

WORKERS  
OF THE  
WORLD.  
UNITE

# THE MILITANT

Weekly Organ of the Communist League of America [Opposition]

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## ON THE SPOT

It seems there is nothing new under the sun. We were of the opinion that the Bonus Expeditionary Force bivouacked in Washington set a precedent in American history until Dana Rice enlightened us through the columns of the New York Times. Indeed, in 1783 recruits from Lancaster, Pa., joined soldiers barracked in Philadelphia and marched on the congress of the confederation demanding more pay. Congress refused to be intimidated so it folded its tent and moved to Princeton, New Jersey. The congressional slogan probably was: "Those who spout and run away may live to spout another day."

The Bonusers were to be much impressed with the theory, popular in our best circles that it is an honor to weave through a flock of bullets for one's country. Those who did not see the German bullets until it was too late got a slice of country wherever they fell. Those who blocked them and survived to some extent are enjoying themselves in hospitals; some in strait jackets. Those who returned, sound in body if not in mind are listening to the epidermis of the stomach singing a mungie ditty. They don't appreciate the music so they are going to Washington to demand their reward for making Wall St.'s billions safer and Holland quite safe for the Kaiser.

The war was a great success for the profiteers if not for the soldiers. It didn't turn out so bad for the Kaiser either. Most any veteran would rather saw a bit of wood with the Kaiser every day to keep his appetite at the proper degree of sharpness than fight bed bugs on the Bowersy and drink coffee until he is ready to declare war on Brazil, the home of the bean. The heroes of 1917-18 are the bums of 1932. They want the bonus which was promised them for killing German workmen in the Kaiser's uniform. But to give it to them would put a price on patriotism! Perish the thought! Patriotism is priceless.

The Bonusers properly call attention to the fact that the federal government made two billions of dollars available to the railroad companies who made tremendous profits during the busy war days. They believe that they are at least as much entitled to the government owes them as the railroads are to what the government does not owe them. The veterans lack a sense of reality. They don't seem to know whose country this is or whose government this is. The country belongs to the capitalists and so does the government. The proletarian ex-soldiers are merely tolerated, if they starve quietly, just the same as the rest of the working class.

The capitalists do not like the idea of this march on Washington. They do not like the idea of giving those fellows a bonus. They have just accomplished the patriotic task of balancing the budget. It was a heart-breaking task but they bore up bravely under the strain. Why impose another load of taxes on them? Many of them are committing suicide. A capitalist with only three million dollars left in his kick feels as insecure as an unemployed worker holding on to his last nickel. Samuel Insull, the Chicago utility baron is left with a meagre income of \$18,000 a year. The poor capitalists have their troubles too, which proves that there are no classes in this country.

There are twelve millions of workers unemployed in this fair and free land of ours, including the heroes. There is nothing in sight for them except starvation, slow or galloping. If the war veterans can be bamboozled into the belief that they can get relief from the government by holding themselves apart from their fellow workers in distress who did not have the privilege of fighting for the House of Morgan, then all we can say is that they are meat for another shower of bullets. We read that George Washington, the Father of His Country, threatened to send troops to shoot down the soldier marchers of 1783. We wonder what will Hoover, the current Father of His Country, do if the Bonus Expeditionary Force grows much more formidable than it is now. This is an election year and 1932 is not 1783—not by 149 years. There was no Soviet Union in those days.

Before the panic the leaders were big shots in the capitalist world. Business unionism was in its heyday. Labor ranks flourished, and entering labor fakers went in for coal mining, real estate and pine-apples groves in a big way. Labor was going to lift itself out of a state of dependency by its bootstraps. The workers were going to be saved one by one. Alas, it was not to be. This pleasant road of escape from wage slavery was not strewn with roses but with ground glass. Most of the labor banks have gone the way of all flesh.

## Slogans in the Elections Must Link Up Communist Goal with Immediate Demands

The downward trend of the crisis that is throwing increasing layers of workers on the surface of the class struggle offers the Communists the most favorable opportunity in the present election campaign. The trend of economic instability in America and in world capitalism as a whole has created confusion in the top ranks of the master class and has forced them into a position never before faced. The social reformers of all varieties are undergoing a sort of verbal transformation to the Left while their material evolution is proceeding to the Right. This favorable objective situation with its increasing dangers from reaction and "reform" places on the shoulders of the revolutionists the task of clearly pointing to the road of action and its direction.

**Left Opposition Excluded**  
The national nominating convention of the Communist party presented Foster and Ford as standard bearers but has sent them into the field with standards every serious Communist must question. The election offers a wide field for unity of the workers against the capitalist offensive but the Stalinist bureaucrats talk of unity and shut the door to a Marxian United Front policy in the elections by ejecting delegates from the conventions in New York, Chicago and Minneapolis. The Communist League (Left Opposition) sent delegates in order that our organization may give full support to the Communist candidates in the coming election, to win greater numbers to revolution. In denying the Marxist wing seats in the different conventions, the Centrists closed the door to a Leninist United Front policy.

**C. P. Platform Deficient**  
The platform of the convention adopted is not to the credit of the Communist forces; and will leave the party further to the right at the end of the campaign than they are even today. Why do Communists participate in elections? Centrism thinks it answers this by publishing Lenin's article in the *Daily Worker* on this question. This is necessary, but Communist theory must be translated into action; and a Communist campaign woven around six immediate demands, as slogans (which must be questioned) in no way connected with our ultimate demand, results in reformism. We need such a slogan, not an ultimate slogan of action today, but as a slogan of propaganda coordinated with our immediate demands.

The ultra-Lefts who speak in terms of ends only and the reformists who speak in terms of means only are swamping Lenin guarded against. Centrism in America presents demands to which any reformist can subscribe. In no way connected with our goal—a slogan for the overthrow of capitalism as the determining factor to distinguish the Communist program from all those of the reformists.

Centrism tries to find a way out of the impasse by speaking of the revolutionary way out of the crisis. The social democracy in every revolution or crisis tells the workers—their road is the revolutionary way out. The latest "revolutionary way out" of the socialists was demonstrated in Spain. What do you mean by "revolutionary way out"? Communists cannot throw out this phrase without concretizing it as a connecting link. To speak of the revolutionary way out and present six immediate demands may signify good intentions but it expresses reformism unless these immediate demands are coordinated with a propaganda slogan for the overthrow of capitalism.

**Slogan Is Workers' Government**  
The Centrist slogan of "Workers and Farmers' Government" must be replaced by the slogan of "Workers' Government". The workers of America must be told that the Communists propose a Soviet United States, as a proletarian dictatorship, which will establish a "Workers' Government". The Stalinists are entering the campaign to obtain votes. We want votes, we want the support of every worker as well as that of our allies, but we only want votes on the basis of a Marxian platform. Voters who understand what relation our immediate demands have to our goal. We want quantity—but not without quality.

The party platform dismisses the reformers with the epithet of "social Fascists". All shades and tendencies of reformism as well as the Right wing and Left wing currents of Communism are catalogued together. This is the most valuable service one could render to reformism. Our election campaign must be conducted by the fighter to win the followers from the fakers and this can only be done by exposing from a Marxian standpoint, the position of each tendency and shading and by following this up with proper tests in action.

The party platform presents the slogan of Social Insurance as the central slogan of the campaign and does not in any way raise the slogan of the "Six Hour Day and Five Day Week without Reduction of pay." The Socialist party is reaping the harvest of this blunder and in many places is contrasting its immediate

demands with those of the Communists to "prove" that they are more "radical". On the basis of immediate demands, and "incoherent ones at that, we cannot expose reformism unless we clearly define our goals. In spite of the fact that sharp class turns and events throw the slogan of Social Insurance to the forefront in the fight against unemployment, the fact remains that the determining immediate demand from now on in the unemployment situation in America will be the slogan for the shorter work day.

Although Social Insurance is the main demand of the party, the *Daily Worker* has presented it to the background and relegated the struggle for the Bonus as the first order of business. It is correct to exclude the Bonus slogan from the platform, but it is wrong to regulate this auxiliary unemployment struggle above the struggle of all the workers for Social Insurance.

**Relief For Workers Also**  
The platform (point 3) call for emergency relief for the farmers and completely ignores the need of such relief for the fifteen million unemployed workers who are in just as dire straits. The demand must be one of emergency relief for workers and farmers.

The Communist League of America (Opposition) calls upon the workers to vote Communist. To unite the working class against the capitalist reactionaries and reformers. The Communist League will give full support in every way to the Communist candidates but our presentation of why workers should vote Communist will not be on the same basis as that of Centrism. We enter the campaign on the basis of organically connecting proper immediate demands with our revolutionary goal, for the overthrow of capitalism.

## Workers in Fight Against Forced Labor in Minneapolis

MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.  
Attention of all alert workers must be called to the scandalous system of forced labor which has been introduced by the Minneapolis City Relief Administration. Over 7,000 unemployed on the relief lists are involved, 800 men each day must prove that "they are willing to work", although no wages are paid. If anyone refuses, he is cut off from further relief and finally evicted from his house—which means misery and persecution for his family. On top of all this, the work is done on the property of private real estate dealers, landlords, landladies. All people who could well afford to pay wages for the work done—if they were really sincere and not hypocrites about their slogan of creating jobs for the unemployed—and also on city property, work that can be done by regularly paid city workers!

**Resist Forced Labor**  
The Communist League calls on the

## G. O. P. Meets in Chicago Confab

After a four year's intermission, the Republican party convenes in Chicago to put on its grand jamboree—called a convention—to nominate the president of the U. S. A. It meets in the gala holiday atmosphere, that makes it resemble a circus or a field day rather than a serious political gathering to decide the destinies of the nation for the coming period.

We are informed that between the classy hotels where the delegates are lodged and the Chicago Stadium where the convention is taking place, the speakies are doing a thriving business. But despite all this the spirit of four years ago seems to be missing. Gone are the thunderous plaudits that rend the roof and shiver the windows into splinters. Gone is the wild cheering, the mad parading around the convention hall, the insane blaring of brass bands that lasted for hours at a time, that greeted the making of some obscure point that strikes the delegates' fancy.

Even the mention of the nomination of Herbert Hoover which raised a storm of interminable hurrahs, a few years ago was received with a coldness that would make even the eskimos shiver. Now we can account for the large sale of prohibition liquor to the delegates. The moonshine is consumed not so much in the spirit of celebration, but to bolster up the depressed state of mind of the convention delegates.

Three years have passed since the beginning of this bitterest and deep-going crisis and it is still getting worse. The republicans are full and good cause for being gloomy and pessimistic. The people, they are fearful, will attribute the crisis to them, and vote them out of office. But, protests the G. O. P., the crisis operates according to immutable laws. Continued. (But—these immutable laws. Continued on page 2)

## Brown Shirts Legalized New Decree Forms Part of Anti-Working Class Move

The establishment of the Von Papen government in power has not as yet called forth a wide spread and vigorous move toward united working class defense action. Temporarily on the part of the working class leaders has permitted the midwives of the Hitler dictatorship to raise their heads ever more arrogantly. Every day brings new blasts of reaction against the German proletariat.

The latest act of the new cabinet is a decree slating to tatters what little is still left of unemployment insurance and relief. It must be remembered that one of the planks of the Von Papen combine before it came into power was—no more emergency decrees. Yet, the new anti-working class measure is based directly on the draft prepared by Bruening before his downfall.

**What the Decree Calls For**  
The manifesto signed by Hindenburg calls for a "reorganization" of the system of unemployment relief and cuts the so-called dole by fully twenty per cent. The annual expenditures for the jobless are in this manner reduced by more than \$119,000,000. But adding insult to injury, the Junker cabinet goes further and declares its intentions of raising the funds required for what still remains of unemployed insurance by levying a new tax—another plank was: no more new taxes—6.5 per cent on the income of "all those gainfully employed!" More than that the exemption in the turnover tax for incomes below 5,000 marks is abolished.

The new decree is a well rounded out attack against the living conditions of all the lower classes. Unemployment compensation is reduced, as the *Times* correspondent remarks, to the level of ordinary poor relief—a bare monthly \$10, on which families of four and more must

attempt to subsist. The wages of the workers still employed undergo a further reduction of more than six per cent. The small shop keepers are squeezed still tighter by the turnover tax.

There can be no doubt that the new measure will meet with the greatest indignation by the broadest layers of the population. According to the social democratic *Vorwaerts*, one of the first results of the decree was a deluge of protests from workers organizations and other bodies. The shameless action of the Junkers, arousing popular resentment to the highest pitch, makes the possibilities and the need of united working class counter-action greater than ever.

**First Signs of United Action**  
United front activities encompassing the Communist and social democratic organizations have already begun on a local scale. In places like Oranienburg and Bernau, etc., cartels of proletarian mass organizations have already been formed and put into motion. The emergency law promulgated this week should give the necessary impetus toward broadening these united fronts into a centralized, national movement that will break the apathy of the German working masses and bring them forward a good way in their fight against threatening reaction and abject enslavement.

In Oranienburg, in Bernau, the Left Opposition was the one to take the initiative in uniting the workers organizations. The successes achieved will no doubt instigate our German comrades toward a determined and powerful effort to swing the whole party into line behind this genuine movement of united action.

Time is pressing. The Brown Shirts of Adolph Hitler, banned under the Bruening government, have been legalized. Already, the Fascist deputies have donned their uniforms in the Prussian diet. Street processions of Nazis march in celebration throughout the Reich. Clashes between Hitlerites and workers are constantly increasing. The organization of the Fascist coup d'Etat is developing apace.

**Clear Words Needed**  
The new dose of misery which the latest decree has brought for the working class—even a salt tax has been established (Remember the "gabelle"!)—cannot fail to have its sobering effect on the German people. More than ever will all workers feel the need of unity and action today. On the brink of disaster, the masses are straining their attention for a clear word, for a firm command.

Only the Communist party is capable of meeting the needs of the moment. But for that, it is necessary that it cast off with one stroke all the fetters of bureaucratism and ultimatum that have been binding its action. It is necessary that it throw off its isolationist policies—the theory of "social Fascism", of the "red united front under our leadership", etc. etc. It must make a clean breast of the mistakes it has committed and open for itself the road of putting the reformists to the test before the working masses—the road of gaining the confidence and support of the majority of the class.

What is at stake—we repeat—is the fate not only of the German proletariat, but of the Soviet Union and the working class of the world as a whole. Every Communist worker is duty-bound to demand first of himself, and then, of the leadership of the party here and of the Communist International, a clear answer to the question: What is to be done? The Left Opposition has sounded the alarm. Incalculable danger lies ahead. Let every worker Communist realize his task!

## Youth Meetings in N. Y.

The Spartacus Youth Club will hold its regular meeting on Friday, June 18th at 8:00 P. M., at the Stayvessant Casino, Ninth Street and Second Avenue. This week's meeting will be devoted entirely to a lecture by comrade Carter on the extremely timely and important subject, **WAR AND ITS ASPECT TODAY**, which will be followed by a general discussion from the floor.

On Saturday evenings the Club holds its weekly open air meetings at Seventh Street and Avenue C. We have a group of good speakers and interesting topics. All who can, are urged to attend these meetings.

For the following week, we plan a discussion on current events. Plans are being made for a camp-fire, the definite arrangements for which will be announced in next week's *Militant*.

All young workers and students are invited to participate with us in our work and discussions. Information can be obtained by writing to the Spartacus Youth Club, 84 East 10th Street, New York City.

## German Paper Interviews Trotsky

The following is the reply of comrade L. D. Trotsky to three questions posed by the Berlin weekly, *Montag Morgen* in a recent questionnaire. The questions were: "Do you believe that the seizure of political power by the National Socialists is imminent? Do you not consider it the urgent command of the hour, that social democrats and Communists, leaving all the conflicts in principle unimpeded, must create a common organization of struggle? Would you be prepared to work for such an organization in your person and with your name?"

1. Yes, I believe that if the most important organizations of the German working class continue their present policy, the victory or Fascism will be assured almost automatically, and in a relatively short interval of time at that. Whether the Centre party will serve Hitler as a better of strivers or not, can be seen much better in Berlin than here. That is not what is decisive. A bloc of these two parties could eventually constitute a brief episode on the road toward the disruption of the Centre party, beginning with the Catholic trade unions. Hitler's promises to remain on the terrain of parliamentarism (by the way: where is he now?), are of as import as the promises, let us say, of Japanese imperialism, not to employ poison gases in a war. To demand such promises is ridiculous, to hope for their fulfillment—utterly stupid. In reality, those politicians who are discounting Hitler's parliamentary checks are clearing the road consciously, for the fascization of Germany. What this foreshadows for the German people and above all, for the entire proletariat, we do not need to repeat here again.

2. Yes, I believe that the Communist party must propose an agreement for struggle to the social democratic party

and the leadership of the Free Trade Unions, from below up to the very top. In contrast to the decorative and impotent "iron front", the united front of the working class against Fascism must have a fully concrete, practical and militant character. Its point of departure should be: defense of all institutions and conquests of proletarian democracy, and in a broader sense; defense of culture before barbarism.

A bold and frank initiative of the Communist party along these lines would not only increase its authority extraordinarily, but also change the political situation of Germany from the bottom up. The monopolistic bourgeoisie would immediately begin to feel that to play around with a Hitler dictatorship means to play around with the fire of civil war, in which not the paper values alone are in danger of going up in smoke. Among the countless and formless masses whom despair has driven into the camp of Hitler there will of necessity ensue a process of differentiation and decomposition. The relation of forces would sharply change to the disadvantage of Fascism even on the threshold of the struggle. There would open up before the working class and the German people great perspectives.

3. Of course, I stand not only theoretically but even practically, altogether and completely on the ground of the tactics I have developed in many of my pamphlets, particularly the last, *What Next?* Every day only confirms anew the fact that there is no other path for the German working class. The question of the fate of Europe, to the Soviet Union and in a considerable measure, the fate of all humanity for a big historical period. No revolutionary can help subordinating his forces and his fate to this question.

What is necessary here is more than a manifesto or an article in the press. What is necessary is a concerted drive. This means nothing less than repudiating the sterile factional intrigues which now tie the hands of the Left wing movement. This means the united front. All power to this movement!

**Open Letter**  
A system of forced labor has been introduced by the Minneapolis City Relief Administration, 7,000 men 800 each day, toil on city and private property on pain of losing the miserable charity they receive. None can deny that relief is given out only to keep the worker, starving in the midst of the plenty he has created, from taking it by force. Under the conditions of the present economic crisis, our masters, who still make fat dividends are reducing conditions of labor to that abject slavery, where men work for their board and keep, without pay, in constant fear of punishment by starvation and eviction from their homes.

May 12, 1932 —L. TROTSKY.