

EDITORIAL NOTES

FATHER COX

While unemployment increases daily and the suffering and misery accumulates to the explosive point the militant movement of the workers around the issue completely fails to keep pace: The unemployment movement shows many signs of regression, or at best marks time. This is the price of false and inadequate policies and bankrupt leadership. In the face of such a contradiction the way is opened for all kinds of charlatans to get the attention of the hungry masses. The situation is made to order for them, and those who show skill in the work of deception have the capitalist press for a publicity machine. The most conspicuous and successful of these traffickers in human misery that has yet appeared on the scene is the Catholic priest of Pittsburgh, Father Cox.

The exploits of this clever sky-pilot are crowding the legitimate workers' movement out of the daily news. While this can be attributed, in part, to a more or less deliberate policy of the capitalist press, it must be admitted that his methods and program have a superficial attraction for many workers. He stole the thunder of the Communists with his "hunger march" to Washington and, from all reports, made just as good a showing. He demands "immediate relief," government appropriations and similar measures, which have a practical sound and make a certain appeal to the desperate workers who are staggering under the heavy blows of the crisis. This is indicated by the attendance of fifty thousand at his Pittsburgh mass meeting. It is not altogether out of question that his project for a national convention at St. Louis should arouse widespread hopes and attain a measure of success.

One thing is incontestable: The intolerable burdens of unemployment are arousing millions who can no longer bear them in silence. They are moving with irresistible force toward some form of irrealistic. Whether it will be a fighting program or a compound of reformist and religious illusions, whether it will be led by revolutionists or demagogues—this remains undecided. It is not written anywhere that the workers, in the first stages of their awakening, will take the road of militant struggle. Neither is it precluded. The policy and methods of the party are the deciding factor in this question. The conditions work in a progressive direction, but the leadership fumbles every time and turns the movement back.

Time is vitally important. Every error and every delay increases the danger that the course of the movement will be turned aside. The spectacular successes of Father Cox are a sharp warning of the reality of this danger.

ATTACKING THE MARINE WORKERS' DEFENSE

The attack on the Marine Workers' Defense Committee in the Daily Worker of January 25th is a continuation, under a new form, of the policy of the party and the I. L. D. in this case since its inception. The attack is shifted from the prisoners to their defense committee, but at bottom the attitude remains the same—treacherous disregard for the fate of the prisoners and concern only for the factional interests of this corrupt and degenerated clique. The attempt to disrupt the defense on the eve of the trial is an act of collaboration with the prosecution no less than was the statement of the Daily Worker on the day after the arrest more than two months ago. If the conspiracy to railroad these workers is defeated—as we trust it will be—it will also be a defeat for scoundrels who, in the name of Communism, have done and are doing their best to deprive the prisoners of the solidarity, support and defense that is their due. When the Communist workers finally call these scavengers to judgment their reckless sport with the lives of labor prisoners will not be the least count in the indictment that will condemn them forever.

When Soderberg, Bunker and Trajer were first arrested their friends appealed to the I. L. D. for aid. This appeal was rejected; this organization, which is maintained by the revolutionary workers for such purposes, refused even to send a lawyer to visit them in jail, to hear their story and to inquire whether they were being mistreated. The Daily Worker on November 15th disavowed the men and denounced them as they lay helpless in the hands of the third-degree torturers. Said the Daily Worker on that date: "Soderberg, secretary of the Tidewater Boatmen's Union, whom the capitalist press calls a 'Red,' was expelled from the Communist party for being a suspicious element and also from the Marine Workers' Industrial Union for disruptive and anti-working class activities. Trajer, Reilly and Bunker were expelled from the Marine Workers' Industrial Union as bad elements." And to this, the Young Worker added: "Soderberg is a stool pigeon."

Now, when the case is already on the calendar for trial they come forward and offer a "class struggle defense." What kind of a defense did they offer in the days after the arrest when defense was desperately needed? Nobody stood in their way. The initiative was taken by others only because they would do nothing—noting but denounce the prisoners and leave them to their fate. For this reason also the Marine Workers' Defense Committee was formed at the request of the defendants. The I. L. D. and the Party were invited to participate, to send speakers to the mass meeting, to

help in the organization of a united front of labor for the defense. All this they refused, and the work went on without them. Now they come forward to protect the prisoners from the "betrayal" of the defense committee which did the necessary work which they refused to do or help in doing.

This eleventh hour discovery of the merits of the case by the Daily Worker has not occurred without reason. It bears testimony to the effective work of the defense committee in popularizing the issue and it indicates the pressure brought against the bureaucrats by the Communist workers who were ashamed of the things done in their name. But the new approach to the case shows a cynical contempt for the intelligence of these workers. They will stand for a great deal—as the continued existence of the Stalinist bureaucracy demonstrates—but they have not forgotten the record this bureaucracy has made in the case of the marine workers, and they will not forget it.

In order to refresh their memory and to put all the issues clearly before the workers the defense committee has decided to issue a statement giving an account of its work and policy. This statement, which will adduce documents and facts on every point, will deal another blow to the disrupters and thereby strengthen the defense of the persecuted workers facing trial.

A PROGRESSIVE TENDENCY

The draft of a program published by the Opposition group of the Proletarian Party gives further confirmation of the progressive tendency represented by the new group. The document leaves a number of the most decisive questions unanswered, but in spite of this limitation—which is easily understandable in a group that has only recently taken shape—the programmatic statement of the Opposition gives a fairly clear impression of the nature of the revolt against Proletarian Party leaders who lived too long, in peace. The faction fight—or, more correctly, the split—in the Keracher organization is a fight of revolutionary workers against a sterile and conservative clique.

The sections of the program dealing with unemployment and the trade union question show the strong sides of the opposition as compared with the Keracher official faction. On both these points, so vitally connected with the daily work in the class struggle, the opposition group shows the impulse to break out of the sectarian passivity, garnished with high-sounding pseudo-Marxist talk, which has characterized the Proletarian Party from the beginning. The progressive and revolutionary tendency of the opposition in this regard is undoubted.

It must be noted however that this characterization applies mainly to its program on these points as compared to the official policy and practice. The formulations of the opposition are by no means adequate, and they are lacking somewhat in theoretical motivation. From this the danger can arise of an uncritical plunge into "mass work" for its own sake and the ending of the whole movement in a swamp. If this is defended as a necessary reaction to the "pure theory" of the Keracher group, it must be remembered that it was not the preoccupation of the Proletarian Party with theoretical questions, but the shallowness and falsity of its theories, that determined its isolation and its fatality.

The paramount problem of the American labor movement—the prerequisite for its development on the revolutionary path in the next period—is the consolidation of a firm cadre of political vanguard fighters, that is, of revolutionary Marxists. In this task the clarification of theory takes first place. The specific weight of even a small group of this character will be far greater, and its influence on events in a rising wave of class struggles incomparable more decisive, than a hundred amorphous "mass movements" which leave aside the fundamental problems for future consideration.

The formation of the cadres of the vanguard need not be contrasted to the mass movements, but their formation is the condition for the revolutionary effectiveness of the latter. If the opposition group of the Proletarian Party sees the thing this way its revolt against the dead routine of Keracherism can become the starting point for an important contribution to the Communist movement. We hope for a fruitful collaboration with them on this line. The best way to begin this collaboration is to conduct a frank discussion of all the important questions.

THE MILITANT

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The Recent Outbreaks in Spain and their Meaning

(Continued from page 1) which will surely be amplified and confirmed by later information.

"Law for Defense of Republic" The republican-socialist coalition which took over the government with such elaborate promises for the welfare of the masses and took such deliberate pains to proclaim Spain a "democratic republic of the workers", has not failed to reveal in action its brutally anti-labor character. Not only has it not succeeded in solving a single one of the problems posed by the democratic revolution, but it has steadily instituted regulations and procedures which have steadily increased the discontentment of the workers. The focal point of the rift between the masses and the ruling class it has brought to power has become, to a great extent, the infamous "law for the defense of the republic" and the existence of the equally infamous "Guardia Civil" which is maintained to enforce the Draconian measures of the law.

Before the adoption of the law, and now "legally" under the law, hundreds upon hundreds of active militants have been arbitrarily arrested and detained without trial or indictment. The system of "detenciones gubernativas" (arbitrary governmental detention), instituted by Primo de Rivera, has been carried over under the Republic. Characteristically, under the dictatorship this vicious system was declared against by such present-day authorities as Azana, Prieto, Marcelino Domingo; one of its most ardent opponents under Primo was Galarrza, who today permeates it just as ardently in the capacity of Director General of Security in Madrid. Just as under Primo and Berenguer, working class papers are now administratively suppressed by the minister of the interior or his representatives. Frente Unido and Mundo Obrero, organs of the Communist party, have been suppressed or harassed. In Catalonia, the civil governor, Anguerra de Sojo, completely suppressed the weekly paper of the Left Opposition, El Soviet. The powerful daily paper of the C. N. T., Solidaridad Obrera, has been seized regularly, particularly since it passed into the hands of the anarchists.

Trade union and political centers of all sorts have been closed by the authorities in the most high-handed manner. Just in the short period of the writer's visit to Spain, the press reported the shutting down of the C. N. T. (anarcho-syndicalist) unions in Cadiz; the illegalization of the anarchist-controlled railroad workers' union in Malaga; the outlawry of the autonomous building trades union in Bilbao, led by the Communist party and the Left Opposition; and—with the tacit consent of the three socialist leaders who are in the coalition cabinet—the closing up of U. G. T. (socialist unions) and even Socialist party centers in their stronghold, Estremadura.

In one strike after another, the government—the Madrid center as well as the Catalan Generality, has intervened openly on the side of the employers. The Civil Guard, cordially despised and hated by virtually the entire population, has been used time and again to crush strikes, to beat up demonstrators, and even to fire-point-blank into workers' meetings. All these measures and acts are now elevated to the plane of constitutional law by the new "law for the defense of the republic", voted by reactionaries, socialists and even Macia adherents, which puts more arbitrary and dictatorial power into the hands of the minister of the interior than Primo ever presumed to take! All this by the grace of the socialist ministers and with their benediction.

The Arnedo Massacre

The flames of resentment in the ranks of the working class, which were reduced to a smoldering for a while back, now seem to have flared up again. From what can be gathered by reading the most recent periodicals, the recent strike outbreaks were precipitated by a horrible massacre of workers in Arnedo, province of Viscaya. Right into a crowd of defenseless workers came the rifle fire of the Guardia Civil, with the result that besides the many wounded, there is now a toll of ten dead men, women and children, among the latter a fifteen year old boy.

Throughout the country it appears that this was the final straw. That accumulated hatred of the Civil Guard, which symbolizes oppression, arbitrariness and police brutality to the Spanish workers and peasants, spilled over in all parts of the country. In one section after another, general strikes of protest against the Arnedo butchery were called some for 24 hours some for two days, some for an "indefinite period"; in San Sebastian, later throughout Vizcaya, and, as recent press dispatches in-

DANCE For the Benefit of the Imprisoned Marine Workers Bunker — Soderberg — Trajer at the STUYVESANT CASINO Second Avenue and 9th St. Friday Evening, February 12th. Auspices of the Marine Workers Defense Committee Show your solidarity with these victims of the frame-up system. Come and bring your friends.

dicale, throughout Andalusia and Catalonia. Everywhere, the popular demand was raised for the dissolution of the Civil Guard. The republicans and socialists in power, cavalierly oblivious of their solemn promises before the fall of the monarchy to abolish the black-hatted bandits of the Guard, promptly proceeded to send comrades of the same Guards to suppress the strikes with all the ferocity for which they are notorious. Despite the militancy of the strike movement, which sporadically and spontaneously went so far as to take over control of local municipalities, it is clear from even the meager press reports that it has been driven back by the concentration. And with the present state of the movement, nothing else could be expected.

The fatal weakness of the movement is its leadership and outlook. Practically everywhere, it is under the domination of the C. N. T. leaders, either of the "pure" syndicalist brand or of the "pure" anarchist brand. Practically everywhere, the actions are consequently precipitated without genuine preparation, with the vaguest, least practical, most "idealistic" aims, without national coordination, without foresight as to the results or the means provided for resisting an agile, mobile, well-directed and centralized bourgeoisie and its apparatus of suppression. The inevitable result is that the anarcho-syndicalists, contempt for the state, are completely discomfited and checkmated when the "social myth" of the state turns up at every corner and confronts the heroically confused workers with serried ranks of trained Civil Guards bayonets fixed and rifles levelled.

The concern which every revolutionist must feel over these events is over the fact that the petty-bourgeois ignorance and prejudices of the anarcho-syndicalist leaders resulted in dress parades of an unprepared and undirected working class against a thoroughly fortified bourgeoisie, unnecessarily exhausting the forces of the workers, bleeding them slowly in futile skirmishes, preaching the superiority of primitive guerrilla warfare when only the strategy of centralized war is applicable, practising the theory of sporadic advances and disorganized retreats under the fatally erroneous impression that it is the bourgeoisie which will thereby be weakened. The continued precipitation of premature and unprospective attacks, accomplished by taking unwisely advantage of the just resentment and militancy of the masses, means that the anarcho-syndicalists are stretching out Spain's "July days" into weeks and perhaps months. It constitutes a terrific threat to the real progress of the Spanish proletarian movement.

The other side of this situation is the "blunders permanence" of the Spanish Communist Party. We have often pointed out the veritable crimes against the revolution which the Stalinist bureaucrats have committed in the Spanish situation. Each acute situation only reveals this horrible fact more glaringly.

In K. C. Opposition

Our first open forum held Monday, January 18 marked a real success for the Kansas City Left Opposition and speaks well for our future work. About sixty workers, among whom were a dozen or so party members, participated in a very lively and interesting meeting on "Why Trotsky was Deported from Russia". The speaker, George Clarke, elaborated on the basic difference between the Left Opposition and the Stalinists; told of the ruinous consequences of the centrist zigzag in the Soviet Union and described the fatal disasters in the international result of the non-Marxian theory of "socialism in one country". The talk was well received by the audience. During the question period the party members were quick to seize the opportunity for questions and discussion. But as usual most of the time of their discussion was occupied with easily refutable slanders. The only half-way serious arguments were old ones, viz: "Trotsky wants to rob the peasantry" and "Neither Stalin nor Kallinin could be centrists since they had been in jail and Siberia for their activities". To these the speaker's replies appeared to satisfy most of the listeners.

On Sunday, January 17, at the Negro Progressive Club comrade Clarke spoke to an audience of approximately 100 Negro workers on the "Economic Crisis, Communism and the Negro". The remarks on this subject seemed to have struck a sympathetic chord among the Negroes gathered, for the hall fairly rang with applause at the conclusion of his speech. This is the second Negro meeting in Kansas City in which the Left Opposition has explained the revolutionary idea. We hope to continue propagandizing Communist theory and practice among the black workers of Kansas City.

KANSAS CITY The Left Opposition Program for America Speaker, GEORGE CLARKE MONDAY, FEB. 8th at 8 P. M. 914 Grand Avenue Second Floor Auspices: Communist League of America (Opposition)

The light-hearted gambling with the problems of the movement, ignorance and ineptness, the stage juggling with the burning trade union question which results in the absence of any decisive Communist influence in the powerful C. N. T.—or the U. G. T., for that matter—has made it possible for the anarcho-syndicalists to debilitate the working class without encountering effective resistance from the Communist forces in the principal mass organizations. So much invaluable, irreplaceable time has been lost by the antics of Stalinism! So much more time threatens to be lost unless a turn is made!

The pitiful attempts of the Stalinist press to cover up the bankruptcy of Ballejos, Adame, Trilla and Co. in Spain, deserve a word. Taken completely unawares, the Daily Worker clamored for days about "eight towns" having "declared the establishment of a Soviet Republic"! Such abysmal ignorance about "establishing Soviet Republics" is to be expected from the bourgeois press... and from Stalinist underlings. Then we learn that "the workers of Spain are turning in masses to the revolutionary leadership of the Communist party"

Book Review:

Lassalle. By Arno Schirokauer. Translated by Eden and Cedar Paul. The Century Co.

Of all the figures in the labor movement since the beginning of the era of scientific socialism, none stands out so romantically and haughtily as does the figure of Ferdinand Lassalle. He has not only been biographed by so eminent a critic as Georg Brandes; but he was even transplanted into the fictional pages of no less a novelist than the great Victorian, George Meredith, who painted Lassalle with the cellophane coating of fiction around him as Alvan, the Jewish firebrand and reformer. In his novel "The Tragic Comedians." And as a "tragic comedian" he has been admired and parlor-gamed over by ever so many well meaning intellectuals, liberals and romantic socialists.

That he should have been taken up by bourgeois intellectuals of his time and after is hardly to be marvelled at. Consider a boy born of Jewish parents—with decided semitic features—rising to the point of confounding the aristocracy, and what's more, the rising bourgeoisie (whom he evidently hated more) up to the great Bismarck himself. With ingenious argumentation that resembled more the haggling of some ancient Talmudists than the Dialectics of anybody, he stands up in court and defends the notorious Countess Hatfeld. A defense which lasts well on to a decade and culminates in making him the darling of the "haute monde"

The turbulent days of '48 find in Lassalle a noisy and forceful, if at times, illogical leader. He electrifies with his speeches. He crushes with his denunciations. He even writes a book and a pretentious drama in blank verse. The book is on the Greek philosopher, Heraclitus and it is written not so much to enlighten anybody as to lay a philosophic background for his aggressive behavior. Nothing is too much for him. He is the eagle. (He says so, himself). All the time he is making love to one woman or another. Love and action are inseparable in letters of fire on his spiritual coat-of-arms. He is as helpless without the one as the other. And so the draft caused by his running from the political scene to the bed-room never ceases until the bullet from a pistol shot in a duel over his lady-love, the comely Helen von Donneges, (would he have loved her a week hence?) lays him low.

Now in the sense that the book deals with these situations which are by now a legend in the ranks of the radical intelligentsia, it is a better book than any that has gone before. Certainly the Donneges affair which has been made so much of by other commentators has here been minimized to its proper proportions. The book in general is written with a gusty savor that somehow does manage to recapture the personality that was Lassalle. The style is rapid—hasty—and in keeping with its subject. So much for the formal aspects.

But the social democratic bias from which the author writes can never for a moment be mistaken. With all the painful efforts to be objective the bias stands out like a pair of bow-legs in a Ziegfeld chorus. The Marx-Lassalle disagreements are explained from the personal point of view. To a bourgeois intellectual or social democrat, a disagreement between two people of different political opinions is always personal. If Marx differs with Bakunin and Lassalle, it is placed directly to per-

BANQUET Greetings on the appearance of Semi-Monthly Jewish Organ of Left Opposition and to celebrate the Return of Comrades Swaback, Shachtman and Glotzer Irving Plaza, 15th St. and Irving Place Saturday Evening, Feb. 6, 1932 at 8 P. M. ADMISSION—50 CENTS Auspices: N. Y. Branch—Communist League of America (Opposition).

(D. W., 1-23-32). Unfortunately, this big mouthful is miles distant from the truth, if only for the reason that these same journalist-manufacturers and their Spanish colleagues have done everything they could to keep the masses from the Communist party.

The Daily Worker is not alone. The current issue of the Workers Age, which contains an outraged article by Glitow against the bluffs and exaggerations of the Daily Worker, does an elaborate piece of bluffing on its own hook. It informs us of the "wide-spread revolutionary uprising under the leadership of the Catalan Communist Federation (the Right wing group of Maurin and Co.) and the syndicalist unions". That the syndicalist unions are leading the movement is undoubtedly true, but no more. The story about the leadership of Maurin and Co. is nothing but bluff, pure and simple, manufactured entirely out of a typewriter and a piece of paper. The revolution in Spain is still on the order of the day. It is only necessary to understand the dangers it faces, and to overcome them in a serious, Marxian manner.

—MAX SHACHTMAN.

sonal jealousy, by these gentry, or to some disease. If Lenin differs with Plechanov and Martov—he is jealous. If Trotsky disagrees with Stalin—it's a personal issue for power. These creatures see everything through the refraction mirror of their own petty-bourgeois souls. And so Marx's and Engels' dislike and distrust of Lassalle is placed right at the door of personal jealousy. It need not of course be stressed here that the political differences between Marx and Lassalle are barely skimmed over or entirely neglected. Marx's criticism of Lassalle's Gotha Program is not even mentioned. But then, what can you expect of a social democrat, and a social democratic intellectual, at that! One more point. In the concluding remarks of his biography, Mr. Schirokauer gives himself over to reflecting upon the career of a man who not only died once but three times. Lassalle is dead. His work is dead. His (?) International (the first) is dead. But our biographer sees a faint light a-gleaming. He argues thus: The chief bone of contention between Marx and Lassalle was the matter of National vs. International Socialism. To put it in modern terms, between Socialism-in-one-country and the Permanent Revolution. Now the spirit of Lassalle, the spirit of the first International (a good international is a dead international nowadays) is coming up over the horizon. For have we not got Socialism in one country in Russia? And are we not instituting a variation of National Socialism right here in Germany, now?

Thus we find, at last, another forerunner of Stalin and Stalinism. Action—no matter how wrong so long as you're doing something; as against action through theory when the opportune moment arrives.

—M. GTN.

A Communication

We have received the following statement for publication. It is of especial interest because it expresses a growing resentment among class conscious workers against the habit of making the defense of class war prisoners a factional football, whether this be done by the Stalinists, or as in this case, by the I. W. W.—Ed.)

New York, N. Y. January 15, 1932

The Militant 84 East 10th St. New York City

Comrades: The following is a resolution unanimously passed at our last meeting: "At our Special Meeting held on Jan. 15th, 1932, at Aristocrat Hall, 69 St. Marks Place, our Delegates reported about the Conference for the Defense of the Kentucky Miners, called by the General Defense Committee held on Jan. 6th, 1932 at Labor Temple, 14th St., and Second Ave., New York, N. Y.

"We endorse the stand taken by our delegates to invite all other Labor organizations, regardless of their political beliefs, to join in the defense of the Kentucky Miners as well as of all political prisoners. We believe—as our struggle really effective, labor must unite all its forces in the struggle against the oppression by the ruling class.

We express our hope that the Conference for the Kentucky Miners Defense will make an honest attempt in that direction"

We hope that you will give publicity to this resolution.

Fraternally yours, Secretary (Signed) Bielotzkyover Br. 417, W. C.

ST. LOUIS OPEN FORUM

"LENIN, TROTSKY, and the WORLD REVOLUTION". Speaker: Martin Payer Friday, FEBRUARY 5, 1931 14th and Cass Avenues Auspices: St. Louis Branch, Communist League of America (Opposition)