

A Letter to A Member of the German Communist Party

EDITORIAL NOTES

PROLETARIAN PARTY SPLIT

Engels once wrote that every workers' party must necessarily develop in a process of internal struggle...

By that state of affairs could only be temporary. The accentuation of the class struggle in the country, and the great conflicts over principle...

In fact, the split has already begun. The leaders of the Proletarian Party, who borrow so much in principle from Stalinist revisionism...

The course of the opposition movement within the Proletarian Party remains unclear. It is quite obvious, from a reading of its campaign material...

One thing at least may be said with certainty: the opposition cannot stand alone as an independent movement. Having made a decisive break with the sterile circle of Keracherism...

To save the new movement, or at least a substantial part of it, from this fate is the task of the serious Communist elements within it.

Every tendency to limit the opposition to the secondary tactical points is a preparation for such a debacle. A serious study and consideration of the great principle questions...

BOMBS FOR NEW YEAR'S

It looks like a big year for the bomb and dynamite racket, if one can judge by the spectacular start that has been made by the people who specialize in it.

Nine times out of ten—or, better, 99 times out of a hundred—this is the real meaning of the "discovery" of bombs and dynamite: to lay the ground for an attack against the workers and to railroad some individuals as an example.

The Daily Worker speaks of the latest bomb scare as the prelude to an attack on the Communist Party, and limits its concern and protest to that.

Communist make a fatal error when they limit their protests to cases of direct attack against their own party. Such questions must be approached from a principle, that is, from a class point of view.

"The working men have no country. We cannot take from them what they have not got. Since the proletariat must first of all acquire political supremacy, must rise to be the leading class of the nation, must constitute itself the nation, it is, so far, itself national, though not in the bourgeois sense of the word."

Minneapolis Open Forum

Among the lecture arranged for forthcoming weeks at the Minneapolis Forum are the following:

All meetings, unless otherwise mentioned are at 3 P. M.:

Sunday, January 17, 1932: "Imperialism; What Next? Speaker: Vincent R. Dunne.

Sunday, January 24, 1932: DEBATE: "Socialism versus Communism". Speakers: O. P. Victorian, representing the Social Party against Carl Cowl representing Communist League of America (Opposition).

Sunday, January 31, 1932: "The Proposed Railroad Wage Reductions". Speaker: C. R. Hedlund.

All these lectures and debates will be held at the Workers Open Forum, 1530 East Franklin Ave., Minneapolis, Minn. The Admission is free.

THE MILITANT

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The Workers United Front against Fascism

(Continued from page 1) rule, but now, under the given conditions, in the coming months and weeks. Thaelmann Considers the Victory of Fascism Inevitable

A correct policy is necessary in order to achieve victory. That is, we need a policy appropriate to the present situation, to the present relationship of forces and not to a situation that may develop in one, two or three years, when the question of power will have been decided for a long time.

The whole misfortune lies in the fact that the policy of the Central Committee of the German Communist Party, in part consciously and in part unconsciously, derives from the recognition of the inevitability of a Fascist victory. In fact, in the appeal for the "Red United Front" published on November 29, 1931, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany, starts out with the idea that it is impossible to vanquish Fascism without first defeating the social democracy.

Can we expect that the Communist Party will in the course of the next few months defeat both the social democracy and Fascism? No normally thinking person who can read and calculate would risk such a contention. Politically, the question is posed in the following manner: Can we successfully repel Fascism in the course of the next few months, that is, with the existence of a greatly reduced, but still (unfortunately) very strong social democracy? The Central Committee replies in the negative.

Once Again: The Russian Experiences In order, to express my thought as clearly and as concretely as possible I will come back once more to the experience with the Kornilov uprising. On August 26 (old style) 1917, General Kornilov led his Cossack troops and one irregular division against Petrograd.

In order to defeat the Kornilovade we must first defeat the Kerenskiade. They said this more than once, for it was correct and necessary for the entire further propaganda. But that was entirely insufficient ground not to put up a resistance on August 26, and on the following days against Kornilov and to prevent him from butchering the Petrograd proletariat.

The thousands upon thousands of Noskes, Welas, Hilferdings, prefer, in the last analysis, Fascism to Communism. But for that they must once and for all tear themselves loose from the workers. Today this is not yet the case. Today the social democracy as a whole, with all its internal antagonisms, is forced into sharp conflicts with the Fascists.

Is Bruening the "Lesser Evil"? The social democracy supports Bruening, votes for him, assumes the responsibility for him before the masses—on the basis that the Bruening Government is the "lesser evil".

There are seven keys in the musical scale. The question or the keys is "better". Do Re or Sol is a senseless question. But the musician must know when to strike and what keys to strike. The abstract question as to who is the lesser evil: Bruening or Hitler—is just as senseless.

Where Lies the Mistake in the Present Policy of the German Communist Party

The misfortune is, that in the Central Committee of the Communist Party there are many frightened opportunists. They have heard that opportunism consists of a love for blocks, and that is why they are against blocks.

The misfortune consists precisely of the fact that the leaders of the German Communist Party have placed themselves on the same ground as the social democracy only with inverted prefixes: The Social democracy votes for Bruening, recognizing in him the "lesser evil".

Communism or Fascism in Germany?

We cannot emphasize too strongly the importance of the developments that are now unfolding in the class struggle in Germany to paraphrase the warnings contained in the recent studies of comrade Trotsky: Unless the leaders of the Communist Party of Germany make a sharp turn away from their present attitude...

The official Stalinist press, with that national self-centeredness which has characterized it in recent years, pays little or no attention to the German events. Brief and boastful dispatches, dealing with trifling episodes, are their sole contribution to the burning problems that cry out for solution.

It is not a Question of the Workers Who Have Already Left the Social Democracy But of Those Who Still Remain With It.

The front must be directed against Fascism at the present time. And this common front of direct struggle against Fascism, involving the entire proletariat, must be utilized in the flank attacks against the social democracy, which are for all that no less effective.

It is necessary in fact, to show complete readiness to make a block with the social democrats against the Fascists in all cases in which they will accept a block. To say to the social democratic workers: "Throw your leaders aside and join our 'non-party' united front", means to add just one more hollow phrase to a thousand others.

A practical program of agreements with the social democratic workers, we proposed as far back as September, 1930. (The Turn in the Comintern and the Situation in Germany, published by the Militant), that is, a year and a quarter ago. What has the leadership undertaken in this direction? Next to nothing.

We Must Force the Social Democracy Into a Block Against the Fascists

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Election agreements, parliamentary compromises concluded between the revolutionary party and the social democracy, serve, as a rule, to the advantage of the social democracy. Practical agreements for mass action, for purposes of struggle are always of use to the revolutionary party.

No common platform with the social democracy, or with the leaders of the German trade unions, no common pub-

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average social democratic worker can say to himself: What the Communists propose is completely indispensable in the struggle against Fascism. On this basic condition it is possible to pull the social democratic workers along with us by our example and to criticize their leaders who will inevitably serve as a check and a brake. Only in this way is victory possible.

A Good Quotation from Lenin.

The present day epigones, that is, the thoroughly bad disciples of Lenin, like to fill up their gaps on every occasion that offers itself with—often entirely irrelevant—quotations. "For the Marxists, the question is not decided by a quotation but by means of a correct method. If one is guided by correct methods, it is not hard to also find the fitting quotations. After I had drawn the above analogy with the Kornilov insurrection, I said to myself: We can probably find a theoretical explanation for our block with the conciliators in the struggle against Kornilov, in Lenin. And actually, here is what I found in the second part of volume XIV of the Russian edition, in a letter of Lenin to the Central Committee, written at the beginning of September, 1917:

"Even at the present it is not our duty to support the Kerensky Government. That would be unprincipled. Someone asked: then we are not to fight against Kornilov? Naturally, we are. But that is not one and the same thing. There is a limit to this. It is being transgressed by many Bolsheviks who fall into "conciliationism" and allow themselves to be driven by the current of events.

"We shall fight, we do fight against Kornilov but we do not support Kerensky, we are uncovering his weaknesses. The distinction is very delicate, but highly important, and must not be forgotten. "Wherein does the change of our tactics, after the Kornilov insurrection, consist?"

"In this, that the forms of struggle against Kerensky vary. Without diminishing our hostility against him even by one note, without taking back one word from what we have said against him, without rejecting the task of overthrowing Kerensky, we say: We must calculate the moment, we will not overthrow Kerensky at present. We approach the question of the struggle against him differently and namely: by explaining the weaknesses and vacillations of Kerensky before the people, (who are fighting against Kornilov)".

We are proposing nothing different from this: complete independence of the Communist organizations and press, complete freedom of Communist criticism, the same for the social democracy and the trade unions. To allow the freedom of the Communist Party to be limited (for example, in the manner of the entrance into the Kuo Min Tang) only despicable opportunists are capable of. Our place is not among them.

There is nothing to take back from our criticism of the social democracy. Nothing to forget of all that has been. The entire historical account, including the account for Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg will be presented in time, as we Russian Bolsheviks also presented it finally to the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries as a general accounting for the baiting, slander, imprisonment and murder carried on against workers, soldiers and peasants.

But we presented our general account to them months after we had utilized the partial accounting between Kerensky and Kornilov, and the "democrats" and the Fascists—and at that in order to repel the Fascists with all the more certainty. Only thanks to this circumstance, were we able to be victorious.

When the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany adopts the position expressed in the lines of Lenin quoted above, the entire approach to the social democratic masses and the trade union organizations will change with one blow: Instead of the articles and speeches which are convulsing only to those people who are already convinced without them, the agitators will find a common language with new hundreds of thousands and millions of workers. The differentiation within the social democracy will proceed in rapid tempo. The Fascists will soon begin to feel that their tasks consist not only of defeating Bruening, Braun and Wels, but in taking up the open struggle against the entire working class. On this plane, a deep differentiation will inevitably begin within Fascism. Only by this road is victory possible.

But it is necessary to desire this victory. In the meantime, there are among the Communist functionaries many cowardly careerists and bureaucrats who hold on to their little posts, to their income and more than that,—in their skins, very dearly. These creatures are inclined to sprout ultra-radical phrases underneath which is concealed a wretched and despicable fatalism. "Without a victory over the social democracy it is impossible to strike against Fascism!", say such terrible revolutionaries, and for this reason . . . they are getting ready their passports.

Worker-Communists, you are hundreds of thousands, millions, you cannot leave for anywhere; there are not enough passports for you. Should Fascism achieve power it will ride over your skulls and spines like a frightful tank. Your salvation lies in merciless struggle. And only unity in struggle with the social democratic workers can bring victory. Make haste, worker-Communists, you have very little time left.

-L. TROTSKY. Kadikoy, December 8, 1931.