

WORKERS
OF THE
WORLD.
UNITE

THE MILITANT

Weekly Organ of the Communist League of America [Opposition]

Published weekly by the Communist League of America (Opposition) at 84 East 10th Street, New York, N. Y. Entered as second class mail matter, November 28, 1928 at the Post Office at New York, N. Y. under the act of March 3, 1879.

VOLUME V, NO. 19 [WHOLE NO. 115]

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, MAY 7, 1932

PRICE 5 CENTS

The S.P. «Lefts» Program

The "militant" socialists have forced their attention upon the American movement by issuing a "Militant Program of the Socialist Party of America". The noise the Militants created in heralding their opposition to the party fathers prompted O'Neal to give them a spanking, issued as a criticism in the New Leader. But like all bureaucrats and upholders of the crimes of the Second International, O'Neal splashed a lot of words, set up a few straw men and evaded the whole issue. No doubt this kind of criticism will spur the "militants" to new conquests. In this advance of the "militants", it is well to point out what their present step means and to lay bare some of the contradictions.

The deepening crisis has caused this stir and forces the more enlightened members of the S. P. to seriously question the crimes of the Second International. For the rank and file of the "militants" it is a step forward, but for those "leaders" who were formerly supporting the Communists it is a big step backward. At least, one will have to give these "leaders" credit for one thing. They have set themselves for a big task. They intend to reform the Second International. Already sections of the more advanced workers in their rank and file are to the left of the "militant" program and are seriously questioning it.

The program is written in the fashion of a crafty lawyer who puts out a feeler, insinuating much, condemning considerably, but accusing no one in particular. The program points out some of the crimes of the Second International, but there is no hint as to who their American bed-fellows are. They seem to be afraid of stepping on somebody's toes. Like good politicians of the capitalist orders these "militants" leaders have left the door open for proper adjustments with the fathers at a later date.

The "militant program" accuses the Second International of crimes beyond class "redemption" and in the same breath advocates reforming this even more tragic than the position of the liberal who admits all the evils of capitalism and then sets out to cure it.

The reformers of the Second International speak of class struggle saying, "The moment this Marxian concept is abandoned, not only in theory but in practice as well, at that moment Socialism loses its significance." We are told this in 1932 by the "militant socialists", but this universal, open abandonment of the class struggle by Second International was heralded unashamedly to the workers of the world in 1914 and ever since then, and it is from then on that "Socialism" has lost "its significance". No group of "Lefts" can blow life into what is already dead. If the "militant socialists" blow anything into the American party we can be sure it will not be Marxism. They can blow into the Socialist Party some radical phrases, and make it more presentable for conditions of crisis. In this stage of increasing class struggle, capitalism must bring into life the American variety of social democracy, so ably preferred by the German "Marxists". If a few sincere but non-Marxian workers "lead" allow themselves to be utilized together with the conscious fakers so much the better for the development of reformism in America, for the capitalists. The Second International served its master well in Europe. Why not give it a chance in America, even if it needs a little doctoring up for presentation? American capitalism had better make haste while there is time and construct some kind of a storm cellar for the coming class battles. Will the rank and file "militants" of the Socialist Party help in this process, or will they take the next step toward the Communist movement?

The program says, "It is a fundamental principle of Marxism that Socialism cannot be achieved as a result of a series of reforms within the framework of the Capitalist State." When the fathers of the party read this they became frightened, but as soon as they were quiet, the next sentence all their fear was relieved, for in its own peculiar way, in the language of the politicians, it lays the basis for the understanding of words and deeds. The next sentence of the program says, "Emancipation of the workers can begin only when the workers capture political power and constitute themselves the ruling class." Just another way of saying, we will shoot the capitalist to death with paper ballots. The question of what to do with the capitalist state (smash it) and what kind of a state will replace it, is left for people to guess as they please. This is no accident on the part of the "militant socialist leaders". These reformers of the reformers in America say the dictatorship of the proletariat is alright in Russia. But in America—that's a different question. Years ago the intense class struggle in Europe forced the "left" Socialists to accept the dictatorship in Russia as

a reality but in the next breath they said it was not their country. And now, years later, the developing class struggle in America forces the "lefts" to say the same. Already we find some of the rank and file objecting to these clever formulations, this lip service to revolution and action for reformism. They demand another step.

The program says, "At the same time, we set ourselves firmly against dictatorship in this country as long as democratic means of transition to a socialist society are still available." We will vote the capitalists out of power, and these defeated capitalists will give us the key to every mine, mill and factory; and the next day they will report to work in overalls." So say the "militants", who are going to use the democratic means of transition to socialism. What a mess. Shapiro, Coleman, Sinclair and Blanchard and their like. What kind of a game do you call this? They may be able to convince some followers that they "don't know any better" but we know them from before.

Every one remembers the last part of the Communist Manifesto and the last sentence. It is well to know the last words of the "militant socialist" program: "We must create and promote a spirit of intelligent hopefulness. Such an opportunity as is at hand for all of us to hasten the emancipation of the working class of America may not come again for generations. We call for action. Let us close ranks and go forward to Socialism in our time." This gem of reform ignorance has two mistakes: ordinary and extraordinary. These reformers tell their followers that if they don't get busy and help them reform the reformers at once we may not have another chance for generations. We can settle this problem by informing the "militant Socialists" that they will not reform the Second International in this generation and in the next generation there will be no need because the Second International will only be a terrible memory for the victorious world proletariat.—H. O.

Bourgeois Left Gains in French Elections

The first ballot of the French elections, last Sunday, although not decisive in its results, indicates a definite trend toward the bourgeois Left in the country. The die-hard policies of Andre Tardieu and his Right bloc; in control at the present time, seem to have driven broad layers of the French intermediate classes to the side of the moderate bourgeois parties. The Radical-Socialists under the leadership of the pan-European "pacifist" Edouard Herriot have already received 63 seats, the largest bloc of votes for any of the parties participating. The Left Republicans of Premier Tardieu received 37 seats, reducing their former strength considerably. The socialists with their 40 mandates also show a substantial gain. Comparisons with the results of the first ballot in the last elections (1928) demonstrate the trend toward the Left very distinctly.

The political line of Tardieu, particularly aggressive in its foreign relations, has opened up French industry and economy to counter-attacks by the other world powers. The high tariffs and the suspicious attitude aroused in the other countries has instigated the fear of "isolation" among the rather formidable middle layers of French society. The Radical-Socialists and the socialists have been for some time campaigning for disarmament and European "cooperation" and have been able to achieve a measure of success in their campaigns.

Growing unemployment and the worsening of the general conditions of the working class, due to the economic crisis which is first unfolding in our seriousness in France, produces still another and very important movement toward the radicalization of the masses. The socialists have, for their part, flirted with the idea of new reforms in their campaigns. That French imperialism, in its present precarious position, with an economic crisis on its hands and with a very wobbly and unrealistic political preponderance in Europe, will not be able to concede in any great measure to the road of social legislation, is a foregone conclusion.

The Radical-Socialists are quite conscious of this and hence the reports of their weariness of an alliance with the socialists. Despite the many protests and declarations of Herriot in the press, to the effect that he will not conclude any bloc with the Tardieu group, we cannot help remaining skeptical. The Radical-Socialists have the interests of the French master class well in mind, and just as in the past, they are apt to be more inclined to draw their conclusions from the eventual logic of French politics than from considerations of temporary gain implied in an alliance with the socialists.

Still, the socialists have been consistently making overtures to the Herriot party and in view of the importance of cooperation in the second ballot, which will definitely decide the composition of the Chambre for the next four years, a temporary accord may be arrived at. In any case a process of self-exposure before the masses, of the impotent bourgeois parties lies in the perspective. At the same time, good opportunities are opening up for the revolutionary party, for the Communist Party of France, to utilize this self-exposure. This requires a realistic attitude and a careful and consistent class policy on part of the leadership.

DEBATE

I. W. W. Representative
Communist Representative
Is the Program of the I. W. W. Sufficient for the Emancipation of the Working Class?

AFFIRMATIVE:
C. B. Ellis
Editor, Industrial Solidarity
NEGATIVE:
James P. Cannon
Communist League of America
(Opposition)
on
SATURDAY, MAY 14th at 8 P. M.
at the
LABOR TEMPLE
14th Street and Second Avenue
ADMISSION: 20 Cents
Auspicies: Joint Arrangement Committee

WEEKLY MILITANT DEPENDS UPON SUCCESS OF \$1,000 DRIVE

It is necessary to put the question bluntly: We depend absolutely on the thousand dollar press fund in keeping the WEEKLY MILITANT and our other publications we have up to the present resorted to "normal" methods—soliciting subscriptions, renewals, etc. The situation of our press at the present time necessitates a much harder drive. We must put on more pressure, we must exert ourselves more and sacrifice more. The life of the weekly MILITANT is at stake.

The Strike in the N. Y. Building Trades

Between 30,000 and 40,000 New York building trades workers went on strike May 1st because of a failure to arrive at a wage scale agreement. The building trades employers association had previously, arbitrarily posted notice of wage cuts ranging from 25% to 30%. However, the immediate cause of the strike was the fact that the elevator manufacturers broke ranks and made a verbal promise to the elevator constructors' union of a day scale of \$11.20 instead of the \$10 announced in notices posted. The press carries statements to the effect that the leaders of the building trades council were otherwise prepared to accept the cut.

On Monday May the 2nd three unions still remained at work, the elevator constructors, the electricians and the iron and steel workers. But the following day the employers decided to make the shut-down complete and disperse with the service of these three union also. The officials of the bricklayers union evidently still expect to gain special favors. Their previous agreement carries a "no strike" clause, and they now insist upon arbitration.

How serious is the building trades? It is less serious about the strike? It

should be remembered that it is not at all called in protest against the wage cut, but rather in protest against a verbal promise for special consideration for one union. Secondly, the leadership made no preparation whatever for strike. It has made no proposals to solidify the unions of the seventeen different international to resist the wage slashes. It has made no proposals for strike activities to prepare against possible scabbing. Thirdly, it made no efforts to establish some semblance of concerted action on a national scale. It is perfectly true that building cannot be transferred from one city to another, nevertheless the lack of concerted action has permitted opening wedges to be made in many cities where the building trades workers have already submitted to drastic wage cuts. Lastly, the union leadership was willing to accept the wage cut decree, had the employers remained united.

Conditions of the Unions
It is of course correct for unions to make all possible use of any break in the ranks of the employers; but such can be utilized only provided the organizations are prepared to make a serious fight. Of what there is no indication whatever.

The building trades unions in New York as well as elsewhere, have suffered serious membership losses. In the main, this has been due to the fact that, with the widespread heavy unemployment members have been unable to keep up their dues payments and the unions have failed to maintain closed shop conditions. To resist in a serious manner the present attacks upon the wage scale it is first of all necessary that real efforts should be made to regain what has been lost and to strengthen the unions. That strength, however, can be expressed effectively only when the unions arrive at a basis of unity of action. That such is not yet the case is amply demonstrated by the fact that three unions could remain at work after the strike was called. Moreover, there will be little possibility of preventing strike breaking unless such unity actually exists.

Must Prepare to Resist
It should be clear that the building trades workers by this time that a reduced scale of wages will not at all serve to increase the jobs. On the contrary, it is the continued unemployment and the surplus of hands available which is being utilized by the employers to reduce wages and

thus reduce the standard of living everywhere. To this should be added, that acceptance of one wage cut leaves the road open for the employers to press for more.

No matter how much the building trades unions have suffered from their own inherent craft weakness, and from their corrupt leadership, they are still the best organized section in the country. In other words, this means that it is still up to them to lead the fight against the general wage slashing. The cuts already suffered should therefore become a serious warning that it is now high time to prepare to lead that fight and to prepare to lead it on a national scale.

Militant Builders

Attention Militant Builders! To each comrade and sympathizer, who during the final month of the drive, May 1 to June 1, accounts for \$15 subs or donations to any of our papers we will give a free copy of Volume 1 of comrade Trotsky's History of the Russian Revolution. To each comrade who falls short of \$15 but reaches \$10, we will give a free copy of WHAT NEXT by comrade Trotsky. This is an opportunity no comrade can afford to overlook.

To the comrade who stands highest in the staff of Militant Builders at the close of the entire drive we will give free a bound volume of The Militant. To the comrade who stands second we will give a free copy of The Problems of the Chinese Revolution.

The record of the builders for the entire drive to date with the final month listed in parenthesis, is as follows:
C. Hedlund, (6)—11; V. Dunne, (6)—9; L. Roseland, (3 1-2)—5; M. Dunne, (3)—8; L. Nagy, (2 1-2)—3; C. Forsen, (2 1-2)—3; L. Basky, (1 1-2)—5; R. Sacharow, (1)—4; R. Ruskin, (1)—2; W. Curran, (1)—2; S. Zaimanoff, (1)—1; C. Cowell, (1)—5; F. Schulman, (1)—1; F. Barach, (1)—4; C. Johnson, (1)—2; S. Lessin, (1)—1; N. Berman (1)—1; G. R. Herman, (1); J. Ross, (1); C. Skoglund, 3; O. Coover, 2; J. Carr, 2; F. Cheloff, 2; G. Ray, 2; M. Gottlieb, 1; M. Koehler, 1; W. Wynne, 1; J. Carter, 1; H. Capells, 1; W. Herman, 1; A. Swaback, 1; A. Glotzer, 1; L. Logan, 1; Kaldis, 1; M. Sterling, 1.

Stalinist - Lovestone Unity Negotiations

We have received the following two letters:

I.
Dear Comrades:
The unity negotiations with Lovestone have been going on for some time. Everything has been conducted in the quietest through secret personal conferences—and nothing has been put in writing on the party side. This precaution was explained to me as a measure "to prevent Lovestone from having anything to show which cannot be denied if the negotiations fall." My personal opinion, however, is that they will come to an agreement. You may not agree with me, but these are my reasons.

I do know that several meetings between them have taken place. I understand that the C. I. representative also talked to Lovestone, but am not absolutely sure of this. The negotiations hinge at present on the Brandler question. The C. E. C. negotiators demanded a statement repudiating Brandler as the main condition for unity. They also insisted that Lovestone issue such a statement personally, under his own signature, in addition to the statement by the group. This proposition was taken under advisement for some time.

Then another conference was arranged and Lovestone made the following reply: He will act together with the group and cannot issue any statement in his own name. The group will not issue any statement against Brandler before being readmitted into the party. However, if they were taken back into the party, they would "submit to party discipline" and carry out any instructions given them on any question.

A second demand of the C. E. C. I. was that the Lovestoneites issue a declaration to the effect that "the party line is right and has always been right". To this, Lovestone gave the same reply as above: no statements before the unity—submission to discipline, including declarations they are instructed to make—afterward.

Then the C. E. C. cabled the report to the Comintern and asked for instructions. A few days ago, the reply of the C. I., signed by Kuusinen arrived. It said: "Conditions not acceptable". This was reported to Lovestone. Up to the present he has not replied.

The whole affair is provoking a new division in the upper circles of the informed functionaries. The former Lovestoneites, especially Stachel, are undoubtedly in favor of the unity and will do all they can to help Lovestone find a

graceful way in. The old-time Fosterites who have prospered in late years, are not very enthusiastic about the return of the Lovestone group and the consequent sharpening of "competition" for the places, which for these people have come to mean life itself. But it is hard to get direct expressions from many of them. They are so afraid of getting cross-ways with "the C. I. line" that they wait to make sure what is expected of them before committing themselves.

The most significant result of the unity negotiations with Lovestone is the effect on those who, like myself, were disoriented by the "left turn". It was the expulsion of Lovestone that really arrested our trend toward the Left Opposition. It certainly makes one feel foolish to think about it now and to realize that the readmission of the Lovestoneites will complete the circle and leave us where we started—with nothing to show for our "strategy" but a bad taste in the mouth.

It will also interest you to know that the "Soviet-American military alliance" issue caused some repercussions, even in the apparatus. When that famous editorial came to the Daily Worker office—it was written, I am told, by the C. I. man—it evoked strenuous protest at first from Harry Gannes. He is something of an editor or half-editor there and began to mutter something about principles, Marxism, etc. You know he has occasional outbursts of this kind. However, he was promptly told that this editorial came from "the top" and he soon subsided.

Yours,
—P.

II.
From a Member of the Lovestone Group
Dear Comrades:

Last Thursday we held a general membership meeting of the group and heard the report on the unity negotiations with the party. Lovestone made the report.

He said the negotiations began several weeks ago soon after the labor mass meeting of our group in the Labor Temple. The first conference took place between Lovestone and the C. I. rep. The C. I. rep., according to Lovestone, proposed that the group return to the party and work everything out gradually. Lovestone demanded as a condition party democracy, a full discussion and following that, a convention.

The C. I. rep. said: "Do you mean to say that you want party democracy?" (Continued on page 8)

Now on the Press! Problems of the Chinese Revolution by LEON TROTSKY

THE 1925-27 CHINESE REVOLUTION WAS ONE OF THE FIRST WORLD-IMPORTANT POLITICAL EVENTS IN WHICH TROTSKY'S OPPOSITION TO THE POLICY OF STALIN MANIFESTED ITSELF IN THE CONCRETE. IN THIS BOOK, QUOTATIONS FROM STALIN'S OWN WRITTEN WORDS AND SPEECHES ARE GIVEN AS WELL AS THOSE OF TROTSKY'S AND HIS SUPPORTERS.

READ THIS HISTORICAL DOCUMENT. COMPARE THE PROPOSED POLICIES OF THAT DAY WITH SUBSEQUENT EVENTS IN THE CHINESE REVOLUTION, THEN DECIDE WHO WAS CORRECT. THE LEFT OPPOSITION DOES NOT FEAR YOUR JUDGMENT AFTER YOU HAVE SERIOUSLY READ AND STUDIED THIS BOOK.

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