

QUESTION BOX

GERALD DAVIS, Philadelphia.—I hope that as a result of this experience it becomes fixed in your mind that when a contradiction exists between what Lenin said and what a Stalinist says, you can be sure that there is something wrong with the statement of the latter. If, as your friend states, Lenin said something to the French comrades about building "Red" unions, you can be sure that he spoke to them in the spirit of his "Left-Wing Communism" and not a la Stalin.

In the first place it is correct that the Red International of Labor Unions was formed during Lenin's time; or to be more exact, in July, 1920. (In 1921 the Constitution of the R.I.L.U. was published in English by the American Labor Union Educational Society.) What your Stalinist friend implies, however, is that the R.I.L.U. was intended as the international center of the various national "T.U.U.L.s". Nothing could be further from the truth. The R.I.L.U. was intended as the international center of revolutionary unions, it is true, but unions made revolutionary by the communists expanding and capturing the existing organization, and not by creating "paper" ones. To prove this statement we will call upon none other than Lozovsky himself.

Reporting upon the international council of trade and industrial unions of June, 1920, which laid the basis for the R.I.L.U., he states: "The question that raised most discussion was that of the tactics of the Communist revolutionary elements within the trade union movement in connection with the old mass unions. The question was: Should the old unions be split or captured? . . . To leave the unions and to set up small independent unions is an evidence of weakness, it is a policy of despair, and, more than that, it shows lack of faith in the working class. (ahem) One must choose between two positions, either the social revolution is inevitable, that the working class is pressing toward the overthrow of capitalism, and the trade unions, however reactionary they may be at present, will change their character under the influence of the revolutionary mass—or the social revolution is a matter of the distant future—in that case no unions, however revolutionary their programmes may be, will be of much use. . . . That the conference took up the correct point of view is proved by the Second Congress of the Third International which sharply opposed the tactics of leaving the unions. The motto put forward by the Communist International, and which is our motto is: NOT THE DESTRUCTION BUT THE CONQUEST OF THE TRADE UNIONS. (Emphasis in original.)

"It may have been possible on other questions to compromise in order to secure agreement, BUT ON THIS CARDINAL QUESTION NO COMPROMISE WAS POSSIBLE . . . neither the Communist International nor the TRADE UNION ORGANIZATIONS (emphasis ours) affiliated to it could put forward any other motto, because for the revolutionary elements to leave the unions would mean playing into Lenin's and Gompers's hand. . . ." (A. Lozovsky, "The International Council of Trade and Industrial Unions," pp. 37 to 39). You will find this further substantiated in another pamphlet by Lozovsky, "What is the Red International of Labor Unions?" published by the R.I.L.U. in 1927.

Now as to the contention that the present "red" unions were formed primarily to organize the unorganized. This argument cannot stand up either in the face of an analysis of such a position or in the face of the facts as stated in the official Party documents or as the matter actually developed in life.

Point 1. The theoretical basis for the new unions (7th National Convention of the C.P.U.S.A., 1930) was that the A. F. of L. is "outright fascist" and since a fascist organization is only fit to be destroyed, "only on the basis of the Trade Union Unity League will the Party be able to assume the leadership of . . . economic struggles."

Point 2. If the new unions were formed primarily to organize the unorganized, it would be reasonable to expect that the new unions would be formed only where none with a mass base existed. The Stalinists, however, split the Workmen's Circle and founded the I.W.O.; split the Amalgamated Food Workers' Union and formed the Food Workers' Industrial Union; the National Miners Union was maintained in the face of the mass U.M.W. of A.; and the Needle Trades Workers' Industrial Union exists alongside the mass I.L.G.W.U. These cases which are not mentioned would only further destroy the Stalinists' contention.

Point 3, which concerns the C. P.'s position prior to the inception of the T.U.U.L. requires fairly lengthy quotations which will be given in order that the matter can be cleared up once and for all, and so that no accusations can be leveled against us that we make use of hastily snatched quotations. Since other questioners are pressing for answers, lack of space requires that this be—CONTINUED NEXT WEEK.

COMRADE H. M. K., Philadelphia.—Unfortunately, since they are out of print, or their publishers out of business, there is no record of all the versions, in English, of Lenin's "Left-Wing Communism." A check-up at the N. Y. Public Library shows that the only copy on file is a French translation.

However, there is handy, in addition to the one recently published by the International Publishers an edition entitled "Left Wing Communism, An Infantile Disorder," published by the Marxian Educational Society, 1921; and an edition entitled "The Infantile Sickness of 'Leftism' in Communism," published by the Contemporary Publishing Association in 1920. The latter translation appeared simultaneously with the first Russian, French and German editions.

A comparison of the 1920 "Infantile Sickness" copy with the latest International Publishers publication indicates that, as far as can be judged by the various subject headings, the text covered by both is the same. Both editions have in their appendix Lenin's correspondence with the Dutch Communist Party, an article about Turatti in Italy, etc. Except for some typographical errors it will probably be difficult to show why the 1920 edition is "inadequate."

However, the Stalinists will bear watching. They are making a turn in their trade union policy and a slight distortion of a sentence or the addition of a word, particularly in that part of Lenin's work which deals with work in the reactionary unions, might help them in their oily maneuvers, especially since it is this chapter which stands as a condemnation of their whole policy.

LEFT S. P. Ite, N. Y.—Because of lack of space, our answer to the Boston Yipsel of August 4 did not go completely into the question raised which may account for the impression you got. It was never intended to convey the idea that the question of proletarian power might be settled by the ballot box even under certain circumstances. No! The question of power will be decided by the dynamics of the class struggle of which elections are, at best, but a crude barometer.

You will find an answer to Kautsky's "Terrorism vs. Democracy" in Trotsky's pamphlet "Dictatorship vs. Democracy" which was written as a reply to Kautsky.

POLITICAL CHANGES IN MEXICO

The Significance of the Impending Crisis in the Government Party

There is a rumor in Mexico that the governing National Revolutionary Party is in the midst of serious internal trouble, that may lead to a split.

On the one side, according to this rumor are the supporters of the newly-formed fascist organizations: the brown-shirted "Mexican Revolutionary Association" and the green-shirted "Pro-race Committee". Supposedly directing this group is the present president in office, A. Rodriguez.

On the other side are those elements of the ruling class who see in these groups a peril, and who think that the democratic ways of ruling the masses are still good enough.

Rumors of Split

Mexico is a land of rumors. The large illiterate population, the timid newspapers (even from a bourgeois point of view), the general unsettled state of affairs causes this condition. Even the lowest peon has a friend, or a friend of a friend, in the large governmental bureaucracy who will tell him "confidentially" all sorts of fantastic stories. This rumor, however, has grounds for belief.

The various fascist organizations have been experiencing some growth lately. The usual collection of social filth, the refuse of life, has been flocking into these organizations: Ex-governmental officials, unemployed generals, colonels, captains and lieutenants (and Mexico with its 25 years of revolution and counter-revolution is more populated with men wearing, or entitled to wear, epaulettes than it is with doctors); petty-bourgeois alarmed at Jewish and Chinese competition; ex-landowners who dream of the glorious days of peonage under Porfirio Diaz; ambitious students; lackeys of the imperialist groups who are getting the worst of the scramble with American finance-capital; and the usual lot of degenerated proletarians recruited at the nearest cantina and instructed at the given signal to shout "Vive Mexico", "Mueren Los Comunistas", and "Abajo los Judios y Chinos"—for the price of a brown coat and a half liter of Tequila.

Above all, Catholics are entering these fascist organizations in large numbers and becoming the chief and most militant elements in all the demonstrations.

Composed of such elements, these groups are a danger to the Calles faction which is in power and which represents American imperialism in alliance with the large native capitalists. The latter, which gained its standing in the struggle with the feudal and clerical elements, as well as the former, have everything to fear from these fascist organizations, made up of reactionary, clerical, feudal elements and those imperialists whose interests clash with Wall Street's.

For fists, for mass support, the Calles group depends upon the peasants who were given a few hectares of land, and very liberal promises—for the future of course, and on the proletariat, whose support was gained because of fear of the loss of the social reforms won during the revolution (Article 23 of the Constitution and the Labor Laws).

These fascist organizations, being liberally supplied with funds from German, French, Spanish, Catholic, and in all probability British sources, elements high up in the government have enrolled in them.

This trivial fact may illustrate this. The Department of War, rumor has it, advised all foot-loose officers to join these movements. It also gave its band to the fascists to be used at an entertainment of the brown shirts at the Bull Ring. A few days ago Calles came to the capital, it is said to personally liquidate these organizations. Upon his arrival the army band was withdrawn.

The main step that lends credence to these reports is the motion passed July 28 by the Central Committee of the National Revolutionary Party, expelling anybody from its ranks who joins any organization of a political type—a move directed against the shirted ones.

Analogy with Kerensky

The Calles Party in Mexico is built upon many elements and classes similar to the Social Revolutionary Party of Russia in 1917 or the Kuo Min Tang of China was in 1927. These elements (supporting one of the imperialist factions, of course) attempt to "unite" the nation, and to suppress the class struggle in the interests of a "national" task. In Russia it was to carry the war to a successful conclusion. In China it was to "drive the imperialists out". In Mexico it is to liquidate the clergy and the feudal elements.

There is another analogy. All these parties appear in the period between the downfall of the political government of the ultra-reaction (the overturn of the dynasty in China, the March Revolution in Russia and the overthrow of the Czar, and revolution against Porfirio Diaz in 1910 in Mexico) and the victory of the proletarian revolution, supported by the poor peasantry.

In this period Kerensky appeared in Russia and Calles in Mexico. The duration of this period depends on the specific conditions in each country and the relationship of

class forces. In Russia this stage lasted but several months, in Mexico years. Basing itself generally upon the petty-bourgeoisie they represent the vacillation of this class which hopes to complete the bourgeois revolution without having recourse to the proletariat. A task of such magnitude is beyond the possibility of any class in modern society but the proletariat. Speaking concretely of Mexico the only class that can abolish the clergy, give land to the peasants on either an individual or collective basis, and free the land of imperialism is the proletariat organized in its own class form, the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The petty bourgeoisie and the upper reaches of the peasantry hope to avoid this by throwing their support behind Calles. He will prove a broken reed to them.

Stalinism and Leninism

There is yet another analogy that from the viewpoint of the struggle between Stalinism and Leninism is of great importance. In the following we naturally exclude Russia. In both China and Mexico the working class and its party was harnessed to the chariot of the bourgeoisie by the Stalinists. Just as Chiang Kai Shek was hailed as liberator of the Chinese from imperialism so was Calles. The masses were instructed to build an iron wall of defense around Calles by the Stalinists. These are the results of the theory of "the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry."

But "parties" built upon so many classes, antagonistic classes moreover, are not parties. They split apart into warring parties, each party with its own class, in time of crisis. In 1917 the Social Revolutionaries split into a pro-Kerensky pro-war wing, and into a left pro-Soviet wing. Broadly speaking this separation divided the peasantry from the big bourgeoisie. The Kuo Min Tang in 1927 split into two groups: a left and right Kuo Min Tang. The same will take place in Mexico. The seemingly powerful National Revolutionary Party will collapse in moments of great stress, from the right as well

as left side. The Communist movement in Mexico must push this forward.

The unity of these above mentioned parties is only "secure" because of a lull in the struggle of the classes. Where the class struggle is given free play and even encouraged, as was the case in Russia, these parties last only a few days. In China where the class struggle between the workers and native capitalists was suppressed by all the strength that Stalin had, the Kuo Min Tang maintained an appearance of unity from 1924 to 1927. Again the turn in the events of 1927, the stunning defeat given the proletariat has kept the Chinese mass movement from reappearing. The major difficulties for Chiang Kai Shek and the bourgeoisie supporting him now is from the right.

The working class of Mexico has been dormant since 1927. The number of strikes, and their militancy have been decreasing. The agrarian movement seethes below the surface, appearing only in nightly expeditions of the white guards of the land owners who attempt to do the same to peasant leaders—or has degenerated as far as pleading on the part of peasants before the agrarian committees of the National Revolutionary Party.

Under such conditions of comparative peace in the class struggle the National Revolutionary Party has been able to maintain unity or what appears to be unity.

Labor on New Upswing

Speaking at least from the point of view of the working class, there are signs that this peaceful period is drawing to a close. The number of strikes and their militancy is increasing, due to the same economic political conditions that work for the increase of the number of strikes in the U. S. The leadership of the union movement has been forced by pressure from the workers to at least talk radically.

And the peasants are not satisfied. The increasing activity of the urban workers will without doubt awaken the class struggle in the village.

With the greater and greater pressure of the class struggle, the

The Crisis in the Socialist Party
"Bogus" Democracy

(This is the second of a series of articles on the problems facing the members of the Socialist party.—Ed.)

II.

Even among the more advanced militant workers in the Socialist party the Detroit declaration of principles is hailed as a revolutionary document. Their enthusiasm is heightened on the one hand by the attacks on the right wing, on the other, by the absence of a genuinely revolutionary criticism of the document within the Socialist party.

Surely, we are told, a document which opposes the "bogus democracy" of capitalist parliamentarianism and calls for its replacement by "workers' democracy" is a revolutionary one. The Old Guard gives aid to this interpretation by howling: communism.

What does "bogus democracy" mean? Kantorovitch again comes to our assistance: ". . . real democracy is incompatible with capitalism. Real democracy will only be made possible by the abolition of class divisions in society." ("The Socialist Party at the Cross Roads"). What Socialist would not give lip-service to such a statement? One can find the same view expressed in Hillquit's "From Marx to Lenin"; but did this make Hillquit a revolutionist?

Kantorovitch goes no further than general remarks on the question of socialism and democracy. And for good reason! For only yesterday when the old "Militants" group showed the changed character of democracy since the World War and stated that the parties of the Labor and Socialist International "have made a fetish of democracy" Kantorovitch replied: "But Comrade Shapiro and the Militants never seem to have thought that their anti-democratic propaganda must be very welcome to capitalism. It is a strange case of class collaboration." (American Socialist Quarterly, April, 1932, page 40). No less!

Now the Old Guard repeats the argument of Kantorovitch—by quoting his past statements! The phrase "bogus democracy" plays into the hands of the reactionaries, they shout. However, if Kantorovitch's recent interpretation of the phrase were put into the declaration of principles, Onal and Lee would find little to disagree with. In a word, the phrase is used so as to appear near-Communist and yet Socialist; to satisfy the Thomases and the militant workers. On the fundamental question of democracy and socialism the declaration is not in irreconcilable conflict with the position of the Old Guard.

Does the declaration of principles fare any better with its statement

of "workers' democracy"?

This has been discussed at some length in previous issues of the Militant. But let us examine Kantorovitch's utterances on the question. "A workers' democracy as the term is used in the declaration of principles means a democracy where franchise is based on useful service to society, and nothing else." It includes both the transition period and the final goal (socialism), according to Kantorovitch, "but in the declaration of principles it applies to the final goal." (p. 15)

What an explanation? In the first place, it is obvious that the declaration formulae is intentional vague, so as to unite the largest, even if conflicting, forces behind it and permit the left wing Socialist to think that the S. P. is for the dictatorship of the proletariat! Does not the "Militant Program" of Kantorovitch state that both terms are synonymous? On the other hand, has not Thomas repeatedly stated that workers' democracy is not the dictatorship of the proletariat?

But Kantorovitch goes further: in the declaration the term "workers' democracy" refers only to the final goal. Which means that it takes no position—that is no positive position—on the all important problem of the transition period between capitalist rule and socialism! Instead of the declaration reading: "workers' democracy, that is socialism" so as to make the full meaning clear, the latter phrase is omitted, thereby giving the impression of supporting something revolutionary! Can one imagine any greater deception than this apparently innocent phrase!

The So-Called Minority Revolution

Many Socialists may be ready to grant that the declaration of principles as a whole is vague. But they are convinced that it is unequivocally revolutionary where it proclaims that if the capitalist system collapses in a general chaos and confusion, the Socialist party, "whether or not in such cases it is a majority will not shrink from the responsibility of organizing and maintaining a government under the workers' rule."

According to Kantorovitch: "No communist, however, would subscribe to the above paragraphs"; and so as to make it clear that he is anti-communist he states that "The declaration of principles does not call for insurrection and violence." Then how is this "non-majority" revolution to be attained? What does it look like in real life?

To this Kantorovitch responds triumphantly: Look at Germany and Austria in the period immediately following the World War!

WORLD OF LABOR

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY AND THE STALINISTS

The following incident should serve to illustrate to what abyssal depths the Stalinist conception of international solidarity has sunk. In cases where the hand of reaction reaches out and seizes a fighter for the proletariat one would expect that every section of the labor movement, irrespective of other political differences, would unite to wrest the victim from the enemy. Not so with the Stalinists. Unless they have a private concern in the case they wash their hands of it because they have "interests separate and apart from those of the working class".

This is illustrated in their criminal neglect of Torgler, who was reported to have had differences with them, up till the time rumors of his death were heard. Then the Stalinists said: "Now that Torgler is dead let us redouble the fight for Thaelmann."

The instance at hand is an interview between Godefroy, the secretary of the Belgian Young Socialists which numbers some 35,000 members had with Kossarev, the secretary of the Young Communist International. Kossarev was asked why the Young Communists of Belgium (500 members) had refused a united front proposal made by it for the purpose of defending the 4 German youths arrested by the Dutch police during the International Youth Conference and deported back to Hitler Germany. Kossarev replied that they "had no time to waste defending Trotskyists who are in the vanguard of the counter-revolution." We have no doubt that this declaration of solidarity will be extremely pleasing to Hitler and his catthroats.

REACTIONARY DECREES IN HOLLAND

Reaction is paving the way for Fascism in Holland. Following the crushing of the spontaneous uprising of the unemployed, reported in this column two weeks ago, the government has undertaken repressive measures against the revolutionary section of the labor movement and passed laws aimed directly at the Revolutionary Socialist Party (Dutch Section of the I.C.L.), the Independent Socialist Party and the Stalinist party. First is the Sedition Bill. Second, the passage of another bill making it impossible for any party to be represented in parliament unless at least three members are elected. Third, a deposit of 250 guilds must be paid before candidates can be nominated. This deposit is forfeited unless at least three members are elected. Fourth, another law has been approved making it illegal for any paid official of a trade union to sit on any public body. This would strike directly at comrade Smeuliet, chairman of the R.S.P., who is likewise one of the officials of an independent trade union movement as well as being a member of parliament.

One further word on Holland. We are not at all surprised to see a reprint in the New Leader, for August 11th, in the column "The Workers Abroad", of the account of Peter Schmidt of the revolt of the unemployed in Holland which is practically a verbatim reproduction with the exception of the part that deals with the treachery of social-democratic trade union leaders who called the police when workers came to them for help. Very convenient, but obvious facts cannot be concealed that way.

VANDERVELDE ON THE UNITED FRONT

Emile Vandervelde, president of the Second International, and leader of His Majesty King Leopold's Most Loyal Opposition, indicates how enormous was the mass pressure for united action in France when he said in an article published in the *Petit Provençal*: "I am fully in accord with Leon Blum, with Paul Faure and with Lebas that it was morally impossible for them to decline." He refers to the unity offer of the Communist Party of France. It was "morally impossible" because the French proletariat was clamoring too loudly for the united front and any bureaucratic, Stalinist or reformist, that stood in its way, would be immediately discredited and brushed aside. To accept the united front was to save the face of reformism temporarily. And Vandervelde, being no novice at political squirming, was well aware of this.

For this ex-Minister of the King, who wept bitter tears at the funeral of Albert, the united front offer was not accepted so as to bring power to the struggle against Fascism but rather because it was "morally impossible" to decline the offer. That Vandervelde and his colleagues in France have found a convenient ally in the Stalinists in hamstringing the united front, confining it to meetings, speeches, etc. but not to struggle is manifest in the same article. Here Vandervelde attributes the turn of the French C.P. to the new position occupied by the U.S.S.R. internationally. This position has led the Soviet Union to follow a policy of attempting to maintain peace at all costs, even at the expense of revolutions and upheavals in European countries. Vandervelde and Co. certainly do not want any drastic change in the capitalist countries where they hold down fat jobs. The Stalinist parties must follow blindly and obediently the foreign policy of the U.S.S.R. Politics make strange bedfellows!

tion in peace time leads to social patriotism in war time. The alternative is a revolutionary Marxist party. To the exclusion of reformists and centrists.

3. Onal and Waldman have no bones to pick with the assumption to power of the German and Austrian Social Democracy in 1918. They are opposed to presenting the problem in the same manner as the declaration; they are against saying anything at all about it in the declaration. On the politics there is no disagreement.

The Revolutionary Policy Committee therefore has made a serious mistake in advising the Socialist party members to vote for the Detroit declaration of principles. No explanatory statement of such an action can wipe away its support of a centrist program.

Undoubtedly many militant Socialists think that a support of the Detroit declaration is a blow at the Right wing. The "Militant" group accuses those left wingers who oppose the declaration as supporters of the Right. But is not this the universal cry of the centrists? By their very position between the extreme right and the genuine left wing they threaten the latter with the growth of the former and the former with the growing power of the latter. At this stage with a small and hesitant left wing in the S. P. the centrists warn them of their "support" of the Right. Tomorrow when the left wing grows stronger the Right wing will be warned of this new danger by the centrists.

What is needed is a clear cut revolutionary program and grouping in the Socialist party. This means an unambiguous struggle against the rights, Thomases and the self-styled "Militants". It means a fundamental understanding of the revolutionary road to power, of the task of the workers' party in the struggle against war and Fascism and the need for a new revolutionary workers' party. Such a party cannot be a member of the reformist Labor and Socialist International. The revolutionary workers in the Socialist party—if they are to break from reformism and centrism—must demand a break with this International and proclaim the need for a new, a Fourth International.

Only along this path can the left wing Socialist forces contribute in a progressive and revolutionary manner to the solution of the problems of the American working class.

—JOSEPH CARTER.