

WORKERS
OF THE
WORLD.
UNITE

THE MILITANT

Weekly Organ of the Communist League of America [Opposition]



VOLUME IV, NO. 13 [WHOLE NO. 77]

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, AUGUST 3, 1931

PRICE 5 CENTS

The New Musteite Party

The C.P.L.A. Prepares a Home for the Political Homeless

Quietly, heralded by only the most modest announcements and by even less enthusiasm, the first bricks are being laid in the dark of night for a new political party, a home for the politically homeless in the labor movement. The new structure is not provided with a firm foundation, its bricks are not tinged with one clear color but those engaged in erecting it are filled with the faith based upon a hope that it will offer them a refuge from the conflicting winds of the class struggle.

The party is the one that was tentatively "launched" at the last meeting of the New York branch of the Conference for Progressive Labor Action in the form of a statement presented by A. J. Muste in the name of the organization's executive committee, "Do We Need a New Political Organization in the United States?". The 150 stalwarts who attended the meeting finally endorsed the document by a slim majority against the votes of the Socialist party members present and a "bolt" by part of the Lovestonites who had entered the C. P. L. A. to give it a "radical" coloration. The nub of the new Musteite party is contained in the following extended excerpt from the manifesto:

Socialists and Communists

"The Socialist Party in the United States today does not have a clear working class orientation. It has not, as a matter of fact, succeeded in winning the confidence of American workers. Some of its exponents have frankly abandoned Marxism as a labor philosophy, and have no philosophy to offer in its place. Others profess to retain Marxism, but exhibit no militancy in carrying on the class struggle. It pursues a policy of "neutrality" toward the trade unions, which in practice amounts to leaving them in the hands of bureaucrats and corruptionists, makes it impossible for a man to be regarded as a good Socialist on the political field, while he is a reactionary on the trade union field and makes it impossible to distinguish between so-called Socialist unions and any other. It has lacked vigor and aggressiveness in supporting, inspiring and leading efforts to organize the masses of unskilled and semi-skilled workers in the basic industries. Its propaganda tacitly assumes that by a gradual democratic process the basic industries of the nation can be bought from their present owners and socialized, and evades any realistic analysis of the modern scene to determine what foundation there is for such an expectation. It is confused and at times distinctly antagonistic in its attitude towards Soviet Russia. It is not aggressive and militant in its struggle against militarism. It is not out-and-out Socialist, neither has it yet demonstrated that it can be an effective Left progressive American party.

"The Communist party in the United States today suffers from a mechanical dictation from outside which severely handicaps it in dealing with the American situation. It does not have its roots primarily in the American soil. It has pursued a divisive and sectarian policy in the trade unions. It has abandoned any honest effort to build a mass labor party. It talks a fantastic and doctrinaire language which American workers do not understand. It overreaches itself and tries to impose a Communist dogmatism on the workers, rather than gaining their confidence and developing their initiative by giving them a realistic and democratic leadership in their daily struggles.

"The Socialist party is too discredited for these homeless Centrists, and they proceed to say so as politely as possible; the Communist party is too revolutionary for them and as is the custom of these people, they conceal this petty bourgeois fear of the revolutionary movement behind weasel words about formal dictation, sectarianism (which to them does not mean an isolationist policy so much as an intransigence in principle) and lack of realism. The Musteite leaders therefore propose to organize a party oscillating between the two basic forces within the modern labor movement; the reformist and the revolutionary. But the purpose of this new movement is not merely that. Only a blind man can fail to see that ever new sections of the workers are moving today, however slowly or unevenly, towards Communism. They are the most militant and conscious sections of the class. That the leadership of the official Communist party and their policies do not facilitate this movement in their direction, is another matter, but it does not remove the fact that the movement is there.

To imagine that the new Musteite party is being organized for the purpose of accelerating this movement in the direction of revolutionary channels and against reformism ("Yes," said Muste in reply to a question, "it is intended that this party be an anti-reformist and revolutionary party.")—is not to understand anything about the role of these people in the labor movement. In "let" times, they were barely dis-

tinguishable from the reactionary and conservative elements in the labor movement. As soon as the working class showed signs of moving away from the bourgeoisie, and even from reformism, the Musteites came forward as a barrier in the path of the workers' advance seeking to turn them back to reformism by devious routes, but under no conditions to allow them to take the natural road of development towards Communism. Since its organization, this has been the primary function of the C. P. L. A. Developed on the trade union field as a political bloc of yellow socialists, labor bureaucrats, pseudo-progressives, and finally embracing turncoats from Communism like Miller and Benjamin and even further "Left"—the Lovestone group itself—the C. P. L. A. now seeks to transfer its functions more directly into the political field.

The Sponsors of the Party

Who are presiding over the birth of the new infant? The names themselves are instructive. Foremost among them is the name of Bert Miller, the notorious anti-Trotskyist, who renounced even that mild variety of Communism represented by Lovestone in order to crawl into the C. P. L. A.; another father of the new party is J. B. Salutsky-Hardman, whom Miller helped expel from the Communist Party as a traitor, and who has since been engaged in the principal literary defense of the Hillman regime of the blackjack, the gangster and class collaboration in the A. C. W. A.; A. J. Muste, the "ideological" leader of the pseudo-progressives in the labor movement whose greatest concern is to prove that in his criticism of the A. F. of L. bureaucracy he does not associate himself for an instant with the only force that has conducted a serious struggle against the disastrous policies of treason pursued by the Green hierarchy—the Communist movement; Ludwig Lore, who falls to find any real distinction between the revolutionary Communist movement and the phrase-mongers of the socialist "Left", wing in England, Germany and the United States.

These are elements without a political home, the classic exponents of Centrism who seek to repeat today the farcical experiment made a decade ago with the formation of a "Two and a Half International". That the sponsors of the new party have their eyes turned towards the recent attempts made by the "Left" wing leaders of the British I. L. P. to build a new "international" is equally sure that the second edition of the Two and a Half International, including its American "section" will follow the first back into the camp of social democracy from which it emanated. No other fate is reserved for the petty bourgeois politicians who attempt to eke out a brief independent existence on the basis of the workers' dissatisfaction with the social democracy and a parasitic criticism of the blunders of official Communism.

The new party—if it can be dignified by such a designation—is already having its troubles. The socialist partners of the C. P. L. A., including the "Left wing militants" are already making barely concealed threats to withdraw their support from the Muste group if it proceeds to establish a rival to the S. P. The "revolutionary-reformist" party of Muste-Lore-Miller-Salutsky and Co. is being born under luckless auspices which already determine its slender and brief future. We shall return to other phases of the question on another occasion.

After the Lamont Letter

Wage Cut Drive

CLASS STRUGGLE OR "PEACE"

Once again, a member of the ill-starred capitalist efficiency cabinet of the great engineer, Hoover's Lamont has unintentionally given away the secret preparations of the bosses for an organized—and that is about all that is real in the social democratic myth of "organized capitalism"—campaign for deep-going nation-wide wage-cuts, ranging from the pivotal steel industry to coal, textiles, manufacturing, all along the line. What Lamont blurted out has not been unknown to the Communists, who were the first to predict the inevitability of a concerted offensive action of the bourgeoisie in the attempt to disentangle themselves from the economic crisis which they and their system have brought about—at the expense of the working class, by whose toil and sweat alone they are able to subsist.

What Is the Situation of the Workers At This Juncture?

Of course, Hoover and his Secretary of Labor Doak who got his training in deceiving and misleading workers from his days in the Railroad Brotherhoods, immediately came out with denials, asserting that the government still remains firm in its stand against wage cuts and rejecting all responsibility for Lamont's letter to Condon. But, too late. The times have been spilled. The New York Times, the mouthpiece of Wall Street, if any, gently chides Lamont for his rashness, deploring the "lack of cooperation" in the government and proceeds . . . to explain the necessity, yes even the inevitability of wage reduction, all in one editorial.

And how do things actually stand at the moment. To what extent has the attack on the workers advanced? This may be gathered from figures published in the June number of the Monthly Labor Review by the Department of Labor.

The figures are extremely interesting and should be studied attentively by every worker.

Per Capita Earnings

(involving some 5 or 6 million workers)

| Industry | March 1930 | | February 1931 | |
|---------------|------------|------|---------------|------|
| | 1930 | 1931 | 1931 | 1931 |
| Manufacturing | \$24.30 | X13 | -9.4 | |
| Anthracite | | | | |
| Mining | 25.14 | -22 | -9.2 | |
| Bit. Mining | 18.86 | -1.6 | -16.2 | |

We notice a particularly sharp downward trend in per capita earnings during the month of March in the current year, and when we keep in mind that the figures for the manufacturing sector include 54 industries, we can easily picture the universality of the trend. Later on we shall show that this drop in average wages is quite out of proportion even with the growth of unemployment and has a cause behind it, wage cuts already carried into effect. From the mining figures it becomes quite apparent why the strike struggle wave has found its inception in that industry.

From February to March 1931, unemployment among the railroad workers increased by 1.4 percent, while payrolls fell 8.1 percent. Taking the figures for the same month in 1929 as 100, the figures for March 1931 are:

Anthracite Bituminous

| Emp'l'ts | Payrolls | Emp'l'ts | Payrolls |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 81.2 | 70.1 | 88.8 | 65.2 |

In the iron and steel industries we find:

| Employment | | Payrolls | |
|------------|-----------|------------|------------|
| 1930 | 1931 | 1930 | 1931 |
| April 91.9 | Feb. 72.0 | March 72.6 | April 71.9 |

In 54 manufacturing industries in

| Employment | | Payrolls | |
|------------|-----------|------------|------------|
| 1930 | 1931 | 1930 | 1931 |
| April 92.8 | Feb. 60.4 | March 62.0 | April 60.7 |

(Continued on page 2)

Mining And Textile Strikes In Danger

Stalinist Failure to Apply United Front Threatens Strike

Every day of the prolongation of the struggles renders more acute the dangers that threaten the two big strike movements that have swept thousands of workers into action—the strikes of the coal miners and of the textile workers. The dangers arise out of the disunity, the separatism, the isolation of the strikes—even when considered from the standpoint of each industry separately. From the very beginning this has been pointed out by the Militant, and the warning sounded that unless swift and resolute measures were taken to overcome the prevailing disunity, the strikes would be threatened with the poison of slow disintegration and defeat.

Our warning was addressed primarily to the Left wing and to the official Communist party which leads it—no initiative in the direction of unity can be expected from the reformist labor leaders who thrive and prosper on the basis of division in the ranks of the working class. Yet, although each day has brought new confirmation of the need of putting into practice the policy we put forward, the party has been compelled to mark time on one spot by a leadership more concerned about maintaining its prestige and the "infallibility" of its policies than in adjusting them to suit the needs of the class struggle and the interests of the movement.

The Party on the Mine Strike

Now, driven to speak out by the serious state in which the Pennsylvania mine strike has developed, the Political Bureau of the Communist party has issued a long declaration in the Daily Worker, which describes more openly than

ever before the gravity of the situation. The strike is still isolated; men have gone back by the thousands, under the pressure of terror or lacking faith in the strike's possibilities; the endeavors to spread the strike have thus far produced the most meager results. What do the party leaders propose as a remedy? Not a single serious step that has not been advocated up to now: spread the strike, intensify relief, fight the Musteites.

All this is very good, except that the militants in the mine fields are not told how this is to be done to secure different results from those obtained with the methods pursued up to now. One small "concession", which remains a pure phrase when taken with the whole party policy, is made in the correct direction by the belated proposal to "organize our opposition and fight for our program inside the U. M. W. A. locals no matter if controlled by the open Lewis machine or by the various Musteite elements". But this is far from enough.

While one of the criticisms made is that of "insufficient reliance in the united front", the statement does not give one other word to this immensely important problem. The strike of the independent West Virginia Miners Union is not even mentioned. The semi-independent Kentucky strike is not referred to. Yet they are in some respects the key to the situation. To give new courage, new heart, new vigor and militancy to the miners strike it is necessary to unite all the autonomous movements—Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia (north and south) Illinois, etc.—in a single front. Not one of these movements can

bring on successfully by itself. The prime necessity, therefore, is for the N. M. U. to take the initiative to address the organizations conducting the other strikes and rebel movements with the proposals for a joint conference to unify them all. This, together with agitation in the ranks everywhere to have the workers exercise pressure upon their leaders, is the first real step towards a genuine united front, desperately needed by the miners.

When the Stalinist leaders fail to take this step, as they have up to now in spite of the fact that it does not diverge for an instant from the policies recommended by the early congresses of the Comintern, they are sacrificing the living interests of the movement for the sake of the dead letter of their dogmatic formulae.

The Paterson Strike

With little change, the same holds true for the textile strikes, particularly in Paterson, where we have the saddening picture of two strikes, under two organizations, with two separate systems of activity. The stubborn stupidity of Stalinist policy in this case has created the anomalous situation where the whole crew of Right wing and reformist leaders of the A. F. of L.—from Matthews to Norman Thomas to Muste to Ben Gitlow—have been able to make the central issue of the strike—the splitting activities of the Communists and the National Textile Workers Union. By the narrow policy of the party, these gentlemen have been able to cover up their own splitting policies, and, in all likelihood, under the same covering of the A. F. of L. leaders will be able to conclude the strike with the usual disgraceful settlement. Here is a tragic instance of what happens when the Left wing throws away the banner of unity. Here too a rapid turn is demanded of the Left wing. The Daily Worker last week reported that J. Rubin, of the N. T. W. demanded one strike and one committee at a meeting of the A. F. of L. union. What is this to mean? Does it mean that Rubin demanded that all the others join the Rank and File Unity Committee of the N. T. W.? If this is the policy, and everything leads to such a belief, than it is a poor and unfruitful substitute for what is imperatively required. The N. T. W. must propose to the A. F. of L. unions a joint committee to direct the strike! On the joint field of strike battle, the Left wing will be able to demonstrate to all the strikers whose policy and leadership best suits their interests. It will be able to spike any attempts of the A. F. of L. leaders to get another "Marion settlement".

The Left wing must snatch the banner of unity away from the Mustes and Gitlows, the anti-Communist baiters who use the banner as a cover for their own splitting actions. The danger confronting the two big strike movements must be overcome immediately. The discredited theories and practices of Stalinism have become an obstacle in the path of development. The obstacle must be kicked aside so that the movement can proceed further on its road.

—L. TROTSKY.

A SLANDER!

Blackguards and Assistants

In Pravda of July 2, Yaroslavsky unmasks Trotsky who, he says, called the Five Year Plan a "deception" in the bourgeois press and predicted the speedy fall of Bolshevism. In Yaroslavsky's article is published the reproduction of the first page of the Polish paper to which, it is claimed, Trotsky sent his article. In this connection, they speak once more of renegade etc.

As a matter of fact, I never gave any article on the Five Year Plan to any bourgeois paper with the exception of an interview which I gave at the beginning of this year to the Manchester Guardian. The content and the sense of this interview, emphasizing the enormous successes of socialist methods of economy and defending the necessity of economic collaboration of England with the U. S. S. R., is in direct and irreconcilable contradiction with the articles of the world bourgeois press which base themselves upon fraudulent falsification and upon perversions. Kiga and Warsaw have long been laboratories of false information, directed against the U. S. S. R. and against Communism. Probably, my alleged article in the Polish Illustrated Courier was supplied by the same blackguards who at one time manufactured the telegrams on: How Lenin and Trotsky are arresting each other, who subsequently manufactured the "Zinoviev letter", and dozens of other forged documents. To fight against these falsifications in the columns of the bourgeois papers is exceedingly difficult, because most of them cover up each other and are certainly not inclined to fall out among themselves in order to lend assistance to a proletarian revolutionist.

The Messrs. Yaroslavskys know this very well, but they hold the interests of their clique higher than the interests of the Soviet Union. While the counter-revolutionary blackguards fabricate false documents and forged articles, the Yaroslavskys photograph these documents as authentic. What then is the political role of the Yaroslavskys? Assistants to bourgeois blackguards—one cannot define this role otherwise.

—L. TROTSKY.
Kadikoy, July 8, 1931

Hillman Brings the Tailor Strike to an End

"If there will be a strike, the racketeers would call it." This ambiguous reply by Sidney Hillman to Mayor Walker's question whether Hillman could promise that there will be no strike in New York has become clear now that the strike of the New York clothing workers has been declared. In that reply were contained the real meaning and the purpose of the strike contemplated by Hillman and of his "campaign" against racketeering. The strike has been engineered and contrived by Hillman and the organized clothing manufacturers for the purpose of bolstering the New York market through lowering production costs at the expense of the clothing workers. (See my article in the Militant, July 11.)

The campaign was well prepared, the "strike" staged in accordance with the plans laid out and having met no interference by any forces inside or outside the A. C. W. organization, will be carried out to the satisfaction of Sidney Hillman the New York Manufacturers Exchange, and Mayor Walker, and incidentally to the aggrandizement of the ignoble, prestige of the yellow socialist leaders, Norman Thomas, Louis Waldman, Vladeck, and their ilk.

A New Betrayal

To the clothing workers this "strike" means another betrayal and a sellout under an "Amalgamated agreement". This

"strike" was in reality a lockout for the purpose of cutting the wages and tightening the noose around the necks of the membership of the organization.

How were Hillman's plans in this "strike" carried out? Already on the second day after the "strike" was declared the workers were sent to work in most of the shops with considerable reductions in wages, amounting in a number of cases to as high as 25 percent. (No official announcements, of course have been made.) These shops are mostly shops owned by the members of the New York Manufacturers Exchange who according to Hillman, have always maintained union standards and have agreed to the terms of the new agreement.

The workers who have remained on "strike" are those who worked for the independent firms which sabotaged on union standards and sent out their work to out of town places.

Considering, however, the privileges given under the agreement to the organized manufacturers to reduce wages and even send their work to out of town shops where standards are lower (even though they operate under a union agreement) it is not difficult to predict a speedy termination of the "strike" and a complete victory for Hillman and the New York Clothing Manufacturers Ex-

Andres Nin Calls for the Spanish Opposition Press

To the comrades of the Militant. New York.

Dear Comrades:

The unusual situation through which our country is passing presents the Communist Left Opposition with gigantic tasks. Although the situation is objectively favorable for the development of Communism and for the preparation of the victory of the proletariat there is the danger that the revolutionary process that has begun may end in a miscarriage that will have fatal consequences not only for the revolutionary movement of our country but for the whole world. These dangers have their origin in causes of various kinds: in the influence exercised in our movement by anarcho-syndicalism, in the strength that the Socialist party still has in certain points of Spain, and above all in the extreme feebleness of Spanish Communism and the disastrous policy of the International. In reality, there is no Communist party in Spain. There exist various factions that fight each other and lack, with the exception of our own, ideological cohesion. Under these circumstances, the constitution of a powerful Communist party is urgently imposed upon us. But this will be impossible without a clear policy, capable of taking advantage of the inevitable discon-

temptment that will not be long in developing among the broad popular masses of the country, deceived by republicanism, in order to win them to our cause and to lead the proletariat to the conquest of power. It is obvious that this can be achieved only under the banner of the Communist Left Opposition. In spite of the difficulties under which we are fighting, we have already achieved in recent times very satisfactory results. But these would be infinitely greater were we to have the possibility of making our voice heard more directly by the masses.

Up to now, we have been confined to a monthly review, *Comunismo*, which while, it has met with an excellent response among the Communists, cannot reach the masses directly because of its relatively modest distribution and its purely theoretical character. We need to issue manifestos, leaflets, weeklies, to have the possibility to react to all events which are unfolding here with extraordinary rapidity and to spread our point of view among the masses. This is a question of life or death for the Spanish revolution. The lack of funds prevents us from carrying out this work. The publication of the review has already involved enormous sacrifices on the part of the mil-

itants. It is absolutely necessary that the comrades of the other countries should lend us their aid. The assistance of the American comrades could be invaluable in this sense. That is why we think that *The Militant* might open up a subscription in its columns for the benefit of the Spanish Opposition in order that it should be able to accomplish the historical mission that devolves upon it. The cause of the Spanish revolution is the cause of the revolutionary proletariat of every country.

Hoping that our request will find a swift and favorable response among the American comrades, I send my fraternal and Communist greetings.

Your comrade,

ANDRES NIN.

We wish to acknowledge the following receipts for the Spanish Left Opposition Press Fund: M. Engel, 1.00—Brown, 1.00—Ralph Heller, 1.00—B. J. Field, 4.00—Bronx Street Meeting Collection, 3.15—CLEVELAND: Fred Fisher, 1.00; Albrecht Viewey .05—A. M. Giotzer, .50—L. Stone and J. Paul, 1.00—Total last week, 10.00—Grand Total to date: \$22.70. All funds should be sent to comrade A. Gonzalez, c/o *The Militant*, 84 E. 10th Street, New York, N. Y.