

MARCH OF EVENTS

By JACK WEBER

American Imperialism Arrives At a Decision

When Roosevelt granted recognition to the U.S.S.R. his move was interpreted correctly as being aimed at Japanese imperialism. Undoubtedly it gave pause to the Japanese militarists in the ruthless plundering of China. For to them it meant the prelude to a military alliance, a view that was made highly plausible by the fact that recognition was soon followed by the sending of military and naval attaches to the Soviet Union by the U. S., by the fact that even prior to recognition the Curtis-Wright aircraft concern had been granted permission by the U. S. Army (naturally with the consent of the State Department) to conclude a technical assistance contract with the U.S.S.R. and to build airplane factories in Russia, etc. Only a few weeks before open announcement of recognition the attitude of the Soviet Union towards Japanese aggression in connection with the Chinese Eastern Railway had undergone a distinct change; the tone of Soviet diplomacy hardened and became less conciliatory. Temporarily the Japanese generals, faced with the possibility of two such foes, whose interests ran parallel only momentarily in common opposition to Japanese aims, uniting against them, were forced to wait and move more cautiously. But since then the international situation has taken new form, new alignments are in process of achievement, and the American capitalists have arrived at a decision. This decision, to make perfectly plain to Japan that there would be no military alliance between the U. S. and the U.S.S.R., is unquestionably related to the stand taken by England in support of the rearmament of Hitler Germany. Thus the whole international situation has become threatening to the Soviet Union. The signal for the war of intervention may be given at any moment.

American Policy

The question of the debts owed by Russia to the U. S. played only a minor role in Roosevelt's decision to withdraw military attaches and consuls from the Soviet Union. It provided merely the plausible diplomatic excuse for justification of a provocative act before the masses. For such an act will be (and has been!) interpreted by Japanese militarism and German fascism as a guarantee that they may proceed with the attack on the Soviet Union without fear of interference by U. S. imperialism. The German "Tagblatt" thus stated that "Apparently Washington intends to demonstrate that there is no military alliance between the two powers." Washington feels that the interests of American imperialism will be best served by pushing Japan into war against the Soviet Union and then waiting till both countries have become exhausted by the con-

Militarizing of the Pacific

Meantime Roosevelt pursues the "New Deal" policy in the Pacific. That is, he is completely militarizing the Pacific coast and the island "possessions" and laying the necessary foundations for properly carrying on the colossal naval battles of the future. The preparations involve political changes as well as physical ones. Thus the New Deal as applied to Hawaii means the change to a "mainland" governor completely under instruction of the U. S. navy. Millions of dollars are being poured out to construct in Hawaii the largest air bases in the Pacific. In addition air bases are being set up rapidly on certain of the Alutian Islands which form the northern and the safest approach to the Japanese Isles. The Philippines will undergo a similar process at the first opportunity. The propaganda for tightening the military grip on the Philippines is already evident in the announcement by American business interests in the islands of the "discovery" of rich chromite deposits, valuable in war time. Thus it is clear that he U. S., under the guidance of a President who, under the cloak of liberalism, pursues the ends of imperialism, is embarked on a course directed against both the U.S.S.R. and Japan. War between these two countries would afford Roosevelt the full opportunity to go even further in "mechanizing and modernizing" both the army and the navy, and in building the largest navy in the world to carry out the greedy aims of world hegemony of the American financiers.

War and Fascism

An unforgettable lesson that the capitalists learned in the last world war is that the ruling class must protect itself not only against the rival imperialists abroad, but also against the working class enemy at home. For just as the capitalists carry out similar policies of exploitation at home and abroad, so the working class under proper leadership pursues internal and international policies directly antagonistic to those of capitalism. During war in particular the workers are apt to learn the lesson that no nation can be free at home that exploits other peoples abroad. Hence the capitalist class attempts to guarantee its rear (at home) in wartime by suppressing all working class liberties and wiping out their independent, particularly their revolutionary, organizations. Thus war breeds fascism and the working class must oppose both.

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Five Join Workers Party Protesting C.P. Bureaucracy

Calling on other members of the Communist Party and the Young Communist League to follow them, five Philadelphia comrades have joined the Spartacus Youth League and the Workers Party. The new members are Milton Proun, S. S. Colton, Nat Cohen and John Brusk, all from the Y.C.L. and Jed Davis from the C. P.

In a statement addressed to "Communist Comrades, Fellow-Workers," these comrades protest against the bureaucracy of the C. P., and cite in particular the change of policy on the trade union field, the united front and the building of a Labor Party without reference to the party convention or free discussion by the rank and file.

Cite Lack of Democracy

"For months already we have witnessed the swift destruction of the last semblance of party democracy," the statement reads, in part, "and the robbing of the rank and file's revolutionary right to freedom of discussion on all major changes in the party line. . . . It was ruled at the last convention, 'in the name of several hundred thousand workers', 'the party must conduct a sharp struggle against any liquidatory tendencies, and expose the slanders and maneuvers of the renegades who call for the liquidation of the T.U.U.L. because they wish to strengthen the A. F. of L. bureaucracy, of which they have become a part.' . . . Without warning, as if there had never been a party congress, the Central Committee not long after startled the whole membership with a series of decrees (Daily Worker, Jan. 26, 1935), completely reversing the unanimous decisions of the convention. The C.C. commands us: 'The existing revolutionary trade unions and their locals join the A. F. of L. or its unions wherever there exist parallel mass A. F. of L. trade unions, or the Red trade unions can join the A. F. of L. directly.' . . . 'Even if the C. C. claim—that the objective conditions have forced

this sudden turn in trade union policy—were correct, still nothing can justify their refusal to recognize the party members' elemental right to democratically decide what the party's proletarian policy should be! . . . 'After we had been taught year in, year out (1929-35) that social democracy and fascism were twins, after it had been drummed into our heads that no united fronts against imperialism and fascism could be carried out with the treacherous socialist leaders but—only with the workers from below—after all this, the executive committee of the Comintern (and there has not been a world congress of the Comintern for seven years!) wholly upset our old united front policy. . . . Are we to honor the impotent united front of the C.P. and S.P. of France as a model for our future united front tactics? Never! . . . It is a united front of speeches and parades, and not of organized struggle against fascism. It is a united front from above! We stand for the united front of all working class parties and leagues from top to bottom, with unrestricted right of mutual criticism in the course of the fight for common aims. Go back and read the records of the Fourth Congress of the Communist International and learn what Lenin meant by the united front! . . . 'The idea that the major political task of the communists today is the launching of a Labor Party came like a thunderbolt to us! We have learnt from history that a Labor Party is a reformist petty-bourgeois party, what we once branded a 'social fascist' party. As Lenin once pointed out, all so-called labor parties inevitably become imperialist (social imperialist) instruments against the revolutionary Marxist vanguard. . . . 'We call on all comrades who are in sympathy today with our viewpoint to follow us and join strength with the rising ranks of the only revolutionary Marxist party and youth league in America, the Workers Party of the U.S. and the Spartacus Youth League.'

How C.P. Tactics Hurt Defendants

By JAMES P. CANNON

San Francisco, Feb. 11.—The "Criminal Syndicalism" trial at Sacramento had every right to become a central issue of the advanced labor movement throughout the country. The reasons for the failure are now clearly established and it is time to speak out loud about them.

Behind the familiar smoke screen of the "Red scare", the prosecution is patently aimed at militant trade unionism; concretely it is an attempt to take revenge for the strike movement of the cannery and agricultural workers, and to head off further activities of this kind. This contention was fully substantiated by the nature of the evidence introduced by the prosecution throughout the past week of the trial which I had the opportunity to attend. The big banking and industrial interests which stand behind the prosecution at Sacramento are out to "get" Chambers and Decker and their immediate associates. At the same time they are aiming a deadly blow at militant unionism which the defendants represented and carried into practice among the most oppressed and deprived section of the California working class, the agricultural workers.

A great working class movement could have been organized around this issue. Nothing of the kind happened, and the responsibility for the failure—which jeopardizes the defendants as well as the advanced labor movement in general—rests squarely on the Communist Party. Indeed, facts are already piled mountain high to prove that the Stalinists did not simply fail to take advantage of the opportunity which was in their hands; they worked deliberately to "play down" the case and to wreck every attempt initiated by others to put the defense movement on a broad working class base.

Sacramento is not merely a repetition of the neglect and incompetence for which the Stalinists are sufficiently distinguished; the story of Stalinism in the Sacramento case is a story of perfidious betrayal of the interests of the labor movement and of the defendants on trial. On this point argument is unnecessary and superfluous; the facts which make up the shameful record speak for themselves.

Suborning the Case

The arrests occurred last July. The trial began in January. Thus the C. P. and its defense organization, the I.L.D., had a period of six months to popularize the case, alarm the labor movement and set a big defense movement into motion. But they did nothing of the kind. On the contrary, the case was completely neglected and ignored. Practically no publicity was given to it in the Daily Worker. No attempt was made to enlist the cooperation of the Socialist Party and other organizations on a national scale. Nothing was attempted even in the State of California beyond the usual perfunctory "united front" of the C. P. and its satellite organizations.

The capitalist reactionaries were fully awake to the import of the case. The opening of the trial found them mobilized and firing away every day in the press against the "red menace" on trial at Sacra-

mento. But it produced hardly a ripple in the labor movement of California. As for the advanced workers throughout the country, they didn't even know about the case until a series of articles in the New Militant called attention to it.

The defendants were allowed to remain in jail the whole six months before the trial, despite the fact that bail for each of them was set at only \$3,200. Chambers and Decker the leaders of the union, are effective and popular agitators. If they had been at liberty during the six months before the trial they could have done much to arouse labor and liberal support for the case and to procure bail for the others. But they never had the chance.

Were they allowed to remain in jail because the I.L.D. was unable to procure bail for them? Nonsense! They had been in conflict with the party bureaucracy over questions of union policy. Because of that bail was withheld from them and they were deliberately kept in jail for six months by their own party while a whispered campaign of slander was carried on to discredit and isolate them. As one over-zealous and somewhat indiscreet Stalinist remarked when questioned about the matter: "The party is keeping Decker in jail to discipline her."

Proof that the failure to provide bail was not due to lack of means and resources was supplied when the Non-Partisan Labor Defense intervened in the case at the request of several of the defendants. The N.P.L.D. offered to attempt to raise bail. At first the prisoners were forbidden by the I.L.D. to accept the "counter-revolutionary" offer of the N.P.L.D. This was going a little too far, however, and Jack Warnick made application to the N.P.L.D. His bail was procured within a week. A few days later the N.P.L.D. took Decker out on bail, and collected the bail funds for a third defendant. Put to shame by this demonstration the I.L.D. woke up and suddenly discovered that they also could raise bail if they wanted to. They deposited bail for six defendants on one day after the N.P.L.D. had forced their hand. They didn't have to hunt for this bail. They had it all the time. They didn't use it for six months because they didn't want to use it.

As stated above, the trial began without the semblance of a united front defense movement. When the N.P.L.D. entered the case as the representative of Norman Mini, one of the defendants who had left the C. P. and joined the Workers Party, it made concrete proposals for the organization of a united front to mobilize the mass movement in support of the defense. Under pressure of the defendants the C. P. finally agreed.

The Socialist Party, the Workers Party, the American Civil Liberties Union and several other organizations participated and a united committee was constituted on the basis of definite agreements in writing. Everything was set to build up a broad supporting movement even at this late day. Prospects were good to organize a real counter-offensive against the capitalist reactionaries and red baiters and to penetrate the trade union movement with the appeal of the Sacramento prisoners.

Then orders came from New York: "Break it up!" At the con-

S.P. on Sacramento "United Front"

The breakdown of the "united front" defense in the Sacramento trial of workers and labor leaders is laid directly at the door of the Communist Party, in a statement issued in Stockton, Cal. by the Socialist Party of California.

Under date of Feb. 5, the statement says, in part: "On the suggestion of the American Civil Liberties officials, conferences began weeks ago in San Francisco, resulting in the setting up of united defense machinery including the Socialist Party, Workers Party of U. S., Communist Party, American Civil Liberties Union, Non Partisan Labor Defense, I.L.D. and several labor unions. An agreement was

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Statement by N.P.L.D.

Fifteen men and women are now on trial in Sacramento, facing 6 to 84 years imprisonment each for their activities.

That the trial is an onslaught on labor unions is proven by inclusion in the indictment of the organization of picketing, as specific proof of criminal syndicalism.

Even more revealing is a statement made to the Sacramento Bee, on February 4, by F. J. Palomaros, manager of the San Joaquin Valley employment agency:

"This trial is of the utmost importance to them (the bosses) because they believe the defendants responsible for the San Joaquin Valley strike of 1933—the first serious one in that section's history." If convictions are obtained in Sacramento, the next step will be a state-wide—and eventually a nation-wide attack on labor unions. Mini and to offer aid to the other prisoners. We raised the ball one of the defendants. We dispatched a field representative to Sacramento and Albert Goldman, noted labor attorney, to defend (\$6,400) for Caroline Decker and Jack Warnick, co-defendants of Mini. By our appeals to trade unions and other means, we popularized the Sacramento defense movement. We have helped provide the prisoners with relief funds and literature needed by them for the trial. We have begun an investigation to impeach State evidence. In New York, we held a great mass meeting protesting Hearst's anti-labor campaign and in support of the Sacramento prisoners.

All this has been done by us without any general appeal for funds. Now we must have funds. Rush donations. Help smash the attack of the California bankers on the elementary rights of labor. Fraternal rights,

GEORGE NOVACK Chairman, Provisional Committee for Non-Partisan Labor Defense Room 731, 22 East 17th St., N. Y. C.

ference on January 26 they tried to do so by the simple device of insisting on the inclusion of their satellite organizations. When they got enough votes in this way, they called ahead and, in violation of written agreements to the contrary, adopted a motion which drove out of the united front every non-Stalinist organization.

The Communist Party has said and written much in recent months about the desire for a "united front" with the Socialist Party. The State organization of the S. P. in California participated in the short-lived united front on the Sacramento case with the C. P. and with the Workers Party. The testimony of the Socialist Party of California as to the cause of the disruption of this attempt therefore has an exceptional interest and importance. I quote from an official circular of the Socialist Party of California addressed "To Members of the Socialist Party of California" under date of February 5, 1935:

"The Communist Party-controlled delegates, however, after repeated breaches of faith, and despite concessions made by the other groups for the sake of unity, deliberately smashed the united defense. At the conference on January 26, acting apparently on orders from New York, they violated every agreement previously made with other delegates. This they did in spite of unity appeals by Dr. George P. Hedley, of the A.C.L.U. and two of the I.L.D. defendants who were present. A policy frankly designed to bar cooperation of any delegate unwilling to accept Communist Party orders was laid down as an ultimatum. Thereupon, the C.P.-controlled delegates called for 'a united front under the leadership of the C.P. and I.L.D.' Having driven all non-controllable delegates out, they got it."

The result of the Stalinist united front policy was predicted by our San Francisco branch in a leaflet, for distributing which our comrades were physically attacked by the Stalinists on the night of Feb. 3. The Stalinist "united front" conference assembled on Feb. 10. It was a complete success—I.L.D. delegates were present from various cities and they never once disagreed with each other or with the C. P. delegates. As a matter of fact, even the I.W.O., the Marine Workers Industrial Union, and the League Against War and Fascism cheered every decision to the echo. As for trade unions and other genuine mass organizations, they stayed away in droves.

Stalinist policy which, for six months, prevented the development of a mass movement, has now smashed the movement which might have been built out of the genuine united front committee including the S. P., W.P., N.P.L.D. and other non-Stalinist organizations. For this the C.P. will have to answer sooner or later to the defendants and the workers of California.

Defense Policy in Court

As previous editorials in the New Militant have indicated, the Workers Party stood for unity and cooperation in the courtroom. Despite the deep and irreconcilable differences which separate us from the Communist Party we considered unity before the capitalist court a

self-evident duty and necessity. The N.P.L.D., representing Norman Mini, brought Albert Goldman from Chicago to conduct his defense and sought an agreement for cooperation between him and the attorney of the I.L.D., Leo Gallagher. The attitude of the C. P., however, made even this cooperation impossible. The I.L.D. attorney has never been willing to confer with Goldman over courtroom tactics, to say nothing of coming to an agreement with him.

The conflict over courtroom tactics, which at one point flared into the open, brought out two conflicting theories of labor defense which I do not believe can be reconciled. Our theory is that you engage a lawyer to safeguard the legal rights of a worker on trial, to take advantage of all legal technicalities and to try to convince a jury that he acted within his legal rights. This does not mean compromising principle. On the contrary, in the courtroom the attacks of capitalism on the workers' standards and workers' rights, the suffering of the masses, the principles and tactics of the revolutionary movement for the liberation of the workers—all are clearly and sharply brought out. "Mass pressure," which is undoubtedly the decisive factor in labor cases in the final analysis, has to be realized by means of publicity and agitation to mobilize mass support and protest outside the courtroom. For this, a united front and a mass campaign is needed. A lawyer's soap box speeches in court cannot be substituted for it.

The attorney of the I.L.D. has proceeded in this case as though it were lost before it started; as though there had been no hope of securing an acquittal, or even a hung jury. Consequently, he has tried the case for the benefit of the courtroom audience, which consists of exactly 112 people when all the chairs are occupied, about one-half of whom are sympathizers who need no agitation and the other half prejudiced supporters of the prosecution. This is the perverted Stalinist conception of "mass pressure." This is the way they try to compensate for their failure to organize a real mass movement in support of the defense.

Gallagher even went so far in antagonizing the jury and applying "mass pressure" in the courtroom that on one occasion, when a woman juror interrupted to ask him not to shout so loud because it made her nervous, he retorted: "I am not talking for the jury, I am talking for the people in the courtroom." (Western Worker, Feb. 7.) How can anyone who has a decent regard for the fate of men on trial support or acquiesce in such tactics? It was at this point that attorney Goldman, after repeated warnings against such methods, made the statement that he did not associate himself with the tactics of Gallagher.

Frame-up Against Norman Mini

If the Stalinist leaders here have shown themselves to be helpless and impotent before the assaults of reaction, and unable to organize any serious resistance to it, they display great energy in the crusade against what, after all, they regard as the "real enemy"—"Trotskyism". Considering the case lost before it started, and the defendants as good as in San Quentin—and losing very little sleep on that score—they are concerned now to find a scapegoat upon whom they can unload the responsibility for the results of their own incompetence and perfidy. They have selected "Trotskyism" for this role. The fact that "Trotskyism" in this instance is represented by a defendant who himself is on trial and facing a prison term does not deter them.

Norman Mini, one of the defendants, quit the Communist Party and joined the Workers Party. That made him, forthwith, a coun-

ter-revolutionist of course. And now, according to the official propaganda, he is also a "stool pigeon". But what's new about that? Is it not well known that anyone who disagrees with the policy of the Communist Party is ipso facto a police agent as well as a social fascist? Who is going to be impressed by this new discovery in regard to Norman Mini? True, such an attack on one of the defendants while the trial is going on and the repetition of the Hearst press lie that Mini made a "confession"—implying that some "crime" was committed—is a blow at the defense. But why should people who deliberately kept their own party members in jail for six months worry if they get six years on top of it? The important thing is to deal a blow at "Trotskyism".

But in this case, also, I think the Stalinist generals have overreached themselves and that their attack will turn out to be a boomerang. For the accusation against Mini is a frame-up which has already called forth the protest of Jack Warnick. And I venture to predict that when Mini's day in court comes, and he takes the witness stand to speak for himself, the blackguards who blithely denounced him as a stool-pigeon will be put to shame.

When he was arrested last August Mini, then a member of the C. P., gave a statement in which he openly admitted his membership in the C. P. and openly proclaimed his revolutionary beliefs. He also answered questions regarding the party affiliation of well known officials of the C. P. and their revolutionary beliefs as he understood them. This, of course, was a mistake and a very serious one too, for which Mini deserves severe criticism. A revolutionist should know better than to give any information of any kind to the police or the prosecutor. Naturally, the Workers Party, which had never even heard of Mini last August cannot take a particle of responsibility for his statement. It reflects the woeful lack of revolutionary education as well as the spirit of leftist bravado of a young member of the Stalinist party. We educate our members differently.

I heard the statement read in court. It fell flat; there was nothing in it that was not commonly known. The capitalist press blasted it as a "confession". This it was not in any sense of the word, for the essence of Mini's statement was that he had a right to belong to the C. P. and to believe in a revolutionary program, and did not consider this a crime. But the Western Worker, over-anxious to strike a blow at Mini, even if there by a deflower was also struck at all the defendants in the case, enormously exaggerated the import of the statement and, following the lead of the capitalist press, declared it to be "the most dangerous weapon the railroad machine has brought into use against the defendants to date."

That is false from beginning to end. As a matter of fact, the statement cannot harm the case of the defendants in the slightest degree except on one theory: that they intend to give up the fight for the legality of the C. P., deny membership in the C. P. and deny the revolutionary program.

Jack Warnick, who made an open break with the C. P. in protest against the frame-up of Mini, gave the answer of a revolutionist to the slander of the Western Worker: "Neither do I think the information he gave is damaging to the case or to the revolutionary movement. What he said consisted of facts which we have always disdained to hide." Other defendants said the same thing in substance when the statement was read in court.

The Western Worker characterizes the document as a "stool pigeon statement". That is not true at all. No person of integrity would support such a slanderous accusation. The very people who make it known that Mini has repeatedly been offered immunity if he would testify for the State and that he refused all such offers and remained in solidarity with his fellow-defendants.

The slander campaign against Mini is a shameful attempt to take revenge on a young comrade who had the intelligence and courage to break with the Stalinist party and join another more worthy of the allegiance of a revolutionist. That is his real crime. For that they want to assassinate him. But they will not succeed. We will not let them do it. We would not deserve the name of revolutionists if we yielded an inch to such an infamous frame-up.

Beginning with the next issue the New Militant will start a Questions and Answers department. Comrade A. Weaver who conducted the Question Box in the old Militant will have charge of the new feature. Readers are requested to address their questions to "Questions and Answers" department.

The next issue of the New Militant will carry Caroline Decker's own statement on how the Communist Party at first denied her and other defendants the right to accept bail from the Non-Partisan Labor Defense, and other questions.—Ed. N.Ce.

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