

The Opposition at Work

Shachtman's Meetings in Chicago

CHICAGO.—A series of successful meetings held here during the brief stay of comrade Max Shachtman resulted in a spurt forward for the Left Opposition in Chicago. The largest meeting held was one, in Humboldt Hall where with the intense heat of the evening, more than 100 workers appeared and listened with close interest to the unfolding of the Left Opposition's standpoint on the German events, which was followed by a number of questions from all over the hall on various problems affecting the views of our group. Very few of the many Party and Y. C. L. members and sympathizers present showed that blind hostility which the bureaucrats seek to instill in them, and comrade John Edwards, chairman of the meeting, received a warm reception when he exposed the frame-up launched against the opposition in New York in connection with the death of two workers at the 7th Street meeting. A good collection was taken up for the Militant.

At the end of the same week, a comradeship supper party was held at the home of comrade Mashow, which was filled to the very doors with League members and sympathizers, and even Party members and friends. Shachtman spoke on the role of the Left wing in the Communist movement and the historical tasks imposed upon it by the bankruptcy of the Stalinist regime. Here too several questions were asked and answered to clarify the standpoint of our movement. Some twenty-five dollars were taken in as a result of the get-together and all those who attended left in good spirits.

Youth Meetings

Shachtman also met with the members of the Young Spartacus Club which has been formed here around a group of Young Oppositionists who were expelled from the Young Communist League by the desperate bureaucrats, although they were among the most active and advanced comrades in the League. Shachtman gave an outline of the development of the revolutionary youth movement in America and the task to be performed by the young Oppositionists coming into our movement. The youth organization here is advancing rapidly despite all attempts of the Stalinists to dam our progress. Threats made by the latter have not availed to stop the fraternization of the young comrades in both organizations, and increasing sympathy among the Y. C. L. members is being constantly manifested.

The Spartacus Youth Club also held an open meeting which was attended by more than 50 comrades, most of them young comrades, who came to hear Shachtman speak on Anti War Congress masquerade of Stalinism. Until midnight the questions and answers flew thick and fast between the speaker and the Stalinist representatives, one of whom disgraced himself thoroughly, as well as the League of which he is an active functionary. He argued in favor of Communist jolting capitalist ministerial cabinets as "a step toward taking power"! Also, he declared, the fact that Tang Ping Shan, as Minister of Agriculture in the Hankow government in 1927, headed an army to suppress the peasant uprisings was to be explained by the fact that "Communists must do anti-militarist work"! So sad is the low state to which the militants in the Stalinist movement have been debased, that even the friends of the Stalinist who were present urged him to remain silent and virtually apologized for him on the floor. The Young Spartacus Club comrades, in addition, are beginning to make headway also among the members of the young Socialist organization who have been moving towards Communism but have been repulsed by the antics of the Stalinist bureaucrats. The Opposition places great hope in the development of the youth movement, especially in Chicago, where an excellent group exists. The need for drawing more working youth into the group is keenly felt and measures will be taken to meet the situation.

The following night, Shachtman spoke on "Problems of the Development of the U. S. S. R.," upon the invitation of the Educational Committee of the north side section of the National Students' League. At the last minute the Y. C. L. priest-hood tried to maneuver the meeting in order to prevent Shachtman from speaking. Another speaker was arbitrarily sent to the meeting so as to shut out the Oppositionist, but the trick did not succeed. The audience of 50 students, workers, Party and League members, voted by a majority to hear the scheduled lecture and comrade Shachtman was able to proceed under the chairmanship of comrade Nathan Gould, one of the most active militants of the Young Communist League who was recently expelled. The interest of the audience may be gauged by the fact that the meeting was adjourned at 1:30 in the morning, after hours of discussion and questions.

A day later, Shachtman spoke briefly at the meeting of the Chicago branch of the Opposition on the growth of the movement in Europe, Asia, the American continents and South Africa. The lateness of the hour prevented more than a short discussion. At the same meeting plans were laid for the winter's activities of the Chicago League which are to be facilitated by the acquisition of a regular headquarters, the holding of forums and other meetings, etc.

South Side Meeting

The last Sunday of his stay was occupied by two more meetings for Shachtman. The first took place at the South Side Forum in Washington Park, where Shachtman again spoke on the German

situation, the danger of Fascism to the Soviet Union, the German and international working class, and explained the standpoint of the Opposition. Several hundred workers were in attendance, and although he spoke during the dinner hour, they listened attentively to the very end.

The same evening Shachtman spoke on the role of the Left Opposition at a foundation meeting for the "Friends of the Militant Club" which has been organized by friends and sympathizers of the Militant in Chicago. All those who were present pledged to join the club. The Labor Day week-end prevented a full attendance by many who had signified their intention of becoming members, and it is expected that the Club will grow rapidly and become a rallying center for the radicals in Chicago. Doctor Ruby was selected as secretary and plans are being made for the elaboration of activities for the coming fall and winter period.—X.

Opposition Expands Its Activities

With the rising tide of the class struggle everywhere the Left Opposition is striving to carry out the tasks imposed on it by its historic mission. It is breaking new ground wherever the objective situation and its forces enable it to. The small size of its membership still imposes on it a certain modesty in its efforts. But these are only, we may say, the acorns from which will grow the revolutionary oaks of tomorrow.

Most important of our present activities is the work we are doing in the Illinois coal fields. There we have excellent prospects and a tremendous uphill struggle. But the party's false and damaging policies in the past period have estranged the bulk of the miners from Communism with the result that they look on every spokesman for Communism with suspicion. Against this obstacle our comrades in the field, both those who live and work there and those who have gone out as field organizers, are striving to redeem the lost prestige of Communism.

They are trying to organize branches of the L. O. and groups of sympathizers. They are following up the shipments of the hundreds of Militants we are making weekly to establish a base for a wider circulation. And they are trying to establish workers' correspondence direct from the miners themselves.

All reports from the field to date tell a story of the great work being done in the front rank of the struggle. The reports tell, too, an alarming story of the swift rise of the Socialist party and the isolation of the Communist party, held back from its rightful place at the head of the struggle by the incorrect policies of its leadership. What is needed from us is a great effort to put forward the banner of Communism. For this we need organizers, literature and money. We are asking our sympathizers to help immediately with donations. Rush all funds to the MILITANT, 84 East 10th Street, New York, N. Y.

Davenport, Iowa

Recently, possibilities for work for the Left Opposition have developed in Davenport, Iowa. Comrade Satir from Chicago has gone to Davenport. He will also do organizational and propaganda work in Muscatine, and Council Bluffs. Reports from that area tell another story of a political group making political and organizational capital of the blunders of the Stalinists. This time it is the Proletarian party which is trying to salvage for its own ends the wreckage left behind by the Stalinists. Watch the Militant for reports of comrade Satir's work.

N. Y. Picnic A Success

The New York picnic was a success. The weather was the best we could ask for, allowing a large turnout of comrades and sympathizers who were well taken care of by the food committee's organization of the banquet and refreshments. The Young Spartacus Club trimmed the League team and won the ball game.

Comrade Shachtman spoke on the Left Opposition, dealing with the German struggle. The Friends of the Soviet Union and the Tremont Workers Clubs held picnics in adjoining plots. Friendly discussions were held by comrades all day, but the climax was reached when over fifty of these workers came over to listen to our speaker. The discussion period was lively, interesting and orderly. Many Stalinist sympathizers left the discussion with a better understanding of the Marxian position of the Left Opposition. The Communist worker of the Centrist faction is showing greater interest in our meetings, our indoor meetings, our street meetings and our picnics. The Militant received \$40.00 from the picnic.

FAIRY TALES AND FAIRY TALES

A returned delegate has said that the most absorbing thing at the Barbusse Amsterdam Congress was the remarkable way Martin Anderson Nexo, Danish writer, had of telling fairy tales. An even more remarkable thing is the manner in which pacifist fairy tales are being told today by the Stalinists in the name of Communism.

The Four Portraits of Chiang Kai-Shek

What Happened to the Ones Sent to Stalin, Rykov and Voroshilov, and the One for . . . Trotsky

EXTRACTS FROM THE ARCHIVES OF STALINIST UNITED FRONT POLICY

On April 5, 1927, Stalin defended his alliance with Chiang Kai-Shek before a select meeting of party officials in the Moscow Hall of the Columns. "Borodin is vigilant!" Through the intermediary of a vigilant agent he hoped to co-ordinate the struggle of the classes and to utilize it. On April 11, 1927, Chiang Kai-Shek after having smashed the proletariat, carried through his coup d'Etat in Shanghai. Shortly before the overthrow, Chiang Kai-Shek still found time to exchange portraits with Stalin, Rykov and Voroshilov, through the medium of Stalin's personal agent in China, Bubnov. It should not be forgotten that in those days the Kuo Min Tang belonged to the Communist International with an advisory vote. The fourth portrait of Chiang Kai-Shek was intended for an exchange with . . . Trotsky. The Secretariat of the E. C. C. I. not only sent along Chiang Kai-Shek's portrait with a note to Trotsky but also categorically demanded that Trotsky promptly send back to the Secretariat his own portrait for transmission to Chiang, with a corresponding dedication. Behind this whole action, it is plain, stood the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The opposition advanced in the Trotsky letter reproduced below, that all this was happening "without the knowledge of the leading persons" is naturally meant ironically. We already know that Stalin did at that time exchange his portrait for that of his Chinese ally. Here is Trotsky's letter:

To the Eastern Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. Copy: To the Presidium of the E. C. C. I. and the Political Bureau of the Central Committee: Nr. 45-c

Returned from leave of absence, I found the photograph of Chiang Kai-Shek sent me through the Eastern Department of the E. C. C. I. and the request promptly to send him my autographed picture. Had I received such a request through the Foreign Office then, regardless of my attitude toward this request, I would find the fact itself explainable. But it is absolutely incomprehensible to me why the Eastern Department of the E. C. C. I.—the International organization of the Communist vanguard of the proletariat—occupies itself with such a thoroughly compromising matter as the spreading of portraits of Chiang Kai-Shek, on top of that—as a result of a malediction of fate—on the eve of the coup d'Etat carried out by him. I do not doubt that this job, unseemly for the E. C. C. I., was done by some employee of the Eastern Department not empowered to do it, without the knowledge of the leading persons and especially of the Presidium of the E. C. C. I., as a consequence of which I deem it necessary to bring this distasteful affair to your attention. The picture of Chiang Kai-Shek I am herewith returning.

With Communist Greetings
April 18, 1927 L. TROTSKY.

A Reply to Comrade Allard

Dear Comrade Allard: Your letter of August 31 (published as an answer to the party bureaucrats in last week's Militant) calls for some clarification. First of all let us say that we fully recognize the enormous provocation from the bureaucratic party leaders to which you have been subjected over a period of time. You have acted as a militant on the firing line and in the leadership of a mass movement fighting for correct policies. This is the reason for the provocation. In view of this your reaction is understandable; but your conclusion is faulty.

The Party and Its Errors

Our attitude to the party we must define correctly and precisely. We defend the Communist party at all times, but we defend none of its mistakes. Our defense presupposes a fight against the false views, tactics, methods and policies of its leadership. In this sense we make a distinction between the party and its bureaucratic leadership, and only in that manner can we correctly defend the party. This is not a new conclusion which we have come to just recently. On the contrary, it has formed a basic principle of the Left Opposition platform since its inception, and all experiences so far have fully substantiated its validity. This conclusion proceeds from our recognition of the great role assigned by history to the Communist party. The proletarian revolution is inconceivable without the leadership of the Communist party. To prepare for the attainment of that goal the every-day working class struggles require the active intervention and direction of the Communist party. In order to illustrate this latter point we need only cite the situation at present existing in the Illinois coal fields.

You have there a powerful movement now marching to a progressive direction. It is made up of workers who have learned many bitter lessons and who have therefore broken with the past. Its leadership is composed of elements of various views and tendencies, ranging from the outright conservative of capitalist ideology to the Communist view. These various tendencies will pull in different directions with the conservative ones applying the brakes upon the progressive development which is so necessary, and driving the movement backward. While a solid rank and file control is essential for the success of the new union it is just as necessary that it have a leadership conscious of its tasks and capable of pursuing a genuine progressive course. Is there any possible way of guaranteeing this without a Communist nucleus functioning actively, constantly exerting its influence and clearly showing its direction. You will readily agree with us that all genuine Left wingers should function in an organized manner within this mass movement to help insure a correct course. But that would also be a hopeless task without the initiative of a Communist nucleus. Needless to add that in general, in the decisive struggles which will face the new union, this responsibility of the Communist forces only multiples. These examples we believe are sufficient to emphasize the role, the duty and the tasks of the Communist party in the revolutionary perspectives as well as in the every-day working class problems.

Blunders of Stalinism

However, and here we come to an extremely important question, it is precisely in this role and in these duties that the Communist party has failed most glaringly since its leadership fell into the hands of the Stalin regime. We have repeated time and again the examples of the fatally false policies pursued by this regime in the Chinese revolution of 1925-27. In the British general strike of 1926 and now being repeated in the extremely critical situation in Germany today. It is repeated again in workers'

struggles of today in America, though on a smaller and less decisive scale. From these false concepts and wrong policies flow the bureaucratic method and practices which not only stifles the party and renders it impotent, unable to develop and grow in objectively favorable situations, but strangles its activities and the movements it influences and controls. This prevents the party from fulfilling its great historic mission, it prevents it from functioning as an active factor giving correct direction to the every-day struggles. It alienates the workers from the party.

Despite all this, or we may say particularly because of this, our duty becomes the more clearly outlined. We recognize that the Communist party can fulfill its historic mission and its tasks of today only through a correct Marxian orientation. We know how essential the Communist party is, and that it is the only workers' political party. This is why we make the distinction between the Communist party and the mistakes of its leadership. This also defines our attitude to the party. We do not assume to function in its place in the sense of taking over the duties of the party. But we must combat the wrong reactions of workers who, because of these mistakes, turn against the ideas of Communism. We must uphold the banner of Communism, and hence, to regenerate the party, to restore it to the basis of Marx and Lenin becomes the fundamental objective. Combining this with our active participation in the class struggle, in the solution of the every-day problems of the working class, we will carry forward the banner of Communism and fight for the realization of its ideas. This is our task to which we must devote ourselves in earnest. It proceeds through the kind of struggles in which you and others of our comrades are now so actively engaged.

Question of United Front

It is in direct accord with the above that we also want to correct the statement in your letter of invitation to "the rank and file of the National Miners Union" (for a united front). Maintaining this attitude would be to imitate the mistakes of the Stalinist bureaucrats, in reversed form. The National Miners Union we consider—as a bona fide workers' organization. Moreover it is a Left wing union. Our attitude to this union as well as to the other unions named by you must be that of a genuine united front. Hence we must approach these unions, and especially the Left union, officially, in our united front policy, as an organization to be invited through its elected leadership, simultaneously urging the rank and file membership that the invitation be accepted.

Hoping this will help to clear up these few points, I remain

Fraternally yours,
ARNE SWABECK.

Watch the coming number of the Militant!

JAPAN

Beginning in the next issue of the Militant, we plan to publish a series of timely articles on the developments of capitalism in Japan and the present situation in that great imperialist power of the Orient. The series of articles is by Louis Weber who has devoted himself to an extensive study of Japanese conditions and developments and especially in view of the recent events in Manchuria, the theme of the series acquires extraordinary importance and interest.

Letters from Militants

Shipstead Exposes His Bankruptcy

MINNEAPOLIS.—Yesterday, Sunday, September 4th, the Minneapolis Central Labor Union held its annual labor picnic at Powderhorn Park with its program of sports, refreshments and speaking. The writer together with other members of the Communist League attended the picnic to listen to the speakers and to place our constructive criticism on the political bankruptcy of their utterances while mingling with the workers present.

During the entire program, speaker after speaker reminded the workers of their plight of mounting taxation and growing unemployment, of the heavy concentration of wealth in the last twenty years on the one hand and growing poverty with all its attendant miseries on the other. But not one single statement was made by any of them which I heard as to what the workers ought to do about it.

Senator Henrik Shipstead, who has spent ten years in the U. S. Senate as a Farmer-Laborite and during that time has traveled extensively in America and Europe for his own entertainment, was the main speaker of the afternoon. The platform was equipped with amplifiers to convey the words spoken at the microphone to the thousands of workers, unemployed and partly employed, who waited in vain for instructions as to what to do with their economic ills. It was a splendid opportunity for anyone permitted to use that microphone to spread ideas to large numbers of workers eager to listen and learn. The equipment was there, the workers by the thousands were there but those who could and would give them advice were carefully kept from the platform. Instead it was used by labor bureaucrats, public officials and Farmer-Labor politicians who either had no advice to offer the workers or lacked the courage to do so.

Shipstead Exposes His Political Bankruptcy

The Senator spoke at length on the laborer and his labor power which the Creator had given him at his birth and collected at his death. That the creation did not stop on the sixth day as stated in genesis, but that labor continues to create and produce. He spoke of wealth concentration, un-sound financing on and off the gold standard and inflation and deflation of money, etc., etc. He also informed the workers of the misery and suffering which flows from prolonged and growing unemployment. This was, no doubt, refreshing news and very instructive to the thousands of Minneapolis workers who have been out of jobs for the last two years and stood in line for soup and charity. After his lamentation on bad conditions and poor statesmanship at Washington he abruptly ended his talk by paying his compliments to Governor Olson, who was absent speaking somewhere else. So after the workers had patiently waited and listened to the flow of words from the amplifiers telling them of their suffering they were all of a sudden left there standing by the Senator without one single suggestion or practical proposal as to what to do about their growing difficulties.

Of course we Communists did not expect anything else from the characters who spoke but, no doubt, many of the workers did. We as Communists and trade unionists went to the Minneapolis labor picnic to get more and concrete evidence of the political bankruptcy of those who spoke and whom the great masses of workers have so far followed and supported for political leadership. This cumulative evidence we as Communists use in a practical way to help and direct the workers, step by step, towards the proper goal through the proper medium, the Communist party, with a Communist program.

The League members distributed a large number of the leaflet issued by the National Committee on the German situation and handbills announcing our open forum meeting next Saturday, at 1530 East Franklin Avenue and our "Hard Time Weiner Roast" at Glenwood Park next Sunday, September 11th. "The Attitude of the Farmer-Labor Party towards the Farmers' Strike" will be the subject for discussion at the open forum meeting, and "The Civil War in Germany Today" will be the subject discussed at the Glenwood Park affair. By attending both of these meetings workers, employed or unemployed, will get information concerning their problems which they were unable to get from those who were privileged to speak at the well attended picnic of the Minneapolis Central Labor Union.

—O. M.

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Martin Abern James P. Cannon
Max Shachtman Maurice Spector

Arne Swabek
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Another «Leader» Against War

LOS ANGELES.—Among the chosen leaders of the "World Congress Against War" appears the name of Upton Sinclair as one of the organizers of the movement, along with H. G. Wells—another smug little bourgeois philistine, as Lenin once contemptuously referred to him.

Sinclair's shifty "revolutionary" record—as a proletarian propagandist of Prohibition, socialism and patriotic pacifism—is pretty well known, even to his friends and comrades on Daily Worker and the New Masses; but the following data may be of interest to your readers—other than the Stalinists (who have to read The Militant on the sly, to keep posted on the revolutionary situation).

In opposition to the official stand taken by the Socialist Party of America—in which he was and is a shining light—Sinclair issued a manifesto or "round robin" letter during the World War, mobilizing the intellectuals in the party to come out openly in support of the Allies. The leading Socialist workers were appealed to, to take sides in the greatest organized slaughter of human beings in the history of the world. Many of the most prominent Socialists in America responded to the call. Spargo, Walling, Stokes, Ghent, A. M. Simons, Charles Edward Russell, Frank Born, Allan Benson (one time Socialist candidate for President)—and other "Marxist" renegades—joined up with the forces of imperialism, and devoted their talents to the service of their capitalist masters—in persuading the workers to destroy one another "to make the world safe for Democracy".

In 1918, during the progress of the war, Upton Sinclair—the great champion of peace (in peace-time)—declared to the writer, in just these words, that "the salvation of society depends on how many Germans we can kill!"

As a confirmation that these were the true sentiments of this professed pacifist, I have in my possession a letter, dated Pasadena, California, June 22, 1918, which Upton Sinclair wrote—and sent to me through the U. S. Postoffice, where it was opened by the authorities—condemning my attitude toward the war. In this letter, he said:

"I do not like misunderstandings and I will therefore make my position clear.

"I take this war seriously. I believe that it is the greatest crisis in history, and that the cooperation of every lover of liberty is imperatively required. You do not agree with this. You regard the war with contemptuous indifference, and you declare your intention to remain aloof from it.

"I am a Socialist, and consider it necessary to sacrifice one's personality to the community."

(Signed) "U. SINCLAIR."

This is not a mere hysterical outburst of ill-considered opinion—as might be expected from this quarter. It is the calm and reasoned expression of the author's "sincere" conviction and belief (at the time)—though some of us may be utterly unable to understand or follow his line of reasoning. It recalls the distinguished writer's freak war-time magazine—or private journal of opinion—"Upton Sinclair's", which came to an early end in the heroic effort to give birth to "Wilsonian Socialism".

This is one of the men to be trusted again to tell the workers what to do in case of war!

When the threatened war breaks out between the forces that stand for reaction and those that make for progress—between the forces behind the falling structure of capitalism, on the one side, and those representing the rising power of the dispossessed workers of the world, on the other—we shall know where to look for these peace-loving patriots, who are always ready to "sacrifice" themselves, and their professed principles, for the benefit of their country and their class. They will be found in the camp of the enemy, exhorting the workers to be "faithful to their masters and fight for their 'freedom'—to work and to starve—driving them unwillingly into another 'holy war,' to preserve 'Humanity', to stem the tide of Asiatic barbarism", "to save Civilization from Communist chaos and ruin."

In the last war, it was the ferocious "Huns" our young men were taught to fear and forced to fight—because they ate little Belgian children alive when they couldn't get rabbits; and they were on their way to America to take away our wives and daughters. In the next one, the "Yellow Peril" will be the scare and cry raised to stir the masses into war frenzy; the "Bolshevik Beast" will be the bugaboo spread throughout the western world by the yellow capitalist press—with the help of hypocritical howlers for peace, prosperity and human brotherhood—under capitalist control.

The self-sacrificing socialist patriots and the humanitarian capitalist pacifists will fall into line when the bugle blows—and "do their bit" in the coming war "to make the world safe" for Democracy.

W. A. NELSON COLLIER.

FULL REPORTS ON AMSTERDAM CONGRESS

Just as the forms for this issue are being locked up, the mail brings us a detailed report of the deliberations of the Barbusse Congress in Amsterdam and the role played in them by the Left Opposition delegates. The brief summary contained in this issue will therefore be extensively supplemented in the next number with the newly-arrived report. All readers are urged to be on the lookout for this extremely important material.