

QUESTION BOX

H. E. F., SPRINGFIELD, III.—

Question: What is the basis for the split among the capitalists on the question of inflation?

Answer: In the first place the demand for "cheap" money usually comes from the rural sections, where the small farmer, usually heavily mortgaged, expects that an inflation will make it easier for him to pay his debts. For illustration let us assume a farmer whose farm is worked only by himself and his family. Interest at 6% on his \$7,000 mortgage is \$420, taxes are \$210 a year, so that his annual debt is \$630. For goods bought from the city he must pay \$400. He sells his annual crop for \$900 which leaves him \$500 with which to pay interest and taxes, so that he is in the red \$120 each year and faces losing his farm in a few years.

If we assume an inflation which raises the price of farm products 40% and the price of city-made goods 50%, the farmer would then get \$1,260 for his crop out of which purchases from the city would take \$600, leaving him \$660 for interest and taxes. Even if his taxes were raised to \$240 a year, he is still able to pay his debts.

This is the underlying idea back of the farmers' demand for inflation and the basis for the "silver" and "greenback" advocates. The various factors, however, may so operate that the farmer will be as badly off as before. The prices of city-made products may rise much higher in proportion than is indicated in the foregoing example and overproduction of farm products may so depress their prices that the gain from inflation may be wiped out, despite the fact that the farmer would be even worse off under these circumstances than if the inflation had not taken place.

That capital which is sunk into farm mortgages or other sources of fixed money income stands to lose by inflation. The owner of the capital receives as many dollars as before but whether this is used for expansion of capital or for personal consumption, it can purchase fewer commodities because of the higher prices.

The worker, unless he fights for, and gets, a proportional pay increase, is the worst sufferer from an inflation, and his loss is the gain of capital sunk into industry, which pockets the decline in the workers' REAL wages. This wage cut also places the capitalists in a better competitive position on the world market.

In modern imperialist society, where the owners of the farm mortgage and the factory are the banks, the conflict among the latter over inflation reduces itself to whether or not they stand to gain more, economically and politically, through the cut in the workers' wages, than they pass out to the farmer as a subsidy.

HENRY BLOOMBERG, Brooklyn—

Question: What is the truth about the following?: The Stalinists say that the "Trotskyists" lie when they state that the C.P. called the A. F. of L. a fascist organization, whereas the C. P. said that the leaders are fascists.

Answer: On several occasions recently the "Question Box" (see Militant of August 4, 1934) has given the official Stalinist quotations and the word organization and not leaders was used.

However that may be, the Stalinists are only stepping from the frying pan into the fire. Bill Green and his ilk are NOT fascists. The prime purpose of fascism is the annihilation of the democratic institutions of the working class, of which the trades unions are by no means the least importance. If the A. F. of L. were to cease to exist, so would the salaries, sinecures, etc. of all the Bill Greens, and so would cease their right to sit at the same dinner table with the capitalists. Why should such people stand for fascism which, for them, means political suicide?

The appellation which best applies to these individuals is that of Daniel De Leon: "The Labor Lieutenants of the Capitalist Class."

PROF. W., Boston—

Question: How can you Communists speak of the "revolutionary working class" when it is obvious that 90% of the American workers support the capitalist parties?

Answer: The capitalist press usually puts this affirmatively as follows: The workers are not revolutionary; all they want is more wages, shorter hours, etc. This is of course either a naïvete or a "subtle" blurring of the truth.

It is precisely because it must defend its material interests that a class may be forced to act in a revolutionary manner, whether or not it is conscious of the fact. Cromwell's Puritans fought for the right to pray in their own manner; the French Revolution was fought in the name of "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity." Nowhere in the English or French bourgeois revolutions was there inscribed on the banners: We are fighting so that the privilege of exploiting the masses shall be transferred from the feudal lords to the bourgeoisie, which is the revolutionary task of the day. After February 1917 large sections of the Russian peasantry were swearing that they would kill any Bolsheviks they got their hands on, at the same time that they were seizing the land. The Bolsheviks later gave consciousness to these acts. The Italian proletariat seized the factories some fourteen years ago but because their acts were not given consciousness, i.e. there was no revolutionary Communist Party at their head, they are now prostrate under the heel of fascism.

The modern industrial proletariat has absolutely no stake in the maintenance of present day capitalist society; their material needs require a revolutionary social transformation and they have been prepared by history to effect such a transformation. It is in this sense that we speak of them as revolutionary. The ideological superstructure lags behind its material base, and it is essentially to close this gap that a revolutionary Communist Party is needed.

J. R. BRYAN, Ohio—As the Militant has already noted, we are having our National Convention in a few weeks, on the agenda of which is the Negro question, which is now under discussion. It is obvious that within the limits of this column, the subject could hardly be adequately treated. Unless you insist otherwise, therefore, it would be preferable that you get your answer officially and fully from the adopted theses which will be published in the not too distant future. At any rate the best you could get at present is the personal opinion of this editor.

EDITOR'S NOTE: It would be greatly appreciated by the "Question Box" editor if comrades, upon receiving answers through this column, would inform us in a brief note whether or not such answers satisfactorily clear up the points in question, or give the desired information. We have no other way of knowing whether or not the column is fulfilling its desired mission. All suggestions for improvement are welcome, and will be acknowledged.

The Rise and Fall of a Gangster-Journalist

By Mid-Western Correspondent

On September 6, in Minneapolis, Howard Guilford was shot and killed by unknown assailants while driving home from downtown. This man's activities, his connections with the underworld and with the employers, has a significance for all workers.

Guilford had been in the publishing field for over twenty years, getting out blackmail and scandal sheets for the titillating delectation of his wealthy readers and for the benefit of his pocketbook. His papers were never of a "popular" nature. He dabbled in politics, in 1918 being defeated in his candidacy for mayor. He had connections with the underworld; for a while things would go along nicely between Guilford and local gambling interests. Then Guilford would be "cut" out, and an exposure of commercialized gambling in the Twin Cities would appear in his paper. In 1927 Guilford was attacked and wounded by gunmen of the underworld. At another time this man dabbled in local theatricals, being a partner of Bainsbridge, present mayor of Minneapolis. At no time in his life has he ever been known to do a socially productive bit of work. In short, Guilford is a quite common type of parasite, a 100% American, a man always for sale to the highest bidder; absolutely conscienceless, mediocre, cruel.

His latest publishing venture was a weekly paper, the Saturday Press. It was this paper that the Citizen's Alliance used during the Local 574 strike to spew out their hatred against the militant Minneapolis workers, and to express their Black Hundred desires. Tool of Citizen's Alliance Local 574 was aware that Guilford was speaking over the air as a representative of the Citizen's Alliance, attacking the strikers in the most vicious ways imaginable. Local 574 was aware that the columns of Guilford's paper were filled with the frantic insane fear and hatred which the employers of Minneapolis feel for the class-conscious workers; a hatred which they think it advisable not to show in their other papers, the Journal, Tribune and Star.

But it is one thing to be aware of the connections between the employers and one of their tools, and another to have definite proof. So it was with satisfaction that Minneapolis workers read that the following letter was found among Guilford's effects. This letter is signed by none other than Joseph Cochran, the notorious chairman of the "Employers' Advisory Committee", so active in the last strike. The letter was addressed to citizens of the state, and reads as follows:

"A statewide campaign of education in the matter of economic disturbances of the past few months, their cause, their effect and their cure is most urgently needed."

Howard Guilford, Twin City

Journalist and radio speaker, has volunteered to lead such a movement, working in co-operation with all agencies now trying to restore conditions to normalcy and eliminate the regrettable spirit of class hatred which is being propagated in Minneapolis. The ability of Mr. Guilford to secure results in his campaign will not be doubted by those acquainted with him, provided the necessary support is extended by business men and public spirited citizens interested in the future of the state.

This letter reeks with the hypocrisy, the statesmanlike diction of the boss class. Since July 1, Guilford was mailing out a "political news service" to 400 country weeklies throughout the state, all these articles containing the most scurrilous attacks, not only upon the working class but upon every liberal sentiment. A Goebbels could not have conceived any filthier propaganda. Especially criticized in Guilford's "news service" were the Communists—and Governor Olson, an old political enemy of Guilford's.

I shall reproduce a few paragraphs from issues of the Saturday Press published during the strike, to give readers an idea of boss-journalism at its most brazen extreme. Readers of the Chicago Tribune, the Los Angeles Times, etc., will recognize the style.

Guilford's Bile

Reading in the issue of August 11:

"In this city a dozen lousy, yowl-eaten, brainless wonders who moth against and urge the overthrow of our government and the adoption of proletarian rule—communism—have forced more than five thousand workers to stand idle while ruffians and communists riot and raise hell. A handful of weevil-brained burros, who haven't the intelligence of a mud turtle but have the vocal organs of a callopie and the courage of coyotes, have cost the workers and common people of this city a million dollars in lost wages within the last ninety days."

In this same issue, the Press whoops it up for the vigilantes. It is significant that, try as it could, the Citizens Alliance was totally unable to form such an organization during the last strike. The memory of the Battle of Deputy Run in the Market district the last Tuesday of the May strike is too firmly implanted in the souls of the "better element".

Featured on the front page of the Press for Aug. 11 is a letter from the United Vigilantes of America.

Greetings from Fellow-Murderers "As the Director of Investigations of the Vigilantes of California, a subsidiary of the United Vigilantes of America, I want to again congratulate your Saturday Press for the splendid way in which you denounced the un-Americans, in a recent issue of your splendid publication."

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Manifesto of Worker's Party of Canada

(continued from last issue)

For the Fourth International!

But while the general crisis of capitalism has created all the necessary objective conditions on a world scale for the successful struggle for Socialism, the international working class movement has itself been passing through a deep-going crisis. Time after time revolutionary opportunities have been lost, and capitalism has "stabilized" itself owing to the absence or failure of a party of the working class capable of giving leadership.

The International of the Social Democracy crumpled up in 1914 as a progressive factor in the working class when its national parts placed themselves openly in the service of their respective warring national bourgeoisies. From that time onward it became, not a working class party, but a bourgeois labor party and the most substantial buttress of a collapsing capitalist order. It ceased to offer the possibilities of reform and became an objective obstacle in the path of the proletariat. For that reason the advanced Marxian wing broke from it and raised the banner of the Third International. In 1933-1934, the Second International, its most important wings at any rate (the conservative German Social Democracy in 1933 and the "radical" Austrian Social Democracy in 1934) was annihilated as an ORGANIZATIONAL factor. In 1914 and 1918-1921, the Social Democracy proved its inherent incapacity to defend the socialist interests of the proletariat. In 1933-1934 the Social Democracy proved its equally inherent incapacity to defend even the "bourgeois" democratic interests of the proletariat.

The bourgeoisie, resorting to the Fascist solution because it could no longer solve its problems with the aid of the Social Democratic physician, exterminated the latter without mercy or gratitude.

The Third International was built up on the ruins of the Second. In the first years of its existence it was the rallying ground of all the progressive and revolutionary forces in the ranks of the proletariat and all other oppressed toilers. In the second, Stalinist period, it experienced an almost uninterrupted decline under the banner of bureaucratic Centrism. Corrupted by the poisonous theory of "socialism in one country", the Third International gradually ceased to be the directing staff of international revolution. By virtue of this nationalistic theory, the harmony of interest between the preservation of the Soviet fatherland and the advancement of the world revolution, was replaced by the conflict of interests between the world revolution and the Soviet bureaucracy dominating the Republic and the international. The theory of national socialism in which was implicit from the very beginning the August 4th of the Comintern, disintegrated for the world proletariat—the Russian included—one defeat

after another, prostrating the revolutionary movement abroad and undermining the proletarian dictatorship in the Soviet Union. To this theory can be traced not merely the bureaucratic degeneration of the International, but the defeat of the English proletariat in 1926, the collapse of Polish Communism at the time of the Pilsudski coup d'etat in the same year, the frightful mangling of the Chinese working class and peasantry by the Kuo Min Tang in 1927, the topping off of the revolutionary wing (Bolshevik-Leninists) from the Soviet Union Party in the same year. Turning its back upon the world revolution in which it lost faith, in order to pursue the illusion of a national utopia in the Soviet Union, the Stalinist Bureaucracy ended by a treacherous desertion of the German proletariat which resulted in delivering it, unarmed and unprepared, into the hands of Hitlerism. The German defeat for which Stalinism bears joint responsibility with Social Democracy, is that last drop which precipitated the final collapse of the Third International and removed it from all possibilities of reform just as definitely as was the case with the Social Democracy twenty years earlier.

In breaking with the Stalinist International, we continue our fight for the revolutionary theories of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky which were the foundation stones of the Communist International. To continue the struggle for revolutionary Marxism today can mean only one thing: to build a Fourth International, a new Communist International, and new Communist Parties in every country in the world.

The Crisis in Canada and the Workers' Party

The crisis in Canada has thrown into sharp relief the deep-seated contradictions and antagonisms in the class-structure of capitalist society. At one pole we find growing centralization and concentration of wealth and capital, giant monopolist banks and industrial corporations (finance-capital), fabulous profits, luxurious living; at the other pole—increasing misery and insecurity of the masses, merciless wage-cutting, over a million unemployed, foreclosures and evictions, inhuman exploitation of women and youth, violation of legal minimum scales, inadequate relief pittance, and absence of social insurance. Fearing radicalization of the masses, the capitalist state sets in motion all its machinery of repression. The Criminal Code outlaws working-class political parties. Freedom of speech, assembly and other civil liberties are trampled underfoot, the workers' press is subjected to censorship, militant workers are jailed or deported. Under pressure of the crisis, however, the masses move to the left, even though their discontent with capitalism still finds its outlet in the channels of social reformism.

(Continued in the next issue)

WORLD OF LABOR

YOUNG LENINISTS OF FRANCE TAKE DECISIVE STEP

(The full text of the resolution adopted by the Young Leninists of France, the counterpart of the Spartacus Youth League of America, on the next step to be taken by their organization is printed below. To some it will appear as a departure from our traditional position in this resolution. The decision contained therein, to join the Socialist youth of France should not come as a surprise to any of our members or sympathizers. The Militant has time and time again stressed the momentous importance of the events now transpiring in France. As in Germany the question of Fascism or proletarian revolution is posed with razor-like sharpness. Of vital necessity, there is a vanguard, a new Communist party, to guide the working class in its moment of decisive action. Because our organization is small and weak despite its correct policies and slogans, it is isolated from the masses and is thereby ineffective. The united front between the Communist and Socialist parties, which has remained in the leading strings of the bureaucrats of both parties has not set the proletariat into action against Fascism but it has further isolated our small group in France.

The entry of the Leninist Youth in France—that is the only country where such a step has been decided upon—has as its purpose the welding of the revolutionary vanguard of the working class youth with the leftward moving young socialists and together with them build the new party on the solid foundations of Marxism and Leninism. As will be noted in the document, not a principle, not an idea, not a line of the Fourth International is renounced, revised or compromised by the Young Leninists in taking this step. They do it with their eyes open, their banner flying and in the interests of the revolutionary youth.—Ed. Note)

The defeat of the German proletariat has posed the task of regrouping the revolutionary faction of the proletariat into new parties. Especially the necessity of winning the young workers to the cause of revolutionary Marxism requires that an international of the youth in the spirit of Liebknecht be rebuilt against the impotent and bankrupt bureaucrats of the Young Socialist and Young Communist International.

The development of the political situation in France has not only confirmed the fundamental line adopted by the International Communist League but demands that it build the vanguard party powerful enough to play a decisive role as soon as possible. Since February 6th a pre-bonapartist regime emerged which has been balancing itself between hostile classes. Without excluding a reactionary stabilization of the crisis in France, the most probable perspective, the one upon which it is necessary to base activity, is an intensification of the class struggle and the development of a number of sharp crises will pose the question of power and lead either to the victory of the proletarian revolution or to the victory of Fascism.

The program of action of the Ligue and the youth, the creation of a worker's militia, the workers' alliances, workers' control of production, the arming of the proletariat, etc., was predicated on this short perspective. This slogan, more timely than ever, must penetrate into the masses. Our tactic should aim towards swinging the masses into action on the basis of these slogans.

Towards this end it is necessary to work for the creation of a party and a youth organization unfettered by reformism, centrism and Stalinism. When the Communist party is beginning to justify in advance its "conditional" participation in national defense, it becomes clear that only a party which holds aloft the banner of internationalism and revolutionary defeatism can stand the test in an imperialist war.

But correct ideas alone do not suffice for the constitution of such a party. Despite the successes of the Leninist Youth and the radiation of our Bolshevik-Leninist ideas, our organization is too weak to guide the experience of the masses, as an independent organization in the short period of time before us. Our organic weakness will cause us to remain mere "advisers" to the existing parties.

It is in these conditions that we see a powerful movement towards organic unity. This marks the ideological reaction which has taken place since noted the ferment in the working masses and the riled this out a year ago. In these conditions, having Tours (1920). But the reaction has ended. We pointings which will follow, regrouping of all workers, currents into one movement with a democratic regime can constitute a very progressive factor for the evolution of large proletarian sections. Especially we, the youth, should stand shoulder to shoulder and learn collectively in the struggle against Fascism. Our task is not to cast judgment like high-and-mighty professors but to go through the same experience with the working youth and then with them to find the path to the real revolutionary youth organization on the bases of Marxism and Leninism. That is why the Young Leninists approve the slogan of the Central Committee: "One revolutionary youth organization."

As partisans of the creation of a new revolutionary youth international, we believe that a step in this direction is the break in the Y.S.I. with the bloc of patriots and reformists (Holland, etc.). The first task is to solidify all the left socialist youth who orient towards Marxism (Belgium, Spain, France, etc.) and to clarify the vital problems of the young workers.

In France the problem is particularly sharp because of the rapidity with which they are orienting themselves towards decisive measures. Our place, today, is in the vanguard of the working class youth who will fight in the united youth organization of tomorrow; in the Communist youth if it gives us the right to defend our own opinions in its ranks; in the Socialist youth especially, where more and more important sections of militants are breaking with reformism and finding the road to Marxism. In order to assist the left in its evolution towards Leninism, in order to spread our slogans, and to pass rapidly over to action, in order to work for the united youth organization of tomorrow, circumstances compel us today to join the Young Socialists.

The Young Leninists are not making a maneuver nor do they want any deals. Each unit of the Young Leninists will join the corresponding section of the Young Socialists.

Respectful of discipline the Young Leninists demand for themselves only the rights and duties of every member of the organization, among others the right to defend their conceptions within the framework of proletarian democracy and discipline.

The Young Leninists will enter the Young Socialists without hiding their banner, without surrendering any of their principles. These principles are the ones which made the victorious Russian Revolution. The world revolution will be made by them. We are fully confident that our ideas will find their way into the masses, permitting thus the effective struggle against the common enemies of the youth and the working class: capitalism and the fascist butchers.

The History of the Frisco General Strike

By JIM OSBORN and DICK ETLINGER

The San Francisco Waterfront and General Strike is now history. Such a tremendous struggle involving as it did almost a hundred thousand workers demands a detailed analysis in order to clearly bring out the lessons of the strike and the steps to be taken in the development of future struggles of the labor movement in this city. This in the main is the purpose of this article.

The background of the conflict is to be found in the conditions that prevailed on the waterfront from 1922 until the latter part of 1933. During this period the longshoremen had been working under the Blue Book or Company Union. The men were forced to pay dues in the Blue Book Union in order to hold a job on the waterfront. In this company union they were subject to all of the deplorable conditions possible in their craft. Such as having to report every morning and stand on the Embarcadero waiting to be called. Even when they were hired and instructed to report at the dock for work, they would have to wait for hours, day or night, for ships to come in without receiving any pay until they went to work.

The Blacklist Those men who most willingly accepted these conditions and did not object to the speed-up system in vogue on the water front were naturally the favorites and received the bulk of the work, while those who protested were quickly blacklisted.

When Section 7A of the NRA went into effect organization again developed on the front. This new organization was formed within the framework of the International Longshoremen Association. Active in this unionization campaign were various elements. A few members of the Proletarian Party, members of the Communist Party and other militants as well as many conservative longshoremen. A conservative by the name of Holman was elected President of the San Francisco local of the new organization.

By January 1934 approximately 90% of the stevedores of the West Coast were carrying cards in the I.L.A.

The Communist Party had for some time been trying to organize the workers on the waterfront in the Marine Workers Industrial Union without success. Their failure forced them to abandon this plan as far as the longshoremen were concerned, and instead they instructed their members to join the I.L.A. and build within that organization a militant left wing.

In February 1934 a West coast convention of the I.L.A. was called for the purpose of formulating demands and making preparations for a strike.

It was decided at this Convention that the scale of wages should be \$1.00 per hour and \$1.50 per hour for overtime, that the 30 hour week should be put into effect, and that the I.L.A. should have control of the hiring halls. It was also decided that the I.L.A. was opposed to any arbitration of these demands. The convention also went on record in favor of a coast-wide agreement and the formation of a water front federation consisting of all maritime workers. While the so-called left wing was able to secure a majority for the adoption of the demands to be presented to the employers, the conservative elements secured control organizationally and elected the majority of the members to the coast executive board.

These demands were presented to the ship owners at a meeting of ship owners, the I.L.A. and the Regional Labor Board on March 5, 1934. The owners turned down all of the demands and publicly accused the I.L.A. of being dominated by "a bunch of reds", and also that the officials of the I.L.A. did not represent the men.

Majority for Strike

After their demands were turned down a strike vote was taken by the I.L.A. in all coast ports resulting in an overwhelming majority

in favor of the strike. The strike date was set for March 23. A telegram was received from President Roosevelt on March 22, asking that the strike be postponed and that new negotiations be entered into.

William Lewis, district president of the I.L.A., on his own authority issued a statement saying that the strike had been called off. His action was later endorsed by the Executive Committee, but there was strong criticism of Lewis by many of the rank and file, although some of the conservatives did support him, stating that "we must give the President an opportunity to settle our demands". If the left elements had attempted to force the issue of a strike at this time, there would have been grave danger of a split.

Negotiations were carried on during April without any progress being made. The waterfront employers refused to make any concessions although many meetings were held. Practically all elements in the I.L.A. were convinced by the first of May that a strike was inevitable. Negotiations were broken off and a strike called, effective on May 9.

Ryan's Maneuvers

Again efforts were made to call off the strike, this time openly by Ryan, international president of the I.L.A. The longshoremen of Seattle were at first influenced by these actions but on hearing of the action of the San Francisco local they also joined the strike.

The teamsters who are the key craft in any waterfront struggle, at first took no action, but the I.L.A. pickets were constantly working to get them to refuse to handle any scab cargo. These efforts were very successful and the Teamsters Union, over-riding the wishes of their reactionary officials, overwhelmingly voted not to haul any cargo to and from the docks.

A few days after the I.L.A. strike began, the seamen were called upon to strike by the Marine Workers Industrial Union, and the greater portion of them left the ships as

fast as they came into port. The International Seamen's Union had been a union in name only for a number of years as the seamen were almost wholly unorganized prior to the strike. Nevertheless, the vast majority of the striking seamen joined the I.S.U. during the strike. The seamen's wages had been reduced from \$90.00 in 1921 to an average of \$40.00 per month, but at first their walkout was a sympathetic one with the longshoremen. Later, however, they formulated their own demands including recognition of their union. In their walkout they were joined by firemen and oilers, the cooks and stewards, the Marine Engineers and the Master Mates and Pilots.

Workers Support Marine Strike

From the very beginning the rank and file of the San Francisco labor movement supported the marine workers' strike. So overwhelming was this support that the bureaucrats of the San Francisco labor movement were forced to issue an appeal to all unions for support. Thousands of dollars were contributed to the support of the waterfront strikers.

The strike committee of the I. L.A. did not effectively capitalize on this support. They should have sent speakers to all the unions, both with the idea of getting funds and propagating the idea of a general strike. If such a policy had been carried out it would have been possible to organize left elements within the various unions of the San Francisco labor movement around the idea of a general strike thereby placing the bureaucracy in a position where they could not have so easily kept the complete leadership under their control when they were forced to call the general strike.

Another mistake made at this period of the strike was that the strike committees of the various unions met separately which prevented effective coordination of picketing and other important strike activities.

(To Be Continued)