

For the United Front of Defense Against Hitlerism

(Continued from Page 1) In this sense: they are not opponents of a "criticism based upon facts" but they are against suspicious, insults and calumnies. A very laudable attitude! But how is the limit to be found between permitted criticism and inadmissible campaigns? And where are the impartial judges? As a general rule, the criticism never pleases the criticized, above all when he can raise no objection to the essence of it.

Landtags, the municipal councilors, etc., are compelled to come to the physical defense of each other when the Nazis resort to loaded canes and chairs. Are more examples needed? What is true in each particular case is also true as a general rule: the inevitable struggle in which social democracy and Communism are engaged for the leadership of the working class cannot and must not prevent them from closing their ranks when blows threaten the whole working class. Isn't this obvious?

Two Weights and Two Scales The Vorwaerts is indignant because the Communists accuse the social democrats (Ebert, Scheidemann, Noske, Hermann Mueller, Grzesinski) of paving the road for Hitler. The Vorwaerts has a legitimate right to indignation. But this remark is too much: how can we, it cries out, make a united front with such slanderers? What have we here? sentimentalism? prudish sensitiveness? No, that really smacks of hypocrisy. As a matter of fact, the leaders of the German social democracy cannot have forgotten that Wilhelm Liebknecht and August Bebel often asserted that the social democracy was ready, for the sake of definite objectives, to come to an agreement with the devil and his grandmother. The founders of the social democracy certainly did not demand that during this occasion the devil should check his horns in the

first chancellor and its first president, has led the country to Hitler. Wells will surely reply that to a large extent it is the fault of Bolshevism. Surely the day has not passed that the Vorwaerts will fall to repeat this explanation and nauseum. Do you think that in the united front with the Communists it will forego its rights and its duty to tell the workers what it considers to be truth? The Communists certainly have no need of that. The united front against Fascism is only one chapter in the book of the struggle of the proletariat. The chapters that went before cannot be forgotten. We must build on it. We preserve the memory of Ebert's alliance with Groener and of Noske's role. We remember under what conditions Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht died. We Bolshevists have taught the workers to forget nothing. We do not ask the devil to cut off his tail: that would hurt him and we would not profit by it. We accept the devil just as nature has created him. We have no need of the repentance of the social democratic leaders nor of their loyalty to Marxism; but we do need the will of the social democracy to struggle against the enemy who is actually threatening it with death. For on that part, we are ready to carry out in the joint struggle all the promises which we have made. We promise to fight courageously and to carry the fight to a finish. That is quite enough for a fighting agreement.

YOUR LEADERS DONT WANT TO FIGHT! However, it still remains to be known why the social democratic leaders speak at all: regarding polemics, non-aggression pacts and the disgusting manners of the Communists, instead of answering this simple question: in what way shall we fight the Fascists? For the simple reason that the social democratic leaders do not want to fight. They cherished the hope that Hindenburg would save them from Hitler. Now they are waiting for some other miracle. They do not want to fight. They lost the habit of fighting long ago. The struggle frightens them. Stamper wrote regarding the actions of the Fascist banditry at Eisleben: "Faith in right and justice has not yet died in Germany." (Vorwaerts, February 14.) It is impossible to read these words without being revolted. Instead of a call for a fighting united front, we get the consoling words: "Faith in justice has not died." Now, the bourgeoisie has its justice, and the proletariat its own, too. Armed injustice always comes out on top of disarmed justice. The whole history of humanity proves this. Whoever makes an appeal to this self-evident "ghost" of "justice" is deceiving the workers. Whoever wants the victory of proletarian justice over Fascist violence, must agitate for the struggle and set up the organs of the proletarian united front. It is impossible to find in the entire social democratic press a single line indicating genuine preparation for the struggle. There is not a single thing, merely some general phrases, postponements to some indefinite future, nebulous consolations. "Only let the Nazis start something, and then..." and the Nazis started something. They march forward step by step, they tranquilly take over one position after another. These petty bourgeois reactionary malefactors do not care for risks. Now, they do not need to risk anything at all; they are sure in advance that the enemy will retreat without a fight. And they are not mistaken in their calculations. Of course, it often occurs that a combatant must retreat in order to get a good start for a leap forward. But the social democratic leaders are not inclined to make the leap forward. They do not want to leap. And all their dissertations are made in short time ago they kept asserting that so long as the Nazis do not quit the ground of legality, there is no room for a fight. Now we get a good look at what this legality was: a series of preliminary notes on the coup d'Etat. Still, this coup d'Etat was possible only because the social democratic leaders lull the workers to sleep with phrases about the legality of the coup d'Etat and console them with hope of a new Reichstag yet more important than those that preceded it.

The Fascists can ask for nothing better. Today the social democracy has even ceased speaking of struggles in the indefinite future. On the subject of the already-begun destruction of the working-class organizations and press, the Vorwaerts "reminds" the government not to forget that "in a developed capitalist country the conditions of production group the workers in factories". These words indicate that the leadership of the social democracy accepts in advance the destruction of the political, economic and cultural organizations created by three generations of the proletariat. "In spite of this" the workers will remain grouped by the industries themselves. Well then, what good are proletarian organizations if the question can be solved so simply? The leaders of the social democracy and the trade unions wash their hands, and relegate themselves to the sidelines while waiting. If the workers themselves, grouped together by the industries, break the bonds of discipline and begin the struggle, the leaders, obviously, will intervene as they did in 1918, in the role of pacifiers and mediators and will force themselves on to the workers' backs to re-establish the positions they have lost. The leaders conceal from the eyes of the masses their refusal to fight and their dread of the struggle by means of hollow phrases about non-aggression pacts. Social democratic workers your leaders do not want to fight!

THEN IS OUR PROPOSAL A MANEUVER? Here the social democrat will again interrupt us to say: "Since you do not believe in our leaders' desire to fight against Fascism, isn't your proposal for a united front an obvious maneuver?" Even more, he will repeat the reflections printed in the Vorwaerts to the effect that the workers need unity and not "maneuvers". This type of argument has actually a convincing sound. In quality it is an empty phrase. Yes, we Communists are positive that the social democratic and trade unions functionaries will continue to evade the struggle to the best of their ability. At the critical moment a large segment of the working class bureaucracy will pass directly over to the Fascists. The other segment, which succeeds in exporting its carefully hoarded financial resources to some other country, will emigrate at the opportune moment. All these actions have already begun and their further development is inevitable. But we do not confuse this segment, today the most influential in the reformist bureaucracy, with the social democratic party or the entirety of the trade unions. The proletarian nucleus of the party will fight with sure blows, and it will carry behind it a good-sized section of the apparatus. Exactly where will the line of demarcation pass between the turncoats, traitors and deserters, on one side, and those who want to fight, on the other? We can only find this out through experience. That is why, without possessing the slightest confidence in the social democratic bureaucracy, the Communists cannot abstain from addressing themselves to the whole party. Only in this manner will it be possible to separate those who want to fight from those who want to desert. If we are mistaken in our estimation of Wells, Breitscheid, Hilferding, Crispin and the rest, let them prove that we are liars by their actions. We will declare a mea culpa on the public squares. If all this is merely a "maneuver" on our part, it is a correct and necessary maneuver which serves the interests of the cause. You social democrats remain in your party because you have faith in its program, in its tactics and in its leadership. This is a fact with which we reckon. You regard our criticism as false. That is your privilege. You are by no means obliged to believe the Communists on faith, and no serious Communist will demand this of you. But on their side the Communists have the right to put no confidence in the functionaries of the social democracy and not to consider the social democrats as Marxists, revolutionists and genuine socialists. Otherwise, the Communists would have no need for the setting up of a separate party and a separate International. We must take the facts as they are. We must build the united front not in the clouds, but on the foundation which all the previous development has laid down. If you sincerely believe that your leadership will lead the workers to struggle against Fascism, then what Communist maneuver can you distrust? Then what is this maneuver of which the Vorwaerts is continually speaking? Think this out carefully: Is this not a maneuver on the part of your leaders who want to frighten you with the hollow word "maneuver" and thus keep you away from the united front? (Conclusion in the next number.) —L. TROTSKY.

A Letter from Moscow About the Left Opposition

(Continued from Page 1) It who had broken off." From mouth to mouth there is now being passed the statement presumably made by Zinoviev prior to his departure for exile. "The greatest historical mistake we made was our leaving the Opposition in 1927." It is reported that Kamenev too joined in with him in so saying. I have no means of verifying this fact at its source. But the report in itself is quite characteristic of the circles with which Zinoviev and Kamenev were connected. The sympathy for the Left Opposition has grown greatly, even within the apparatus circles, especially among old party members, who know and remember the past. "The Lefts have a program, real men, real character, and leaders". One chances to hear such remarks very often, sometimes where one would least expect them. However, among the apparatus functionaries, who were educated during the last period, there is considerable fear of the Left Opposition; should it come to power it would deal harshly with all those who in their own time took charge of Stalinist reprisals. It goes without saying that all such doubts and fears are carefully encouraged from above. In the course of the last few months, arrests on a large scale have been made in factories. More than a hundred workers were arrested in the "Amo" factory, where Opposition circulars were distributed. A few dozen workers were nabbed in Sharkopodshnik. There were arrests in the "Calibre" factory (30 to 40 workers) and in the Baltic factory in Leningrad. A circular, set up locally, was distributed at a factory in Kovrov; undoubtedly similar facts could be obtained in many other places. I send only those reports that have reached me. I have already informed you that during the October days, at a brake-producing plant a portrait of Stalin was so drawn that the next morning it turned into a portrait of Trotsky. There was a great do about this; many were arrested, but the offenders were not caught. From time to time "misunderstandings" of this type occur in other enterprises. At the factory "Proletarian Labor", on the 22nd of January, the leading article of the wall newspaper, dedicated to Lenin's anniversary, turned out to be completely composed of excerpts from Trotsky's articles on Lenin. A terrible rumpus! Many of the participants were excluded from the party. The workers in factories are sullen, dissatisfied and irritable. The authorities are taking advantage of the passport system primarily in order to ship out of Moscow all the undesirable and even the least suspicious elements, in a political sense; among them all those Left Oppositionists who had repented at diverse times. The purpose behind this is clear: toward Spring stormy times are expected in factories and all those who are being liquidated beforehand who have any chance of serving as leaders in these agitations. This measure, just as many others, serves as a means of self-defense for the apparatus to the detriment of the party, for it is quite self-evident that the Left Oppositionists in whom the workers trust would have striven to lead every movement into Soviet channels. In factories there spring up odd opposition groups which function with their own means and forces. During arrests there is found "Trotskyist" literature, chiefly home-made circulars, theses, extracts, etc. From out of "My Life" comrades have selected material for propaganda. On this ground, three Oppositionists were arrested. In many cases, the ideas of the Opposition get abroad intuitively. Workers are drawn to our slogans by different paths. At present the questions that are posed most acutely are those that deal with the suppression, bureaucratic despotism, and unbearable conditions in factories and in the party. Recent-

ly, the party apparatus issued a secret circular with instructions to double the watch over hectographs and other multigraphing machines in offices; evidently, the Opposition utilizes these machines in order to publish its documents. In January, at a Moscow party session, Kaganovich said, "in the Istrinsk region (near Moscow) for five months all the nuclei were in the hands of Trotskyists. And what happened? The apparatus proceeded to enter into a discussion with them instead of dealing with the Trotskyists as they ought to be dealt with." The same Kaganovich reported, "Khlichkov, a woman worker in Leningrad, took the floor in her nucleus to announce that she did not believe in Zinoviev's counter-revolutionism. She was, of course, expelled immediately." Arrests among the workers, especially among the young Communists, take place continually. The majority of these arrests pass unnoticed. Party circles become acquainted with mass arrests only when the latter are connected with individuals more or less well known. Thus, for instance, the following is current in connection with the arrest of the group of Nemchenko, a trade union functionary: first, a group of YCLers was arrested, among them Nemchenko's son. They were confronted with the indictment charging them with conspiring terrorist acts (!) and they were harshly cross-examined to make them divulge how they, the youngsters, had come to such ideas. Nemchenko's son is reported to have replied, "There's continual talk at home that the Chief is ruining the country." In this manner they got at Nemchenko and his friends. It is, of course, possible that within some circle or other of the youth, which are deprived of leadership and of the possibility to discuss and criticize, there is actual talk going on about terrorist acts. But most probably, what is involved in the above matter and the like, is the provocation for the purpose of intimidating and vilifying "liberal" parents. The struggle against those elements in the apparatus which are inclined toward the Opposition proceeds not only by means of arrests but with slanders as well. Those who criticize are smeared with filth, being charged with embezzlement, graft, nepotism, etc., etc. This facilitates liquidation. The following method is widely applied. During all sorts of authoritative conferences, particularly those connected with collectivization, industrialization, inflation, the conditions of the workers and other burning questions, the chairmen proposing the discussion proceed in the spirit of forthright frankness, presumably to give the "leaders" an opportunity to elucidate all sides of the question. Concurrently, every critical statement, particularly, if there seems to be behind it considerable reflection, serves invariably as a reason for inquiry and surveillance, and for ferreting out connections; and not infrequently it leads to the arrest of individual groups. It is said that Smilga suffered for his "critical" speech at a conference where the most touchy questions of rural economy were discussed. It is indubitable that Smilga, in any event, did not represent any Oppositionist or semi-Oppositionist group. But, nevertheless, he paid for his attempt to speak out upon the peasant policies of Stalin in the very intimate and super-authoritative circle. From well informed sources the following is related about the manner in which the group of Elsmont, Tolmachev and others was liquidated. While recruiting supporters, Elsmont shared his views with a close intimate of his, Nikolsky, speaking of the situation in the country and, in particular, of the necessity to get rid of Stalin. This confident "shared" Elsmont's views with functionaries from the Central Control Commission. Elsmont was ordered to report there. "What

are your relations with Nikolsky?" "The best", "You trust him?" "Yes". Thereupon Elsmont was shown Nikolsky's testimony; and that was immediately followed up with an indictment charging preparation of... terrorist acts. Obviously, this indictment was in reference to this words about the necessity of "getting rid of Stalin". Elsmont could not withstand the pressure and betrayed Tolmachev, and said that Rykov and Tomsky knew about his point of view. It is possible, of course, that Elsmont merely referred to Tolmachev, Rykov and Tomsky, as witnesses who could testify that while he, Elsmont, spoke out critically about Stalin's policies, he was much too far away from any idea of terrorism. A reference of this sort to authoritative witnesses could and must have become transformed, under the given conditions, into "betrayal", and have called for a charge being brought against Rykov and Tomsky, of their being informed, and their failing to report. As is well known, in its own time, the charge against Zinoviev and Kamenev in relation to Klutin and Slepikov reduced itself to precisely the same thing. In connection with the affair of the Elsmont group, the word was carefully passed around among the party tops, that not only Rykov and Tomsky knew about "the conspirators" but also one member of the Politbureau; a delicate hint at Kalinin. There is no doubt that Kalinin is heart and soul with the Rights. It is also possible that in a super-cautious manner he is taking out insurance "to the Rights". At the Plenum of the CEC Voroshilov said, turning to Tomsky, "You cut out thinking that you are a leader. That's all over now. You want to deport yourself as a leader but you are just an ordinary party member. Begin working as a rank and file Communist in the nucleus; work in the wall newspaper; produce proof that you are deserving of trust." Rykov unbundled himself at the Plenum in the following manner. "How can I prove my devotion to party, working only among the letter-carriers? Give me the opportunity to step out before the masses. Now, for example, I was refused permission by the district

committee chairman when I wanted to make an address during a jubilee at the Park of Culture and Rest, where 30,000 participated." The same Voroshilov replied to Rykov at the Plenum, "And he was right in refusing—who knows what you would have said, and what line you might have defended. You learn how to work among the letter-carriers." At present, Voroshilov, at any rate, is not a rank and file member of the party, but a "leader". One must not think, of course, that after the complete capitulation of the Right leaders, the attitude towards them has been radically changed. At the meeting of the Moscow Party militants, Kaganovich while reporting on the Plenum, spoke with great animosity not only about Rykov and Tomsky but also Bukharin. The latter, however, because the least dangerous, has been slightly pardoned. Among the Rights there is great confusion. They are strong in moods but not in organization or ideas. They are now without central leaders. However, the arrests among the Rights continue. Recently there were important arrests in the People's Commissariat of Agriculture. A "wrecking" organization was discovered there, embracing many super-authoritative workers. At its head presumably were the chief of this commissariat, Konor, and his colleagues Kovarsky and Wolf. They are accused of having maintained connections with Petlura organizations in the Ukraine and in Kuban, and of even keeping in touch with the Petlura center in Poland. It is possible, of course, that there were isolated class enemies in the apparatus of the Commissariat, but the entire case as a whole represents an obvious amalgam. So far as I know, Konor was born in Galicia, joined the Bolsheviks during the imperialist war, of shortly thereafter; he participated in the Civil War, and I think he sympathized with the Left Opposition a few years ago. Of his latter history I know nothing... Notwithstanding the curt and detailed character of the accusations, no one believes in their validity. Everybody is of the opinion that the "chief" is simply preparing for an instructive trial of those supposedly guilty of the collapse of rural economy. The situation in Kazakhstan is extremely onerous—the population has turned nomad... "Faithful" Goloshchekin, who brought Kazakhstan to the outermost limits of disaster, has finally been replaced. However, there has been appointed in his stead the no less "faithful" Mirzoyan, former secretary of Baku. This matter goes no further than the shuffling of personalities. On the soil of economic and other difficulties there are sprouting diverse hostile movements, among them nationalist movements, in particular in Crimea, where many authoritative workers were arrested—Tatars. Grain collections, as well as other rural operations, are taking place under fearful pressure in North Caucasus and the Ukraine. Merciless repressions encompass ever wider circles of peasantry, local Communists among them. The leadership has completely taken to the course of administrative force. No trace has been left of the former "idealization" of the peasant, in practice at any rate. At present the Stalinist upper crust considers that it is possible to get out of the difficulties only by way of new and extremely enforced methods of subjection. All work is being undertaken in this spirit, especially since the last Plenum of the CEC. About 50,000 authoritative workers are being mobilized in the cities in order to put through the "decisive" policies in villages. They will be placed there in the Political sections, in machine and tractor stations, in commissions for sowing and harvesting, in produce tax commissions, etc., etc. Their chief task is to break down the "softness" of the local Communists.

MARCH ISSUE OF YOUNG SPARTACUS

The March number of Young Spartacus, which is ready for sale, is a lively issue containing articles on the burning questions of the day. Its leading article "Unite to Smash Fascism" discusses the manifesto of the Comintern for a united front with the Socialist International. The call for an anti-Fascist Conference signed by a number of youth groups including the National Youth Committee of the Left Opposition, the New York Spartacus Youth Club and the Young Communist League, an item on "Non-Aggression Pact or United Front", a review of comrade Trotsky's pamphlet "The Only Road" and quotations from the Stalinists and Social Democrats on Germany, make the issue a predominantly German campaign number. Reports on the toy workers and anti-Fascist youth conferences, the Albany jobless and Tom Mooney Conference, the conditions of the homeless youth reflect the activities of the youth movement. Several items on the Young Communist League, "A YCLer Speaks" "Ninth Plenum of the Young Communist International" a statement of a Chicago comrade, the appeal of the Chicago Club against physical assaults on Left Oppositionists, etc. a letter of comrade Trotsky to the Spanish youth, the report of activities of the French Left Opposition youth, "Karl Marx's Confession", an article on the Paris Commune, reprints of two proclamations of the Commune, complete the lively number of our youth paper, Young Spartacus. Comrades are urged to order bundles of orders. Get subs and donations for our paper.

THE MILITANT Entered as a second class matter November 28, 1928, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y. Under the act of March 3, 1879. Published weekly by the Communist League of America (Opposition) at 126 East 16th St., N. Y. C. EDITORIAL BOARD Martin Abern James P. Cannon Max Shachtman Maurice Spector Arne Swaback Saturday, April 1, 1933 Vol. VI, No. 21 (Whole No. 169) Subscription rate: \$2.00 per year. Foreign \$2.50. Five Cents per copy