

«With Both Hands»

The Stalin Bureaucracy and the United States of America

(Continued from page 1)

as the confiscation of property, elimination of personal rights, nationalization of women and children, repudiation of debts and religion, and above all, what we thought was an attempt to interfere with our own Government. I told him that neither he nor his Government could expect the friendship, cooperation and recognition of our Government if they ever did try to interfere with our affairs.

"Mr. Stalin immediately replied that he realized this and he too wanted to speak with the same frankness and with out offense. He said that he knew there were such unfavorable reports in our country, and took considerable time to explain the true conditions in Russia. He unhesitatingly admitted, with disarming frankness, that under Trotsky there had been an attempt to spread Communism throughout the world. He said that was the primary cause of the break between himself and Trotsky. That Trotsky believed in Universal Communism while he wanted to confine his efforts to his own country. He explained that they had neither the time nor the money to try to Communize the world, even should they wish to do so, and that his own chief interest was to improve the conditions of the people in Russia, without any interference whatsoever in the government of other countries.

"We discussed the Third International and other reports of Soviet propaganda and I must admit that Mr. Stalin convinced me there is no attempt now on his part, or on the part of officials of the Soviet Government, to interfere with the Government of the United States. We discussed politics, economics, banking, business, trade with the United States, transportation, agriculture and education. I was amazed at Mr. Stalin's knowledge of general affairs. He reminded me of many of our big industrial leaders who must have a general knowledge of practically all affairs to hold their positions. His words, as they were transferred to me through the interpreter, were carefully chosen, and I was particularly surprised at his knowledge of the Constitution of the United States. In fact, my own lack of knowledge of this same Constitution caused me considerable embarrassment, and the first thing I did, upon reaching London, was to find a bookstore to buy a copy.

"The conference lasted well after dark, as the sun sets early in the northern country. Upon leaving, he told me that the interpreter would prepare a typewritten copy of our conversation, which I received two weeks later in London, signed 'J. Stalin', and with this note—'Keep this record, it may be a very historical document some day.'"

The correctness of the interview, as is clear from the circumstances described, is beyond any doubt. Campbell is no light minded journalist hunting after sensations, but an energetic Yankee business man, an important American man of wealth and machine builder. He is quite kindly disposed in his relations to Stalin. In reporting the interview, Campbell did not rely merely on his memory, but also upon the official report supplied to him. Finally, Campbell's reports have nowhere and never been denied. These circumstances sufficiently clarify the correctness of the interview from the formal side. But much more important is the inner political power of conviction of the conversation, its concordance with the spirit of their participants and their circumstances. No journalist, moreover, could

have thought up that double handshake, that excellent description of the true essence of the differences of opinion between Stalin and Trotsky.

The Yankee remains true to himself to the very end in this conversation. The solid bourgeois, who has had a bad harvest this year and is therefore all the more inclined to do a stroke of business with the godless nationalizers of women, sticks his leg upon the Soviet table, and slaps the leader of the Bolsheviks on the shoulder half patronizingly, half warningly.

Nobody will want to reproach Stalin for endeavoring to utilize the meeting with Campbell for facilitating an agreement with the American government and the American market. Yet, why this "sudden" rise to his feet, this gripping of Campbell's hand with both of his and this proposal not only of "mutual respect" but also of "friendship"? Does that resemble the conduct of a representative of the workers' state, who is carrying on business negotiations with the representative of the capitalist world? Alas and alack, no resemblance at all! But it does resemble the crawling conduct of a petty bourgeois before a big bourgeois. This little occurrence which, to put it frankly, nauseates one in the reading, is very characteristic: it affords the possibility to discern the true political consciousness of Stalin, who is so resolute and relentless in the struggle against the Opposition Communists and the dissatisfied workers.

Fifteen years after the October revolution, Stalin speaks with the American capitalist in virtually the same tone in which Milukov and Kerensky once spoke with Buchanan in the not very glorious days of the impotent coalition. The resemblance lies not only in the tone, but also in the contents. "The necessity is openly preached amongst you in the press and in public for concluding the war," Buchanan cuttingly reproached the February powers-that-be. "Not we," Milukov, Teleschenko, Kerensky defended themselves, "only the Bolsheviks. But we'll finish them off right enough." "Just look," Kerensky then assured Buchanan, holding his hand with both his own because he did not have a third hand—"just look, Lenin is already driven into illegality again and Trotsky is in the Kresty prison."

Naturally, Stalin's position is essentially different for the October revolution is an historical fact, and the "apparatus" bases itself upon its social consequences. But the political task of the bureaucracy does not consist in the spreading of the October revolution throughout the world; it is for this program that Trotsky was exiled from the USSR, Stalin respectfully reports to the American bourgeois. His, Stalin's, task—consisted in improving the position of the Russian people by means of "friendship" with American capital. Unfortunately, however, it is precisely Stalin's policy on the field of "improving the position of the people" that leads to constantly sadder results.

Perhaps a sage will be found to contend: By his assertions about the international revolution, etc., Stalin simply aimed at deceiving the American as to his real opinions. What is wrong with that? Is it worth while hanging on to such a point? Yet, only a completely hopeless idiot could possibly believe such an explanation.

Before anything else: Is it permitted to seek to deceive an adversary by such declarations which must inevitably confuse and demoralize friends? For what Stalin simply declared before the whole

world was that in contradistinction from the Left Opposition, his faction has renounced the theory and practice of the international revolution. Should one play with such things in the interests of diplomacy? Even in the limits of diplomacy such a game would be condemned to a miserable fiasco. A private conversation, even when it lasts till sunrise, is not enough to exercise any influence upon the ruling class of the U. S. A. The Yankees—are serious business men: they will not buy a pig in a poke. Assertions must stand on facts and lead to facts. The declaration of Stalin is no maneuver and no trick; taken at bottom it is the consequence of the theory of socialism in a single country. It was prepared for by the whole policy of recent years. In the near future too, it may become the doctrine of the new course, into which the bureaucracy is entering more directly every day, thanks to its blindness and its failures.

Can it really be forgotten that the Soviet government, unexpected by all, supported the Kellogg Pact? The motivation dictated by Stalin and intended only for home consumption, said: Even if the Kellogg Pact does not go far enough, it is nevertheless a step forward. Soviet diplomacy is of course under no obligation to say out loud everything it is thinking. It must not, without undermining the ground beneath its feet, make any steps of declarations which help the enemy to deceive the workers and weaken their vigilance. The Kellogg Pact is no step forward to peace, but the diplomatic cover for the mightiest and most dangerous of all the imperialist handbills. The matter is not merely confined to the Pact. Litvinov recently supported the American proposal for "partial disarmament". In that connection the Soviet press did not expose Hoover's demand, but only those imperialists who did not want to join hands with it. Meanwhile, Hoover's proposal, just like the Kellogg Pact, has as its aim neither disarmament nor the averting of war, but the concentration of the control over war and peace in the hands of the U. S. A. The preparation of favorable moral and material points of departure for the coming war—that is the only task of the American imperialists. If it is assumed that Soviet diplomacy could not express itself openly—that is not our opinion—then the press should have spoken for it. But when the Stalin-inspired diplomacy clings to the proposals of Hoover and Kellogg "with both hands", it is deceiving the world proletariat and weakening the Soviet state. If the Centrists in Amsterdam place themselves entirely upon the basis of petty bourgeois pacifism, which is essentially meant for the most part and is at all events still rooted in the masses, then in Geneva, they join hands at the "Left" with imperialist pseudo-pacifism, whose roots are to be sought in banks and trusts. In the question of war, the epigones break openly and demonstratively with the revolutionary tradition of Leninism. Their immediate objective is to win the trust of American capital. The nocturnal conversation in the Kremlin constitutes irrefragable commentary to the speeches of the Soviet delegates at Geneva.

Yet, diplomacy does not exhaust the question, and on this field it can lay no claim to first place. Where does the Communist International fit in? For four and a half years now no Congress of the Comintern has been called and nobody knows when it will be called, if ever. Stalin does not so much as find the time to appear at the ECCI Plenum and leaves the leadership to people who for the most part need leading themselves. Is it not a deliberate demonstration of disrespect for the Comintern? Does it not signify and in actuality and

not only in conversation with the American bourgeois, Stalin has given up completely the policy of the international revolution? No, he did not deceive Campbell. He only described, with rare frankness, the situation as it actually is. Still another question, and that the most essential of all, was brightly illuminated in the Stalin-Campbell dialogue: the question of socialism in one country. In spite of all the half-baked prophecies, the Five Year Plan did not increase the economic "independence" of the Soviet Union. On the contrary, the advances of the industrialization extended and deepened the relations of Soviet economy to world economy, consequently, also, their mutual dependency.

The double hand-shake of Stalin and his respectful indication of the Left Opposition to American capital is, in the last analysis, nothing but the political expression of the economic dependency of the Soviet Union upon the world market. The humiliating character of this "expression" is determined by the psychology of a very highly situated but notwithstanding that, a petty bourgeois bureaucrat, whom the great events always find unprepared.

The more the Stalin faction turns its back upon the international revolution, the more it will feel its dependency upon world capital, the more convulsively it will cling to it "with both hands". Stalin's hand-shake is not only a symbolical act—it is almost a program. Whereas he thoughtlessly and flatly accuses the Opposition of endeavoring to turn over Soviet industry to foreign capital, Stalin is obviously preparing for a change in the international as well as the internal political course.

Stuck in a vise, the bureaucracy is capable of engaging in any adventure, including treacherous ones. To trust it blindly, means to be an accessory to treason. Today more than ever are we duty-bound to watch over Stalin's conduct in the field of foreign political relations not only with tireless attention but also with sharp distrust.

On guard! Be prepared!

WHERE THE MILITANT IS SOLD

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The Crisis in the Food Workers Industrial Union in New York

The Food Workers Industrial Union is in a very bad situation. The enthusiasm and strength of its membership and its strike struggles, which struck terror in the past in the hearts of the bosses' associations and their gangsters, has given place for a long time to pessimism and discontent. This is very often denied and only occasionally admitted by the leadership of the union and the Trade Union Unity Council. But they always cautiously avoid any explanation of the causes that brought about the present situation.

During the party's pre-convention discussion in the summer of 1930, I wrote an article on the union, pointing out that unless the union changes its policy and corrects its errors, the union would continue to head toward destruction. This article never appeared. The excuse was that it was handed in too late, though it was given to them during the first week of the opening of the discussion. Again, a year ago, the convention of the union took place. The discussion for the delegates to the convention was limited by the fraction (headed by Joseph Zack) to ten minutes and later to 5. I strenuously protested against this decision and insisted that the past errors ought to be brought out into the open and a chance to discuss these errors be given to the delegates. In this way, some of the confidence lost by the members in the fraction, might be regained. This proposal was rejected by Zack on the ground that such a discussion would tend to demoralize the convention.

On November 16, 1932, the elections of the officials in the Cafeteria Section took place. General secretary Rubin made a long and "satisfactory" report on the union. He defended the general policy of the TUUI and said that if some sort of crisis existed in the union, it was because we had failed to carry out correctly the "general line". Then three minutes was set as the limit to the discussion, which was not to last over an hour. Some party members who had chanced to be misunderstood by the party bureaucrats, took advantage of the opportunity, to smooth over their bad standing by defending the "general line". Then the slate of the fraction for the officials was presented and steam-rolled without difficulty—to the glory of the general line.

The Open Letter Let us take the open letter of the Executive Committee of the TUUI signed by the General Secretary Joseph Zack, addressed to the organization and published in the September issue of the Food Worker. In it the crisis is analyzed as follows:

"It is necessary to emphasize at this time that the inner situation in the Food Workers Union is such that the union can hardly attract and hold workers ready for organization." The letter attributes the cause of the present conditions in the union to the following reasons: anarcho-syndicalist traditions of the union; constant changes in the leadership; lack of persistent, steady line of policy in the industry; infantile Leftist tendencies when the union is on the upgrade; rank opportunism when faced with severe difficulties; lack of inner democracy; cliquism of Beal and Teitelbaum, etc.; and above all, the failure to carry on the "general line" of the TUUI.

So read the letter. But when we examine closely the actual results of Zack's letter we see that the general line carried out in full in the union (which entirely reflects the general line which the Stalinist bureaucracy has imposed upon the party) is what brought about the present conditions in the union.

It is discouraging, however, that with the exception of Kleron's mild criticism in the following issue of the Food

Worker, the fraction said nothing about the merits or lack of merits of this disgraceful document.

Is it possible for us to believe that the fraction forgot the past so soon and allowed itself to be made the scapegoat—of the "general line"? Has it been forgotten that in every instance, all the policies and tactics in the union were made with the endorsement of Zack and Johnstone, whether they were "ultra-Leftist" or "rank opportunist"? For instance in May 1930, when the Executive Committee after a three day discussion decided to change the structure of the union, Johnstone over-ruled the proposals of the Executive Committee of the union, stating that it was an A F of L policy. Only a year and a half later, this "A F of L policy" was accepted by them as the "correct TUUI policy." The above example is an indication of that "lack of persistence" in the union's line. Was I not condemned time and again by Johnstone and other bureaucrats for proposing in the leading fraction the abolition of the general shop delegates council, the establishment of section executives, etc., etc.?

To conceal these facts which are very well known at least to some members of the union can only bring injury to the TUUI in particular and Communism in general.

In his letter, Zack speaks for democracy against bureaucracy. What a pity! Didn't Zack, over the heads of the union leadership, come down to the Concoops workers, demanding a ten percent tax on their wages for the TUUC and stating that those who refuse to pay the tax are enemies of the working class? When the majority of the members refused to submit to this categorical and arbitrary demand, Zack came back a few weeks later with an alleged decision by the National Committee of the Trade Union Unity League and the party, stating that for the "benefit of the Concoops", they were ordered to leave their jobs. When the workers elected a committee to see comrade Foster and find out the reasons for this decision, he (Foster) in the presence of the National Committee, said that the "Committee knew nothing of this decision and, turning to Zack, he condemned him for such bureaucratic action.

The Kornelios Case Another example is the Kornelios case. Because Kornelios dared to criticize the inefficiency of the Concoops management, he was fired from his job by Zack's assistant, John Steuben. When the membership of the union condemned this action and voted that Kornelios return to work, Zack said, "Nothing doing. The membership is not always right," and rejected its decision.

As to anarcho-syndicalism, the cliquism of Beal, Teitelbaum and the others, we shall deal with these aspects of the question in our next article.

In conclusion, Zack proposed several good points for the union. But these points were proposed dozens of times in the past. They never materialized due to the fact that the party members did not function as a genuine Communist fraction.

Only recently, the party bureaucrats arbitrarily excluded more than thirty comrades from fraction meetings, considering them as "unhealthy and disruptive elements". Only those with special invitations from the fraction secretary are now allowed to attend meetings. This action has nothing in common with Leninism. If comrades are not qualified for the fraction, they must first be called to account before the Control Commission and action taken there. Such procedures indicate that no healthy measures are being taken to remedy the ills within the union.

—SEBASTIAN PAPPAS.

JAPAN

Its Rise from Feudalism to Capitalist Imperialism and the Development of the Proletariat

By Jack Weber

The turn-over of labor in industry is a vital index of workers' living conditions. In Japan this index is artificially lowered by the method of involving workers in debt at the beginning of employment so as to keep them in bondage, and by the virtual imprisonment of labor in dormitories. Factory workers are allowed but two rest days a month by law and those in dormitories can only leave two to four times a month by special permission. Even so the turn-over in "normal" times is extremely high, official figures setting it at from 60 to 100 percent before the present crisis. The costliness of this turn-over may be gauged by the fact that it takes a year in silk mills to bring a recruit's productivity up to average, yet the average term of work is but slightly more than one year. Nor do the girls who represent more than half of all factory workers (and 80 percent of all textile workers) transfer to other factories. They prefer to return home to marry—or they are forced into prostitution.

Trade Union Movement

The first attempts at organizing trade unions were ruthlessly suppressed by the government. The anti-union Act of 1900 remained in force with but minor changes up to 1926 when, following the English models of opportunist "harmony" unions designed with the aid of the ruling class to blunt and render harmless the weapons of working class organization, the Japanese government decided to foster and encourage company unionism by a new act recommending arbitration in labor disputes. This act has remained a dead letter on the statute books although company unions have spread. Trade unions still possess no legal status, the government cautiously tolerating re-

formist unions but ever ready to suppress "dangerous tendencies" without warning.

The Outburst of 1918 and After

As the cost of living rose to dizzy heights during the War, the workers were driven more and more by need to strike for higher wages. Whereas in 1914 there were only 50 strikes involving 7900 workers, the number of strikes rose to 398 in 1917 and to 417 in 1918 involving, in the latter year 66,000 workers. The existing scarcity of food was aggravated by the Siberian adventure which necessitated the buying-up and diversion from the market of large stocks of rice. The pinch of hunger was felt everywhere by the masses.

Suddenly, without previous warning, the storm broke and there came the thunderclap of the spontaneous uprising of 1918. Starting in the obscure fisher village of Toyama where some fishermen's wives stormed the rice shops for food for their starving children, the movement spread like wildfire among workers and peasants. The agrarian movement revealed its elemental power by the burning of the homes of large landowners in forty-two provinces, and the looting of granaries. In the space of a few days the workers in practically every large town and city poured out into the streets, banded together and, where they did not loot the shops directly, forced the sale of rice to pre-war prices. Troops were called out in every large city. The workers faced the troops and called on them not to fire on their brothers and sisters. The government, realizing the ultimate possibilities of the situation, threw the troops into the shops to sell food over the counters at low prices, yes, and to give free rice

to the poor. Only when the movement began to recede were the troops used for shootings and brutal suppression, many of those who had bought rice at the lowered prices being thrown into prison for indeterminate periods.

Had there been the barest kernel of a Bolshevik party in Japan at this time, the year 1918 might well have been hailed as the "1905" of the Japanese working class. But no such organization existed, ready to place itself consciously at the head of the masses in action and to formulate the necessary political slogans in the light of the existing situation and the relation of forces. The masses were not aware of developments in Russia, the censorship acting as a "cordon sanitaire" to prevent the infecting of the Japanese workers. Whatever leadership did exist was more under the influence of anarcho-syndicalism than under that of Communism. Hence the complete lack of preparation for events, the sporadic character of the outburst and the lack of political demands that could have served as a focal point for later organization. Soviets were out of the question but demands to end the war, to grant universal suffrage, to recognize the right of the workers to organize—under the circumstances the democratic slogans could have been linked up with the more elemental demand for bread and peace.

Nevertheless the rice riots of 1918 form a turning-point in Japanese history. The masses learned their own power and the utter helplessness of the ruling class in the face of a mass outpouring into the streets. The seed was planted for making the workers conscious of their historic role. Conscious or not, the first step had been taken on the road to the conquest of power. Immediately the riots resulted in a great impetus to unionization. The unions became a force to be reckoned with, one that could no longer be safely suppressed by the ruling class. Instead the government and the "enlightened" capitalists were impelled to resort to the new methods of "boring from within" the unions, helping to create organiza-

tions for "harmony" and the "mutual interests" of capital and labor.

Anarcho-Syndicalism and the Unions

In 1906 the worker-intellectual Kotoku returned to Japan from the U. S. where he had been active in the ranks of the IWW. Kotoku brought to Japan the best traditions of this movement, an insufficiently grounded but revolutionary precursor of Communism. The movement thus founded was ruthlessly hounded by the police until temporarily suppressed after the discovery of a bomb plot against the Emperor in 1911 for which eleven men and one woman were executed. Despite this inevitable result of individualist terror, the basic ideas of syndicalism, direct mass action and industrial unionism, penetrated deeply into some of the unions, particularly those organized in the newly-built dockyards, destined soon to closure under the blight of the after-the-war crisis of 1920. Encouraged by the uprising of 1918 in which they had taken a leading part, the syndicalists led several great dockyard strikes during the years 1919 and 1921. In the Kawasaki and Mitsubishi dockyard strikes of 1921 there was exhibited the inspiringly heroic solidarity of thousands of workers. To combat the rapid spread of unemployment now engulfing the working masses, the strikers set up the slogan of workers' (syndicate) control and management of the shops. Many strikers felt that the proletarian revolution was at hand.

These strikes were the high point of syndicalist influence in Japan. They illustrate the splendid fighting qualities of the syndicalists but also the inevitable downfall of a workers' movement that attempts to ignore the state with its special armed forces prepared to crush any revolt. These strike struggles and the political consequences form an object lesson of the absolute need of a revolutionary vanguard in the form of the Communist party armed with the Marxian theory of the state, analyzing every new situation by means of its dialectic class approach and thus prepared to put forward correct tactics based on correct policies.

Our Club Plan MILITANT BUILDERS

Since December 24th there has been no change in the rate at which subs are coming in. The record for December 24—January 4 is not a good one. Perhaps the reason is the year end holiday slack. Be that as it may we must now make up for lost time. To make this campaign a success, every branch must participate and there should be no let up in the work.

New York should be taken as an example of what splendid work can be done by taking advantage of our club plan. New York is in the lead again. In New York more comrades are participating in the campaign than anywhere else, and they are doing the work consistently.

Here is the record of the campaign from the beginning up to date by cities:

Table with 2 columns: City and Count. Includes New York (48), Chicago (32), Minneapolis (22), Pittsburgh (18), Philadelphia (15), Montreal (13), Toronto (10), Boston (10), New Castle, Pa. (8), St. Louis (4), Des Moines (4), Lynn, Mass. (4), South Bend, Ind. (4).

THE STAFF

Table with 2 columns: Name and Count. Includes Chicago Friends of the Militant Club (12), H. Capelis (12), P. Vornvas (12), H. Nash (11), B. Morgenstern (8), V. R. Dunne (8), W. Krebm (6).

Table with 2 columns: Name and Count. Includes A. Joel (6), J. Ross (6), H. A. (4), M. Hudson (4), F. Rayburn (4), M. Gottlieb (4), J. Hamilton (4), W. Koulikow (4), O. Coover (4), S. Lessin (4), J. Sifakis (4), E. McMillen (4), A. Miller (4), J. Weber (4), L. Busky (4), G. Drucker (4), C. Ingram (4), J. Ritz (4).

The New York Branch is represented on this list by five members. That is the reason New York stands at the head of the list of cities.

Mobilize the membership for the campaign!

THE NEW YORK CLASS IN THE HISTORY OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

Due to the holidays at the end of the year, the course of lectures on "The History of the Communist International" being conducted by Max Shachtman at the International Workers School, 129 E. 16th Street, was postponed for two sessions. The course will be resumed this Sunday, January 8, 1933, with the "Fourth Congress of the Comintern" as the topic. All comrades are invited to attend.