LEFT WING VICTORY OR TREACHEROUS BARGAIN?

The recent elections in Local 9 of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union are an event of great significance for the Left wing labor movement. In these elections the Left wing, under the direct leadership of the Communist Party, elected five delegates to the national convention of the union out of a total of seven. Since Local 9 is one of the largest and most important locals in the union, having approximately 7,000 members (cloak finishers), the momentous import of the election result can be seen at once. On the face of things it would appear that the Left wing has captured came about it is the sort of thing which leave very little to be said for the "comone of the main strongholds of the "company union". If this is really so, if the Left wing, which was expelled from the gained this shoddy success seem to be International and compelled to form its own union, and, then, in its convention two years ago, declared the I. L. G. W. U. to be a "company union" and forbade the formation of any organized movement within it, can come out now as election off with a two inch notice on the victor in the elections to the con- an inside page on April 8th. And even vention—then this is indeed an amazing that little notice contains an outright as the Industrial Union. To win over testimony of the strength of the Left lie that cannot possibly deceive any wing and of the Communists in the needle trades. If it is a genuine victory trades. The left delegates were elected it portends momentous developments in they say, "despite all efforts of Schlesthe entire movement.

But here we run into a number of disturbing facts which are well known to want anybody to believe that the Schles- Dally Worker, the victorious left dele- their own delegates in Local 9, set out the workers in the trade and its close inger group voted for the "Progressive gates "ran on a program of class strug- to cut down the representation of the observers. There are three groups in the local which have tested their strength defeated their combined forces? That the International, for a real strike unin a number of struggles. The strongest requires more faith in human credulity der rank and file leadership". We think group is the so-called "Center", consisting of anarchists supported by the Lovestoneites and their sympathizers in a "Progressive Bloc", and its strength is is just another lie of the Daily Worker, verted to such a program. To advocate gering denunciation and take no praccertified by the fact that it controls the and what's another lie more or less? present administration of the local. The second group, from the standpoint of numerical strength, is composed of the Schlesinger Right wing forces who have constituted the opposition to the "progressive" administration of the local. The third group, the weakest numerically and one that came to life only recently and has played very little part in the life of the local, is the "Left wing" group directed by the Communist Party.

This is the situation out of which the election "victory" of the Left wing emerged like a miracle. And as we examine another fact the strange story becomes stranger still. Despite the exist- judging the affair than the dubious gos- ently, by its very nature, controlled by

didates, and so did the Left wing. But put up no slate of its own! And when candidates!

bad and to smell worse. However it shames and discredits the Left wing pany union" idea. movement. The Communist leaders who anxious to avoid discussion of it. Perhaps that is why the Daily Worker, which usually screams in big headlines about the smallest accomplishments, real or imaginary, passes the cloakmakers' worker who knows about the needle inger and the fake progressive anarchist-Lovestone combination". Do they Bloc" candidates and that the Left wing gle, a program against clique control of than even Barnum had. The best that the delegates were right in advocating Left wing delegates at the convention any needle trades worker in the market "a program of class struggle". But a will say for that explanation is that it company union has never yet been con- will confine themselves to phrase-mon- of the day. It has more power to move

absolutely clear. But another question remains to be answered: Was it the result of a treacherous horse-trade with the Right wing fakers (Foster and Co. have played that rotten game before), or was the Left wing the victim of favors it did not want? There are people who say openly that it was a bargain. The Lovestoneites, as is their custom whenever anything happens, tell about a sechave "inside information", between the that you are in favor of a different con-Right and Left leaders where the deal trol by a different leadership. What has by. There are more reliable means of union is a company union and, consequence of the three clearly-defined groups, sip of the Lovestoneites. The Left wing the bosses and subjected to no change? there were only two slates in the elec- delegates will have to show by their The program of the left delegates is in tion. The "Progressives" had their can- stand at the convention whether they fact a direct contradiction to the whole

The victory was a fake; that much is

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE "COM-PANY UNION" THEORY?

At the convention of the Needle Trades Industrial Union two years ago the I. L. the Schlesinger group, the black and yel- G. W. U. was branded a "company unlow gang that has been distinguished ion" and organized work within it was always by its voracious appetite for forbidden as an opportunist illusion. At office, was overcome with modesty and that time, in our comments on the convention, we pointed out the falsity of this illuminating circumstance is con- this theory and the tactical conclusions sidered in connection with the result of drawn from it. Our arguments were un- bargain with Schlesinger the reasons the election-the victory of the weak- availing and the theory and the tactics which prompted the black hundred forces est group over the strongest group- had to run their course. This course, to support the Stalinist candidates must there is only one possible conclusion; the strewn with tragedy for the Left wing, be explained. These people are not genright wing forces voted for the Left wing is just about finished. The facts of life erous; they don't give something for have spoken their own word against nothing. And they are not foolish eithese conceptions. The most revealing ther. Even without a direct agreement Already the victory, so bright and fact of all is the election in Local 9. they could act in this case, in the way alluring at a distance, begins to look The Daily Worker's comments on this they did, with full deliberation, counting event, miserable and scanty as they are, on the policy of the Stalinists to help

If you hide a smile and admit their claim that the Left wing has really carried the elections in a genuine fight what remains of the dictum of two years ago without interest, and certainly not withthat an organized Left wing struggle in the International is not only wrong, but also hopeless? This Local alone has three or four times as many members a majority of these members for the Left lumped together in one "social-Fascist" wing, after the very attempt had been forbidden as a deviation, shows a terrible contradiction between the theory and the event.

And that is not all. According to the such a program in the union is to ad- tical steps to unite the opposition? This hibited organized work in the Internathe needle trades have every right to has surrendered this slogan. That is tional precisely on the ground that it demand that the left delegates clear one of the chief reasons for the defeat couldn't be reformed.

Further, the Daily Worker says the left candidates had a program "against clique control of the International" Again we say they were right. But if you are against clique control of the ret meeting, about which they, as usual International, you are saying thereby was made. We can afford to pass this this to do with the teaching that the

north and south at the same time. A third plank in the program "a real strike under rank and file leadership" is an expression of I. W. W.ism that flagrantly violates Communist fundamentals. It deserves a separate discussion.

WHY DID THE RIGHT SUPPORT THE LEFT?

If one acquits Foster of a backroom them as it has in the past. The Schlesinger administration in the International is being pressed hard in the pre-convention campaign by the "Progressive Bloc" opposition. They have observed the present ultra-radical policy of the Party not out profit. According to the ruling theory of the Party, the Lenin teachings on the united front are out of date; all groups and factions not under the immediate domination of the Party are mass; there can be no temporary agree ments, even on the smallest questions, with any of them. Seeing this policyand no doubt agreeing with it heartily -the Schlesinger forces, unable to elect "Progressive Bloc." To accomplish this

Did they get a direct promise that the will fulfill their expectations that they gle. The slogan of unity is the slogan mit the possibility of reforming its pre- question need not be answered in adsent character. But the Stalinists pro- vance. But the Left wing workers in is also the leadership of the Left wing, was a company union and therefore themselves of this suspicion by their ac- of the Left wing and the advances of ism. In the meantime they have been 9. compelled to yield position after position to the Rights, and through them to the bosses. It is time for a decisive turn. The convention of the International is the place for it.

The first duty of the Left wing dele- vote for the Left wing delegates because

are obligated to the Schlesinger gang conception of "company unionism". But still the Party generals continue to mutter the phrase. This is trying to walk

succession of delays in announcing de- Mooney." cision in response to the pleas of Mooney's lawyers for a pardon. At first pose to force Mooney's unconditional an announcement appeared of a decision freedom? The Daily Worker says that to be reached by the end of February. only a mass movement can force Mooney's It became next postponed to the middle release. But do they propose the creaof March, then to the end of March and tion of a mass movement? Do they pronow again to April 21. Will there be pose a series of united front conferences

further postponements? That Rolph is able to postpone his detestimony to the weakness of the movement for Mooney's release. This is the be a rising flood of letters, telegrams, resixteenth year of Mooney's imprison- solutions, to Governor Rolph at Sacrament. No one so much as dares of question mento, California, demanding immediate his innocence. It is a universally ac- and unconditional release . . . " And cepted fact. Mooney is the outstanding that is all! symbol of capitalist class vengeance, of Are we for this rising tide of letters, the American frame-up system. His telegrams and resolutions? We are. cause is dear to the American workers. Yet Rolph can play "cat and mouse with unconditional release? They will if they the life of an innocent man . . . "

The hypocrisy of Governor Rolph of cratic optimism appears under the head, California is now clearly revealed by the "Force Unconditional Freedom of

· How do the C. P. and the I. L. D. proto build this mass movement? They do not. They propose merely "This week cision from month to month is damning must see a special burst of protest." What form shall it take? "There must

Will they force Mooney's immediate and are backed by a united, fighting working And the Daily Worker can say on April class movement. Not otherwise. This 11, "Governor Rolph has been waiting must be organized at once. It is not too for a favorable opportunity to hand down late. The I. L. D. and C. P. must take an unfavorable decision during a moment the lead. Their leadership is making no of working class passivity. Instead the move in that direction. The rank and working class is more alert than ever on file must make its voice heard together the Mooney issue"! This gem of bureau- with that of the Left Opposition.

the calculations of the Schlesinger ma- with the "progressive" opposition, then chine and to clear the Left wing of suspicion in the elections. They must raise nation of the policy. The Party press there the banner of unity in the needle trades, and make the convention the starting point of a new campaign to unite the needle trades workers into a single organization for a common strugthe workers than any other because it corresponds most to their needs. By its false policy, the party leadership, which tions. These delegates will occupy the the reactionaries. The left delegates at strategic position at a significant moment the convention of the International, act- gressive Bloc" leaders to the wall with in the needle trades struggle. Many ing in accord with the Industrial union proposals of a fighting united front workers will judge them and the move- on the outside, have a rare opportunity against Schlesinger and his gang. Who ment they represent, not by what they to turn the tide on this decisive question. gains by the counterfeit radicalism which say there but by what they do there. The That will be a powerful blow to the rejects such a policy? The Schlesinger Left wing workers have heard enough of Schlesinger machine, and a proof that machine on the one hand, and the anthe frothy pseudo-radicalism of Stalin- it miscalculated in the elections in Local archist-Lovestone combination on the

> The second task of the left delegates at the convention is to bring forward a united front program for the convention tion of the International is the place to struggle. If the Schlesinger people can make the turn.

> gates to the convention is to frustrate; they count on their refusal to combine that fact in itself is a sufficient condemthese days is full of talk about "working within the reactionary unions", but this talk doesn't mean much without a realistic tactic. The united front of progressive and oppositional forces against the reactionary leadership is just a tactic, and a most necessary one. We have no confidence in the leaders of the "Progressive Bloc". But the very fact that they come out as an opposition to Schlesinger and talk in radical terms is a proof of the sentiments of the workers behind them. The Left wing must find a road to these workers.

To do this they must force the "Proother. The Left wing and the workers lose all along the line. This is the bitter history of the past few years. Is it not time to turn the helm? The conven-

J. P. C.

DEMOCRACY AND FASCISM

by LEON TROTSKY

(Continued from last issue)

"As regards 'the class content' there are no distinctions between democracy and Fascism," lectures of sociology. The point of departure in the struggle Werner Hirsch echoing Stalin (DIE INTERNATIONALE, Jan. 1932). The transition from democracy to Fasc- the democratic state, but, by the living organizations ism may take the character of "an organic process", of the proletariat, in which is concentrated all its past that is, it may occur "gradually" and "bloodlessly". Such reasoning might dumbfound anyone, but the epigones have inured us from becoming dumbfounded.

There are no "class distinctions", between democracy and Fascism. Obviously this must mean that democracy as well as Fascism is bourgeois in character. We guessed as much even prior to January, 1932. The ruling class, however, does not inhabit a vacuum. It stands in definite relations to other classes. In a developed capitalist society, during a "democratic" régime, the bourgeoisie leans for support primarily upon the working classes which are held in check by the reformists. In its most finished form, this system finds its expression in England during the administration of the Labor government as well as during that tion is posed only as regards the ruling class, then mann and Remmele see in this the quintessence of there is no difference. If one takes into account the position and the inter-relations of all classes, from the angle of the proletariat, then the difference appears to be quite enormous.

built up within the bourgeois democracy, by utilizing the French periodical Cahiers du Bolchévisme, we it, by fighting against it, their own strongholds and bases of proletarian democracy: the trade unions, the scheid; they accept the famous social democratic political parties, the educational and sport clubs, the theory of the "lesser evil", according to which Bruck co-operatives, etc. The proletariat cannot attain ing is not as bad as Hitler, according to which it is power within the formal limits of bourgeois democracy. not so unpleasant to starve under Bruening as under but can do so only by taking the road of revolution: this has been proved both by theory and experience. by Groener than by Frick." This is not the most And these bulwarks of workers' democracy within the stupid passage, although—to give it due redit bourgeois state are absolutely essential for the taking of the revolutionary road. The work of the Sec- the gist of the political philisophy of the laders of ond International consisted in creating just such bul- the Comintern. warks during the epoch when it was still fulfilling its progressive historic labor.

bald sociological abstraction. But the class war takes place on the soil of history, and not in the stratosphere against Fascism is not formed by the abstraction of experience and which prepare it for the future.

The statement that the transition from democracy to Fascism may take on an "organic" and a "gradual' character can mean one thing and one thing only and that is: without any fuss, without a fight, the proletariat may be deprived not only of all its material conquests-not only of its given standard of living, of its social legislation, of its civil and political rights-but also even of the basic weapon whereby these were achieved, that is, its organizations. The "bloodless" transition to Fascism implies under this terminology, the most frightful capitulation of the proletariat that can be conceived.

Werner Hirsch's theoretical discussions are not accidental; while they serve to develop still further the of the Conservatives. In a Fascist régime, at least theoretical oracle of Stalin, they also serve to generalduring its first phase, capitel leans on the petty bour- ize the entire present agitation of the Communist geoisie which destroys the organizations of the pro- party. The party's chief resources are in fact being letariat. Italy, for instance! Is there a difference in strained only to prove: that there is no difference bethe "class content" of these two régimes? If the ques- tween Bruening's régime and Hitler's régime. Thael-Bolshevist policy.

Nor is the matter restricted to Germany only. The notion that nothing new will be added by the victory of Fascists is being zealously propagated now in al In the course of many decades, the workers have sections of the Comintern. In the January issue of read, "The Trotskyists behave in practice like Breit-Hitler, and infinitely more preferable to be shot down stupid enough. Unfortunately, however, it expresses

The fact of the matter is that the Stalinists compare the two régimes from the point of view of vulgar Fascism has for its basic and only task, the razing democracy. And indeed, were one to consider Bruening's to their foundation of all institutions of proletarian régime from the criterion of "formal" democracy, one democracy. Has this any "class meaning" for the would arrive at a conclusion which is beyond arguproletariat, or hasn't it? The lofty theoreticians had ment: nothing is left of the proud Weimar constitu- saying in reality: it makes no difference whether our better ponder over this. After pronouncing the ré- tion save the bones and the skin. But this does not organizations exist, or whether they are already degime to be bourgeois-which no one questions- settle the question so far as we are concerned. The stroyed. Beneath this pseudo-radical phraseology Hirsch, together with his masters, overlooks a mere question must be approached from the angle of pro- there hides the most sordid passivity; we can't escape

when and where the "normal" police methods of re- | the question to whether it is better to starve under action under decay capitalism are replaced by the Hitler or Bruening. To them it is a question of under Fascist régime.

looking perhaps?) is a question which, we confess, We raise the question of how to fight and win. And doesn't interest us at all. But one need only glance at the list of workers' organizations to assert, Fascism | before the bureaucratic dictatorship is replaced by the has not conquered yet in Germany. In the way of its victory there still remain gigantic obstacles and forces.

The present Bruening régime is the régime of boureaucratic dictatorship, or more definitely, the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie enforced by means of the army and the police. The Fascist petty bourgeoisie and the proletarian organizations seem to counterbalance one another. Were the workers united by Soviets; were factory committees fighting for the control of production, then one could speak of dual power. Because of the split within the proletariat, because of the tactical helplessness of its vanguard, dual power does not exist as yet. But the very fact that mighty organizations of workers do exist, which under certain conditions are capable of repelling Fascism with crushing force, that is what keeps Hitler from seizing power and impart s a certain "independence" to the bureaucratic apparatus.

Bruening's dictatorship is a caricature of Bonapartism. His dictatorship is unstable, unreliable, shortcan bring down the thunder of paper decrees but not real thunderbolts. Bruening is fit for dissolving parliament with its own assent; he'll do to promulgate a few decrees against the workers, to proclaim a Christmas truce and to make a few deals under its cover: to break up a hundred meetings, close down a dozen papers, exchange letters with Hitler worthy of a village druggist-that is all. But for greater things his hands are too short.

Bruening is compelled to tolerate the existence of workers' organizations because he hasn't decided to this very day, to hand over the power to Hitler, and inasmuch as he himself has no independent means of liquidating them. Bruening is compelled to tolerate the Fascists and to patronize them inasmuch as he mortally fears the victory of the workers. Bruening's régime is a transitional, shortlived régime, preceding the catastrophe. The present administration holds on, only because the chief camps have not as yet pitted their strength. The real battle hasn't begun. It is still to come. The dictatorship of bureaucratic impotence fills in the lull before the battle, before the forces are openly matched.

The wiseacres who boast that they do not recognize any difference "between Bruening and Hitler", are In place of the historical process they substitute a reliable one on which to consider the question as to from the French Stalinist periodical. They reduce issues.—Ed.

whom to starve. To us, on the contrary, it is not Whether Bruening is "better" than Hitler (better a question of under which conditions it is better to die. we conclude thus, the major offensive must be begun Fascist régime, that is, before the workers' organizations are crushed. The general offensive should be prepared for by deploying, extending, and sharpening the sectional clashes. But for this one must have a correct perspective; and first of all, one should not proclaim victorious the enemy who is still a long way from victory.

Herein is the crux of the problem; herein is the strategical key to the background; herein is the operating base from which the battle must be waged. Every thinking worker, the more so every Communist, must give himself an accounting and plumb to the bottom the empty and rotten talk of the Stalinist bureaucracy about Bruening and Hitler being one and the same thing. You are muddling!, we say in answer. You muddle disgracefully because you are afraid of the difficulties that lie ahead, because you are terrified by the great problems that lie ahead; you throw up the sponge before the fighting is begun, you proclaim that we have already suffered defeat. You are lying! The lived. It signalizes not the initiation of a new social working class is split; it is weakened by the reformists equilibrium but the early crash of the old one. Sup- and disoriented by the vacillations of its own vanported directly only by a small minority of the bour- | guard, but it is not annihilated yet, forces are not geoisie, tolerated by the social democracy against the yet exhausted. No. The proletariat of Germany is will of the workers, threatened by Fascism, Bruening powerful. The most optimistic estimates will be infinitely surpassed once its revolutionary energy will clear the way for it to the arena of action.

> Bruening's régime is the preparatory régime. Preparatory to what? Either to the victory of Fascism, or to the victory of the proletariat. This regime is preparatory because both camps are only preparing for the decisive battle. If you identify Bruening with Hitler, you identify the conditions before the battle with the conditions after the defeat; it means that you admit defeat beforehand; it means that you appeal for surrender without a battle.

> The overwhelming majority of the workers, particularly the Communists, does not want this. The Stalinist bureaucracy of course, does not want it either. But one must take into account not one's good intentions, with which Hitler will pave the road to his Hell, but the objective meaning of one's policies, of their direction, and their tendencies. We must disclose in its entirety the passive, timidly hesitant, capitulating and declamatory character of the politics of Stalin-Manuilsky-Thaclmann-Remnele. must teach the revolutionary workers to understand that the key to the situation is in the hands of the Communist party; but the Stalinist bureaucracy attempts to use this key to lock the gates to revolutionary action.*

—L. TROTSKY.

* The article "Democracy and Fascism" is an extract from comrade Trotsky's larger work What Next?-Vital Questions trifle: the position of the proletariat in this regime. letarian democracy. This criterion is also the only defeat anyway! Read over carefully the quotation for the German Proletariat. Others will follow in coming