

Communism and the Negro

Fighting Lynching in the South

To the credit of Communists generally there is a widespread interest in the Negro question and for those comrades who can recognize the experiences of the party in the South as more authoritative than the decrees of the bureaucrats, there are vitally important lessons concerning tactics and strategy in the struggle against lynching, particularly, and also in the struggle against all the other weapons the southern rulers employ to perpetuate racial antagonism in the ranks of labor—so as to keep the South unorganized.

It is of very great importance to note that the only really effective campaign of the party against lynching was possible only after efforts to unionize the South had led to and made known to the world the Lora strike at Gastonia, N. C., in which a fighting issue was the Communist demand for full social, political and economic equality for Negro workers. A Negro organizer had been sent into the field here to pull out in solidarity with the white workers, the Negro workers in the picker rooms of that mill and the result of his efforts were reacted to on the part of the bosses by their attack on the National Textile Workers' Union on June 7, 1929, the very night the picker room workers joined the strike. Negro workers in the waste mill of Bessemer City, N. C. struck along with the white workers in the American mills of that town in protest against the frame-up of Fred Beal, the strike leader and fourteen other comrades and militant workers—this frame-up following the bosses' attack of June 7.

This frame-up changed the struggle into primarily a defense of the workers framed in the Gastonia-Aderholt case, but the calls to every meeting and demonstration were addressed to and invited both Negro and white workers. Nevertheless, with the exception of Negro Communists, there were practically no Negro workers who defied the southern segregation laws and the ever-rampant terrorism in the South because of the institution of lynching to make their presence a response to the calls until the southern Convention of Textile Workers held in Charlotte, N. C., October 12, 13, and 14, 1929, appeared as pregnant with the possibilities for a general movement to organize the entire working class of the South. This convention to which both Negro and white delegates came and participated, drove home to southern white workers present the fundamentally important fact that any serious movement to organize the South must develop not merely on the basis of wages, hours and shop considerations, but just as important or more so, on the basis of full equality for Negro workers in the workers' organizations.

Following this conference, in and around Charlotte, N. C. especially, meetings of defense of the framed workers, meetings celebrating the Russian revolution, meetings to organize the unemployed, etc., were responded to by workers of both races, and workers of both races became members of the organizations, steps which in themselves were blows at the bosses' weapons of division, segregation and Jim Crowism especially; but also steps preparatory to the only real struggle in the South carried on against lynching as in these instances to the workers had to be ever ready to defend themselves from attacks.

It was on February 8, 1930 that Senator Hefflin of Alabama delivered his infamous speech in which he endorsed, condoned and encouraged lynching, which was a signal to the southern Bourbons he represented to employ this weapon more frequently as an aid in their efforts to push still more on to the shoulders of the proletariat, especially the Negro proletariat, the burdens of the deepening crisis, at a time when the strikers of the Leaks, the mill in the vicinity of Charlotte, N. C. were yet under the influence and guidance of Communist organizers, a time when in that town, meetings preparatory to the March 6 demonstration against unemployment were being frequently held.

In just a few days, several lynchings took place, the first and most dramatically brutal being that of Jimmie Levine at Ocala, Ga. This prompted the comrades in the field to call protest meetings in all sections of the South where even the beginnings of organization had been made. Certainly among the very first to get active were the workers and comrades in Charlotte who held first a noon-day demonstration against lynching in front of one of the local mills and then advertised the special protest meeting. But "so full of artless jealousy was guilt" on the part of the Charlotte police that they interrupted the demonstration as a move against the lynching that was being prepared in Charlotte at that time instead of as a demonstration against lynching as an institution, and as a result, the whispering campaign against a colored fellow being held in the Mecklenburg County jail at that time, charged with raping a dead white woman in a funeral parlor, leaked out because of their attack on the preparations for the protest meeting. Of course, this transformed the intended educational and protest meeting into an experience or rather, a test of the forces in the locality for and against lynching. The armed thugs who congregated within less than half a block from the protest meeting, did not carry out their threats to break it up. They did not even dare to attack it. But the workers made plans to carry their struggle much far-

ther. Three worker guards kept watch over the County jail so that no matter at what time a mob might congregate the workers would be aroused at a moment's notice. The result was that the jailed Negro worker was transferred to the state penitentiary by state authorities before his trial took place. But why was this the party's only effective campaign against lynching in the South? Some comrades may well wonder. And the answer is, in this campaign, southern white as well as Negro workers were active participants. But to understand more fully it should be borne in mind also that they were together because the party's efforts and energies were being directed in the direction of organizing the industrial workers of the world instead of almost exclusively the tenant farmers of the "Black Belt."

The campaign of the party against lynching came to a halt as far as being effective was concerned (there were many reasons subordinate to it) when it put forward the slogan of "self-determination for the Negroes of the Black Belt" which carried with it the aim of agrarian revolution instead of proletarian revolution in the South. When that change was made by the party, it suffered let-down after let-down, instead of rising to greater heights on the upswing of winning the South for Communism. —GEORGE J. SAUL.

The Banking Crisis In the U. S.

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Unemployment, the result of which is inflation. This would mean higher prices for goods, less buying power of the workers' wages, and intensification of the capitalist attack on the workers' standard of living.

It simply cannot be predicted at the present time whether or not this will follow. If the capitalists decide that their interests will be best served by inflation, the present banking crisis and the issue of scrip may afford them a favorable opportunity to carry it through. This is by no means certain, however. It would mean a serious setback in the struggle for world hegemony, particularly if France remains financially "sound" and supports the English pound against the dollar.

The Daily Worker has already decided that there will be inflation, and furthermore that the new paper to be issued, the "scrip," will be depreciated and that it is all a trick to cheat the worker and small depositor by giving him worthless paper while the banker holds on to his cash and gold. Undoubtedly the capitalist class including the bankers will try to throw the burdens of the banking crisis, as well as of the crisis in general, on to the petty bourgeoisie and the proletariat. But merely to say this in general does not do away with the necessity of studying the concrete situation and working out an effective revolutionary class policy on the basis of a correct understanding of what is going on.

It is possible that too many scrip may be issued leading to inflation, or that delay and confusion in getting it out may result in a general unwillingness to accept it which would lead to its depreciating in price, which would take the form of a premium for dollar bills over scrip. But this cannot be assumed in advance. This scrip must not be confused with something like the scrip which the bosses use all the time in many mining districts, for instance, which can be used only in company stores, and constitutes an outright cheat on the worker, to be fought against at all times. If this were the kind of scrip which it is proposed to issue here, or if the new scrip were really what the Daily Worker says it is, it would be the duty of all revolutionary organizations of the workers to take the leadership in a defensive movement to refuse to accept it, under some such slogan as "We want our full wages—cash, not scrip." At the present time, there does not seem to be any reason for such a slogan, and it should not be raised unless it is meant and responds to the living experience of the workers.

The typical Stalinist "two-class" opportunism in dealing with other classes is shown in the demand for "decisive mass action" by small depositors to get their deposits out in cash. This is a capitulation to the petty bourgeois psychology of "I don't care what happens to the others, just so I get mine." It is in no sense a workers' demand, such as those for higher wages, or unemployment relief. Workers' deposits are not their main worry. The slogan is a mechanical attempt to harness the forces of the most advanced section of the proletariat to a reactionary-individualistic demand of a section of the petty bourgeoisie, a demand which is neither practicable on the basis of the existing order nor constitutes a step in a revolutionary direction. —B. J. FIELD.

At this crucial moment of the German crisis, the Left Opposition must be readmitted into the party with full party rights, to fight side by side with the other Communist workers for the cause of the proletariat!

LEAGUE ACTIVITIES

Successful Meeting In Newcastle

New Castle, Pa.—Comrade Oehler arrived here on schedule, February 20, and spoke to a meeting arranged for him at the Knights of Malta Hall, secured for this occasion. In numbers, response, political representation, and keen interest manifested, the meeting was a success. About seventy-five workers, from the CP, SP, IWW, and other working class organizations including fraternal and trade union locals, young workers, sympathizers, and many old militants active in the labor movement for years attended. It was a very representative and selective audience.

Comrade Oehler's lecture was received with the closest attention and concentrated interest on the part of the audience. All phases of the German situation were given in their logical order and relationship, starting with a lucid consideration of the objective factors: the economic crisis and the German economic crisis in relation to the international situation, and the political crisis flowing from the economic. All these points which are ABC to Marxists, were a very valuable and interesting lesson to the advanced workers which composed its audience. Passing from the objective to the subjective factors, the role of the working class parties and their policies was the most acute interest, as there were Stalinists and Socialists in the audience. The course embarked on by the Social Democracy in 1914, and the criminal policies of Stalinism which aided both the Social Democracy and Fascism by building a wall between the Socialist Workers and the Communists through the theories of Social Fascism and Third Period Zig-zags, these phases of the lecture drew fire during the discussion period, especially from the Stalinists.

The discussion period took such a turn, due to the political currents in the audience, that comrade Oehler actually gave a series of short talks on the history of the Comintern since Lenin, dealing with the Chinese Revolution, the British General Strike, the situation in the Soviet Union, and the problems of the labor movement in this country, in order to answer all questions in detail.

So intense was the interest, that the chairman, comrade Reburn, had to declare the meeting adjourned at eleven P. M. after a three-hour period of lecture and discussion. We have reason to believe that the ideas of the Left Opposition have been greatly advanced as a result of this meeting. —MAX HUDSON.

250 At Brownsville Meeting

Two hundred and fifty workers packed the hall at the Brownsville Lumber Lyceum in the first meeting ever held in that section of the city by the Left Opposition, to hear our standpoint presented on the situation in Germany and the tasks of the Communists. Almost half of the audience was composed of members or sympathizers of the Communist party and the Young Communist League, who listened attentively to the exposition of our views by comrade Max Shachtman. In the discussion, three representatives of the party took the floor with extended time at their disposal.

International Pre-Conference of the Left Opposition Presents Thesis

Continued from last issue

Fundamental Principles of the Left Opposition. The International Left Opposition stands on the ground of the first four Congresses of the Comintern. This does not mean that it bows before every letter of its decisions, of which many had a purely temporary character and in individual practical consequences have been refuted by subsequent practice. But all the essential principles (relation to imperialism and to the bourgeois state; to democracy and reformism; to the problem of the insurrection; to the dictatorship of the proletariat; to the relation to the peasantry and to the oppressed nations; Soviets; work in the trade unions; parliamentarism; the policy of the united front) remain even today the highest expression of proletarian strategy in the epoch of the general crisis of capitalism. The Left Opposition rejects the revisionist decisions of the Fifth and Sixth World Congresses and considers necessary a radical re-statement of the program of the Comintern, in which the gold of Marxism has been rendered completely worthless by the centrism of the Comintern.

In accordance with the spirit and the sense of the decisions of the first World Congresses, and in continuation of these decisions, the Left Opposition sets up the following principles, develops them theoretically and carries them through practically: 1. The independence of the proletarian party, always and under all conditions; condemnation of the Kuo Min Tang policy of 1924-28; condemnation of the policy of the Anglo-Russian Committee; condemnation of Stalin's theory of two-class (worker and peasant) parties and of the whole practice based on this theory; condemnation of the policy of the Amsterdam Congress, in which the Communist party was dissolved in the

positional, to defend the Stalinist stand of the party asserting that the party's policy was now in favor of the "united front with the leaders." This contention was adequately refuted by Shachtman who quoted from the official party press to the contrary. Several young Communists present approached us to express their agreement with our views or their dissatisfaction with the official point of view. Others declared their disagreement with the attempts of some party members present to disrupt the meeting by constant heckling. A very favorable impression was made, however, upon the workers present in general. Added to the preliminary individual agitation work that has been carried on by our comrades in this section, this meeting revealed the sentiment for our movement and indicates that good organizational results will soon be forthcoming.

Two Good Meetings In Boston

Boston.—Two excellent meetings on the crisis in Germany were held by the Boston branch of the Communist League of America (Opposition) last week. On Sunday night, March 5, comrades Antonette F. Konikow of Boston and Martin Abern of New York spoke before an audience of over 80 in a tensely interested persons at the Belmont Hall in Roxbury. After a complete review by the speakers of the causes that brought the Fascist Hitler into power in Germany; the traitorous role of the social democracy of Germany from the days of the World War up to now; the enormities of the blunders committed by the leadership of the Communist Party of Germany and the Stalinist Communist International in relation to the Fascist menace, the speakers brought forward in detail the program of the Left Opposition, particularly the matter of the correct application of the united front policy in order to achieve a militant and victorious struggle against Fascism.

The remarks of the speakers were very well received, and numerous questions aimed still further to clarify the situation were put to the speakers. Large numbers of Communists and Socialists, including quite a few members of the Young People's Socialist League who espouse the cause of the so-called "Militant" group in the S. P. Copies of the Militant were sold and distributed and a large batch of comrade Trotsky's "Germany—What Next?"; his speech at Copenhagen "In Defense of the Russian Revolution" and the brochure, "Soviet Economy in Danger", were sold.

On Friday March 3rd, comrade Martin Abern addressed an Open Forum, at which 40 people were in attendance, at Peabody, Mass., on the subject, "The Crisis in Germany". A good number of socialists were also present at this meeting, and after the lecture discussion took place among those present on the situation in Germany, and especially on the respective roles of the Socialists and Communists in the class struggle. This meeting was arranged through the efforts of the Boston branch of the Communist League. There is a noticeable enlivening of the activities of the Boston comrades, and these are reflected too in the columns of the Militant.

First Mass Meeting In Los Angeles

Los Angeles.—The first official appearance of the Left Opposition before the workers of Los Angeles was the mass meeting on the question of "The Crisis in Germany." The results of the meeting of March 3 left the newly formed branch highly enthusiastic. Over 85 workers including a score of members of the party and Y. C. L. listened to the presentation of the position of the International Left Opposition. The hall chosen for the meeting was far too small. Every inch of standing space was taken and the meeting overflowed. The door was kept open to allow the workers who could not be accommodated within the hall to hear the speeches and discussion.

The speakers of the evening were S. M. Rose and C. Curtis. Comrade Sam Meyers was the chairman. After the speakers of the evening had concluded the floor was thrown open to discussion. The comrades of the YCL and the party are marked here as elsewhere by a lack of any serious education. (They have, however, plenty of that which goes as Marxism-Leninism in the present day.)

Driven into the corner by the irresistible flow of Marxism, one young comrade resorted to the inevitable retreat of an exposed person: slander. The meeting, finally, adjourned at midnight. We are sure that the comrades and workers are going to seriously consider the L. O. position, and are going to raise the issue within their organizations.

It is noteworthy that the C. P. here has not taken notice of the German events. The necessity sensitiveness of a Communist to international events has been blunted by the years of the Stalinist regime. "More important things... shop campaigns, unemployed work...," the bureaucrats mumble. "More important things than the defeat or victory of the most powerful working class movement outside the USSR!"

The meeting resulted in a number of contacts for the L. O. and quite a sale of literature.

The comrades of the L. O. are very active in the mass unemployed movement and are the recognized spokesmen within the movement for the Left wing. The Left wing of the Unemployed Cooperative Relief Association (an organization of 40,000 heads of families), through the initiative of the L. O. has invited the C. P. into active participation in the work. The comrades of the C. P. are having quite a time of it. At one meeting we are counter-revolutionists, and at another we are comrades-in-arms, battling together. —C.

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China Report Confirms Opposition

The Foreign Policy Association, hardly known for its Communist leanings has recently issued a very interesting report on the class forces and relations in China. The report issued under the signature of T. A. Bisson lacks the usual bourgeois bombast and makes the effort to confine itself to the actual facts. As such it deserves comment.

The central pivot of the Chinese situation, today, is the expanding influence of Communism in the interior of China, which the report declares, is the "key to political events in China." The recognition of this fact is most significant to revolutionaries throughout the world. It points to the complete bankruptcy of the Chinese bourgeoisie to solve any of the needs of the Chinese people. In spite of all the material support the Chiang Kai-Sheks have received from the American imperialists they have not been able to alleviate the indescribable conditions of the Chinese masses even in the most elementary manner. They have not been able to consolidate China and consummate its internal unity. They have remained the compradors, the lackeys of foreign imperialism.

Bisson states that the anti-foreign policy, the drastic social and internal reforms, which he claims "were being rapidly and easily achieved during the 1925-1927" period no longer obtain today. This clearly bears out the analysis made by the Left Opposition of the reactionary role of the Chinese bourgeoisie in the revolution. We have declared many times, not only on the basis of the experience of the Russian revolutions but of the particular class relationships that exist in China, that the Chinese bourgeoisie could not be a progressive factor. Our analysis directly contradicted the revisionist policy of the Stalin-Bucharin leadership of the Comintern, which lost the Chinese Communist Party in the camp of the Kuo Min Tang, because the latter would "fight against imperialism" because it feared the consequences of the action of the tolling masses who would necessarily have to be brought into motion. At this point we disagree with Bisson, who says echoing the Mensheviks of the Stalin faction, that the Kuo Min Tang had set an anti-imperialist movement afoot in the 1926-1927 period. Innumerable facts have been adduced to prove the falsity of this statement. Events have incontrovertibly demonstrated that the Kuo Min Tang bourgeoisie never fought against imperialism but against one or another imperialist nation with the support and sponsorship of some other imperialist nation.

The driving force of Communism still retains its vitality despite the defeat which Stalinism led it into and the four years of ruthless extermination of the flower of the movement by the butcher Chiang Kai-Shek and his henchmen. Bisson admits that under this danger of Communism "the Left and Right wings of the Kuo Min Tang—formerly quite distinct—have drawn so closely together as to become practically indistinguishable...." We might add that so great is the apprehension of the Chinese generals of the spread of Communism in the interior of China that even under the impact of the blows of the Japanese imperialists, partitioning northern China, they could not spare any forces from their campaign against the Communists.

On the character of this Communist movement in China the statement of Bisson further vindicates position of irreconcilable hostility to the Stalinist faction which currently dominates the U. S. S. R. and the C. I. The recognition of these principles, on the basis of the decisions of the first four Congresses of the Comintern, is an indispensable condition for the acceptance of single organizations, groups and persons into the composition of the International Left Opposition.

Faction and Not Party. The International Left Opposition regards itself as a faction of the Comintern, and its separate national sections as factions of the national Communist parties. This does not regard the organizational regime created by the Stalinist bureaucracy as final. On the contrary, it proposes as its aim to tear the banner of Bolshevism out of the hands of the usurping bureaucracy and to bring back the Communist International to the principles of Marx and Lenin. That such a policy under the given conditions is the only correct one, is proven both by theoretical analysis as well as historical experience.

Although the special conditions of Russia had brought Bolshevism to a final break with Menshevism as early as 1912, the Bolshevik party remained on in the Second International until the end of the world war 1914. The lesson of the world war was necessary, to pose the question of a new International; the October revolution was necessary, to call the new International into being. Such a historical catastrophe as the collapse of the Soviet state would naturally sweep away with it the Third International too. In the same way, the victory of Fascism in Germany and the smashing of the German proletariat would hardly allow the Comintern to survive the consequences of its disastrous policies. But who in the camp of the revolution would today dare to say that the collapse of the Soviet power and the victory of Fascism in Germany are inevitable and invincible? Not the Left Opposition, in any event. Its policies are, on the contrary, directed toward defending the Soviet Union from the danger of Thermidor which has been brought closer by

the prediction and analysis of the Left Opposition. He characterizes the movement as having made "steady gains in China's agrarian hinterland". Not a word about the strength of Communism in the urban and industrial centers. And how can it be otherwise? Augmenting their criminal errors in the revolutionary period the Stalinist bureaucracy has turned its face away from the proletariat and has established what is virtually a peasants' party drawing on the belated echo of the rural areas to the revolutionary upsurge that has passed and which has not as yet re-arisen in its real force.

The fundamental problem of the future of the Chinese people is raised by Bisson with singular clarity. "Capitalist domination of the Kuo Min Tang however, has not suppressed the issue thus raised. With the progress of the Chinese Communist movement, the choice between reconstructing China on a socialist or a capitalist basis is pressed more and more insistently on Chinese leaders. On which of these bases shall China seek to satisfy its supreme political necessities—national unification, stability and security?" This is the crux of the Chinese "puzzle" just as it is of the chaos that reigns throughout the rest of the world.

But this problem has passed from the domain of pedantic inquiry to the plane of tested reality. In China, no sooner, had the bourgeoisie seized the reins of government than it has found itself in a paralytic impasse, unable to solve any of the burning questions of its national economy, let alone the dire needs of the hungry masses. To put the question is to answer it.... Either capitalism will plunge the masses into the abyss of barbarism or the emergence of humanity on a higher plane will come through the triumph of the proletariat. —CLARKE.

The Seventh Congress of the Comintern is at least two years overdue. It must be called immediately, with the Left Opposition participating!

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7. Recognition of the necessity of mobilizing the masses under transitional slogans corresponding to the concrete situation in each country, and particularly under democratic slogans insofar as it is a question of struggle against feudal relations, national oppression or different varieties of imperialism, dictatorship (Fascism, Bonapartism, etc.). 8. Recognition of the necessity of a developed united front policy with respect to the mass organizations of the working class, both of trade union and political character, including the Social Democracy as a party. Condemnation of the ultimatum slogan "only from below", which in practice means the refusal of the united front and consequently the refusal to create Soviets. Condemnation of the opportunistic application of the united front policy as in the Anglo-Russian Committee (bloc with the leaders without the masses) and against the masses; double condemnation of the policy of the present German Central Committee, which combines the ultimatum slogan "only from below" with opportunistic practice on the occasion of parliamentary pacts with the leaders of the social democracy. 9. Rejection of the theory of social Fascism and of the whole practice bound up with it, as serving Fascism on the one hand and the social democracy on the other. 10. Differentiation of three groupings within the camp of Communism: the Marxist, the Centrist and the Right. Recognition of the impermissibility of a political alliance with the Right against Centristism; support of Centristism against the class enemy; irreconcilable and systematic struggle against Centristism and its zigzag policies. 11. Recognition of party democracy not only in words but also in fact; ruthless condemnation of the Stalinist plebsitary regime (gagging the will and the thought of the party, the rule of usurpers, deliberate suppression of information from the party, etc.). The fundamental principles enumerated above, which are of basic importance for the strategy of the proletariat in the present period, place the Left Opposition into a

position of irreconcilable hostility to the Stalinist faction which currently dominates the U. S. S. R. and the C. I. The recognition of these principles, on the basis of the decisions of the first four Congresses of the Comintern, is an indispensable condition for the acceptance of single organizations, groups and persons into the composition of the International Left Opposition.

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centrism, and toward helping the German proletariat not only to get rid of Fascism but also to counter power. Standing on the ground of the October revolution and of the Third International, the Left Opposition rejects the idea of parallel Communist parties.

The entire responsibility for the splitting of Communism lies naturally on the Stalinist bureaucracy. The Bolshevik-Leninists are prepared at my moment to return into the composition of the Comintern and to preserve strict discipline of action, while at the same time carrying on an irreconcilable struggle against bureaucratic centrism on the basis of Party democracy. But today, under the conditions of the split, our adherence to the Communist International cannot be expressed by organizational self-limitation, by refusal to assume independent political initiative and engage in the mass work, but must be expressed by the content of our work. The Left Opposition does not adapt itself to the Stalinist bureaucracy, does not pass over its mistakes and crimes in silence; on the contrary, it subjects them to an irreconcilable criticism. But the aim of this criticism is not to set up competitive Parties against the existing Communist Parties, but in drawing the proletarian nucleus of the official Parties over to our side and in this way revivifying them on a Marxist foundation.

This question is put more crudely and more sharply in the USSR than anywhere else. The policy of a second party there would mean the policy of armed insurrection and of a new revolution. The policy of the faction means steering a course toward the internal reform of the Party and of the workers' state. Despite all the slanders of the Stalinist bureaucracy and of its admirers, the Opposition remains fully and completely on the ground of reform.

Our relation to the Communist International is determined by the name of our faction: Left Opposition. The content of our ideas and methods is characterized with sufficient clarity by the name Bolshevik-Leninists. Every section must bear both of these complementary designations. To be continued