

EDITORIAL NOTES

ANOTHER DEFEAT IN KENTUCKY

The conviction of William Hightower and the sentence of life imprisonment is the second heavy defeat suffered by the miners and the entire working class of America in the Kentucky murder trials.

A purely legal defense, however competent, unless it is reinforced by a determined and clamorous agitation, presents no serious obstacles to the railroad of a working class militant.

The chief obstacles in the way of effective protest action of the masses are the disunity in the labor ranks, and the partisan disputes which take no account of fundamental class interests.

The life-sentences in Kentucky are warning signals of a furious offensive against the awakening labor movement.

A SORRY ADVENTURE

It is just about a year since Weisbord, having failed to convince us by argument, set out to prove by example that he alone possessed the secret of organizing a mass movement and steering it on the straight revolutionary path.

As the world knows or ought to know, the herculean endeavors of Weisbord have recently culminated in a split of his organization.

whose sole instruction in revolutionary ethics had been imparted by him, made an uninvited visit to the headquarters and carried off some books.

We are not in favor of burglary and larceny and it is easy to incite us against practitioners of these arts—principle in this matter being reinforced by personal grievances.

So what can we do now? We have never yet testified against anybody in court and cannot go as witness.

One may think that these performances would be enough for one man for one year—or for a life-time.

—J. P. C.

In Spain: «The Democratic Republic of the Workers» A First Hand Account of Conditions Under the Socialist-Republican Regime

This is the first of a series of articles on the situation in Spain by comrade Max Shachtman who has just returned from a visit to that country.—Ed.

The social democrats throughout the world beat the drums mightily for their Spanish colleagues when, a few months ago, the prominent socialist parliamentarian leader, Luis Araquistain, speaking for the Constitutional Committee, presented the committee's report to the Cortes at Madrid which incorporated into the fundamental law of the land the proclamation that Spain was henceforth a "democratic republic of the workers".

What do the conditions of the Spanish workers actually look like, now that Alfonso Bourbon has been driven from the throne, his henchmen dispersed, and the republic proclaimed?

The far from revolutionary International Labor Bureau of the League of Nations places Spain, in a recent survey, at the bottom of a list of some dozen representative European countries, with regard to the standards of living of the working class, lower in the scale than some of the classic countries of misery in the Balkans and the Baltic states.

With the Spanish peseta now equal to less than nine cents in U. S. coin, the industrial workers average about 8 pesetas a day which means that on the basis of a 48-hour week, the Spanish worker would average something like five dollars a week.

—HUGO OEHLEK.

but half of that wage. In Saragossa, where the cost of living is somewhat higher than elsewhere, a painter will earn 8 pesetas a day.

But these are not the worst by any means. Agricultural laborers not only have a highly seasonal employ, but when they do work in the fields they will get from 3.5 to 4 pesetas a day, and in some districts as low as 2.5 pesetas a day (about twenty cents a day in U. S. coin), together with their board and the highly doubtful pleasure of sleeping in barns and stables with the live stock.

Such a wage standard is better understood when the reader learns that a rather modest meal at a very modest restaurant costs two pesetas.

For those who are fortunate enough to have work, life is still "bearable", so to speak. But what about the unemployed? With a magnificent gesture, the Republican-Socialist coalition government has introduced the 8-hour working day. It cost it little, since most of the workers had already acquired that standard. In some cases, the law made conditions worse by lengthening the working

day. But of what value is the 8-hour working day to those who cannot find work for one hour a day?

Unemployment in Spain at the present moment is terrific and the consequences are almost indescribable. Industries are paralyzed, there is an acute financial crisis, the peseta continues to careen along the downward path.

Misery and suffering march in the train of this situation, which has even more dramatic and sensational results. Prostitution, an inescapable curse of capitalism under all conditions, rages like a pestilence.

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The Two Revolutions

—But was your workers' republic any better at the outset? One can hear the retort of all manners of social democrats and their apologists.

—MAX SHACHTMAN.

ter the Bolshevik revolution, even the casual one, does not speak a single word in favor of the former of its artificers. Unlike Spain, the Russian workers proclaimed their republic after three years of the most horrible and exhausting war known to history, a war in which the flower of the Russian working class and peasantry was driven to the slaughter by a depraved royalty and a cynical semi-feudal militarism, and decimated by the millions.

Yet, in spite of these enormous differences, quantitative as well as qualitative, which constituted such mountainous obstacles to the progress of the Russian workers' republic, one may say without exaggeration that the Bolshevik regime gave the working class and the peasantry infinitely more in one week than the Socialist-Republican revolution and regime have even thought of giving the Spanish workers and peasants in the whole nine months of their existence.

At the very outset, the Bolsheviks established a workers' control of production which was a veritable control, and not the class-collaborationist burlesque which the Socialist minister of labor, Caballero, has so solemnly presented as a gift to the employers under the guise of benefiting labor.

In a word, the difference between the two revolutions and the two republics they produced is the difference between the proletariat in power which crushes the bourgeoisie and their social democratic guardsmen, and the bourgeoisie in power which, with the aid of its social democracy, crushes the proletariat.

The next article in the series will appear in the Militant next week under the title: "The Republic Establishes Law and Order."

The Proletarian Party Opposition

After a decade of existence as an expelled group from the Communist party, the Proletarian party is now proceeding through a period of internal struggle and split.

This party, after a decade of existence as a sect devoting its time to theory—theory that now proves to the majority of its own members to be void of living Marxism, can only exist as a counterparty to bookshelf "activity".

The split in the P. P. is national with the Left, through expulsions and withdrawals, holding the majority over six units and contacts throughout the country.

Since the party fastly chopped off part of Cleveland and New York we should ask, where do we catalog the R. P. Opposition among the Communist cur-

rents? It cannot be cataloged with the Left Opposition, the Ultra Left nor the Right wing currents this they themselves admit.

On the one hand, the expulsion of the Left Opposition from the C. I. was the most detrimental to the world revolution and the Soviet Union, on the other hand we can say the struggle within the P. P. and its majority under the influence of the P. P. Opposition is healthy and a step forward for American Communism.

The P. P. Opposition is not a homogeneous grouplet by any means. The action of Cleveland and New York already throws light upon the process of contradictions they brought out of the party with them and have not yet outgrown—or contradictions that may kill them as a grouplet, depending upon what their most advanced force does in the next several weeks.

Opposition among the Communist cur-

national program to be rounded out with revolutionary strategy and tactics for the peculiarities of America.

—HUGO OEHLEK.

CHICAGO Open Forum Every Sunday, 3 p.m. JAN. 31 C. R. HEMINGSEN From P. P. Left "The Class Nature of the American Government" Free Admission at HALL, 1435 NO. WESTERN AVE. Auspices: Chicago Branch, Communist League of America (Opposition).

ST. LOUIS "Labor Fakers Betray the Shoe and Railroad Workers" will be the topic at a mass-meeting held Wednesday evening, January 27th, 7:30 P. M. at the Main Library Hall, 14th and Olive Streets, St. Louis, Mo. Martin Payer will speak, with John Scott as chairman. Auspices: St. Louis Branch, Communist League of America (Opposition).

Kansas City MONDAY, FEBRUARY 1 FASCISM OR COMMUNISM IN GERMANY? SPEAKER: GEORGE CLARKE of N. Y. 914 Grand Avenue Second Floor Auspices: Communist League of America (Opposition)

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Unemployment and Communism

On February 25, 1931, 400,000 workers in the United States according to the Daily Worker demonstrated for Unemployment Insurance. Compared with the demonstration of the year before, this showed a great decline.

This in part is what Browder wrote: "Where the city authorities reject the demands for the relief of specific cases of starvation—the council must set up a food collection committee which will undertake food collections from the larger capitalists and corporations of the locality, particularly in those institutions where the unemployed were formerly at work.

This "fight" for relief reached its highest expression in a recent New York demonstration in which a worker carried a placard, reading: "We want more, not less relief!"

While the dwindling party supporters were struggling to carry out Browder's directives, the fight for unemployment insurance was confined to resolutions passed at narrow, sectarian conferences, and to articles in the Daily Worker and other party organs.

Browder's strategy, as could have been foretold by a pioneer, ran its course without results. By the end of the summer of 1931 it was clear to all that competing with capitalist charities for pin-

urance had lapsed; the struggle for relief was equally unsuccessful. The crisis was still deepening; the misery of the masses was greater and more widespread.

Its first assault on capitalist greed was the National Hunger March. This was organized around the slogans of a resolution adopted by the Executive Committee of the T. U. L. on October 3.

If the party's efforts to win Unemployment Insurance demonstrated anything, they demonstrated that the party could not unite the masses around the slogan of unemployment insurance alone.

One reason, of course, is the stifling bureaucratic regime in the party and its organizations which drives away thousands of workers sympathetic to Communism.