

WORKERS
OF THE
WORLD.
UNITE

THE MILITANT



Weekly Organ of the Communist League of America [Opposition]

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The New Party Turn

The new turn, or half-turn, of the Party in the unemployment movement opens up the possibility for a broad development of the unemployment struggle which hitherto has owed its stagnation and ineffectiveness, in no small degree, to the absurdly narrow and sectarian policy of the Stalinists. To the extent that it creates the conditions for the free participation of all workers organizations, whose members have a good cause and a genuine will to react against the fearful pressure of unemployment, the new policy of the party creates the primary conditions for the transformation of the isolated vanguard actions of the Communist militants into a united movement embracing masses of workers. Such a movement, driven forward by the appalling mass misery and discontent, and putting all parties and leaders to the test of action, can lead to a stormy development of working class struggle and a rapid expansion of Communist influence. From this point of view the Left Opposition is bound to greet the new turn, to support it with full strength and to penetrate into the very heart of the unfolding movement.

At the same time the new turn puts the Left Opposition before new opportunities and tasks. By releasing their monopolistic stranglehold on the emancipated movement, and inviting all workers' organizations, "irrespective of political opinions or affiliations," the Stalinists are perforce required to leave a crack open for the feared and hated "Trotskyists". We must and we will make our way through that crack, spread it wider, and establish direct contact with the workers, including the Communists, who are assembling for struggle under the banner of the united front. Up to now the strength of the Marxist wing of the movement has been revealed chiefly in its criticism. The opportunity to participate in a movement of struggle against the plague of unemployment places us also before the test of action. The Left Opposition will grow in numbers and influence to the extent that it makes good in this test—to the extent that it demonstrates its qualities as a fighting political organization—not a mere propaganda circle.

But this direct participation in actions can be really effective for the unemployment movement and for Communism only if it supplements and reinforces the criticism of all harmful and retarding currents and tendencies, including the tendency of bureaucratic centrism. In no case and under no circumstances can this criticism be submerged in a general sentiment of "unity". First of all, we have to see things as they really are and to talk out loud about them. Not a few party members discouraged and demoralized by the devastation of the "Third Period", will hail the "new turn" uncritically, as a way of salvation. Is it possible that a Left Oppositionist here and there, chafing for action and wearied of the drawn-out struggle of our small faction for the principle foundations, can fall into the same error? Hardly. But such things have happened before. Every zig-zag of Stalinism, the whole course of which is a series of zig-zags to the left and to the right, has claimed its credulous victims. For this reason also a critical appraisal of the new united front policy at the beginning, and at every turn, must go along with and condition our support.

In initiating the new tactic the Stalinists have been true to themselves—to the vacillating, cowardly, half-measure character of Centrism. In the first place the turn from the "social Fascist" theory is not a complete one: the branches of the Socialist party and the local A. F. of L. unions are invited to the united front—but what of the central bodies of these organizations? What of the leaders? Can you convince any Socialist worker or A. F. of L. unionist that these leaders are unwilling and unable to participate? (Continued under Editorial Notes on Page Four)

OPEN FORUM

REPORT OF THE OPPOSITION DELEGATES TO THE UNITED FRONT UNEMPLOYMENT CONFERENCE.

Speakers:
J. P. CANNON
MAX SHACHTMAN

January 27, 1933
126 East 16 Street,
ADMISSION: 15c

Auspices:
N. Y. Br. Communist League of America (Opposition)

WHO WILL PREVAIL?

They are watching the financial appeal column every week now as interested people watch the fever chart of a sick man. Our MILITANT is sick. Of this its enemies are, by now, quite convinced; and its creators, those who have made it and those for whom its word has been a light, have no reason to deny it. Indeed, they cannot, for the appeals that appear here every week now are all too patently the desperate cry of distress. And more than that, the two issues that were skipped and the two issues that came out in half size described too graphically the mad upward course of the temperature markings on the fever chart of the sick paper.

Yes, the MILITANT is in desperate trouble. The financial crisis burms like a high fever from week to week and from day to day. The sickness is a financial sickness—the prosaic bills, past due, accumulating, becoming more and more insistent in the demand for payments—this is the mortal illness that assails the paper.

Who will prevail?—that is the question. With your help, dear friends of the MILITANT, we shall answer that question our way. The paper will prevail. Its message will prevail. The courage, the sacrifice, the unconquerable spirit of the Bolshevik-Leninists will prevail.

The Left Opposition in America, and on an international scale, is on the eve of great advances. All its ideas are being vindicated, its predictions verified. Its organization grows and extends to every capitalist country in the world.

Its cadres grow firmer, harder, more confident of victory and more determined to achieve it. We have the right to victory and we have no right to turn back from the path of resolute struggle that leads toward it.

In this struggle the MILITANT is our voice and our banner. The voice shall not be silenced. The banner shall not come down. The means will be found, the sacrifices will be made, the paper will be saved. We say this because we have confidence that those who have made the paper and kept it alive in all adversity will do their duty when they know how matters stand. There is no doubt now how matters stand. The need is for money—not tomorrow, but today. That is your first obligation. Do not let anything take precedence over it. Send in your contribution now.

—JAMES P. CANNON.

JANUARY YOUNG SPARTACUS OUT

The January number of the YOUNG SPARTACUS is off the press and ready for sale and distribution. It is an eight page devoted primarily to the anniversary of Lenin, Liebknecht and Luxemburg and the struggle against imperialism war. It contains reports of the New York and Chicago Anti-War Conferences and articles on the latest developments in the Young Communist League, besides items of general working class interest.

Order your bundles. Reach the young Communists, Yipels and working youth with the YOUNG SPARTACUS.

L. Trotsky Ill

An Associated Press dispatch from Istanbul on January 9 reports that comrade Leon Trotsky is seriously ill in his home on the island of Frinikpo. The report states further that comrade Jan Frankel, who has worked as Trotsky's secretary for almost three years of his exile, is on his way to Europe for the purpose of securing the services of a foreign specialist.

It appears that the exertions attendant upon his recent trip through Europe en route to Copenhagen, overtaxed comrade Trotsky and rendered more acute the ailments from which he has been suffering for many years. The secret agreement between Stalin and Kemal Pasha has kept Trotsky virtually a prisoner in Turkey. Under the pressure of the Soviet embassies in various countries, every application for a visa—has been denied by practically all of the European governments, whose claims to the defense of the right of asylum, do not extend to the leader of the Bolshevik-Leninists. His isolation in Turkey has made it impossible for him to obtain the special medical attention he requires.

Is it not high time for the Communist workers everywhere to reflect upon this matter, and to raise their voices in protest against the hideous united front between Stalin and the European bourgeoisie which keeps in Turkish bondage the organizer of the Bolshevik insurrection, the leader of the Red Army, the closest collaborator of Lenin?

Japanese Invasion of Jehol Creates Tense Situation

World Imperialist Powers Press for Their Share of Loot

The rattle of the sabre grows louder in the Far East. As the Japanese conquest grows in scope and as the plunder and murder of these robber bandits proceeds unabated grave events of international consequence loom on the horizon. Fear for their territory and sources of exploitation have struck fear into the hearts of American and British imperialism. The equanimity that marked the original attitude of American imperialism has given way to an attitude of extreme anxiety over Japan's possible purpose in her invasion of the Jehol territory. At the outset, when it seemed that the Japanese military expedition might end in intervention against the Soviet Union, the diplomatic circles in Washington were quiet as the grave. But now, when it appears that American profits and the huge Chinese colonial market will be swallowed up by Japanese capitalism, a virtual furor of protest has emerged from the Washington watchdogs of the Wall Street bankers', munition makers' and manufacturers' interests in every part of the globe.

Already recrimination, abuse and contradictory rumors calculated to incite the war fever fill the air, both in America and in Japan. The old and familiar story of "atrocities" begins to make screaming headlines on the front pages of the yellow journals. The Tokio War Office gives out information to the Jap-

anese press that the United States is making huge sales of war supplies to the Chinese. The United States foreign office counters by saying the whole matter is a colossal fabrication, that the sale of ammunition to China in the last period was a mere bagatelle. The truth perhaps lies somewhere between these two, although it is a well known fact that the Du Ponts are not wasting any opportunity to reap profits from their deadly products. And they will sell this war paraphernalia to the Japanese just as soon as to the Chinese. Such are the noble and principled motives that actuated these same gentlemen in the last world slaughter. They have but one criterion—pecuniary gain. They reserve the sentimental phrases for consumption by the masses.

Simultaneously a new sensation has flashed across the American scandal sheets. A group of Japanese workers, according to these press reports stormed the Singer Sewing Machine plant in Yokohama and left a wreckage behind them amounting to several hundreds of thousands of dollars. Counter charges and claims are made that there was insufficient police protection; that it was a group of Left wing workers that committed the deed, etc., etc., ad nauseum. And now we hear still more ominous news that the Japanese fleet maneuvers have been advanced from October to June or July in the Pacific. And the American naval maneuvers, likewise in the Pacific, are scheduled to take place in about a month. Naval maneuvers are usually the prelude to more serious action.

At the same time we notice another significant fact. The attitude of the League of Nations has undergone an abrupt and fundamental revision. In less than a week the position of the "black international of imperialism" changed from one of yielding to all the Japanese demands to a hard boiled attitude of no concessions whatever. At first glance this is somewhat astonishing. But upon looking deeper into this change it is quite in accord with the spirit of recent international events.

During this past week when the Lytton report hung fire the American coalition intervened to lay down the law. To the public it merely reaffirmed its policy on the Far Eastern question of January 1932. "Protection of the open door.... respect for the territorial and administrative integrity of China.... the Nine Power pact.... the Kellogg-Briand Peace Treaty" and all the other shams that serve to camouflage the desire of the American capitalist class for self-aggrandizement in China and the opening up of huge markets for the profiteers. But behind the scenes another and more powerful weapon was brought into action. And with this weapon the American imperialists bled the League of Nations to make its position conform to American interests. This weapon is the war debt, which has been suspended over the heads of the defaulting nations, by the U. S. for this purpose among others.

The voice of the American Shylock has thundered forth; "If you want a favorable settlement on the debt you owe us, then support our policy against the Japanese!" And as the old saying goes "money talks". The whole League of Nations including France which has previously given Japan her warmest support fell into line. And now the papers tell us that a strong condemnatory resolution against Japan will be adopted. Great Britain which had been reticent about "provoking Japan has now offered diplomatic representations to the latter about the tense situation which is endangering British interests. The American whip strikes sharply and imperatively. But any illusion that any possible action of the League of Nations will permanently stop Japan's adventure in Jehol and elsewhere is not only absurd but dangerous. The most any action of the League can accomplish is to cause new alignments and intensify imperialist rivalry to the breaking point. The Wall Street agents in Washington are using the League of Nations as their battering ram against the Japan. (Continued on page 4)

International Workers School

Class in
ELEMENTARY COMMUNISM
by
MARTIN ABERN
MONDAY—8 P. M.
126 East 16th Street

Leon Trotsky Defends the October Revolution

Full Text of Speech Delivered to the Social Democratic Students at Copenhagen November 27th 1932

My dear listeners,

Permit me to begin by expressing my sincere regrets over my inability to speak before a Copenhagen audience in the Danish tongue. Let us not ask whether the listeners lose by it. As to the speaker, his ignorance of the Danish language deprives him of the possibility of familiarizing himself with Scandinavian life and Scandinavian literature immediately, at first hand and in the original. And that is a great loss.

The German language, to which I have had to take recourse, is rich and powerful. My German, however, is fairly limited. To discuss complicated questions with the necessary freedom, moreover, is possible only in one's own language. I must therefore beg the indulgence of the audience in advance. The first time that I was in Copenhagen was at the international Socialist Congress, and I took away with me the kindest recollections of your city. But that was over a quarter of a century ago. Since then, the water in the Ore-Sund and in the fjords has changed over and over again. And not the water alone. The war broke the backbone of the old European continent. The rivers and seas of Europe have washed down not a little blood. Mankind, and particularly European mankind, has gone through severe trials, has become more sombre and more brutal. Every kind of conflict has become more bitter. The world has entered into the period of the great change. Its most extreme expressions are war and revolution.

Before I pass on to the theme of my lecture, the Revolution, I consider it my duty to express my thanks to the organizers of this meeting, the Copenhagen organization of the social-democratic student body. I do this as a political opponent. My lecture, it is true, pursues historic-scientific and not political aims. I want to emphasize this right from the beginning. But it is impossible to speak of a Revolution, out of which the Soviet Republic arose, without taking up a political position. As a lecturer I stand under the same banner as I did when I participated in the events of the Revolution.

Up to the war, the Bolshevik Party belonged to the international social-democracy. On August 4, 1914, the vote of the German social-democracy for the war credits put an end to this connection once and for all, and opened the period of uninterrupted and irreconcilable struggle of Bolshevism against social-democracy. Does this mean that the organizers of this assembly made a mistake in inviting me as a lecturer? On this point the audience will be able to judge? After my lecture. To justify my acceptance of the kind invitation to present a report on the Russian Revolution, permit me to point to the fact that during the 35 years of my political life the question of the Russian Revolution has been the practical and theoretical axis of my interests and of my actions. The four years of my stay in Turkey were principally devoted to the historical elaboration of the problems of the Russian Revolution. Perhaps this fact gives me a certain right to hope that I will succeed, in part, at least, in helping not only friends and sympathizers, but also opponents, better to understand many features of the Revolution which had escaped their attention before. At all events, the purpose of my lecture is: to help to understand. I do not intend to conduct propaganda for the Revolution nor to call upon you to join the Revolution. I intend to explain the Revolution.

I do not know if in the Scandinavian Olympus there was a special goddess of rebellion. Scarcely! In any case, we shall not call upon her favor today. We shall place our lecture under the sign of Snotra, the old goddess of knowledge. Despite the

passionate drama of the Revolution as a living event, we shall endeavor to treat it as dispassionately as an anatomist. If the lecturer is drier because of it, the listeners will, let us hope, take it into the bargain.

Let us begin with some elementary sociological principles, which are doubtless familiar to you all, but as to which we must refresh our memory in approaching so complicated a phenomenon as the Revolution.

Human society is an historically-originated collaboration in the struggle for existence and the assurance of the maintenance of the generations. The character of a society is determined by the character of its economy. The character of its economy is determined by its means of productive labor.

For every great epoch in the development of the productive forces there is a definite corresponding social regime. Every social regime until now has secured enormous advantages to the ruling class.

Out of what has been said, it is clear that social regimes are not eternal. They arise historically, and then become fetters on further progress. "All that rises deserves to be destroyed".

But no ruling class has ever voluntarily and peacefully abdicated. In questions of life and death arguments based on reason have never replaced the argument of force. This may be sad, but it is so. It is not we that have made this world. We can do nothing but take it as it is.

The Meaning of Revolution

Revolution means a change of the social order. It transfers the power from the hands of a class which has exhausted itself into those of another class, which is on the rise. The insurrection is the sharpest and most critical moment in the struggle of two classes for power. The insurrection can lead to the real victory of the revolution and to the establishment of a new order only when it is based on a progressive class, which is able to rally around it the overwhelming majority of the people.

As distinguished from the processes of nature, a revolution is made by human beings and through human beings. But in the course of revolution, too, men act under the influence of social conditions which are not freely chosen by them, but are handed down from the past and imperatively point out the road which they must follow. For this reason, and only for this reason, a revolution follows certain laws.

But human consciousness does not merely passively reflect its objective conditions. It is accustomed to react to them actively. At certain times this reaction assumes a tense, passionate, mass character. The barriers of right and might are broken down. The active intervention of the masses in historical events is in fact the most indispensable element of a revolution. But even the stormiest activity can remain in the stage of demonstration or rebellion, without rising to the height of revolution. The uprising of the masses must lead to the overthrow of the domination of one class and to the establishment of the domination of another. Only then have we a whole revolution. A mass uprising is no isolated undertaking, which can be conjured up any time one pleases. It represents an objectively-conditioned element in the development of a revolution, as a revolution represents an objectively-conditioned process in the development of society. But if the necessary conditions for the uprising exist, one must not simply wait passively, with open mouth: as

Shakespeare says, "There is a tide in the affairs of men which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune."

To sweep away the outlived social order, the progressive class must understand that its hour has struck, and set before itself the task of conquering power. Here opens the field of conscious revolutionary action, where foresight and calculation combine with will and courage. In other words: here opens the field of action of the Party.

The revolutionary Party unites within itself the flower of the progressive class. Without a Party which is able to orientate itself in its environment, and early win the confidence of the masses, the victory of the proletarian revolution is impossible. These are the reciprocal relations of the objective and the subjective factors in insurrection and in revolution.

The Causes of October

What questions does the October revolution raise in the mind of a thinking man?

1. Why and how did this Revolution take place? More concretely, why did the proletarian revolution conquer in one of the most backward countries of Europe?

2. What have been the results of the October revolution? and finally,

3. Has the October revolution stood the test? The first question, as to the causes, can now be answered more or less exhaustively. I have attempted to do this in great detail in my "History of the Revolution". Here I can formulate only the most important conclusions.

The fact that the proletariat reached power for the first time in such a backward country as the former Tsarist Russia seems mysterious only at first glance; in reality, it is fully in accord with historical law. It could have been predicted and it was predicted. Still more, on the basis of the prediction of this fact, the revolutionary Marxists built up their strategy long before the decisive events.

The first and most general explanation is: Russia is a backward country, but only a part of world economy, only an element of the capitalist world system. In this sense Lenin exhausted the riddle of the Russian revolution with the lapidary formula, "The chain broke at its weakest link".

A crude illustration: the great war, the result of the contradictions of world imperialism, drew into its maelstrom countries of different stages of development, but made the same claims on all the participants. It is clear that the burdens of the war had to be particularly intolerable for the most backward countries. Russia was the first to be compelled to leave the field. But to tear itself away from the war, the Russian people had to overthrow the ruling classes. In this way the chain of war broke at its weakest link.

Still, war is not a catastrophe coming from outside, like an earthquake, but as old Clausewitz said, the continuation of politics by other means. In the last war, the main tendencies of the imperialistic system of "peace-time only expressed themselves more crudely. The higher the general forces of production, the tenser the competition on the world markets, the sharper the antagonisms, and the madder the race for armaments, in that measure the more difficult it became for the weaker participants. For precisely this reason the backward countries assumed the first places in the succession of collapses. The chain of world capitalism always tends to break at its weakest link.

(Continued on PAGE TWO)

BANQUET FOR THE BENEFIT OF "THE MILITANT" SAT., JAN. 21 at 8 P. M.

Spaghetti Dinner

Music

Entertainment

126 E. 16 St.
ADMISSION

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