

EDITORIAL NOTES

STRIKE "STRATEGY"

Among the absurdities spawned during the third period of the Comintern's mistakes, a prominent place belongs to the new inventions in the field of trade union policy, relating to strikes, or as the generals say, "strike strategy". During the past few years we heard plenty about these discoveries. Articles, resolutions, and pamphlets if not whole books—have poured forth in a steady stream as evidence that on this subject also the statesmen of Centrism have something new to say. As was to be expected, the new prescriptions have fared badly in the test of experience. Matters were bad enough before the deluge of theses on strike strategy; since then they have been worse.

The central feature of the new revolution—as nobody has been allowed to forget—is "independent strike leadership". Under this formula the tasks of the Communists in strike situations are reduced to an A B C simplicity: they simply take over the direct leadership of the struggle, regardless of reformists reactionaries, fascists or "social-fascists" who may oppose the idea, and regardless also of the proportionate influence they may wield at the moment. But if the opponents of Communism control the union conducting the strike, what then? The answer is given in all the theses: form a new strike committee. And if the workers do not understand and support this action? That is their fault.

In the recent Duluth-Superior dock strike we have seen a brilliant exemplification of these tactics. In this strike, which was so ably reported in the last number of *The Militant* by Clem Forsen, the party confronted a situation in which the sentiments of the workers were divided between several groups. There were supporters of the Halonen group—the Finnish variant of the Loveston Right wing—among the strikers, and the I. W. W. had a strong influence over others. In this respect the strike does not present an exceptional picture. It is rather typical. In the coming wave of strike struggles the Communists will rarely find a situation in which they have no rivals. And in most cases they will be more serious rivals, and better organized. For that reason the Duluth experience should not be overlooked.

The logic of the Duluth situation pointed to only one policy for the Communists. It was their task in the first place to raise the slogan of unity and solidarity for a common front against the employers in the strike. From that it would follow that they should demand a single strike committee, democratically elected by the strikers in which each of the contending factions would have the right to make its proposals and submit them to the decision of the majority. By this means the unity of the workers would be preserved, while they would have the opportunity, at the same time, to judge the proposals of the various groups, test them in action, and make their own free selection assisted by their own experience.

This applies to the question of union affiliation no less than to the other questions. Through their own experiences with the representatives of the rival unions in the strike, and the strike policies sponsored by them the workers would be in a better position to decide whether they want to join the I. W. W. or the Marine Workers Industrial Union. We have no right to demand that they answer this question beforehand if they are not willing to do so. And if they decide against us we have no right to split. Sooner or later the idea must enter the heads of the Communists—a small minority in the labor movement—that leadership of the workers cannot be secured without their knowledge and consent. We cannot order them to follow us. They will not obey, and we have no power to enforce the order.

These ideas are so elementary and obvious that there should be no need of argument about them. But the Communists at Duluth could not apply them. The "strategy" of "independent strike leadership" stood in the way. With what result? They left the slogan of unity to the I. W. W.—and "the Marine Workers Union and party speakers are chased from the lot." The Communists lost the confidence of the workers, their speakers were isolated from the strike meetings, the strike was demoralized and ended in the acceptance of a wage cut. A defeat for the workers, a defeat for Communism. But what of that? The new strike "strategy", like the whole

policy of Centrism from the beginning to end, takes no account of such considerations.



ASSEMBLING THE FUTURE STAFF

The International Opposition has always proceeded from the assumption that the regeneration of the Communist International can be accomplished only by the defeat and displacement of the upper stratum of the Centrist bureaucracy. The degeneration of the leading circle of Stalinism, confirmed in every decisive question of the international revolution over a period of years, is given a fresh confirmation in the political resolution of the Eleventh Plenum of the C. I., this utterly barren and worthless document is a striking revelation of the unbridgeable chasm which stands between the necessities of the movement and the capacities of the official leadership. In this respect it is on a par with the contributions, in theory and practice, of the Stalin mercenaries directing the American party.

It becomes clearer by day that people are not and cannot be the leaders of Communism. They are the chief obstacle in the path of its development. If the kernel of the future staff of Marxist revolutionaries must be assembled in the struggle against them—and there is no other way—then the real headway of the Opposition in maturing and developing new leading forces is a yardstick by which to measure its actual progress.

In this field our gains are indisputable. The Opposition is barred by all the circumstances of the complicated fight from a rapid numerical growth. We never promised that. The crisis is too profound to permit of a quick and easy solution. But in the stubborn and irreconcilable struggle we are preparing the cadres of the future leadership. One has only to examine the recent issues of the *Militant* to convince himself of this vital fact. An increasing number of contributions of a high political standard are coming from comrades who are writing for the first time. This is the unerring sign of internal growth of qualitative improvement and strengthening in our ranks. It is the proof that our forces, unavoidably limited as they are, are preparing for their great historic future and going out to meet it.

To record this promising development is not to rest content with it. For it must be recognized that it marks only a beginning of what we must accomplish if we are to measure up to the magnitude of

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our tasks. It is only a beginning because the education of new Communist propagandists, organizers and politicians does not keep pace with the expansion of our responsibilities, and because they still remain amateurs devoting only their spare time to the movement.

It would be fatal to stop there, and doubly fatal to make a principle of such a condition. "In order to be fully prepared

for his task" said Lenin, "the working-class revolutionist must also become a professional revolutionist." We ought to steer a deliberate course in this direction. The training of the young Communists in the Marxist school of the Opposition should proceed with this objective. The more earnestly we concentrate on this design the better will we utilize the opportunities of the present to prepare the revolutionary staff of the future. —J. P. C.

The Eleventh Plenum of the Comintern

(Continued from last issue)

On the question of social-fascism, the resolution says:

"Wherever the Communists apply mechanically the correct tactic of class against class without taking into account the level of the Communist movement, wherever they identify fascism with social-fascism, the social-fascist leaders with the social democratic workers, the Communists weaken their independent leadership of the class struggle . . . thus permitting the social democracy to maneuver by simulating a struggle against fascism (Austria, Poland) and to deceive the masses who follow them."

In this formulation, there is an open avowal that the identification of fascism with social-fascism was an error that cost the Communist movement dear. Could it be otherwise?

The social democracy is beyond dispute a petty bourgeois wing and the assistant to the bourgeoisie, serving it as a powerful weapon in the struggle against the revolutionary proletariat. Fascism is also a wing of the bourgeoisie, even though of a different type put forward by the bourgeoisie also to battle against the proletariat but under different conditions. The social democracy is the party of the petty bourgeoisie which supports itself primarily upon the labor aristocracy and upon its great influence among the poor strata of the proletariat. Fascism is a petty bourgeois and of functionaries, and possesses an influence among broad strata of the middle peasantry.

These two petty bourgeois movements, in spite of the fact that they support each other subjectively and objectively, sometimes collide because of the diversity of their composition, the differences in their ideological traditions and the methods with which they support the bourgeois regime (bourgeois democracy or dictatorship). The duty of the Marxists is to make clear these differences and not to hide them, for otherwise we might arrive at the conclusion of a monolithic bourgeois class, without internal struggles without competition in the struggle for national and international struggles.

The pitiful results, not only of the bad application, but of the theory of social-fascism in general, proceed from the fact that every worker sees, even by observing daily life, that in spite of all the Communist arguments, in spite of the name of social-fascist acute struggles still break out between the two parties—fascist and social democratic. The fascist party destroys the headquarters of the social democrats and their newspapers, arrests them sometimes, and even tortures and kills them. The worker revolts against this, but the Communist movement does not draw him towards it because, thanks to its ridiculous theory of social-fascism, the Communist party refuses to fight together with the social democracy against fascism at the moment when this becomes a vital necessity for the proletariat. (An investigation conducted by the central organ of the German Communist Party, the *Rote Fahne*, among the Social democratic workers showed the correctness of our contention. To the question: "What prevents you from joining the Communist party?", many workers replied: "I am for you but against the theory of social-fascism.")

What is responsible for the negative results of our work?—The bureaucrats of the Eleventh Plenum of the Comintern reply: "It is the workers who do not understand." They do not want to acknowledge that at the moment when they drew the parallel between fascism and social democracy, they drove towards the identification of fascism and social democracy that is, of the social democratic workers and the fascists.

The casting of the responsibility for the bad application upon the national sections is nothing but a retreat in the theory of social-fascism. But as always, it is upon the ranks that the responsibility is cast.

The bureaucracy is afraid of the truth like an ape of his image, so as not to see its own incompetence, otherwise it would have seen that the weakness of the Communist movement does not reside in the ranks. But the bureaucracy is loyal to it-

self. For every mistake made it immediately finds a formula which frees it of responsibility. In the long run, it always finds a scapegoat (like Molotov, for example) in order to crawl out of a bad situation.

Among other stupidities they never forget to take a kick at the Russian Opposition:

"The work of constructing socialism has finally destroyed all the hopes of the capitalist world, and the 'predictions' of the Trotskyists on the degeneration of Soviet economy into capitalist economy."

Here as everywhere, the bureaucracy fights against the Left Opposition by the solitary means of falsehood. Did the Left Opposition foresee a degeneration of socialist economy into a capitalist economy? Yes, but on one condition: that the policy of Stalin and Bucharin of the years 1926-1927, that is, the policy of "socialism at a snail's pace" be applied. It is Stalin and Bucharin who fought for this policy and slandered the Opposition as agents of the bourgeoisie because of their proposals for industrialization.

Does the Left Opposition today still see a danger of degeneration of the Soviet Union? Yes it sees dangers in the proportions between the different branches of industry (which is sometimes directed by concealed Mensheviks) and in the extraordinary strengthening of the apparatus.

Besides this, the disappearance of the control of the party masses is also a great danger. The degeneration and the replacement of the socialist economy of the U. S. S. R. by a capitalist economy is related above all to the militancy of the proletariat and of its vanguard in the U. S. S. R. as well as outside of it.

The greater the vigilance shown by the C. P. S. U. the closer will be the decisive victory of the proletariat.

The Left Opposition saw all the dangers and called them to the attention of the international proletariat. It will continue to do it, without looking forward to eulogies from the narrow bureaucrats of the Eleventh Plenum but in the interests of the world proletariat. —JANIN.

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