

QUESTION BOX

ABRAHAM Z. BROOKLYN—

Question: In view of the fact that Lenin recognized that Industrial Unionism as formulated by the American socialist, Daniel De Leon, would supply the basic form of the Socialist Republic and that ultimately the labor unions of Russia would control all production and in fact be the government, is not your failure to teach such principles here in America anti-Leninist?

Answer: One can hardly avoid a feeling of stupefaction in the manner in which the advocates of "Industrial Unionism", as expressed by the above questioner, attempt to use the prestige of Lenin to justify their position.

What facts do you present to prove their contention? In the pamphlet "Socialist Construction of Society" (a speech made by De Leon in 1905), published by the Industrial Union Party, four quotations are given of people WHO SAY THAT LENIN SAID what our questioner attributes to him; namely Arno Dosch-Pleurot in a Petrograd dispatch to the N. Y. World, Jan. 31, 1918; Arthur Ransome in "Russia in 1919"; Robert Minor in the N. Y. World, Feb. 8, 1919; and John Reed, May 4, 1918. This is surely not an impressive list of authorities and authoritative revolutionary publications.

Do these "facts" at all justify our good "Industrial Unionists"? First of all one has the right to ask: Wouldn't Lenin have devoted at least one full article to a question as important as this? Secondly, even if we give the "De Leonists" every benefit of doubt and grant that the above four individuals accurately reported Lenin's statements, and that other stray sentences of a similar nature could be adduced, the question still remains: what could Lenin, considering his position as a whole, have meant by these remarks?

The Leninist position (and our position) for the emancipation of society involves the creation of a vanguard party of the proletariat to lead the labor in smashing the capitalist state machinery by FORCE and to REPLACE it with its own, i.e., POLITICAL, state power, under whose direction industry will be organized and the remnants of the exploiters suppressed. Under SOCIALISM, when classes will have been abolished and when the workers' state will have withered away, the remaining "state", having purely administrative functions may take the form of industrial unions, every working member of society being eligible to such unions.

De Leon, on the other hand, combines the reformist with the syndicalist position: The workers will form industrial unions and after they have, through their political party, peacefully captured the power by the ballot box, thus forcing the capitalists to "flee", the political party of the workers is to "ADJOURN . . . ON THE SPOT, SINE DIE", otherwise this would be a "usurpation", and the industrial unions will then form the basis of society. In addition to his reformist orientation toward the workers' seizure of power, De Leon thus skips over the dictatorship of the proletariat, substituting for this historical stage a form of society which can be realized only under Socialism.

What has this in common with Lenin? Particularly how can one claim that he could have given support to De Leon's naive contention that the American social revolution will be peaceful because the capitalists, being swindlers, are cowards, whereas in Europe, because of feudal remnants and training, the ruling class is brave and will fight? . . . Though guilty of all the crimes of the decalogue, there is one vice that the feudal lord is substantially free from. That vice is COWARDICE. . . He will fight without the odds. . . But how is the lay of the land here, in America? . . . Let the political temperature rise to the point of danger, then, . . . your capitalist will quake in his stolen boots; he will flee. . . At least I, for one expect to see him flee. . . (For De Leon's complete position see "Socialist Construction of Society", particularly pp. 36 to 47.)

A complete polemic against the position of the "Industrial Unionists" would, of course, occupy more time and space than is at our disposal. The correctness of their viewpoint, however, is not decided merely by whether it agrees with what Lenin might or might not have said, but, since it has no foundation in the revolutionary position of the latter, we would recommend that it attempt to stand on its own feet. Chicken legs, after all, are something.

A. L. DES MOINES—

"Fontamara" is now available in an English translation and can be obtained at the Pioneer Book Shop, 102 E. 11th Street, New York, N. Y. The price is \$2.50.

H. M. D. BROCKTON—

Question: Can you give me a quotation from either Marx or Engels in which the "Materialist Conception of History" is given?

Answer: The following is from Engel's "Socialism, Utopian and Scientific": "The materialist conception of history starts from the proposition that the production of the means to support human life and, next to production, the exchange of things produced, is the basis of all social structure; that in every society that has appeared in history, the manner in which wealth is distributed and society divided into classes or orders, is dependent upon what is produced, how it is produced, and how the products are exchanged. From this point of view the final causes of all social changes and political revolutions are to be sought, not in men's brains, not in men's better insight into eternal truth and justice, but in changes in the modes of production and exchange. They are to be sought, not in the PHILOSOPHY, but in the ECONOMICS of each particular epoch."

Editor's note: Because some questions require more investigation than others, they are not being answered here entirely in the order in which they are received. The indulgence of the questioners in this matter is requested.

J. SHERMAN, N.J. (Continued)

Question: What is the Communist position on "immediate demands"?

Answer: In general the Communist position is that the fight for immediate demands is a necessary stepping stone toward the seizure of power, without which it will not be possible to organize the workers. The historical sense of this position was stated by Lenin as follows during a debate on whether to abandon a minimum program: "Our entire program would be nothing but a scrap of paper if it were not to serve us in all eventualities and in all the phases of the struggle by its application and not by its non-application. . . . If our program is the formulation of the historic development of society from capitalism to socialism, it must naturally formulate all the transition phases of this development, and must be able to explain to the proletariat at any time the process of the transition toward socialism." (From speech made in autumn of 1917, quoted at the IVth congress of the C.I.)

WHAT NEXT FOR FRENCH LABOR

WORLD OF LABOR

The first phase of the development of Bonapartism in France began on February 6 under the "truce government". A new stage is now in preparation. The maturing crisis of the summer months is reaching the point of explosion. A solution is near at hand.

Let us review the situation in a few words. The policy of deflation has brought no improvement. The economic crisis is raging more intensely than ever with no prospect of ameliorating the difficulties of industry as of agriculture. But, on the contrary, the economic conditions of the workers of the city and country have worsened with the prospect of growing unemployment and large scale pauperization looming big. Large sections of the country are discontented with the fate which is being forced upon them. This has been attested by the partial elections where in many places the socialists and communists have recorded gains.

Strengthening of Bonapartism and the Struggle Against the "Common Front"

The big bourgeoisie is alarmed. It feels the foundations of its rule over the country shaken. Its forces of coercion, its apparatus of repression, reveal a very advanced state of decay. The big bourgeoisie also feels the need of re-arming itself immediately. Doumergue developed in his speech over the radio the program that it wants to carry on in the new period. He demands, by means of a reform of the constitution, reducing parliament to a shell, making the state administration a vast barracks where the civil servant will be no more than a soldier without any rights, submitting to the strictest discipline (the teachers have already received a direct blow), with the power concentrated in few hands, thoroughly obedient to the orders of big capital. He demands a strengthening of Bonapartism, of the power which imposes "law and order" by basing itself primarily on armed force.

In order to realize its program, the big bourgeoisie is effecting a rapid mobilization of its servants and formations. Doumergue has issued an appeal. The various bourgeois groups reply: present. But its acceptance by the toiling masses is still to be had and the difficulty facing the bourgeoisie is great. Years of relative "prosperity", the absence of great social struggles, together with the confused policy of the C.P.—all this has caused harm to the revolutionary current, but has deeply strengthened parliamentary and democratic illusions. The victory of Fascism in Germany has also reacted in the same way. The urban and rural masses of France, hardly touched by reaction, are attached to the democratic liberties acquired over a period of years. And this attachment is translated today, even for important sections of the petty bourgeoisie, by an inclination towards the bloc of the Socialist and Communist parties which appears to them to be the best defender of these freedoms. The big bourgeoisie well understands the danger latent in this state of affairs. In order to ward off the blow from "the man with the dagger between his teeth" it denounces the "common front which will send the franc down to zero". In addition the fighting formations of capital have begun to attack workers organizations and militants with revolvers. The Croix de Feu is going through mobilization exercises. It is attempting to intimidate the workers' organizations, to reduce them to passivity and inaction while the bourgeoisie carries out its plans.

The C.P. and the S.P. on the Plane of Bourgeois Legality The leaderships of the C. P. and the S. P., instead of orienting the workers towards struggle, are retreating before the pressure of the bourgeoisie. The leadership of the C. P. is bound up with Soviet politics which needs the friendship of France. Discontent with the policy of inaction is making itself felt in the ranks, but this is drowned in the ideological confusion created by the recent turn. The leadership of the S. P. dreams of the democratic past. It is only beginning to accustom itself to "unity of action". Profoundly imbued with conceptions of gradual political development, it is overwhelmed by even the eventuality of a period of instability. As to the rank and file, although in certain federations as the Seine, the illusions of a return to democracy are dissipating, there still obtains far from a clear conception of the conditions of struggle.

To the mobilization of the bourgeoisie, to its shock troops whose purpose it is to deprive the masses of their meager liberties, the bloc of the Socialist and Communist parties responds by issuing an appeal which is based strictly on the grounds of bourgeois legality. A parliamentary interpellation and then, after the cantonal elections, which absorb now the greatest part of the activities of the C. P. and the S. P., they envisage meetings and demonstrations. Parliamentary cretinism flows in big waves. On this path, the same as that followed by the Austrian Social Democracy, defeat will be inevitable.

Editorial Note

The article printed herewith is a translation from la Verite, official organ of the Bolshevik-Leninist Fraction of the S.F.I.O. The clarity of its analysis of the political and economic situation in France and the realism of its program for the French proletariat make it a guide for every militant in the United States towards an understanding of the turbulent conditions now transpiring in that country. Trade union unity, workers militia, general strike against the reactionary Doumergue government, workers and peasants government—these constitute a revolutionary policy to arouse the French masses out of the united front of inaction. They are the measures necessary to stand off and finally smash the fascist movement. With this program we are in complete agreement. There is, however, one point of this article which we are obliged to take sharp issue. Two references are made to the need for a united party which la Verite says is "on the order of the day". The concept here referred to is the most issue of "organic unity". With this the National Committee of the C. L. A. is in disagreement. However, the problem cannot be exhausted in the space of this editorial note. We will return to the question of "organic unity" in future issues of the Militant. The New International August number carries articles of interest on this subject.

able. Occupying a constantly narrowing arena, the working class will suffer defeat after defeat, and reaction will impose its program of multiplied misery, of redoubled preparations for war. It is absolutely necessary to smash this official perspective of resorting to the bourgeois Parliament. It is no longer possible to keep silent about this. There can be no return to the former democracy. It is doomed. Neither the bourgeoisie nor the proletariat can use it for its class interests. The Only Perspective: Fight for a Workers and Peasants Government! The real perspective must be

Discussion Article

The Question of Intervention by U.S. Imperialism in Cuba

The highest point of a social revolution so far reached on the American continent occurred in Cuba, starting with the struggle that overthrew the Machado regime. The formation of the elementary forms of the Soviets in some parts of Cuba was a reality and a living threat to the rule of American imperialism. As the main enemy of the extension of the October revolution, the American imperialists were confronted with a situation in the Cuban uprising that threatened the plans of the United States to "organize the world". Soviets are no longer "Russian" institutions; they have been established in every revolutionary upheaval in Europe and Asia, and with the Cuban revolution have invaded America.

At a most critical stage of the struggle of the Cuban workers, when opposition to American imperialism was still on the upgrade, the Stalinists took the position and issued instructions to the workers not to seize American property. This was the directive of the C. I., through its Latin American Secretariat to the Cuban section. In order to hold off intervention the Stalinists informed the workers to stop seizing American property. To instruct the workers not to seize the American property when over eighty percent of the cultivated land and property of Cuba belongs to American interests is to tell the workers to stop the revolution. A social revolution, a proletarian revolution in the colonial and semi-colonial countries is impossible without the seizure of the property of the imperialists.

When the Cuban revolution reached its most favorable stage of development, the decisive conditions, under the given international situation were in favor of the working class. The Cuban ruling class was in confusion. The American side blundered and was hated. Bitter resentment against American imperialism ran high. The economic condition of the country, revolving on the axis of sugar, had long ago reached the point of breakdown. The sugar industry had reached its worst stage. The masses were in motion. Large layers of the middle class and peasants were following the lead of the proletariat. The army had revolted and had removed its officers and in some cases were either in support of the workers' struggles, or were neutral in given cases of the seizure of sugar plantations. The establishment of Soviets was gaining momentum and their establishment on a national scale was favorable. The arming of workers and peasants, involving large layers of the class was taking place. In other parts of Latin America anti-American and anti-imperialist feelings ran high, and threatening opposition to the United States took shape in some countries.

The question is: can intervention be prevented by this Stalinist retreat? Intervention did exist in a peculiar form. But could this Stalinist position modify its form? Capitulation to intervention by refusing to seize imperialist property is capitulation to imperialism in the revolutionary period. The American imperialists changed the form of its intervention in Cuba because it feared the effects of direct intervention, realizing the powerful forces and opposition such action would release throughout the whole of the Americas. The success of the Cuban revolution demands the seizure of American property. The revolutionary government must be prepared, in order to modify and postpone intervention, to take up negotiations with the American owners the question of their former property. It is always necessary to conduct a policy that will modify and delay intervention. But to carry this over to a system whereby a policy is pursued within the bounds of action that checks the further development of the revolution to prevent intervention is suicide.

There can be no social revolution without intervention. The given class relations on a national and international scale can be such as to modify the effects of intervention, or on the other hand make intervention a direct threat to success. But one cannot modify intervention by putting the brakes on the factors which extend and strengthen revolutionary action. The modification of intervention depends upon the extension and the deepening of the revolutionary forces. A social revolution cannot be confined to one country. Further development and the deepening of the Cuban revolution would have caused its extension into other parts of Latin America and would have effected the American workers by accelerating the class antagonisms and by giving impetus to the developing strike waves. The extension of the Cuban revolution beyond its national boundaries does not necessarily mean success in these countries. But its extension would rouse the workers and other layers of the population of these countries, who in one form or the other would give battle to the exploiters and the American imperialists, thereby preventing the full blows of intervention from striking. Under such conditions the revolution in Cuba could further consolidate its power through the Soviets. A social revolution in an advanced country will confront intervention, although the relation of forces are far more favorable in

workers. (Continued on Page 4)

facied. Either the working class and the toiling masses organize, strengthen their defensive (that is what they are restricted to, today) which will soon be transformed into an offensive, or they will suffer a debacle. This perspective should guide all the activity of the working class. There can be no return to the democracy of the pre-February 6th days. The clock of history cannot be turned back. The alternative is: deeper into Bonapartism, towards Fascism and war, or forward to Socialism. That is why the working class must not agree to merely asking parliamentary questions of the bourgeoisie which holds them in scorn, but must take its post as the champion of the widest democracy possible. The struggle against the Doumergue program can be carried on only for the following aim: All power to the toiling masses, to the workers and peasants' government.

The Methods of Struggle

By which methods shall this will of the working class to resistance and to its historic goal be organized in order that it does not disintegrate itself in sporadic movements of revolt provoked and crushed by state and fascist reaction? All the fanfares of leaders, without solid organization, can but precipitate constantly worsening conditions and only play the enemy's game. How shall this struggle for the workers and peasants government be conducted?

The coup de Force of February 6 has cemented the workers' ranks. The threat of a new blow should bring about without any delay the greatest solidarity of the workers' ranks.

The question of a united party is on the order of the day. For its realization, united preparatory meetings must be held now at which the problems of the party in the present situation should be examined.

The question of trade union unity must be solved in the immediate future. Not a single trade union should agree to a delay of several weeks and months when danger is so imminent. The most efficacious method of struggle against the reactionary offensive is the general strike, carried on to victory, until the bourgeoisie capitulates. It is precisely for the purpose of assuring the preparation and organization of the general strike as the method of struggle of the workers under the most favorable conditions that trade union unity is necessary at once, without bureaucratic delays.

A united party and a united trade union movement is not enough for the solution of the problem of uniting the workers against the reactionary danger. The great majority of the workers are unorganized. All of the toiling masses must be drawn into the struggle against reaction. How is that to be done? In every factory enterprise and workshop workers committees should be elected by the workers in factories and enterprises. Organize these committees locally. Centralize all these local committees nationally. In this manner, parallel with the unification of the organized workers, the organization of the entire toiling mass will take place and thus against the Bonapartist pretensions of the bourgeoisie and against the rump parliament quite ready to satisfy these pretensions, there will develop the only honest parliamentary representation of the workers of the country, and in this struggle the workers and peasants government will be born.

Anti-Fascist Militia and the Arming of the Proletariat to Beat Back the Reactionary Bands

But the struggle has begun to shift to the plane of physical force. It can develop only on this plane, for it is by force alone that a solution will be reached, that the crisis will be bridged. The workers, because they can place no confidence in bourgeois legality, must take practical measures to assure themselves the defense of their rights. Anti-Fascist militias must be set up in every locality and every district. The revolutionists who seek to oppose this under such pretexts as that "the bourgeoisie will use this against our organizations; there must be no provocation" are at bottom camouflaged partisans of restricting the struggle to the plane of bourgeois legality. The forward march of reaction will not be averted "by eschewing provocation". If necessary the bourgeoisie will invent plots to justify violent measures. The only means of opposing and of smashing reaction is by meeting force with force.

The only guarantee the working class has to preserve its liberties at a time when the gangs of reaction are armed in order to gag it, is to arm itself as well. "Self-defense of the Masses" is possible only if every worker has in his possession the means whereby to reply to the guns and daggers of the Fascists. Certain it is that when the people are armed, far from "provoking" the reaction, the latter will show itself far less provocative. Reaction is preparing a new blow. The danger is imminent! To action, without a moment's delay!

TRADE UNION UNITY IN FRANCE

Outstanding in the struggle against reaction and Fascism in France is the need for trade union unity. The general strike of February 12 brought the industrial power of the masses into bold relief. The French labor movement, however, is divided. For years it has been split into two camps—the reformist C.G.T. (Confederation Generale du Travail) and the communist-Stalinist C.G.T.U. (Confederation Generale du Travail Unitaire). Trade union unity has been hindered—and even sabotaged—by the bureaucrats of both centers out of fear, and sectarian interests. The yellow leader of the reformist unions, Jourhaux, cynically advised the members of the red organization to tear up their cards and join the C.G.T. The Stalinists expelled the advocates of a fusion congress forthwith.

The sentiment of the masses which forced the united front between the Socialist and Stalinist parties has likewise caused the trade union leaders to change their tune. The British and American New Leaders print interesting reports on the latest developments towards unity in this field. The British periodical for Oct. 12 states that the C.G.T.U. agreed to amalgamation "without any question of minorities or of separate loyalty to other organizations". While Communists never make this demand a fundamental consideration in entering or working in reformist or reactionary trade unions, it is quite possible that the Stalinists surrendered to this condition without much resistance. According to the British New Leader version this compromise was made in return for the withdrawal of the suggestion that the trade union "have the power to forbid their members belonging to outside organizations".

How little, if anything, this compromise is worth is seen by the fact that seldom or never in the history of the contemporary trade union movement of France have the political affiliations of any trade union member been brought into question. Three and four years ago the Communist League of France advocated a Congress of Fusion to achieve unity. For this they were abused, slandered and even hounded in the C.G.T.U. Today the Stalinist union, once more powerful than the C.G.T., but now only a small fraction of it, is willing to accept unity on whatever conditions they can get. Their long record of incompetence, mismanagement and splitting has given the reformists the upper hand. The Stalinists are eating crow today in payment for their crimes of yesterday.

The American New Leader carries a report in its latest issue which places an entirely different light on the matter. The issue, according to this paper, is not fusion or amalgamation but the dissolution of the C.G.T.U. and the adherence of all its members to the C.G.T. They imply that the Stalinists have acceded to this condition but balked at the demand that they drop the fight against the Amsterdam International to which the C.G.T. belongs.

The experience of the Stalinists in the trade unions in France contains an object lesson or the workers of the rest of the world. The C.G.T.U. began as the bigger organization with the onus of splitting the trade unions on the reformists and social-patriots. Immediately the new trade union center was created and it set up the hue and cry for unity, which the reformers rejected. But that was in Lenin's time. Since then, a long interval of social-Fascism, independent leadership in strikes, united front from below and the rest of the rubbish out of the Stalinist incinerator turned the tide in favor of the C.G.T., which has been growing steadily at the expense of the C.G.T.U. Today, under pressure of the workers, the Stalinists must abandon their organization. They can accept the piddling concessions offered them by the other bureaucracy. If there are none then tongue in cheek, they can crawl in.

The worker today who would place his life in the hands of these people is displaying about as much intelligence as a mother who would entrust the safety of her child to a blind man on a congested metropolitan thoroughfare.

EXPULSION IN BRITAIN

Lest any comrades have doubts on the subject, the penalty for heresy in the Stalinist church, in Britain as in the United States, France or Australia, is excommunication. The recently arrived October issue of the Red Flag, organ of the Communist League of Great Britain, carries the information that two comrades have been expelled from the High Street Cell of the South East District of the Communist party in London. Their crime is—if the explanation is necessary—"Trotskyism". Following their expulsion, the cell broke up and seven comrades signed a statement, of which the following is an excerpt: "Hitler's coming to power, the Brighton T.U.C. march and the conduct of the anti-war and anti-Fascist campaign have made us uneasy as to where the party is going. In fraction meetings we have raised our objections only to be met with furious personal attacks, leaving our points unanswered. We have made continual efforts to get some explanation of points in the C. P. policy which seems to us to be dangerously wrong. . . . Of course we were attacked as "Trotskyists". . . ."

SIR STAFFORD MUDDLES OUT

The Right wing of the British Labor Party which hopes soon again to don the mantle of His Majesty's Most Loyal Government administered a decisive defeat to the Pink-Tea, parlor bolshevik outfit, the Socialist League, run by Sir Stafford Cripps and consorts. This gentleman, it appears, made pretensions at being the "Left Wing" of the Labor party and favoring more "revolutionary" action. The three principal planks in his very radical program were the abolition of the House of Lords, radical reform of the House of Commons and the use of emergency powers by the Labour Government "if the need arose". But at the Brighton congress of the Labor party this "revolutionary" lion became as tame as a lamb. He appeared before the delegates, his claws clipped, fawning and howling before the die-hard servants of the British Empire. Revolutionary changes could be brought about, according to this new type of "revolutionist", by parliamentary methods provided they were "drastically modernized". This, says Sir Stafford further, would obviate the need for violence. Even if we accepted these premises—and they are fundamentally wrong—the question would still remain as to whether the British capitalist class would allow such parliamentary changes to be made without challenging them very vehemently and very violently. But before the congress was over the Socialist League back-watered, agreeing to support the Executive's recommendations which were intentionally vague so that nobody would be committed to anything. Cripps and his followers had become so mild and peaceful that Herbert Morrison, a labor-skate of the old school, took to chiding them for not having progressed beyond the "inevitability of gradualism" as espoused by the late Sidney Webb, now Lord Passfield. The pretensions to being a revolutionary current, now stripped of all pretensions, there is room and need for a genuine left wing in the Labor Party, to raise the issues sharply and to fight the lackeys of the King as only revolutionists can.