

WORKERS
OF THE
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UNITE!

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Off the Leninist Track

Stalin's «New Economic Policy»

The "new economic policy" enunciated by Stalin at a meeting of industrial directors on June 23, and made public only two weeks later, has brought him paeans of praise from the bourgeois press. "This latest step back toward the normal in working conditions," writes the New York Times on July 7, "is scarcely shorter than the restoration of private property rights and liberties would be." Fortunately, the elation of the Times contains more wish than reality. There is no doubt that the Times and other bourgeois commentators would prefer to have the Soviet Union restore those "private property rights and liberties" which have demonstrated their "superiority" over the socialist system by the planetary crisis of capitalism and the misery and want that have accompanied it. There is equally no doubt, however, that the whole spirit of Stalin's "new policy", the formal and official adoption of which is naturally a foregone conclusion, marks a step backward from the revolutionary policies of Lenin's time.

How the New Policy Is Made

The manner in which the new turn is made is in itself characteristic of the state of affairs in the Soviet Union today. In the days before the bureaucracy had fastened its talons upon the party, questions of this sort were subjected to a thorough discussion by all the Communists, and the non-party workers as well. Every phase of the problem was treated in so adequate and clear a manner that it had the guarantee of the collective wisdom of the party. What is more, its promulgation was assured of an understanding and a popularity among the workers. The best instance of this mode of procedure—the only one proper for a workers' state—was the manner in which Lenin first introduced, had adopted and applied the New Economic Policy. In the present case, the new turn was first made public upon the sole responsibility of the infallible General Secretary. The party—much less the working class as a whole—was never consulted. The speech was deliberately withheld until the day when the Central Committee session opened. In this way, Stalin insured himself against any discussion at all. The Central Committee, a purely "advisory" body to the General Secretary, will adopt the measures proposed by him without a word.

What is the essence and the spirit of the new measures proposed? It is a disquieting continuation of the course which the Stalinist bureaucracy has pursued since its rise to power. It means that the hand is stretched out more openly to the bourgeois elements, while the working class is pushed back another step from control or influence over industry.

"The saboteurs still exist and will exist so long as classes exist, but saboteurs are now isolated (?). The attitude towards the old intelligentsia must change. The desire for cooperation, together with efforts to improve the material situation of the intelligentsia must be stressed."

A realistic Communist statesman cannot, to be sure, reject or ever fail to seek the cooperation of the bourgeois specialists in the construction of a socialist society. They are some of those "bricks" of the old society which are found at hand when the old structure is torn down by the insurrectionary proletariat. But the most vigilant attitude must be observed towards them. Assurances must be given that the workers have the opportunity to control them, to prevent them from undermining the rule of the proletariat. It was the failure to establish these assurances in the past that made possible the penetration into the highest posts of the party; the Soviet and the economic institutions of such elements as were finally uncovered in the recent trials and those that preceded them. Does Stalin's "new policy" strengthen these assurances? The contrary is unfortunately true.

"Clumsy, topheavy Soviet organizations," says Stalin, "must be divided up and amplified to permit leaders the possibility of learning what happens to all parts of the apparatus. Collective leadership must develop into individual responsibility. A chairman, with a few assistants must head concerns, whilst remaining members of the collegium must descend into practical work to their own advantage and that of the cause."

How Lenin Viewed the Problem

Lenin did not oppose the "subjecting of the will of thousands to the will of one" in industry, any more than the Bolsheviks were ever opposed to the establishment of piece work during the transition period to Communism. But Lenin did not fail to emphasize that "the more firmly we now have to advocate a merciless and firm rule and dictatorship of individuals for definite processes of work during certain periods of purely executive functions, the more diverse should be the forms and means of mass control in order to paralyze every possibility of distorting the Soviet rule, in order repeatedly and tirelessly to remove

the wild grass of bureaucratism" (Soviets at Work, page 42.)

The "forms and means of mass control" have been reduced to a minimum under the Stalinist regime. The Bessekovskys and Agabekovs can rise to the top in the party because the workers do not control them from below. The Ramzin, the Ossatchis, together with the Menshevik conspirators, can go on for years with their criminal work because collective leadership has not only "developed into individual responsibility" but because there is no control of the workers over this "responsibility".

In 1927, Stalin told the American trade union delegation to Russia that "not a single factory manager can remain at his post contrary to the will of the workers or the particular trade union. It must be observed also that in every factory and workshop there is a factory council elected by the workers, which control the activities of the management of the particular enterprise," etc., etc. Since then, the decree was issued abolishing all these guarantees, which were exaggerated by Stalin even then. "Members of the Communist party, union representatives and shop committees," said the decree, "are instructed not to interfere in questions of management." (Freiheit, September 9, 1929.)

Socialism cannot be built up by bourgeois specialists. Not even the foundations for a socialist economy can be laid by them. They can be of great aid, but the main task requires the wholehearted, enthusiastic, collective, initiative, self-activity and participation of the proletarian masses. They must not merely "descend into practical work", they must also guide, manage, control, check the plans by the results; they must feel in the most intimate sense of the word that they, the working class, are the rulers of society, the masters of their destiny. Without the stubborn maintenance and deepening of this feeling among the workers, industries may grow to fabulous proportions, all the efficiency systems in the world may be introduced, but a socialist society will not be erected.

Four years ago, the Left Opposition issued the warning in its Platform:

The Opposition's Warning

"The regime within the shops has deteriorated. The administrative organs are striving more and more to establish their unlimited authority. The hiring and discharge of workers is actually in the sole hands of the administration. Pre-revolutionary relations between master and workmen are not rarely to be found. . . . Never before have the trade unions and the working mass stood so far from the management of the socialist industry as now. The self-activity of the mass of workers organized in the trade unions is being replaced by agreements between the secretaries of locals, the factory directors, and the chairmen of the factory and shop committees (the "triangle"). The attitude of the workers to the factory and shop committees is one of distrust."

Since these lines were written, the process of removing the workers from control of management has advanced with giant strides. Even the agreements of the "triangle" no longer obtain. The latest "turn" only makes matters worse. How much longer will the Stalinist bureaucracy be permitted to pursue its disastrous course which strengthens the elements hostile to proletarian rule, which weakens the hold of the working class, which threatens the revolution with dissolution and decay?

—MAX SHACHTMAN.

On Guard Against Betrayal!

Hillman's New Racket - The «Campaign» Against Racketeering

The Amalgamated Clothing Workers and its president, Sidney Hillman, are being given wide publicity in the press. The A. C. W. through Hillman has placed itself on record as a bitter enemy of racketeering and gangsterism. Hillman's fame as a progressive labor leader, won by his elaborate system of self-advertising, has been augmented by a new achievement: the ridding of the men's clothing industry of the plague of racketeering and gangsterism.

He started his campaign against racketeering in connection with the declaration of his program for the coming season at a meeting of 1,500 shop chairmen called by the New York Joint Board. The program calls for a general strike in the New York market.

At that meeting, Hillman stressed the point of putting an end to the racketeering and gangsterism rampant inside and out of the union. He referred to the murderous attack upon officers and members of the union by gangsters in the strike against Silverman and Turner, which must be taken as a challenge to the organization and met with the utmost determination.

Shall Eight Die?

The day draws near when eight innocent Negro boys will be taken one by one to the electric chair to have their lives burned out by the fatal current. The sadistic bourgeoisie of the South, thirsting for blood, is determined to add the Scottsboro victims wholesale to the list of those who have fallen to the greater glory of Lynch law and capitalist justice.

The day of the execution which was set for July 10 has been postponed pending an appeal to a higher court by the defense. But this is only the most temporary and deceptive of delays. It was in this manner that the murderers of Massachusetts kept Sacco and Vanzetti in nerve-racking suspense, while the movement for them was partly deluded and taken off its guard. Only the revolutionists pointed out then as they are pointing out today: What will save these victims from the savages who plan their death is an iron-willed mass movement of the workers. The courts and their justice are a cruel illusion. They exist only as the instruments of our enemies. To expect justice for the oppressed from the hands of their masters is to expect water from stones. Rely upon your own action, upon the power of your united efforts!

The stay of execution must now be utilized to the maximum. The workers and the Negro masses as a whole who have rightly made the cause of the Scottsboro boys their own cause, have no interest at all in "saving the fair name of Alabama" or in "vindicting the justice of our courts". They can safely leave these aims to the whining liberals—black and white—who have played such a shameful role in the whole case. Let them continue their chosen task of "saving the face" of the decadent institutions of a barbaric ruling class. We want to save the lives of the Eight. We want to use the occasion offered by the movement created for the defense of the prisoners as a new point of departure for an offensive against the virulent system of super-exploitation of the Negro masses, against the political, social and economic inequality under which they suffer. For it is not merely eight members of an oppressed race who are held for execution. The Negro masses have been tried and sentenced in the lynching atmosphere of the court.

There is no time to be lost. The movement must be extended and rooted deeper in the masses. But its base must be a solid and sure one. It is not the petty bourgeois Negro masses who will save the boys. They oscillate constantly between their white masters and the Negro masses. Their most "consistent" representatives are the heads of the National Association for the Advancement of the Colored People, N. A. A. P. are the various religious and church organizations which have come to the I. L. D. conferences a sufficiently sure and firm basis for the movement. They are allies of the moment—but not for long. The movement must be extended among the trade unions, the workers' organizations, and above all, into the depths of the most exploited sections of the Negroes themselves.

Giving large enough scope, such a movement can wrest the Eight from the talons of the Bourbon South. Upon the workers—black and white—rests the responsibility for the right reply: Shall Eight Die? Let there be such a thunderous response that the Southern assassins shall hear and heed!

On Guard Against Betrayal!

Hillman's New Racket - The «Campaign» Against Racketeering

The following week, Hillman issued appeals to the clothing retailers and the general public for support in his noble campaign to clean out racketeering in the industry. He then held a number of conferences with Mayor Walker, District Attorney Crain and Police Commissioner Mulrooney, and secured their services in the coming struggle against the enemies of law and order and the wreckers of the industry. Upon the Mayor's question whether he could promise that there would be no strike in New York, Hillman answered that "if there will be a strike, the racketeers would call it" and that he was concerned with peace and cooperation in the industry.

In his public statements and declarations about the contemplated general strike, Hillman made it clear that the strike would be called only against the unfair contractors and manufacturers who are under the influence and protection of the racketeers and constitute only about 3 percent or so of the industry and whose shops number about 60 in all.

Who then are the racketeers so powerful and influential inside and outside (Continued on page 3)

23,000 West Virginia Miners Are Out in New Strike Wave

Forward to a United Front of the Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois and W. Va. Miners

On July 6, the miners of the Kanawha, West Virginia, coal fields went on strike against the existing starvation conditions and on the very first day equalled in the splendid manner the solidarity already displayed by the miners in other sections now on strike. A total of 23,000 went out in this field. This strike is called in the name of and under leadership of the independent West Virginia Mine Workers union. The conditions of poverty there are almost indescribable, wages are down to rock bottom, as low as 28c for getting out a ton of coal. It thus follows right upon the heels of the strike in the Western Pennsylvania, Eastern Ohio and Northern West Virginia territory under leadership of the National Miners Union and once more

RUSH RELIEF!

The strikers are in desperate need of relief to help them win. The coal operators are relying not only upon their thugs, private and public, but also upon General Hunger. The splendid movement of the tens of thousands of miners, harbinger of a new day in the American working class, must not be allowed to suffer for want of relief. The miners saved nothing from the "prosperity" days, because they had nothing to save. They have infinitely less now. They and their kids and wives are hungry for want of food. They are homeless for want of homes—the operators evict them daily. They are ragged for want of clothes. Aid is desperately needed. It will help win the strike. We urge all workers to send funds and clothing either to the local stations, or to the main office of the Pennsylvania-Ohio Striking Miners Relief Committee, 611 Penn Avenue Pittsburgh Pa.

bears testimony to the widespread revolt within the coal miners' ranks.

Kanawha A New Impetus

In this last named territory, the murderous police and gunman attacks, the vicious injunctions and the treacherous efforts of U. M. W. officialdom have succeeded only in bringing a very small fraction back to the pits. The action of the Kanawha field miners should now offer a new inspiration to their ranks and vividly reawaken the glorious tradition of the battles of Paint Creek and Cabin Creek. It is to be expected that the coal operators here will also live up to their brutal tradition of using all ruthless attempts to crush this strike. The contemptible gang of the U. M. W. is already on the job endeavoring to serve the bosses as they did in the past, when the West Virginia miners were left in the lurch in 1924.

In Harlan, Kentucky, nearly 10,000 miners are still standing solid, striking under local leadership. Seventeen of their numbers are within the shadow of the electric chair for having defended themselves and their union against the operators' gunmen. Recently also some 2,000 miners struck against starvation conditions in the heart of the Illinois coal fields at the Orient mines, number 1 and 2. Here also the John L. Lewis forces attempted to rescue the bosses by ordering the men back to work. But just so much more should the miners' struggles throughout the country become a rallying cry to all militant workers to give their unstinted support to the relief actions which are being carried on in behalf of these strikes and to the defense of those incarcerated.

Simultaneously with the beginning of the West Virginia strike, the Illinois rebellious miners are meeting in convention at Belleville. Whether the definite steps for the formation of a new union will be taken at that gathering is not yet known. But it can be stated with absolute certainty that the wreckage wrought everywhere in the soft coal fields by the capitalist agents of the John L. Lewis clan should leave no doubt in the minds of these miners that there is no other way out. The lack of organization in the face of these important growing struggles is sadly apparent. The lack of unity stands out clearly. The time should be past for office-seeking elements, who will attempt to capitalize the situation in order to land a job. It should also become a real test and a process of selection of leadership of the character ready to take the bold steps required by the situation. There should be an opportunity as well to make short shrift of the opportunists and conscious reformists who step into the situation to harness the movements into safe channels and prevent the militancy from unfolding. The actual test of the present situation will quickly show where each aspirant to leadership stands. We have presented a picture of various

independent movements developing from various directions and through various methods and forms of the struggle. But all are genuine in mass character, all are striving in one general direction—toward the building of a miners' union free from the corrupting and treacherous influence of the old John L. Lewis machine. This is what we have already emphasized as the only way out. Its correctness is being demonstrated in its first steps by the realities of life. It gives the lie to the Right wing Lovestonites, to their proposal to return to the decadent U. M. W., and flings it back into their face. How pitiful was their aim, how clearly it is now being demonstrated that it could mean only going backward, to give up struggle, to submit to the bosses' agents and to prohibit the miners from finding a militant solution to their problems! Well, the miners gave no heed to such reformist proposals and even if they do not fully succeed at this present stage a tremendous step forward has been taken.

However, these struggles of various bona fide movements developing in one general direction, despite existing defects, present yet one bigger problem pressing for a solution. That is the one of unifying all these fighting miners ranks within one militant union embracing all the coal diggers and resting solidly on a class basis. The proposal made by Foster in the Daily Worker to invite these various sections, or perhaps only some of them, to come to the planned convention of the National Miners' Union, while it shows a change from the former reactionary policy of boycott of these movements by the Centrists, brought about by the pressure of events and by the pressure of our correct proposals, is nevertheless false. It does not present the correct method

of actually solving this problem. We have emphasized before that the correct method is a genuinely established united front, an amalgamation of all these rebellious miners' sections with the N. W. U. leading toward complete unification within one such all embracing union. We repeat: these various movements are independent and genuine in their mass content as well as in their revolt against the old corrupt bureaucracy. They must all be treated as such and there must be an honest approach toward them in recognition of this basis. In the process of unifications, the Communists have nothing to fear and everything to gain. Only the office-seeking opportunists and outright traitor need fear the unity of the fighting miners. And it is precisely in such a process that they will stand exposed, while the superiority of the revolutionary policies and leadership will be demonstrated.

The Need for the United Front

The National Miners' Union, and more particularly the party leadership, has a great opportunity in this situation to carry out a Leninist policy of the united front. It is absolutely essential, in the interest of the rank and file coal miners, that it needs this opportunity. Translated into action, into practical steps required by the present situation it means that the party leadership must adopt a policy for the National Miners' Union of it becoming instrumental in calling a conference and take all the other necessary steps to bring genuine representatives of these independent sectional movements together to discuss their problems as equals and to find the way and provide the means for united action. When these steps are taken there should be good prospects for unification into one militant miners union. —A. S.

For a United Defense!

Movement Begins for the Defense of the Two Philadelphia Oppositionists

George J. Saul, of the Communist League, has just returned to New York from a week's series of meetings in Philadelphia where he addressed workers on the significance of the conviction recently handed down against Bernard Morgenstern and Leon Goodman, two members of the Left Opposition who were indicted under the Flynn Sedition Act of Pennsylvania for distributing an Opposition leaflet on the unemployment situation. Comrade Saul reports hundreds of workers in attendance at meetings, great interest displayed in the case and a good distribution of literature.

In order to centralize the defense movement, a Morgenstern-Goodman Defense Committee is now being formed in Philadelphia, representing various elements in the labor movement. The Committee will undertake the agitational campaign for the two militants, conducting the defense, raising the necessary funds, sending out speakers to labor organizations and so forth. The need for a separate committee for this case has been rendered imperative by the fact that the International Labor Defense, under the control of the Stalinist bureaucracy has shamelessly sabotaged the defense of the two workers from the very beginning, solely because they were active in the I. L. D. even failed to provide the day, the official party and I. L. D. publications have not breathed a word about the arrests, the trial and the conviction, herents of the Left Opposition. To this workers with legal defense—much less an agitational movement. To blacken the record even more deeply, our comrades have been forcibly ejected from a defense conference called by the I. L. D.

This criminal procedure becomes all the more disgraceful and disastrous for the movement in view of the numerous other cases that have been or are being prosecuted under the Flynn Act. A number of Communist party members have already been convicted under it. Others run the same danger. Under the provisions of the Act, any organization with a Communist program is automatically considered illegal. In other words, the various prosecutions for "sedition" are a preliminary to crushing the whole Communist movement, driving it out of legal existence, as a forerunner to intensified attacks upon the labor movement and the working class as a whole.

United Front Imperative

Such a state of affairs demands the most energetic struggle possible, and a struggle upon the basis of unity. The failure of the I. L. D. bureaucrats to take even the elementary steps towards establishing class solidarity in defense work has already met with the protest or inquiries from numerous branches and members of the I. L. D. This is the best sign of the vitality of the ranks of the organization, whom the bureaucrats seek to stifle. The sabotage of the I. L. D., which is giving signal service to the state prosecution, must be stopped forthwith. The workers in the ranks must demand a change in policy. The movement must be broadened. It must be built upon the basis of the united front. It must embrace the cases of Lawrence, Ryder, Morgenstern, Goodman and other victims of the Flynn Act.

The Left Opposition is prepared to give its entire support to such a united front movement.

A PICNIC

To Celebrate the Appearance of the Weekly Militant

The New York branch of the Communist League invites all militants to join with it at the Picnic to celebrate the appearance of the Weekly Militant. The affair will take place on

SUNDAY, JULY 12, 1931

at TIBBETTS BROOK PARK

Games — Races — Rowing — Baseball

Directions: Jerome Ave.—Woodlawn subway to the end of the line. Hike or take street car to Park: Plot 8.