

# Peoples front Abandons Defense Groups

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told the Chamber that the Socialists had a few self-defense groups, not adding that these groups were organized by Bolshevik-Leninists and other comrades of the left wing against the positive sabotage of the Stalinist and Socialist bureaucracies. Blum was making no sacrifice on his own when he offered these hard-fought groups up on the altar of national reconciliation. We quote from the account given in Populaire on Dec. 7:

"Blum: I repeat—there is no analogy between our self-defense groups and the semi-military leagues—which constitute a non-national army within the nation, but I say to M. Ybarnegaray: We are ready to destroy our formations, to dissolve them. Are you?" (Applause from extreme left, left, and many center benches).

"Voice from center: Do you also speak for the Communists?"

"Thorez: The Communist Party associates itself with the declaration made by M. Blum concerning the self-defense groups."

"Guernut (Radical): "And we, who haven't any, we associate ourselves too. (Laughter.)"

"Blum: This exchange can end with something very definite. You say, M. Ybarnegaray, 'We are ready to disarm.' To any extent that our comrades are armed, we accept that also. To any extent that there exist among us formations of a semi-military character, we are ready to dissolve them. Are you?"

"Ybarnegaray: To the extent that our organization has a semi-military character, yes."

Up jumped Laval, congratulated the Chamber on this "triple declaration" and announced that he would draw the "necessary conclusions" therefrom.

That afternoon, Laval won a new vote of confidence, 351 to 219!

Blum announced: "I express a feeling of joy and pride at the thought that such a result which was one of the essential objectives of the Peoples Front should have been in part obtained."

Thorez, however, had some additional remarks to make. Let them be described by his own confere, Vaillant-Couturier, who wrote (l'Humanite, Dec. 7) that he was "astonished to hear Leon Blum seriously put side by side the tiny self-defense groups of his party . . . with the forces of de la Roquette. . . ."

"Taken by surprise in the suddenness of the debate, Maurice Thorez said in a word that he associated himself with the declaration of Leon Blum. Immediately Laval and then his press, with the

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help of enormous headlines, tried to make an argument against the alleged 'combat groups' of the Communists. And suddenly our party saw itself presented as having made a sacred union with the Croix de Feu."

How thoroughly illogical that anybody should describe a common accord among Fascists, Socialists and Communists as a "union sacree"! The Stalinists were so dismayed that they headed their account of the day's proceedings: "Sacred Union with the Enemies of the People? Never!" And how could anybody charge the Stalinist party with having "combat groups"? Listen to Vaillant:

"Thorez, during the course of the day . . . rose with vigor against this absurd legend. No, our party has never had any semi-military organization! . . ."

In the Chamber Thorez declared: "I associated myself with the declaration of Leon Blum, but I repeat here that the laws for the dissolution of the semi-military organizations cannot apply to us because we have not and never have had armed groups."

**Fire at the Bolsheviks**  
To level such a charge against the Stalinist party was foul provocation. When Ybarnegaray mounted the tribune to deny that the Croix de Feu sought civil war, he tried also to prove that the Peoples Front was threateningly militant. To find an expression of the revolutionary will of the workers he had to go to Revolution, organ of the Revolutionary Socialist Youth allied to the French Bolshevik-Leninists, organ of Fred Zeller, partisan of the Fourth International! And what did he quote? He quoted passages urging the formation of a workers' militia, urging the workers to train for mobilization against the Fascists, to arm themselves against the heavily-armed Fascists.

But, stoutly maintains l'Humanite, "this is a sheet edited by provocateurs whom we have long denounced. It is with such texts that Ybarnegaray tried to 'prove' that there are combat groups on the left!" Oh, no, nobody is going to pin such a malicious charge on the Stalinists!

Quoting Blum that the left has only had "small defense groups," l'Humanite nods fervently: "And this is true. There is no armed organization of the left, no groups organized for street fighting. No shock troops or semi-military leagues. Only the Fascist leagues are armed and militarized."

**Omits Names**  
What about these laws, then, that were rushed through the Chamber of Deputies on the night of Dec. 6 aimed at all and any political organizations which might take on the character of armed militia, which might cause armed demonstrations in the streets or which might "attempt by force to attack the republican form of government"?

Were they aimed at the Fascists? They were passed by a majority of 408 to 179—hailed as a "powerful left majority" and a "victory for the Peoples Front"? If they were, why was a motion, introduced by a Stalinist deputy, asking the bill to specify the names of the organizations in view, voted down by 380 to 148? This fact is buried way down in the bottom of the story published in l'Humanite and is not mentioned at all in Populaire.

In other words, the Laval-de la Roquette maneuver resulted in the passage of a law which gives the Bonapartist regime still more leeway to keep the path to Fascism clear. How easy it will be for the Croix de Feu to get itself "authorized by the War Ministry to give military training," a condition which exempts it from the application of the law! And the Senate, passing the law this week, obligingly inserted the proviso that it shall not apply to "sport organizations"—shades of Bruening-Roshni! Cabinet Empowered to "Dissolve" Such was the Peoples Front victory! But wait, there is more. The law as introduced by Laval originally wanted to give the right to dissolve such political leagues to the courts. On the insistence of the Peoples Front—this was hailed as an especial victory the next day—this power was taken from the courts and given to the Cabinet which was authorized to issue a simple decree to achieve its purpose!

Leon Blum, the defender of democratic rights, explained (Populaire, Dec. 9) that this was "the only rapid, efficient method." And Marcel Cachin, who has been howling for months that the courts try de la Roquette (see l'Humanite, Nov. 18) explained it in more detail: "The ministers proposed to give this job (of dissolution) to the correctional magistrates. . . . On that, comrades, we know where we stand. We know what the magistracy of the bourgeoisie is. Long experience shows us that it is always at the mercy of power, that it is terrible and pitiless against workers and all anti-Fascists, that it has infinite tolerance and kindness for the Fascists. . . . and then, if the courts take it, there will be interminable delays. . . ."

The magistracy is all these things

and therefore cannot be trusted to dissolve the Fascist leagues. But, pray, is the government of Pierre Laval not also all and more of these things?

Cachin writes: "The majority of the Chamber wanted to give the Laval government efficacious weapons which it could use immediately against the armed leagues. . . . The Chamber wanted, and rightly, that Paganon (minister of interior) should immediately dissolve the leagues."

Not a magistrate but Laval-Paganon can do the job. Due process of law? Poof! What is this, oh ye defenders of democracy?

**Fascists Free Their Hands**  
Having forced the hand of the Peoples Front and caused it to expose its readiness to lay the fate of the French proletariat down on the altar of 'civil peace'—the Fascists next day conveniently went back on their "promise" and de la Roquette announced resumption of "full liberty of action." This did not please Blum who announced (Populaire, Dec. 11): "The proposition I made in the name of my friends still holds."

On Dec. 11 the Peoples Front formally announced that it "had won its first victory."

"The chiefs of the Fascist leagues spoke of national reconciliation," reads the formal statement published both in Populaire and l'Humanite. "But when it came to acting, they refused to renounce their civil war organizations. The Peoples Front organization detests civil war. It seeks the dissolution and disarmament of semi-military organizations to bar the way to civil war. It is to spare the country from civil war that today, before the volte-face (!) of the Fascist leaders, it adjures the organizations and masses of the Peoples Front to see that the Chamber laws are applied in letter and spirit."

In other words, sacred union only awaits Fascist compliance. "The Stalinists naturally had to fight back doubts and protests in their own ranks. "There was doubt for a moment in the minds of some, but it has now vanished," said Thorez at a meeting Dec. 12.

**Bolshevik-Leninists Real Target**  
On Dec. 12 the Permanent Administrative Committee of the Socialist Party congratulated Blum and his fellow-deputies for the way in which they "applied all the decisions of the party in the ever-vigilant struggle against the Fascist peril and the civil war makers." A few days before the National Council had confirmed the expulsion from the party of the Bolshevik-Leninist leaders. The proximity of these two facts is more than eloquent. With the Stalinists it was even more striking.

On Dec. 12, under the heading in bold type: "For the Union of the Peoples of France," l'Humanite reports the proceedings of the Political Bureau of the Stalinist party which congratulated Thorez on his conduct in the Chamber and once again "emphasized before all the workers the dastardly role of Trotskyism—advance guard of counter-revolution."

**Why? Because the Bolshevik-Leninists alone call treason by its right name. Because the Bolshevik-Leninists call for a program of revolutionary action, for a workers' militia, for the overthrow of the Bonapartist regime, for the dissolution of the Fascists by workers' action, for the establishment of a Workers and Peasants Government, for the formation of a new revolutionary party in France which will have done with the betrayals of the old bureaucracies; in short, for the program of the Fourth International!**

**SCRATCH A SECTARIAN . . .**  
On another page of the NEW MILITANT comrade Trotsky shows the close proximity between centrism and sectarianism. We are in a position here to adduce additional proof for this contention in the form of the recent antics of the French Lhuillier group. The Lhuillier group split from the Bolshevik-Leninist group of France when the latter entered the Socialist Party of France (S.F.I.O.). This group set up a big howl (i.e. big for its size since it numbered a mere baker's dozen), claiming the Bolshevik-Leninists had "capitulated," "broken with Marxism," ad nauseum. This it did in spite of the laudable revolutionary work of the Bolshevik-Leninists who propagated openly and bravely all the principles held by them prior to the entry. Even the expulsion of the Bolshevik-Leninist youth and adult leaders by the social-patriotic reformist bureaucracy and the violent attacks on them by the Stalinists made no difference to this hopeless clique. They lived in a world unswayed by reality.

Now the news reaches us that the Lhuillier group has entered the S.F.I.O.! It forgot its "principles" almost as rapidly as the world forgot it. And moreover—in the S.P. they are already combining with centrist opponents of the Fourth International, voting for Pivert's resolution and against that of the Bolshevik-Leninists.

Like their fellow-sectarian, Bauer of Germany, who began with loud shrieks about "Trotsky's return to Menshevism" only to turn up as the most vitriolic opponent of the Fourth International in the reactionary S.A.P. sect, the Lhuillier group has completed the cycle—sectarianism to centrism. . . .

# Latimer Urges Bosses Break Contracts

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ers were present and his honor, Tom Latimer, was there to meet the committee.

Now, let us stop for a moment, and reason things out. How did a committee of fifty business men gather themselves together, decide on a common program, and descend on the mayor's office at a certain stated time?

Well, first of all, committees do not gather themselves, they are always gathered by someone. In this case the gatherer was none other than the present mayor; he did not only gather the committee together but he sent them a special invitation to attend.

The most peculiar part about the whole affair is this, that the so-called "committee" did not know what they were there for until Tom told them what it was all about.

When they were assembled in the mayor's office at ten o'clock they set around half an hour waiting for Latimer to arrive, discussing among themselves as to what the meeting was all about.

When his honor appeared half an hour late, he wasted no time with an apology over his late appearance but immediately launched into a bitter tirade against Local 574, its leaders and its policies. He advised, more than that, he demanded, that these employers, who comprised representatives from the coal and transfer industry, that they break all existing contracts that they might have with Local 574 and compel their employees to organize into the new A. F. of L. union that has been set up here.

He said that all the law enforcement agencies of the city, county and state would stand behind the employers in the event they decided to take this step. He told the employers they had nothing to fear from 574, that the police were prepared to deal roughly with its members or leaders who would object to this contract-breaking program. He asked the employers' transfer committee what they thought of this program.

Their spokesman replied briefly that they had a signed agreement with Local 574, that they had found this union honorable and honest in all its dealings. The spokesman said that there was now industrial peace in Minneapolis insofar as the driving crafts were concerned, that it seemed strange to him that Latimer who had pleaded for industrial peace, was now proposing a program that spelled industrial warfare.

The transfer employers stated that as far as their group was concerned they had entered into contractual relations with 574 honestly and intended to abide by the terms of that contract.

At this point, the transfer employers were excused. Then Latimer, with the help of Lewis and Hall, made the same proposal to the coal employers' committee. They also rejected this dishonest and vicious proposal on the same grounds as did the trans-

fer group. Conniving and double dealing are nothing new on the part of Lewis, Hall and Geary. It is to be expected from the characterless kind of people as we know them to be, but why Thomas E. Latimer, Farmer-Labor mayor of Minneapolis, has injected himself into this disgraceful situation, is something that every worker has a right to know.

Why has Tom Latimer, who has never been a member of the A. F. of L., suddenly decided to become the Messiah and Moses of the Teamsters International?

The only union Latimer ever belonged to was the Western Federation of Miners, an I.W.W. organization, condemned and cursed by the A. F. of L. bureaucracy for years.

The action of Latimer merely means that he is following the same line of conduct that has characterized his whole administration. He lends his willing ear to the conniver that happens to be nearest to him and goes in the direction that he is shoved the hardest.

Do Latimer, Lewis and Corcoran believe that contracts are made to be broken? For years we have listened to the A. F. of L. bureaucrats whine about the sacredness of contracts between unions and employers. Does this mean that they are no longer sacred?

The astounding part about the whole affair is that this disgraceful and crooked swindle on the part of these A. F. of L. representatives happens at a time when a "truce" has been officially declared by the Central Labor Union between Local 574 and the rest of the Minneapolis trade union movement.

Is this the sort of a truce that gangsters declare?

While we are binding up the wounds of our enemy, do they think that we are going to allow ourselves to be stabbed in the back? Perhaps the contracts that are held by the Milk Wagon Drivers Union are not sacred either.

We shall see. If this is a declaration of war on the part of the Teamsters International, we are prepared.

But we will conduct our fight in the open without the aid of politicians and law enforcement agencies.

**ILLINOIS, IOWA RELIEF WORKERS PLAN WALKOUT**

Walkouts of relief workers in Illinois and Iowa against the Roosevelt starvation wage scales of the W.P.A. seem destined to give federal officials a headache early in the new year.

In Iowa the walkout has been called for January 2 while an original December 16 zero hour in Illinois has been set back in order that the workers of both states may act in concert. Illinois WPA officials have already offered a 10 percent wage boost-bribe in an effort to kill the strike.

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# Student Unity Conference Clashes on War Policy

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only points upon which we all agree" and therefore proposed that the Oxford Pledge should not be included in the program, that only compulsory R.O.T.C. should be condemned, that student demonstrations should be called after school hours "so as not to antagonize the authorities."

An R.O.T.C. officer from C.C.N.Y. stated that he was disappointed with the radical (!) tone of the convention. He protested that this was contrary to the impression that he was given of the purpose of the student organization.

That next year he would be a regular in the U.S. Army and would be loyal to the government. Therefore he would be compelled to withdraw if the proposed program were adopted. From this incident alone, one can get a good picture of the impression given the students as to the "broad" character the student union would take.

Spartacus delegates and several students in agreement with them attacked the pacifist and "above class" character of the program. Their substitute program was never presented to the delegates.

With minor amendments the draft program was adopted. Nominations were then made for the incoming national committee. Then the resolutions committee brought in a report on the war resolution.

The S.L.I.D. supplementary resolution was reported by the minority of the resolutions committee. An effective defense was made by Hal Draper of the Y.P.S.L. The majority of the committee contended that since the Oxford Pledge had already been adopted there was no sense in "speculating as to the possible wars which may arise." The majority of the committee had no substitute resolutions to introduce.

The S.L.I.D. resolution was then voted on section by section. Stalinist representatives stated that the resolution was extraneous! "Of course we are against so-called 'defensive wars'." "Nobody is for a war of the United States or 'democratic' nations against Fascist nations." However they would support these sections. The first two parts were therefore carried.

On the third section (no support of the U.S. if it were allied to "a progressive or non-imperialist power") was greeted by the Stalinists with the cry of "anti-Soviet slander." They repeated ad nauseum that since they supported the Oxford pledge they had declared themselves against any war in which the U.S. government was involved. They could however make no direct attack on the section under dispute. To reject it out of hand without a substitute might have endangered the fusion. The S.L.I.D. and the Yipsels had made this clear even before the convention in their press and at negotiations.

The Stalinists therefore introduced a substitute motion. It called for support of the Ethiopian and Chinese people and an attack on the Liberty League and Hearst. It concluded:

"At the same time we reject the use of such support of the people of Ethiopia and China as a pretext for war or steps leading to war on the part of the United States Government. This convention states further that whatever other form the alignment of international forces may take we will oppose the participation of our government in war, we will be against voting for war credits and of other military steps."

This motion undoubtedly is in contradiction to the policy of the Stalinists. However the vagueness of the language and the manner in which they opposed the S.L.I.D. resolution shows that they tried to avoid the issue lest it break up the fusion. In a sense the substitute was a partial victory for the anti-Stalinist forces.

The Yipsels tried at the last minute to make up for their previous conciliatory conduct. They attacked the Stalinist motion because it was abstract and equivocal. One speaker referred to Mike Gold's statement that young Socialists should join the U.S. army if the U.S. were allied with the Soviet Union in a war against Japan. The effect of this reference was negated by her further statement that Gold had retracted the first position; in reality his so-called retraction was worse than his original comment. The Stalinist reply was that Mike Gold is only a columnist and novelist.

The Spartacus delegation announced that it would support the S.L.I.D. resolution with a statement of its own including a Marxist analysis of the general causes of war, the specific war problems today and the solution to war. The statement was read to the convention. Immediately thereupon a leading Yipsel delegate asked that the statement be considered as a resolution and discussion be permitted on the question. However when this was attempted the chairman ruled it out of order. Earlier in the convention the Spartacus substitute motion on war to the program was tabled to the program committee so that it would be buried before any discussion could

take place on the convention floor. The Stalinist substitute motion was adopted by a vote of 193 to 155, with many of the young Socialists regretting that they had not put up a fight on the question of war under the discussion on program and had previously voted to table the Spartacus substitute resolution on war.

The S.L.I.D. steering committee met and considered how the adoption of the last motion affected the fusion. A spokesman reported that while they considered the adopted motion equivocal and unsatisfactory they would go through with the fusion and fight for a correct position along the line of their own resolution.

Al Hamilton then took the floor in the name of the Y. P. S. L. He repeated in sharper form the declaration of the S. L. I. D. He stated that his organization wanted the convention to adopt a clear position against war. (From the results it is obvious that they did not know when and how to fight for such a position). The Y. P. S. L. is for the defense of the Soviet Union but will not support the U.S. even if it were to be in alliance with the S. U. They would continue to fight for their position in the A. S. U. and fight for its adoption at the subsequent convention.

Adam Lapin replied in the name of the "Communists." He welcomed the statements of the S. L. I. D. and Y. P. S. L. and stated that unity was possible despite differences. He did not comment on the point in dispute, glossing over the basic differences between the two organizations.

Bernard Forrest then asked for the floor in the name of the Spartacus Youth League. He declared that the last minute dispute on the question of war was a complete vindication of the course of the Spartacus delegates and those working with them in fighting for a revolutionary position on war to be included in the program of the organization. He further stated that the delegates would conduct themselves loyally within the A. S. U. while continuing to fight for their position. Nineteen delegates signed the program of the Spartacus Youth League. This included students from Chicago, Illinois university, Akron University, New York University, C.C.N.Y., Hunter College, Radcliff, Connecticut, Wesleyan, Michigan Univ. and other universities and high schools.

The Congress decided that any student could belong to the A.S.U. who agreed with the program "in part or whole." A national committee of thirty was elected. The leading officers are members of the Yipsels.

The special convention issue of Young Spartacus was well received by a good section of the delegates. The dispute on the question of war was the prelude to the conflict that will take place within the organization and shatter all spurious unity.

# Texas WPA Strike Nears

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the unskilled. In fact, their only concern is simply for those trained workmen who have been able to continue the heavy dues and assessments of the craft unions. The restlessness of the Texas workers forces the union politicians to take some action, but these leaders are known for their ability to translate phrases into sell-outs. An element playing directly into their hands is the feeling of the unskilled that they need not organize; that the A. F. of L. will present them with a successful strike purely out of human kindness.

**Lack of Coordination**

Another unfavorable circumstance is the lack of coordination existing between the different unemployed organizations of the state. Last year, representatives of every unemployed and several sympathetic groups drew up a common platform and program of action. This united front eventually passed into the hands of the Communist Party which let it crumble, since "the Farmer-Labor Party" was becoming the line for the moment. Now the C.P. is instructing its unemployed contacts to purchase A. F. of L. charters, and to work directly under the supervision of the state federation officials.

An immediate task for the unemployed of Texas is the setting up of a state committee which will serve as a central strike apparatus. Only thus will the A. F. of L. leaders be forced to keep their promise of cooperation with local groups of project workers. The coming struggle will be the most important and probably the most bitter class conflict in the history of the state. The workers must be fully prepared to deal with the mobs of national guardsmen and police that will be unleashed against them.

**THEATER BENEFIT**

Tickets are now available for the theatre party "Let Freedom Ring" Monday evening, Jan. 13 at the district office, 55 E. 11th St. Prices range from 30c up to \$1.50.