

# The Recovery Program of the Socialist Party

The Socialist Party has issued a five-point program for recovery from the crisis: reduction of interest on all indebtedness; reduction of the capital structure of all business and utilities affected with a public interest; a capital levy; a step increase in inheritance taxes; the issuance of currency to finance the public works program.

It is clear at one glance that this program offers no threat to the capitalist system. On the contrary, it is designed as its name indicates, to HELP THE CAPITALISTS RECOVER FROM THE CRISIS. That is also the aim of the official political parties of the capitalist class, and of all the government agencies including the vast network of the governmental agencies including the vast network of the recovery administrations.

Let us take a closer look at the program. Point one calls for a reduction on all indebtedness including farm mortgages to 2 or 2 1/2%. Whom will this benefit? According to the December bulletin of the National City Bank—"the chief debtors are governments, corporations and credit institutions." It is plain from the figures of the Twentieth Century Fund, Inc., that the overwhelming bulk of the debts are owed by corporations or by persons falling within the rich or well-to-do income groups, and not by the poor. The Socialist Party recovery program would cut down the interest the banks pay on workers' savings, afford them some relief in connection with mortgages and lift a tremendous load from the shoulders of the capitalist class.

Point four calls for "a step increase in inheritance taxes." What does the Socialist Party recovery program propose to do with this money? Use it for unemployment insurance? No. "The proceeds would be used for the retirement of government bonds."

Point five calls for the issuance of currency to finance the Public Works program. Inasmuch as this runs into billions of dollars, point five is tantamount to outright, unlimited currency inflation. What this means for workers is well known—drastic cuts in real wages through soaring prices.

The Socialist party has the brass to say in its statement accompanying its recovery program that it is against currency inflation. It explains the contradiction on the all-too-familiar philosophy of the lesser evil. To finance its Public Works program the government issues bonds on which it has to pay interest. The Socialist Party wants to save the capitalist government about four million dollars in interest. Instead of selling bonds, says the S. P., run the printing presses. It is true this is inflation but it is justified by "other inflationary measures already undertaken."

Not only is the S. P. recovery program designed to help the capi-

## The Story of a Boy Who Made Good

At the disgraceful affair in Brownsville last week, where the Party officially mobilized to prevent comrades Shachtman and Dasch from speaking, one of the wildest of the party hooligans was Joe Ross. In the three years or so that he has been in Brownsville, Ross has forged steadily ahead in the ranks of the Y. C. L. and Communist party to the position of the section workers' School Director. He proved by hard, untiring, unstinted, devoted and conscientious, day to day work that he is fit for nomination as one of the best disciples of the "best disciple." A thorough account of his revolutionary (he confesses) would read like a dime adventure story. Sufficient be it to merely honor him by pointing out some of the bright spots in his career.

**Hero's Career Begins**

In 1930 the district office of the Young Communist League sent him down to take complete charge of its work. After a few months of complete control and organization, the Pioneers withdrew. The Y. C. L. decided that a change of scenery might prove beneficial to all parties concerned, so he was sent in to the American Youth Club, where the Party and League fraction voted him in as general secretary of the club. Joe proved to be long on speeches and short on work, so one membership meeting when it was found that the membership amounted to more than the fraction, Ross was politely removed.

The Paterson silk strike then broke out. It was remembered that our hero had done some sterling work among the Brownsville Pioneers. To Paterson he then hid himself.

On the basis of the wreckage he spread around in Paterson, Ross was appointed Section Organizer of the Young Communist League—no less. Inside of two or three months he was demoted, which is quite a record even for the Y. C. L. Not one whit discouraged his next function which was to become the Agit-Prop director of the section. A month of this and the enraged League members cried halt. Ordinary rank and file could not recognize ability the District Office could. He became literature and Young Worker agent of the Brownsville section. Poor Joe, at the first membership meeting after this latest appointment, he was requested to try his hand at something else.

**Still Running Strong**

Our hero obliged by joining the Students Forum, and carrying out a furious humiliation against a couple of counter-revolutionary "Trotskyites." After a herculean and intensive struggle in the line of 10th plenum (this was before the famous open letter) against these disrupters, Joe succeeded in having them expelled. Strange to say, with the renegades out and the Forum kosher, Joe removed himself from the club. Some were unkind enough to say that as long as slander was the main activity of Forum, Ross would have remained a member. This was however, traced to one of the expelled counter-revolutionaries, which of course whitewashed Joe.

His next venture was as Daily Worker agent. Perhaps he had visions of building up a tremendous route, being recognized by Franklin, Hathaway and the District Office and—but alas!—the routes decreased the sales fell down and Joe with them.

As a reward for his outstanding work in the Y. C. L. Joe Ross was assigned to full time work in the Party. Recently a workers' school was organized in Brownsville. Who better fitted as its head—whose record better entitled them to the important position of grinding out best disciples—than Joe Ross?

There may be one thing that Joe will have a hard time explaining to his students. And that is why despite his howling at the Shachtman-Dasch meeting, when the time passed from slander, bravado and hooliganism to action—he was seen slinking down the stairs accompanied by another disciple—Gilbert nee Joseph Simonoff (expelled from the Workers Party) alias Simmons (expelled from the Communist Party). It will be a good trick if Joe can do it—we hope to be permitted to be a member of the class when he tries it.

—AL DASCH.

## MOVIE REVIEW

Like Cavalese, which heads the list, George Cukor's and Kenneth Macgowan's pictorialization of Louisa May Alcott's famous novel, *Little Women*, is considered by writers in the capitalist press as one of the ten best pictures of 1933. We have not seen all the pictures put out in the past year and we cannot presume to offer a list of the best pictures. But we are positive that this picture should not be included in any list save one which aims to name the worst pictures.

The picture is well cast and well acted. Nice words can be said about the direction and photography.

But what would only emphasize still more the utter triviality of its content. As most of our readers know from having read the book it is a story of four girls who grow up in a prim New England home. Their feelings for one another and later their husbands, forms the theme of this story. Great art has been woven out of this stuff. But for that it is necessary to illuminate profoundly the human soul.

The picture does not begin to do that. It says nothing original or profound about the well springs of the mind and heart. It reeks from beginning to end with sickening sentimentality. All the people in this story, without exception, be they of high station or low, are kindly souls. Generosity flows without interruption from opening to close. Verily, it is Pollyanna's paradise.

But from the social point of view the picture is even worse. Its action takes place in the period of the Civil War and, presumably, the time of the picture is not clearly indicated. The horrible suffering which the war and the reconstruction period brought in their wake sweeps by this family to leave them untouched except for a temporary but not too serious poverty and the wounding of the girls' father, also not too seriously. It almost never enters their conversation and it has almost no influence on their actions. The inflation of 1861-65 increased the cost of living to more than double what it was in 1860 and ruined thousands of workers' and petty bourgeois families. But you would never guess it from this picture. On the other hand a mystic, invalidism, a result of an attack of scarlet fever contracted in a charitable visit to a neighbor, carries off one of the girls.

It is no good to argue that these shafts are aimed at the book for the defects of which the picture makers are not responsible. If the function of art is to illuminate life—and the cinema is an art form—then it becomes the duty of every artist, whether he be actor, producer or director, to strive with his whole soul to tell the truth about life.

The players in this picture did the best they could within the limits of the scenario. But the producers have fashioned a false picture of life in general and of life during the Civil War in particular. For our part we do not expect anything much better from the talent which sells itself body and soul to the capitalist propaganda machine. Before a man can tell the truth in art he must own his soul. Cukor and McGowan apparently do not.

—KINO.

**FREE TORGLER, DIMITROFF, POPOFF AND TANEFF**

The N. Y. Herald-Tribune for Jan. 2, apprizes us of the fact that the Nazi murderers who failed to frame up the Reichstag fire defendants are looking for a country willing to grant asylum to the three Bulgarians. Nothing is said of Torgler. Nor is anything mentioned concerning the outcome of this "search."

Meanwhile all four of the innocent Communists remain imprisoned in the Fascist dungeons. The request of the Committee to aid the victims of the Hitler "Terror" to that we face today, the development of mass Communist parties. The 2nd C. L. thesis states "It is only the power of organization of the Communists that enables the advanced guard of the working class." At this moment it is of utmost importance to stress these fundamental aspects of our work

**Just Off the Press**

# TEN YEARS

HISTORY AND PRINCIPLES OF THE LEFT OPPOSITION

By MAX SHACHTMAN

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## The Railroad Brotherhoods Ritualistic Mummery at Meetings

IV.

We think it can be truthfully said that all reactionary arrangements of today were at one time progressive forces in human development. It was only as they outlived their usefulness that they became gradually reactionary and therefore oppressive to the people. This same law of development applies to the secret work in our Lodge and Division meetings.

**Pioneer Needed Secrecy**

When the Brotherhood pioneers first started to organize the railroad unions they did so at the risk of losing their jobs and were often fired and blacklisted against getting another job. It was therefore quite natural for them to act in secret and to throw all kinds of protection around their meetings against the bosses' stool-pigeons and informers. Pass words, signs and counter signs, grips and other ceremonies, well known to the ordinary Brotherhood member, were useful and therefore progressive.

Today all ritualistic and secret work has long since outlived its usefulness and is therefore a reactionary force and serves just the opposite purpose to that was originally intended. Originally the secret work was intended to protect the organized labor movement against its enemies. Today the secret work protects the enemies of the labor movement by serving as a gag-law and as an obstruction against the spreading of ideas.

**Secret Work Now Isolates the Unions**

The secret work as it acts today serves to isolate each local lodge from the others. It also keeps them separated from one another, and

acts as a splendid insulation against circulation of members' opinions. It is strictly a reactionary force and that is precisely why all these useless and overpaid craft union officials, big and small, are for the continuance of the secret work.

The Pioneers' constitution provides specifically that Vice Presidents and General Organizers shall "visit and instruct subordinate lodges in the unwritten work of the order." The 21 complete sets of craft officials which the railroad workers maintain are conscious of the fact that as long as they can keep their members busy with such harmless pastime as the mumbling of passwords back and forth and the juggling of signs and countersigns at their meetings they are not starting nor spreading anything progressive nor constructive.

For instance, when the workers are listening to the prayer by the chaplain and rehearsing long and foolish ritualistic ceremonies at the opening and closing of their union meetings, they are not discussing Amalgamation, freedom of expression, nor the cutting of high salaries.

**Aids System of Gag-Rule**

The secret work helps the Grand Lodge Officers to keep the railroad workers uninformed and separated from one another. Together with the rest of the gag-laws and strictly censored Brotherhood Press the secret work rounds out a complete system of gag-rule in the Brotherhoods that must be exposed to light and eliminated by the progressive minority.

Brother progressives, use the columns of the Militant to spread progressive ideas in the railroad unions.

—A. E.

**Discussion Article**

## On the Youth Resolution

The draft resolution of the National Youth Committee states that it bases itself "in all essentials" upon the youth thesis of the second national conference. The predominant note of the 1931 thesis was to stress the educational and cultural character of youth work and at the same time to follow dutifully the line of the Y. C. L. in the participation in the economic struggles of the working class.

In 1931 our thesis declared that "in textile, coal, automobile, radio, etc., the youth should be organized into the revolutionary unions or leagues." Our 1933 resolution—in the face of the triumph of Fascism in Germany, the collapse of the 2nd International and the need of building a 4th International and a new Communist party in America—not only fails to correct this fundamentally erroneous trade union policy but slurs over the tasks of the young Communists in the trade union field, which are intimately linked up with the new tasks before us—the building of a new party and its youth section. These outlined formulas, from the period when we were a faction of the Y. C. L. must be cast aside. Today they can serve only as a millstone around our necks.

**The Policy of 1921**

In 1921 when Muenzenberg was the spokesman for the policies laid down by Lenin and Trotsky and not the Stalinist mouthpiece of today he wrote that the first and foremost duty of the young Communists "consists in collecting the millions of young workers of all countries into young Communist organizations, to train and teach them in these organizations and bring them into the Communist parties as trained, capable, and tried revolutionaries and Communist fighters. This means of gaining millions of young Communists is above all an economic struggle." (Communist Review, October 1921, No. 8).

When Muenzenberg wrote these words the problem was the same to that we face today, the development of mass Communist parties. The 2nd C. L. thesis states "It is only the power of organization of the Communists that enables the advanced guard of the working class." At this moment it is of utmost importance to stress these fundamental aspects of our work

more than ever. The young Communists can serve as the broad educational organizers of the youth only if they succeed in directly participating in the organization of the economic struggles of the working class. Our resolution stressed the educational and cultural character of youth work, but fails to stress that the only way this work can be successfully carried on is through the slogan—into the masses! Into the elemental economic struggles of the working class!

**Basic of the Youth Movement**

Wherever the League is active, the young Communists must first of all be the organizers of the youth movement. Even where the League has as yet no basis, we must proceed with our work, always under the guidance of the League. We establish broad young workers clubs where we are confronted with masses of backward youth, who are as yet too raw to enter a young Communist organization. But always we form these clubs only on the basis of the class struggle; at all times we center our efforts upon to the ranks of our Communist youth organization.

Not for one moment do we cast aside the varied aspects and activities of a Communist youth organization. Classes and study groups are of utmost importance. The cultural and social aspects of our activities (socials, sports, dances, dramatics) are important in so far as they meet the needs of young workers and serve as a means of attracting and holding them within our organization. However, these activities become meaningless and academic if divorced from the participation in the class struggle.

**Political Leadership**

In connection with educating and training young workers to become Communists, it is of primary importance to stress that this can be achieved only through the political subordination of the Spartacus Youth Clubs to the C. L. A. This political subordination, however, is not a mechanical process. Our relationship to the C. L. A. must be viewed in the same manner as expressed by comrade Trotsky in the "New Course." "It is wholly inadequate that the youth should repeat over formulas, it is necessary that the youth should take our revolutionary formulas fighting, transfer them into flesh and blood, work out for themselves their own opinion with that courage that comes from sincere conviction and independence of character."

**Tasks of Immediate Period**

For the immediate period before us, the success or failure of our work depends upon the degree of our participation in the main task that faces the C. L. A.—the building of a revolutionary party of which the youth section must be an integral part. It is not enough to say that "the strategy and tactics of the Party (C. L. A.) are the strategy and tactics of the League (S. Y. C.);" it is also necessary to lay down a concrete program of action whereby we may, together with the C. L. A., and under its guidance enter upon new fields of the economic struggles of the American workers. Only in this way can we recruit fresh and healthy reserves and build a firm foundation for a Communist youth organization that will serve its revolutionary function in the class struggle.

—DAVE LEVITT.

## Pioneer Publishers

We are starting a drive to build up the Pioneer Publishers. It is superfluous to explain to you the need of a Marxist publishing house in America in these critical times for the working class. Reaction is marshaling its forces on an unprecedented scale as a result of the betrayals by the Social Democracy and the bankruptcy of Stalinism. Never before was there a greater need to make the ideas of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky accessible to American workers than today; never before was the American proletariat more ready to digest the great experiences of the October revolution and the lessons of the ten years relentless fight of the Left Opposition under the leadership of comrade Leon Trotsky.

The Pioneer Publishers have been spreading these ideas in the past, thanks to great sacrifices on the part of individual comrades and friends who come along at the right time with contributions and loans. Many of the books and pamphlets published by us are now out of print; more are going to be so in the very near future. Manuscripts are piling up. Many brilliant writings in foreign languages await translation and publication. The workers are literally knocking at our doors for literature.

Here is a practical plan to help the Pioneer Publishers. Comrades should buy a \$5 certificate in the P. P. which will entitle them to a 50% discount on books published by the P. P. and to 25% reduction on books of other publishers ordered through us.

**LAST OPPORTUNITY**

We are glad to announce that we have a few more copies of *Labor and Internationalism* by Louis L. Lordwin. The supply on hand is limited. All those who want to obtain this 700 page book should rush their orders immediately. It is only \$1.50 postpaid.

Have you a copy of *My Life by Trotsky*? If not order one from Pioneer Publishers it sells for \$2.50. (Publishers Price: \$5.00).

**CORRECTION**

Comrade Trotsky's article that appeared last week (Hitler the fascist) was made from the French text and contained a number of errors.

The following corrections should be made:

In the first paragraph instead of "No more consoling is the fact, etc." read, "All the more consoling is the fact, etc." And in the same paragraph the last sentence instead of "But Ossietzki is imprisoned for the very reason that he is able, etc." read, "But Ossietzki is imprisoned for the very reason that he should not be able, etc."

In the third paragraph instead of "It is not very difficult to dispel their doubts," read, "It is not very easy to dispel their doubts."

The fourth paragraph is a hedge-podge because several lines were left out. Beginning with, "And the Leipzig trial shows" the next should go on to read as follows: "that the medico-legal expert testimony of the Nazis merits unbounded confidence. If in this world there existed only sincerity and love of peace, life would probably be made an eternal delight, etc."

In the sixth paragraph instead of "His nervous system at all times had succeeded, etc." read "His nervous system by that time should have succeeded, etc." And further down instead of "the light avenger von Papen" read "the light-minded avenger von Papen."

In the seventh paragraph (first sentence) instead of "Hitler still inclined in those days, etc." read "Hitler was still forced in those days, etc." And in the very next sentence instead of "... from its whole inclination France can come to an agreement only on the basis of a change, etc." read "... on its own inclination France cannot come to an agreement on the basis of a change, etc." And in the same long sentence (at the close) instead of "the Germans must re-arm at once" read "the Germans must re-arm beforehand."

In the ninth paragraph instead of "... or, to use a better known expression, a passport" read: "... or, to use a more precise expression, a

## Roosevelt's Speech on Latin America

Roosevelt's speech at the Wilson Dinner is heralded by the press as a new policy of "cooperation" in the western hemisphere based on the renunciation of armed intervention and the desire for world peace. In reality, behind this speech lurks a new stage in the rivalry of the imperialist powers for hegemony over Latin America. The speech comes on the heels of American imperialist work at Montevideo. Behind the talk of non-intervention, armament reduction and peace is cloaked America's bitter struggle with England for the domination of Latin America.

The Roosevelt-Hull talk of non-intervention in Latin America is an attempt to line up a South American bloc and to keep Europe out of Wall Street's "backyard." The talk of intervention has about as much real weight as the talk of peace and arms reduction. Hull's position at Montevideo on this question is a joker that only fools and puppet delegates could accept.

The Argentine representative endeavored to save Hull's face by suggesting that the subject of non-intervention be referred to an Inter-American committee for definition. Hull supported this move, but it was impossible to jam it through the convention; and when the final vote was taken Hull was forced to retreat and vote for the resolution with reservations that make the proposal meaningless and an insult to Latin America. Roosevelt said as if there were not several other forms of intervention which, under certain conditions, are more effective. The Roosevelt-Hull non-intervention talk coincides with the most subtle form of intervention in Cuba and other Latin American countries.

The position of Roosevelt on the League of Nations, is just a polite way of saying that America intends to continue her role of dominating "observer" at the League Council. There the struggle of the U. S. against Europe takes on special forms. The meaningless gesture of non-intervention in Latin America, a sop to the Western Hemisphere, must be supplemented by a more intense struggle against Europe. The aim is to retain the dominating position in Latin America by preventing England, Germany and others from absorbing the markets.

The talk of world peace and armament reduction is only a maneuver to cover up the mad race of America in the competition for armaments.

The basic antagonism of the imperialist powers for control of Latin America is that between the United States and England. Roosevelt's speech is a warning of a new onslaught. Competition from Fascist Germany comes second and America will fight on this front also. But it must be kept in mind that trade in Latin America revolves around the pound and the dollar, not the mark and the yen.

The economic position of America in relation to Latin America is the key to the policies at Montevideo and what has followed. Before the war America held a secondary position in the economic life of Latin America; after the war America dominated. Exports to Latin America grew 27% from 1910 to 1929 while imports increased 125% in the same period. Capital investments increased from one and a

third billion dollars in 1913 to five billion in 1929. While the percentage of American export is about eleven percent of the total production, in many South American countries the percentage of export reaches 35 to 65% of production. Cuban export reaches 85%. The per cent of export of the United States to Latin America is manufactured and semi-manufactured goods and the investment of capital, while imports from these countries consist primarily of raw material.

A greater share of the world market is a burning question for the continued domination of American imperialism. Since Latin America offers possibilities in this sphere America's struggle against England and other contenders will be carried on in the most ruthless manner there.

## A Letter on the Hitler Boycott

Dear Comrades:

December 30, 1933

Some months ago the International Left Opposition and the Communist League of America came out in favor of a militant transportation boycott of Hitler Germany. At the time you published an editorial on this question, I was moved, although not a member of your group, to write you endorsing your stand. I still feel that the consumers' boycott for Jewish relief is no substitute for a labor struggle on behalf of labor. Only by international labor action, the refusal to transport goods in and out of Germany, until certain demands are granted (release of political prisoners, restoration of right to organize workers independently, publish labor papers, etc.), can a smashing blow be dealt to Hitlerism.

**The Old Position of Comintern**

As I pointed out in my letter some weeks ago, a similar view was taken of similar problems years ago by the Comintern under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky. At the time of the Hungarian White Terror and the Primo de Rivera dictatorship in Spain, for example, the C. I. sent out ringing calls for international action by all workers to smash these reactionaries by means of a transportation boycott. When the idea was first brought up with respect to Hitler, however, the Comintern under the leadership of Stalin's office boys, turned a cold shoulder to it. They found it to be ineffective, unrevolutionary because it would divert some trade from Germany to other countries and thereby benefit other capitalists, etc., etc. The C. I. denounced the proposal in the *Rundschau* (Basel) and elsewhere.

But the validity of the idea could not be obliterated. Spontaneously, workers in France, Belgium, Spain, Holland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Czechoslovakia and elsewhere began to take the transportation boycott into effect. The chief struggle was by ironworkers who repeatedly refused to unload ships displaying the Nazi flag. On one occasion even, Scandinavian members of a Red Trade Union refused to load Soviet naphtha on a German boat flying the Hakenkreuz. Efforts made by the International Left Opposition and other organizations to spread the idea of a united front transport boycott for joint, immediate demands have not been entirely fruitless; important labor organizations of various political tendencies in half a dozen countries have endorsed the idea.

**A Typical Stalinist "Turn"**

After attacking the idea, the Comintern and its sections shut up on the matter like a school of clams. But now they have quietly executed a change: the *Daily Worker* of December 30, attacking Bill Green for his sure-enough rotten piece of fakery in favor of "the formation of united front committees to be set up for effective action to stop the import and transportation of German goods." It even contrives to find a quotation from Bela Kun: "The revolutionary workers must see clearly that the merchandise boycott of German fascism is a deception if isolated from the general anti-Fascist struggle, if conducted without a transportation boycott."

Thus the C.P. of the U. S. A., and presumably the C. I. which gives it its line, have made another turn and, as usual when the turn is in the right direction, it is a turn to the line laid down by the Left Opposition, which the Stalinists first persistently rejected and ignored. Of course, you can't expect them to thank you for the idea. What you can do is to try to bring the idea off paper and force the Stalinists not simply to talk about a transportation boycott, but to do something about it. Can't you call a united front conference on the matter?

Sincerely,  
—HARRY STRANG.

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