

The Railroad Brotherhoods The Reactionary Union Officialdom

In discussing the rise and fall of the Railroad Unions in this series of articles we want at the very beginning to make ourselves clear on a few questions. In the first place we not only admit, but point out to the workers repeatedly, that every thing we have got so far as shorter hours, better wages and working conditions, have been brought about by the craft unions on the railroads. We further admit and also point out that the craft union was a progressive force as long as that kind of organization was in a position to function to the interests of its membership. It was only when industrial development outgrew the craft system of organization that the Brotherhood leadership and program gradually became more and more reactionary.

It is to the interest of every railroad worker to understand this and act accordingly. But we cannot remedy these conditions by leaving the union and doing nothing. We are only entitled to criticize the performances of others when we propose something better ourselves. We must stay with the organized workers wherever they are and do good and faithful work behind constructive proposals and, by this practical method in dealing with every day problems of the workers in their unions, show them the needed changes in the program, leadership and structure of the railroad unions.

A Picture of the League Today

A look at the League today, in its palpitating growth throughout the country and the excellent types of serious fighters it is attracting into its ranks in ever-growing numbers, offers a really encouraging picture. It is a far cry now from the time when those who expelled us from the official party scornfully dubbed us the "three generals without an army". Still, there is no intention at all on my part to exaggerate our numbers and influence or to create false impressions of a greater strength than actually exists. But the League is making a place for itself the conditions now developing in the country.

Therein lies the great hope for the future. Still we are today very small for the big job ahead. In recognition of this one of our comrades, a well drilled man from Oregon, wrote us the other day asking the very pertinent question: "In the awakening which is now beginning will not our forces be too small. There is so much to be done. Will we not be altogether too late?" Today we stand before the coming storms. A few recent strikes, notably the Philadelphia transportation strike, indicate the resistance which is gathering against the pressure of degrading working class conditions. And we need not expect in advance that international union officials or the NRA labor boards will in every case succeed in smothering the fight. On the contrary, even the very conservative unions will be forced to take some steps forward. In preparation for that the League is also taking its first steps towards its announced objective of rebuilding the Left wing in the trade unions.

On the Pacific Coast our new branches in San Francisco, Oakland and Vancouver were almost entirely recruited from forces coming over from the official party. In New York City, where we have our largest membership, there are at this moment considerable new forces also taking the step from the official party to the Left Opposition. Within the official party itself there is a dead calm, all the more ominous after the Soviet recognition "bargain". Unquestionably many of its members feel very uneasy and there will be new forces turning away from Stalinism to become supporters of the new party. This was already indicated by the official party organizer in New Castle, Pa., when he attended our meeting of my recent tour. He said, "Yes, the Left Opposition rests upon a sound foundation and it has excellent forces while the official party in New Castle is dead."

MANIFESTO OF THE SPANISH BOLSHEVIK-LENINISTS

Madrid, Dec. 5, 1933.—The calling of the recent elections for deputies to the Cortes (Spanish parliament—Ed.) coincided with the period of the reorganization of the Spanish Bolsheviki-Leninists in the light of the decisions adopted on an international scale concerning the new orientation towards new parties and the new international of the working class. In line with the radical change which has taken place in our international organization, we decided to participate in the elections in complete independence and under our own banner. The following are the most important decisions adopted.

It is well known that reaction emerges from this struggle strengthened by the victory of the Right wing. For that reason we see the great urgency in making known the position our organization adopted toward the present reactionary threat. This position is summarized in the following leaflet distributed in tens of thousands of copies throughout Spain.

The Teachers and the Class Struggle

One reason teachers have been slow to struggle is that they constituted an aristocratic stratum of the working class. Their wage level was higher than the average wage level of the workers. They enjoyed job security to a great extent and all sorts of factory never had under capitalist rule. And on top of that they are permeated with bourgeois ideology to a degree that places them, in this sense, at the rear of the class.

Successful Meet in Brownsville

Defying and protesting the threats of the Stalinists, over 500 workers, including several dozen Communist party members and sympathizers, and a labor jury representing five workers organizations and the American Civil Liberties Union attended on Wednesday evening, December 20th, the Brownsville meeting of the Communist League on Russian recognition and the Communist International. This meeting was held after the disruption by the Stalinists of the previous Thursday evening's meeting on the same subject. The workers' guard was well prepared to insure an orderly meeting. In addition, representatives of the Conference for Progressive Labor Action, the Jewish Workers' Party (Left Paole Zion), the Industrial Workers of the World, the Workers Unemployed League, the 22 A. D. Branch of the Socialist Party and the American Civil Liberties Union were present as a workers jury to place the responsibility for any attempted disruption of the meeting.

Militant Builders

We want to address a few remarks to our builders. It is upon them that The Militant depends for extension into new and wider fields. It is to them also that the planned transformation of The Militant into an agitation paper will have great significance. It will facilitate their work.

BOOK REVIEW

The Marxian Theory of the State, by Sherman H. M. Chang, Ph. D. This book is advertised as "the first scholarly book on the Marxist theory of the state". Dr. Chang came to write it by chance. Beginning merely out of curiosity with a chapter on Marxian theory, he discovered that no one had written fully on the political theory of Communism, and therefore decided to make a deep study of "this formidable theory of the state". He devoted two years to this deep study, and accomplished precisely what could be expected from such concentrated effort. In that time, he managed to become acquainted with a half dozen pamphlets by Lenin, a few extracts by Trotsky, and absolutely nothing of Liebknecht, Luxemburg, and Mehring, not to mention such "non-entities" as Plekhanov or Kautsky of the pre-revisionist period.

The Youth on the March

In Chicago where the Stalinist party, infuriated by the progress we had made, came organized in large numbers to break up the meeting held on my tour, two new League branches have since emerged. That is a most fitting answer. To it can be added the fact, which augurs well for further progress, that in Chicago our youth movement is perhaps the most active of any place in the country. Two live Spartacus clubs already exist there. The Chicago Workers' School, directed by comrade Goldman has become an excellent supplementary institution reinforcing the Marxian foundation of the movement. With a total of over one hundred enrollments, the school is now expanding and forming branches in various parts of the city. The Friends of the Militant Club and an influential Italian workers' club complete the Chicago picture.

Teachers' salaries in New York and elsewhere are fixed by law and are changeable only by legislative action in the state legislature or local governmental agency. In the first three years of the crisis prices fell precipitately. Teachers wages, consequently, which apparently remained fixed actually rose in purchasing value. This appreciation together with the yearly increments made mandatory under the law in some cities, constituted a more or less steady improvement in their condition.

Just Off the Press TEN YEARS HISTORY AND PRINCIPLES OF THE LEFT OPPOSITION By MAX SHACHTMAN 10c 7 Cents in Bundles of 5 or More; Order from: PIONEER PUBLISHERS, 84 E. 10th St., N.Y.C.

What we need above all today is an active staff of Militant builders throughout the country—live comrades who will take bundles of Militants under their arms, go out to sell them at working class gatherings or in working class neighborhoods and solicit subscriptions. We need more of them. We consider essential that these builders constantly renew their activities and continue without let-up. We have a number of actual builders already but we are now preparing plans for a much wider extension of the Militant circulation. In anticipation of this we ask all those comrades who are ready to enlist amongst the staff of active Militant builders to notify us by mail.

There can be no revolutionary movement without a revolutionary theory—said Lenin. A revolutionary theory cannot be spread effectively without the help of a publishing house. The problem now is to develop our work on a broader scale. An efficiently functioning publishing house is indispensable. Every conscious worker, every sympathizer of the revolutionary movement, every anti-Fascist has, therefore, to do his utmost in the building of such a revolutionary publishing center. Here is a practical way for you to help. Buy a \$5 certificate in Pioneer Publishers. This will entitle the holder to get any book published by us at a 40% discount and books of other publishers at a 20% discount.

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known quotations from that book in his pamphlet "The State and Revolution". According to Chang, "it is interesting to note that such a devoted disciple of Marx had made no mention (of these passages) in his State and Revolution". Had the doctor devoted a few more weeks to Lenin he might have discovered that a number of people had written rather fully on the political theory, and that Lenin had far closer first hand knowledge about the quotations than Chang! He might have also learned that the "State and Revolution" was never completed, as planned.

Thus Chang is convinced that a necessary feature of Communist society is the disappearance of the division of labor. He reaches this conclusion by misinterpreting Marx's statement to the effect that in a Communist society the subjection of labor dependent upon the present division of labor will disappear, and that there will be no opposition between brain and manual work. To Chang this means that the division of labor itself will disappear. (Marx's own words are "when the slavish subordination of the individual to the yoke of the division of labor has disappeared, and when concomitantly the distinction between mental and physical work has ceased to exist..."). Chang then bolsters his misinterpretation, by reporting that Engels agreed with him. Engels (according to Chang) held the view that the division of labor "lies at the basis of the division into classes". (The point being that since classes will disappear so will the division of labor!). Here is what Engels actually wrote, "It is, therefore, the law of division of labor that lies at the basis of the division into classes." Of course, the enslaving subordination of the individual under the division of labor as it exists in class society is one thing, and the division of labor itself is something else again. Among the outstanding characteristics of Communist society is that it frees the individual from subjection under particular types of the division of labor; but the Communist society itself has no intentions of doing away with division of labor. It is based upon international division of labor. And of course the law of the division of labor is one thing, and the division of labor is another. But Chang is law unto himself, and having confounded so many things, and understood so little, he confounds Marx with himself.