

Whither the I.L.P. of Great Britain

The latest political decisions of the National Council of the British Independent Labor party show clearly that after its break with the reformists this party continues to move leftward. Similar processes are to be observed in other countries: a Left wing forms within the social democratic parties which splits off at the following stage from the party and tries with its own forces to pave for itself a revolutionary path. These processes reflect on one side the deep crisis of capitalism and of reformism which is inseparably bound up therewith, and on the other—the inability of the Comintern to group around itself revolutionary currents within the proletariat.

In England, however, the situation is further complicated by an unhealed combination. Whereas in other countries, the Comintern continues to treat the Left socialist organizations as "Left social Fascists" and as "the most dangerous counter-revolutionists", a permanent collaboration has been established between the I. L. P. and the Communist party of Great Britain. How the leaders of the Comintern combine this collaboration with the theory of "social Fascism" remains a mystery. In the July issue of the theoretical organ of the Comintern, Fenner Brockway, the newly appointed secretary of the I. L. P. is called a "counter-revolutionist" as heretofore. Why the British Communist party made a united front with the I. L. P. is not clear from above, but from below, moreover, with leaders who prove to be "counter-revolutionists", and a united front made not for one single practical action but for collaboration in general,—no mortal can solve these contradictions. But if the principles be left aside, the matter can be explained very simply: under the exceptionally favorable conditions of Great Britain the Comintern managed completely to isolate and weaken its British section by the ruinous policy of the Anglo-Russian committee of the "third period", "social-Fascism" and the rest; on the other hand, the deep social crisis of British capitalism pushed the I. L. P. sharply towards the Left; not heeding consistency or logic the totally discouraged Comintern this time grabbed the alliance proposed to it with both hands.

We could have and should have welcomed and heartily supported the collaboration of the I. L. P. with the Communist party had it not been based on evasiveness, suppressions and ambiguities on both sides.

Of the Communist party the National Council says that it is "revolutionary in outlook as ourselves". That is all that we learn with regard to the appraisal of the Communist party and of its policy. Every serious and thinking worker will inevitably ask: why are two parties necessary if they have both an equally revolutionary outlook. The worker will be more astonished upon learning that the leaders of one of the equally revolutionary parties consider the leaders of the other party as "counter-revolutionists" and "Left social-Fascists". Possibly the National Council refrains from a critical estimation of its ally so as not to undermine the alliance itself? But an alliance of revolutionary organizations which is based not on open mutual criticism but on diplomacy will be thrown over by the first gust of the political storm, like a house of cards.

The theses of the National Council explain the bloc with the Communist party, first, as a step towards the united front, secondly as a stage in the creation of a mass revolutionary party. Each of these two arguments has its weight; but mechanically placed side by side they contradict each other. The theses repeat that the united front should embrace any and all organizations of the proletariat insofar as they wish to participate in the struggle: the Labor Party, the trade-unions, even the Co-operatives. But we know well, and not from literature but from the tragic experience of the German catastrophe, that the Comintern rejects the united front with reformist ("social-Fascist") organizations. How does the I. L. P. intend to build a united front with reformist organizations in alliance with the Communist party: only from below and under the leadership of the Communist bureaucracy guaranteed in advance? To this question there is no answer.

Mentioning in passing that the bloc with the Communist party has pushed certain sections of the "official" central sections of the "Right, the National Council expresses the hope that these prejudices can be conquered by an active participation in daily struggles. The fact that the reactionary prejudices of the leaders of the Labor party and of the General Council of trade-unions do not frighten the leaders of the I. L. P. only does the I. L. P. credit. Unfortunately, however, it is not only a question of prejudices. When the Communist bureaucracy declares that reformism and Fascism are twins, it not only criticizes the reformist leaders incorrectly, but it provokes the rightful indignation of the reformist workers. The theses, it is true, say that the criticism of reformism should correspond to actual facts and push the reformist workers forwards and not back; but the Communist party is not mentioned in this connection by one word. What can be made of the theory of "social Fascism" and how can the policy of the united front be built on this theory? To pass such questions in silence in the resolution does not mean to remove them from life. An open discussion could possibly force the Communist party to adopt a correct position, diplomatic evasiveness can only pile up contradictions and prepare a new catastrophe for the next

Its Present Position and Perspectives by L. Trotsky

Without defining in principle their attitude to official Communism (Stalinism) the theses of the National Council stop midway in their relation to reformism. The reformists must be criticized as conservative democrats and not as Fascists, but the struggle with them must be no less irreconcilable because of it, since British reformism is the main hindrance now to the liberation not only of the British but also of the European proletariat. The policy of a united front with reformists is obligatory but it is of necessity limited to partial tasks, especially to defensive struggles. There can be no thought of making the socialist revolution in a united front with reformist organizations. The principal task of a revolutionary party consists in freeing the working class from the influence of reformism. The error of the Comintern bureaucracy consists not in the fact that they see the most important condition for the victory of the proletariat in the leadership of a revolutionary party—that is entirely correct—but in that being incapable of gaining the confidence of the working masses in daily struggle starting as a minority in modest roles, it demands this confidence in advance, presents titanic attempts at a united front because other organizations are not willing to voluntarily hand it over the marshal's baton. This is not Marxian policy but bureaucratic sabotage. A sec-

ure and firm victory of the proletarian revolution—we repeat it again—is possible only under the condition that a revolutionary party, that is a truly Communist party, succeeds in gaining the firm confidence of the majority of the working class before the overthrow. This central question is not touched in the theses. Why? Out of "tact" with regard to the ally? Not only that. There are deeper causes. Insufficient clarity of the theses with regard to the united front flows from the incomplete realization of the methods of the proletarian revolution. The theses speak of the necessity "to wrest the control of the economic system and the State from the capitalists class and to transfer it to the working class". But how solve this gigantic problem? To solve this pivotal question of our epoch the theses reply with a naked phrase: "this can only be achieved through united action of the working class". The struggle for power and the dictatorship of the proletariat remain abstract notions which can be easily dissolved in the amorphous perspectives of the united front....

In the realm of reality-made-revolutionary formulae the bureaucracy of the British Communist party is immeasurably better equipped. Precisely in this lies now its advantage over the leadership of the I. L. P. And it must be said openly: this superficial, purely formal advantage may under the present circumstances lead to the liquidation of the I. L. P. without any gain accruing to the Communist party and to the revolution. The objective conditions have more than once pushed tens and even hundreds of thousands of workers towards the British section of the Comintern, but the leadership of the Com-

intern was capable only of disillusioning them and of throwing them back. If the I. L. P. as a whole should enter today the ranks of the Communist party, within the next couple of months one third of the new members would return to the Labor Party, an other third would be expelled for "conciliatory attitude towards Trotskyism" and for similar crimes, finally, the remaining third, disillusioned in all its expectations would fall into indifference. As a result of this experiment the Communist party would find itself weaker and more isolated than now.

The I. L. P. can save the workers movement of England from this danger only by freeing itself from all unclarity and haziness with regard to the ways and methods of the socialist revolution and by becoming a truly revolutionary party of the proletariat. There is no necessity of inventing anything new in this field: all has been said and said well by the first four congresses of the Comintern. Instead of feeding on bureaucratic substitutes of the epigones it is better to set all the study of the resolutions of the first four congresses of the Comintern. But this alone does not suffice. It is necessary to open a discussion in the party on the lessons of the last decade which was marked by the struggle between the Stalinist bureaucracy and the Left Opposition. The content of this struggle was made up of the most important stage of the world revolutionary movement; economic and political tasks of the U. S. S. R.; problems of the Chinese revolution; the policy of the Anglo-Russian committee; methods of the united front; problems of party democracy; the causes of the German catastrophe. This enormous cycle of problems cannot be passed by. These are not Russian but international problems.

In our epoch a revolutionary party cannot be international. What is the position of the I. L. P. on this? Having entered into an alliance with the Communist party the I. L. P. has not determined its international position. It broke with the Second International and made an alliance with the Third, but it also enters into a labor alliance with Left socialist parties. This alliance, in its turn, is not homogeneous. There are elements in it which gravitate towards Bolshevism, but there are also elements which pull towards the Norwegian Workers Party, that is, in reality towards the social-democracy. What position does the I. L. P. take on all these questions? Is it willing to share the fate of the already historically doomed Comintern, does it want to try to remain in an intermediary position (which means to return by round about ways to reformism), or is it ready to participate in the building of a new international on the foundations laid by Marx and Lenin?

To the serious reader it is clear that our criticism is least of all inspired by animosity towards the I. L. P. On the contrary, we see too clearly that if this party should ingloriously disappear from the scene socialism would suffer a new blow. And this danger exists and it is not far removed. In our epoch it is impossible to remain long in intermediary positions. Only political clarity can save the I. L. P. for the proletarian revolution. The aim of these lines is to help revolutionary clarity to pave its way. August 28, 1933.

L. TROTSKY.

Stalin Prepares Treacherous Blow

Soviet delegates, unable to muster any reasons for the justification of violence against comrades Rakovsky, Victor Serge and many others, declared at the conference of teachers which took place in Reims that a trial will soon be held in the U. S. S. R. which will show that Trotskyists have participated in sabotage and counter-revolutionary activities! This is the reserve argument with which Stalin's office supplied the delegate for his journey. Referring to a Moscow radio announcement, bourgeois newspapers afterwards carried the information that a few dozen "Trotskyists" were actually arrested in the Ukraine and charged with sabotage and state treason: they were

all brought to special trial. A Patent Fraud. It is clear beforehand to every thinking person that the Bolshevik-Leninists, called "Trotskyists", can have even less relation to the economic sabotage of the workers' state than the German Communists to the Reichstag fire. The Left Opposition has always faithfully supported the industrialization of the country not only theoretically but in practical work. It has considered and considers the economic successes of the Soviet state as its successes. It has fought and fights only against the false economic leadership of the uncontrolled bureaucracy.

If real saboteurs are arrested on the Ukraine, they cannot have and have no relation to the Left Opposition; if adherents of the Left Opposition are arrested in the Ukraine they cannot have and have no relation to sabotage. The indictment of "Trotskyists" in counter-revolutionary activities can only be based on an "amalgam" that is a criminal combination of persons who have no relation to each other.

Another Wrangle Officer Frame-Up. As far back as 1927 an agent of the G. P. U., formerly an officer of Wrangel, offered his "technical assistance" to a member of the Communist Youth, sympathetic to the Left Opposition,—and on the basis of this provocation the Bolshevik-Leninists were accused of connections....not with the G. P. U. but with a Wrangle officer. Now it is a question of a crime of far greater magnitude. Stalin is in urgent need of shootings of supposed Trotskyists for real crimes, or of real Trotskyists for supposed crimes to justify the repressions against irreproachable revolutionists whom he has kept now almost six years in jails and exile.

Even from the infrequent official communications on the progress of the party cleaning, one can see that the Left Opposition can not be eradicated; in different localities of the country, in full view of responsible party officials, the "Trotskyists" group together and act. The scant revelations of the Pravda show that the Left Opposition is surrounded by an atmosphere of sympathy, otherwise the local Communists and the local control commissions would have no need to drive and threaten the expulsion of "Trotskyists". No less clear and evident are the successes of the Left Opposition on the international arena. The Stalinists know no less than we of the important gains of the Bolshevik-Leninists among the international proletarian vanguard. The bureaucracy is in great panic. It is necessary to do something and right away! But what? To enter into discussions would be a hopeless task from which only the Bolshevik-Leninists stand to gain. No, drastic measures are needed! Stalin is not stopped even by the fact that by his new amalgam he hinders greatly the world proletariat in its struggle against the amalgam of Hitler. In both cases proletarian revolutionists are involved.

Cuban Situation

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But no bourgeois coalition cannot cope with the situation on the basis of bourgeois parliamentary democracy. The bourgeoisie can reestablish their rule only by the armed suppression of the workers. If their own forces are insufficient for this purpose—if the army goes over to the workers—the bourgeois coalition will call upon the armed might of U. S. imperialism.

For the Cuban workers there is only one road to travel. They have seized plantations, and have set up workers' committees to control and manage production. They are threatening to take over mines and fruit plantations. They must now begin to establish their Soviets as organs of struggle.

For this is necessary a Communist party in Cuba correctly oriented in the questions of revolutionary strategy and the IMMEDIATE active assistance of the Latin American and, in the first instance, the American proletariat. If the Cuban workers are not to be bloodily suppressed and driven back into the yoke of slavery as frightful as that of the Chinese coolie the American workers must organize a movement against armed intervention in Cuba.

The solidarity of the American proletariat with the Cuban workers is not an abstract nor a sentimental question. The worker in the Buffalo steel mills and the Cuban iron miner at Daiquiri work for the same boss, the Bethlehem Steel Corporation. The exploiters and oppressors of the Cuban workers are the oppressors and exploiters of the American workers. They must unite their forces to overthrow their common enemy.

The Cuban proletariat which has entered upon the revolutionary road before the American proletariat cannot wait. The Cuban workers need help now. The American workers must be aroused to come to their aid. That is the immediate duty of the Communist movement.

—T. STAMM.

Demand Freedom for Chen Du Siu

The life long fighter in the cause of the oppressed masses of China, Chen Du Siu, still lies in the dungeons of Chiang Kai-Shek. The International Labor Defense heeds the Stalinist slander of Chen being a "counter-revolutionist" and renounces its duty to defend him. Yet they fall entranced by the hangman of the Chinese revolution, by the agents of world imperialism. Chen's long magnificent record in the Chinese movement is well known to these people. They are perfectly aware of his leading part in founding the party and his years of devoted service to it. Twice before he was imprisoned and the Chinese bourgeoisie paid Chen the tribute of arresting him and on each occasion the workers brought about his liberation. And this time he is sentenced to thirteen years imprisonment. Arrested last October, after having been sought for by the police for many months, he made a magnificent stand at the trial and now lies in the death dungeon of Chiang Kai-Shek. Fifty-five years of age, a sentence of this kind, under the conditions existing in Chinese jails, means the slow death of our comrade.

Is this great old fighter to be left to his fate? Is the I. L. D. to be permitted to sacrifice the life of a revolutionist because of preservation of bureaucratic prestige of Stalinism? Was not the International Labor Defense organized for the defense of all class war prisoners? Is it not necessary for the working class to make common cause against the imperialist oppressor and its hangmen? The I. L. D. falls to defend Chen Du Siu because he, after the disastrous experience in China, adhered to the Left Opposition. He has remained a revolutionary fighter ever since and a fighter better equipped with the weapon of Marxism. The workers everywhere must demand that efforts be made by the I. L. D. for the liberation of Chen Du Siu.

Alignment of Forces in Mexico

A New Revolt Is Growing Out of Split in Ruling Party

During the period included roughly by the years 1924 and 1929, the revolutionary workers' movement, and especially with a national and peasant ideology, produced the soil of the country itself and strengthened by the opportunist colonial policy of the Communist International, attitude with a deadly critical attitude the "revolutionary" bourgeoisie personified in Calles-Obrregon. The several counter-revolutionary uprisings of the clergy and feudal landlords, were suppressed by the government, thanks in large part to the collaboration of the peasant masses led by members and sympathizers of the Communist Party.

Late in 1928 however, with the stabilization of the bourgeois counter-revolution and the adventurist turn in the Communist International (third period) the relations between the party and the bourgeois politicians were rapidly altered.

The Left Socialist Conference

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only in the bloc of four which signed the Declaration but also in the Committee of the majority (together with two representatives of the I. L. P. and one representative of the Norwegian party). We, the Left Opposition, cannot expect and do not expect anything positive from the participation of two of our allies (S. A. P. and O. S. P.) in the Committee (the RSP, the party of Smevlett does not enter in the Committee) as a glaring contradiction, we consider also the voting of the representatives of the O. S. P. and S. A. P. for the revocation of the majority as a grave political error which is capable of sowing illusions and confusion. But it would be entirely wrong if we should on this basis renounce the honest attempt at collaboration with these two allies. Their participation in a bloc with us is the tomorrow. Their participation in the "Committee" is the yesterday.

Revolutionary irreconcilability consists not in demanding that our "leadership" be recognized a priori, not in presenting our allies at every occasion with ultimatums and threatening with a break, with the removal of signatures, etc. We leave such methods, on one hand, to the Stalinist bureaucrats, on the other—to some impatient allies. We realize full well that disagreements between us and our allies will arise more than once. But we hope, more than that we are convinced, that the march of events will reveal in deeds the impossibility of participating simultaneously in the principled bloc of four and in the unprincipled bloc of the majority. Without resorting to any unbecoming "ultimatums" we retain, however, the full right not only to appear under our own banner, but also to tell our allies openly our opinion with regard to that which we consider their mistakes. We expect the same frankness from our allies. Our alliance will only be strengthened by this.

The elaboration of a programmatic document stands now on the order of the day. The Manifesto give a general picture of the modern capitalist world (as well as of the Soviet Union), of its economic, political and international relations. All the convulsions of our epoch (wars, crisis, fascist barbarism) should be explained as the result of the tardiness of the proletarian revolution. The responsibility for this tardiness must be placed on the Second and Third Internationals. A special chapter of the Manifesto should be devoted to the picture of the decline of both Internationals. Conclusion: the problems of the proletarian revolution, as well as the problems of saving the U. S. S. R. demand the creation of a new International. The concluding chapters should outline the program of struggle of the new International.

The elaboration of such a document is the task of the coming two-three months. So responsible a task can be solved well only in a collective manner. Although it is a question of a document of an international character, the most impor-

tant national problems must find reflection in it. The receipt of various political documents and in general of written or printed material that might help in the elaboration of this or that part of the Manifesto is most desirable.

The sections of the Left Opposition will, of course, exert all their efforts to give the Declaration of the widest possible publicity and popularization. Tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of revolutionary workers will breathe with relief upon learning that there is a way out from the revolutionary impasse. We must strike while the iron is hot!

September 1, 1933. —G. GOUROV.

German Letter

ON THE DISCUSSION WITH COMRADES OF THE C. P. (Correspondence from Berlin)

While in our discussions with S. P. and S. A. P. workers we are penetrating relatively easily with our arguments in the questions of the past and of the tasks of the future, we are even today encountering stubborn resistance in part among the comrades of the C. P. G. The superficial dogmatic education, so far as any education at all was received, the setting-up of ready-made "absolute truths" continue to exercise an evil influence, still paralyze the critical powers, and so it is understandable that the bureaucracy has succeeded, with the help of its illegal apparatus, which is again half-way functioning, in spreading new illusions among a part of its members and in temporarily strengthening its thoroughly shaken authority. The inevitable new disappointments, however, will hasten the process of disintegration; further large sections of the working class will fall into passivity, while precisely the best part will necessarily have to be driven to us.

The following conversation is typical:

"So you are of the opinion that precisely now, after the defeat, we must close ranks all the tighter around the only revolutionary party, in order to utilize the painfully built-up organization. But how will you act when you receive instructions to distribute leaflets with slogans that are mere phrases, to point 'Give us back Thaelmann', to distribute the 'Rote Fahne', whose stupid contents you recognize, and much more like this?"

"Naturally I and my comrades refuse such senseless work, which only puts us in danger without any purpose. We only carry out what seems right to us."

"But in this way you are breaking discipline, and if you have not yet been expelled from the party, you can simply thank the bad functioning of the apparatus. Like many of your comrades, you are of the opinion that our demand for the creation of a new party involves your immediate resignation from the party nucleus. But we believe that during this transition time you should carry on revolutionary work in your nucleus, by bringing before the eyes of your comrades, on the basis of the criticism of the past, the necessity of truly Marxist-Leninist policy, new from the ground up. You must recognize that the breach of discipline which is unconditionally necessary with regard to the bureaucracy already represents in fact the first step, which in its consequences contains our demand for the creation of a new party, in which the maintenance of the strictest discipline in action is no longer in contradiction with your political convictions."

For several months the party worked with the perspective of an independent armed insurrection to take place simultaneously with the revolt of Generalissimo Manzo, Aguirre and Escobar. When this rebellion finally materialized however, in March of 1929, the ultra-Leftist slogans of the "third period" were found not to have completely overcome the prejudices of the majority of the party's opportunist central committee. What actually happened is that the "party's" peasants again cooperated efficaciously with the ruling bourgeois faction in putting down the reactionary militarist uprising.

Attempts to Crush the C. P.

Before the last echo of the civil war in the north had died out, the government drove the Communist party and all of its auxiliaries underground. Several local Communist leaders, most prominent among them, Jose Guadalupe Rodriguez, agrarian leader of the state of Durango and member of the Central Committee of the party, were executed on charges of plotting revolt. Other Communist, trade union and agrarian leaders were murdered, almost all of the foreign comrades were deported and dozens of the best militants of the revolutionary organizations were imprisoned.

A definite period of reaction set in now that the ruling bourgeoisie felt sufficiently strong to no longer require the cooperation of the C. P. and its supporters.

The National Revolutionary Party was then formed in order to better regulate and coordinate the interests of the ruling class and to inaugurate "institutional" rule. Within this party, Calles, while remaining in the background, was enabled nevertheless to dominate the policies, and soon showed himself very adept at playing the different factions within his party against each other, thus assuring his own hegemony over the whole.

Through the enactment of the Federal Labor Code, against which the C. P. struggled valiantly, the labor organizations were placed in a decidedly subservient role in relation to the government.

The "Institutional" Regime and the Crisis

In every other field, the national bourgeoisie of the P. N. R. vaunting its "institutional" program, has attempted to consolidate its position in an attempt to interrupt the permanency of the Mexican revolution, and perpetuate their class rule.

Many enormous difficulties of an economic nature presented themselves. The world crisis has not spared Mexico. The collapse of the petroleum industry and the fall of the price of silver would certainly have plunged the country into turmoil before now were it not for the agrarian base of the country. Large sections of the proletariat are scarcely a generation removed from the peasantry, and by returning to the family corn and bean patch have managed somehow to weather the crisis. It is estimated that there are close to a million unemployed in the republic. Mass deportations of unemployed Mexicans from the United States has not helped matters.

Recovery Ballyhoo of the P. N. R.

Elaborate plans for public works, highways and irrigation projects, and schemes for colonization of the unemployed on farms, have been announced and in some cases commenced. The Mexican bourgeoisie has learned much from the ballyhoo methods of its North American counterpart. Dozens of plans, programs and campaigns have been launched, an enormous amount of money appropriated, most of which promptly disappears into the void.

As in other countries, attempts were made to solve the crisis by a national program of economic self-sufficiency, an idea which is of course inevitably doomed to failure because of the oneness of world economy.

The reactionary character of the government's program is becoming apparent to the whole nation. Mass discontent and radicalization grows apace, although the Communist party has been unable excepting in isolated cases to break through its shell of illegality, and take a decisive part in the growing struggles of the masses. The sectarian policies of the party with its splitting tactics on the trade union fields, and its ultra-leftist attitude towards all non-Communist workers, have hindered the party's growth.

The general sympathy towards the ideas of Communism is growing rapidly. This is expressed in a distorted form through the activities and program of Tejada's "Left Socialist Party".

In the forthcoming issues of The Militant, an attempt will be made to analyze the Mexican agrarian problem and the character of the "Left Socialist Party" as well as the role that the Communists must play in the next stage, if they are to assume their proper place as the proletarian vanguard.

—ROSALIO NEGRETTE.

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