



Left Currents in the S.P.

IN THE NEW YORK MAY DAY PARADE

The Revolutionary Policy Committee

Note: This is the first of a series of articles by comrade Cannon on the program of the Revolutionary Policy Committee of the Socialist Party.

Under the impact of the second historic debacle of social reformism on the international field—Germany and Austria—and the sharpening of the class struggle in America, the ferment in the Socialist Party is deepening and a process of differentiation along principle lines is clearly evident. Most significant, among the many groupings, a left wing current is now taking shape inside the party.

This current, which differentiates itself in many important respects from the lukewarm radicalism of the "Militants", calls itself the "Revolutionary Policy Committee of the Socialist Party". It has recently issued a programmatic statement of aims and principles with 47 signatures under the title: "An Appeal to the Membership of the Socialist Party". In this pamphlet, for the first time since 1921, a group of more or less influential party members takes issue with the reformist position on fundamental principle questions and approaches the standpoint of revolutionary Marxism, that is, of Communism. Declaring against any "middle road" and demanding that the Socialist Party change "its present principles and tactics", the new Left group attacks the traditional reformist policies of Social Democracy all along the line.

The statement of the Revolutionary Policy Committee is somewhat lacking in clarity and incisiveness on certain fundamental issues which permit of no ambiguity. The document also leaves other essential programmatic questions untouched and omits the necessary critique of the various groups and tendencies in the Socialist and Communist movements.

Despite these defects, however, the declaration of the Revolutionary Policy Committee indicates the emergence of a substantial group in the Socialist Party which is obviously breaking with the policy and practice of social reformism. If the group preserves on this course it will undoubtedly attract the revolutionary elements of the party, especially the Socialist youth, and play an important role in the reconstitution of the revolutionary movement in America.

Dangers Facing the Left Wing

Many dangers will beset them on this path. They can overcome them, and avoid the fate which has befallen many other radical groupings in the parties of the Second International—that of serving as a wind-break for social reformism, and an apologist for its treacheries—only on the condition that they round out their program and develop its implications to the very end.

For this, as theory and all experience have demonstrated, clarity and precision of expression are needed. And, in addition, a course which suits the action to the work is needed. The break with reformism must be complete and lead to a fusion with the revolutionary Marxists, or it is no break at all in the real sense of the word.

The Revolutionary Policy Committee has taken the first, but only the first, decisive steps in such a break. Needless to say, every intelligent Communist can but welcome this significant development in the Socialist Party and aspire to aid its further evolution in a revolutionary direction. The first prerequisite for this is frank, and straight-forward criticism. After that, direct proposals to the Left Socialists to apply their programmatic declarations in practical action follow as a matter of course.

Those who mean their declarations seriously can have no objection to such criticism and such proposals. They are doubly necessary at the present time when, after the manifest bankruptcy of reformism in Germany and Austria, reformists of all shades are covering themselves with the mantle of radicalism in order to return to the old ways again tomorrow. One of the first obligations of honestly revolutionary Socialists is to mark themselves off, in word and deed, from these false prophets and centrist masqueraders.

The State and Revolution

Under the chapter heading, "The Road to Power", the statement of the R. P. C. is remarkable, both for what it says and what it leaves unsaid. On this fundamental question of the state and revolution,

which has divided the Social Democracy and Communism most sharply and irreconcilably, the R. P. C. rejects the conception that the bourgeois democratic state can serve as the instrument for the transformation of the social order. The program assigns this function, as Marx and Engels did, to the dictatorship of the proletariat.

In order to bring out the position clearly we quote at some length:

"It is necessary (says the statement of the R.P.C.) to acquire possession of the state power so as to transform capitalist society into socialist society by means of the dictatorship of the proletariat."

Further:
"The class character of a capitalist society means that no institution or instrument set up by the capitalist class can be depended upon to establish the Workers' Republic. Therefore the working class state will be an entirely new type of state based on workers' councils, historically suited to serve as the organs of liberation"

For Arming the Workers

On the function of the workers' state, the declaration of the R.P.C. says:

"Once socialists are in possession of the state machinery by the mandate of the workers, their task is to secure and insure the governmental power for the victorious revolution by arming the workers for its defense against all possibility of a counter-revolutionary resistance and to proceed to transform the economic

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Leader of the Spanish C.P. Resigns Post

According to a Barcelona despatch printed in the New Leader, organ of the Independent Labor Party of Great Britain, the leader of the official Communist Party of Spain, Jose Balbontin, has resigned from the Party because it refuses to unite with the Socialist Party, the Anarcho-Syndicalists and the Communist Opposition in resistance to Fascism. The C. P. has rejected with the other working-class organizations under the phrase "united action from below".

In a letter to the Central Committee of the Spanish Communist Party, Balbontin says it is "inimical to the solidarity of the working class to continue fighting Socialism as if it were a wing of Fascism". He continues—

"I do not believe that Fascism in Spain has been defeated, as Comrade Stalin stated in his last speech. It seems to me that Fascism in Spain marches apace, and has one foot in the Government already, and it will soon succeed in monopolizing the Government completely if we do not hurry to stop it by a sincere united front against Fascism. . . ."

"It seems evident to me that Spanish Socialism and Anarchism want sincerely to fight against the Fascist danger, and that in this critical moment the Spanish Communists must join loyally with the Socialists and Anarchists in a united front from below and from above, suspending all internal factional struggles in answer to the demands of the masses.

"We must suppress effectively the advances of Fascism; and only then shall we be able, without fear, to dedicate ourselves to the tasks of organizing a Workers' and Peasants' Government based on Soviets.

"At this moment in Spain, it seems to me too premature to insist on imposing upon the great revolutionary mass the leadership of a Communist Party which has hardly begun to sprout. If you insist on an immediate displacement of Socialist and Anarchist leadership, in place of treating with them provisionally, you are preventing a proletarian bloc and you are facilitating the complete triumph of Fascism, just as was done in Germany."

The resignation of Jose Balbontin has aroused great interest among the Spanish workers. There is not the least doubt that he will have the support of many workers within the Communist Party.



MARCHING UNDER THE BANNER OF THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE

Capitalists of All Countries Close Their Doors to Leon Trotsky

The attempt of comrade Trotsky to find asylum in some country has thus far proved fruitless. All doors are closed to him. Latest reports indicate that he must remain in France "under constant police surveillance". The New York Times of May 3 prints the following despatches:

Wireless to The New York Times.

PARIS, May 2.—France, which two weeks ago ordered Leon Trotsky to leave the country, will be obliged to keep him. No other country will take him off her hands.

Since the order for his expulsion was issued the arch-conspirator, who admitted he was engaged in trying to organize a fourth international, has carried on negotiations with many governments, with a view to obtaining asylum. But today, when the time limit put on his sojourn in France was reached, he informed the French Government that he had not succeeded. No other country would permit M. Trotsky to cross its frontiers.

Under these circumstances the French Government has decided upon his virtual internment. The Council of Ministers agreed to assign a residence to him where he would be kept under constant police surveillance. Authorities stated tonight that M. Trotsky would occupy that place of residence tomorrow, but they would not indicate its exact location. It will be at least 185 miles from Paris, it was stated.

Meanwhile, M. Trotsky will continue negotiations in the hope of obtaining a place of refuge. He has solicited the hospitality of several Central American republics, from which he has not yet had responses.

DEMAND THE RIGHT OF ASYLUM FOR LEON TROTSKY IN THE UNITED STATES.

SUDDEN DEATH OF A. A. BUEHLER

Just as this issue of the MILITANT went to press we received a telegram with the shocking news of the sudden death of A. A. Buehler, the beloved veteran of the American Communist movement, one of the foundation members of the Communist Party and an active member of the Communist League since its inception. The death of comrade Buehler is a heavy blow to our cause. Coming on top of the death last week of comrade Cora Duff the passing of comrade Buehler inflicts a particularly severe loss on the Kansas City Branch. The laconic telegram of the Kansas City Branch comrades: "We are grief-stricken but will carry on", gives a true expression of the spirit of comrade Buehler.

TERROR IN HITLER GERMANY

Berlin (T.S.)—Hitler justice closes its balance sheet for the first month of 1934 with a total of three new death sentences and 447 years of prison and hard labor. Four earlier death sentences were executed, including the one against van der Lubbe, the unwitting instrument for the establishment of Nazi mass terror. Four well-known anti-Nazi leaders were shot down by the police while "trying to escape" although it is conclusively proven that the men were deliberately murdered.

According to January statistics which are, however, incomplete, 123 enemies of the Hitler regime suffered heavy penalties from the hands of Nazi justice.

Greatest May Day in the History Of New York Labor Movement

"America First" Parade is Fiasco At Minneapolis

Minneapolis, April 30—The dark forces of reaction catch at labor's heels these days. The surge of the workers' ranks toward the organizations of struggle has a meaning for the profit-mad bosses. They understand that the temper of the workers, who have suffered long years of hunger in the bread lines, is mounting. They look upon the rapid spread of the strike wave as a certain signal that the workers in industry, even though faced with unemployment, have determined to fight for a better living standard. These bosses do not mean to give up a single penny unless they are forced to do so.

The "America First" parade and demonstration in Minneapolis, organized by the Hofstads and Labos as a counter demonstration to the May Day parade, marched in perfect step with these labor-hating bosses and their tools in the Welfare Board. Whether inspired directly by the business men's associations, the Citizens Alliance and like organizations or not (and there is plenty of reason to believe that it was) does not matter greatly. What must be made crystal clear, is that a number of active workers, members and, in some cases, officials of the M.C.C.W., played an active role in the work organizing this disgraceful performance. The Minneapolis Central Council of Workers must lose no time in cleaning its ranks of these twilight elements.

Traitors in the Labor Ranks

When Shay, McKinzie, Lindberg, Hofstad, Labo and others announced, through channels best known to them, that they were constituted as a committee to arrange this "America First" parade for the unemployed, all the forces of reaction leaped to their posts. What! an unemployed "loyalty" parade! With American flags—and all that! And—just think—best of all—to start from the Auditorium at 9 in the morning, THE DAY BEFORE—MAY DAY!!!

What a perfectly splendid idea. Here was an opportunity to deal a crushing blow to the real workers' international holiday. A good chance, so they reasoned, to cut the May Day Demonstration to pieces. To teach the militant workers a lesson. The local press gave this project plenty of publicity. The Journal, the most reactionary of the lot, fairly outdid itself, carrying two column pictures of the "committee" on the front page, and giving, also on the front page, a detailed account of the preparations. It listed the slogans: "We have faith in America; all we want is work." "Lets have fair play!" "Merchants, farmers, factories—our problems are your problems." "Lets pull together—" etc. etc.

The Journal stressed the announcement that a loyalty program would be conducted at the Parade Grounds where the parade was to terminate after a march through the downtown streets. It proclaimed that speakers from the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars would address the expected crowds. Former CWA project contingents were to form and march as separate units. All in all, the press and certain radio stations did the best they could under the circumstances to trick un-informed workers into participating in this counter-demonstration. Bands were promised. American flags for the coat lapels, banners, patriotic symbols, police escort and the rest.

It must be clearly understood. This "demonstration" was cooked up by the people mentioned and according to their own statements, behind the back and without the knowledge of the M.C.C.W., the organization to which most of them belonged. They asserted that they knew "such proposals would be defeated". They chose, rather, to go out as individuals and get aid from the only place that aid is forthcoming for such an affair, from organizations and individuals whose purpose is to divide, confuse and throw back the gathering forces of labor.

It goes without saying that a few workers were misled into participating in this sorry mess. Let them

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By far the largest and most impressive May Day demonstration that New York has seen took place this year. From one o'clock until after six the parade passed before the speakers stand in Madison Square, singing the militant songs of labor, shouting the slogans of unity and struggle and hailing the imposing beginning of a great united front of the workers in the fight against war and Fascism.

Despite the division of the movement and the holding of a separate parade and demonstration at Union Square under the auspices of the Socialist Party, the May Day Labor Conference, which united all the other tendencies in the progressive labor movement exceeded all previous demonstrations and all expectations in the size and spirit of its demonstration.

Mexican Police Seize International Communists

The New York Tribune prints the following dispatch from Mexico City under date of April 29:

By Cable to the Herald Tribune Copyright, 1934, N. Y. Tribune Inc.

MEXICO CITY, April 29.—Three men have been arrested here for distributing propaganda setting forth the doctrines of Leon Trotsky, one-time Red army leader, and the police have seized several hundred pamphlets urging Mexican workers to join the "Fourth International," which Trotsky now favors. Law students of the University of Mexico sent a delegation in an unsuccessful attempt to obtain the release of one of the men, a recent law school graduate.

According to the newspaper "El Grafico," a Trotskyite organization already exists in Mexico, but the authorities have been unable to locate its headquarters or to find the persons who issued the propaganda.

Attacking other Communist groups, the Trotsky pamphlets protested against the French government's decision to expel Trotsky, calling this action "the first direct step toward complete fascization of France and western Europe." Trotsky's presence in that part of the world, it was said, "is most important for the workers, since leadership is needed to transform the next war into a civil war and revolution."

Com. Cora Duff Dead

Kansas City, Missouri, April 23.—Comrade Cora Duff, aged 25, died early this morning at the Research Hospital. Her death came as the end of nearly six months' suffering from an inflammatory condition of the arteries. Throughout her long and very painful illness Comrade Duff fought bravely and uncompromisingly.

Comrade Duff was secretary of the Kansas City Branch of the Communist League of America and organizer of the Kansas City Young Spartacus Club.

The revolutionary movement suffers an irreparable loss in the death of Comrade Duff. She was a leader of young and old. Her mind was keenly active. She had an artistic appreciation of life; she had a warm, affectionate nature; she was courageous, optimistic, and militant. To the last she was steadfast in her principles and convictions and in her devotion to the high cause of social revolution.

JOIN THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE.

ations in the size and spirit of its demonstration.

May Day this year was not the occasion for a holiday festival. The shadows of war and fascism hang too heavily over the world to permit a spirit of festivity in the working class movement. The demonstration was permeated, rather, with a sober and determined urge of struggle and the powerful urge for unity in the labor ranks against the threatening reaction. The Young Socialists especially expressed this spirit and presented an impressive spectacle as they marched behind a huge banner bearing the motto: "We will fight to the death against war and fascism!"

As the divisions of the Communist League, the Communist Party Opposition, and the I. W. W. marched into the square they were greeted by the assembled Socialist workers, particularly by the Young Socialists, with resounding cheers and shouts of "Long Live the United Front!" The fraternalization of Socialist and Communist workers, the comradely spirit of unity and solidarity in the common struggle against the common enemy, which is the cement that binds the united front together, found a powerful expression at Madison Square this May Day.

The International Communists wound up the day with a rousing mass meeting at Irving Plaza where a number of speakers reviewed the event and outlined the program of struggle for the united front for the ensuing period. Our speakers at the Madison Square meeting—J. P. Cannon representing the League and M. Garret representing the Spartacus Youth Clubs—hailed the great occasion for the real progress toward the united front which it represented and urged that every conscientious effort be made to extend it to include all the organizations of the workers, including the Stalinists. While continuing to fight for this line, our speakers made it clear, however, that the International Communists will continue to participate in the existing movement that was launched so auspiciously with the May Day demonstration at Madison Square.

Shachtman Speaks at St. Louis Meet

St. Louis—Max Shachtman addressed one of the largest meetings arranged by the Communist League in St. Louis recently when he spoke on the need for a new revolutionary party at the Crunden Branch Library auditorium last Wednesday.

Almost 100 workers were in attendance, mostly from the factories, unions, and other workingclass organizations. They were so attentive to the discussion that ensued and so eager to learn about the principles and history of the International Communist League that a large amount of literature, Militants and pamphlets was rapidly disposed of.

Practically the entire membership of the Y.P.S.L. attended the meeting en masse, after having been visited by the writer and urged to be present to help prevent an anticipated Stalinist hoodlum attack. In order to be able to attend Shachtman's lecture, the Y.P.S.L. by unanimous motion, omitted their regular circle meeting which was supposed to have been held on the same night.

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