

# The Stalinists Distort Our Stand

"Trotskyites Retain Faith in Strength of Capitalism," with this headline the Daily Worker, March 11, 1933 carries an editorial which continues its campaign of confusing and miseducating the workers as to the principle differences between the Left Opposition and the centrist Stalinist and Right wing Lovestonite groups. The viewpoint implied might be imputed to the latter; it is not and never has been that of the Left Opposition.

To bolster up its assertion, the Daily Worker brings two quotations, one from an article by Max Shachtman in the Militant of Dec. 14, 1929, and one from an article by the present writer in the Militant of March 6, 1933.

Comrade Shachtman's article is quoted as follows: "This (Stock Exchange) crash does not point to a crisis—it but indicates a growing recession."

What he actually did say was that "This does not yet point to a crisis—it but indicates a growing recession." His very next sentence was, "And Hoover offers no way out for the workers for the simple reason that he cannot solve the multiplying contradictions of capitalism, American capitalism included." A fine defense of capitalism!

More than that—this correct Marxist estimation of the situation as it stood in early December 1929, was accurately representative of the attitude of the Militant during that whole period, which corresponded to the facts of the developing crisis. In the previous issue, Dec. 7, 1929, the Militant said, "What Congress will do 'nothing' about—except to hand out soft soap—is the increasingly obvious tendency towards a deep economic depression which is cutting the ground from under the feet of the American workers."

The isolated sentence quoted by the Daily Worker, wrenching out of its context and misquoting it, is typical of the Stalinist method of falsifying the viewpoint of a political opponent.

The quotation from the article of March 6, 1933, is given as follows: "At the present moment in the United States, whether or not the turn in the crisis has already arrived, unquestionably most of the work of the crisis in violently and brutally solving, for the moment, the contradictions developed during the boom, has been accomplished."

The Daily Worker distorts this into the following comment, "In the present banking crisis the Trotskyites already see the solution of all the evils which grew out of the 'boom' period, thus clearing the way for a new 'turn in the crisis', for a turn towards prosperity." And the moral, as the Daily Worker puts it, is that "Since the development of the crisis in 1929, in unison with the capitalist economists, the Trotskyites and Lovestonites denied the sharpening of the crisis in order to lull the growing readiness of the workers to struggle!"

The Militant article of March 6, 1933, begins, "The present cyclical crisis began in 1929 with a financial crisis, in the form of a crash on the stock market; now, after nearly 3 1/2 years, it is marked by a nationwide banking crisis."

This clearly shows that the writer was talking about the specific cyclical movement that began in 1929, not about the general post-war crisis of capitalism. The "turn in the crisis" to which he referred was a cyclical turn, the kind of limited and temporary recovery which is possible within the framework of the general crisis of capitalism.

To deny the possibility of such a turn within the general crisis of capitalism, is to say that capitalism has no way out, that the collapse of capitalism is an immediate practical question, and this can mean only that the revolutionary crisis is "around the corner"; in the language of tactics, it means that the proletariat should prepare for the seizure of power in the immediate future. It means that capitalism can fall of the weight of its own internal contradictions, when the decisive forces of the working class are not yet mobilized under the banner of Communism for the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeoisie.

This is not and never has been the language of Leninists. It is the language of pseudo-Socialist sectarians of the Socialist Labor Party type. Lenin proved at the

**Cornelia Davis**  
Cornelia Davis, a long-standing member of the New York Branch of the Left Opposition, died a few days ago in Utica, N. Y. Stricken by the full weight of the economic crisis, comrade Davis succumbed. It is with extreme sorrow that we report this untimely death of a very sincere and active comrade. The passing of comrade Davis is but another of the innumerable instances in which the murderer, capitalism, strikes with the weapons of hunger and privation one victim after another in the camp of the proletariat. We mourn the loss of this comrade whose services to the revolutionary movement might yet be manifold, to her husband, comrade. We send our most fraternal regards to Peter Hansen, who is likewise a long-standing member of the League and we promise to continue our relentless struggle against this system which robs us of our best fighters long before their time.

## On Our "Faith in the Strength" of Capitalism

Second Congress of the Comintern that capitalism can always find a way out unless the revolutionary proletariat, under the leadership of the Communist Party, will block its ways of escape. The economic contradictions of capitalism, including its cyclical form, will come to an end only with its political destruction. They will not culminate in an automatic collapse, whether called "the end of capitalist stabilization" as the Twelfth Plenum named it, or by any other name.

As long as there is capitalism there will be crises, that is, cyclical movements of economic activity; cycles have both an upward and a downward phase; a turn in the cyclical crisis from its downward to an upward phase by capitalist means, i. e., on the backs of the workers, will be impossible if the proletariat takes the power, and it will be delayed or rendered impossible to the extent of the effective organized resistance of the proletariat, general crisis to the extent that workers' organization and resistance is inadequate and ineffective. History has so far shown us no other instrument than a genuine Communist party which can organize the effective resistance of the workers.

To say that a turn in the crisis is possible because the resistance of the workers has been inadequate

is therefore a criticism of the Communist party, and is resented by the Stalinist ruling faction as such. Consequently they deny the facts: cover up the failure of the party to win the leadership of the class, a failure due in large part to the mistakes and crimes of bureaucratic centrism, and deny the possibility of the upturn, preferring instead to lull the workers themselves with "the end of capitalist stabilization."

With this basic approach, they are unable to formulate a policy for either understanding or meeting the developing phases of the crisis. They accept the banking crisis as opening the collapse of capitalism, instead of seeing that, coming at the end of four years of crisis, which during capitalism has held on to the bases of its power, it must have a secondary rather than a fundamental importance.

With typical contempt for the intelligence of the worker, they tell him that the banks have not enough money left to pay off their deposits because their holdings have depreciated, while the fact is that no bank ever can pay off all its deposits at one time, no matter how sound it is. They explain that the banking crisis is due to the bankers' desire to exploit the workers still more, having found that wage cuts alone are not enough. They say that the U. S. is heading at the same kind of inflation, in Germany, since the situation has gone beyond the possibility of control. They point out

## Sidelights On the Albany Conference

Albany—Between freight cars, via jail, and in the back of a dish truck—this is how the Spartacus Youth delegates arrived at the Albany Conference for Labor Legislation on Monday morning.

The first dominant impression in the hall was that almost all present were party members or from groups affiliated to the party.

The second thing (which struck us) was the fraternal spirit with which we were greeted. No word of "renegade," no dirty looks in our direction, no attempts to get us out, but instead a comradely interest and sympathy for the way the boss bulls treated us on the way up.

We translated the fine spirit which prevailed into open discussions on tactics and principle, all over the hall, and perhaps for the first time in years did the party comrades accept the resolution on Unemployment which we distributed in the hall, with a smile—as if to say, "We know you Left Oppositionists... well, let's see what you've got to say. What is your program?"

The big moments for us came when we received the New York Times with Duranty's article. We darted hither and hence to all the delegates we recognized from anywhere, pushing the article in their faces. Only a few, "So you agree with the bourgeois Times?" Most faltered hawed, hammed and hedged.

## The Stalinists at the Mooney Conference

(Continued from Page 1)

In the discussion which took place later the party offered no line of its own nor any criticism of this essentially liberal-legalistic line. Why did the party maintain this opportunist silence? On the vital question of policy and line it must speak openly and clearly. Its silence contributes only confusion.

The credentials committee tried to carry out the pretence of a genuine united front. Nessin reported 509 delegates from 347 organizations. All attempts to obtain an analysis of the report met with the stubborn resistance of the party steering committee which publicly prevented Nassin from giving the information asked for from the floor. 43 trade union organizations were reported but what they were was not revealed. 31 political organizations, 50 defense organizations, 22 unemployed organizations, 195 fraternal organizations were also listed but no analysis was given.

However, it is known that there were very few A. F. of L. locals. The CPILA was there as were Weisbord, the Lovestonites, the League for Industrial Democracy, the New York district of the C. P. was represented in front of us sat delegates from the YCL. It was said that some YPSL locals were present. The SP was represented by a lone individual, Gubernick of the Huntington, Long Island Branch. It was reported from the floor that the S. P. had instructed the locals of the ILWGU over which it has control, to stay away. Scott reported later that the City Central Committee of the S. P. had voted unanimously not to endorse the conference and not to attend. That is how the Socialist party answered Mooney's call. But it also testifies to the weakness of the united front policy of the C. P.

The fight to establish the composition of the conference on the floor was intense but short-lived and unavailing. The Stalinists were in complete control of the proceedings at this point. The matter was finally disposed of by Scott's personal promise to publish a detailed report within 48 hours! The report which has just arrived confirms our analysis of the composition of the conference.

But what the credentials committee report failed to establish, was made clear from the collection which together with pledges exceeded \$500 For some forty min-

## Marxist Works by Leon Trotsky

utes a flood of donations and pledges was poured into the treasury of the conference by IWO branches, ILD Branches, Unemployed Councils, TUUL Unions, the C. P. and Communist opposition groups. It was clear to all that this was a Stalinist conference.

The resolutions committee was carefully selected by the Stalinist steering committee. It was composed of "reliable" people: Becker, Benjamin, Gubernick (!) Corliss Lamont, etc. Its retirement to consider the resolutions of the conference created a vacuum in the proceedings which was filled by discussion.

The Stalinists intended, no doubt, to confine the discussion to the routine speeches by their leading comrades. The discussion that took place caught them completely unawares. Delegate after delegate spoke. And all the speeches centered around the united front.

In this discussion the Lovestonites were jeered and howled down. Boos greeted other delegates who even timidly proposed that to draw the socialist workers into the conference it was necessary to suffer the presence of their leaders. Not all of these proposals were correct. But they were the gusts of a new wind.

The voice of the Left Opposition rang loudly and clearly for a genuine, Leninist united front. From beginning to end the speech of our delegate was accorded the closest attention. An attempt to heckle was squelched by the entire conference. At its conclusion there was not the faintest sign of hostility.

The blow the Opposition delivered to the Stalinist policy on the united front accounts for what happened afterward. Even the Stalinists were forced to take this into account. All their later attacks against the people who "re-

that the dollar has already been depreciated till it is now worth only quarter, because with the new issue of notes there will be \$4 of paper currency to each \$1 of gold—by which reasoning the dollar was never worth a dollar, since there never was \$1 of gold for each \$1 of paper. They say that the 1907 scrip was finally redeemed at a big discount—historically untrue.

They draw the conclusion that the depositor must demand repayment at full value and the worker refuse to accept scrip, but must demand "full payment of wages in old currency values," which would mean an immediate increase of 300 percent, if it is true that the dollar is worth only a quarter now.

On the other hand pose the principle that the conscious revolutionary action of the working class at the head of the broad masses will overthrow capitalism, not the automatic accumulation of its contradictions; that capitalism has been for many years in a general crisis, within which alternations of cyclical stabilization and crisis have taken place and will continue to take place; that a turn in the crisis toward the upward branch of the cycle at the expense of the working class is possible unless the exploitation as it should under the leadership of a real Communist party; that in the absence of such leadership, capitalism can find a way out of the crisis and that the banking crisis together with the rest of the cyclical crisis which has developed since 1929 is part of the machinery with which capitalism restores temporarily its equilibrium and not the prelude to an automatic collapse.

—B. J. FIELD.

with the comrades was extremely interesting. "There weren't enough seats; the organizers rushed up and down seeking places; at last we were in, one of us sitting on a pile of Hunger Fighters, with all the comrades offering condolences in a wonderfully comradely manner for the uncomfortable position.

Came discussion... and far into the night we microscopically examined the united front from below. For hours we discussed the program and work of the Left Opposition. There was the inevitable question, "Why don't you do mass work; why don't you lead the masses in rent strikes?" We could only point out that by their looking at only personal events and by disregarding the questions of principle and tactics they were led into a bog of empiricism. Then we have our comrades facing the guns of Illinois miners disgusted with Communism because of the incorrect tactics of the party which are post-facto self-criticized—that is, too late, the party says we are misleading the workers. We don't aim to set up rival organizations to that of the C. P. We are a faction of the Labor Sports Union told of the troubles he was encountering in the development of the political life of the organization, and the proposals and comment we made were greeted by hand-clapping from a comrade at his side. In all—we feel that, the party comrades are taking a serious Communist attitude to the criticisms and proposals of the Left Opposition.

To all that has gone before, to the great detriment of the movement tendencies but no masses' were careful to avoid any reference to the Left Opposition. It was easy to see that the tremendous impression made on the party members by our campaign on the situation in Germany made them eager to hear what we had to say on the Mooney question and especially on the united front.

Under the hammering the Stalinists were losing control of the conference. Their feeble attempts to counter the political attack with parliamentary procedure alienated them. Panic began to seize the chairman who publicly rebuked party steering committee. They turned loose their heaviest artillery. The speeches were the same as yesterday's but the difference was clear. Heretofore there were violent intonements to violence. Sunday they were last line defenses.

Politically they were a denial of the Comintern's invitation to the Second International for a united front. Alexander strained himself to prove that we couldn't have any traffic with Green and Well, Hill, quit and Thomas. If the Stalinists did not dare to say it openly they made the implication clear: no united front with the leaders.

The resolutions were abstract expressions on the Mooney question and class war prisoners. The resolution on Mooney set May Day as a day of united struggle for his release. It proposes a united demonstration of the socialist and Communist workers and includes the A. F. of L. Formally the proposal is correct. But the line of the conference and the content with which the Stalinists fill their united front proposals make it doubtful whether this will be realized.

The final blow which accomplished the rout of the Stalinists came with the nomination of a permanent committee of 25. Nessin reporting for the credentials committee which had been instructed to make the nomination read only 24 names. Comrade Berman protested from the floor, pointing out that the name of the delegate from the Left Opposition who had been agreed on by the committee had been omitted. The chair asked Nessin to explain. He attempted to lay the blame on Berman. Berman's contention was supported by another member of the credentials committee. The already heated atmosphere was beginning to simmer. The chair appealed to Scott for his explanation of the incident. Scott came forward and supported Berman. Nessin was left standing on the platform, in view of the entire conference, caught red-handed in a clumsy attempt to remove the

# Albany: 3 Years of Party Policy

The Albany State Conference for Labor Legislation represented a culmination point in the endeavors of the party, over a period of nearly three and a half years of the crisis, to organize and develop a movement of the workers on the issue of unemployment. In all that time the heavy burdens of unemployment have been accumulating and growing more and more intolerable, and the situation has thereby become increasingly favorable for the work of the revolutionary party. There has been no lack of effort—agitation, slogans, conferences, demonstrations and marches, organized and directed by the party in these past years, have centered chiefly at the burning question of unemployment.

The Albany Conference itself was conceived and prepared as a major demonstration. It was preceded by months of preparatory work, including two conferences in New York City. On top of that—it should be added—the Albany Conference came after the recent half turn in the policy of the party, and provided a means of measuring its value. Socialist party branches and local unions of A. F. of L. were invited to participate—the well-known "united front from below."

Not Result of False Policy  
And what was the net result of three and a half years of "third period" frenzy capped with the "half-turn"? Out of 348 delegates only seven local unions of A. F. of L.—and those all left wing locals—and one branch of the Socialist party were represented from the entire state of New York! Crushing and irrefutable testimony to the utter falsity of the policy of the party leadership!

The shadow of this catastrophic failure to create even the semblance of a united front movement outside the sphere of direct party influence hung over the conference from the first day. The attempt of the leaders of the conference—Hathaway, Winters and lesser bureaucrats of the Stalinist apparatus—to compensate for the failure to attract the non-party workers who, according to their own thesis, are eager to struggle against unemployment, with windy soap-box agitation could not baffle the minds of the delegates the haunting question: why are these workers not represented here? A delegate from a bakers' local union gave a truer expression to the unspoken sentiment of the great majority than all the "official" speeches when he said: "I read in the Daily Worker that only seven A. F. of L. unions are represented here. As a trade union man I would like to see this hall packed with union delegates." But such delegates were not there. The questions of why they were absent and how to attract them in the future—to these questions, which were uppermost in the minds of those who want to see a broad class movement on the class issue of unemployment, the Hathaways had no answer. They could only pass a cross over the bankruptcy of all their previous manoeuvres and leave the future blank.

To all that has gone before, to the great detriment of the movement

## The Opposition's Criticism of Stalinist Bankruptcy

ment, the official leaders added new blunders and stupidities at Albany. The conference was obviously not a united front affair in any real sense of the word. It was a gathering of the vanguard of the Communist party and its auxiliaries and sympathetic organizations. Besides that it had very little of a State-wide complexion. The roster of delegates could have served, with a few alterations, for a roll call of the second and third line functionaries of the party and Left wing organizations in New York City. Even such a representation, after a united front conference of workers' organizations in the whole of New York State had been aimed at, might have been turned to advantage. If the conference had been led by half-way competent politicians they would have sized up the situation, charged off the expenses of transportation to profit and loss, and devoted themselves to a discussion of ways and means of transforming the Albany conference of the vanguard into a conference of the class another time.

Instead of that, they tried to solve the contradiction by a characteristic exhibition of Stalinist self-deception. The thing—that was became transformed—in their minds—into the thing that had been desired. The conference of party members and sympathizers was declared to be a united front conference of workers' organizations, political parties and trade unions. Their speeches to the conference were predicated on this fictitious assumption. The conference needed the concise, business-like elaboration of a program for changing the situation and uniting the vanguard with the masses—a single bullet aimed at a real target. It got, from the official leaders, the thunder of agitation in the name of the masses who were not represented in the conference—blank cartridges fired in the air. Worse, they not only talked; the actions of the conference, under their control, were the same caricature. Comedy, in the speeches of the leaders, alternated with tragedy in the misguided "legislative" deliberations of the delegates.

The "Bills" Discussion  
As sad and pitiful a spectacle as one could expect to see in the revolutionary movement was the session of the conference devoted to the report of the "bills committee". (This was the committee that had been charged with the task of drawing up legislative bills for presentation of the State Legislature). As if transported to another world the delegates, Communists almost to a man, who had expressed their real sentiments shortly before in cheers for the overthrow of capitalism, were put through the ridiculous and futile business, for many wearisome hours, of discussing and debating, line by line, the legal phraseology of proposed legislative measures. What, for example, is the precise legal residence of a seaman under the terms of

delegate from the Left Opposition. This incident aroused a furious storm of indignation and protest. The chair was deluged with motions, points of order, questions seeking information, and verbal protests. The Stalinists made a desperate attempt to unseat the delegate from the Left Opposition from the permanent committee. Ballham made a motion to replace our delegate by a delegate from the Amalgamated Food Workers. This brought forth a roar of protest from the delegate from that union. He said that the union would willingly serve on the committee but not at the expense of unseating any other organization. The motion was defeated. Two additional delegates were added. The proposals to provide spaces on the permanent committee for all political tendencies represented were defeated. Notwithstanding, Ballham read a statement welcoming all Socialist and A. F. of L. workers as the sentiment of the conference. It carried.

By this time delegates were standing on seats speaking at the tops of their voices as was the chairman. Not a word anyone said could be heard. Above the roar the IWW announced that they were withdrawing from the conference. Half the conference was on its feet. A riot was imminent. To avoid it the conference was adjourned.

The Stalinists have succeeded in wrecking another conference. Nothing fruitful came out of Sunday's session. The approach to the Socialist and A. F. of L. workers is still incorrect. The positive sides of the conference are its size and enthusiasm, and the beginnings of workers' democracy accorded to the Left Opposition. The Left Opposition will use its position on the permanent committee to broaden the conference and make it a genuine united front.

—T. STAMM.

But this victory had a certain Phryric quality filled with ominous forebodings for the victors. One fact stood out above all others at the Albany Conference: the delegates wanted to hear the Left Opposition. Our speeches were heard in a tense silence, without a single interruption from the floor and received closer attention than any others. Our statement was distributed to all the delegates without interference and was read attentively by them. The closest fraternization, between the Left Oppositionists and other delegates, comradely discussion with large groups of Party members and sympathizers, went on continuously throughout the conference.

While still remaining within the framework of the bureaucratic discipline and voting as they were required to vote, the conference delegates nevertheless expressed in all these actions a different attitude. In substance, after four and a half years of falsification, slander, incitement and violence against the Left Opposition, the rank and file delegates, by their attitude, said to the bureaucrats: We don't believe it; we want to find out for ourselves!

Armed with the invincible ideas of Marxism that is in all the Left Opposition needs. Given such a hearing, as was the case at Albany, to a far greater extent than ever before, our eventual victory is assured.

the bill for unemployment insurance? And how shall the different rates of wages for various categories of labor employed on proposed public works at same future time be decided now in meticulous detail?—With just such questions the conference of the workers' vanguard was occupied, solemnly and seriously, for hours on end. Pitiful!

Here was a picture of the double face of bureaucratic centrism. Posed on a half-turn in policy under the pressure of events and our criticism, the futile bureaucrats at the Albany Conference stood with one foot in the mud of ultra-Left sectarianism and the other foot in the mire of parliamentary centrism. The conference was dedicated to a melange of both, and thus it was confused and muddled and demoralized.

Among all the "leaders" there was not one to explain to the worker delegates that the fight for a legislative program does not require and is in no way advanced by trying to transform a conference of several hundred workers delegates into so many amateur lawyers. The task of the vanguard workers is to formulate the program of demands clearly and concisely and then to mobilize the power of a mass movement behind the program. The task of the leaders is to show the vanguard the way to do this. As for the drafting of the "bills" for presentation to the Legislature—a small committee with the aid of a jack-leg lawyer is sufficient. It is a shame to lead conscientious worker militants through the rigmarole of solemn debate about the wording of legislative bills.

More than that, it is a crime, for it sows illusions as to the real nature of the struggle for labor legislation. This was to be noted already in the session of the conference devoted to this tragedy. The bold note of militancy in the remarks from the floor in the earlier sessions was muted down, became more "practical" and restrained. And, even more significant, a different type of delegate became conspicuous in the discussion. The militants imbued with the spirit of the class struggle gave place to the legal-minded elements who took the wording of "bills" very seriously and, read them carefully lest a comma be out of place and the law fail on that account.

In both sides of their policy the Stalinist misadventurers worked against a fruitful outcome of the conference. With their sectarian "Left" tactic they shunted the conference off the broad highway of the united front which could lead to a broader movement; with the vulgar opportunist comedy of the "bills" they put brakes on the further development of the narrow vanguard movement.

The hope for the emergence of a broad workers' front of struggle against unemployment was in Albany, in spite of all its limitations, just because the pick of the vanguard militants, the indispensable dynamic force for the creation of a broad class movement, were there. But the leaders, not all of whom are as stupid as the policy they expounded under orders, did they could to frustrate this hope. They gave no review and summary of the experiences of the movement in these years of the terrible crisis—for this would require the examination of missed opportunities and multiplied mistakes which have left the movement weaker than it began three years ago, despite all the powerful social forces propelling the movement forward. They laid out no perspectives and offered no real measures to get the vanguard movement out of the strait-jacket of isolation—because this would require a sharp turn in policy which they are not permitted to make.

The Left Opposition  
It remained for the delegates of the Left Opposition, a small minority in the conference, to analyze the situation realistically and to point out the way to improve it radically. We did this to the best of our ability within the short time allotted to speeches from the floor. In the formal sense of the word, our views did not prevail. The Stalinists entrenched in the apparatus scored another victory which, like their old victories over the Marxist wing, was a defeat for the Party and for the whole movement.

But this victory had a certain Phryric quality filled with ominous forebodings for the victors. One fact stood out above all others at the Albany Conference: the delegates wanted to hear the Left Opposition. Our speeches were heard in a tense silence, without a single interruption from the floor and received closer attention than any others. Our statement was distributed to all the delegates without interference and was read attentively by them. The closest fraternization, between the Left Oppositionists and other delegates, comradely discussion with large groups of Party members and sympathizers, went on continuously throughout the conference.

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