

WORKERS  
OF THE  
WORLD  
UNITE

# THE MILITANT

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## New Stage in Needle Trade Fight

A Campaign for Unity is now the Order of the Day

The convention of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union stands in the center of a series of developments and events which signalize a new stage in the needle trades struggle. This occasion can be the starting point for the revival of a genuine labor struggle against the bosses and a new advance of the militant section of the movement. The conditions now are present for the rapid transformation of the existing state of affairs in favor of the workers and their revolutionary vanguard. In order to make this possible the Left wing is obliged to make an objective examination of the whole situation as it exists in reality, and to elaborate a new line of tactics which proceed from it. The leading idea in this departure is a new and correct formulation of the slogan of unity. Bound up with it, and indispensable to its effective application, is a reconsideration of the present attitude with regard to the problem of work within the reactionary union.

The appearance at the I. L. G. W. U. convention of seven delegates—five from Local 9—one from Local 1, and one from Local 38—even though their election was accomplished under shady circumstances—denotes a recognition in fact of the necessity for a systematic struggle within the Right wing union. It is also a proof of the fruitful possibilities of this struggle. This was clearly indicated long ago, from a practical as well as from a theoretical standpoint, despite all the fulminating agitation to the contrary by the people who deduce tactics out of their own heads and not from the facts of life.

### What the Election of the Left Wing Delegates Signifies

The election of the Left wing delegates is an expression of the fact that workers, who are sympathetic to the aims of the Left wing, are compelled by the force of circumstance to belong to the Right wing union. The organized Left wing, under the direct influence of the Communist Party, had to seek an approach to these workers and provide a focal point for their protest. This is the meaning of the Left wing campaign for the election of delegates to the convention. The Party was dragged at the tail of a movement which came into existence in spite of the asinine "theories" which prohibited it. The problem now is to recognize the vital progressive character of the unauthorized movement and provide it with a bold and realistic leadership.

The program on which the Left wing delegates campaigned for election ("for a program of class struggle", "against clique control in the International", etc.) refutes in life the worthless contention, imposed upon the Left wing by the Stalinist muddlers, about the International being a "company union" and therefore not a proper field for systematic work and not subject to reformation in its practices by an organized struggle of the militants within it. The circumstances which compelled the workers to re-enter the Right wing union imperiously command the revolutionary militants to adjust themselves to the situation and organize a struggle there, in coordination with that of the Industrial Union. The old policy which has artificially divided and thereby demoralized this struggle must be replaced by a policy which unites and revitalizes it.

These developments, among others, are signs of a relationship of forces between the Right and Left unions in the field which cannot be ignored in the elaboration of the Left wing tactics of the day. On the contrary, they must be taken as the basis from which the tactics ensue. Added by the bosses and the police on the one side, and the consistently false policies of the Party leadership on the other, the Schlesinger union, which was badly shattered in the split, has been able to re-constitute itself to a very large extent. At the same time, and by dint of the same factors, the organization of the Industrial Union has been reduced and relegated to a small sector of the trade and has been unable to lead the struggles of the needle trades workers on a sufficiently broad scale to beat back the encroachment of the bosses.

### What the Past Developments Teach

The justified aspiration and the heroic struggle of the workers to replace the reactionary unions with a militant industrial union did not meet with success. The best militants were isolated into a small organization which, lacking a mass membership, lacked the power to enforce its demands. On the other hand, the masses of workers, driven by the pressure of circumstance into the fakery-controlled union and lacking the directing nucleus of conscious militants, could not organize an effective struggle within the union.

As a result of all this the fighting capacities of the workers in the trade have been weakened and they have had to suffer a steady deterioration of their conditions. The strikes of the Industrial Union yielded no concrete results, and each failure had the effect of still further undermining the confidence of

the workers in the prospect of any progress along that line. The traitors at the head of the International, freed from the pressure of a genuine fighting opposition, were able to transform the official strikes into decorative affairs which left the conditions of the workers no better than before, and in some cases worse. The morals of the masses in the needle trades has suffered heavily under these repeated blows. Pessimistic moods, induced by the apparent hopelessness of victory while the union organizations are split apart, spread a paralyzing influence over the "market" and undermined the struggles in advance.

The slogan necessary to revive the fighting spirit and fighting capacities of the needle trades workers, and to restore the decisive influence of the Left wing, which is a condition for victorious advances, is the slogan of trade union unity.

This slogan can move the workers more than any other precisely because it corresponds to their most burning needs and expresses their deepest impulses. But in spite of that, or rather just because of that, there can be no trifling, no phrase-mongering bluster, no demagogic pretense with this great slogan. Whoever really wants to get the attention of the needle trades masses and to influence them seriously must remember one thing: they have been fooled enough, they are on guard for tricks in the name of "unity", they have to be convinced that the slogan is both sincere and realistic.

### "Unity from Below" or Genuine Unity?

The Party bureaucrats overlooked this point, and this is one of the main reasons that their bombastic agitation around the question of "unity", and their gross perversion of the Lenin teaching on the subject yielded such miserable results and gave the game to the bosses and their labor agents every time. The demand for "unity" under the leadership of the Communists predetermined in advance—as the demoralized functionaries of Stalinism have been presenting the question—cannot unite anybody except those who are already convinced of the necessity of this leadership. The "unity from below" ballyhoo is part of the same futility. But the problem of the day is to unite the great masses of the needle trades workers, including those who are indifferent and even hostile to Communism, for a common trade union struggle for concrete demands. This is what the workers want, and this is what they need. The slogan of unity must be formulated in such a way that it conforms to this situation and appears to the workers as both realistic and realizable.

At the time when the Industrial Union still contested the field seriously with the International—when the struggle for supremacy remained undecided—the slogan of unity, as formulated by the Left Opposition, was applicable to the situation (the amalgamation of the unions into a single organization by means of a joint convention). The present conditions and relationship of forces between the unions dictate a reformulation of the slogan of unity which, without yielding anything in principle, will correspond more closely to the realities of

## Left Oppositionist Speaks from the Tribune of the Prussian Diet

The following speech was delivered several weeks ago in the Prussian parliament by comrade Oskar Seipold, speaking in the name of our German brother section the Left Opposition of the C. P. G. From the parliamentary tribune the spokesman of the Left Opposition hurled the challenge of united proletarian action against the hordes of Hitler, mercilessly exposing the bourgeois "democratic" politicians and the social democratic lackeys for the role they are playing in paving the road for Fascism.

Making concrete proposals of mobilizing the workers for a genuine struggle against the Nazi danger, he forces the reformists to show their true colors, thus pointing the way to an effective Communist policy and permitting the masses to judge between the Leninist tactic of the Left Opposition and the impotent confusionism of the Stalinists. In these tense days, when the whole world looks anxiously to the outcome of the historic struggle now going on in Germany, the speech of comrade Seipold deserves especial attention on the part of all class conscious workers.

Rep. Seipold (Left Opposition of the C. P. G.): The nations of the entire world and especially we in Germany, are at present living under such conditions, that every serious conversation turns directly to the questions of high politics and the questions of high politics—to that of the revolution. In the history

## OPEN FORUM

THE MENACE OF  
FASCISM IN  
GERMANY  
Lecture by  
ARNE SWABECK  
on  
FRIDAY, APRIL 29, 1932  
at the  
Labor Temple  
14th Street and Second Avenue  
at 8 P. M.  
QUESTIONS and DISCUSSION  
ADMISSION: 25 Cents  
Unemployed Workers Admitted Free  
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League of America (Opposition)

the situation. From this standpoint the latest meeting of the National Committee of the Communist League, in agreement with the needle trades group, decided to recommend to the Party and the Left wing the slogan of unity, with respect to the International, be formulated now as follows: "Readmission of the Left wing into the International in a body, without discriminations and with full membership rights". Together with this a general campaign should be carried on for the amalgamation of all the unions in the various trades into a single organization embracing the entire industry.

This slogan, which flows out of the actual state of affairs, will also impress the workers as both reasonable and realizable; it will reawaken their confidence and their aspiration for an effective union. At the same time it will open the way for the Left wing to the masses of workers now separated from it in the Schlesinger union.

The Industrial Union, which holds its Plenum on May 1st, the day before the opening of the convention of the International, should put forward the slogan in this way and elect a delegation to present the question before the International convention. Simultaneously, the Left wing delegates to the International convention, acting in concert with the Industrial Union at every step, should begin a fight in the convention in favor of the slogan. Such an action on their part, following the action of the Industrial Union's Plenum, will immediately change the character of the convention, and change it most radically.

### The Slogan as a Challenge to the Progressives

The more-or-less sham battle between the Schlesinger machine and the "Progressive Bloc", with the Left wing fluctuating on the sidelines—for which the stage is now set—will give place to a realignment of forces and a real fight. Let the "Progressive Bloc" dare to oppose this slogan! Their rank and file supporters, who want unity and a militant policy and mean it earnestly, will at once begin to shift over to the Left wing. If the "Progressives" accept the slogan it will be the means of developing a struggle on a broad front that will soon go beyond the bounds of the pseudo-progressive program. In a few decisive steps the Left wing can regain its position as the dynamic force in the whole

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## The Intensified Wage Cut Drive

Many credulous workers have suffered from the illusion, and possibly still do, that wage reductions will bring an increase of jobs. To those there have been a number of decisive and hard hitting answers given in the rounds of wage cutting which have followed one another in rapid succession during this

crisis and with the unemployment figures still mounting.

The most recent wage reductions actual or contemplated, are symptomatic of the fact that the formerly more privileged strata of the working class are now ever more becoming the victims, the same as the lower paid, unskilled ones.

## Failure of the Danube Union Conference

The Conference which was held last week in London of delegations from Great Britain, France, Germany and Italy to consider plans for rescuing the Danubian States, Austria, Hungary, Roumania, Czecho-Slovakia and Juglo-Slavakia from economic and financial bankruptcy, ended in a complete failure. Germany and Italy did not agree to the plan elaborated by France and supported by England on the ground that the French Plan deprives them of their rights of "the most favored nation" guaranteed them under their commercial agreements with the Danubian States.

The plan in brief is the following: the five small states are to lower their tariffs with reference to each other by 10 percent or more maintaining at the same time the existing tariffs in regard to outside countries. The outside countries are to agree to a lowering of tariffs on the agricultural products of the Danubian States.

Germany also had a specific ground for her objection to the plan because under it, Czecho-Slovakia, an industrial country, is granted the privilege of the agricultural countries, those of a preferential tariff on her products which will afford her a possibility of eventually driving Germany out of the Danubian market.

Italy refused to support the French Plan because it would strengthen the French Little Entente in Central Europe. Thus the plan of Great Britain and France to "rescue" the Danubian states from disaster failed because of their own imperialist designs and that of other European powers.

The plight of the Danubian States, which grew out of the former Hapsburg Empire after the last World War is a result of the Versailles "Peace" Treaty, which divided up the old Austro-Hungarian Empire in small parcels, forced them into narrow national boundaries, as beasts in the cages of a Zoo, and compelled them to conduct their own economies independently on the basis of their meagre economic resources. The competition, tariffs and other national restrictions augmented by the various national historical controversies and mutual distrust, continually hindered the economic development of these countries and rendered them a toy in the hands of the imperialist powers. During the period of capitalist stabilization they managed with great difficulty and with the aid of loan from British, French and American banks to maintain their precarious existence. The crisis and the high interests on the loans, however, have finally led them to economic and financial bankruptcy.

The victims of the deplorable situation thus brought about are, of course, the broad masses of workers and peas-

ants. Millions of unemployed and ruined peasants are doomed to starvation and suffering. The bourgeoisie of these countries are receiving the systematic aid of the big imperialist powers in all their plans of saving themselves at the expense of the broad masses and also to crush every resistance against the terrible exploitation. The price that the bourgeoisie is requested to pay for that service is their consent to be utilized by the imperialists in their fight against the proletarian revolutions and the U. S. S. R.

Poland, Czecho-Slovakia and Rumania are virtual vassals of France and figure in all the schemes of French imperialism to provoke a war with the Soviet Union. The present scheme of France is to draw in the rest of the European countries into the Little Entente and augment her hegemony over the whole of Europe. Should she succeed in this scheme there will be created a monstrous power that will present the greatest danger to the existence of the Soviet Union.

About a year ago Germany attempted to establish a customs union with Austria which could eventually also include other European states. The late Aristide Briand employed his diplomatic talent and France's financial power to frustrate Germany's plan, and he succeeded. The French bourgeoisie envisaged in Germany's plan the danger to her hegemony and did not permit it to be carried out.

However, the interests of finance capital urgently require the adoption of a method by which to save the capitalist system in Europe. The narrow nationalist boundaries in which the small Danubian states are cramped in are a hindrance to their economic development which endangers the investments of the financiers and drives the peoples to revolt. They are consequently compelled to bring about some sort of a union among the small states in order to stimulate industry and commerce and save their investments. Their plans, however, are constantly clashing with their own contradictions, with the mutual rivalries and the strife for hegemony among the European powers. In each plan brought forward there brazenly protrudes the sinister aim of this or the other imperialist power to strengthen her hegemony over the other.

In the rivalry of the imperialists for "aiding" the impoverished small European countries there are revealed its true character of a conflict for hegemony, a conflict that recalls to memory the period preceding the last world war and which carries the germs of a similar outcome in a much more horrible shape, the danger of a world war of monstrous dimensions.

### The Solution Lies in the Proletarian Revolution

The real solution to the plight of the peoples in the small European countries, lies in the hands of the European proletariat, in the direction of a proletarian revolution. Capitalism is unable to solve all the contradictions that have accumulated in the course of its development. Imperialism has brought ruin and bankruptcy to the broad masses and the small oppressed peoples. All its financial and diplomatic plans can only stave off the moment of its catastrophic collapse, but by no means, avoid it. The hour of the proletarian revolution has struck. Its beginning is on the order of the day in Europe, in Germany in the first line. The Communist Party of Germany is advancing the slogan of a Soviet Germany. What a Soviet Germany means for the whole of the European continent and particularly for the small European

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## Greek Opposition Holds Convention

ATHENS, GREECE—Our National Congress took place in Athens on March 25-26. Forty-eight delegates were present from all Greece, representing 2,000 members. The Congress was preceded by 3 Regional Conferences (1) Macedonia & Thessaly district, (2) East Macedonia and West Thrace, (3) Athens, Peloponnesus & Islands). The national and international problems were discussed in the organization nuclei before the Congress and the conclusions arrived at will be published in Davlos, No. 3. (Theoretical Organ of the Greek Left Opposition).

The Congress took the opportunity of reviewing the long and hard history of our organization, the roots of which are found in the First Congress of the So-

cialist Labour Party (now C. P.) in 1918, through this long period up to now. The experiences accumulated will encourage us to continue on the path laid down by the forerunner of our organization, the "Communist Union" which formed the Left wing of the Congress of the S. L. P. in 1918, and whose ideas (the necessity of a homogeneous nucleus, the formation of cadres, the assimilation of Bolshevik experience, etc.) are forming the foundation upon which our organization rests. We feel certain that our Congress will be a landmark in the history of the revolutionary movement in Greece.

A few months ago the New York printing employers associations made a demand upon the allied trades for a 20 per cent reduction. Their contracts had not yet expired but this did not in the least deter the employers from calling upon their old friend Major Berry, President of the Pressman's Union. Major Berry came to their assistance, once again playing the role he has so often before played, namely to break the workers' ranks. In the name of the union he accepted a 7 per cent reduction for the pressmen. After that treacherous break the other unions began to follow suit: The mailers, the paper handlers, the cutters and the bookbinders similarly accepted cuts. Only the typographical union, the Big Six, is still holding out. It is holding out by virtue of the fact that the membership almost unanimously set themselves against the demand. But the officials, who, for the time being at least, had to pay heed to this decision, are trying to turn the tables in a different way. They are merely emphasizing the fact that the union contract does not expire until Sept. 31 this year, thus intimating that after that date the prospects of their following in the footsteps of Major Berry are likely to improve. That however, in the first instance depends upon how well the membership are able to prepare to frustrate it and to resist the attack.

### Another Privileged Trade Hit

After the consistent barrage of the newspaper campaign, always holding up the building trades workers as a horrible example of "high pay and little work", the official wage reductions are beginning to keep step in city after city. Unofficially, of course, the level of actual wages paid has long ago been reduced. The employers undoubtedly know well enough that an official sanction for a reduction now will also make a further downward step in the actual level possible. In most of the larger cities the official reduction has already taken place; but there are no particular indications that even the season, which should now be at hand, will anywhere approach an absorption of the jobless builders.

Last week the New York Building Trades Employers Association broke off all parleys and sent the unions an ultimatum to accept a 20 to 35 per cent reduction. It was done by the simple process of posting notices. The reduction will involve some 115,000 workers. It is to take effect May 1, and is scheduled to run until December 31, 1933. In this manner the employers aim to also gain a more propitious time for expiration just prior to the beginning of the winter months. But it should not be forgotten that they do not at all propose to sign any kind of agreement, thus leaving themselves the option of decreasing further reductions whenever they see fit. Yet in this respect also, the calculations would still depend upon what the organized workers may have to say about it.

It is reported that the New York Building Trades Council, through President Halkett, has announced that it will resist. How much confidence can be placed in this announcement one may gather from the offer already previously made by the council to accept a 15 per cent reduction. And it becomes a good deal clearer by the observation that at this time no steps whatever have been taken for organizational preparation to resist.

Obviously, as far as the wage cutting campaign is concerned, there is today little distinction made between the organized and the unorganized workers. That this could become possible is, in the first instance, an expression of the advantage taken by the employers of the severe unemployment crisis. But it can also largely be ascribed to the complete failure of the present union leadership. In view of what is happening to the

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We are preparing a report on the Congress for the International Secretariat and for the national sections.

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