

The Left Face of the Socialist Party

Hitler's victory in Germany was a blow which should have brought the official communists back to consciousness and sobered them up. The bureaucratic apparatus had lost the power to think straight and had consequently taken that power away from most of the members. If the "theories" of social-fascism, united front from below, and dual revolutionary unionism had been a result merely from a state of temporary derangement the Nazis should have succeeded in bringing the Stalinists back to their senses. But it became apparent after the German catastrophe that the insane tactics of the bureaucracy of the Communist International were not due at all to anything temporary but were part of the bureaucratic organism and, since Hitler's terrific blow did not destroy that apparatus, these theories and tactics remained in all their purity.

What is more, the fascist juggernaut deepened the confusion and senselessness of the official communists. The German working-class was not defeated; the tactics of the Communist Party were, and ever will be correct; the victory of fascism indicated not the weakness but the strength of the workers. Such was and continues today to be the burden of the Stalinist song celebrating Hitler's ascent to power. Every word of protest, even of doubt, was denied the light of day and persistence on the part of any member determined to keep quiet no longer meant inevitable expulsion.

Impetus to Revolutionary Elements The socialist bureaucracy has not the coercive power of the apparatus of the Comintern. It has no Soviet Union giving it the tremendous prestige and power that the workers' state lends to the communist bureaucracy. It controls no purse strings. As a consequence the members of the various socialist parties are freer to think as they please and the German situation caused a great many of them to do some hard thinking and set them into motion towards the left. The struggle of the socialists in Austria, though utilized by the socialist leaders for showing how brave they were and what a militant organization the Socialist party of Austria was, gave a further impetus to the revolutionary elements within the socialist parties. The result has been that all over the world socialists have entered into discussion of socialist theories and tactics and a definite drift to the left is apparent. As against the fatalistic, religious acceptance of the dogma of infallibility by the communist priesthood and its followers the ferment in the socialist ranks is like a fresh breeze and has great revolutionary significance.

It must be said clearly that insofar as members of the socialist parties have shown that they can think independently of the leadership they are more important for the building of a new revolutionary party than the docile, unthinking followers of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

No Attraction in Comintern That the Comintern has practically no attraction for the leftward-moving socialists speaks volumes for the present character of that organization. The fact that the left socialists, instead of going over to the Communist International, are attempting to reform the Socialist International shows conclusively that revolutionary currents in the labor movement do not and cannot flow in the direction of Moscow. The failure of the Third International to attract the socialist workers is both cause and effect of the German catastrophe.

The Socialist party of America like its brother parties the world over finds itself in the throes of a serious discussion. Left-wing groups are challenging its fundamental principles of bourgeois democracy and gradualness; some of the left-wingers are making a determined bid to obtain control of the organization. It is necessary for those of us who are interested in the formation of a new revolutionary party and a new international to study the tendencies of the various groupings, to differentiate between them and to enter into very close relationship with those left-wing elements most likely to come all the way over to our position and thus play an important role in the coming political readjustments in the labor movement.

Heterogeneous Elements Nothing is more necessary than to understand clearly that the left wing in the Socialist party is composed of heterogeneous elements united only in their opposition to the old reactionary guard now in control. There is a world of difference between the "left-winger" Norman Thomas, a really sincere individual who has faint academic doubts about bourgeois democracy and the fighting rank and file coal miners of southern Illinois who are in reality communists who were driven away from communism by the Communist party and are repelled by realizable persons to hate everything connected with the Com-

unist party. Thomas has a powerful influence in the Socialist party, especially over the petty-bourgeois liberal elements in it. Essentially a Christian pacifist, having less than a superficial acquaintance with revolutionary Marxism, his being counted a left-winger merely indicates the depths to which the old guard has fallen. He is a sincere reformer overruling with a desire to help the downtrodden. His honesty leads him in some questions—as in the united front and in the struggle against the racketeering leadership of the American Federation of Labor—to take a position to the left of the official leadership of the Socialist party. All his writings, however, show conclusively that he could be correctly characterized as a "left-winger" only if he were in the Democratic party. As far as the revolutionary movement is concerned his very sincerity and ability constitute danger because of the influence they give him over the rank and file socialists.

The Middle-West Group The group that is making a real bid for the leadership of the Socialist party is the one now in control of Illinois and led by Maynard C. Krueger, professor of economics at the University of Chicago, and Clarence Senior, national secretary of the Socialist party. Bleimiller of Milwaukee is part of this group, known as a left-wing group and wanting everyone to recognize that it is left.

But it is difficult indeed to discover the platform upon which it lays claim to being left. It has taken great care to conceal its principles from everybody, even from itself. What is its program? Not a soul knows! At the state convention of the Socialist party not a single theoretical question was discussed. To all intents and purposes the delegates were not concerned with any of the problems agitating the minds of the membership.

The theory of Krueger and Senior seems to be that to struggle for the basis of theory, on the basis of a theoretical program with definite principles and tactics is inadvisable. They lead one to infer that what they want is first to obtain control of the organization and then to show their left color. False to the very core! No principled left-winger would dare permit himself such an opportunistic course. Unless a group is composed of simple careerists, the first necessity is to formulate a program and the second, to make it public and try to win over members upon the basis of the program. A real left-wing group must attract to itself the more advanced elements in the party and must educate the backward elements.

A Typical Centrist Group How can that be done without a clear-cut program? Where is the group going? What does it want to do? Krueger and his followers must answer these questions. Else the accusation that all they are interested in is the getting of power will have more than a semblance of justification.

Simply pointing to the fact that Krueger and Senior supported the minority resolutions at the International Socialist Conference held in August 1933 is not at all sufficient. Vaguely intimating that one is in favor of revolutionary principles and tactics is still less satisfactory. The whole attitude of the Illinois group is typically centrist. It stresses action and tends to ignore theory. And above all it is impatient with the demand for exactness in theory and for a struggle on the basis of theoretical formulations.

The Illinois group will probably point to articles by Bleimiller and Kantorovitch in the American Socialist Quarterly dealing with the problem of socialism and democracy as proof of their interest in theory. Aside from the fact that what is necessary is a well-rounded program of a group and not isolated articles by individuals, the articles themselves leave much to be desired. One must admit that both Bleimiller and Kantorovitch take a step forward—but a very hesitating one.

Reformist Theories When Kantorovitch asserts that "the way to political power in democratic countries will, in all probability, be the way of an electoral victory, if fascism will not intervene and make an end to democracy" (American Socialist Quarterly, Autumn 1933) he is very close to pure reformism. The reformists also threaten to gain power in fascist countries by revolutionary means. It is one's attitude toward the use of revolutionary means to gain political power in bourgeois-democratic countries and not in fascist countries that distinguishes a reformist from a revolutionist.

And to say, as Kantorovitch does in the same article, that "the problem is not so much how to get power as how to hold it, how to use it" is almost putting the cart before the horse. One must presume that power must be gotten first before it can be used and to emphasize the latter in contradistinction to the

former might leave the working class in a position of never struggling to obtain power. Both problems are of tremendous importance and must be tackled diligently and solved without hems and haws.

Bleimiller repeats almost the same idea in his article in the American Socialist Quarterly (Spring 1934) when he says "under such conditions . . . it is probable that socialists can be voted into control in those countries where bourgeois democracy exists". The use of force is limited only to the end of retaining control. We repeat: It is a step forward but it is by no means a revolutionary Marxist position.

Revolutionary Policy Committee The only group that assumed the obligation of putting its ideas publicly before the membership of the Socialist party and gaining adherents for those ideas is the Revolutionary Policy Committee. Its appeal to the Socialist Party membership is a serious though not quite adequate document. To the extent that everyone knows its principles, it is miles ahead of the Illinois left-wingers.

An effective critique of the program of the Revolutionary Policy Committee was made by Comrade Cannon in the Militant of May 5th and 12th, 1934. It may be pointed out that on the problem of the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist class the minority resolution proposed by Ronald Deval (New Leader, National Convention Agenda, April 21, 1934) is more specific than the section dealing with the same problem in the Appeal of the Revolutionary Policy Committee. In its position on the Labor party, trade-union policy and the Soviet Union the influence of Lovestone is visible. But it is hardly likely that leftward moving socialists capable of independent thinking should get off on a track leading nowhere.

Struggle for Leadership At the national convention of the Socialist party to be held in June in Detroit there will undoubtedly be a struggle against the present reactionary leadership. That struggle will in all probability not be led by the left-centrist elements represented by the Revolutionary Policy Committee but by the right-centrist elements represented by the Illinois leadership, helped by Norman Thomas and his followers. The general tendency of the working class elements and the youth is to the left. Consequently it is not at all unlikely that the Illinois group with its left-front will ride into power. The greater likelihood, however, is a compromise involving the present leadership, the Thomas following and the Illinois group.

The agenda for the convention gives promise of a highly interesting ideological struggle provided the sponsors of the revolutionary resolutions are represented. The agenda clearly mirrors the existence of the irreconcilable groupings in the Socialist party. How can a group announce the fact that "the Socialist party seeks to attain its end by orderly methods" and a group insisting that "we must be prepared for violence if necessary" remain in the same party? How can a group clinging to bourgeois democracy remain in the same party with a group openly advocating the dictatorship of the proletariat? The answer is that the two groups cannot remain in the same party and in the same international if those who see the necessity of the dictatorship of the proletariat mean what they say and are ready to draw the inevitable conclusions.

And therein lies the whole gist of the matter. The revolutionary socialists must think things through to the very end. Even if they do not openly state it, they must ask themselves some very pertinent questions: What if the party does not accept our principles? (And we can assure them that it won't!) How long shall we remain and keep on trying to transform the party? Many of the left-wingers point to the degeneration of the Independent Labor Party in England as a warning not to leave the parent organization. But that degeneration is not due to the fact that the I.L.P. left the Labor Party, but that after leaving, it did not resolutely take the road of building a new party and a new international.

No matter what happens at the convention the real socialist left-wingers who are inarticulate, the miners of southern Illinois, the revolutionary youth who are in the Socialist party by virtue of the stupidities of the Communist party will, and not in the very distant future, find their rightful place under the banner of international communism.

—ALBERT GOLDMAN.

Manhattan Spartacus Youth Club Educational Meetings MAY 31—L. Bord: The Minneapolis Strike. JUNE 7—Fascism in America Thursday evenings at 8:15 P.M. at 126 E. 16th Street, N.Y.C.

The Minneapolis Battle

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are in a panic before this avalanche of labor militancy. The spirit of the workers soars to the heights.

League Calls for General Strike While many labor organizations in the city are actively supporting the strike, the Central Labor Union with a more conservative leadership has yet taken but little action. Pressure must be brought to bear upon them to get that body to call a general strike. This is the central slogan raised by the Communist League. The rank and file of the unions are ready for this action and it is possible that they may go out in a day or two. (Since the above was written 35,000 building trades workers have gone out—Ed.) Mass meetings all over the city have been arranged. The St. Paul drivers voted to go out but failed to do so at the last minute and agreed to arbitrate a point or two. However, they can not hope to gain a thing and will have to struggle in the end for what they want. The street-car-men made a similar decision. The labor movement seethes with indignation against the leaders responsible for these actions in the face of the situation created by the Drivers' strike.

Miscellaneous Role of Stalinists The Stalinists fumbled again, due to their wrong policies and outlook. In a leaflet issued to the union men, just as they were about to take a strike vote, they denounced the leadership of the union, especially C. Skoglund and M. Dunne as "traitors" and "agents of the bosses". The men knew full well that these and other leaders in the union have worked loyally to build the union to the fine fighting organization it is today. They tore up the leaflets in anger and declared that these "Communists" are in the pay of the bosses, for what their leaflet said was too far from the truth. Another example: "Have a rank and file leadership", said the official C. P. leaflet. This is advice to unionists who have a strike committee of seventy-five composed of only workers on trucks!

At this writing the tide of the struggle is rapidly rising. The crest of the wave has not yet been reached. The organization is solid. The strike was well prepared. The coal drivers strike a few months ago—a battle which electrified the city by its stormy militancy and firmly established the union—is seen now as the preliminary skirmish of the present battle. And behind that is the long period of patient systematic work which went into the pioneer work of building the union and inspiring it with the spirit of determined struggle. The trade union policy of the Communist League was our guide in everything we did and in all our activity in the thick of the fight today. —F.K.

Attend the First PICNIC of the season given by Chicago Local, Communist League SUNDAY, JUNE 3rd at Forest Glen GOOD TIME ASSURED. Directions—At end of Elston Ave. car line transfer to bus and get off at Forest Glen Ave.

BEACH PARTY given by Spartacus Youth Clubs. Meet at Brighton Beach, 7th Street SATURDAY, JUNE 2, at 8 P.M. All comrades invited. Bring your own food.

FOURTH INTERNATIONAL MANIFESTO The Pioneer Publishers printed 50,000 Manifestoes "For the Fourth International". This excellent call of the League of the International Communists to the workers of the world to build new parties and a new international should reach tens of thousands of workers.

It is the duty of every friend of the Fourth International to spread it everywhere. Have it always ready with you. Hand it to all your contacts, acquaintances, etc. Don't miss a single opportunity. Branches should use them as propaganda material at their open air meetings, and distribute them at Socialist, Stalinite and other workers' meetings. "Penetrate every organization; Explain, arouse, recruit! Do not lose a day, not an hour", says the Manifesto. Rush your orders for the Manifestoes. 500 copies for \$1.00 plus postage (9 lbs.). 25c for 50 copies post paid. Order from Pioneer Publishers, 84 East 10th Street, N. Y. C.

Brownsville Lecture "THE CRISIS IN THE SOCIALIST PARTY" Speaker: MAX SHACHTMAN SATURDAY, May 26, 8 P.M. at 1776 Pitkin Avenue, near Stone Auspices: Spartacus Youth Club and Communist League of America. Admission 15c

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The Darrow Review Board's findings on the NRA has resulted in a bitter fight on Capitol Hill between the spokesmen for the different sections of the exploiters. Although the Review Board was only appointed March 7th by Executive Order, it has already received its death sentence, to take place next month. The hundred-thousand word report is to be followed in a week, before the expiration of its short life, by another report which promises to reveal more of the NRA doings. The National Recovery Review Board report says that the NRA is helping the trusts, that the NRA tends toward monopoly, that the little fellows under the codes are stifled. It sharply assails the codes reviewed; especially the steel code where the monopolistic practices are exposed.

The report reveals with facts and figures that the NRA is helping the large concerns and is systematically freezing out small business under all of the codes reviewed. To the readers of the Militant this is nothing new. From the very first day of the NRA we have clearly pointed out this phase of its functioning. What is important in the Darrow review is the fact that the antagonisms and conflicts inside the camp of the exploiters are sharpening. The report is one of its expressions. It will be used by a large section of the middle class. Darrow Speaks for Middle Class More significant than what is said in the Darrow report is what is left unsaid. The report gives a little attention to the problems of the working class. But it does not deal with the fundamental problems confronting the working class under the codes. This is not an accident. Darrow speaks for the middle class and not for the working class. The committee and those that back the committee, such as Borah and Nye, are fighting for the little business man and a large section of the middle class. In such a fight they come into conflict with the working class, even though they hope to involve large sections of the

Darrow Speaks For the Middle Class

working class in their fight against big capital. It is true that Darrow and Tomp-

son, in a supplementary report, call for the socialization of industry as an alternative to the NRA. This does not represent a left position. It signifies a position in which left phrases cover the worst kind of social reformist and reactionary ideas. Johnson, in his reply, correctly pointed out that the Darrow position leads either to Communism or Fascism. And correctly so. We do not expect Darrow in his report to specify which road he desires after the NRA—Fascism or Communism. We only point out that these two roads are open. The sloppy middle class report of the Darrow committee which cannot find space for the working class in a hundred-thousand word criticism of the NRA in no sense throws a favorable light upon the committee. A committee's report which criticizes the NRA, which is against big business and for the "little fellow" and which, at the same time, speaks of socialization as an alternative but leaves out any reference to the problems of the working class—such a report can become a basis for the worst kind of a middle class movement to rally the workers "against the trusts".

Pressure on the Workers How any one can write a hundred-thousand word document and criticism and say so little about the working class is a surprise to us. For every ounce of monopolistic pressure against the little fellow under the codes there is a ton of pressure against the working class. The fact that the Roosevelt New Deal was so capable of putting over its big business measures in the name of the workers calls all the more for an exposure of the clever methods used under the NRA to lower the standard of living of the American workers, and to hold it in check. The expression of class antagonisms through the NRA has simplified the previously complicated problem of the relation of economics to politics and class interests. In the past the ruling class had the simple task of issuing every measure in the name of the "people". They still do this, but before the ink is dry on the new measures the "people" split up into struggling classes.

The Wolinsky administration called a meeting of the Pocketbook Makers on Monday, May 21st at the Stuyvesant High School. At this meeting the Joint Council gave a report of the demands to be presented to the employers. When the secretary read off the demands which consisted: 1. A 36 hour week, 2. A ten percent increase in wages, 3. The employers should be kind enough to increase employment 10%. These demands were worked out by the legal "advisor", the agent of the bosses, the faker Wolinsky. When the notorious traitor, Wolinsky, was introduced to defend these demands the workers gave him a reception that he will not soon forget. In a demagogic speech Wolinsky spoke about Roosevelt's NRA, Frances Perkins, and what good things he is doing for the pocket-book makers to make a national agreement with the employers. A heated discussion followed on the question of the 36-hour week. An amendment was made by David Meyer of the Socialists and one of the progressives that our demands should be a 35-hour week instead of 36. Diamond of the Rank and File Committee made a substitute motion for the 30-hour week. In the discussion Matlin, Diamond, David Meyer, Block, Gallick spoke for the 30-hour week, and condemned Wolinsky as an agent of the bosses. Maltzer and Lubliner supported Wolinsky for the 36-hour week. It is interesting that the Wolinsky gang interrupted each speaker and tried to terrorize every one who spoke against Wolinsky's proposals.

The climax came when Wolinsky was again introduced to defend the 36-hour week. A tumult which lasted over an hour prevented Wolinsky from speaking, as yells of "betrayer", "traitor", "sell-out" were heard over the hall. The audience was in an uproar, protesting against the Wolinsky proposals, and his sluggers were busy provoking fights all over the hall in order to cow and break the morale of the protestors. This meeting and the attitude of the workers present demonstrated clearly that Wolinsky's task of selling out the interests of the pocket-book makers would not go uncontested by the rank and file workers in the union. After the audience was quieted down, a vote was taken on the question of the 36-hour or 30-hour week. In spite of terrorism, the Wolinsky proposal for the 36-hour week received 444 votes, and the 30-hour proposal received 304 votes, giving the Wolinsky gang the majority of 124 votes. The crying need of the pocket-book makers is a solid unity of all the progressive forces in a single block to fight the Wolinsky machine and its infamous policies. —A POCKET-BOOK MAKER.

Who is the NRA For? The NRA is detrimental to the working class. The NRA is also detrimental to the middle class, as Darrow points out. And, according to some of the big fellows of the Chamber of Commerce, the Manufacturers Association, the Steel Association, etc., the NRA is also detrimental to them. If this is the case who is the NRA for? Under the NRA the working class received crumbs in order to restrain them from taking more in strike struggles and organization. Also, the little fellow is being driven out of business through the operation of the codes. This much of the problem is not so difficult to understand. What confuses many is the fact that monopolists also criticize the NRA. Marx pointed out the significance of such phenomena in the last century. Here we have a striking confirmation of his analysis. The conflict within the national ruling class is sharpening. There is not only a conflict between imperialist nations. There is, likewise, a struggle between groups of imperialists within the nation. The Roosevelt group is in sharp conflict with the Hoover group. Besides this, other groups are struggling for sectional control of the country and of industries.

Finance Capital and the New Deal The bitterest attacks on the NRA have come from the groups of financial capitalists, who are not on the inside of the New Deal. They have more foresight for their own interests. This does not account for the whole of their criticism. Much of their criticism against the NRA has only been leveled at Section 7a. They know that the precedents established at the start will, to a large extent, govern the whole unless labor can demand a change. Therefore, they hammer away against labor. They want to give as few crumbs as possible and, at the same time, make a lot of noise to cover up the increase of profits rolling into them. The Darrow report is speaking for a section of the middle class and small industrialists. The working class must use their criticism to further expose the NRA. But the workers must steer clear of Darrow, Nye and all of the other liberals and social reformers. —HUGO OEHLER.

Anti-Nazi Demonstration in N.Y. A militant, shouting column of workers and anti-Fascists, organized by the Communist League of America and the Young People's Socialist League, paraded for four hours through the White Way district of New York City Thursday night, giving a militant answer to the "Friends of New Germany" meeting called in Madison Square Garden to praise Hitlerism. Within the Garden were 20,000 Nazis and their sympathizers; outside 1,000 police of the "democratic" state guarded the doors and streets. But more than 1,200 New York workers answered the threat implied in that meeting by a fine demonstration of militancy. A few days before the Nazi meeting the Stalinist press produced its latest orientation on Fascism. Having declared, on May 2, that Trotskyites are not an opposition to be argued with but "class enemies to be destroyed," the Stalinist Party now ordered its followers to discuss matters patiently with honest Fascist rank-and-file in order to win them from their leaders. With this notion as a basis, the Stalinists made no counter-demonstration to Thursday's Nazi meeting. Instead it mobilized for a meeting at Cooper Union to listen to "Comrade" Goldstein, one of the "honest, rank-and-file" rabbits.

United Front in Action Efforts made by the Communist League to arrange a formal united front counter-demonstration through the May Day arrangements committee fell through. The League therefore mobilized about 100 members and sympathizers, including Spartacus Youth Club members, at 8 o'clock on the evening of the Nazi rally. A block from the Garden they joined with a group of about 100 Yipsels. The steering committee of both groups merged, the united front of organizations thus being forged in action on the street. At a signal from the joint steering committee, the groups formed a column, shouting "Down with Hitler!" "Down with Fascist Terror!" The effect was instantaneous: before the column began to march hundreds of workers on the sidewalk joined the line. Thus began the four-hour march. The column wound up and down Broadway, west to the Garden and east again, looping back and forth. The streets were lined with sympathetic crowds including knots of Jewish Minute Men whose leaders had to restrain them from answering calls to join the demonstration. Before the evening was over the column had grown to more than 1,200. Efforts to reach the sidewalk just outside the Garden failed. There

were enough cops on hand to block off all approaches. The Stalinists were active in disorganization work. An hour or so after the march began a few of them drifted into the column. The steering committee, however, had made up its mind to go into Times Square for a meeting, and they managed to prevent the Stalinists from precipitating confusion and disruption. Meeting in Times Square The meeting in Times Square lasted about 40 minutes. Two Yipsels and one representative of the A.W.P. spoke, as well as Carl Cowl for the C.L.A. and Joseph Carter for the Spartacus Youth Clubs. The keywords of all the speakers were the same: denunciations of Fascism, condemnation of the Garden meeting and of the police attitude toward anti-Fascists, and proungalization of the idea of the united front of all workers' organizations against Fascism. Carter was loudly cheered when he voiced a protest against the persecution of German revolutionists and the deportation from Holland to Germany of the four German youth delegates at the Laren Conference. After having failed to disrupt the demonstration a Y.C.L. leader, Larkin, asked for the floor at the meeting. The steering committee gave it to him. He began to yell at the top of his voice about the Communist Party of Germany "which fights bravely against Fascism and against all Social-Fascist misleaders of the workers". The crowd—which was now several thousand strong standing on a traffic island in the midst of Times Square—gave him about the loudest howl heard on the White Way in years. It was so sharp and loud that Larkin lost some of his impudence. The workers put him in his place very nicely. The chairman, a Yipsel, wound up by calling for the International. —HARRY STRANG.

Bronx Workers! Attention! Special Lecture On THE CRISIS IN THE SOCIALIST PARTY Speaker: MAX SHACHTMAN Editor of New International FRIDAY, JUNE 1st, 8 P.M. AMBASSADOR HALL 3875 Third Avenue near Claremont Parkway QUESTIONS DISCUSSION Admission 15c Auspices: Bronx Branch Communist League of America, 1789 Boston Road, Room 5.