

Skeletons Out of the Daily Worker Closet

A Few Telling Quotations

By HENRY THURMAN

In the Daily Worker of April 3, 1935, and also in the issue of May 11, is printed the following correct Leninist policy on the war question: "It is difficult to forecast the lineup in the next imperialist war. But it is very probable that such a war would start either as an attack upon the Soviet Union or as Stalin said would be rapidly transferred into a united attack of the imperialists against the U.S.S.R."

"But whatever the exact circumstances in which the hostilities would begin, the French Communist Party would continue to wage its relentless and unceasing struggle against French capitalism and their own imperialists. It would raise Lenin's slogan of turning the imperialist war into a revolutionary civil war. . . ."

But the Stalinist editorial board was caught napping. Only a few months before it had printed a front page article vehemently denying that there was, or could be, any truth in the rumors of an impending military pact between Stalin and La Belle France. The gentlemen of the editorial board did not know (?) that Stalin had lost all faith in the international movement, and no longer considered a militant proletariat, fighting against their own national bourgeoisie at home, to be the best and only true defense of the Soviet Union. They did not know (?) that Stalin wants desperately to get rid of the embarrassment of the Comintern, as a chameleon snake at a broken tail until it rids itself of the useless member. They had not adapted themselves as yet to the sorry spectacle of a bureaucracy renting out the International in the manner of Abraham renting out his wife Sarah.

A "Little" Correction

Maurice Thorez, General Secretary of the Communist Party of France, cleared up matters, as the following quotation in the June 12, Daily Worker shows: "And here I shall answer a question which has been put to me: 'In any war unleashed by Hitler against the Soviet Union, would you apply your slogan: Transform the imperialist war into Civil War?'"

"Well, no! Because in such a war it would not be a question of an imperialist conflict between two imperialist gangs, it would be a question of war against the Soviet Union."

"Maochen for all, indeed!" as Lenin would have said.

Now let us consider the matter from the viewpoint of internationalists. In a war of Germany against the Soviet Union and France, we want the German workers to turn the war into a rebellion against Hitler's regime—yes? Correct. See them gazing with pained anxiety over the line to see if their comrades on the other side remain loyal to internationalism. What are the German workers to do if the Com-

munist International eggs on the French workers to support the war? Stalin, Thorez, and Hathaway, have you forgotten the German masses in your considerations?

Monstrous Indeed Thorez tells us that "it would be monstrous to consider a side imperialist which included the country of socialism, the country of the working class."

So if France fights on the same side as non-imperialist Russia, that makes France also non-imperialist for the time being. The French bourgeoisie will fight, not for the maintaining of the Versailles Treaty but for—the defense of the Soviet Union, pure and simple? Well—yes.

Yes, it would be "monstrous" to think of France as an imperialist nation with the "Communist" Party supporting it in a war. But France is imperialist, and the act of Thorez, in chaining the French party to the chariot wheels of the national bourgeoisie—is monstrous!

Thorez borrows the very arguments of the social-chauvinists of 1914, for he brings in the example of Marx's attitude toward the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, which was one of the social-patriots' favorites. Lenin answers Thorez.

Lenin on the Stalinists

Lenin wrote: "Whoever refers at present to Marx's attitude towards the wars of a period when the bourgeoisie was progressive, forgetting Marx's words that the workers have no fatherland, words which refer to a period when the bourgeoisie is reactionary and has outlived itself, to the period of socialist revolutions, is shamelessly distorting Marx and substituting a bourgeois viewpoint." (Socialism and War.)

Since Lenin wrote those words, the workers have gained a fatherland, the Soviet Union; but we are still in the age when the bourgeoisie is reactionary, and the real defense of the Soviet Union is identical with the struggle against our own national ruling class, for its eventual overthrow. The struggle of the French workers against the French master class, for example, is the best guarantee of a successful struggle of the German masses against Nazism.

Thorez brings up another point in defense of a position that a Marxist-Leninist cannot defend. He refers to the fact that Lenin accepted the aid of French officers who were willing to blow up railroad tracks to keep the German troops from advancing upon the Bolsheviks. Obviously this agreement in 1918, in which the Bolsheviks accepted aid but did not aid French imperialism by handing over the services of the French working class, and which did not renounce the Leninist policy of fomenting revolution against the French bourgeoisie, has little in common with the present traitorous pact.

150 Delegates Attend I.W.A. Convention

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shadows, the contrasts and contradictions of capitalism in decay. There were shots of working class families living in hovels not fit for human habitation. One family in the opulent state of Illinois was seen actually living in a cave. Factories, mills and other engines of plenty, if the workers would but take them over, were shown. Jim Shipley explained those pictures not covered by subtitles on the screen.

On the second day of the convention resolutions were passed: for any workers' security bill that might be presented to Congress with the same principles as the Lundeen Bill; endorsing the Labor Party; against Hearst; condemning war and pointing out that it is an inevitable result of capitalism; against Mussolini and his imminent rapping of Ethiopia; for youth relief; and for a slogan of union wages and conditions to promote the ideals of a 30 hour-\$30 week. This last-named resolution was altered several times before being finally toned down to more of an appeal than a demand.

Two W.P. members, Cyrus Rigby, secretary of the Utica (N.Y.) Unemployed League, and Leighton Rigby of Dixon, Ill. asked for permission to address the convention. They were refused the floor on grounds that the business before the assembly allowed no time for guest speakers who had not appeared before the proper committee on the first day. Dick Harrington, national chairman of the Unemployed Councils, however, had gone through with the necessary formalities and was allowed to speak. He spoke on "working class unity" and specifically advanced the C. P. program of a united front by calling for such "unity" between the I.W.A.

and the I.U.C. When this C.P. program finally came to a vote it was overwhelmingly defeated; a resolution was passed condemning the Stalinist tactics used in Illinois in the past, particularly during the Hunger March.

A resolution for affiliation of the I.W.A. with the Workers Alliance of America was passed without serious opposition. This plan was not opposed by W.P. delegates to the convention because of the party's expressed and proved stand against splitting organized workers, whether employed or unemployed—in this spite of the raw tactics used recently by the national leadership of the W.A.A. when Lasser invaded N.U.L. territory in what could be interpreted as nothing else but an effort to chisel away fragments of the N.U.L. membership. The understanding of I.W.A. delegates who voted for the national affiliation was that the Illinois unit must remain a rank and file organization of the workers, as opposed to one mechanically dominated by Lasser and Rasmussen and the S. P.

Among others two W.P. members, Jim Shipley and Charles Fearn, were elected to the Executive Board by the convention. Hank Mayer was continued as Educational Director and commented on the fine job he has done in propaganda and workers' education in Illinois during the past year. Other comrades were assigned duties towards building an organization to include all the unemployed workers of the state of Illinois.

Philadelphia PICNIC For the benefit of the eight-page weekly New Militant SUNDAY, AUGUST 18th, 1935 in Fairmount Park, west of 33rd and Cumberland Sts. Arranged by Philadelphia Br., W.P.

PAUL LUTTINGER, M.D. DANIEL LUTTINGER, M.D. 5 Washington Square North 1-2 and 6-8 Except Sundays and Holidays.

What Next in the Socialist Party?

An Analysis of Developments Arising Out of the Recent Old Guard Triumph at the N.C. Meeting

By A. J. MUSTE

War clouds become thicker and blacker. Daily occurrences and speeches furnish conclusive and final proof that the Stalinist bureaucracy of the Soviet Union and the Comintern have capitulated to French imperialism, sold the revolutionary integrity and soul of the Third International for a mess of pottage. Under the circumstances Socialist workers in the United States and elsewhere—those of them who have abandoned the falacy of classic Social Democratic reformism and who claim to be "revolutionary"—are more and more insistently confronted with the question: How and under what banner may the revolutionary elements in this period be welded together into a powerful, international, revolutionary party, under whose leadership all the forces of the working class and its allies may unite, not merely for defense against Fascist aggression but for the counter-attack to destroy capitalism.

Socialist party members in the United States in evaluating their own party and their own responsibility in the face of this question must make up the balance sheet of the party development during the little over a year that has elapsed since the Detroit convention of the S. P. and the adoption of the Detroit Declaration. This development has been reported and provisionally analyzed in the NEW MILITANT and the New Internationalist and it is not necessary to review it at length.

The Detroit Turn

At Detroit, in 1934, a National Committee was elected which the Militants claimed to dominate. The Detroit Declaration was far from a Marxist one. It represented, however, a certain turning away from reformism. In other words, it was a Centrist declaration. The election of the N.C. and the adoption of the Declaration were hailed by the Militants, on the one hand, as a climax of their work over a period of years, as representing a decided turn to the left, and the vindication of their contention that the S.P. could be made a "revolutionary" party. On the other hand, they stated that this was the beginning of a vigorous and more rapid move toward the latter goal. On this basis "unattached radicals" were invited to join the S.P. and "Communists" such as Goldman, Gilroy and Zam accepted the invitation. Those who were not convinced that organizations such as the A.W.P. and the C.I.A. should be liquidated and join the S.P. were put down as hopeless sectarians.

The Old Guard in the S.P., and especially the New York section, promptly took the offensive. Organizationally it defied the N. C. Politically it declared that the Detroit Declaration was "Communism" if it meant anything and that the Socialist Party must stand openly and unequivocally on a gradualist and democratic basis, that is, on reformism. At the Boston session of the N. C. as a result of this course the Old Guard again proceeded promptly to follow up this opening and further baited the N.C. The Militants on their part, as well as their "allies" such as Norman Thomas, realized that the Old Guard was gaining ground and that they must put up a much more determined fight if they were not to be routed. So the Socialist Call was projected and established, and talk that those who had hoped to be able to avoid a split in the party were wrong and that the Old Guard must be kicked out began to be heard.

The First Blow

At Buffalo three months later the Thomas-Allen, etc. group made a gesture of attack on the Old Guard, laying down certain requirements which they must meet within a given period or (presumably) be kicked out. At the same time a much more decisive attack, however, was made on the left wing by means of the resolution which declared "advocacy of armed insurrection" as incompatible with membership in the S.P. The notion that one could hold any views, and especially revolutionary ones, in the S.P. was thus abandoned. The Centrists made an attempt to establish a political position of their own as that of the S.P. by an organizational gesture against the right and a political blow against the left.

The denouement which might have been expected and which some of us had frequently enough predicted, came at the recent New York Plenum of the N.C., which has been reported in the columns of the NEW MILITANT. There Thomas, Hoan, etc. signed a peace pact with the Old Guard so that all good Socialists could get ready to roll up a big vote or the party (meaning for Hoan?) in the 1936 presidential election. The basis of the pact is the exclusion of "Communists," that is, Marxists from the S.P., technical "acceptance" by the Old Guard of the Detroit Declaration with the understanding that the right to "criticize and modify" exists, etc.

Militants Fail to Create Left Wing

The first point that stands out today is that after all these years of work by the assorted varieties of militants in the S.P., no revolutionary left-wing of any proportions has been crystallized in the party.

The militants who said they were going to do this job—yes, even make the S. P. itself revolutionary—and who rode so high and sung so confidently a year ago, suffered at the New York Plenum an obvious and shameful defeat. So far from being kicked out, the Old Guard is in the ascendancy and in a stronger position to advance its avowed purpose of undermining any attempt to build a left wing.

Under the circumstances those who question whether any considerable left-wing will be built in the S.P. have some basis for their doubts. The real point, however, is that no left-wing can be built on the basis and by the methods the Militants have employed in the last half dozen years.

What is the reason for the failure of the Militants to do what they professed they were going to do? First, they have never worked out a political program and sought to gather followers, educate the membership of the S.P. and carry on the fight against the Old Guard on the clear basis of such a program.

Secondly, having no clear political basis on which to fight, their struggle has been an organizational one. "We will get control of the N.C. and of the party by uniting all elements opposed to the Old Guard for this purpose and then we will use our control to make the party revolutionary"—this is in effect what the Militants said to themselves. The Old Guard on its part carried on a political fight on the basis of a program though, of course, an incorrect one, and they won out. The opposition to them, not standing united on a program, being composed of politically unclear, heterogeneous elements, fell to pieces just at the critical moment.

Norman Thomas, for example, having no principled differences with the Old Guard, could not make a final break with them, no matter how many violations of discipline they committed, how ruthlessly they might hold him up to ridicule, and how many oaths of loyalty he might swear to the Militants, and thus run the risk of having the party get into the hands of "revolutionists" with whom he does have differences and whose control of the party would mean to discredit it "in the eyes of the trade unions," that is, of the A. F. of L. bureaucrats.

The Fetish of Unity

Because of this inherent political weakness the Militants also had their hands tied by a formal and fetishistic conception of the "unity of the party." Keep the party together, there must be no more divisions in the working class, was their plea. Suffice it at this point to make three brief observations:

First: "Unity" on an unsound and unclear basis means, as repeated experiences of the working class have demonstrated and as the Militants have now once again found out, disruption at the critical moment—disruption precisely of the more progressive forces to the benefit of the reactionaries.

Second: What kind of unity is it which means political collaboration with the Old Guard, reformists and trade union bureaucrats, but no collaboration with, objectively, even enmity towards revolutionists?

Third: Such painless births as are envisaged by those who expect a revolutionary party to be born on the basis of keeping all the boys together in a party may have become a possibility in the biological realm but it is not yet in the social!

Moonlight On The Hudson

ATTENTION—moonlighters, comrades and sympathizers. The preparations for the Moonlight Sail are going full steam ahead. Don't wait until the last moment to purchase your tickets. Only 200 tickets will be sold and those who wait too long will find it impossible to obtain them. Tickets can be bought at 55 E. 11th Street, and at the Bookshop, 26 Fifth Avenue.

MUSIC DANCING MOONLIGHT SAIL S.S. ISLANDER TO HOOK MOUNTAIN LEAVES PEIR W. 132ND ST., 5.30 P.M. SATURDAY AUGUST 17, 1935 BENEFIT 8 PAGE NEW MILITANT TICKET \$1.00 ENTERTAINMENT REFRESHMENTS

The second point that stands out from an analysis of the past year's developments in the S.P. is that a terrific blow has been struck at the conception that the S.P. could be "reformed," that is, that a majority could be won to a Marxist position and so make this the position of the party and the basis of the party membership. On the contrary, the course of those who rejected this road and who worked for the merger of the A.W.P. and C.I.A., established the W.P. as the independent revolutionary party, and raised the banner of the Fourth International, has been justified.

The Open Letter

There was a timeliness which was perhaps not altogether a historical accident, and in any case is significant, in the publication here and elsewhere, right upon the heels of the N.C. S.P. meeting, of the Open Letter for the Fourth International. The forces in the United States who have entered the W.P. and have accepted the program of a Fourth International are not entirely insignificant, compared with those of the S.P. Indeed, the number of S.P. members who accept or claim to accept our theoretical position is not small. But even if this were not so, S.P. members, Militants, all who are not reformists in the S.P., must face the challenge of the Open Letter and draw conclusions in the light of it as to which party represents the revolutionary vanguard, the future of hope for the proletariat and not the past of betrayal and defeat.

For the numerous Marxists and militant workers in the U.S. who are at present unattached, there can now, after the developments which have taken place in the S.P. and the revelations of the Comintern Congress now in session in Moscow as to the final capitulation of the Comintern to social patriotism, be no question of going into the S.P. or C.P. The Workers Party is the revolutionary party in the United States. Its doors are open. This is no time for any Marxist or honest militant to stand on the side line. There is no time to lose even in the U.S. in increasing and welding together the party of the vanguard.

We are aware that there are a considerable number of individuals in the S.P. who are not yet ready to accept our program or if they do, to draw the organizational conclusions from it. We never have, and we do not now in the Stalinist manner call them counter-revolutionists and Social Fascists. On the contrary, we expect them to be our comrades in the struggles of the working class today and hope that many, if not all of them, will be not merely fellow-travelers but comrades in the fullest sense of the term in the approaching revolutionary struggle.

The Duty of Left Wingers

We do say to them, however, that if they are serious in asserting that they are not reformists or mere Centrists it is, in the first place, their duty to study the program of the W.P. and the Open Letter, and to see to it that they are discussed in the Socialist Party. If these comrades are not prepared for such discussion of the problems before the revolutionary movement, they have no right to the name of revolutionist. If these issues cannot be discussed in the Socialist Party, there is no use talking of building a revolutionary wing in it.

Secondly, the leftward moving elements in the Socialist Party who still believe that something can be accomplished there must make their own program covering the crucial issues of today, not seeking an escape in generalities, and they must win followers, educate the S.P. membership, and carry on the fight against not only reformism but centrism on the basis of such a program. Thirdly, these comrades cannot expect to be taken seriously if they can make collaboration with the reformists of the Old Guard in the S.P. and collaboration with elements such as Norman Thomas, on the basis of toleration of such a surrender to the Old Guard as the recent "peace pact," the basis for their procedure, while they hold aloof from or objectively even struggle against revolutionary elements in the S.P. or outside. To say that they have differences with these elements is to say exactly nothing or else to cover up organizational fetishism and cowardly evasion, for they claim to have differences with the Old Guard and the trade union bureaucrats also. Any movement in the S.P. which makes serious pretensions at aiming at the crystallization of a left-wing must make a clear and final break with the organizational horse-trading and maneuvering tactics which have marked the Militant in the past, must stand unequivocally and from the outset on a program of break with all reformists and Centrists and unity with the revolutionary elements on the basis of a revolutionary program. Let the rank and file in the Socialist Party and especially the Socialist youth apply that test rigorously and without delay to every program submitted to them and to every would-be leader who stands up before them.

Question Box

By A. WEAVER

C. V., PHILADELPHIA— Question: What is the meaning of the struggle between Hitler and the Catholic Church?

Answer: In general, Fascism cannot tolerate the existence of any organization over which it does not have complete domination; otherwise the interests of classes other than, and opposed to, finance-capital can exert themselves. When the Fascist state has become Bonapartist, this is particularly true as evidenced by the fact that even a large storm troop organization composed of plebeian elements, which might get out of control, cannot be permitted. For this reason, Italian fascism had to engage in a struggle with the Pope, and Hitler is repeating the process.

The existence of the Church, however, is not incompatible with fascism. On the contrary, once it has been adjusted to the new conditions of its master, it becomes again the justifier, with a mandate from heaven, for the increased misery of the masses, even though, as in Germany, it will have less funds at its disposal. (The Church devours a great deal of the wealth of which Hitler is greatly in need).

O.S.S., NEW YORK—

Question: What is meant by inflation? Deflation? Devaluation?

Answer: In general, these terms, as used by the capitalist economists, have various and different meanings, reflecting the confusion in the minds of the bourgeoisie. To some economists, for example, any general rise in prices is an "inflation"; any decrease is a "deflation." Their difficulties arise, of course, through their failure to understand the distinction between money as a standard of value and as a standard of price.

Under the "normal" development of capitalism, prices rise and fall. This was neither "inflation" nor "deflation." It merely meant that the amount of gold for which fixed quantities of commodities would exchange fell or rose, and, since the standard of price (the weight of gold represented by the dollar, pound sterling, franc, etc.) remained stationary, the number of dollars (or pounds, francs, etc. also) fell and rose.

The term "inflation," therefore, has no significance unless an actual change takes place in the standard of price so that each unit (dollar, pound, franc, etc.) represents less gold than formerly. Prices then rise not because it requires more gold to exchange for commodities, but because the amount of gold represented by each unit of paper money is less. Inflation may be partial or complete, the latter implying that the standard of price has become worthless.

"Devaluation" is inflation except that the government, when it is able, formally acts the lowered standard of price.

"Deflation" is a meaningless term, a product of bourgeois confusion, and can have significance only if it is intended to mean the returning to a standard of price which has been reduced, or, if the latter has not been the case, the raising of the standard of price. However, it is very unlikely that we shall ever witness anything of this sort. The "devaluations" and "inflatons," which we are witnessing, an index of the decline of capitalism internationally, are forced upon the capitalists. This fact alone eliminates the possibility that "deflation" will ever take place.

What to Attend

Friday, August 9—S. Y. L. dram group meets 8 P.M. at 55 E. 11th St. Casting for "Exhibit A," a one act anti-war play scheduled as the first production of the Spartacan Players, will begin this Friday. Ansp: Sparacus Youth League.

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