

Left Wing Group Gains in Phila Needle Trades Union

Stalinists and Lovestonites Support Administration; Sabotage United Front

PHILADELPHIA.—Local Phila. ILGWU passed thru one of the most exciting elections ever held in its history. This election, an emergency election granted by the G.E.B. in order to eliminate, if possible, a bitter factional fight between two office-seeking elements, which threatened the very existence of the organization.

The conditions of the workers in the shops, as a result, were going from bad to worse. All sorts of union violations were taking place. Wage cuts, lengthening of hours, discrimination against active and militant workers was a daily occurrence, but the officials were too busy establishing their power in the office to do anything.

The Stalinist "Rank and File Committee" together with the Lovestone "Progressives," were supporting the administration against the remnants of the old Reisberg regime, who sought to regain control of the union by assuming the role of fighters for better conditions for the workers in the industry.

Although, when Reisberg was manager, he fought bitterly against groups, his followers imitated the left wing and organized themselves into a committee, held meetings outside of the union, and instructed their members to carry out their policy. Hence, their members, who were in the majority in the cotton Local Executive controlling also the delegation to the Joint Board, kept up a continuous struggle against the other faction which dominated the majority of the Joint Board. In spite of the fact that the Cotton Local is the largest local, it is a minority on the Joint Board, since representation on that body is not on a proportional basis. The fight in the Joint Board finally reached a point where the cotton delegation walked out of its meeting and the other faction took advantage of the situation to expel them.

A Disgraceful Squabble

The Reisberg group immediately got to work in the cotton Executive and sent a committee to the G.E.B. which was to meet in Cleveland. A few days later a membership meeting of the cotton local was broken up and police were called in. The Stalinists and Progressives added to the general disorder, by lining up with the manager, who refused to permit the chairlady (a Reisberg follower) to open or conduct the meeting.

The general membership, ignorant of the squabble, did not participate in this disgraceful performance, many left in disgust.

Meanwhile, a new group has sprung up. They called themselves the "Militants." Although many of the members are not only new to the movement, but to unionism, the group already shows promise of a future genuine left wing.

"Militants" Issue Leaflet

A leaflet was issued by the group exposing both factions, that were bringing ruin and demoralization into the union, calling on the workers to get rid of these cliques, by demanding new general elections on a more proportional basis. The leaflet aroused great interest. Simultaneously, the "rank and file" committee handed out a circular, in which they further showed their line-up with the administration by asking for the election of a new cotton delegation to the Joint Board as the only solution.

However, because of the interest aroused among the workers in the shops, the "Militants" were urged to get together with other progressive elements on the basis of their leaflet.

A conference was called in which the "Militants" and the "rank and file" committee participated. The Progressives were invited but did not show up.

The "Militants" proposed a united front to demand general elections, as a means of ridding the union of the two right wing and reactionary factions and to establish a real progressive leadership and policy in the union.

"Impractical" . . .

The "Rank and File" delegation replied that it was impractical to make such demands, since the constitution provides for elections every two years; the administration had only been in office one year and they were not ready to agree that it should be kicked out. They were the lesser evil, in spite of wage cuts, etc. Get rid of the main evil, the Reisberg faction, by electing a new joint board delegation. Besides, a general election would certainly not be granted by the national office. No agreement was reached and the conference was disbanded.

A few days later a telegram was received, granting new general elections. A committee appointed by the Cleveland G.E.B. to investigate the critical Phila. situation found that an emergency existed in the union and since the constitution provides for such cases, special elections were granted.

Although the majority of the joint board offered some resistance, the election machinery was immediately set into motion by the G.E.B. committee who were here to supervise the proceedings. Everything was put through very quickly eliminating the time periods set by the constitution.

New Conference, New Attack
Some of the members of the "Militant Group" still under the illusion that somehow the Stalinists and "Progressives" were sincere, urged the group to make another attempt at united front. This was done and this time they were invited to a "conference" initiated by the "Rank and File" Committee. At this meeting the "Militants" discovered that the Stalinists and Lovestonites had combined. All former enemies were forgotten, no more differences were between them. They had indeed combined not against the right wing and its disastrous policies, but against the "Militants."

No sooner was the meeting opened than the "Militants" were put on trial. They were asked why they had formed a separate group. The delegation was fully aware of the reason for this question. Already branded as "Trotskyites" everywhere especially by the Stalinists and if they did not state this openly the "Militants" were well aware of the meaning of this question. They therefore refused to be provoked into a discussion insisting that the question before the body was the coming elections, that time was pressing, that a united front must be set up in order to defeat the right wing. Thereupon an attack was launched upon the leadership of the "Militants" in order to drive a wedge between the new members and those who had helped organize the group.

This attack which consisted of the typical lies and slanders of the Stalinists and their Lovestoneite henchmen had the opposite effect from the one intended. These new members left with the feeling that these people no longer represent a healthy left wing policy in the union and a new left wing movement must be built.

The Stalinist Line-up

The following night, at a membership meeting of the cotton local, with great ballyhoo, the Stalinists elected a majority on the "Elections-Objections" committee and for a time it looked as if they would sweep the elections. A tremendous campaign ensued. In the few days before the elections, slates were handed out and the line-up of the groups was exposed to everyone.

The Stalinists and the Lovestonites were definitely lined up with the faction in control of the office, which in many respects is more reactionary than the Reisberg group. The cutters local issued their slate bearing the very interesting title "Vote for the People's Candidate."

On the day of the elections the whole C.P. machinery was mobilized behind their candidates. Workers were told not to vote for the "Militants." But the results of the elections brought out some very interesting figures.

"Militants" Gain

In spite of lack of forces to do the necessary work and other obstacles, such as the newness of the group, the "Militants," running independently, received one-third of the vote, electing two members to the executive of the cotton local where they hold the balance of power. The elections further demonstrated the correctness of the analysis of the "Militants" in their offer for a united front.

The "Rank and File" and "Progressives" with all their work and deals with the office faction, just managed to squeeze through some of their candidates, including the business agent of the Cotton local. But they constitute a minority in the Cotton Executive since the Reisberg group was able to elect all their candidates, the Executive consisting of nine Reisberg supporters, two "Militants" and eight Stalinists and their followers.

The former administration was reelected, of course, with the help of the "Rank and File" and their followers and are therefore stronger than ever. The situation remains as before. Already the Stalinists are talking of liquidating groups.

A genuine left wing must be built in the needle trades and the "Militant" group has taken the first step in this direction.

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Social Patriotism Routed in Debate Between YCL-YPSL on War Question

Shamefaced, apologetic, ever on the defensive, recognizing the unpopularity of its position before an audience of revolutionary youth, Stalinism clutched at a wordy veil to hide its social patriotic ugliness at the debate on war held in St. Nicholas Palace on February 14th.

Its representative, Gil Green, National Secretary of the Young Communist League, had the onerous task of defending pacifism, reformism, and chauvinism against a champion of revolutionary policies in the struggle against war, Gus Tyler, spokesman for the Young Peoples Socialist League. What an ironic twist of history! How strange to see the organization emerging from the split of 1919 speaking in the tones of Kautsky and the spirit of Noske and Scheidemann! How gratifying to see an organization still formally tied to the Second International proudly raising the banner of Liebknecht and Lenin!

Second Edition Social Patriots

Listening to Green as he read a prepared speech, utterly lacking in fire or forcefulness, the writer could hardly escape the impression that no one was more unconvinced than the speaker himself. We say this not out of generosity or condescension with Gil Green—for revolution exists there can only be against those who use the words of Lenin and Marx to mobilize the masses for imperialism. What is interesting for us is that the social-patriots of the second edition lack even that modicum of sincerity and conviction displayed by their infamous forebears of 1914. They, at least, thought that in defending the capitalist fatherland they were defending the socialist institutions, the trade unions, the party, the cooperatives. Their contemporary prototypes know that they are defending only . . . Stalin. What an inglorious end of Lenin's Comintern!

Tyler's job was therefore an easy one and as he lashed at Stalinism with the whip of revolutionary Marxism, Green could only whine and plead: "Don't be impractical . . . and fatalistic . . . and passive . . . please let's unite." He only neglected to add his main concern: "They are watching me in Moscow." Unite the defenders of sanctions with the opponents of the capitalist fatherland with the internationalists, the spokesmen of class peace and coalition governments with the partisans of civil war with the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeoisie, the lion with the lamb, the fire with the water!

The debate begins. Wounded by the phonograph Green lides from contradiction to contradiction. The record might be called: The Dance of the Confused Social Patriots. The tune starts in a low key, for its first notes are the only true ones and it hates to have them heard: Capitalism is the cause of war, only its abolition will also end war. But immediately the key is changed: "Yes, war can be stopped.

united action of the toilers can stop war." How? By revolution, by overthrowing the system that breeds war? No, "that is the passive, negative attitude of the Yipsels which flows from a fatalistic attitude. We need a practical attitude, one which utilizes every means for peace."

What are these means? The class struggle pursued to its goal, class war which will strike a death blow at imperialism? Hardly. Pacifist methods and a pacifist program: "Against the R.O.T.C., withdraw U.S. troops from China, abolish the Monroe Doctrine, for disarmament, for the prohibition of subsidies to arms manufacturers, against gag-laws, for the popularization of the achievements of the Soviet Union and the rallying of the toilers for its defense." A good program with everything but the class struggle in it, choked with illusions, calculated to promote war in the shortest possible time.

In Case of an Alliance . . .

The pacifist twaddle of his chest, Green got down to "cases." All talk about a possible military alliance between the Soviet Union and the imperialist U. S.—music of the future, "incredible," but suppose the "incredible" does happen, what will be the policy of Stalinism then? Listen to Green: "In such a war our primary aim is to insure the victory of the Soviet Union . . . and this defense of the Soviet Union demands more than merely turning the imperialist war into a civil war." Implicit in this remark is the support of the capitalist government of this country in the event of such a war. What else can it mean, especially when Green took pains to characterize the war of 1914-1918 as an imperialist conflict, and the approaching one as a struggle between imperialism and socialism. What else can it mean when Green pointed out that the principal means of struggle in such a war would be not "strikes or revolution because it is impossible to answer war with a strike or revolution"—but the "expulsion of the predatory aims of U. S. imperialism."

Realizing that he was approaching the danger zone, Green began to shift the issue. An impassioned defense of military alliances followed, even Lenin is quoted. Not whether the working class should support its own bourgeoisie if allied with the Soviet Union, but whether the Soviet Union can utilize imperialist contradictions, this was how Green distorted the issue. And his quotation from Lenin: the letter to the American workers where the latter defends his utilization of the military assistance of the French officer, de Lubersac. Of course, he overlooked the other quotations from Lenin, in which he mercilessly flayed the traitor for supporting the capitalist fatherland on the pretext that the Soviet Union was in danger.

Tyler's Speech

In comparison with this rambling, dodging, and hurdle-jumping, Tyler's speech was easy to follow:

THE MANAGER'S CORNER

One of our subscribers, who signs himself "Anti-Fascist," wrote to us the other day as follows:

"Enclosed find the renewal of my subscription to the New Militant. I'm sorry I haven't been able to renew it sooner, but the Daily Worker's leaflet, 'Indorsement of Hearst's latest raid on the working class press, impelled me, as a left wing Socialist, and one, therefore, anxious to defend whatever proletarian liberties remain to borrow the money post-haste, in order to contribute at least that bit on one front, against this combined attack on the organized working class.'"

No comment is required on a letter of this character; it speaks for itself. It is a fine example worthy of emulation. That we have a number of comrades who are eager to support our press and to work actively for its extension is verified also by the participation in our subscription drive. We have now almost reached the 500 mark. But, as we have said before, we are still a good distance from our goal.

Two of our party branches, branch 8 in New York City and the Salt Lake City branch, have reached their quota of new subscriptions. Branch 1, New York City, has turned in not less than 81 new subscriptions, coming very near toward reaching its quota of 90. The branches in Philadelphia, Los Angeles and Austin, Minn., are similarly reaching near toward their quota.

This is all very encouraging; but there is also a negative side to our report. For example, some branches have not yet succeeded in obtaining a single new subscription. In this respect Allentown heads the list and what is worse, this is a branch with very good mass contacts and consequently with very good possibilities to obtain new subscriptions. Other branches which have very good contacts and very good possibilities

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Boston, Mass.	25	7
Charleston, W. Va.	5	0
Chicago, Ill.	50	18
Cleveland, Ohio	25	9
Columbus, Ohio	10	10
Detroit, Mich.	25	2
Dickson City, Pa.	5	0
Fargo, N. Dakota	10	0
High Point, N. C.	5	0
Kansas City, Mo.	10	2
Los Angeles, Cal.	25	15
Minneapolis, Minn.	75	17
Mount Carmel, Pa.	5	4
Newark, N. J.	20	4
New Castle, Pa.	10	2
New Haven, Conn.	10	2
New York City	400	308
(Branch 1)	90	81
(Branch 2)	40	11
(Branch 3)	75	41
(Branch 4)	30	13
(Branch 5)	20	15
(Branch 6)	15	11
(Branch 7)	15	3
(Branch 8)	10	12
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Philadelphia, Pa.	20	14
Pittsburgh, Pa.	25	1
Plentywood, Mont.	10	10
St. Louis, Mo.	10	10
Salt Lake City	10	10
San Francisco, Cal.	20	2
San Diego, Cal.	10	4
Springfield, Ill.	5	5
Toledo, Ohio	25	2
Utica, N. Y.	5	3
Washington, D. C.	10	3
Youngstown, Ohio	10	1
Cities not listed	45	44
Total	1,000	486

in the basic issues of the debate his position was clear and unambiguous. It was as it should be when revolutionary policy confronts social-patriotism. First, the great lesson of 1914, of which he said, in truth, that the C.I. had forgotten, or rather was repeating its worst mistake. In that war he declared the social democracy had betrayed, by supporting the fatherland under the guise that this fatherland was protecting the interests of a "small nation." He pointed to the British socialists supporting their government because of Belgium, the Russian socialists because of Serbia. Now the C.I. had appropriated this policy by substituting the name of the Soviet Union. How shall war be answered once begun: by class struggle action leading up to strikes and revolutionary civil war.

"What will the Communists be doing?" he asked. They will be for the war if the Soviet Union is involved. And in the interests of this policy they will be compelled to break the strikes carried on by revolutionists since these will impede a successful outcome to the war. The logic of the Stalinist position will lead them to vote for a war with Japan, to vote for the military budget and they will become Jingo No. 1.

An the Soviet Union Here Tyler made a telling point. In 1918 the American Socialist Algeron Lee had voted for a liberty loan in the New York Board of Aldermen on the grounds that the revolutionary regime had been established in Russia and since both America and Russia were at war with Germany it was necessary to support this measure in the interests of Russia. This drew a severe rebuke from the S. P. But, wouldn't Green favor such an action as Lee's, wouldn't he be opposed to the censure?

He continued, laying bare the fake of a war of democracy versus Fascism. In case of war, the "democratic" nations would turn Fascist, or at least all civil liberties would be "suppressed as the experience of the last war showed. A quotation from Marty, a leader of the French C.P. was read which clearly established this dictatorial tendency on the part of "democratic" capitalist governments. "Anybody," Tyler concluded the point "who raises the question of a war between a democratic France and a Fascist Germany is either a faker or a fool."

Wars for national liberation are another alibi that the Stalinists use to explain their treacherous policy. Tyler correctly countered with Lenin's position, that no capitalist nation in the present epoch can conduct a progressive war, that the characterization of the central European nations as oppressed nationalities and Germany as the imperialist aggressor would lead the C.I. to support of the capitalist governments of Czechoslovakia, Austria, Bulgaria, Rumania, Latvia, etc., etc., etc.

"Beacon or Burden"

Finally the issue that proved to be the high point of the debate. In his first presentation Green had demagogically played on the pro-Soviet tendencies of the audience by asking Tyler whether he considered the Soviet Union a beacon to the international working class or a burden. Tyler properly jeered this Stalinist artifice to turn the debate off its proper tracks and put him on the spot. But, in all truth, it must be said that Tyler's answer was only partially correct. He asked whether the A. F. of L., the craft unions and the German social democracy, respectively were beacons or burdens. How was it possible to pose the question that way? What Tyler failed to say was that the Stalinist bureaucracy must be differentiated from the Soviet Union as such just as the trade union bureaucracy must be from the trade unions; that the Stalinist bureaucracy is more than a burden, it is a brake, a reactionary influence on the international working class and upon the Soviet Union; that the Soviet state must be distinguished from its bureaucratic incubus. This was implicit in all his foregoing criticisms and attacks on the policy of the C.I., but he failed to make the point as crystal clear as it should be.

All of the major arguments of Tyler had been put in the form of questions to Green, who in turn danced around them in each of his two rebuttals. But twice as he rose to speak shouts of "answer the question one!" came from many parts of the hall. His mealy-mouthed replies, his maudlin appeal to sentiment about the "communists in jail," his abuse of Lenin's ideas for social-patriotic purposes were properly nailed by Tyler. In the latter's one rejoinder in the debate his hammering on the questions was so strong that Green was forced to admit that in case of a Soviet-American alliance in a war with Japan the Stalinists had a "two-fold aim" neither of which would be to overthrow the American bourgeoisie. And the answers to the questions: "Time alone will prove who is correct. . ."

"Our Line's Been Changed Again"

The Daily Worker has taken its cue. Hathaway is making up for lost time—his job as editor of the Daily is at stake. So all the scribes are mobilized for a daily fire against the Left Socialists and the "Trotskyists." Orders are orders—and they are to be found in the current issue of the Communist International (January 1936).

Kuusinen's report to the president of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, "No Grounds for Self-Satisfaction," is a criticism of the mistakes and shortcomings in the application of the Seventh Congress line on the united front. "In the past years, many Communists replaced business-like (!) criticism of Social Democracy with mere denunciation. Now it happens that the necessary serious business-like criticism is replaced by silence."

Even worse than silence is the charge against the Daily Worker. Kuusinen cites the Daily's praise of Otto Bauer as a leader for working class unity; its suggestion

Hathaway Made the Scape Goat

Kuusinen's criticism of the Daily Worker is elaborated upon by "R." in a review of the October issues of the paper. The reviewer scates that "the (Socialist) Call is rarely criticized" and then repeats Kuusinen's criticisms on Bauer, etc.

However, the chief aim of the review is to establish that the line of the Daily on the Lewis movement—criticized by Kuusinen—was not the line of the Central Committee of the Communist party. In a word, Hathaway's line was in conflict with that of Browder and Foster!

The reviewer quotes Browder and Foster on the Lewis movement and adds: "But this policy as stated by Comrades Foster and Browder was not carried out by the Daily Worker." Simple! Not quite! The Daily articles under attack were in the October issues (the last article cited is of October 26). Foster and Browder's "line" was presented one month later (printed in the Daily, Nov. 28 and 29, respectively).

St. Gottwald Attacks 'Trotskyite' Dragon

K. Gottwald, Czechoslovakian Stalinist-patriotic chief, is the latest of the brave knights of Stalinism to undertake a scurrilous attack on "Trotskyism." The attack takes the form of a plea to Otto Bauer to keep clear of "Trotskyism"—with which he is already apparently tainted!

"Is it not clear that anyone who is found in the neighborhood of Trotskyism, is open, whether he wants it or not, to the danger of being lost forever to the working class cause?"

Is it not clear that Otto Bauer, in his own interests, ought to ponder this question very seriously? asks Gottwald, who is interested in Bauer's welfare.

The occasion for the article is Bauer's review of Boris Souvarine's book on Stalin wherein he speaks critically of the Soviet regime and of the "personal dictatorship of Stalin." (Souvarine is not a "Trotskyist." See review of his book in "N. I.", December 1935.)

This immediately reveals Bauer's "Trotskyite counter-revolutionary pool!" Admiration for Stalin's work—expressed by Bauer—is not sufficient, cries Gottwald, either you accept "unconditionally" everything going on in the Soviet Union or . . . you are a counter-revolutionary Trotskyite!

Let us appear to be exaggerating, we will quote some choice bits from the revived religious theory of the "indivisible whole."

"The entire Soviet Union of today is one indivisible whole the indivisible accomplishment of many millions and tens of millions carried out under the guidance of Lenin and Stalin. And this is how it must be taken, as one indivisible whole, and not eclectically on the lines of: 'I like this and I don't like that!'" (Emphasis in original.)

And further: ". . . Stalin and the Soviet Union are indissolubly bound together."

Is Bauer a "Trotskyite" No one but the most recent recruit of Stalinism can answer in the affirmative. Bauer's attitude toward the Soviet Union is in fundamental agreement—and has been practically since the Russian Revolution—with the Russian Mensheviks. It is nothing new. It is, as it has always been in sharp conflict with "Trotskyism", that is, Leninism.

that the American S. P. follow the road of Bauer and the progressive forces among the Socialists including the Russ an Mensheviks.

The Daily "gave way . . . to opportunist 'backsliding' which has nothing in common with the recommendations of the Seventh Congress on differentiated tactics" when it made a hero out of John L. Lewis.

The critic further informs the readers that the "Trotskyite danger" demands "constant vigilance and activity. This is especially true for Denmark, the Scandinavian countries in general, in Holland . . . and it is necessary in other countries to react more actively than hitherto to Trotskyite slander, for such slander, though issued at first by Trotskyites themselves, is frequently spread by all kinds of 'Left' Social-Democrats and Socialists." For example, adds Kuusinen, Otto Bauer repeats the "lander" of Boris Souvarine against Stalin. This speech is the source for the new campaigns.

No evidence is given to show that there was a conflict between the Daily line and the Central Committee in October!

But what happened by Nov. 28 to make Foster and Browder so critical of Lewis? Most likely, Kuusinen's criticism of the Daily delivered on November 20 had already reached the Central Committee!

The aim of the review can be seen when "R." writes:

"It must be stated that the examples given from the Daily Worker are departures from the line of policy, and do not characterize the activities of our Central Committee, the party as a whole or even most of the work of the Daily Worker. The Central Committee must, however, take measures to strengthen the carrying out of the Seventh Congress line in the Daily Worker."

Hathaway is made the scapegoat! Another verse can be added to the song: Our Line's been changed again!

sequently level at these theses was, not against its essential features but its reference to the "terroristic dictator ship" in the Soviet Union.

In reality however it is not Bauer who is under attack by Gottwald: it is "Trotskyism" which, officially denounced by the Stalinists as dead ever since 1924, is now making its way in the ranks of the left wing socialist workers.

And so every occasion must be found to heap "lander and calumny. . . in many countries Trotskyism has become a direct branch of the police and supplies the latter with numerous agents provocateurs; and speak to fight against the revolutionary movement," states Gottwald, without even attempting to give (that is, manufacture) evidence to substantiate this dastardly lie.

As Gottwald's party votes for military credits and for the bourgeoisie president Benes, as all the parties of the Third International prepare to become recruiting agents for imperialism, their main attack is against those who struggle against social patriotism and for proletarian internationalism.

The renewed attack on "Trotskyism" in the Soviet Union as in the capitalist world is testimony to the growth of the idea of revolutionary Marxism. The Daily Worker recommends Gottwald's article to the Left Socialists. On this score, we are in agreement with the Daily: the Socialist workers will learn that calumny and slander is merely the cover for treachery; that Stalinism demands of everyone joining its fold blind obedience, unconditional servility to the leader: Stalin.

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