Discussion on the German Defeat

The article below represents the first installment in a discussion on the problems of the German situation after the victory of Fascism. Comrades are invited to state their views which will be printed as discussion articles.—Ed.)

By the course of events in Germany, which culminated in the complete victory of Fascism, the international proletarian movement finds itself face to face with an entirely new situation. In its objective essence it means a new historical stage; the inauguration of a new reactionary period with its serious implications not only for Germany but for the world as a whole. That it will be fraught with new attacks upon the workers, with prospects of imperialist wars moving much closer, with new serious dangers to the Soviet Union and also with new revolutionary possibilities, goes without saying.

In measuring the consequence of these events the International Left Opposition has some time ago made clear that for this new situation the orientation, the position and the formulae of the past will no longer suffice. We thereby placed ourselves entirely upon the basis of the new historical situation created by the victory of Fascism and the collapse of the German Communist Party. Where we had previously emphasized the immediately pressing problems for a change of course of the party and of the Comintern to prevent the Fascist victory, that is, where we had emphasized the short perspective we now place before ourselves the long perspective. Where we before, in pressing for a change of course, also held the position of reform of the party, we are now compelled to recognize its complete breakdown and to orient ourselves upon that basis. To this extent there was unanimity within the International Left Opposition. In this we also met with sympathy and considerable agreement from other working class groups stirred by the course of events. Some doubt however, did naturally arise when the question was posed fully in the concrete: What must follow the breakdown of the party? Can there for us be any other course than that of a new party? To pose the question that way was such a radical departure from our former position of a party fraction fighting for reform of the party. But this was necessitated by the historical change which had taken place and, in the first instance, the doubts could only emerge wherever the full significance of this change was momentarily lost sight of. These doubts are disappearing and in their place we have a greater clarity.

In order that we here in America may better understand what is involved in this question of whether or not a new party in Germany we must endeavor to fully appreciate what the historical change means to the working class in general and to the German proletariat in particular. We have already mentioned that it means a new reactionary period. No further proof of that is needed than the tangible evidences of experience since German Fascism came into power. What needs particular emphasis, however, is the seriousness of the scope of the working class defeat. First the Social Democracy miserably exposed its bankruptcy followed by the bankruptcy of the Communist party. Both parties were numerically powerful yet they disappeared in face of the onslaught of the Fascist regime. Today there is no revolutionary party in Germany. This is the greatest defeat recorded in working class history. It is the culmination to a series of defeats suffered by the Comintern beginning with Germany of 1923, through the disaster of the Chinese revolution and back to Germany, in 1933. And yet all these defeats occur under the conditions of the downward spiral of capitalism, during the capitalist decay stage, during the very period of its bankruptcy being the most glaringly demonstrated. This is the frightful paradox. And because of that the responsibility for the policies and strategy which brought such disaster becomes only many times greater. Of course, the Comintern leadership, the Stalinist leadership, must be held entirely responsible. ..Once again the importance of a working class revolutionary party has been demonstrated, but this time in a negative sense. Already from the time of the Communist manifesto we knew that the emancipation of the working class was unthinkable without its own revolutionary party. It was the absence of such a party, or to put it more precisely, the failure of the Stalinist party to perform this function, which accounts for the Fascists and not the proletariat being victorious. In seeking the reason for that, when traced to its source, the verdict will read: It is because we had in Germany a party of national Socialism instead of a party of interntional revolution. For proof of this, wherever doubts or disagreements still exists outside of our ranks, we need not confine ourselves to the inescapable conclusion that the theory of Socialism in One Country can produce nothing else but parties of national Socialism. We can add the advice to the comrades to study the numerous declarations of German party leaders on their program of national and social emancipation. This program is of course only a reflection of the basic party and Comintern orientation.

Today, after this frightful defeat, the German party leaders, speaking from emigration, and behind them the Comintern leaders, commit the double crime of stubbornly denying the historical character of the defeat and add to it the attempt of maintaining the dangerous illusions in the minds of the Communist workers that Hitler will soon get out of business.

But as Hitler remains and consolidates his power the disillusionment will inevitably set in. New and more frightful demoralization will result. The Communist workers will leave the Stalinist party leaders in disgust and despair. Today these gigantic experiences are fresh in the minds of the Communist workers and yet there is no discussion permitted by the party leadership. Inquiries into the correctness of the official line are taboo. Those who express doubts are hounded and expelled. From these facts it follows that what still exists in Germany of sporadic activities by the official party remnants is not at all the beginnings of an orientation based upon the new conditions but only the tail end of the past. After that follows the void, for there can be no other perspectives for a party leadership which denies the existence of the new historical conditions.

The facts being so, one can brand only as criminal lightmindedness the final conclusion of the Comintern resolution adopted after the German defeat; the resolution of April 1. This resolution finds that it is necessary to strengthen the party and all the mass organizations of the working class,

...."to prepare the masses for decisive battles. For the overthrow of capitalism and for the overthrow of the Fascist dictatorship by an armed rising."

In other words, the armed uprising is placed on the agenda in the midst of the greatest defeat yet suffered by working class. Upon what prognosis does it rest? First of all upon the Comintern alibi that the cause of what has happened in Germany is Social Democracy. Its part of the betrayal never needed to be doubted; but that does not in the least explain the Comintern and the official party responsibility, or its position. Secondly it rests upon the foundation of the Comintern affirming the infallibility of its characterization of "Social Fascism", thus nullifying and giving the lie to any expressions for desire of a united front with social democracy. Further it rests upon an estimation of the preceding governments of Papen and Schleicher having been Fascist governments the same as Hitler's. Finally it rests upon the analysis, as presented in the resolution, that there was no revolutionary situation in Germany. Yet a complete historical change has taken place. But the change is not toward strengthening the possibilities of the proletarian revolution. On the contrary, the Fascist reaction is immensely strengthened, the German working class defeated, the Communist parties elsewhere declining, demoralized and impotent. In face of this the armed insurrection is placed on the agenda by the Comintern resolution. Criminal lightmindedness is about the mildest characterization one can find for this.

The International Left Opposition poses the problems facing the German working class, and the world movement, from the point of view of opposite considerations. To rebuild upon an entirely new foundation what lies shattered in Germany, its general working class movement and above all to rebuild the revolutionary party, that is the task. There can be no more talk about the old basis or the old formulae. The problem is to build anew. The Left Opposition proposes an orientation toward a new Party in Germany liberated from the deadly embrace of bankrupt Stalinism. —ARNE SWABECK.

United States at London Confab

The World Economic Conference, just concluded at London, met at the most critical period of the world crisis. The victory of Fascism in Germany and Japanese aggression hung heavy over the conference. Between these realities and American Imperialism, the conference was unable to end satisfactorily for the leading European powers. In this situation, 1933 represents an accentuated 1913, and therefore, many countries left the conference with fear of tomorrow.

Conclusions drawn from the London Economic Conference indicate that the United States was not only able to hold its own position, it was also able to leave the gathering in a stronger position. Imperialist powers and capitalist nations do not enter peace conferences and economic conferences with any illusions about their ability to solve the "objectives" listed for public consumption. This is especially true of American Imperialism under the Roosevelt government.

The real objective of the economic conference that met at London was the imperialist struggle for points of vantage, at the expense of the other powers in the preparation for more intense economic and military wars. Peace conferences are cloaks for greater economic and military wars.

The high sounding phrases and humanitarian cloak was pierced by the reality of the economic conflicts and imperialist antagonisms at the very opening of the London Conference. Prime Minister Mac Donald, in behalf of Europe, and especially in behalf of England's hegemony over Europe raised the forbidden question of war debts. This move revealed an attempt of a European united front against American imperialism which came to London with the intention and plan to further the process of putting Europe on rations.

The powerful pressure of American Imperialism and the tremendous contradictions in Europe since Hitler took power smashed this attempted united front. This first attempt was repeated on several occasions but to no avail. The The next attempt to drive American Imperialism from her strong position was the European effort to peg up the dollar and obtain the temporary stabilization of international exchange. England was part of this bloc, half concealed and half open, nevertheless, the bloc and plan was shattered, especially after Roosevelt's statement on this question. Next the die-hards under the leadership of France organized the Gold Bloc. This move, in the long run played into the hands of American Imperialism because it widened the gap between the French and British interests and thereby gave America a better position in this three cornered fight.

It is true that Germany played no outstanding role at the conference at the rise of Fascism to power in Germany caused a shake-up and a realignment. It contributed to the success of America against Europe.

American Imperialism went to London well armed for the battle against Europe, as well as Japan. Some of the weapons in the hands of the American representatives were pounded out in the first days of the Roosevelt administration. This move was cloaked as part of a national policy but was pointed out at that time in its true international relations in the columns of the **Militant.** The Banking laws and farm relief amendment, which were important international weapons as well as internal weapons were used very effectively at the conference.

America went off the gold standard, repudiated the gold clause, gave the President power to inflate currency as well as other forms of inflation and to reduce the content of the dollar by one-half. If the American representatives did not hold this threat over the London conference another story would have been written. These weapons were very effective in helping the American representatives in shattering the united front of the European powers against America. The mere threat to use some of them resulted in excellent results at London as well as within the country. The internal policy of the Roosevelt administration is an integral part of this international struggle. It is two sides of the same problem.

Economic collaboration and organized production is as hopeless as non-aggression pacts (regardless of what Litvinoff says). No one but liberals and half-wits expected such from London. America desired more from the London conference, but America obtained more than the other powers. The London conference can be summed up as a prelude to a more intense onslaught on Europe, a greater drive by America to put Europe on rations, a prelude to the imperialist world war—in which America hopes she can duplicate her role of 1914-1918.

The Paris Soir paper summed up the World Economic Conference in the following words: "If we allow the depreciation of overseas currency to continue, their rivalry will be more than ever irresistible and our reserves will be wasted. It is only a question of time until European industires will be controlled by the United States."

—HUGO OEHLER.

Furniture Strikers Defeat Maneuver

(Continued from Page 1)

most dangerous material, such as a broadside.

Very truly yours,
Col. Leopold Phillip,
Chairman, Bureau of Compliance.

He added the following postscript without the knowledge of the union officials:

"This letter was sent to help pacify the labor leaders".

The whole fraud of the NRA as the impartial arbitrator in strike disputes is here shown up in all its nakedness. After secretly conspiring with the bosses association to put across starvation wages in the industry, the NRA sends a hypocritical "reprimand" to the very elements with whom he made the conspiracy.

* * * *

Now, when we have the bosses licked is the time for solid ranks in the strike. Let there be no talk of going back to work. NO FAKE SETTLEMENTS. Without the recognition of the union you are helpless to enforce whatever conditions you have achieved by the strike. Don't let the boss pull any promises to groups of men in the shop. It's too late for that. If he wants to settle, make him settle with the union. The time is past for herding upholsterers under the slave conditions of the past 3 years.

—LANKIN-COWL.

J. L. Lewis Betrays Miners at Hearing

(Continued from Page 1)

are such forces in order to give direction to the revolt of the disillusioned workers in the very near future. Proper tactics will be able to guide such a struggle to a higher level than the recent western Penn. experience.

P. M. A. Capitulation and Stalinist Blunders

The Progressive Miners of America lost their most favorable opportunity and now the fruit of the Right wing policy has resulted in lost ground. Their capitulatitonis policy has not even enabled them to get in on the NRA bandwagon. The Right wing, or at least a big section of it, is ready to go over to the folds of the UMWA. The Left wing must intensify its work toward the realization of its policy. If the Progressive Miners of America had called a national conference prior to the NRA becoming a law as advocated by the Left wing and has conducted a Left wing policy, a different story would be written now. However the wrong policies of the Right wing of the PMA, and the whole series of Stalinists blunders for years in the trade union field means that we have to retrace our steps to obtain a running start for the coming struggles which are sure to develop in the sick and decayed coal industry. The reorganization of this industry through the NRA will cause increased class antagonisms between the operators and miners as well as between the large and small operators.

The National Miners Union could have saved the day some time ago if the Stalinists had a correct trade union policy, understood the united front and used a little common horse sense. Now they are pushed into a more difficult corner. Due to the Stalinist's wrong policies and the lost ground, our task is to retrace our steps through the wing of the UMWA and the PMWA Then the Communists can once again take the lead in the coming struggles. To continue to play with the paper National Miners Union is to waste valuable time and retard the movement of the class.

HUGO OEHLER

Clubs, Tear Gas in Milk Strike

(Continued from Page 1)

and three-fourth cents per quart. The better grades were priced at from 2 to 2 1-2 cents per quart. But the big dairy companies, including the Dairymens' League classified all milk alike and paid an average of 1 3-4 cents per quart. The farmers thus found that they were again sold out. From then on their conditions grew from bad to worse. Most of them cannot meet their taxes, not to speak of interests and payments on mortgages. A degrading poverty set in. The farmers reached the end of their endurance. A breaking point came. The strike was declared and spread to seven counties involving many thousand farmers. At their meetings the farmers agreed not only to hold back their own milk supply but also to picket the milk stations. There they took care of the scabs in the effective manner of dumping their milk.

"Striking Against the Government"

The owners of the big dairy companies, however, could lean back in their swivel chairs saying: You are not striking against us, you are striking against the government. Meanwhile Governor Lehman the willing tool of the dairy companies, concentrated all the state troopers in the teritory to give the striking farmers a lesson in law and order, enforced by clubs, tear ags and riot guns. He proclaimed that all law abiding citizens are to be protected, by that he meant the scabs. He proclaimed that all law breakers, meaning the striking farmers, must be prosecuted. Several hundred were subsequently arrested.

The striking farmers demanded as their share 45 percent of the price at which milk retails in the cities. This would mean about 4 to 5 cents a quart. The trouble is, however, that the farmers have no organization. They are merely loosely held together by pressure of the desperate conditons under which they suffer. Nevertheless they all expressed themselves as ready to fight to a finish, stating that they had nothing to lose. At the time of this writing a truce has been declared and it remains to be seen whether the strike will be renewed or whether the big dairy companies, aided by the state forces, will be able to enforce their kind of an agreement.

The roads here in all directions have been patroled by about 500 state troopers equipped with steel helmets and gas bombs. How many sheriffs and deputies were added to this force I do not know but in many instances actual wholesale deputizing took place. The Dairymens' League asked the governor to also call in the National Guard. For the time being that is held in abeyance. There is no sign of the Milk Control Board offering a solution, but meanwhile the farmers are learning rapidly that the government is not for them but against them. —GADFLY.

U.S. Holds High Cards in Cuba

(Continued from page 1)

The anti-Machado movement was essentially anti-imperialist, at different times different classes came to the front and occupied the center of the stage. The students and the petty bourgeoisie constituted the Left wing of the nationalist front. While the proletariat remained passive they fought the military dictatorship with terroristic methods. Sections of the bourgeoisie went in for heavier work. They organized military insurections which were put down.

The direct intervention of the proletariat into the struggle precipitated the crisis which drove Machado out. The general strike has been described as a "passive, revolutionary" one. It is unquestionable that the proletarian organizations, many of them, distinctly left in political orientation, were opposed to both Machado and his imperialist masters. But the press dispatches fail to show the revolutionary content of their participation in the struggle.

Pre-Revolutionary Situation

The situation which developed was a pre-revolutionary one. It required the determined intervention of the proletariat under the leadership of a resolute, revolutionary vanguad to develop the situation into a revolutionary one and prepare for the seizure of power. The demands which the workers made, not on their bosses, but on the new government before it had an opportunity to consolidate its power, were modest to an extreme: immediate freedom of all imprisoned workers; repeal of certain legislation affecting wage scales; stricter enforcement of the eight hour day law; recognition of the Confederacion Nacional Obrero de Cuba, the national trade union center; and regulations to put in force lower prices for foodstuffs.

These are essentially democratic demands. All the more astonishing is the statement of the Central Committee of the American Communist Party in the **Daily Worker** of August 4: "Butcher Machado is gone, driven out by the mass revolutionary uprising of the Cuban workers, peasants and toiling population, organized around the general political strike, which was initiated by the Communist Party of Cuba"! ! The question arises: if the Communist party is so well rooted in the proletariat that it can organize a general political strike why did it not put forward demands corresponding to the situation?

The truth of the matter is that the Communist party did not organize the strike and is not, unfortunately a decisive factor in the situation; that the **Daily Worker** is boasting; and that the proletariat with inexcusable modesty marched behind the bourgeoisie against Machado. That is why the struggle did not rise above an anti-Machado movement.

The modesty of the proletariat below and the skill and pressure of American imperialism above combined to confine the anti-imperialist struggle to an anti-Machado movement. The job of Sumner Welles consisted in easing Machado out to allay the rising tide of discontent, and slipping in a substitute of the same servile stripe, but one more agreeable to the population. The situation created by the intervention of the proletariat very nearly upset his plans. But the "disinterestedness" of the proletariat which demanded nothing "unreasonable" or "unpatriotic" for itself alowed Roosevetl-Welles to retain the cloak of friendly mediation, that is to say, to keep the lid on the anti-imperialist movement, without resorting to more forceful measures.

None the less the mediators were worried. They had to allow the people to blow off steam. They utilized the anti-Machado sentiments of an entire country as a safety valve. The hatred of the people for Machado took on violent forms. The members of La Porra were hunted down like rats and killed where they were found. The Presidential Palace was sacked. The Heraldo de Cuba a Machado paper was also sacked. The soldiers and police stood by and even lent a hand occasionally.

Cespedes' Job

In this way mediation canalized the anti-imperialist movement. The shooting and sacking, thought the mediators, is like a thunder-storm. It makes a noise and it passes. But this thundertsorm did not pass quickly enough to suit the mediators. As long as the people were in motion the movement contained within itself the possibility of developing to a higher stage. "President Cespedes faces the serious problem of....preventing the successful mass revoltuion from becoming too revolutionary." **N. Y. Times, August 14, 1933.**

And if it went far enough it would make necessary armed intervention to induce it to subside. In that case the whole of Latin America with the help of England would raise a tremendous cry against American imperialism with the resulting shifts in trade more favorable for England at "our" expense. The lessons of Nicarauga and Haiti have not passed Wall Street by without a trace.

Still treading warily Roosevelt ordered warships to Cuban waters —without marines aboard—just to protect American citizens and property. No intervention intended. And the Cuban army has been ordered to shoot down any violations of "peace". The holiday is over, say the mediators. Slaves, back to your yokes.

The policy of Roosevelt in the Cuban situation is an extension on an international scale of his domestic policy. American imperialism is learning to speak a new language. For a time and for a purpose it is foregoing the accents of harsh command. The mailed fist is there. But it is clothed in velvet. Soft words now fall from Uncle Sam's lips. Friendliness beams on his face. He believes and practices mediation!

The reason is not far to seek. The crisis of American capitalism cannot be solved on a domestic scale alone. Europe, Latin America and Asia are the markets to which American capitalism must export to realize its surplus value. The assault on Europe has already begun. The assaults on Asia and South America are in preparation. That is the meaning of the trade parleys with the South American countries, as far as South America is concerned. And Roosevelt is careful not to jeopardize them by blunders of Hoover-Stimson type.

Cespedes and the new deal for Cuba will no more solve the problems of Cuban economy than the policies of Machado. Whatever makeshift is worked out will be a temporary scheme to protect the profits of American capitalism on the backs of Cuban masses. The condition of the Cuban masses can be improved and the problems of the revolution solved only in struggle against Cespedes and Wall St.

By themselves the Cuban masses cannot throw off the yoke of American imperialism and Cuban capitalism. The socialist revolution in Cuba is dependent on the revolution in the United States. That is true for Latin America as a whole. But to the Cuban proletariat can fall the honor of entering upon the revolutionary path before the more backward American proletariat. For that is necessary a Communist party rooted in the proletariat marching on a correct internationalist road. In Cuba as all over the world the Stalinist theory and practice hold back the movement. The revolution in Cuba cannot grow to its full stature until the Communist party strikes off the shackles of Stalinism. This the newly former Cuban Left Opposition must help it to do. —T. STAMM...

2 Young Negroes Lynched in South

(Continued From Page 1)

hearsed. The sheriff did exactly as ordered. He did not lift his little finger in protest—not to mention his gun. The youngest of the three Negroes, Dan Pippen, 18, and A. T. Harden, 16, were slain outright. Elmore Clark, 28, was saved from death only by a ruse. He played dead and after the lynch mob left crawled to the house of a Negro family where he had his wounds dressed and cared for.

If ever the phrase cool, calculated and premeditated murder could be used, this is it. The sheriff was warned that a mob had organized to lynch the Negroes. He was warned not to move them without sufficient protection, yet he deliberately sent home the trailing car of deputies on the darkest part of the road. He made absolutely no effort to resist the lynchers. The case is clear.

That typical southern hypocritical yawping of southern courtesy and fair play is again to the fore. Always after another lynching. "Justice will be done", rants Judge Foster. And he immediately sets about pointing his finger at the International Labor Defense which had offered to defend the boys against lynch justice. The boys were undoubtedly terrorized against the use of the I. L. D. The attempts on the part of the southern bourbons to shift the onus of responsibility for this crime will go unheeded by the southern white and Negro workers. These workers will recall that it was due only to the mass pressure of the working class throughout the entire country and even throughout the entire world set in motion by the International Labor Defense that the Scottsboro boys are still alive. They will realize as they must that for a poor exploited Negro of the south there is only one kind of justice meted out in the courts—lynch justice. The legal murder of Dan Pippen and Harden are no accidents. Rather it is the rule in the south. To defend himself from the bestial fury of the southern ruling class the Negro must learn that only by uniting in common struggle with the exploited poor whites of the south against their common exploiters will a measure of safety be gained for him. Lynch law is the law of the southern ruling class.

* * * *

As we go to press we learn that a committee under the auspices of the Scottsboro Action Committee, the National Committee for Defense of Political Prisoners and the American Civil Liberties Union has been formed to demand from Roosevelt immediate action in Tuscaloosa and to force the arrest of Judge Henry B. Foster and Sheriff R. L. Shamblin in connection with the murder of the two young Negroes. —M. GLEE.

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: BOOK REVIEW :

S. S. Bulgaria
July 20, 1933

FOSTAMARA*

A remarkable book! From the first line to the last it is directed against the Fascist regime in Italy, against its lies, its violence, and book of passionate political propaganda. But revolutionary passion is raisch hert to such heights that it creates a truly artistic work. Fontamara is only a poor, god forsaken village in the South of Italy. In the space of the book's two hundred pages, this name becomes a symbol of the whole Italian countryside, its poverty, its dehpair, but also of its indignation.

Silone knows the Italian peasantry remarkably well; the first 20 years of the author's life, according to his own words, were spent in "Fontamara". Embelishein to him. He knows how to sec ment and sentimentality are forlife as it is, how to generalize what he sees by means of the Marxist method and then to embody his generalizations into artistic images. The stroy is told by the peasants, cafoni, paupers themselves. Despite the exceptional difficulty of this style, the author executes it like a real master. Some chapters have a stupendous force!

Has this book appeared in the Soviet Union? Has it drawn the attention of the publishing houses of the Comintern? The book deserves a circulation of millions of copies. But no matter what the may be towards works of truly revattitude of the official bureaucracy olutionary literature, "Fontamara" —we are convinced—will make its way into the official bureaucracy may be towards works of truly revolutionary literature. To assist in the circulation of this book is the duty of every revolutionist.

—L. TROTSKY.

Fontamara. A Novel by I. Silone, Zurich, 1933.