

EDITORIAL NOTES

BRING THE UNITY NEGOTIATIONS INTO THE OPEN!

(Continued from page 1) Since the position of the Left Opposition on the subject of Party unity, as on all other important issues, is founded on principle, a consistency in its expressions on the matter from time to time can be noted.

Our chief concern, that transcends all other considerations, is the return of the Party and the Comintern to the foundation principles of Marxism. Since 1928, first within the Party and afterward as an expelled group, we have advocated, on all the important questions of the day, the Marxist line of the International Left Opposition against the opportunist and adventurist zig-zags of official Centrism.

They are deceivers of the Communist workers who, abusing their good will, preach "unity" and capitulate the general sentiment for it without speaking of the principle causes of the demoralizing and splits. No better are those worthless intrigants whoicker over "unity" in a dark corner without even informing the workers what is going on, like commission merchants with so many head of livestock at their disposal.

This is not to say, of course, that the differences must be settled beforehand, or that the platform of the Left Opposition must be accepted as a condition for unity. We have never demanded that. The demand of the Left Opposition is for Party democracy, as Lenin's party defined and practiced it. A free and open discussion of the disputes within the framework of the Party. A convention whose delegates are fairly and honestly selected on the basis of the discussion. A leadership freely elected by the membership and subject to its control. The right of the minority to work in

the party and to advance its viewpoint a second, a third or a tenth time on proper occasion, within the limits of the party constitution. This is the way Lenin's party clarified its policies, corrected its errors, chose its leaders and safeguarded its unity.

Nobody has invented any other method, and nobody can. The Stalinist substitute only succeeded in derailing the Party from the Marxist track, crushing the initiative of the membership and celebrating its "monolithic unity" with split after split. It is the horrible bankruptcy of this Stalinist substitute that compels the Party membership to think of unity again in terms of Leninism, and to seek a way for the inclusion of the Left Opposition.

There is no doubt that the present objective circumstances accentuate the harmful results of the splits and the consequent weakening of the Party before its class enemies. The sharpening of the class struggle at home, the increasingly heavy blows dealt to the militant workers by the entrenched reaction, the rumbling of impending revolutionary struggles abroad—all this gives a powerful impulse to the sentiments for unity within the Party ranks.

The first of these proposals, which will be transmitted to the Party within the week, will ask the reinstatement of the Left Opposition without any conditions except the rights of Party democracy, and with an undertaking to assume any duties or responsibilities whatever which are assigned to us by the Party.

The second proposal, to be applied immediately while the matter of formal reinstatement remains pending, is that the Party accept the cooperation of the Left Opposition in the class struggle actions, in the trade unions and other organization and on every front where the pressure of the class enemy is heaviest. The Left Opposition will take its place in the front ranks of every struggle without exception and will demonstrate its revolutionary qualities there now as it has in the past.

In the Party or temporarily outside of it, cooperating with the Party in united front struggles or denied the right to participate in them—whatever the circumstances of the moment, the Left Opposition will retain its principle positions, and above all its internationalism. We are united for life and death with the true inheritors of the October revolution, the Bolshevik-Leninists of Soviet Russia and the international organization of the Bolshevik-Leninists which now embraces the world. We do not seek a solution of the problem of unity on a national basis; we do not separate our cause from theirs. If we are readmitted to the American Party our first demand in free discussion will be:

Reinstate the expelled oppositionists in Russia and all other sections of the Comintern! Recall Trotsky from Constantinople and Rakovsky from Siberia! Release the thousands and tens of thousands of Bolshevik-Leninists from the Stalinist prisons and exile camps and restore them to their rightful place in the Party. That and only that will give a revolutionary, international substance to the slogan of Communist Unity.

REPLY TO COMRADE BOJARSKY

A worker who apparently agrees in part with the trade union policy of the Communist League has criticized the article on the elections in Local 9 of the I. L. G. W. U. which appeared in the issue of April 16th. In order that his differences may be fairly presented, his letter is printed in full on the correspondence page. The doubts we expressed about the genuineness of the victory of the Left wing in the Local 9 elections are attributed by the writer of the letter, comrade Bojarsky, to misinformation about the conditions in this local and the relation of forces between the contending groups. If that were really the case we would have no hesitancy in acknowledging and correcting the error, since honest information is the prerequisite for intelligent and enlightening discussion.

As a proof of the strength of the Left group in Local 9 comrade Bojarsky says it "was the first to defeat the \$3.75 tax proposed by the International Administration." If the Left alone had fought this tax, and the other two groups—the Right as well as the "Progressive Bloc"—had defended it, then the defeat of the tax would indeed have been an indication of the strength of the Left. But this is not exactly so. The "Progressive Bloc" was also against the tax, and since this group controls the administration of the local, which in itself is a demonstration of its strength, it is manifestly wrong to conclude that the defeat of the tax showed the supremacy of the Left. We sympathize with the "patriotic" loyalty to the Left which our correspondent shows. But we do not in the least help the cause of the Left by closing our eyes to realities and making exaggerated and easily refuted claims regarding its accomplishments.

Comrade Bojarsky also disputes our statement that the "Left wing group in the local came to life only recently and has played very little part in the life of the Local." Against that he says the group "has been in existence since 1930 and was incorporated into the officially organized Left wing groups in March, 1931". Here again, in our opinion, the criticism is not a refutation. We did not speak of the "existence" of the group, but of its "coming to life" and "playing a part in the life of the Local". These expressions were used deliberately. After the practical elimination of the Industrial Union from this field the Left wing workers in shops under control of the Schlesinger union were obliged to register again. Their eventual formation into a group within the old union was inevitable. But they could not play a really effective part in the struggles within the union. And why? Because the policy of the Party and the official Left wing made it impossible.

First the Party and the Industrial Union declared the I. L. G. W. U. a "company union" and forbade an organized struggle within it. (See the resolutions of the Industrial Union Convention.) It denounced as a "reformist illusion" of the Trotskyites, the idea that it could be transformed into an organ of the class struggle. This insane policy could not stand up under the test of the actual developments. Then the Stalinists "changed" it—in the typical Stalinist way, without saying so, and without changing the theory which motivated it. As a result there was a period during which the Left members were organized into a group within the "company union" for the purpose of splitting away little sections. This middle-headed strategy also suffered a collapse. How can you build a real fighting force within a union if you announce in advance your intention of breaking it up?

Thus it was only recently, that the Party, while still muttering the "com-

On the Anniversary of Marx's Birth

(Continued from last issue)

Karl Marx in his early youth became a disciple of Hegel. It is not our purpose here to attempt to take up the Hegelian concept more than to say that it represented one of the first serious and thorough endeavors to break with the philosophy of the past—particularly that of the middle ages—which conceived of all things as fixed, constant and eternal, and to formulate in its place a new logic in accordance with the universal process of evolution. The essence of this was the dialectic.

To Marx, the dialectic became the method of investigation of social and economic phenomena. Through it he formulated his materialist conception of history, which belongs entirely to Marx, and Engels. But with that discovery he also separated the dialectic method from the Hegelian mysticism and idealism. It became dialectic materialism. It revolutionized the science of history.

By the means of the materialist conception Marx was able really to explain the course of history, not only in so far as it relates to the past, but also its future stages. That became possible because this conception proceeds from the basis of the economic conditions of each society. It holds that the relations of production, of each given stage are the foundation for its social order, the foundation for its legal and political superstructure, as well as for its division into contending classes. Marx did not discover the existence of classes or the class struggle. That was known long before him. But he added the contribution that its existence is bound up with, and is the result of, certain phases of the material production. He added also the essential contribution that the oppressed class today, the modern proletariat, in achieving its own emancipation must thereby liberate society as a whole from class divisions. Now this will be accomplished through its various stages Marx stated in precise formulation in his letter to Weydemeyer, written in 1852, in part it reads as follows:

"... the class struggle leads necessarily to the Dictatorship of the Proletariat; this dictatorship is but the transition to the abolition of all classes and to the creation of a society of free and equal."

There could be no clearer exposition of the materialist conception of history than this statement. It pictures the results of the relations of production, and the social organization necessarily following from it, traced to its logical conclusion. Yet it skips none of its stages, but clearly and decisively specifies the form of class rule of the proletariat during the transition period, the period between capitalism and Communism and "company union" idiosyncrasy, gave directives for a more sensible participation of the Left group in the internal affairs of the Local. The fight against the tax was one sign of this turn. The participation in the recent elections was another. But there is yet a long way to go. The correction of the Left policy has only begun. A radical change must yet take place, both in theory and practice, before the Left wing can even become a serious contender for supremacy. To contend that this supremacy has already been demonstrated comrade Bojarsky had to deceive himself as to the obvious facts.

After the reports of the convention of the International and the Plenum of the Industrial Union are received we will return to this subject again. Meantime both the Militant and the Unser Kampf will be glad to print the opinions of the needle trades workers as to the facts and the inferences to be drawn from them. How does the Left wing stand now and how can it regain its lost positions? Letters on this theme, whether they coincide with our views or not, will be welcomed. —J. P. C.

the economic transformation of the one into the other. Truly, with the discovery of the materialist conception of history, Socialism became elevated to a science. Yet, how pitiful are those contemptible charlatans who claim adherence to scientific Socialism but reject the Proletarian Dictatorship—that is, under the guise of the common phrase, "it might be alright for Russia, but not in America." The truth about them is that they do not at all accept the essence of Marxism—the forcible overthrow of the capitalist system. They do not accept this sum and substance of all Marx's teachings—the Proletarian Dictatorship. There is not a shred of the revolutionary in them.

Engels says of the Communist Manifesto, that, "the fundamental proposition, which forms its nucleus, belongs to Marx." Here is traced, distinctly in the light of the materialist conception, the historical development which established the capitalist system, from the serfs of the middle ages to the burghers of the earliest towns; and next, to the first elements of the bourgeoisie. Shattering the feudal guild monopoly emerged the manufacturing system. "Thereupon, steam and machinery revolutionized industrial production. The place of manufacture was taken by the giant, Modern Industry. . . . Each step in the development of the bourgeoisie was accompanied by a corresponding political advance of that class. . . . the bourgeoisie has at last, since the establishment of Modern Industry and of the world market, conquered for itself, in the modern representative State, exclusive political sway." The Manifesto could therefore lay down the postulate that the class struggle is essentially a political struggle and that the proletariat must elevate itself to become the ruling class led to this goal by its revolutionary vanguard.

To this we shall here add further only by quoting the proposition: "In place of the old wants, satisfied by the productions of the country, we find new wants, requiring for their satisfaction the products of distant lands and climes. In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal interdependence of nations". Apparently forgotten, within leading circles of the Communist parties today, are these words. Apparently forgotten is also the conclusion which Marx drew of the social, the international character of the proletarian revolution. In its place has been substituted the theory of Socialism in One Country with disastrous consequences to the world Communist movement.

Viewing the developments in the great French revolution in historical retrospect Marx noted its continuous upward progress. The rule of the Constitutionists was followed by that of the Girondists and then by the Jacobins. Each advancing force needing the indispensable support of the next succeeding one. "When each party, in turn, had conducted the revolution as far as it could or dared, and wanted to cry halt, it was pushed aside by the bolder spirits who had hitherto supported it, and cleared away by the guillotine." But the proletariat, as Marx observed, had not yet emerged as a separate and distinct force out of the third estate.

In the fateful events of 1848-50, and preceding them, in the July days, 1830, in France as well as the large scale strikes in England in 1842 and in Silesian weavers' insurrection in 1844, the proletariat had emerged as a distinct class but still remained an appendage of the middle class parties. Marx noted that these movements, inspired by Communism on the continent and by Chartism in England could no longer be looked upon as chance phenomena, but were an expression of the aspirations of an oppressed class. And, after the June defeat in France of 1848, Marx could draw the conclusion for the proletariat

which groups itself "more and more around revolutionary Socialism, around Communism. . . . This Socialism," he said, "is the declaration of permanent revolution, the establishment of the Class Dictatorship of the Proletariat as a necessary step towards the abolition of class distinctions in general, towards the abolition of all the conditions of production on which class distinctions depend, towards the abolition of all the social relations which depend on these conditions of production, towards the revolutionizing of all ideas which emanate from these social relations."

Once again we can add, that here we have, on the basis of the concrete proletarian experiences, the materialist conception of history applied and set down with an indelible imprint for the future.

The revolutionary events during Marx's life time closed with the Paris Commune. The proletariat had then reached a distinct independent class position, though not yet, as Marx observed, a position of revolutionary maturity and preparation. It had not yet created its revolutionary party. Its heroic attempt to maintain a proletarian regime was circumvented essentially because of these weaknesses. And it was on this experience that Marx, in his address to the General Council of the International, made his masterful analysis, culminating in the terse statement: "But the working class cannot simply lay hold on the ready made state machinery and wield it for its own purpose." In these words are again forcefully reiterated the conclusions from the realistics of the material world. Today they serve as the proletarian revolutionary strategy.

Our task is today, clearer than ever, to proceed on the foundation of Marxism and to fully comprehend what Marx embodied in his thesis to Feuerbach: "Up to the present the philosophers have but interpreted the world; it is, however, necessary to change it."

We witness today the completion of the process of a dialectic cycle in human society. We have reached the last and final period of the capitalist epoch. The blood and tears in which the pages of the history of its birth were written is again being shed at this stage of its violent decay and collapse. It is giving birth to a new and higher stage. The world is being changed. A glorious beginning was made by the proletarian revolution in Russia. In that we saw the theoretical system of Marx applied and brought to its first victorious conclusion. But in that we found also the closest approximation to the life long revolutionary friendship of Marx and Engels in the unshakable friendship and harmony of views, during "the decisive revolutionary events, of Lenin and Trotsky."

The gigantic vision, the enormous and all embracing perspective unfolded in the closing paragraph of the concise statement of his materialist conception of history which Marx embodied in his introduction to the "Critique of Political Economy", is about to be realized. It reads as follows: "The bourgeois relations of production are the last antagonistic form of the social process of production. . . . the productive forces developing in the womb of bourgeois society create the material conditions for the solution of that antagonism. This social formation constitutes, therefore, the closing chapter of the prehistoric stage of human society."

—ARNE SWABECK.

MINNEAPOLIS, ATTENTION!

The Minneapolis comrades have arranged a JAMBOREE for Saturday night, May 21st, 8 P. M. at the home of the Ulrichson's 4627 Colfax Ave., No. for the benefit of the Left Opposition Press and as a send off for the N. E. C. comrades leaving for the Plenum. All comrades and sympathizers of The Militant and Unser Kampf, as well as Young Spartacus are urgently invited to attend. An unusually interesting program is promised. Johnson, Curran and Miles Dunne have their heads together. Nuff said. Bring your friends!

—THE COMMITTEE.

Stalinist Zig-zags on the Question of the «United Front»

by LEON TROTSKY

(Continued from last issue)

Everyone should read THE INFANTILE DISEASE OF LEFTISM; today it is the timeliest of timely books. It is in reference to just such situations as the present one in Germany that Lenin speaks of—we quote verbatim—"the absolute necessity for the vanguard of the proletariat, for its class conscious section, for the Communist party to resort to tacking and veering in its course, to agreements and compromises with different proletarian groups, with different parties of workers and of small proprietors. . . . The whole matter lies in being able to apply this tactic for the sake of raising and not lowering the common level of proletarian class consciousness, of the revolutionary spirit, and of the capacity to fight and to win."

But what steps does the Communist party take? Day in and day out, it reiterates in its newspapers that the only United Front it will accept, "is the one directed against Bruening, Severing, Leipart, Hitler and their ilk." In the face of a proletarian uprising, there is no gainsaying it, there will be no difference between Bruening, Severing, Leipart, and Hitler. Against the October Bolshevik uprising, the S. R.'s and the mensheviks united with the Cadets and Kornilov; Kerensky led the Black Hundreds and the Cos-

sacks of General Krasnov against Petrograd; the mensheviks supported Kerensky and Krasnov; the S. R.'s engineered the uprising of the junkers under the leadership of monarchist officers.

But this doesn't at all mean that Bruening, Severing, Leipart and Hitler always and under all conditions belong to the same camp. Just now their interests diverge. At the given moment the question that is posed before the social democracy is not so much one of defending the foundations of capitalist society against proletarian revolution as of defending the semi-parliamentarian bourgeois system against Fascism. The refusal to make use of this antagonism would be an act of gross stupidity.

"To wage war for the purpose of overthrowing the international bourgeoisie," Lenin wrote in THE INFANTILE DISEASE OF LEFTISM, "and to refuse beforehand to tack and veer in one's course and to make good use of the antagonism (no matter how temporary) in interests between the enemies; to eschew agreements and compromises with possible (no matter how temporary, vacillating and adventitious) allies—isn't that too funny for words?" Again we quote verbatim: the word we italicize in parentheses are Lenin's.

We quote further: "It is possible to vanquish a

more powerful enemy only by straining one's forces to their utmost; and it is imperative that one make use, most painstakingly, carefully, cautiously and expertly, of any "rift" between the enemies, no matter how tiny." But what are Thaelmann and Remmele under Manuilsky's guidance doing? With might and main they are striving to cement—with the theory of social Fascism and with the practice of sabotage against the United Front, the rift—and what a rift—between the social democracy and Fascism.

Lenin enjoined that use be made of "every opportunity to gain a mass ally, no matter how temporary, vacillating, unreliable, and adventitious. Whoever hasn't been able to get that into his head—he said—doesn't understand an iota of Marxism, and of contemporary scientific socialism, in general." Prick up your ears, prophets of the new Stalinist school: it is written here in black and white that you don't understand an iota of Marxism. It's you Lenin spoke of. R. S. V. P.

But, the Stalinists refute, without a victory over the social democracy, victory over Fascism is impossible. Is this true? In a certain sense it is. Yet the converse theorem is also true: without victory over Italian Fascism, victory over the Italian social democracy is impossible. Both Fascism and the social democracy are tools in the hands of the bourgeoisie. So long as capital rules, Fascism and social democracy will exist in divers combinations. All the questions, therefore, are reduced to the same denominator: the proletariat must overthrow the bourgeois régime.

But just now, when this régime is tottering in Germany, Fascism steps forward in its support. To lay this supporter by the heels, we are told, it is first necessary to finish off the social democracy. . . . Thus we are led into a vicious circle by schematism dead

as a herring. The only conceivable way out is in the domain of action. And the character of this action is determined not by juggling abstract categories but by the real interrelations between the living historic forces.

"On, no!" the functionaries keep drumming, "we shall 'first' liquidate the social democracy. How? Very simply, we shall order our party organizations to recruit 100,000 new members within such and such a period. Instead of political struggle—merely propaganda; instead of dialectic strategy—departmental plans. And what if the real development of the class struggle, at this very moment, has posed the question of Fascism before the working class, as a life and death question? Then the working class must be wheeled about with its back to the question; it must be lulled; it must be convinced that the task of fighting against Fascism is a minor task; that it will wait and solve itself; that Fascism in reality rules already; that Hitler will add nothing new; that there is no cause to fear Hitler; that Hitler will only clear the road for the Communists.

Is that exaggerating, perhaps? No, this is the exact and indubitable idea that motivates the leaders of the Communist party. They do not always follow it to its ultimate conclusion. On coming in contact with the masses they recoil often from the ultimate conclusions; they make a hodge-podge of divers policies, confusing themselves and the workers; but on all those occasions when they try to make both ends meet, they proceed from the inevitability of the victory of Fascism.

—L. TROTSKY.

(To be Continued)

(FROM WHAT NEXT?—Vital Questions for the German Proletariat)