

EDITORIAL

A 'Farmer-Labor' Strikebreaker

THE mask is off. The "friend of the worker", the Farmer-Labor Governor of Minnesota has revealed himself to be the bitterest foe of organized labor, the shrewdest supporter of the bosses. Olson has played out his bag of tricks. And every trick has been a boon to the Citizens Alliance, a blow at the embattled strikers.

Arrest of Cannon and Shachtman

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attorney declared that he had no objections to the release of the men on the writ. It immediately became clear why no prosecution was to take place. Having found it impossible to hold the men any longer even on a trumped-up charge, Johannes had arranged with the officers of the National Guard, who had taken over the city under martial law the day before, to put Cannon and Shachtman under military arrest.

Just as the release in civil court was effected, a sergeant of the Guard entered the courtroom—the first time such a procedure has ever been witnessed in the history of Minnesota—and demanded the custody of the prisoners. The sensation was heightened by the fact that he was armed with a sub-machine gun and that a dozen Guardsmen, automatics strapped to their sides and rifles in their hands, stood outside the courtroom as an escort for the dangerous leads. Completely surrounded, Cannon and Shachtman were marched down the corridors, out of the municipal building to the street, where another score of Guardsmen awaited them with another score of automatics and rifles.

repeated. They then declared that they would refuse to leave the city of Minneapolis of their own volition, that they would depart only if forced to do so by a squad of Guardsmen. They had violated no law, they had not violated, nor could they have, any of the military regulations which were put into effect during their stay in city jail, and they would insist upon their rights to carry on as correspondents for their periodicals to exactly the same degree as the representatives of out-of-town capitalist papers who had, of course, not been molested.

Stalinist Zig-Zags

The United Front

Is the united front with the Socialist parties (hitherto the "social-fascists"), for long so vigorously denounced by the Stalinist leaders, here and elsewhere, again to be accepted as a policy of the official Communist party? Supposedly that appears to be the case. But in reality it is not.

The Stalinist party leadership, over the signature of its general secretary, Browder, submitted a proposition to the Socialist party convention for a united front struggle for certain specific aims. Later that proposition was repeated to the S. P. national committee with several requests already made for an answer. As yet the Socialist party leadership has made no answer and the question might well be posed: Why is it silent?

There is one basic answer to this question and it is well documented by facts from recent history. The Socialist party leadership, like that of international social democracy, of which it is a part, prefers capitalism to a workers republic—a Soviet Republic. For that we have the best proof in the German Social Democratic party's participation in the Hindenburg "iron front" right up to the fateful hour of Hitler's seizure of power. We have the additional proof of its Austrian brother party clinging to the coat tail of Dollfuss right up to the day when he trained his howitzers on the homes of the Austrian socialist workers.

From this basic proposition flows the attitude of the Socialist party leaders, of relying on bourgeois democracy and its rules of the game, rather than on the militant struggle of a united working class, of finding more comfortable company and more agreement with the reactionary trade union officials than with the struggles of the left wing workers. Inevitably, and in time, this will tear the workers loose from the Socialist leaders. But that is not yet the case.

There is, however, also another side to this question. The Stalinist party leaders have not at all convinced the Socialist workers that they mean their united front policy seriously, that they propose a genuine united front. On the contrary, they have done everything in their power to divide the working class and prevent its unity of action.

While it now appears that there is a change in orientation, and methods of the Stalinist leadership of the party and of the Third International, it is not a real political change. To affect a real change in this respect it would be necessary to throw overboard the ideological baggage of the recent past and to repudiate many of its concepts and methods. First of all it would be necessary to repudiate the spurious theory of "social-fascism".

It would be necessary to repudiate Stalin's axiom that "social democracy is objectively the moderate wing of fascism. They do not negate one another. They are not antipodes, but twins,"—or is this still to be considered correct? If so there could not and there should not be a united front. No, it is necessary to repudiate it because it has nothing in common with the Leninist conception of the working class and its forces.

But it was in following these ridiculously false ideas that Manuilsky reported to the Eleventh Comintern plenum that those "in our own ranks who erroneously act along the line of a belief in the existence of a basic contradiction between bourgeois democracy and fascism, between the social democrats and Hitler's party, are harmful and fatal to the Communist movement." And the American party at its plenum in 1932 defines as "American social-fascism (American Federation of Labor, Socialist Party, particularly the Muste wing with the Lovestone-Cannon renegades)." Is that still to be considered correct, or was it pure and unadulterated fakery?

And let us ask Willi Muenzenberg, who is now the celebrated visitor here, was he correct when he said in Feb., 1931, "A bloc, or even an alliance, or even a temporary joint operation in individual actions between the Communist party and the Socialist party in Germany against national socialism, would forever discredit the Communist party among the broad masses of the workers, toiling peasants and the middle strata, and draw it into decline."

Is he ready to repudiate that now? Will he disavow the old slogan of the German Young Communist League—"Drive the social fascists out of the factories, out of the unemployment bureaus, out of the trade schools." Will he disavow the old slogan of the German Young Pioneers—"Beat the smallest Zoergelbs out of the schools and playgrounds."

Your own statements condemn you as liars. You cannot expect, gentlemen, that workers shall take your united front proposals seriously unless you are ready to declare that all this was false. Formally the united front proposal has now been made to the Socialist party and to its national committee. What is its meaning? Does this represent a political change from the course pursued in the past? We recall from very recent date, from the eighth convention of the official Communist party, held in April this year, the thesis declaration: "The Communist party must widen its struggle for the united front with the social democratic workers, over the heads of their treacherous leaders."—Over the heads of the leaders—what hollow rapid phrases. They will not help in the least to tear the workers away from social reformism, and that, after all, is the ultimate objective of the revolutionary party. Today such hollow phrases represent only the most stupid disregard of the organization of the social democratic workers. Unfortunately these social democratic workers still belong to their party and support their leaders because they are socialist workers. Disregard of his fact serves only to provide an excuse for the S. P. leaders to reject the united front offer. It becomes only a bureaucratic maneuver at the expense of the working class unity of action. Nothing could suit the social reformist leaders better than this. They can continue with impunity their treacherous role of support of bourgeois democracy.

It would be illusory to expect that these formal united front proposals represent a political change of policy of the Comintern and its various parties. Essentially it reflects the pressure of the Communist workers facing an ever more menacing enemy to which the Stalinist leaders are attempting to adjust themselves in a tactical way instead of giving actual leadership. It represents the pressure due to the decline of the official Communist parties and an effort of the Stalinist bureaucrats by means of another periodical zig zag to establish an alibi for the past failures when the genuine united front had in reality become a life and death question. Meanwhile the bureaucrats of the Comintern have become so estranged from an actual united front policy that what they propose now is in reality the social democratic "non-aggression pact" which suspends criticism. That, of course, is false to the core. One of the first essentials of a genuine united front is the freedom of mutual criticism of all participants.

In the formal united front proposal made by the C.P.U.S.A., there is listed as one of the aims, "building a revolutionary trade union leadership." Is that possible of achievement jointly with the social democrats? Obviously not. And we might also ask, what role will the T.U.U.L. rival unions play in this? But there are many more questions that the Stalinist leaders are obliged to answer before they can begin to convince a single worker with the seriousness of their united front proposal and even before it can become clear to their own members and supporters what they mean.

Are they ready to repudiate their theory of social-fascism and their declarations of the impermissibility of a bloc with the Socialist parties? Are they ready to repudiate their spurious united front below policy? Are they ready to repudiate their actions at the Madison Square Garden meeting? Are they ready to liquidate their T.U.U.L. policy of rival unions, which splits the labor movement, and adopt a policy of the militants working within the mass unions?

These are minimum requirements to prove the sincerity of the united front policy, to prove that the formal offer made means a genuine united front. However, mere declarations and mere formal proposals are not sufficient. It is necessary to adopt a policy which in all the practical daily activities of the Stalinist party proves by deeds that its interests are identical with those of the working class, that it has no separate factional motives and that it means the professed united front proposal seriously.

For us this question does not present difficulties. We stand squarely for the Leninist united front policy. We are ready at all times to contribute all in our power towards a genuine united front of Communist and Socialist and also trade union organizations against the attacks upon the workers by the bosses and their government, and against the rise of fascism. In that there must be preserved the right of mutual criticism and independence of organizations. Do not bind your own hands! There must be no common platform, but agreement on practical aims to be respected and to be honored. To keep separate banners, but to strike untidily must be the objective.

—ARNE SWABECK.

Strike at Martial Law!

As we go to press, the latest news from Minneapolis is that Governor Olson is showing his true colors so that even the Farmer-Labor workers on strike there can see them clearly. His militia has marched into their headquarters, arrested the strikers leaders, then marched on the Central Labor Union headquarters and raided that too!

Drivers Force the Release of Leaders

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der pretense that there they would be better cared for. Meanwhile, the painstaking arrangements of the strikers to take care of their own were destroyed in the clean-up.

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MOONLIGHT EXCURSION Saturday, August 18th, 1934 Dancing Entertainment Refreshments S. S. SEAGATE Leaving Pier 11, East River, foot Wall St., at 6 P.M. Ticket \$1.00 Auspices: International Workers School, 144 Second Avenue, N. Y. C.