

# THE LEAGUE IN ACTION

## Cleveland Workers Hear Oehler

Cleveland.—A highly gratifying mass meeting of the Left Opposition was held here last Wednesday night at Painters Hall. More than 130 workers were present, more than half of them party members or members of party mass organizations. Comrades Hugo Oehler and Sam Gordon presented the point of view of the Communist League on the German crisis, with comrade John Brantlin in the chair. A good collection was taken and numerous Militants were sold.

This marks the largest and first peaceful meeting of the Left Opposition in this city. All previous meetings took place under organized attacks from the Stalinists. The previous intense and widespread activities of the local group with regard to the German Fascist danger—participation in demonstrations and meetings, extensive distribution of leaflets, etc.—had aroused great interest in the German meeting of the Left Opposition and the official party leadership saw itself forced to refrain from this time and actually to send down a representative to take the floor in their name.

After the presentation of the views of our organization the chairman, comrade Brantlin, asked if the party representative wanted the floor for 15 minutes. Comrade Leonard Patterson, in the name of the party, did his best in the course of twenty minutes to defend the indefensible position of Stalinism in Germany. After a great deal of confusion and stammering, he finally concluded with that poor trump card of the bureaucracy—the swindle about the "dislocation" of the German Left Opposition.

Comrade Oehler replied for the Communist League and with firm, but comradely arguments tore the bottom out of the contentions of the party representative, exposing in an even more convincing and concrete way the inadequacy and faltering, criminal stupidity of the Stalinist position in Germany. Many questions, testifying to the intense interest in the subject, were asked by the audience, to which our comrade gave the proper revolutionary answer. After comrade Oehler's summary, the meeting adjourned amid continued private discussions outside the hall.

All in all, this represents a great step forward for the Left Opposition in Cleveland. Not only the excellent attendance, but even more the comradely and sane spirit of the discussion is bound to have a profound effect on the local Communist workers, but those who constituted the majority of the audience as well as those who will come in contact with them. For the first time in their experience, they saw how deep principle disputes among Communists can be conducted in a Bolshevik manner, in a manner aimed to bring about genuine clarification in the proletarian ranks. That this will show them the futility and shamefulness of the Stalinist methods of physical terror in settling disputes with the Left Opposition cannot be doubted.

## 400 at Minneapolis Meeting

Minneapolis.—Last Thursday evening four hundred Communist, trade-union, and Left wing workers packed the Mayor's Reception Hall in the Court House to hear comrades Dunne and Skoglund expound the position of the Left Opposition on the German Crisis. This was the first large meeting protesting the assault of Hitler upon the German working class organizations. A small neighborhood meeting was held earlier in the week on the North-side by the Left Opposition. Seeing the laxity of the Stalinists upon this vital question the League advertised its meeting primarily through distribution of handbills at the party-led State Relief Demonstration, the trade union, and organized unemployed headquarters. This resulted in bringing to our meeting hundreds of Communists and party followers and numerous trade unionists and Left wing workers.

A profound effect was made upon this audience by the speakers' argumentation for unity in the Communist ranks, for a correct united front policy in mass work, for a Marxian estimation of the German crisis and the tasks of the C. P. The local district leaders of the official party were not present, but his sent a group of lower functionaries to observe, take notes, and ask questions. One of these, Minor, who had participated actively to bar the Left Opposition from a recent unemployment conference, prompted a party member to ask why the Communist League doesn't participate in the unemployment struggle. Comrade Dunne in answering was able to state our re-

## CHICAGO Civil War in Ill. Coal Fields

Lecture by GERRY ALLARD Editor of "The Progressive Miner" and Illinois Miners Leader on FRIDAY, MARCH 3, 8 P. M. MIRROR HALL 1136 N. Western Ave. (Near Division St.) Questions and Discussions from Floor

peated attempts to support the unemployed "united front", our position on the struggles, and exposed the lies, slanders and bureaucratic intrigues used by the party leadership to bar our organization from direct participation in their movement. Similarly when this comrade asked about the well "split" in the German Opposition, the speaker was able to drive home more lessons to the hundreds of new rank and file comrades in the hall, on Communist leadership and the miserable distortions of it that Stalinism imposed upon the party.

About one hundred Militants were sold and every worker present was given past issues. Despite the general poverty, ten copies of "What Next?" and additional literature by Trotsky were sold. New contacts with advanced workers were made.

An active functionary of the Socialist party was present and spoke in discussion. Apologetically he evaded the Weimar Constitution and Germany by saying that everything is not bad in the S. P. that in Vienna the S. P. "is returned year after year with ever increasing majorities..." Defensively he pleaded for "less criticism of the S. P. in order better to effect a united front with it." Three workers answered him. The speaker pointed out to him the necessity of the working class to defend itself against Fascism, that in such a united front each organization must stand on its own before the class, that workers' democracy in the united front allows criticism and reevaluation of every party's program as it pertains to the immediate action and problem before the class.

The meeting lasted well-nigh to midnight. It demonstrated the powerfulness of the ideas of the Left Opposition, when applied to crucial problems thrown up by crucial turns in the Proletarian revolution. We plan to duplicate this meeting in St. Paul.

—C. FORSEN.

## Nearing, Stalin Apologist, on Germany

### In Chicago

Chicago.—The lecture that Scott Nearing delivered here a few weeks ago under the auspices of the Chicago Forum, on "What Next in Germany", was an additional illustration of his ignorance of the dynamics of the class struggle. Coming just a few days before Hindenburg chose the leader of the Fascist butchers to the chancellorship, one had the right to expect of Nearing an analysis that would cover at least the fundamental questions relating to the present civil war period in Germany.

He gave a historical picture of the post-war period of Germany and, coming closer to the present situation, measured the relative strength of the political parties by their votes. In Nearing's schematic set-up, the Communist party is overwhelmed by heavy odds. These heavy odds preclude the possibility of a struggle for power by the Communist party. To Nearing, there are no differentiations to be sought in Von Papen, Von Schleicher, Hitler, Hugenburg, and the social democrats. They are all lumped together as if they make up an integral whole. On the basis of such a consideration Nearing concludes that these forces are too strong a combination for the Communists to attempt to struggle against. The likely variant according to Nearing, was the establishment of a coalition between all these groups.

It would be a good thing if some of the social democrats could be won to the support of the Communists, including too, some elements of the middle class. Then perhaps the revolutionists might make a struggle for power. And here one expects, that Nearing would take up the question of the united front to show how and in what manner the Communists could wage a victorious struggle. But apparently he has heard nothing of this tactic. It was not mentioned once in his lecture. Is it any wonder then that in his summary Nearing declares: "Unless the revolutionary movement (1) wins to its side some elements, either the social democratic elements or some of the middle class elements, they are whipped before they start, because the round-up of the class forces with the middle class and ruling class on one side of the round-up is unbeatable. That is the position of the German Communist Party and I believe it must be dismissed as an improbable way out of the difficulty." (My emphasis—A. G.)

Having dismissed the possibility of a victory and rejected the need for a struggle, Nearing concludes that the possible result of this seeming blind alley of German politics, would be a coalition of Von Schleicher, Von Papen, Hugenburg, Hitler and the social democrats, under the charge of the first. Thus a few days before the Fascist chief took over the chancellorship and his legions spread a reign of blood over Germany, Nearing dismissed the idea of a Fascist assumption to power.

Some days later, after Hitler's assumption to power, Nearing again spoke on Germany. Added to the confusion of his first lecture, was hopelessness and despair. Nothing could be done now. It was too late! As in his first lecture, the fundamental questions of the situation were left out entirely. If one expected to receive from Nearing a way out, he was greatly disappointed. It was not for nothing

## Wilkes-Barre Miners Hear Opposition

Wilkes-Barre, Pa.—An audience of 50 people, nearly all anthracite coal miners, turned out at Wilkes-Barre, Pa., despite the very cold weather, to hear Martin Abern, member of the National Committee, Communist League of America (Opposition), speak on the Menace of Fascism in Germany. Comrade Abern reviewed at length the role of the social democracy of Germany since the World War up to now; the program and activities of the Communist Party of Germany and the Communist International, as conceived by the Stalinist-Thaelmann leadership, and the policy and united front program of action put forward by L. D. Trotsky and the International Left Opposition to meet the German crisis. There was an intense interest among the audience, as is attested by the 30 questions put by them after the conclusion of the opening talk by comrade Abern. Members of the Communist party and the Young Communist League were among those present who asked numerous questions and participated in the general discussion that followed. Italian and Lithuanian comrades were responsible for the organization of this meeting, which was the first meeting held in Wilkes-Barre on the present situation in Germany. A good-sized bundle of each issue of the Militant is well distributed among interested workers.

A check-up of the audience revealed that only seven workers, of all present, were at present employed. It was a graphic illustration of the ravages of the economic crisis upon the anthracite miners. Workers who spoke, also brought out the treacherous role which the John L. Lewis leadership of the United Mine Workers of America was playing in helping to lower still further the living and working standards of the anthracite coal miners.

—C. FORSEN.

### In Pittsburgh

Pittsburgh.—On Saturday, Feb. 11, Professor Scott Nearing lectured before the "Friends of the Soviet Union on the 'Second Five Year Plan'." After a long speech on the achievements of "planned economy", many questions were asked among them was "Why was comrade Trotsky exiled?" To the surprise and astonishment of all present he answered like one who has just returned from Russia where he attended the Stalin school of falsifications, that Trotsky was exiled because he was a "counter-revolutionist". Among other questions was "Can Socialism be completed in Russia alone?" His answer was that when a revolution breaks out in China or Japan it could be completed in Russia (quite smart!).

Three of our comrades were standing outside the hall and distributing the Militant to the crowd as they left the meeting. A Stalinist, gorilla grabbed the bundle of papers out of the hands of one of our comrades and walked away with them. This is not by accident. More than once the Stalinists have stolen display cards placed in restaurant windows by the Pittsburgh branch of the Left Opposition. They have torn down leaflets we paste up. Yet they have the nerve to say that if the workers had any brains at all they would not listen to the teachings of the L. O. but to the "teachings of Stalin".

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that the reaction of the Communist workers who listened to him speak, was utter disgust.

Nearing is not a member of the Communist party and therefore does not speak in its name. But he has been a member of the party and is sufficiently close to it now, to give his speeches a semi-official character. He is looked upon as a representative of Communism. His lectures, up until this date, were the only ones to be held, in addition to those by the Left Opposition in Chicago. The party here, has as yet not moved a finger on the German situation.

—A. GLOTZER.

## The Flower of Bourbon Civilization Negro Lynchings in the South

Lynching in the South is a phenomenon that must be explained historically as a political weapon of the ruling class is to be correctly understood. Put into effect on a tremendous scale by the Ku Klux Klan during the Reconstruction Period, it claimed far less victims during the 80's of the last century. In the last decade of the last century its use became far more frequent again, there having been 1789 known lynchings between 1890 and 1900. With the beginning of the present century the number of its victims again decreased until during the present economic crisis the Southern bourgeois more frequently wield this awful weapon.

The above are cycles, but certainly not just business cycles. They are cycles or periods of great social change. The first or Ku Klux Klan-Reconstruction period when the northern capitalists by means of military dictatorship over the South were uprooting the system of chattel slavery so as to unite the country on the basis of capitalism, was outstandingly noticeable for its terrorism against the Negro race and the vast number of lynchings that took place, but at the same time it was a far deeper break with the past that immediately preceded it than was the 1890-1900 period. That period, though awful to recollect when one recalls it, considering the great number of deaths through lynchings, was the period of sharp political struggle that was a part of the social change from competitive capitalism to monopolist or imperialist capitalism. In the present period of decaying capitalism it is again true that the increased number of lynchings during the present economic crisis in America reflects the fact that here too the great social change that is shaking the world at large is affecting the social structure in our midst.

But many are falsely informed by the Southern Commission on the Study of Lynching that the Communists, the banner bearers of the new society, here responsible for these lynchings and many are wondering if lynchings will not continue in the South in the society of the future. A far greater number, not conversant with the forces making for social change nor realizing that capitalism is in decay, figure that lynching in America will become a thing of the past under capitalism.

To get at the truth one must deal with the nature of lynching as a capitalist institution. It is indeed a weapon for suppression of

the Negro race, used by the forces of reaction and useful only for such forces. When capitalism was young and progressive it was the weapon of political agents of the ex-skave holders, that is, the side of reaction. When capitalism underwent a qualitative change that created possibilities for the Negro's escape from the degradation of the rural South it was used to keep him in that degradation, "in his place". When capitalism is old and decaying, adapting to itself every outgrown form—even slavery, it is again a weapon on the dark side of reaction.

But let no one underestimate the far reaching nature of the social change that is taking place at the present time, nor on the other hand, overestimate the consequences of lynching because this is a part of a deep-going and far reaching social change. It is not just a mathematical proposition. It is a political one. The nature of this period of change is such that though far greater in historical importance than even the Civil War-Reconstruction-Ku Klux Klan period, far less lynchings should be expected to accompany the fight against this change, not because the enemy is better or more civilized, but because Communists fight against lynchings politically, by mass action, and can and will forestall many lynchings.

And while we are thinking politically instead of mathematically let us not fall into that other rut of the George Milton's that says that with the exception of the present crisis the twentieth century has witnessed a progressive decrease in lynchings, that the situation is getting better and better, and that under capitalism, we are outgrowing the fondness of lynching. He disregards entirely the fact that under imperialist capitalism, and even that phase of it with which he is most acquainted, the phase when lynchings were decreasing, the lynchings were also more brutal, more dramatically brutal, so that they were more impressive, so that their purpose of helping keep the Negro subordinated was served.

It is the height of absurdity to believe that the southern bosses will voluntarily drop this reactionary capitalist weapon. It is equally absurd to think Communism will pick it up. The Communists will disarm the bourgeoisie of this political weapon when they disarm them generally and will smash it in the same way as we will smash the bourgeois state.

—GEO. J. SAUL.

## Barbusse-Stalinist Capitulaton

San Francisco.—The Feb. 27 issue of the Western Worker prints a report of the Students Anti-War Conference in Los Angeles. It complains that the conference in which the Communists and Y. C. L. "played the leading role...in political guidance" capitulated to the pacifists. In heavy type it states that "The United Front in Los Angeles was essentially a capitulation to the pacifist elements."

The article points out that the main reason for this consisted in the fact that the members of the Young Communist League under- stood the tactics of the united front as giving up the right to criticize the action of the other parties in the conference. That, the article claims, deprived them "of the right to present our Communist position". As if a Communist position could be expected from people who came to revision of the "third period" tactics through the swindle of the Amsterdam Peace Conference. And besides, where is the guarantee that the party itself in its revision of the yesterday tactics of the "third period" and "social Fascism" would not come to the very same "day-before-yesterday" tactics with Chiang Kai-Shek and the Anglo-Russian committee, for which it criticizes the Los Angeles Conference.

Especially vociferous in its criticism is that part of the article which is directed against one of the paragraphs of a leaflet, issued with the help of Y. C. L. and which demands "the enforcement in both spirit and letter of the Kellogg peace pact". Poor lads! Knowing that the Soviet Union signed that pact, they believe with all their heart that pact should be enforced. And think of their bewilderment when the righteous elders of the Western Worker with solemn mien enlighten them: "The Kellogg peace pact is an imperialist document, a means of strengthening imperialism's hold on the vast colonial areas and against the Soviet Union."

We would like to know who would not get "dizzy" in these circumstances?

—L. GREEN.

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## Report Shows Fate of Germany Hangs In Balance; United Front Is Urgent

Continued from last issue  
But that is only one side of the picture. On the other hand the politically corrupted Stalinist bureaucracy did not hesitate to engage in lightminded maneuvering in the moments of fateful decision. It published and broadcast leaflets in which the Socialist party and the trade unions were called upon to form a united front with the Communist party for a general strike. It did not address its proposals directly to these organizations officially as organizations. It did not make any proposals for formation of united front organs. It did not make any concrete proposals for the conduct or the objectives of the general strike. It did not prepare its own membership and followers to fight for the realization of the united front, because it was not meant seriously. It was only a maneuver so that the bureaucrats could say to the Communist workers: "There you are. We offered them the united front, but they did not accept it."

Only the United Front Can Mobilize Workers Power  
The general strike, now that the establishment of a Fascist government has become a fact, will, of course, be a very important step in the struggle of the Communist workers against the menace of Fascism. But it can be only a first step and even this first step cannot be realized at all without the most complete working class unity. The C. P. alone cannot mobilize the working masses for a general strike. That is already conclusively proven. Its method of continually hurrying the slogan without proposing concretely how and when, by what means of organization, at what point and around which issues, can only lead to discredit of the slogan and to demoralization, not to mention the fact that the most resolute working class section which responds in its danger of further isolation and destruction. To speak of a general strike without the social democratic and average trade union workers is criminal lightmindedness, and it is not yet possible to mobilize these workers for such action against their leaders and less so by counterposing Communist leaders or the Communist party. To reach such a stage further preparation is necessary.

A general strike purely under social reformist leadership without control by the masses through their own established organs of struggle can have prospects only of further sell-outs and betrayals. But the social democratic workers are threatened by the scourge of Fascism as are the Communist workers. Even these very S. P. and trade union bureaucrats are being forced toward the wall, but pressed only from the one side from this menace. They feel this pressure and fear it. Now they must be pressed also from the other side, from the revolutionary workers. They must be put to the test and exposed at this crucial moment before the eyes of the work-

ing class and particularly before the eyes of their own following. Failure to do that spells failure to fight the traitors. The means with which to do that is the united front policy. The key to the situation is still the united front. Nay, it is more, it is a matter of life or death.

## The Left Opposition Conference Appeals to Comintern

In this fateful situation, in this hour of mortal danger, no guidance, no assistance, in fact not a word is heard from the Communist International. What woeful neglect. What criminal failure. What has become of Lenin's world party? It too is paralyzed, gagged and bound by the disloyal bureaucratic Stalinist regime.

In the midst of these developments the Left Opposition held its preliminary international conference in Paris, participated in by delegates of 13 countries. Our conference dispatched an urgent appeal to the Comintern for immediate convocation of its Seventh Congress, with the Left Opposition to participate in its deliberations. We proposed that the main point on the agenda be the Comintern initiative for a conference of the Second International, the Amsterdam International of trade unions and the Communist International to establish a united front in defense of the German working class against the Fascist menace.

Fascism has not yet conquered Germany. But it has its hands on the instrument of power. It is in the government together with elements of the attempted Bonapartist regime. Even an election victory for this combination will not finally settle the issue. There will still be a stage of differentiation with the Hugenberg and von Papen forces. However, these are not fundamental and are entirely subordinated to the issue of civil war. For the working class there is yet time; but every day, every hour is precious. The fate of the events of the immediate future are in the hands of the Communist forces. Of these the Left Opposition is a part. Our ranks in Germany have grown appreciably in the recent period; but numerically we are still small when compared to the party. Our strength lies in our Marxian program and the Left Opposition in Germany will do its duty. We commenced a long time ago a determined fight for the working class united front. Today it is the only way out; a united front from organization to organization, Communist, Social Democrats and trade unions and the establishment of definite united front organs of these organizations to function as the centrally directing force in the struggle for defense against the Fascist enemy. Within these organs, within this united front, the Communist solution will be proposed and fought for. That is the road to the Soviets. That is the only road.

—ARNE SWABACK.

February 11, 1933

## S. P. Conference

(Continued from Page 1)

Again the spokesman appeared on the platform and now with the report of the Credentials Committee he announced that the original committee of ten had enlarged itself to the number of 30. At this point a delegate from Carpenters' L. U. 2717 and I protested against such procedure, but surrounded by strong arm men we were quickly shoved back in our seats. The spokesman also announced that because of the lack of time, the resolution on unemployment insurance as well as all other resolutions handed in by various delegates would have to be taken under consideration at some time by the committee of 30, and that the conference endorsed the Cincinnati A. F. L. insurance bill.

Again I stood up and this time was recognized by the chairman. I asked that all resolutions be read off before the delegates and be voted on. I reported that the resolution from my local union contained on appeal to the delegates to this conference to merge with the provisional A. F. L. committee for unemployment relief at 799 Broadway. I also pointed out how useless the aims of this conference were when they seek to co-operate with such discredited types as Commerford, Brouch, Green and Co., who for years were checking the workers in every progressive step, but before I was able to finish I was pulled and pushed back in my seat again. The delegate from Carpenters' L. U. 2717 who proposed "that at least one building trade worker be on the resolution committee because of special problem of demanding public works as part of relief" was treated in the same manner. In summing up this conference I can not see why my L. U. was invited to participate in this conference, and this applies to all other delegates. There was no discussion on a single point of the question. Not a single proposal heard of by any of the delegates. No one of the delegates was elected on the committee and I may add the whole affair, therefore was of no concern to most of the delegates—except for a bunch of tricky politicians and job seekers.

—W. H. HERRMANN.

## Student's Strike

(Continued from Page 1)

flag pole. With howls and physical attacks they attempted to tear the banners, in which they succeeded in part and prevented the speakers from addressing the students on the campus.

Unfortunately the strike at City College was not very well prepared. Called scarcely with more than a day's preparation the strike could not take on the broad character and forceful effect it might otherwise have had. The strike committees were poorly organized if at all, and did not show a clear understanding of what move to make next. Not enough students had been reached in advance to, firstly, sound out their response, and, secondly, to ascertain their support. Furthermore by more carefully detailed plans much of the hectic features which detracted from the serious nature of the events could have been avoided. However the strike will remain a memorable event in the fight of the City students, as well as those at other institutions, for recognition of their rights. The evening strike, which suffered from the same faults, gathered about 500 demonstrators.

The strike at N. Y. U. was obviously better prepared aside from certain factors that made it easier to call. Here the students were insisting on the right of the editor of the Daily News, school paper, to freely express his opinion and to take his stand in favor of the student body. The Daily had made accusations against the athletic committee for mishandling an injured athlete. To this the school authorities responded with suspension of the paper. Before the strike had been called the proper preparation had taken place. Consequently greater numbers of student were involved.

That in a "liberal" school like N. Y. U. the students are pressed to take strike action, and that they stand ready to pursue such action, as they were in Columbia University last year, another "liberal" school with upper class enrollment, is a healthy sign. Even in the city owned colleges where academic freedom is so much more suppressed, it is unusual for students to leave classes. It is to be hoped that taking measures which are the natural instruments of the working class in its resistance to capitalist exploitation, will help to identify more closely the students with the struggle of the proletariat. In that alone rests the full value of the action taken by the City College and N. Y. U. students.

## Oehler Tour:

St. Louis, Mo.—March 4, 5  
Illinois Coal Fields—March 6, etc.