

LEAGUE ACTIVITIES

New League Branch In Springfield

Springfield, Ill.—A new branch of the Left Opposition was organized here last night with six charter members. Comrade Hugo Oehler, member of the National Committee of the Communist League was present at the meeting and gave an explanation of the principles of the Left Opposition. The new members are all miners, active members of the Progressive Miners of America. The first activity of the new branch will be the organization of a public mass meeting on the German crisis on March 19 with comrade Oehler as the main speaker. We have a considerable number of other contacts whom we expect to draw into the organization. Plans are being made to start a study class for the new members in Communist fundamentals.

Chicago Stalinist Again Try Gangsterism

Chicago. — Stalinist gangsters, last Wednesday night appeared at a session of the class in "Theoretical System of Marxism" conducted by comrade Giganti. The gangsters were armed with blackjacks and clubs and came for the purpose of smashing the heads of the "counter-revolutionary Trotskyist" students. Red Cruck, YCL member and leader of the crew, came up before the session started and told the comrades present that he was giving them half an hour to beat it out of the neighborhood, at the end of which time he was coming back up with a gang. Our comrades, however, refused to be terrorized and the class was opened as usual. While the meeting was going on, in marched Red Cruck and his crew of toughs, all YCL and party members. The instructor asked them what they wanted, to which they made no answer. However, in order to avoid provocations Giganti told them they could remain to listen in, provided they kept silent and made no noise. However, in a little while, tiring of the knowledge that was being propounded, they left the room stating that they were waiting outside where they would get us. The session proceeded to a regular close. In the meantime the young toughs with clubs and blackjacks were slinking around the entrances. Our comrades decided that this should not be a one-sided affair, and immediately proceeded to improvise clubs out of chair legs. Viewing the determination of our comrades with evident apprehension, Red Cruck's army thought it best to disappear leaving their redoubtable leader to face the hostilities together with a creature by the name of Ben Brown, an individual who is said to be at the present time one of the leading party members of this city. As our comrades marched out of the hall into the sidewalk Red Cruck and Brown advanced with open knives in hand with their faces leering; but soon that look changed to fear as they saw that our comrades were not in the slightest bit cowed. The last remaining member of Red's army took to his heels and left Red to face the music alone. Red submitted to a little chastisement which ought to be remembered on future occasions, should similar thoughts of breaking up Left Opposition meetings ever occur in his head.

Mink & Co. Expel 'Trotskyist' Seamen

At the membership meeting of the Marine Workers Industrial Union on Wednesday, March 15, the Stalinist bureaucracy managed to unburden itself of another "disruptive" element. Mink, Hudson and company railroaded through the expulsion of Henry Weser, an unemployed seaman, on the main charge of "Trotskyism" as well as other subsidiary charges. Comrade Weser had been especially spotted by the Stalinist henchmen for his agitation on the waterfront around the question of the German crisis, in which he defended the views of the Left Opposition, which have been confirmed by events, particularly since that time. At the packed membership meeting, in which the majority of the participants were avowed party members, the bureaucratic machine went into action against Weser, attacking him as a "Trotskyist" and charging him with "attempts to organize an opposition in an underhanded manner". The crew of hand-raisers assembled naturally supported the Stalinists. Comrade Weser, who has for a long time been sympathetic to the Left Opposition, has in the past been one of the most active workers in the union and in the waterfront section of the party. Participating in a leading position in the Morgan Line strike of October 1931, Weser

When one considers that recently there has been a wave of terrorism against the Left Opposition, the obvious conclusion is that the campaign is being directed by responsible people higher up. It is nothing more than a desperate effort of the Centrals to misner our Marxist arguments with the only weapons they have left—those of the club.

The Chicago branch of the Left Opposition is protesting to the party officials in a formal letter in which it points out the dangerous possibility as well as the further besmirchment of the name of the Communist on the part of Stalinist bureaucrats.

Austintown Jobless Forge Ahead

Youngstown.—Under the direction of the local Unemployed League, the unemployed workers of Austintown have started to move ahead again. After passing through a period of comparative inactivity they succeeded in mobilizing their forces for a strike today and winning their demands. Here are the facts: A township trustee, Ohl, succeeded in getting his son, Boyd Ohl, a job as foreman over the gangs of men who are forced to work on the county roads for their meager relief. The older Ohl has never done anything to make the workers like him, and the son was foolish enough to walk in his father's footsteps. He kept apart from the men, thought himself superior to them, dominated men who know more about construction work than he did, and bullied several men smaller than himself. This typical "boss" went just a little too far Friday when he struck a young defenseless worker in the face after he had provoked him into argument by continual nagging. That night an Enlarged Grievance Committee met and decided to call a strike Saturday morning, demanding that young Ohl be permanently removed from the payroll, and suggesting that he could work in the ditch for his relief like the rest of us.

The Grievance Committee was out on the road where the men were working at 7:30 Saturday morning. The 30 or 35 men reporting for this work "relief" responded to the plea of the Committee gladly and without much persuasion. The men all agreed to stick together and strike until our demands were met; the Committee promised to fight to see that the men would get their grocery orders even though they didn't work. When the road superintendent showed up the Committee gave him written copy of the demands and made it plain that the men were not going to work until the demands were met. The Committee then visited the Relief Headquarters to see the State Investigator and the Trustees.

In the meantime young Ohl, whom the superintendent had advised to go home, had gone to the County Courthouse to confer with his father who was there on business. Soon the County Commissioners called the Investigator who confessed that he thought Ohl "in te wrong" and that the thing had to be settled in order to avoid any "violence". News reporters phoned a committee member for the details and later drove seven miles for the complete story. At the committee's request one trustee was sent after a third one; and we later learned that these two visited the scene of the strike in order to see whether or not we were bluffing. Trustee Ohl, of course, did not make his appearance. But the other two were anxious to meet our demands when they returned. In the Relief office, in the presence of many workers, these two trustees, Brickley and Shively, promised to call a meeting of the three trustees on Monday and to see that Ohl was discharged. On these conditions the committee directed the men to return to work at about eleven o'clock; the trustees are, of course, to pay the men the full day amount. And it was generally understood that unless young Ohl is removed immediately, as the trustees promised, that more than 300 men working for "relief" in this township would be called

out on strike. This is just one step in a very high ladder. The next step is more adequate relief. The first measures in this battle have already been taken and the Austintown Unemployed League swears that it will use every resource at its disposal in order to gain another victory. More about this struggle later. —N.

Miners Hear Opposition On Germany

Springfield Ill.—The Springfield meeting of the Left Opposition on the Danger of Fascism in Germany, with Hugo Oehler as the speaker, was attended by about 45 class conscious workers, representing all tendencies in the city. After the speaker had concluded, the chairman, comrade Angelo, asked the party members present to select a speaker, who would be given more than the regular time, so an active C. P. miner comrade took the floor. He did not deal with the German question but confined himself to a five minute discussion on the united front from below.

After the question period the chairman raised the question of the Taylorville cases and pointed out the danger of withholding mass pressure. The lawyers think they can take care of the case better in this way, and the defense committee is yielding to this false policy. The meeting unanimously went on record for a motion calling upon the miners of the PMA and the workers of America to proceed to mobilize mass pressure at once in order to have a solid foundation under the cases when they come up for trial. The Peabody Coal Company intends to burn some of these miners in the electric chair. This can be prevented only through properly directed mass pressure.

The mass meeting also took up the case of Webb and two other miners who had just been framed up and sent to jail. The Right wing in the union object to Webb's popularity with the Left wing rank and file workers. They are not following up this clear cut, class, case and defending the victim of capitalist persecution. A committee was elected from the meeting to arouse the PMA to action on the frame-up and to demand that the case be appealed.

Second Big Meet In Minneapolis

Minneapolis.—The second large meeting on the crisis in Germany was held here in the Mayor's Reception Hall at the Court House with comrade Oehler of New York as a main speaker. This meeting followed the Minor meeting of the official party by three days, at which all Left Oppositionists were mobilized to cover with Militants and hand-bills advertising the Oehler meeting. This was primarily the only place the branch distributed its advertising for its German meeting, the large turnout of 400 showed that we practically duplicated the party meeting minus the most hard-shelled Stalinists. The concentration of 11 League members in front of the Finnish Hall where Robert Minor, editor of Daily Worker spoke, covered the bulk of workers attending the meeting with Militants. Near to the time of starting the meeting, the party bureaucrats sent out about a dozen strong-arm "boys" who threatened to fight if we did not stop. They were told about the workers' struggle for free press, that they were facing a group of workers who were still ready to defend their press along with the fight to distribute it. After a confab, "the gang" went back in the hall, we finished distributing what few Militants we had left, and those comrades selected to go in, paid their dime, and also entered the hall. After the Internationale, the collection, Robert Minor was introduced.

After a few minutes of discourse in which he spoke sporadically on Germany but more on Soviet Union and the "world rise of Communism" as against "the decay of Capitalism" we were told off-hand about "the terrible fate of the German proletariat". Although the local capitalist press carried the announcement of the C. I. call upon the Second International for a united front against Hitler, Minor stuck to his old guns, the resolutions of the XIth Plenum. He explained that we have socialism, already achieved in Soviet Union! He did not mention the "offers" of a united front to the social democracy. Time and again he would break his speech to vilify comrade Trotsky.

In a din of howling and hooting organized by bureaucrats, the members of the Left Opposition asked their questions of Minor. On the united front, social Fascism. Socialism in one country, playing with the General Strike slogan, on the role of the Red Army. In reply Minor made cut remarks of the Stalinist political fallacies. "Trotsky says socialism cannot be built in one country; we say that it can be and is being built in one country".... etc.

Oehler covered the German political situation from all angles; answered dozens of questions on all aspects of Communism. In the discussion two rank-and-file leaders in the Unemployed Council spoke against "theoreticians" and wanted "action. Oehler in reply asked them if the Russian revolution would be possible if the Russian workers had such an attitude toward Lenin, Trotsky, and Marx, and other theoreticians. These workers were no doubt Party men; for one had attempted to lead "heckling" in the meeting. It soon melted away before the ideas presented by the speakers, V. R. Dunne spoke with Oehler stressing

Litvinov at Geneva

Opportunist Diplomacy Plays Into Hands of Imperialists

The Moscow Daily News for February 15, 1933 contains the full speech made by the representative of the Soviet Union on February 7 in the Geneva Committee on Disarmament. Litvinov, speaking on the security question, stated that the Soviet delegation "is glad to say" that some of the French proposals, "if not all, have met with full support" by the Soviet delegation. Litvinov submits a sort of "self-criticism", pointing out that after all the travail, they find themselves at the same stage where they were five years ago. According to Litvinov, the Geneva Committee is to be blamed for that, because it does not agree with the Soviet delegation that "the best, if not the only guarantee of security for all nations is complete disarmament, or at least the maximum reduction of armaments in a short time". As to the French proposals themselves, the Soviet delegation finds they "give a much wider interpretation to the obligations assumed by the signatories of the Kellogg-Briand Pact". On the basis of that he is again "glad to be able to state that the Soviet Delegation... will be ready to sign a convention incorporating them". Thus it is plain that the Kellogg Pact continues to fulfill its great historical task as an imperialist sand heap into which the Stalinist ostrich is putting his head in order to forestall the dangers to the building of socialism in the Soviet Union alone, thereby also preventing that treacherous heap from crumbling under the blows of the world proletariat.

Lenin defined the gist of opportunism as readiness to sacrifice fundamental interests for the sake of partial and temporary advantages. The fundamental task of the Soviet delegation at the Geneva and all similar conferences, should consist in one thing only: to expose to the world proletariat the machinations of the imperialists from the very tribunal which

they are sometimes compelled to offer it. But at a time when the Stalinized Comintern is quiet as a grave for four and half years, the People's Commissar of the Soviet Union is substituting for a tribune some other means which are "less dangerous" to the building of socialism in the Stalinist fashion. That exposure of the imperialists should consist only in playing up one of the imperialist wolves against the other, utilizing their fundamental antagonisms and their readiness to jump at each other's throats, not forgetting at the same time that it is the Soviet Republic which they hate more than anything else. To hope that these imperialist powers will act as opportunists, sacrificing their fundamental aim of overthrowing the Soviet Union for the sake of restoring the capitalist relations there and thereby transforming it into a semi-colonial country—one of the very few ways to escape the revolutionary consequences of the present crisis—to hope for this, is to act, in Lenin's words, as a shyster politician and cheap diplomat. Lenin gave that definition, in his speech on concessions, to those who would try to utilize not the fundamental differences between the imperialist powers, but the secondary ones, exactly as Litvinov is trying to do. He is attempting to convince the old sharks of capitalist diplomacy that the French proposals are acceptable to the Soviet Union, hoping thereby to put French diplomacy in a difficult position in relation to its old friends, the Japanese diplomats. Litvinov is doing this at the time when the imperialist French robbers are doing everything in their power to strengthen the diplomatic position of Japanese imperialism in its preparatory work for an assault on the Soviet Union. Litvinov did not find a word to say about the danger of German Fascism. That was not, you see, on the agenda.... —J. GREEN.

Hathaway at Membership Meet

(Continued from Page 1)

has been steered in the struggle of 1918, it has been steered in the struggles of 1923." He pointed out that although in 1923, 25,000 workers lost their lives and the insurrection was suppressed, the revolutionary movement continued. What he forgot to mention was that it took ten years after 1923 for another revolutionary situation to come into being in Germany and for the proletariat to be in a position to seize power—and at a disadvantageous position for the moment, at that. This fatalistic optimism of Hathaway and the Stalinists is as dangerous as the fatalistic pessimism of the social democracy. Neither permits accurate analysis of a situation. The Stalinists have delayed because they are not conscious of the meaning of Fascism, and because they forget the rudimentary fact that a revolutionary situation, once lost, may not reappear for a decade. The German proletariat has been "steered in the struggles of 1918 and 1923"; it will survive 1933. That is true, but—the question is not at all one of the survival of the revolutionary movement; it is a question of whether the revolution is to triumph now or be smashed for a decade.

For years the Left Opposition has been pointing out the danger of Fascism being permitted to consolidate its power in Germany. For years the Opposition has been calling for a united front of the Communist Party of Germany and the reformist organizations to unite the German workers so as to be able to resist Fascism and be in a position to seize power. All this Hathaway "demolished" by stating that the Trotskyists say that if Fascism comes to power the revolution is lost!

Hathaway pointed out that for a successful revolution, two conditions must exist: a revolutionary upsurge of the workers and a split in the ranks of the bourgeoisie. On the basis of the theory of social Fascism the split cannot be said to exist. The social democracy is simply the Left wing of Fascism, basically the same. But actually, when Fascism arises, there is a split in the ranks of the bourgeoisie. Social democracy is the Left wing of the bourgeoisie; Fascism is its right wing. But the bourgeoisie cannot use both wings of its power in Germany. For years the Opposition has been calling for a united front of the Communist Party of Germany and the reformist organizations to unite the German workers so as to be able to resist Fascism and be in a position to seize power. All this Hathaway "demolished" by stating that the Trotskyists say that if Fascism comes to power the revolution is lost!

Hathaway then elaborated upon the Comintern Manifesto calling for a united front with all possible organizations against Fascism, against wage-cuts, for unemployment relief and insurance. He said it was the duty of all party members to fraternize with members of reformist organizations, to show them the call for a united front, and bring a united front call to every reformist organization, branch and local. This position in Hathaway's speech showed that the ECCL has made at least a partial turn away from the old united front from below. The danger is that the swing of the ECCL will go too far to the Right, as indicated by the more than ambiguous sentences in the Manifesto, Point C. This Point Hathaway interpreted as a threat to the reformists if they violate the united front. But he said nothing to reassure the party that the party press will not be silent about the social democracy until it be too late. As he interpreted it, the party will not criticize the social democracy until it has broken the agreement clearly and completely. The danger of this united front Manifesto lies in its failure to say a word about the independence of the party and the freedom to criticize the social democracy. Instead, the paragraph referred to has a statement that almost forbids criticism and also a threat not only to the socialists but to any Communist who dares to criticize the social democracy. All these points Hathaway ignored. At no time did Hathaway define the Communist position in a united front. The

German working class and to strike at the strategic point.

The C. I. Turn

Now, with the Manifesto of the ECCL, there is a turn. The Manifesto calls for a united front, both with the leaders as well as with the rank and file of the reformist organizations. This Hathaway had to admit on Monday evening. But the theoretical meaning of this united front and the change in policy of the ECCL he entirely ignored. He said, "I state categorically that there is no change in the basic position of the Communist International as regards the united front and the social democratic leaders." He explained that the Manifesto was caused by two factors: the increasing sentiment for unity among the workers and the treacherous calls for a united front by the social democrats and the Trotskyists. This Manifesto is simply a maneuver by which the Comintern cheekmates the counter-revolutionary demands of the Trotskyists. The united front demanded by the Left Opposition was characterized by Hathaway as one contingent upon the willingness of the social democratic leaders to agree. Thus it must be based on the limits of the social democratic program. It would in reality make the Communist party a partner in the social democratic betrayal of the workers.... Comrade Hathaway either has never read the proposals of the Left Opposition (He has!—Ed.) or else he has very conveniently distorted them. From the beginning, the Left Opposition has fought for a real united front. From 1923 till 1928 we fought against the false united front in which the independence of the Communist party was sacrificed. We have consistently stated that the party must always remain independent and distinct. Since 1928, with the ultra-Leftist swing of the ECCL, we have fought for a real united front—not the so-called united front from below, which is in reality no united front whatsoever.

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The American Capitalist Paradise HOOVERVILLE

Ambition and hope characterize almost every young man, who, leaving his family hearth, enters the cruel capitalist world in search of his fortune. Ambition and hope makes his life bright and happy. The young worker, possessing these natural stimuli for working and fighting, needs no artificial substitute. But when ambition and hope fade in the hopeless individual struggle against heavy odds—the cold industrial oligarchy and the boss class—different psychological characteristics appear in a worker. As an unskilled or semi-skilled worker, working at first steady job, and afterwards losing one job after another, he begins to lose ambition and hope for a better future in his life. Gradually, as he gets older and becomes less productive, he is pressed into the army of unemployed and very often the army of unemployables. This is the road that the great multitudes of workers, who roam over our railroads and highways in a continuous stream, who fill the employment-offices, charity institutions and jails in our cities, have traveled; this is also the road that the residents, who make up the population of Hoovervilles all over the country—of shanty-towns, shack-cities and jungles, have gone over. First a steady worker, then a casual worker, and finally an unemployed worker: this is the lot of an average American industrial slave!

These latter institutions, popularly known as Hoovervilles, are of a recent origin. They have sprung up all over the country near the big cities, empty lots and river-edges only during the last few years. They consist of a number of generally crudely, but sometimes skillfully constructed one or two-room shacks, which sometimes reach into several hundreds in a cluster.

Its inhabitants form a community composed primarily of the aforementioned average American unskilled workers, but during the present great unemployment crisis many skilled workers and even professionals are moving into the "Shanty-towns", men who are thrown out of their jobs and constantly being evicted from their living quarters. This last-mentioned layer of these Communists can merge with the social democrats without violating any point in Hathaway's speech. Hathaway's speech is interesting as an example of theoretical confusion and also because by its vicious attacks and mis-statements against the Left Opposition, it shows how much our influence has increased due to the German situation and the about-face of the Comintern. Many of his remarks concerning the discouragement of the party members, their criticism of the Communist Party of Germany, the sentiment of the united front among the workers—all show that our correct criticism has penetrated deeply into the party. The epithets, the lynch demand, the falsification of our position, all demonstrate how hard pressed Hathaway and the Stalinist bureaucracy must be in their attempts to answer us. But curses and lies are flimsy defenses and still worse guides for a workers' party.

Characterizing the confusion and demoralization into which the party members have been thrown by the zigzags in Stalinist policy, is the fact that out of all the questions asked, none dealt fundamentally with the question at stake; they were all of a technical nature. Discussion, what little there was of it, was of the same kind. But the Communist workers will yet speak up, and when they do their language will be unmistakable. —PARTY MEMBER.

International Workers School Notes

Two new classes in the New York International Workers School are now definitely under way. Comrade Max Shachtman's lectures on the "Principles and History of the International Left Opposition" is bringing a larger attendance with each session. The lectures take place each Wednesday evening at the hall of the International Workers School, 126 East 16th Street. The admission per lecture is 15 cents, and the public is invited. Comrade Jack Weber's class in "American Working Class History" meets each Sunday afternoon at 4 o'clock. Those who still wish to register for this course have an opportunity to do so at the next session. The class by Martin Abern in the "Principles of Communism" will conclude, after having held ten straight and successful sessions, next Monday, March 27th. Comrade Cannon's lecture course on American Labor Leaders has been indefinitely postponed. Those who desire are urged to join either or both of the two IWS classes that are now under way for this session.

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working class elements, who have learned or who have been forced to learn through suffering the class composition of society and their position relative to these classes, therefore being more class-conscious, have a great mission to perform; to study the psychology and interests of their fellow-worker; to approach them correctly in order to educate and finally organize them, so that this section of the broad unemployed masses do not become lost for the revolutionary working-class who need all the help they can get in their bitter struggle against the master class. The approach is a hard one. The citizens of Hooverville do not read anything of consequence; they seldom think of anything outside their miserable dwellings and hardly ever talk of the class struggle. They are devoted mostly to the accumulation of possessions with no purpose beyond the pleasure of the game, or their own pride or vanity—as collecting useless furniture, clothing, and cooking utensils which they cannot use. These dull, uninteresting, selfish, crude, human animals, with their petty lives and narrow visions, become absorbed in ragpicking and drunkenness. They have drifted into the Hoovervilles where they settle and become either passive or indifferent towards the class struggle and develop a peculiar anarchistic individualistic character—or degenerate into "lumpen-proletariat" that is, into the category of workers known as unemployables—tramps, bums, vagabonds, petty-criminals, etc.—in short the down-and-outers. To the question, what is the matter with these men, and how could they be made again useful to society?—many varied answers have been given to the writer who has spent the last eight months in an East River shack town, by curious and interested visitors who flock to these places in singles and groups.

Bourgeois Explanations

The bourgeois element usually says that the men are too lazy to work; the laws, courts and police are too soft as regards begging, loafing and living in shacks that do not pay taxes; and the charity organizations demoralize rather than uplift the men, by giving them meals in the breadlines without working. The charity "worker" says that the men themselves are defective and responsible for their misfortunes. They have acquired bad habits, have lost their rugged individualism and will-power. They indulge in drunkenness. Of course the "sky-pilot" suggests for the men to turn to God and everything will be "lumpy-dory". The educator and moralist preach that the main cause is the lack of general character-building and the presence of too many speakeasies and disorderly houses.

And finally comes the technocrat and explains "scientifically": the existence of unemployed workers, who live in large numbers in various shack-towns, is an essential of the present organization of our industrial system; rapid introduction, and pressure of circumstances and environment in general. Only the "urg-certificates" and the "org" will solve the problem. The widely varied opinions of the capitalist spokesmen about the unemployed workers in general, show the complexity of the problem in their minds, and the lack of complete understanding.

They do not like to admit that the existing miserable conditions of the workers; low wages, long hours and unemployment are to be traced through the whole capitalist system, which is responsible for the existence of Hoovervilles, and the production of hoboes and tramps—that is, the surplus labor population. They refuse to see that there is nothing wrong with the men themselves; they are just as human as anybody. They do not like to hear the only solution, that of the overthrow of the capitalist system which will do away with these conditions—the products of industrial slavery.

How They Live

In the meantime the residents of the shanty-towns go about their way, and do not mind in the least what is said about them in the papers, or in what "pose" they are snapped for the tabloids. They are generally willing and desirous to work, if there are any wages. But in the present unemployment crisis they are supplementing their living by such means as beggars and stealing—"taking". At night they go for their "kill" like wild animals. But their "kill" consists mostly of loads of week-old bread from bakery back-rooms, discarded vegetables from Wallabout and Washington markets, rotten fish from the Fulton Street pier and "nickels" from subway entrance. They do not overlook also the milk-bottles in the hallways and pastry-baskets outside the chain-store doors—though they usually take it only in such quantities as to satisfy their immediate needs. However, being workers they prefer to earn their living by working.

Some of the individuals are averse to work because their nervous systems, by suffering and privation, are exhausted. But this seeming laziness is nothing more than a kind of defense reaction forced upon them by this rotten system. In drunkenness they also find a sort of relief and forgetfulness. Rainbow-chasing is again an artificial means of making life newly "hopeful". Their lack of ability to concentrate their attention on anything could be explained by the fact that they are worn out, and as a result their will power has gone to pieces. (To Be Continued) —PAUL SCHWALBE.