semi-monthly paper to cope with. One cannot bring down a flock of quail with a rifle.

The best we can do is to single out and refute some of the characteristic instances of this game of falsification, enough to expose the whole system. In spite of all limitations the *International Opposition* has managed to do this. The notorious affair of the "Wrangel officer" was such a case. "The alliance with Coolidge and the Austrian Government" was another. The "bloc of the Right and the Left"—embell-

ished lately with cooked-up disclosures about "overtures" and "conversations in the summer of 1930"—is a third. All the rest follow the same pattern.

THE OPPOSITIONISTS AT THE MAY DAY CONFERENCE

The delegates to the May Day Conference from the New York branch of the Communist League gave a practical demonstration of the actual policy of the Opposition. It was not lost on the Communist workers present; of this we may be sure. The action of representatives of the Opposition, in disregarding all provocation and breaking through the bureaucratic barriers to speak directly to the rank and file for solidarity, is one to be proud of and to set up as a model for Oppositionist conduct. This is the way to carry our ideas deeper into the party.

Our policy is the policy of united front with the party. Several hundred Communist workers, assembled at the May Day Conference saw it exemplified there in deed and heard it expounded in the speeches of our delegates. Let the Stalinist disrupters of the workers' vanguard slander and misrepresent us all they want. If we keep our own line straight, and if we find enough comrades who can represent it as faithfully as our May Day Conference delegates did, our slogans and ideas will make their way into the minds and hearts of the conscious proletarians.

A friendly reception was accorded to our delegates by the workers present, despite the attempts to incite a lynching spirit against them. Applause, even, greeted their exposition of our policy. These are signs of the times. Do they not indicate the beginning of a break in the wall between the Opposition and the party ranks?

The results of this incident confirm once more the rightness of our attitude toward the party from which opportunists and middle-heads have tried and still try to divert us. Every new experience proves over again that those who want to turn the course of the Opposition away from the party, who complain about being "a tall to the party", do not speak our language and are not going our way.

We are with the party, and no one can tear us away from it. But to be with the party in the revolutionary, and not merely in the formal sense, means to be against the Centrist bureaucrats, who corrupt and mis-educate it, with an irreconcilability that grows harder and more relentless as we draw nearer to the workers in the ranks. Our delegates to the May Day Conference acted in this spirit and thereby advanced our cause another step forward.

—J. P. C.

MAY DAY MEETING IN CLEVELAND

Comrade John Brahtin will speak at the May Day affair of the German Workers Educational Society at 4308 Franklin Boulevard, Cleveland, Ohio, on May 2nd, at 7:30 p. m. Other speakers will also address the assembly on the significance of the international workingmen's holiday. All are invited.

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