

## On the German Situation

An Appeal to all the Communist Workers by the National Committee of the Communist League of America (Opposition)

The danger of Fascism in Germany has not diminished. On the contrary, while the Communist have registered a number of important advances, they have failed to absorb even those social democratic workers who have left the standard of their party, and the Fascists have been striding forward with seven league boots. It should now be clear to all that the Hitlerite hordes are deliberately preparing themselves for the seizure of the state power. Their strength multiplies. All the recent elections show a distinct and threatening shift to the Right from all the bourgeois parties. The bourgeoisie is staking upon the victory of Fascism as the counter-revolutionary issue from the terrific crisis in which it finds itself. The big bourgeoisie press of the countries bordering upon Germany, like France, is already preparing to "reconcile" itself to a Hitler regime.

### WHAT WILL DECIDE?

But Hitler's march to power has not yet been crowned with success. His victory or his annihilation will be decided by the relationship of forces, and primarily by the course which the German Communists will pursue in the coming months.

The German Communist Party, to this day, has followed a false policy. It has not yet adopted the course which would successfully exterminate the Fascist danger.

Following the last Reichstag elections and for many precious months thereafter, the party leadership lulled the masses into a false security with its baseless assurances that Fascism had reached the height of its power. The events that followed every such boastful assertion brought new proofs of the advances of the Hitlerites.

Instead of steering firmly towards winning the socialist workers, the Stalinists engaged in a vulgar and reactionary competition with the Fascists, servilely copying their slogans, seeking to outbid Hitler in nationalist demagoguery, and sinking to the most abysmal depths of "National-Bolshevism".

Then, when the reactionary monster had grown to a size which compelled the whole working class to look at the situation with alarm, the party leaders dragged the Communist masses through the mud of "red referendum" in Prussia, which not only heightened the wall between us and the socialist workers, but added new fuel to the fires of Fascism.

To all this, the confusion was worse confounded by the theory finally developed, in blatant contrast to yesterday's boasting, that the victory of Fascism was inevitable. The fact that in the October 1923 crisis, Stalin himself declared that the seizure of power by Fascism was even preferable to an attempt at power by the workers, does not justify the policy of Thaelmann and Co., but serves to illuminate the source of its inspiration.

### THE RUINOUS THEORY OF STALINISM

Under the pressure of the increasingly acute crisis, of the discontent of the masses with the party policy, and of the hammer-blows dealt this theory by the Left Opposition, the theory of "inevitability" is now being formally and hypocritically thrown overboard, the scapegoats found for its advocacy in the approved bureaucratic manner and the traces thus covered up. But unfortunately, in all their practices, in all their "subsidiary" theories, and by the personal conduct and preparations being made by the party leaders, it is clear that the party course is still directed towards a capitulation before the advance of Hitler. We still hear that the Bruening regime is practically Fascism; that Bruening is no different from Hitler. With the thoroughly false dictum of Stalin that the "social democracy is a moderate wing of Fascism", with the equally disastrous theory and practice of "social Fascism", the party leaders still contend that for the crushing of Fascism, it is first necessary to liquidate the social democracy. Such a standpoint means that Fascism is to be allowed to come to power while the Stalinists are engaged in "liquidating the social democracy"—an aim which they will not attain with their present course.

Not daring to defend publicly the theory of capitulation, and incapable of meeting the criticisms of the Left Opposition, the Stalinists, beginning with Stalin himself, are laying a smoke screen to cover up their indefensible standpoint and to divert attention from the real needs of the hour. Instead of dealing objectively with the proposals made by comrade

Trotsky, supported by the international Left Opposition, for a united front to prevent Fascism from coming to power, a new campaign of calumny and falsehood has been launched, initiated and approved by the central Stalinist bureaucracy. "Trotskyism", killed a hundred times, has now been "re-discovered" in the highest instances of the Russian party. "Semi-Trotskyist" deviations are being revealed in the German and French parties. From Moscow itself, the flat lie is being circulated throughout the bourgeois and Stalinist press that "Trotsky has gone over to the German social democracy"; that "Bruening, by the intermediary of Kautsky, is going to give Trotsky a visa to Germany".

We warn the Communist workers that these lies, these criminal and light-minded diversions, are desperate maneuvers of a bankrupt bureaucracy which can discuss and argue on Marxian-Leninist strategy and tactics only by slanders and police concoctions. The issue cannot be settled in this way. Fascism will not be destroyed by lying about the Left Opposition and its leader, comrade Trotsky.

### WHAT A FASCIST VICTORY MEANS

A victory of Fascism, which threatens in Germany, means—if it teaches us anything—the crushing of the Communists, the social democratic workers, their trade unions, their press, their centers—in a word, the complete and bloody extermination of the whole working class movement.

A victory of Fascism would mean the reactionary, counter-revolutionary solution of the present crisis, not merely for the German bourgeoisie but also for the bourgeoisie in other countries, including the United States.

A victory for Fascism would break the spinal column of the Communist International at its strongest point outside the Soviet Union—Germany. It would be a direct and immediate threat to the very existence of the Russian workers' republic.

The Left Opposition, contemptuously rejecting the liquidators' standpoint, does not believe in the inevitability of the Fascist victory in Germany. On the contrary, we are deeply convinced that the united strength of the German proletariat, assisted by the international working class, can smash the Fascists without great difficulty and prevent them from coming to power.

But for this, the Communists must have a correct policy, which means, in Germany, a radical and genuine change of the present course of the party. Not bureaucratic maneuvers which leave nothing essentially unchanged, but a breaking of the strangulating chains of the theory of "social Fascism" and a turn towards the real united front as Lenin's Comintern taught it.

The German social democratic workers, who number millions and who hate Fascism with all their heart, who will not reconcile themselves with Hitlerism as their leaders will in a crisis, must be won for the united front against Fascism. The Communist Party, as comrade Trotsky, and the Left Opposition have advocated, must put to the German social democracy and to the reformist trade unions the proposals for a united front to resist the advance of Fascism. Only in this way, which puts their leaders in the way on a concrete, burning issue, will the masses realize that the Communists alone can lead them in the struggle for liberation and for the defeat of reaction.

### ACT BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE

If the official party leaders miss the opportunity which is still before them, if they persist obstinately in their pernicious course, if they allow Fascism to come to power without organized resistance, the revolutionary workers the world over will hold the Stalinists directly responsible for the inevitable catastrophe that will ensue.

The times are pregnant with great events, with victory or defeat. The right road may still be chosen. The Communist workers in the ranks, here as well as in Germany, must speak out. They cannot arrange their passports to flee to safety from the consequences of a Fascist victory. It is up to them alone to act and to turn the course of the Comintern in the right direction. The Left Opposition, conscious of its duties, is ready one more to join with the party to arouse the proletariat to action, and in Germany it must act before it is too late. Let every Communist worker reflect carefully. Do not permit yourselves to be swayed by slander and falsehood. Demand an accounting now. Today, the decision is still in your hands for it is not yet too late. Tomorrow, it may have passed into the historical records of a great catastrophe!

NATIONAL COMMITTEE, COMMUNIST LEAGUE OF AMERICA (Opposition)

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### IN OUR NEXT ISSUE:

1. "The 'Armed' Uprising of November 7, 1927" by Leon Trotsky
2. The Second Article in the Series on Spain by Max Shachtman

## Japanese Invade Shanghai!

### War Threatens in the Far East and against the Soviet Union

As we go to press, the wires are still humming with the latest dispatches of the Japanese seizure of Shanghai. Battles between the Japanese and Chinese troops are in full blast all over Shanghai, the native part of the town, and Japanese reinforcements keep on marching toward the scene of the fighting. After 13 hours of fierce skirmishes and air raids, one report says, the occupation is not yet completed. But one thing is certain. The crux of the Sino-Japanese conflict is already here.

### Undeclared Open War

The minions of the Mikado have been steadily proceeding southward for weeks ever since their first easy successes in Manchuria. This time, China proper is the object of the imperialists' operations. The game of the Japanese has been to lop off one territory after another, while protesting against breaches of the treaty of 1915, while declaring the absolute altruism of their motives. At this rate, the official declaration of war ought to come just about at the time when the Nippon capitalists are ready to sign the peace treaty.

So far, the other imperialist powers have shown extreme restraint and cau-

tion in dealing with the hardly delectable demarches of their Oriental competitor. In such a heated atmosphere as the present, even the fact that several American warships have been ordered to Shanghai, appears to be a mild form of indignation. But it would be foolish to think that this has been so because of their good will, or because of pacifist scruples. Nothing is further removed from that.

The reason why the Western powers are refraining from prompt and drastic action to curb their yellow brother-under-the-skin is that the present world situation is as combustible as a powder magazine. Unemployment driving millions to a choice between extermination and bitter, uncompromising struggle. Germany on the verge of social eruption. Unrest in Poland, class fighting in Spain, turmoil in Austria, Hungary and the other central European states. That is what the capitalist world is faced with today. A "working agreement" for the time being, or at least an "entente" is the most natural thing to expect among the various national master classes. The throttling of a social conflagration and the victorious subjugation of the fortress

of the world revolution—Workers' Russia—is the immediate and common objective of all the powers that be.

### Anti-Soviet Advances

The Rengo News Agency (Japanese) reports the seizure and operation of the branch line between Harbin and Changchun of the Chinese Eastern Railway by Japanese train troops! Add to this the planned invasion of Jehol valley and Mongolia by the notorious Russian White Guard general, Ataman Semenov, an adventurer definitely known to be in the pay of the Mikado's government, and you have as arrogant a provocation against the Soviet Union as can possibly be hatched up. The signal for an attack against the light-house of the international proletariat is being given in the East.

The government of the Soviets is watchful and cautious. And in a situation such as this, it must be. But, if we are to believe quotations from Pravda and Izvestia in the capitalist press, the stress is being put altogether and exclusively—for the present, at least—on the danger at the Eastern frontier of the U. S. S. R. That danger is hardly to be underestimated. It can and probably will serve as the spark of an around attack.

But, for a revolutionist with open eyes it cannot help being clear that the real and the main danger is in the West. Developments in the Far East generally drag, must drag, because of the physical character of the land, because of the lack and inadequacy of transportation facilities, because of natural difficulties. Should Fascism, however, succeed in crushing the German proletariat, and thereby pave the way for a combined effort of imperialist reaction, this menace would increase at a furious tempo. On the Western frontier, the position is sufficiently military. A few weeks of successful military operations by the European imperialists would place in their hands the Ukrainian granary and the heart of Soviet industry. Not to speak of depriving the Soviets of the aid of its most powerful and most valuable ally, the European and more immediately, the German proletariat.

### Chinese Experiences Not Forgotten

That is what every Communist worker to whom proletarian Russia, to whom the world revolution is dear, must keep in mind. This is what the Russian worker, especially, must keep in mind. And it is precisely for this reason that the policy of passivity and inaction of the Stalinist leadership of the Russian Communist Party and of the Communist International in this situation is criminal and treacherous.

It was these same people, on whose masquerade trading as intransigent doctrinaires whose principles do not allow them to force struggle agreements against German Fascism upon the social democrats (the "social-Fascists")—who were responsible for the slaughter of the flower of the Chinese proletariat by Chiang Kai-Shek in 1927. Then—under the banner of the Martynovist bloc of four classes. All the futile and empty shouts of the Stalinist press about the "Chinese Red Army" and the "powerful Chinese Soviet Republic" (Daily Worker 1-29-1931) cannot cover up the fact: that the impotence of the oppressed Chinese masses in the face of the imperialist aggressors today is the retribution for the crime of 1925-1927.

### All Out On February 4!

The Left Opposition, under the leadership of comrade Trotsky issued its warning then. It is warning the party now. Only an acute turn of policy in the Communist International, only an immediate reorientation toward the old Leninist line of international proletarian action can save Soviet Russia, can prevent the pillage of the downtrodden of China, liberate the working class and the oppressed colonial peoples from the yoke of capitalism and imperialism. Enormous dangers are facing the workers of the world and tremendous possibilities for successful action are opening up for them. Every day, every hour, every minute wasted—can bring untold consequences at this stage of developments.

The official party is calling upon all workers to voice their protests against the Japanese invasion of China at the nation-wide demonstrations on February 4. Let all workers, all revolutionists turn out in mass at these demonstrations. Let every Communist bring pressure upon the party leadership to wake it up to the danger in Germany as well as to that in the Far East. Let every sincere revolutionist help the Left Opposition bring back the Communist party, the vanguard of the working class, to the Leninist path, to the path of proletarian victory.

—SAM GORDON.

## Utilize Feb. 4 Meets to Build Jobless Movement

There will be another unemployment day with nation-wide demonstrations for unemployment relief on February 4th. It should receive the undivided support of the working class everywhere. But it is imperative that it become more than just one other demonstration.

Can it become more than that? We believe it can. There can hardly be any question that with a real substantial section of the millions of unemployed workers actually and seriously participating in a movement for relief it can. But that is essential. Under all conditions the workers will obtain nothing more than they can take themselves and certainly not more than they are seriously ready to fight for.

All the demands—and the pleas—so far made by the army of unemployed have been rejected with scorn by the Hoover administration and similarly by the state and municipal governments throughout the country. Whether the governments were Republican or Democratic made no difference whatever. The capitalist class as a whole feels itself sufficiently strong to confine the unemployed millions to the charity crumbs which they have seen fit to set aside. And sufficiently strong to overcome their fears of a rebellion from those they so haughtily scorn. Maybe, though, they are wrong in this feeling of security. It is certain at least that a real serious and determined movement would soon make them change their mind. It would soon bring the unemployed masses within reach of obtaining actual relief.

### Possibilities for Movement Growing

But there is not yet such a serious movement. It would be foolish for Communists to close their eyes to this fact. It is precisely because of this that such mountebanks, official dispensers of hope, as the Pittsburgh Catholic priest, Father Cox, can step on the scene and rally thousands of unemployed upon a program of pleas to congress. The purpose of his appearing is, of course, to act as a preventive for a real movement by leading the attention off into such futile channels. But a movement learning to know that the workers will get only what they are prepared to fight for would leave no room for such quacks.

### Failures Should Be Recognized

The Communists lead whatever fighting unemployment movement there is. The official Communist party is by far the

main factor in this. It therefore also carries the main responsibility for the opportunities not being utilized. As the objective conditions mature further this responsibility becomes heavier and the party failures become real obstacles in the way. Its failures have been apparent in the slogans presented in its attitude of approaching the unemployment situation mainly as a field for maneuvers and advertising stunts. Its failure has been apparent in the utter lack of efforts for a class education, in the bureaucratic methods of restricting the movement as well as in pursuing a course opposite to the one of uniting the workers in action. This, of course, is all inherent in the policy and methodology of the Stalin agents everywhere.

The direct results to the organized unemployment movement, whatever there is of it, have been that the councils lead a precarious existence out of proportion to the possibilities available. Their scope is restricted by bureaucratic division of the workers and elimination of all who do not submit to the mechanical party control which is imposed upon them. They do not sufficiently attract the workers and those who join, come and go.

### Some Practical Steps Proposed

It would be a good beginning for the party to consider rounding out its demands for unemployment relief by adding the practical slogans which can appeal to the broad strata of the workers, including those now employed. We have in mind, as we have often emphasized, to add to the slogan for unemployment insurance also the ones of "six hour work-day without reduction in pay" as well as the slogan for "extension of long term credits to the Soviet Union." That it would offer better possibilities for the building of an actual

movement can hardly be disputed.

It might also be appropriate to propose to the party that the unemployment demonstrations be no longer conceived purely as objectives and means of advertising but on the contrary to be conceived primarily as an integral part of agitation and organization activities to build a movement. The demonstrations themselves will not become effective unless actually sponsored by a serious movement. Not until then will the capitalist class and its government pay serious heed to the demands made.

It certainly should be in order now also to really begin to remove all the bureaucratic restrictions from the unemployed organizations. At present there is no broader appeal to the working class than the one concerning the various measures for unemployment relief. Around this the greatest extension of elementary class unity could be attained. It should ring out to all workers organizations regardless of how reactionary their leadership, as well as to those entirely unorganized. On this basis serious efforts could be made for working class unity of action.

But above all it should be necessary to pursue a thorough method of class education. That is not to be content with merely what directly and immediately concerns the spontaneous movement but rather to proceed from that to teach the workers in regards to the far more serious problems they must face to reach their revolutionary goal.

None of these proposals, however, can be approached with the method of bureaucratic maneuvering and playing with a movement. They require first of all the attitude of serious minded revolutionists.

—A. S.

## The Recent Outbreaks in Spain

"The old world is burning at both ends." In the Far East, the imperialists' lust has mounted to the head of a Japan rendered desperate by the crisis that has eaten into its vitals and it has plunged into so violent and unshamed a conquest of predated China that only a spark is needed to set off an international conflagration. In Germany, the death rattle of capitalist mingles with the noise of Fascism's sabres and the

distant rumble of a proletarian reply.

Now in Spain, the workers—headless and unled though they are—are again displaying a fighting disposition, a vigor and a resourcefulness that offer magnificent possibilities for shortening the interlude between the democratic and the proletarian revolutions. The resurgence of the strike movement, particularly in Catalonia, Andalusia and Vizcaya, is especially heartening in view of the preceding period of depression that set in the working class right after last year's series of heavily defeated strikes led and mismanaged in classic syndicalist style by the head of the National Confederation of labor (C. N. T.). At the same time, the events which have just occurred, during which a number of municipalities were apparently taken over by the workers and the Red flag hoisted, give ground for some concern for the immediate future of the movement in Spain: the silver lining has a cloud.

The distance that separates us from Spain and the thoroughly unreliable reports of the bourgeois press make it difficult to evaluate and to analyze last week's events in proper detail. But a general knowledge of the Spanish situation and the most recent copies of the revolutionary press that have arrived, make it possible to give a momentarily adequate picture of what is going on. (Continued on page 4)

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