

WORKERS  
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WORLD.  
UNITE

# THE MILITANT



Weekly Organ of the Communist League of America [Opposition]

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## A Million to Be Expelled!

The New Stalinist Plan for «Purging» the Russian Party Ranks

The New York Times of December 27, informs us in Moscow dispatch from Walter Duranty, the correspondent whose services it commands in partnership with the Stalinist apparatus, of a new event impending in the Soviet Union.

"Nearly a million members of the Communist party might be deprived of their membership rights in the coming months, when Joseph Stalin follows the example set by Lenin and purges the organization of undesirable elements. The party itself has a little more than 3,000,000 members... The party has grown too fast, and many of its members, though loyal, are undisciplined. Many, though loyal and disciplined, are ignorant and unfit for the leadership to which Lenin destined them. Some are not even loyal and have broken discipline. Only today the newspaper Pravda reports the expulsion and arrest of nine Communists, Ukrainian district leaders, who had made common cause with the kulak enemy, and there are similar cases from the Caucasus to Siberia. In 1921, when Lenin purged the party, wolves in sheep's clothing, the blind leading the blind, he called them, and Stalin will follow his hard example."

The gratuitous reference to Lenin was undoubtedly furnished Duranty by the liaison officer in the Stalinist Agit-Prop department. For in reality, there is no natural connection between the purging of the party carried through in Lenin's day and the one being planned today, in which an estimated third of the party membership is to be expelled.

### An Involuntary Admission

The mere observation that in the sixteenth year of the Bolshevik revolution, one third of the party membership must be turned out, is itself a crushing indictment of the whole system introduced into the party by the Stalinist apparatus.

How did Lenin carry through the cleansing of the party during his period of leadership? The key to the situation at that time as well as to Lenin's approach to the problem is indicated by his famous proposal that nine-tenths of the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionists who joined the Bolshevik party after the revolution, should be expelled forthwith! The difference now is that Stalin has been carrying through the purgings at the other end.

Under the Centrist regime, the bureaucracy has been swelled to enormous proportions. Into its ranks have been injected all the Menshevik elements who "discovered" the Bolshevik revolution after it was already firmly established and consequently "respectable", whereas the organizers and leaders of the revolution and the Comintern have been simultaneously ejected from the party. For the Trotskys, Rakovskys, Muralovs and Sosnovskys who were expelled from the party, the Stalin machine substituted such organic anti-Bolsheviks as Chubar, Martinov, Saslavsky, Rafes—to say nothing of the bourgeois saboteurs like Ramzin, Groman, Kondratiev and Co.

Coincidental with this process and inseparable from it, the party has been systematically dissolved into the class as a whole, reduced to an amorphous, inert mass. When the Opposition demanded from 1924 onwards that the proletarian composition of the party be decisively strengthened, the bureaucracy raised a hue and cry against it on the grounds that the party would be swelled into a huge membership. This did not

prevent it from stuffing the party in so promiscuous and indiscriminate a manner as to burst its firmness, its mobility, its vanguard character. Particularly in recent years, this plebiscitary decomposition of the party has taken on the most disastrous forms. The working force of large factories—composed in large part of backward workers whom 17-18 years of world war and two revolutions did not inculcate to join the party!—was obliged to enter the party by purely administrative means. In this whole job of eliminating the vanguard character of the party, i. e., of eliminating that feature which makes it the party of the proletariat, the Stalinist apparatus has been careful to strengthen its own bureaucratic position. For to the same degree that the party was being dissolved into the class, the upper stratum of the party dissolved the bonds which connected it with the party ranks, and raised itself above and beyond them.

### Dissolving the Party

For all of this the proletarian dictatorship is paying a heavy price today. The idea conceived in the distorted mind of the bureaucrat that a socialistically planned economy could be carried out by purely administrative means, by command, and without the direct and genuine participation of the masses—which can be assured only under a regime of workers' democracy—has proved to be false to the roots and pernicious in its consequences. This necessary workers' democracy must start in the party, which leads the class. But that is precisely where the trouble lies. The party, shot through with alien elements, is hacked to bits. Its restoration as a party, pulsing, breathing, thinking, acting and controlling its executives, is the burning need of the moment.

A letter from Moscow, written towards the end of November, will serve to give an insight into the real situation: "Yes, many things have changed in recent weeks. The dominant feature of the situation remains the shaking of the personal position of Stalin. The 'general secretary' has lost all standing among his own supporters. On the other hand, we are happy to observe how the standing of L. D. Trotsky is growing in the political circles and among the advanced proletarian strata. Those who were once his most embittered critics are becoming, in many instances, his warmest partisans. We could cite many examples in the capitals. Many of those who fought him, who approved of his exile, admit today that a great future is opening up to him, his ideas and his companions. Others are disturbed without end over his new works, his viewpoints, etc.... Believe us, this tells more than all the official panegyrics for Stalin."

The "purging" proposed by Stalin is aimed at consolidating his own badly shaken position. Which does not mean that the party does not require a cleansing. It does, and it must be a drastic one. It must run from top to bottom. It must commence with the fulfillment of Lenin's last advice to the party, the advice that it should find ways of removing from the post of party secretaryship the man whom he qualified as rude and disloyal: Stalin.

The party must be purged indeed. And the purging must commence with the removal of Stalin and the bureaucratic crust which has strangled the party!

## THE MILITANT MUST BE SAVED!

An Appeal of the National Committee of the League

To all Members of the League,  
To all Friends and Comrades of the MILITANT!

Our weekly organ THE MILITANT, is now in the greatest danger it has experienced for more than a year. Unless drastic measures are taken immediately, the success we have had thus far in maintaining the weekly will end with its collapse. Throughout the country our friends have continued to make brave and generous efforts to sustain us in the work of publishing our paper regularly. But the unrelieved crisis has had telling effects. The regular income of THE MILITANT is today too low to make possible its unhampered appearance. What is required for this purpose is a number of special contributions which we can obtain only from our comrades and sympathizers.

The seriousness of our position should be obvious to all. For the first time this year we have been compelled to omit two of the regular issues of THE MILITANT, as well as to print a half-size edition of two other numbers. THE MILITANT is the principal weapon in our fight and whenever it is weakened, the effectiveness of the whole Opposition in the United States is weakened. This blow has already been felt throughout the country and we are confident that all energies will now be bent to make impossible a repetition of the retreat.

THE MILITANT has fixed a distinct place for itself in the revolutionary labor movement. It is today the only paper in the United States which fights unrelentingly for those fundamental principles of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky which enabled the Russian Bolsheviks to lead the proletariat to power, which were embodied in the foundation and building up of the Communist International, in restoring the goal of the international social revolution to its rightful place of pre-eminence in the working class movement. THE MILITANT alone is in a position to speak out what is in reality, to tell the truth to the workers so that they may be able to emancipate them-

selves from the bourgeoisie, to tell the truth to the bourgeoisie so that they may be able to liberate themselves from the physical and intellectual strangulation of Stalinist Centralism. If the voice of THE MILITANT, which never compromises with unprincipledness, fraud and revisionism, with the bureaucracy, and adventurism—is silenced even for a week, a wide gap is left in the continuity of the revolutionary struggle we are carrying on for international Bolshevism.

That is why no stone must be left unturned in the campaign we have launched to save the MILITANT! The National Committee of the Communist League of America (Opposition) has set aside the next two months for a concentrated national campaign to collect a special fund of \$1,000.00, apart from the regular income of the organization, to guarantee the regular weekly appearance of THE MILITANT. For the whole period of the campaign, this question must remain Point One at the top of the agenda of every unit of the organization. It must be kept in mind as the matter of paramount importance by every friend of the Left Opposition. And above all, action taken now, with speed, is doubly important! Our need at the present moment is most acute, and every measure must be taken with this in mind.

We look forward to two months of systematic, organized activity to put the campaign over the top, to raise the thousand dollar fund, and thereby to make the MILITANT independent of the crisis which has struck it with such violence.

We express the common opinion of every Oppositionist when we declare: THE MILITANT is in danger! THE MILITANT must be saved! Shoulders to the wheel, Left Oppositionists!

—National Committee,  
Communist League of  
America (Opposition).

All funds should be sent immediately to THE MILITANT, 126 East 16th Street, New York, N. Y.

## Ala. Negro Croppers Resist White Terror

Pitched Battle Between Posse & Negroes

The attempt to seize the mule and cow of a Negro share-cropper in Notasulga, Tallapoosa County, Alabama, and the armed conflict between the harrassed croppers and the legally armed mob that attacked them, brings to the forefront all the horrors and misery of the Negro throughout the notorious "Black Belt" in the South. At least three of the band of Negro croppers who gathered in the home of Clifford James to defend him from the mob of armed deputies, are known to be dead; several are wounded. As was the case in the Camp Hill, Alabama, affair a year and a half ago, the attack was courageously resisted by the assembled Negroes, who were finally compelled to submit in the presence of an overwhelming hostile force recruited from the entire country for miles around and even outside the county limits.

As a sequel to the Notasulga battle, the International Labor Defense office in Birmingham was raided and its equipment practically destroyed; while Alice Burke, the wife of the I. L. D.'s Southern organizer, was arrested a short time afterward in the home of a white worker of East Lake, Alabama, where a protest meeting was being held.

### The Bourbon System

The fact that the Negroes invoked did not meekly submit to the arrogant demands of the white landlords and their armed posse, is of tremendous significance. Ever since the end of the Civil War, the bourgeoisie of the South has put at the very spearhead of its policy the determination to keep the Negro submerged as far as possible, to inculcate in him the spirit of subservience and non-resistance, to impress him with the absurd, unfounded, reactionary theory of "Negro inferiority". The whole social and political system erected around these ideas has been bolstered up by "Jim Crowing," the Negro, disfranchising him in every conceivable manner, keeping him on the lowest rung of the economic ladder, and, to impress him with the advisability of not resist-

ing, by torturing and murdering him in accordance with the principles of Judge Lynch. The unrelenting persistence which the Southern Bourbons have shown in preserving this barbaric system of virtual enslavement of the Negro, is accounted for by the fact that the emancipation of the millions of colored toilers in the South is equivalent to the end of white capitalist domination.

Suffering most acutely from the nightmare of Southern capitalist democracy, are the Negroes engaged in "share-cropping". The leasing of land, and sometimes also of mechanical equipment or live-stock, to the croppers, is paid for by them in the form of a portion of the crop they garner. The system is strongly reminiscent of the dark feudal ages. It places the cropper at the mercy of the white landlord from whom he can scarcely ever liberate himself. The living conditions of the croppers, lowest in the scale of tenant farmers, are indescribable. They are constantly, and more often than not, increasingly indebted to the landlord, who robs them of their already scanty income not only by the "cropper's contract" which puts the Negro in the hands of the landlord, but also by the fantastic prices charged at the latter's food and clothing commissary.

### The Negro Stand Their Ground

When there is added to this the fact that cotton, the principal cash money crop in the "Black Belt" has been hit terrifically by the crisis, the desperation of the Negro share-cropper may be easily imagined. No wonder that in spite of the tremendous forces the landlords have at their disposal, the Negroes in the South are beginning, for the first time in years, to stand their ground against the arbitrary, tyrannical encroachments upon their already sufficiently miserable living conditions.

Camp Hill and Notasulga of symbolic significance. No longer does there exist a progressive bourgeoisie in the North which is compelled to grant at least formal recognition to the rights of the Negroes, in the interests of their own fight for liberation from the hampering fetters of a slave-owning aristocracy. The union of the Southern Bourbons and the Northern republicans into a reactionary financial oligarchy, has long ago been accomplished. From that source, the Negro can look for anything but support or comfort. But not much more support will the cruelly exploited Negro get from the petty bourgeoisie, his own not excepted. The Negro petty bourgeoisie is in that peculiar position where it actually thrives on the segregation and Jim Crowing of the black toiler! That is why its interests are so intimately associated with those of the ruling bourgeoisie. That is why it continuously counsels the Negro masses to wear the "Uncle Tom handkerchief" on its head, the symbol of the fawning slave who never fights back.

This leaves the Negro of town and country only one way out of the purgatory in which they are confined. The Negro tenant and cropper of the South cannot lead and organize the movement for liberation; they can, however, contribute (as they have) all the passion of the wronged, the strength at their command, the heroism they have already displayed. But at the head of the columns marching to victory must stand the class conscious, machine-organized, urban proletariat, white and black. Eventually, it will stand there. When it has reached the consciousness of its task, it will not find the Southern Negroes wanting. Camp Hill and Notasulga are signs of the vast inflammable material in the South which can be ignited to burn to the roots the bestial rule of oppression.

—Sn.

## OPEN FORUM

Will Social Reformism  
Grow in the U.S.?

Speaker:

HUGO OEHLER

December 30, 1932

126 East 16th Street,  
ADMISSION: 15c

Auspices:

N. Y. Br. Communist League of A  
(Opposition)

## Canadian Organ Issued

Left Opposition Launches 'Vanguard' as Monthly in Toronto

A new achievement for the International Left Opposition is represented by the launching of its own organ in Canada, *The Vanguard*. For several years the Canadian Communist movement was more or less isolated from the world-wide party and the struggle begun around the problems raised by the Left Opposition did not find immediate echo in Canada. It was only after the public declaration in favor of the Opposition issued by the chairman and co-founder of the party, comrade Maurice Spector, that the Left wing received its first organized form. In recent times, the preliminary ground work done with the aid furnished by the *Militant* and the distribution of comrade Trotsky's work has borne fruit in the forward spirit that the Canadian Opposition has experienced. Several months ago, the movement was strengthened by the addition of comrade Jack MacDonald who was for years secretary of the party and most prominent spokesman for Communism in the country. Since then, the Opposition in Toronto has gained considerably in membership and prestige, and extended the sphere of its activities in the trade union movement and among the unemployed workers who have created a fairly elaborate movement in

that region. In addition, the Left Opposition is engaged in work among the revolutionary students who have already published the second number of their magazine, *The Spark*.

The first issue of the *Vanguard* (which can be obtained at 5 cents a copy from P. O. Box 63, Toronto, Ont., Canada), is devoted largely to the Russian revolution anniversary. Besides some timely articles from the recent writings of comrade Trotsky, there are contributions and editorials on the most important questions of the Canadian labor and revolutionary movement. Of heartening significance is the article by comrade Bill Matheson, former head of the American Unemployed movement and active Communist party militant in the mine fields of two countries. In it he submits the party trade union policy to searching criticism and shows how telling has been the view of the Left Opposition. We have every reason to believe that our Canadian comrades have only made a beginning which augurs well for the future. We look forward with confidence to encouraging progress that will carry our revolutionary banner to every working class militant in Canada.

Our heartiest wishes go to our Canadian comrades-in-arms!

## Unite to Smash the Trade Union Racketeers!

The shots fired by a member of the Waiters' Union, Local 1 of New York, which sent to the hospital two of its business agents, bring sensationally to the forefront one of these rannally sores which has made the American labor movement unique in the entire world. The publicity attendant upon the shooting brought to public view the following facts:

It has been the custom in this union for the business agents to charge workers anywhere from \$100.00 up to be "placed" on a job, in agreement with the petty bosses who received from the labor racketeers a portion of the tax imposed illicitly upon the worker desperate for a job. A short time after the worker had parted with his money, and obtained the job, he found himself discharged by the boss, in cahoots with the labor officials, who promptly proceeded to start the game all over again with some other worker. While the jobs were "rotated" in this ingenious manner, the workers were being separated from vast sums of money which found their way into the bank accounts of the union skates.

The sufferings of the union members under this atrocious system may be judged from the fact that one of them felt impelled to vent his desperation by shooting at the two most notorious profiteers.

The class conscious worker is not the partisan of methods of individual terrorism. While we do not go into fits of hysterical horror—we leave that to the "liberal" friends of the labor movement—we are aware that the incubus of labor racketeering, like all the manifestations of class rule and labor exploitation, cannot be solved by individual attacks. They are at best the futile act of desperation which ignores (and sometimes evades) the imperative need of setting into motion the masses of those who suffer injury and injustice. The assassination of this or that king of Europe never brought about the abolition of monarchism. It was abolished, however, when the masses rose in a social revolutionary movement against that decadent system, as happened in 1917 in Russia, in 1918 in Germany and in 1931 in Spain. On a smaller scale, the same rule applies to the petty monarchs of the American trade union movement, who have fixed themselves to it like leeches exercising at times a power

### The Meaning of the Shooting in Waiters Local, No. 1

beyond the dreams of many present-day kings.

The Sam Kaplans, the Frank Commerfords, the Big Tim Murphys, the Mike Boyles and all the rest of the underworld gangster crew who have bullied their way to the top of whole sections of the labor movement with the aid of strong-arm men, blackjacks and pistols, can be thrown back into the gutters whence they came only if the masses of the workers affected are organized to put them out. While the struggle is no easy one, as has been demonstrated on more than one occasion, it is the only way out. The establishment of trade

union democracy and the conversion of the unions into class struggle organizations instead of class collaborationism which invites racketeering—these are the sticks of dynamite which blow the underworld leeches out of the labor movement. A quintessential prerequisite for this is the restoration of the Left wing in the unions, where it was once a growing force, commanding respect and making for progress.

The fact is that the so-called socialist unions are not very greatly distinguished in this respect for many others. To rid them all of the poisonous hydra which is devouring their vitals is a task which every worker can join in carrying out.

SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTORS TO  
SAVE THE MILITANT

## A. F. L. and Union Unity

The Stalinist Policies Fail to Meet the Test of the Situation

In viewing the relationship of the revolutionary party to the trade union movement in the light of the events at the recent American Federation of Labor Convention, one specific feature stands out strikingly. And for the thinking worker there should be little difficulty in drawing a conclusion. We have, for some time, been faced with an unemployment situation pressing so acutely upon the working class that the Green bureaucracy found itself compelled to execute a change of front. The A F of L became committed, though so far only on paper, to the important measures of unemployment insurance and the six-hour work day without reduction of pay. Yet the revolutionary party had no direct influence in producing this change.

The best proof of this fact is furnished by the party's own actions. There assembled in Cincinnati, at the same time as the A F of L gathering, a rank and file convention for unemployment insurance. It was sponsored by the official party, but, of course, without any apparent formal connection. It had up to 200 delegates in attendance, a few of them officially elected by A F of L union locals. Its purpose was, as indicated by its name, to fight for unem-

ployment insurance, to focus attention upon this issue alongside of the A F of L convention, to expose the A F of L and to serve as the true expression of the trade unions on this issue. Yes, the party leadership had actually come down from its lofty perch of the third period dogma, from the "revolutionary upsurge of the American workers"—to speak to the A F of L about unemployment insurance. From an adventurist position which had no foundation in reality to dragging entirely at the rear of events. This is the sum and substance of its recent course. But before the rank and file convention had even gathered, the hidebound reactionaries of the A F of L had already framed their insurance policy and, in addition, made ready for the six-hour day proposal. The rank and file convention therefore became entirely overshadowed by the A. F. of L. action. It exposed primarily its own backwardness.

There is on the other hand, at least, a compensating feature in the fact that the A F of L convention action had already served to influence the party views somewhat. Party speakers are beginning to use the term class collaboration by its name, to fight for unem-

(Continued on page 3)

New Year's Eve

DANCE AND ENTERTAINMENT

SATURDAY DECEMBER 31, 1932  
at 126 East 16th Street  
ADMISSION: 35 CENTS

Auspices: N. Y. Branch, Communist League of America