

WORKERS
OF THE
WORLD.
UNITE

THE MILITANT

Weekly Organ of the Communist League of America [Opposition]

VOLUME VI, NO. 21 [WHOLE NO. 168]

NEW YORK, SATURDAY APRIL 1, 1933

PRICE 5 CENTS

For the United Defense against Hitlerism!

A Talk with the Socialist Workers by Leon Trotsky

This brochure addresses itself to the social democratic workers, even though personally the author belongs to another party. The disagreements between Communism and social democracy run very deep. I consider them irreconcilable. Nevertheless, the course of events frequently puts tasks before the working class which imperatively demand the joint action of the two parties. Is such an action possible? Perfectly possible, as historical experience and theory attest: everything depends upon the conditions and the character of the said tasks. Now, it is much easier to engage in a joint action when it is a question for the proletariat not of taking the offensive for the attainment of new objectives, but of defending the positions already gained.

Conflicts which at times take on an acute character. The saviors come to afford the luxury of engaging mutually in intrigues only because the proletariat is abandoning its positions without battle and is beating the retreat without plan, without system and without direction. The "enemy" is unleashed to such a point that it does not constrain itself from discussing right in public where and how to strike the next blow: by frontal attack; by bearing down on the Communist Left flank; by penetrating deeply at the rear of the trade unions and cutting off communications, etc. The exploiters whom it has saved discontinue on the Weimar republic as if it were some worn-out bowl; they ask themselves if it should still be utilized for a while or be thrown into the discard right away.

The bourgeoisie enjoys the full freedom of maneuvering, that is, of the choice of means, of time and of place. Its chiefs combine the arms of the law with the arms of banditry. The proletariat combines nothing at all and does not defend itself. Its troops are split up, and its chiefs discourse languidly on whether or not it is at all possible to combine forces. Therein lies the essence of the interminable discussions on the united front. If the vanguard workers do not become conscious of the situation and do not intervene peremptorily in the debate, the German proletariat may find itself crucified for years on the cross of Fascism.

democratic interlocutor interrupts me and says: Don't you come too late to propagate the united front? What did you do before this? This objection would not be correct. This is not the first time that the question of a united front of defense against Fascism is raised. I permit myself to refer to what I myself had the occasion to say on this subject in September 1930, after the first great success of the national-socialists. Addressing myself to the Communist workers, I wrote:

The brochure from which I take this extract was written two and a half years ago. There is not the slightest doubt today that if this policy had been adopted in time, Hitler would not be chancellor at the present time and the positions of the German proletariat would be unassailable. But one cannot return to the past. As a result of the mistakes which were committed and the time which was allowed to pass, the problem of defense is posed today with infinitely greater difficulty; but the task remains just as before. Even right now it is possible to alter the relation of forces in favor of the proletariat. Towards this end, one must have a plan, a system, a combination of forces for the defense. But above all, one must have the will to defend himself. I hasten to add that only he defends himself well who does not confine himself to the defensive but who, at the first occasion, is determined to pass over to the offensive.

certitude we will have that this attack, instead of smashing the ranks of the workers, will cement them."
The social democratic leaders are not lacking in tried-out and skillful policies. All the more reason for asking how they could have chosen such a slogan which runs counter to their own interests.
The formula has been borrowed from diplomacy. The meaning of this type of pact consists in this: two states which have sufficient causes for war engage themselves for a determined period not to resort to the force of arms against each other. The Soviet Union, for example, has signed such a rigorously circumscribed pact with Poland. Granting that a war were to break out between Germany and Poland, the said pact would in no way obligate the Soviet Union to come to the aid of Poland. Non-aggression and nothing more. In no way does it imply common action for defense; on the contrary, it excludes this action; without this, the pact would have a quite different character and would be called by a quite different name.

no question of a danger of war—but of combining the forces of the social democrats and the Communists against the attack with arms in hand which has already been launched against them by the national-socialists.
Incredible as it may seem, the social democratic leaders are substituting for the question of the genuine defense against the armed actions of Fascism, the question of the political controversy between Communists and social democrats. It is exactly as if one were to substitute for the question of how to prevent the derailment of a train, the question of the need for mutual courtesy between the travelers of the second and third classes.
The misfortune, in any case, is that the ill-conceived formula of a "non-aggression pact" will not even be able to subserve the inferior aim in whose name it is dragged in by the hair. The engagement assumed by two states not to attack each other, in no way eliminates their struggle, their polemics, their intrigues and their maneuvers. The semi-official Polish journals, in spite of the pact, foam at the mouth when they speak of the Soviet Union. For its part, the Soviet press is far from making compliments to the Polish regime. The fact of the matter is that the social democratic leaders have steered a wrong course in trying to substitute a conventional diplomatic formula for the political tasks of the proletariat.

Stalinist Persecutions Russian Left Opposition Forges Ahead in the Party

Moscow.—The most important fact here is the arrest of former Left Oppositionists, this time not rank and file, but leaders... You probably already know about the arrests of I. N. Smirnov, Preobrazhensky, Ufintzev, Ter-Vaganyan, Lifshitz, Gruenstein, Mraehkovsky, Pererevov, and many others. In Leningrad, Olga Ravich was arrested. In the People's Commissariat of Agriculture of Ukraine, who himself, it is said, had and has no connection whatever with the Opposition. Mraehkovsky and Pererevov were arrested in the Far East and they are being brought to Moscow. Many arrests were made in the Foreign Trade Department (in particular, the above-named Lifshitz). All told about a hundred people were arrested who at one time or another belonged to the cadres of the Left Opposition. The chief arrests were made in Moscow, Leningrad and Kharkov.

Workers' Youth Form Genuine United Front in New York Protest Struggle against Hitlerism

One hundred and nineteen delegates, representing fifty-five youth organizations met in New York, March 24-25, at a conference to plan concrete action in the struggle against German Fascism. The delegates were overwhelmingly Left wing and Communist, including the Young Communist League (Opposition)—Limestone Group, the National Youth Committee of the Communist Left Opposition, the New York Spartacus Youth Club, and the National Student League. Several socialist groups were present, such as the Rand School Students Ass'n, which had initiated the conference, the Brookwood Labor College Fellowship—one of the delegates being a member of the National Committee of the YPSL, the New York University Socialist Club and the Rand School Debs' Club. Youth clubs, youth sections of Left wing unions, the Menorah Society—a Jewish group, the Friends of India (Gandhi followers), the various workers' schools, and several sport organizations were represented.

New Ill. Mine Contract Left Wing Criticizes Provisions of 2 Year Agreement

Gillespie, Ill.—The Scale Committee of the Progressive Miners' Union of America has met with the operators holding contracts with the union to renew the contract expiring April 1, and recommend to the membership of the union to sign a contract for two years. A referendum vote of the union will be held Saturday, the 25th. The Gillespie office has sent to all locals instructions and the contract to be voted upon, but up to this date, Wed., March 23, the majority of the miners have not yet seen the new contract or the amendments to the old contract as proposed by the Scale Committee. Regardless of the changes or lack of changes in the new contract, the miners should have more time to study the contract, and to discuss it before the referendum vote is taken.

Party May Day Conference Reveals Inner Dispute on United Front Policy

Ave hundred and thirty delegates from one hundred and sixteen organizations gathered to constitute the New York United Front May Day Conference, on Sunday, March 19th. For the most part, they were the same delegates who make up all the party united front mass-querades hereabouts. Its breadth can be seen from the credentials committee report: four AF of L unions were represented by six delegates; there were no representatives from the Socialist party or YPSL.

Bank Holiday Screens Advance in the Concentration of Big Capital

The "Bankers Holiday" has passed into history and will be recorded as one of the major moves of the financiers in their struggle to bring the antiquated banking structure up to the level of the present day needs of the American imperialists. For years they have been striving to legalize unlimited branch banking. They have been able, finally through a bitter struggle and, in a compromise, to obtain a partial victory in this field.

Friday April 21, 1933 at 8 p. m. **SPRING DANCE & FESTIVAL** Jazz Orchestra - Songs - Other Features
IRVING PLAZA HALL 15 St. of Irving Pl. for the Benefit of 'THE MILITANT'
Auspices: New York Branch Communist League of America (Opposition) and Protomagia Club.