

LETTERS from the MILITANTS

HOW THE I. L. D. DEFENDS OPPOSITION WORKERS

The International Labor Defense and the League of Struggle for Negro Rights had their Scottsboro Defense Conference on May 25. At a previous meeting of the Philadelphia branch of the Communist League we elected comrades Morgenstern and Whitten as delegates and LeCompte as alternate.

At the conference, we handed in our organization's credentials to Leon Platt, party district organizer, who was at the door. We were told to go in. The conference began about 9 p. m. in a small hall that was soon overcrowded. Delegates were asked to remain and visitors to go to another meeting room on the same floor, where they were entertained with speeches of the open air "to the barricades" type.

But in the conference hall itself, another line entirely was pursued. Here Lovestone's famous "united front conferences" were made to look sick by the bureaucrats of the erstwhile "third period". The conference was the biggest thing they had in years. Ninety-eight organizations with 191 delegates were announced.

The officers and committees were of course party affairs—on the q. t. George Powers was chairman. Everything was cut to order. Not quite everything, however. Two people were announced as the Credentials and Resolutions Committee: Jack Rose of the I. L. D. and Coleman of the L. S. N. R. Then, after a time they announced that to speed the work of the committee, four more delegates were to be elected to each committee. That was their "deviation".

Comrade Morgenstern was nominated for the Resolutions Committee and then four others. Bill Lawrence, a C. P. bureaucrat made a motion to ask the four from the bottom of the list if they accept, and put them on the committee. Our protests were of no avail—one, two three and Morgenstern is out. Then, on nominations for the Credentials Committee, comrade Morgenstern was again nominated (the fourth this time) along with four others. Well, the same trick couldn't possibly be repeated. And our motion that the five stand as nominated for the committee was declared absolutely out of order—impossible—the committee must have four and four only. A vote is taken and the four highest elected. Partyites—delegates and non-delegates—voted and abstained in the same way. The chairman announced 36 votes for Morgenstern. He had at least 56 votes.

This looked pretty suspicious to everybody not initiated into the factional trickery of Stalinism. But nothing was said at the time.

Comrade Walters reported—or rather was supposed to report—on the work of the joint committee of the I. L. D. and L. S. N. R. As a matter of fact, he did nothing with the exception of killing time. Several Negroes got up timidly to speak. Nothing of importance. No discussion. Justice, Rights and Rights. The credentials Committee didn't bring in its report until almost 11 p. m. Rose who is in charge of sabotaging the defense of the Philly Op positionists, made the report. He announced 98 organizations with 191 delegates distributed as follows: 11 churches, 19 delegates; 65 fraternal organizations, 126 delegates; 19 T. U.s and unemployed groups, 40 delegates; 2 political organizations, 2 delegates. If you take the trouble to add up the numbers, you get 97 organizations and 187 delegates. All however, were declared seated. No names of organizations were mentioned.

Then resolutions and telegrams were read. Then organizational report. And still nothing said or done. All organizations must give money; must collect money; must sell **Liberators**; must distribute leaflets, etc.

Here comrade Morgenstern finally managed to get the floor to speak on organizational proposals. Morgenstern has some concrete proposals on policy to put forth. He shocks the Stalinists by telling the delegates that this is a good conference, but it does not yet represent the working class in Philadelphia. He proposes to enlarge the work and scope of this conference and draw into it the workers in the A. F. of L. unions and he proposes to send representatives to the S. P.

Then the bureaucrats began to beat the hammer, to shout, etc. But they did not succeed, despite their numbers in drowning out our comrade, and after points of order, procedure and motions had been put and passed (?), he still held the floor. I represent the Communist League and I myself one of those workers in Phila-

delphia arrested and charged with sedition, facing from one to twenty years in prison. . . . These people are trying to stop me because we have different proposals than their's," etc.

The C. P. bureaucrats were wild. "If you don't shut up, we'll throw you out" they screamed, ignoring all protests and motions from the floor to permit Morgie to go on. "That's the only way you can get me away from this conference," he replied, "you'll have to carry me out."

It was a magnificent display to the workers present of the strangulation policy of Stalinism. It warned the workers that even here—at a meeting to protest lynching, they must be on their guard. Here was raised the voice of a delegate of at least one organization who gave expression to those who voted for our comrade's election to the resolution and to the credentials committee: and who would not say Yes, Yes, to all the stupid and criminally incompetent work of the bureaucrat and his puppets.

It was at the same time a fine display of proletarian courage to stand up boldly in the face of this howling mob (the "well-known" Tasker Street gang was present too . . .)

The Stalinists rushed us and forcibly ejected us from the hall. They would surely have beaten us up had there not been so many people around. Cries were raised in the hall: "Let him speak! He's telling the truth! We want to hear him!" and mingled with cries: "Kill him!"

Several delegates and others walked out in protest against the bureaucrats' "united front" tactics.

After our ejection from the hall it might have been expected that the "renegades" were denounced. Not so, this is not the party's line here. On the demand of delegates for an explanation, it was explained (!) that we were not delegates and that all visitors had been asked to leave. The bureaucrats were entirely on the defensive. The reason for the strange explanation of what occurred can be understood from the following:

Throughout the entire evening, we never once heard mention of even the word Communist (let alone Communist party) or socialist, or class struggle, or Rights, Courts, Fairness, Rights, Rights, etc. These bureaucrats even took to leading to the church delegates by calling each other, not comrade, but "brother"—thus, Lawrence to

THE STRANGLERED REVOLUTION - - by LEON TROTSKY

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Garine and Borodin will be delivered of their benevolent vassalage towards the bourgeoisie. They will only have chosen as the new channel of their activity, Chang Kai-Shek, son of the same class and fellow-cadet of Teheng Dai. Head of the military school of Whampoa founded by the Bolsheviks Chiang Kai-Shek does not confine himself to a passive opposition; he is ready to resort to bloody force, not in the plebeian form, the form of the masses, but in the military form and only within limits that will permit the bourgeoisie to preserve an unlimited power over the army. Borodin and Garine, by arming their enemies, disarm and repulse their friends. This is the way they prepare the catastrophe.

But are we not overestimating the influence of the revolutionary bureaucracy upon the events? No, it showed itself stronger than it might have thought, if not for good then at least for evil. The coolies who are only beginning to exist politically require a courageous leadership. Hong requires a bold program. The revolution requires the energies of millions of rising men. But Borodin and his bureaucrats require Teheng Dai and Chiang Kai-Shek. They suppress Hong and prevent the worker from raising his hand. In a few months, they will stifle the agrarian insurrection so as not to rebuff the whole bourgeoisie from the army. Their strength is that they represent the Russian October, Bolshevism, the Communist International. Having usurped authority, the banner and the subsidies of the greatest of revolutions, the bureaucracy bars the road to another revolution which also had all chances of being great.

The dialogue between Borodin and Hong (page 181-182) is the most frightful indictment of Borodin and his Moscow inspirers. Hong, as usual, is after decisive action. He demands the punishment of the most prominent bourgeois. Borodin finds this unique reply: "Those who are paying must not be touched", the revolution

Powers (both party members, "brother chairman", etc.

The fear of our delegation, and the desire to hide the very name "Communist" are far from accidental. They are the reasons why the names of the organizations represented were not mentioned. "Two political organizations"—which two? Socialist, Democratic, Communist? Shall the worker-delegates present know who defends the workers? Sh-sh! Nothing must be said. Thus the national representative of the I.

Shall We Subordinate Social Insurance Fight?

The deep protracted crisis in America has long ago blasted the 1928 platform of Lovestone and his Right wingers. At the same time, the longer the crisis lasts the more is revealed the utter bankruptcy of the policies pursued by the Stalinist (Centrist) party bureaucrats since the crisis set in. At a time (Winter of 1929-1930) when the workers, after experiencing a long period of prosperity (probably the highest degree of prosperity ever experienced by any working class under capitalism in any country) were just beginning, in a bewildered confused manner, to feel the effects of the crisis, the party bureaucrats wrote in their theses of the revolutionary upsurge of the masses and came forward with their now famous slogan of "Fight for the streets". Thus the "third period" was ushered in.

As the crisis deepened, the bureaucrats veered to the Right, following a policy which was a mixture of S. Pism and adventurism. After giving birth to their flimsy "Insurance bill" hunger marches became and still are the order of the day. At the present time, the question of Social Insurance is mentioned with decreasing frequency in the columns of the **Daily Worker**.

Lately the Left Opposition has also manifested a strong tendency to minimize the importance of social insurance. Is the struggle for social insurance to be completely subordinated or given up entirely? What should our attitude to this question be? Where do we stand to-day? How much longer will the crisis last? With the experience of the last two years behind us we should be able to analyze the present situation and draw a few conclusions regarding the length of the crisis.

This much is certain: the crisis which has lasted nearly two years at this time shows no signs whatever of abating. The lowest point so far reached by the crisis was touched this Spring. The tendency is still downward. The latter is shown by the continued falling-off of exports, falling-off of revenue by the so called "blue chip" companies, continued unemployment and

L. D. announced that he and the I. L. D. took the initiative to point to the necessity of organizing a Scottsboro defense.

After we were thrown out there was no more discussion (the delegates evidently fear to make a suggestion, let alone to disagree with anything). And the conference that might have been a stepping-stone to further education and organization of the workers to the necessity of united workers' defense was concluded. Philadelphia, Pa. —LEON GOODMAN.

the downsliding of stocks. The coming Winter, (the third of the crisis) will not only be the most severe thus far but will be one of the worst, if not the worst, ever experienced by the American working class.

In view of the above facts, to subordinate the struggle for social insurance is a severe mistake. Also to speak of such strikes as the textile strike in Lawrence Mass. as the beginning of the offensive struggles of the working class in the period of the upward curve as comrade Swaback recently wrote in the **Militant** is speculative reasoning.

The working class is still entirely on the defensive. The recent strikes which are and will become more numerous, are defensive strikes. The capitalist class having failed to get out of its crisis by two years of lay-offs and wage-cutting has decreed the only "remedy" they know of, namely; more wage cutting, thus seeking to load a greater share of the burden on the working class. Lately they speak even more openly of the need for further wage-cuts. The increasing number of strikes are half-organized, desperate attempts at resistance on the part of the working class. The only unemployed workers that the capitalists willingly feed are those who will do strike-breaking duty. Big business is now rubbing its hands and calculating that the unemployed are now more hungry than they were two years ago, hence ready to work at any price and under any circumstances.

The Communists must not only take a greater hand in these defensive strikes but must organize and lead them. Against the wage cuts we must counterpose the shorter working week with no reduction of pay. We must not give up the fight for social insurance but on the contrary we must keep this issue in the foreground. Around this fight and the fight for a shorter working week, the unemployed and the employed must be united in the battles that will develop during the coming Fall and Winter over the question of wage reduction.

—MIHELIC.

is not so simple, says Garine for his part. "The revolution means paying the army dearly," adds Borodin. These aphorisms contain all the elements of the noose in which the Chinese revolution was strangled. Borodin preserved the bourgeoisie which, in recompense, made contributions for the "revolution", the money going to the army of Chang Kai-Shek. The army of Chang Kai-Shek exterminated the proletariat and liquidated the revolution. Was it really impossible to foresee? And was it in truth not foreseen? The bourgeoisie pays willingly only for the army which serves it against the people. The army of the revolution does not wait for rewards: it makes them pay. That is called the revolutionary dictatorship. Hong came forward successfully in the workers' meetings and overwhelms the "Russians", the bearers of ruin for the revolution. The road of Hong himself does not lead to the goal but he is right as against Borodin. "Did the Tai-Ping leaders have Russian advisors? And the Boxers?" (page 189). Had the Chinese revolution of 1924-1927 been left to itself, it would perhaps not have come to victory immediately but it would not have resorted to the methods of Harikari. It would not have known shameful capitulations and it would have trained revolutionary cadres. Between the dual power of Canton and that of Petrograd there is the tragic difference that in China there actually does not exist Bolshevism; under the name of Trotskyism, it was declared a counter-revolutionary doctrine and was persecuted by every method of calumny and repression. Where Kerensky did not succeed during the July days, Stalin succeeded ten years later in China.

Borodin and "all the Bolsheviks of his generation", Garine tells us, were marked by their struggle against the anarchists. This remark was needed by the author so as to prepare the reader for the struggle of Borodin against Hong's group. Historically it is false. Anarchism was unable to raise its head in Russia not because the Bolsheviks fought successfully against it

but because they had first dug up the ground under its steps. Anarchism, if it does not live within the four walls of intellectuals' cafes or newspaper editorial offices, but has penetrated more deeply, translates the psychology of despair in the masses and represents the political punishment for the deceptions of democracy and the treachery of opportunism. The boldness of Bolshevism in posing the revolutionary problems and in teaching their solution, left no room for the development of anarchism in Russia. But if the historical investigation of Malraux is not exact, his recital shows admirably how the opportunist policy of Stalin-Borodin prepared the ground for anarchist terrorism in China.

Driven by the logic of this policy, Borodin consents to adopt a decree against the terrorists. The solid revolutionists, repulsed into the road of adventurism by the crimes of the Moscow leaders, the bourgeoisie of Canton, provided with the benediction of the Comintern, declares them outlaws. They reply with acts of terrorism against the pseudo-revolutionary bureaucrats which protects the bourgeoisie that pays. Borodin and Garine seize the terrorists and destroy them, no longer defending the bourgeois but their own heads. It is thus that the policy of conciliation slides down fatally to the lowest degree of felony.

The book is called "The Conquerors". This title which has a double meaning when the revolution paints itself with imperialism, the author attributes to the Russian Bolsheviks, or more exactly, to a certain faction among them. The conquerors? The Chinese masses rose for a revolutionary insurrection, under the unmistakable influence of the October upheaval as their example and with Bolshevism as their banner. But the "conquerors" conquered nothing. On the contrary, they surrendered everything to the enemy. If the Russian revolution called forth the Chinese revolution the Russian epigones suppressed it. Malraux does not make these deductions. He does not even seem to think of them. They only follow all the more clearly from the basis of his remarkable book.