

Discussion on the German Defeat

The article appearing below is another contribution to the discussion on the problems of the German situation after the victory of Fascism. The views expressed are those of the writer. Comrades are invited to participate in this discussion but their contribution should be limited to about 700 words.—Ed.

In the *New Republic* of July 5 there appeared an article by comrade Trotsky entitled "The German Catastrophe" (reprinted in the *Militant*) which subjected the policy of the Central Committee of the C. P. and the C. I. to a critical analysis. The substance of this document was that the failure of the C. P. and the Social Democracy to form a united front, and the failure of the C. P. G. to propose it, was responsible for the catastrophe. With the substance of this criticism, limited as it must be within the confines of a short article, we have no argument. But this explanation does not go far enough and to the root of things. The reader gets the impression that the leaders of the C. P. G. were free agents acting in accordance with the dictates of their own judgment which proved to be erroneous. The leaders of German Communism acted as they did not merely because their judgment was poor but because they consented to become puppets of the existing foreign policy of Stalinism. They had received orders from Moscow to offer only a dilatory opposition or passive resistance but no serious struggle against Hitler. What proof is there for these assertions? And what were the motives for justifying this policy?

The organs of the L. O. noticed the strange silence of the C. I. for months preceding the events of March 5, they called attention to its failure to furnish political assistance and to the failure of the C. P. G. to make adequate defense preparations. The C. P. U. S. A. also ignored appeals from the L. O. for action on the German crisis. These were the outward symptoms of the crisis in the C. I.

Were these features and events mere accidents and oversights on the part of the Stalinists? We know that in politics there are no accidents or oversights—not where major policies are concerned. We believe the answer is to be found in the changed foreign policy of the C. P. S. U. From a party committed to the promotion of world revolution it has degenerated into a party of national Socialism. In order to establish this hypothesis we invite the consideration of the following facts.

It is common knowledge that an isolated workers' revolutionary government operating under the discussion of a party committed to a policy of world revolution must of necessity have difficult and strained relations with capitalist powers, who, when they are not conspiring actively to destroy it are protesting against the "outrages", that a foreign party, i. e. the C. P. S. U. should be conducting propaganda on their territory through an affiliated organization, the C. I. Hence, since the termination of the active interventionist program the capitalist world powers have demanded the cessation by the S. U. of Communist propaganda on their soil. In the language of diplomacy this means the suppression of the C. I. Depending upon various situations in the international field they have threatened to break off relations, have refused to sign trade agreements, treaties, extend loans, guarantee credits as long as the C. I. was an active threat to their existence. The Soviet diplomacy countered with the argument that it was not responsible for the actions of the C. I. and that no Soviet government agency was engaged in any hostile action on foreign soil. Mr. Henderson, British foreign minister to mention only one case, refused to accept this contention insisting that the S. U. was responsible for the acts of the C. I., which he considered a propaganda arm of the Soviets. He informed the Soviet Union that if the C. I. engaged in propagandizing on British soil relations between the two countries would again be broken. As long as Lenin and Trotsky were leading the C. P. S. U. this demand for suppression of the C. I. was energetically resisted. But with the death of Lenin, the expulsion of the L. O., the slowing down of world revolution and the rise of the policies of national socialism, the Stalinist leadership of the C. P. S. U. has gradually yielded to the pressure of world imperialist powers. The benefit of an active international center coordinating the activities of the parties was considered as insignificant compared to the benefits of recognition and credits. The belief gradually grew up among the Stalinist bureaucracy that one or the other would have to be sacrificed. The C. I. was, of course, sacrificed and with it the international conception that the fate of the Soviet Union was bound up with the fate of the world proletariat. The

theory which the Stalinist school of national socialism advanced, officially and unofficially, may be expressed as follows:

The mere existence of the S. U. is a beacon light to the world proletariat. If the S. U. can obtain a breathing space for a number of years during which untroubled, peaceful relations, loans, trade, etc., can be established with the capitalist world powers then fulfilled socialism can be developed within the Soviet Union. The resultant socialist construction will be a great inspiration to the oppressed proletariat, who will then, seeing a finished socialist structure as an objective reality, be only too willing to overthrow their bourgeoisie. What shall the proletariat do in the meantime? In the meantime the C. P. S. U. abandons its original program of world revolution. In fact, the proletariat of other countries must mark time not even attempt to seize power because this would disturb the Soviet capitalist peaceful cohabitation. In fact for the time being, the world proletariat must be prepared to sacrifice its historic mission—the overthrow of capitalism for the sake of the "upbuilding of socialism in the Soviet Union".

These arguments have not an iota in common with Leninism. The war scars which the Stalinists use to justify their policy is strange—very similar to that used by the German social democracy in 1918. When after the German Revolution they were called upon by the workers to establish a workers government and come to the assistance of the Russian revolution, they replied in these words: "If we come to the assistance of the German proletariat and establish a workers government the allies will march into Germany and occupy Berlin. Thus all the achievements of the German revolution will be destroyed. It is therefore much safer and more certain to follow the slow but peaceful path to socialism of the Weimar Constitution." Now we can understand the silence of the C. I. before and after the coup d'état. Now we can understand the passivity of the C. P. G. The German working class and with it the hopes of the world proletariat were sacrificed for years to come, so that the Stalin bureaucracy might nurse its illusory hope of peace calm and quiet living together with world capitalism.

The Future of the C. I.

From the Stalinist course of a half-liquidated international there arises a three fold danger:

1. If the Soviet Union should be really threatened with war, intervention or both, the danger is that the workers of the various important countries will not respond with the same enthusiasm to the slogan of defending the Workers Republic as they have heretofore. These

workers will argue that the C. I. and the C. P. S. U. remained silent while Fascism rolled over our organizations and broke the backbone of our movement for liberation. Why should we break our heads for the Stalinists when the Soviet Union, manned by Stalinism, finds itself encircled by world imperialism?

Naturally from the standpoint of the I. L. O. such a viewpoint would be calamitous and the L. O. would actively resist it. But the danger nevertheless exists that such currents are likely to make themselves felt widely. The I. L. O. must take measures to forestall the possibility of such phenomena.

2. There is another danger—that of passivity. Many Communist-minded workers will lose faith, because of the inactivity of the C. I., in all revolutionary movements and withdraw from the struggle altogether.

3. Lastly, the greatest danger is that of liquidation. When, in 1923, the C. I. failed to respond to the revolutionary situation, the result was a steady streaming back of workers to re-enroll under the banner of the social democracy. Such a danger is magnified today because the breakdown of the C. P. in Germany and Austria, in Germany and Italy Fascism has been able to carry on only because it has made deep inroads into the ranks of the workers. The danger therefore exists of large masses streaming into the folds of Fascism because of the breakdown of both internationalisms, the 2nd as well as the 3rd.

Conclusion

The Stalinist policy, can now, be summarized as follows:

1. Abandonment of the Leninist program of world revolution.

2. Nominal existence for the C. I.; Muzzling of the C. I. as important world crises arise.

3. Civil peace with world capitalism; no international class struggle.

4. Suppression of democratic centralism in the C. P. S. U.; conversion of the party into a semi-military administration and ruled from the top by a dictatorial oligarchy.

Where does this policy lead to? It is obvious that we are not dealing any more with a centrist current in Communism with which we have tactical differences but with tight wing opportunism.

Upon the shoulders of the I. L. O. rests the responsibility of preventing the above-mentioned dangers from becoming acute and from engulfing for decades the entire workers' liberationist movement. Under these changed circumstances the I. L. O. must make plans for its transition from the role of an Opposition within the C. I. to a new role—that of the leading nucleus for the organization of a new International.

—L. BROWN.

Relativity and Pacifism

The *New York Times* of September 10 quotes Albert Einstein, world famous pacifist, as follows: "If I were a Belgian I would not refuse military service under the present circumstances, but I would, on the contrary, accept it with a clear conscience with the sentiment of a contribution toward securing European civilization."

The "present circumstances" are Einstein's fear of a threat of war emanating from Hitler. Einstein thinks that the tide of war will roll westward and that Belgium will fall beneath the Nazi chariot wheels. Hence the gratuitous admonition to Belgian workers to train for the defense of "their" country.

The French Socialists and the British labor skates want to defend European democracy against Fascist and "Soviet dictatorships". Hitler, too, wants to defend European civilization against "the East". How many saviors of European civilization there are!

It is difficult to reconcile this latest position of Einstein's with his endorsement of and services for the Stalinist Amsterdam World Anti-War Congress. This the Stalinists will have to explain away. We warned in time against entrusting the leadership of the fight against imperialism war to well meaning intellectuals and pacifists. For our good advice the Stalinists gave us curses and blows.

This latest advice of Einstein's stands in contradiction to his former, well known advice to the entire world to refuse to bear arms. He is the formulator of the pacifist idea that if only two percent of a population refuse to bear arms that number will suffice to defeat the war plans of the imperialists.

But if you think you see a contradiction here Einstein does not. He explains this point: "There does not mean I renounce my previous opinions. I desire nothing more than to see the moment come when the refusal of military service will be the means for an efficacious struggle for the progress of humanity." You see, he merely postpones his idea of refusing military service for a while. And in the meantime he advocates the exact opposite.

Is there a contradiction here? Yes and no. It all depends on how you look at it. Workers should remember that Einstein is the author of the theory of relativity which, despite its positive contributions to science, implies that there is no objective world independent of consciousness and that the world is only the result of the position of the measurer. In other words if you stick your head between your legs and look at the world from that position the Empire State Building grows down from the sky and calling on Belgian workers to enter the military service of the capitalist class to defend the capitalist state is not in contradiction to pacifist ideas.

That is generally the conclusion to which the petty bourgeois, confusionist theories of pacifism lead. We hope that Einstein will forgive us if we see in his playing with serious questions the bankruptcy of pacifism and its objective support of imperialism.

—T. STAMM.

Southern Negroes Under the N.R.A.

The murderous meaning of Roosevelt's "New Deal" to southern Negro workers has been brought to our attention by many conflicts which have arisen around the issue of wage differentials between white and Negro workers. A firm in Atlanta which prominently displayed the blue eagle insignia pays its Negro employees from 6 to 13 cents an hour. The most violent forms of Jim Crowism transferred into the wage differential question is given testimony in an article in the *New York Times* of August 27, from which we quote in part:

"Mississippi already has given the nation an example of barbarity based on an economic condition.... Negro firemen were lured from their engines with flares and then shot down. Others were slain or seriously wounded in the engine rooms.... It can be assumed that how- ever true the statement that the living costs of the Negro justifies a differential in wages, the thought is not a pleasant one to blacks who are forced to live in miserable surroundings in order to live at the lowest scale. This situation created by the NRA regulations benefited as they are in intent (?) is one that must have the serious and honest consideration of reasonable men of both races."

It would be much more correct to state that this situation and the whole Negro question requires the consideration of working men of both races created exactly this situation. I quote further from the same article to prove this statement:

"Many men suggested that a differential in wages should be established. This was successfully done among laundry workers, where Negro workers have long represented the majority of the workers. But a drastic differential in other lines is another matter and contains a danger pointed out by Dr. R. R. Moton, head of Tuskegee In-

Secretary Hull expressed the opinion to the London economic conference that if any nation wrecked it, "that country will merit the execration of mankind." Yet the United States did it. Secretary Woodin, when denying rumors of currency stabilization agreements reached at London, said that "any agreement on this subject will be reached in Washington, not elsewhere." Soon Secretary Swanson, who is now busy building a navy "second to none", can be expected to add his declaration that "any future agreement on naval ratio will be reached in Washington, not elsewhere."

Even Slander Needs Meaning

A Discussion with those Stalinists Who Reflect

On every occasion the Stalinists repeat that the Bolshevik-Leninists whom they call "Trotskyists" are working in favor of military intervention in the U. S. S. R. A shameless absurdity of this kind is calculated to mislead ill-informed people. The courageous man, the honest one, must inevitably say to himself: "It is impossible that such a thing is simply an invention, there must be some truth in it." And unfortunately there are not a few of such courageous men in the world.

How then must one understand the aid that the "Trotskyists" will lend aid to intervention? Does that mean that the Bolshevik-Leninists are on the side of imperialism in the struggle against the U. S. S. R., that is, that they will be materially or politically interested in overthrowing the workers' state with the aid of the military force of the imperialist bourgeoisie? There are people who even go as far as such assertions. In the majority of cases, these are slovenly careerists who are little concerned over intervention, revolution, Marxism and ideas in general they simply serve the master of today and will unhesitatingly betray this master in time of danger.

At bottom, these "udarniks" (shock brigadiers) of slander continue the tradition of the reactionaries, who, from 1914 onward and particularly from 1917, repeated indefinitely that Lenin and Trotsky were agents of the German General Staff. After 15 or 20 years in the course of which such events as the October Revolution, the Civil war, the creation of the 3rd International and the intransigent struggle of the Bolshevik-Leninists for the banner of Marx and Lenin against the degenerating bureaucracy have taken place—the Stalinists have withdrawn from the mud of the accusation formerly fabricated by the military espionage, by Milinkov, Bourtzov and Kerensky.

Others of the more prudent bureaucrats do not trust themselves to pose the question in the spirit of the British and Czarist counter-espionage. They add a wise word: the Trotskyists, they say, objectively aid the counter revolution, and the intervention. Such a formula, which itself pretends to objectivity in its reality deprives of all content. Any mistake of the revolutionary party aids the enemy directly or indirectly but the whole question consists precisely in this: on whose side is the mistake? The Bolshevik-Leninists have demonstrated (and events have justified our arguments) that the policy of the Stalinist bureaucracy has aided the bourgeoisie and foreign imperialism against the workers in China; that it aided the British reformists against Communism; that in the U. S. S. R. it has aided and it aids the thermidor-

ians and the bonapartists against the October Revolution; finally that it aided Hitler against the proletariat in Germany. Is this true or not? This is the decisive question. Of course our criticism does not contribute to raising the authority of the Stalinist faction; but can one put the prestige of the bureaucracy and the vital interests of the world proletariat on the same plane? The Stalinist bureaucracy, which disposes in abundance of the services of publications, papers, "theoreticians", journalists, has not even approached a refutation of our criticism. Is it not truly astounding that the C. I. has no book which draws the lessons of the German events of 1923, the Bulgarian intervention and a series of other events of lesser extent. Thus, after the miserable report of Heckert they have put a cross on the study and on the analysis of the causes of the victory of German Fascism. By treating our criticism as counter-revolutionary the Stalinist bureaucracy merely says by that we assail the principle of its infallibility. This principle has no doubt of demonstration: whoever doubts it is expelled from the organization and is locked in a prison in the U. S. S. R., then the family of the criminal is deprived of domicile and bread.

But is or is not the Opposition correct in its criticism? What then has military intervention to do with it? However in its chase for stronger and stronger arguments to justify its measures of physical destruction of the Leninists, the Stalinists with more and more frequency advance the argument of intervention. Their reasoning is constructed somewhat along the following lines: the "Trotskyists" say that Socialism in a single country is impossible; that the kulaks in the U. S. S. R. are not destroyed; that social democracy is not Fascism, consequently... the "Trotskyists" press forward on the road of intervention. The conclusion here does not in any way at all flow from the premises. Only a little reflection is necessary to be convinced that the very conclusion stands in direct contradiction with the premises. Only a little reflection is necessary to be convinced that the very conclusion stands in direct contradiction with the premises. The Stalinists themselves have repeated on numerous occasions that it is precisely the success of the construction of socialism which sharpened the hatred of the imperialists for the U. S. S. R. and by that brings closer the danger of intervention. But then is it not the Bolshevik-Leninists who declare that the actual successes are far from being as great as the Stalinist faction affirms? How then can this criticism push the bourgeoisie on the road of intervention? Let them explain that to us!

No one who knows anything will

deny that the hostility of the world bourgeoisie originates from the fear of the extension of the proletarian revolution in other countries. This danger, in any case, effects the world bourgeoisie more immediately than the "liquidation" of classes in the U. S. S. R. The Bolshevik-Leninists, as is known, accuse the Stalinist bureaucracy of having practically renounced the policy of world revolution. Whether this be basically true or not, in any case such an accusation should diminish and not augment the danger of intervention. And indeed one can bring tens and hundreds of proofs to bear that the bourgeois believes that the policy of "socialism in one country" is much more realistic, wiser, "national" than the policy of "Trotskyism", that is of the international proletarian revolution. The criticism of the Left Opposition can only strengthen the diplomatic positions of Stalinism. A serious American bourgeois, Campbell, has shown the necessity of recognizing the Soviet Union by referring to the words of Stalin, saying that the course towards international revolution was liquidated with the expulsion of Trotsky. It is true that Stalin has disavowed these words. Let us admit that they were said to Campbell not by Stalin himself, but by one of his associates; let us even admit that Campbell, in order to make the greatest impression, has himself put this argument into Stalin's mouth. At bottom that does not change the matter one iota. Campbell puts as a positive feature of Stalin that which left Opposition considers as a negative feature and the American bourgeois is right from his point of view.

In any case, to accuse the Stalinist bureaucracy of being nationally limited does not hinder, but facilitates "normal" and even "friendly" relations for it with the bourgeois states. What happens then to the lecture on intervention? It can however be said that we do not exactly explain the basis of the Stalinist argumentation. Let us take their official press. We have at hand the last number of *l'Humanité* (August 2nd). Let us surmount the natural repugnance for slander and let us probe the arguments of the functionaries of *l'Humanité*. Here as an example of "Trotskyist" counter-revolution, they cite the words of Simone Weil: "The diplomacy of the Russian State should inspire us with defiance in case of war as in case of peace, just as the diplomacy of the capitalist states, if not to the same degree." Further on they cite the words of a so-called "Trotskyist" Prader: "The power which dominates the U. S. S. R. has nothing in common—in spite of its lies—with the October Revolution." In alleging these two quotations, of which we cannot guarantee the authenticity of the text, the editors write: "These are words for word the same fifth that appears in the press of the other white-Russian or French counter-revolutionaries, of the Renaissance of General Miller, in the *Dernieres Nouvelles* of Milinkov and in *Populaire* of Blum-Rosenfeld."

So the White-Russians accuse Soviet diplomacy of having sunk to the level of bourgeois diplomacy or having betrayed the heritage of the October Revolution. Can anything more stupid or more ridiculous be imagined? And in order to show what he really is the unfortunate functionary, accidentally more than he can: "the accusations of the two camps coincide word for word."

In reality, the white guard press exerts all its strength to prove to the bourgeois governments that the Stalinist bureaucracy continues the criminal work of the October Revolution, that it does not limit itself to national aims and aspires as before to the world revolution, and that is why the conclusion of the Franco-Soviet non-aggression pact or the recognition of the Soviets by Spain are fatal mistakes. In other words, the reactionary Russian and world press tries to demonstrate that Soviet diplomacy is not "Europeanized" that is, that it is not bourgeoisified and it sees in its refusal to bourgeoisify itself a basis some logic in that. But the Stalinist intervention: there is at least lists have nothing, except absurdities. The Whites hate the Soviets with a vehement hatred and precisely because of that they look for arguments that have political meaning. It is an entirely different thing when an appointed functionary defends a cause which is quite foreign to him: he throws into the same sack all the absurdities which come into his poor head.

The functionary receives his task for the day: connect Trotsky with the white onagers in order to justify the repressions against Rakovsky and thousands of irreproachable Bolsheviks. Then how does the indifferent functionary act in the cause? He assuredly does not throw himself into a polemic with Trotsky or his comrades: such a polemic promises nothing good. He has neither facts nor arguments: where should he find such facts and arguments? The functionary finds two isolated quotations which have no relation with Trotsky and he sets his wits to work to identify these quotations with the point of view of the white guards which is directly contrary both in spirit and letter. In order to give proof of his zeal the functionary adds: "word for word": in slandering he takes no care to give his slander even an appearance of sense. No wonder if the advanced workers more and more turn their backs on the dishonest, ignorant and traitorous functionary. —G. G.

Cuban Revolution Rising

Revolutionary unrest continues unabated in Cuba and the new regime which claims to be "anti-imperialist but willing to fulfill all of its legitimate obligations" is finding increasing difficulty in maintaining itself between the pressure from Wall Street and Washington on the one hand and the masses from the left on the other. While several hundred of the old army officers continue barricaded in the National Hotel, Colonel-Sergeant Batista, army chief of staff, is busy promoting enlisted men to replace his former officers. Fraternization between the soldiers and workers continues. This is what the capitalist press means when it complains of the breakdown of discipline.

The native bourgeoisie is already consistently sabotaging the Grau San Martin Government by withholding taxes due to the government, hoping in this way to force the government to default in the payment of interest on loans to Wall Street increase the pressure on it from that direction and turn the army against it consequent on its failure to pay the enlisted rank and file.

The workers and students, realizing the danger of counter-revolution and in order to be able to exert mass pressure on the bourgeoisie, are taking steps to fortify their present positions in an attempt to prevent the triumph of a counter-revolution, led by the Menocal conservatives or Mendieta nationalists.

The strike wave continues unabated; the militancy of the workers and unwillingness of the soldiers to act against them being everywhere in evidence. On the banana plantations at Antilla, Oriente Province, the workers have

given the owners until Saturday to grant their demands and the seizure of the estates should compliance not be made is likely. The strike at the Cristo manganese mines continues in spite of efforts of the students and soldiers to arbitrate. In this particular case some weakening of the workers' attitude is to be noted in their apparent willingness to accept a truce of 15 days, during which they would return to work.

Once more the dock workers of Santiago are threatening to strike unless their latest demands are accepted within 72 hours. The strikes at the Mabay refinery in Santiago and on the coffee plantations of the same province continue.

In many points throughout the island the workers, especially those on the sugar plantations, are arming themselves. The first attempt of the present government or of the counter-revolution to oust them from the sugar mills and plantations, some of which they have already seized will undoubtedly be met by violent resistance.

At the same time camps for military instruction are being organized by the student organizations and authorized spokesmen for the students stated to the Associated Press representative:

"We are attempting to prevent a recurrence of those things which happened to these boys during the Machado regime. We want them to have a knowledge of military training so that they may be prepared to defend themselves whenever it may be necessary to do so."

The same Associated Press representative goes on to note that the organizers of these military training camps take pains to explain that their movement is not of a fascist character.

Representatives of American capitalist interests, especially Ambassador Welles, are bargaining with the Grau San Martin Government as well as with the leaders of the other bourgeoisie political groups. By intelligently plying them against each other any one of them can be made to come to an agreement favorable to Wall Street. The pressure of the masses, however, as expressed concretely within the ranks of the army, by the seizures of the sugar mills, and by the developments at the manganese mines in Cristóbal, Oriente Province, must be reckoned with before Yankee imperialism can hope to again establish the good old days of uninterrupted exploitation of Cuba.

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