

ROBBER BARONS RAVE AT CRIME

I. Capitalism Breeds Crime

There is practically not a large industrial city where some kidnapping has not occurred during the last few months. All along the newspapers have been carrying sensational reports of the kidnapping of this or that scion of wealth. The paid press, which remains curiously indifferent to the poverty and degradation of ten million American working men and women, and which always retains a sober "impartiality" when it reports the beating or even the shooting of a striking dock worker, miner, etc., managed to work itself up into a veritable frenzy against this danger to the life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness (of the millionaires) and hysterically demanded the death penalty for all offenders. The corrupt legislatures—these mighty, these just, these disinterested "public servants" forgot about the gas trust and power corporations for a whole day and passed still more vicious laws to combat the "crime wave".

Catching Suckers

What was disgusting about the "crime wave", from our point of view, was the pitch of indignation to which the press succeeded in arousing many working men against the criminals. (We mean those that were caught, as distinguished from the catchers.) The press, the radio and the news services put on the high pressure valve and hysterical editors poured into the offices of the city editors demanding that something be done about it, while armed posses were reported to have been organized around Arizona and California.

Doesn't that really sound preposterous?

Here we are in the year of our lord 1934, where thousands, literally thousands of young men are being butchered off every day in South America and China and right here in the U.S.A.—four workers shot to death at the San Francisco Embarcadero, fifty-five wounded and one killed in Minneapolis, another worker electrocuted to death the other week in Milwaukee during the car strike, unemployed workers committing suicide every day; still nobody seems to get excited. But have one hair torn of the head of a millionaire, or any other parasite and then the press begins to carry reports of loud voiced young attorneys who tell us of the sanctity of the law and the fire-works begin in real earnest!

Who Pays the Press?

That shows just about as clearly as anything else what interests our press serves and what is very important, with what infinite ease they can stir up millions of people to an hysterical pitch, and divert their thoughts from their own misery. (Remember 1914?) Such events give us again a sharp warning that we must reexamine with a fine toothed comb everything we read in their press.

About this thing of kidnappings and crime in general, we workers have no reason to become indignant at this or that sensational murder which the press reports, or join in with the Chambers of Commerce and the lawyers of the American Bar Association in demanding more brutal punishments against offenders. What judges and lawyers call "crime" is nothing but an outgrowth of the system in which we live, with its exploitation and discrimination and poverty and hunger. And as long as this system of exploitation is allowed to remain, so long will crime exist no matter how vicious the laws that are passed.

Only One Way Out

The only way that crime can be abolished is to give people a decent chance to live; to abolish all private property, all monopoly and exploitation and then no man will go out to commit burglary when his house is well stocked with food and necessary clothing and no woman will walk the streets when she has a comfortable home of her own. Learned professors may write books about the criminal mind and how some people are naturally bad just as the rest of us are naturally good—law-abiding citizens—but that is all nonsense! There is no such thing as a natural criminal. You can examine any set of statistics, of any of our larger cities and you will find that invariably 99% of all crimes committed are crimes against property and are due solely to unemployment, to poverty and to want.

Why is it that so many of our young men must embark upon a career of "crime"? Why must so many of young working boys violate the "law"?

The Biggest Grab of All

Simply because 90% of all our wealth lies in the hands of 10% of the people. Solely because a pack of robber barons have monopolized the earth to themselves, have stolen all the forests, the oil lands, the coal, the copper and iron ore and have passed laws to compel the rest of us to pay tribute to them.

When you go out and try to find a plot of land to cultivate you find that everything has been fenced off long before you came, and a large sign planted in front, "Private Property—Keep Out."

When you go into a city and want to ride on the subway or the street

cars, you find that you are compelled to pay five or ten cents for something that is not worth more than 2¢, simply because the bankers who own the transportation companies have bribed the state legislatures and have passed laws compelling all of us to pay tribute to them.

When you go home and want to cook something on your stove, you find that you are being held up by the great Consolidated, who can generally furnish enough light so that the state legislature can see it, as was revealed at the recent investigation at Albany.

And when you go out and want to find some work, there is no job to be gotten, simply because of the greed and the grasping of a small clique of bankers, industrialists and landowners who have stolen so much of our wealth, that the rest of us can hardly buy back anything of what we have produced.

When you do find work, three-quarters of what you produce is stolen by the owner and the boss. And so we workers find wherever we may turn, we are surrounded by a hungry pack of wolves, who have fenced everything off for themselves, robbed everything, and then turned around and passed laws compelling us to keep our hands off.

Under conditions of that sort, facing the choice of slow extinction or "crime", of course, many of the more daring young boys take the latter choice and when they strike out and attempt to grab a morsel of all that has been stolen by the Astors and Vanderbilts and Morgans and Mellons they are clapped into jail for violating "law" while the jackals of the yellow press cry for their blood.

The big criminals, who have stolen more than all the petty thieves in the county jails put together never violate the law.

They are the respectable citizens, who make speeches and build churches and jails.

They have made the laws and therefore have no need of breaking them.

And the more these robber barons steal and plunder, the more many of the poor sons of the working class must go out and commit "crime" in order to live.

Some of us may not realize it at the time, but it is always hard economic need which drives them towards it. When young women prostitute their bodies, we know it is not because they don't go to church often enough, but because the lawyers and giant corporations have appropriated all the wealth and have deprived some girls of a chance of life and we know that the Morgans and the Rockefellers are responsible and not the girl who walks the streets.

Here and there, some person with a peculiar formation of the brain, may commit some senseless, weird crime, for no apparent reason, and receive great notoriety in our press, but these crimes are so rare as to be practically insignificant. By and large it is the poor who are forced to crime and it is they who fill our prisons and jails and who furnish the victims of the law. Such crimes can never be abolished by revengeful laws. They will only disappear when workers get a chance to live and get in on some of the good things of life. Only when all monopoly and exploitation is abolished and when the workers will receive

back in some form the wealth that they have produced, only when the bankers and capitalists and landlords are overthrown and the workers will become partners in production under a collective Socialist Society.

II. How Capitalism Reforms Itself.

Last summer, at about this time, all the liberals were walking around with broad, contented smiles on their faces, saying "I told you so. That was the time, as we remember, Ferdinand Pecora, as counsel for the Senate Banking Committee, was investigating the bankers and stock market brokers, and even though important phases of the investigation were suppressed, enough dirt and filth was revealed to satisfy the most blood-thirsty muck-raker. We all remember the juicy details: the "interesting" inside list, the strange workings of the income tax law so that J. P. Morgan did not have to pay a cent in income taxes for five years, etc., etc.

Now this is just what we've been talking about—the liberals exposed to us. "Public Opinion" exposed an investigation, the scoundrels and wrong doers are punished, a law is passed preventing such abuses in the future.

"Status Quo Ante Bellum"

It is months now that the investigation has ended. Congress has adjourned. It is fitting that we sum up the results gained, if any. Have we gained anything? Have the workers gained anything, as a result of the protracted investigations? Have Morgan or his pals been deprived of their wealth? No one in Congress even dared suggest as much! (John J. Astor, brother-in-law of Roosevelt's pal, can still spend two million dollars on his bride and have it smeared arrogantly across the headlines for the unemployed to read.) Is there any less cheating or tawdry now than last year? Is the stock market perhaps run more honestly? (Trying to run a stock market honestly is something like fighting a war without hurting anybody.) Way, just a few months ago, Arthur Cutten, the grain speculator, raised the price of wheat and kept it up, while thousands of workers did not have the price of a loaf of bread, etc., etc.

A NON-AGGRESSION PACT

Our liberal friends reply to us, "True, the results of the Pecora investigation have been disappointing, but at least now we will have the stock exchange regulated." "The Right Man for the Right Job"

Yes, out of that whole investigation, nothing has remained but a bill to "regulate" the stock exchange. (Just as our gas and electric companies are "regulated") and even that is nothing but a cheap ruse to throw dust into the eyes of the gullible. After months of bagging and bargaining at Washington a stock-exchange bill was passed by Congress which was so meaningless that even the million dollar Corporation lawyer, Samuel Untermyer, raised his voice in protest! But the corporations were not satisfied even with that. These shrewd men realized that about 99% of the importance of a law depends upon the people who are enforcing it, and so they saw to it that the President appointed Jos. P. Kennedy to the chairmanship of the Stock Exchange Commission.

"The right man for the right job", as the business men say. Had the President combed the country from New York to Frisco he could not have found a more fitting candidate to regulate the exchanges.

Last winter, right in the midst of the Pecora investigations, Jos. P. Kennedy carried on a wild manipulation with Harry Sinclair and his partner Mason Day, both of whom served prison sentences, in the so-called repeal-stocks.

In a few months, they made a profit of \$395,000 by buying and selling a million shares of the Laby-Owen-Ford Glass Co. stock. Of this sum Mr. Kennedy received the modest sum of \$60,000 without having to put up a cent.

Pontius Investigates Pilate

And this Jos. P. Kennedy, the worst kind of Wall St. speculator, is going to watch over Wall St. to see that it goes "straight"; and just to show the confidence they have in the man, Pecora (another member of the commission) who viciously attacked this very same pool in the Senate Banking Report, has just turned over his proxy to Kennedy, permitting the latter to vote for him at meetings. This is just to show how seriously they take the whole investigation.

Thus the net results—after an investigation costing hundreds of thousands of dollars—money finding its existence from the blood and brawn and muscle of the American working man and woman we are going to have a Wall St. speculator, regulating Wall St. The President's gratuitous insult to the intelligence of the workers, by this appointment, will not be forgotten by us. This glaring contrast between the words and deeds of the President will help thousands of workers to realize more than anything else, that capitalism can never reform itself, and can live only by exploitation and robbery. And only a workers' government working for Socialism can provide real justice to the working class and humanity as a whole.

The Significance of the United Front Between the C.P. and S.P. in France

The turn of the Communist party and the pressure from the left in the Socialist party has finally led to the organization of unity of action between these two parties. Thus the theory of social-fascism crumbles to dust, thus it becomes clear that by our intransigent struggle for the united front from organization to organization we have correctly interpreted the undeniable will of the toiling masses.

We must say very clearly. A new stage is opened before us now. We have not before us a chance zig-zag, or a maneuver for a day. It is a question of a whole policy, whose development will be replete in results. For the present we will limit ourselves to the principal features of this policy.

Firstly, what we have here is a victory of the workers themselves. Since February 6, unity of action has been the fundamental demand of the workers who see in it the first prerequisite for the success of their struggle. In every form and in the various centrist and democratic parties and organizations a pressure in this direction has been exercised from the very heart of the popular masses. The German experience has not been in vain.

The movement towards the left grew in the Socialist party drawing its main force in the Seine and in a number of provincial federations. The struggle of Doriot in the Communist party reflected the same state of things. Similarly in the trade unions a movement towards organic unity grew and deepened. On the other hand numerous Vigilance Committees and Workers Alliance dotted the country. In thousands of localities they maintained the connection between diverse organizations which found themselves literally thrown upon

each other on February 12th. Even the Amsterdam movement was forced to consider a change in its form.

For weeks and months (particularly in April and May) the action of the leading bureaucrats was exercised against the realization of the united front of organizations, that is against the masses. But action from below continued to bring the fighters of different tendencies and social groups together against Fascism. In June, these demonstrations were more extensive, more solid, more frequent. The hour was approaching when the bureaucrats would have to surrender.

From this point of view and in the degree that it reflects a pressure, a rising of the proletarian masses, vast perspectives are opened for a united front movement. As we said months ago and repeated hundreds of times in the struggle against Hitler in Germany, the constitution of a massed proletarian group can develop courage, hope and militancy, can push the struggle to a higher stage, in a word can create pre-revolutionary conditions.

In this sense we hopefully greet the realization of an action which embodies the profound correctness of our previous proposals and prepares a broader arena of struggle for the working class.

But it is essential to have complete clarity on the new situation facing us and therefore to develop our analysis further.

Consideration should be given to the form of exclusiveness the entente between the S. P. and the C. P. has taken. While at the present time it includes the most important sections of the working class, the apparatuses of these parties appear to have consorted not

only to organize common action but to mutually guarantee themselves against any intrusion of any current outside their control. The fact that Populaire (organ of the S. P. F.) has ceased to make any reference to Doriot, while l'Humanite refrains from supporting Just (leader of the left wing in the S. P. F.) against Blum, is very indicative. The fact that neither the C. P. nor the S. P. have even dreamed of enlarging the first manifestations of the united front to other political and trade union organizations of the proletariat, and do not speak of realizing it in the local committees suffices to dispel all doubts.

We place our finger on this danger because it is serious. The S.F. I. O. (Socialist Party of France) and the Stalinist leaderships represent two varieties of centrism; there is no principle difference between them. It is therefore necessary that the real Marxist-Leninist vanguard cuts out its own path at the expense of these two centrist currents. Consequently it will be no surprise if after consummating their fusion these two centrist bureaucracies function together against the incipient new party. History has seen similar examples as in 1917 at the time when the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries monopolized almost the totality of the working masses in the united front of the Soviets.

Great events and unparalleled audacity were necessary in order for the Bolsheviks to win the leadership, thanks to the experience acquired by the masses.

On the other hand the turn of the C. P. has an international scope which must be emphasized. It is not only a question of the adaptation of centrism to the will of the workers for united struggle. For the apparatus it is a question of a policy which makes the agreement of the U.S.S.R. with "democratic" France the pivot of the international struggle of the C. I.

The evolution of the Stalinist policy in the Saar bears evidence to this fact. Several months ago the C. P. abandoned its initial slogan and declared itself ready to vote for the status quo in 1935. In the meantime Cachin denounced Doriot for proposing an agreement with Max Braun, social democratic leader in the Saar and was received with loud applause. But on July 3rd it was announced that the C.P. and the S. P. had arrived at an agreement to constitute a common front "against any link with Hitlerite Germany!" We are also informed that the same proposals are to be made in other European countries.

The C. P. has tacitly liquidated its theory of "social-fascism". Its national conference adopted a new policy although it carried no resolution on this subject. Thorez (leader of the French C. P.) uncovered the very bottom of this policy.

Firstly, at one blow, Thorez declared for the defense of democratic rights. That is a step forward. But at the same time he makes two steps backward. He limits democracy to the freedom of assembly and press, and to proportional elections in the Chamber of Deputies, that is, he conceives of it in the most opportunist manner.

Secondly, he makes a profession of patriotic faith. A typographical error had made Thorez say "nous aimons notre patrie" (we love our fatherland) whereas he had wanted to say "notre pays" (our country). Hem! These subtleties will not serve to hide the basic fact. Thorez and Cachin has contrived to give a chauvinist tone to their new position in defense of democracy. It is necessary to call that danger by its right name for it constitutes the first link in a well-known chain; the one that ties the hands of the proletariat the moment war breaks out!

No one can doubt that the socialist center and left leadership have found a guarantee in this new orientation. There is no wonder that they feel a kinship with Thorez. They can say that this slipping in the position of the C. P. constitutes the most important element in the constitution of the united front.

Finally it is necessary to emphasize this extraordinary phenomenon: the bureaucracy of the C. P. accomplishes a 180 degrees turn without even thinking of opening a discussion or of informing the party! In the black of night with all lights extinguished the turn is accomplished. It is not in this manner that Communist cadres are educated.

And what will be the program of the united front?

Up till now it has limited itself to the defense against Fascism. That is an important task, but it can only serve as the arena for a more direct struggle to overthrow Doumergue. We will not insist on this essential question today. For our part we consider that ideas enunciated in our program of action in the last issue of Verite (we will publish a resume of this program of action in the next issue of the Militant—Ed), constitutes the only program by means of which the united proletariat will be able to fulfill its historic tasks.

—P. NAVILLE, writing in La Verite, July 6, 1934

DAILY WORKER TELLS ALL

Many have been and are the boasts of the Stalinists; of their numbers and influence over greater numbers; of the organizations they have built—trade unions, unemployed councils, fraternal societies, a whole catalogue of them; of the strikes and demonstrations they have led; of the gains they have won for the workers. For the most part their vauntings were like the wind. The small gains they won, now here, now there, have been lost or eclipsed in the greater offensive of the second strike wave of the "recovery era" The organizations they built have crumbled to dust or are paper shells. Over the Stalinists, history has marked the cross of death.

The Daily Worker itself offers continuous evidence of the isolation of the Stalinists from the American working class. In its columns there is a continuous bleating and whining about the failure of the party membership to carry out the always-correct line and root itself in the trade unions; become a factor in the great strike struggles; get subs; all those activities for which a revolutionary party is created.

Perhaps most damning of all are the figures of the circulation of the Daily Worker published on June 19 in connection with the drive for twenty thousand new readers, itself part of the drive to double the Daily's circulation by January 1, 1935. Fifteen years after the launching of the Communist Party, in the fifth year of an unprecedented crisis, with more than ten million unemployed, in the midst of a great offensive by labor, with no daily working class papers with which to compete, the circulation of the Daily Worker, the main organ of the Stalinist Communist party is only thirty-one thousand a day! Is this not a confession of failure and isolation?

The Daily's figures apply nationally to twenty-six districts. In only five—New York exclusive of the Buffalo area, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Detroit, and Chicago has the daily a circulation of more than one thousand! More than forty percent of the total circulation comes from New York, presumably from New York City and vicinity. In Detroit, center of the great automobile industry, the Stalinists admit their failure with a circulation of only 1,595. In Pittsburgh, center of the steel industry, it is even worse with 481. In Birmingham where their work in the Scottsboro case gave them a base for work and influence they have a circulation of only 301. In the important cities of St. Louis and Buffalo they have respectively 226 and 529. So it is with other cities and districts—nothing to bear out their boasting.

Readers and Members

Let us take another look at the figures. They will tell us more. The circulation of the revolutionary press has always been considerably larger than the party membership. The reasons are obvious. The Stalinists generally exaggerate the difference. Thus in Germany today where the Lovestonites accord them twenty thousand members in the underground they claim a weekly circulation for the illegal Rote Fabne of a million and a half! But here in the U. S. where they claim twenty-four thousand members they admit to only thirty-one thousand readers of their daily press. So little is their influence. And what of the hundred and twenty-five thousand members they say they

have in the T.U.U.L. unions? Don't these revolutionary workers read the Daily Worker? Evidently they don't. Or to put it as it is, the circulation figures prove they haven't got a hundred and twenty-five thousand workers in the sectarian and impotent T.U.U.L. "unions" And it demonstrates, lie as they will, on the basis of the party membership, that the influence of the party press does not extend far beyond the membership.

The figures are a balance sheet to date of the Stalinist's disruption in the revolutionary and labor movements. No "explanation" by them can explain away the dismal failure their own figures reveal. Look at the quotas for the twenty-six districts in the drive for twenty thousand of the thirty-one thousand new readers in two months! Half of this twenty thousand is assigned to New York! For the rest of the country, for the Minneapolis, Toledo, Milwaukee and West Coasts to come—ten thousand new readers!

The other quotas are equally revealing. The same issue which gives all these revealing figures intimates that the S.M.I.U. was "preparing strikes despite betrayal" by Tigue and the Committee of Ten. If that were the case they must have had it in mind to raise the pitiful circulation in the Pittsburgh district from 481. Their real perspective in this situation is to be found not in the "news" columns, nor the editorials, nor anywhere save in the circulation quotas for the district. There are more than four hundred thousand steel workers. The quota is 300! The strike talk is for the reader and to fool the gullible.

Less than 4,000 for Steel

It is true that not more than all of the four hundred thousand steel workers are in and around Pittsburgh. There are some in Buffalo; the quota there is 320. Birmingham—200; Cleveland—900; Chicago—2,000; total less than four thousand.

The Pittsburgh figures must also apply to the thousands of miners in the district as well as the steel workers. Similar "perspectives" obtain for the other industries. In the figures, not the "news" and "editorials" are to be found the real perspectives of the Stalinists. It is a confession of bankruptcy.

Were we to take the Stalinists at their word and accept them and their party as the representatives of the Bolshevik October and the bearers of the traditions of Marx and Lenin, as the Lovestonites do, we should have to conclude that there is no hope for Marxism in the United States. But we need not accept the Stalinists at their word. They are no longer the representatives of the Bolshevik October. It is true they try to cloak themselves with its glorious traditions, but they have betrayed it. No longer a revolutionary party, they are a reactionary force. Their blatant claims makes an even less serious impression on the working class which turns from them with repugnance and bitterness.

There is a great future for Marxism in the United States as all over the world. That future lies with the Fourth International and its American section. Encouraged by the self-confessed bankruptcy of the Stalinists, let us put new energy into the work of rooting the Fourth International in the U. S.! Let us build the new revolutionary Communist Party! —T. STAMM.

A NON-AGGRESSION PACT

1. The theory of "social Fascism" which has become a mockery continues to remain an obstacle to revolutionary policy. If reformists are the same as fascists, how can the Stalinists address Pontius with the proposal to struggle against Pilate? This patent absurdity greatly facilitates the manoeuvres of the reformists.

2. The socialist congress at Toulouse declared in its resolution that it is necessary to set up defense groups against fascism but that these groups must not be used as an instrument for the seizure of power. This clear declaration completely confirms our estimate of the Socialist party as a party of bourgeois democracy. It does not want to give up its position to fascism without a struggle but it is not at all disposed to overthrow the rule of capital. Thus, the united front can pursue only definite, immediate, practical tasks: above all the struggle against fascism. This realistic manner of posing the question presupposes, in any case, the abandonment of the idiotic theory of social fascism.

3. Blum—S. P. leader—states: "We are ready to make a united front, but you must cease attacking us". In other words, Blum is ready to accept collaboration in the defense against fascism only if his collaborator changes his opinion of Blum, or desists from saying what he thinks of him. But is not this absurd? When passengers of a stage coach are held up they defend themselves without inquiring into the opinions that they have about each other.

4. Blum only increases the absurdity and the erroneousness of his position by writing: "The workers will not understand how we can attack each other and at the same time make a united front." It is quite obvious that Blum understands well the psychology of ministers, of parliaments, of salons and editorial offices; but he understands absolutely nothing of the psychology of the proletariat. Every worker will say: "If the Communists and the Socialists make a bloc despite their irreconcilable differences, it means that the danger is really mortal; it means that we must redouble our efforts, it means that we must arm ourselves." Messrs. leaders, you must not take the workers for babes in the woods. You need not color and mask reality. You must tell the workers the truth.

5. The Stalinists reply to Blum: "We will not criticize you within the limits of the tasks of the united front, but we reserve the right of criticizing you in other questions. One absurdity is piled upon another."

er: in reality, the differences remain their force also in what concerns the tasks and methods of the united front. One cannot renounce the right to criticize in the most important field and at the most critical moment, in the field of struggle against fascism. But criticism of indecision, of semi-measures and parliamentary illusions of reformism should not and does not have to prevent the taking of practical steps in common.

6. Leon Blum is too experienced a politician not to know that no party, under no circumstances can renounce the struggle for the spreading of its ideas and the growth of its influence except at great cost to itself. Blum has always acted in this way with regard to bourgeois radicals, his allies in the parliamentary bloc. If Leon Blum and Paul Faure put false, artificial conditions about everything else it is because they fear the united front with the left. They still hope that everything will pass over by pacifist, parliamentary means; they try to stall for time and lose it in reality. This means that the pressure of the workers is not yet strong enough. It must be doubled.

7. But Cachin and Thorez (French C. P. leaders) also fear the united front which is the condemnation of their whole past policy. Precisely because of this the Stalinists befuddle the issue, juggle with it, play the hypocrite instead of telling the truth. The pressure of the workers has already forced the bureaucrats to engage in the policy of the united front, at least in words, but it did not force them as yet to carry on this policy in a Marxist manner.

8. But what can one say of two bureaucratic apparatuses that in a most critical period in history, confuse things, diplomatize, play hide-and-seek, disorient the workers and lose precious time. These apparatuses have become a terrific break upon the proletarian revolution. Our epoch is in need of a new party which can see, which can understand and which can act. To prepare such a party is the most important task of the advanced workers!

—Verite, July 6, 1934

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