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Woe to the Vanquished--Mussolini Slogan

Jobless Masses Unite Ranks

An Analysis of the Washington Unemployed Convention and the Task Ahead

By MAX SHACHTMAN

A long and decisive step has been taken to put an end to the division of the organized unemployed workers of this country into three separate national organizations and countless local groups. By virtually unanimous vote, the delegates assembled in convention in Washington last week in the auditorium of the Department of Labor brought about the amalgamation into one body of the Workers Alliance of America, the National Unemployed League, the National Unemployment Councils, the American Workers Union (a Missouri organization) and several other local and state-wide organizations of the jobless.

The name of the new organization, as agreed upon by all its constituent bodies, is to remain that of the group which had the largest representation at the Washington convention, namely, the Workers Alliance of America. Similarly, the principal officers of the new Alliance have been drawn from the old one.

There can be no two opinions about the progressive nature of the merger. The separation of the unemployed workers into organizations which were not far removed from enlarged editions of the political organizations mainly responsible for their formation or maintenance, has proved to be a costly division of energy and efforts. It may even be added that, just as on the trade union field, so among the unemployed, workers should be organized not upon the basis of their political beliefs, associations or sympathies, but upon the basis of the simple and adequate fact that they are workers—in the case of the trade unions—or that they are unemployed (or part time, or relief) workers in the case of the organizations of the jobless.

The indispensable corollary to this principle is that in both cases the field must be left entirely free for any member who may be so inclined to agitate in a loyal and comradely manner for the particular political, economic, philosophical views he may hold. The workers demand of their employer that hiring be not confined to those of one sex, creed, race, color or political view. This demand is usually accompanied by the right which every worker in a plant takes to himself: to agitate among his shopmates for any views he may have. The two propositions have at least equal validity in the broad organizations of the working class.

Advantages of Unity

The unification of the organizations of the unemployed is therefore correct generally speaking, and even more correct and urgent in the present circumstances. Assembled under one banner, and determined as they are to maintain the most intimate contact with the organized trade unions, the masses of the unemployed who have already understood the need of organization will be imbued with a greater spirit of self-confidence and consequently of militancy. The disunity of the jobless gave the ruling class and its government, indubitable advantages in the struggle between the two forces. The unification not only takes these advantages out of the hands of the enemies of the unemployed, but gives the latter a corresponding and hitherto unpossessed superiority.

The whole outcome of the struggle to ameliorate the lot of the jobless and the relief workers—to the extent that this can be accomplished under the capitalist system which inexorably creates their wretched conditions—now depends entirely upon the extent to which the unemployed combine with their new solidarity a militant policy of action, a policy of class struggle. Without the latter, even the completest unity can mean nothing at all, or worse yet, can become a treacherous consolation.

Politics and the Unemployed

It is especially from the latter standpoint that the situation is far from reassuring. The course of the convention registered several deficiencies in the movement which, in our opinion, require the earliest possible rectification. The fact that these shortcomings relate to political questions in no sense conflicts with our previous contention that the unemployed cannot merely be the appendage of a political party, a disguise for it. For, from the latter view one must not for a moment conclude that political ques-

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IN STALIN'S PRISONS

Dr. Ciliga Continues Series on Persecution of Revolutionists Under the Stalin Regime

EDITOR'S NOTE:

"Question: Is it a criminal offense to speak against Communism in the Soviet Union?—M.C.

"Answer: No. There is complete freedom of speech in the U.S.S.R. Any person can have and can voice any opinion about Communism or about the Communist Party, or about its policies, or leaders. . . ."
Daily Worker, April 16.

Now read the testimony of Dr. Anton Ciliga who was jailed for five years in the prisons and exile camps of the Soviet Union for differing with the Stalinist bureaucracy on questions of policy. (Ciliga, a member of the Political Bureau of the Yugoslav C.P., came to the Soviet Union an exile only to find, through bitter personal experience, the repressions against revolutionists more severe than in his native land. Another installment of this series will follow in the coming issue of the NEW MILITANT.

By DR. ANTON CILIGA

III. In the Prisons at Leningrad and Verkhn-Uralsk

I spent five months (from May to October 1930) in the Detention Prison in Leningrad. During the first part of this term, up to the conclusion of the investigation, I was committed to a small dark cell with several other prisoners. During the latter part of the term, while awaiting my sentence, I sat in a large cell, intended for 23 people, in which there were from 80 to 110 of us. The occupants of the large cells were continually changing and in view of the fact that 4 to 5 large cells were let out together for 15 minutes into the yard, I had the opportunity to become acquainted with a great many prisoners with hundreds of "cases" and the fate of hundreds of individuals. These were the days of the mass uprisings of the peasants against

the Stalinist collectivization, the days of mass executions throughout the whole of Russia, the days of the famous execution of the "Forty-Five" so-called wreckers. During this time prisoners in our jail were taken out almost daily to face the firing squad. Except in rare instances, the press carried no news about these executions. But once I witnessed the following case. The morning paper, which had been just brought in, contained a dispatch that the death sentence of so-and-so had been "carried out." But this man was still alive, sitting, entirely unaware, among us in the cell. The entire cell, the whole tier fell into a frenzy, into horror . . . but a few minutes later this oversight was "corrected," and the man led from the cell to face the firing squad. . . .

I also became acquainted here with the methods by which certain (Continued on Page 3)

Huge Student Strike Nears

350,000 Expected to Join in Protest Against War in Nation's Schools

Over 350,000 students are expected to leave their classes on April 22 at 11 A.M. in the third nation-wide students' strike against war. Called by the American Student Union, the strike has been endorsed by a number of college presidents and professors as well as leaders of other student organizations. The New York Teachers Union and other local unions have pledged support to the strike.

While in the colleges and universities the students will hold their own demonstrations, in the high schools, where "peace assemblies" are being called by the administrations, the A.S.U. urges student participation on four conditions: that it be student controlled; that student resolutions be permitted and recognized as part of the national action. Whether or not the conditions are granted, there is little doubt after last year's experience that the assemblies called by the school administrations will in most cases be patriotic rather than anti-war demonstrations.

Warn Against Intimidation

Two national strike calls have been issued by the A.S.U.: one for the colleges and universities and a "milder" one for the high schools. Warning against intimidation by the authorities, the college call states: "To surrender the militancy and purpose of this strike at the first sign of opposition is to pave

the way for far greater retreats and concessions later"; a view that is made meaningless by the provision permitting A.S.U. participation in administration controlled assemblies in the high schools.

The call describes the strike as a "rehearsal for the future" and calls for support of the Oxford Pledge (not to support any war in which the U.S. government is involved).

A Confused Slogan

"War anywhere is war everywhere; stop the aggressor!" (the new formula of the "peace is indivisible" pro-Sovietist conception of the Stalinists) is among the slogans in the strike call. And in another section of the same call we find:

"With genuine neutrality circumvented, a strike of 350,000 students for the principle of no loans, credits or supplies to belligerents will indicate that at least the student population of the United States has learned the lessons of the Nye inquiry."

Can one logically support the slogan of "Stop the aggressor!" and at the same time "principle of no credits or supplies to belligerents," which includes both "aggressors" and "defenders"? Yet, the Stalinists do so in practice!

At the Cleveland congress of the American League Against War and (Continued on Page 3)

Fascist Army Overruns Ethiopia

Two Internationals Reveal Bankruptcy Once Again

With the capture of Dessye and the announcement by the Italian forces in Africa of plans of a three-day march at the end of which it is expected to take the capital city of Addis Ababa, the main immediate objective of the Fascist invasion of Ethiopia seems to be definitely assured.

The occupation of the capital which now appears inevitable will undoubtedly be a severe moral blow to the defenders, and little more will be left to the courageous Ethiopians save the continuance of sporadic guerrilla warfare to prevent the Italians from completing the subjugation of this last of the "independent" lands of Africa.

At Geneva, meanwhile, the Italian representatives, haughtily exuberant with victory, have laid down the victor's peace terms in accordance with the old Roman war-cry which is the shibboleth of all modern imperialist pirates: "Woe to the vanquished!" From the intimidated terms, it is clear that the Italians plan simply to convert Ethiopia into a colony, to humiliate her to the depths and to inflict such penalties upon her for her fight for independence as will constitute the maximum guarantee against the future resumption of the struggle against the invaders.

The Fascists are bluntly contemptuous not only of Ethiopia but also of the great "guarantor of peace," the League of Nations. Mussolini's representatives, demonstratively ignoring the League, insist upon negotiating exclusively with Ethiopian representatives, without even the presence of League representatives, and in a locality ostentatiously removed from the League seat, Geneva. As a "concession," it is reported from Geneva, Italy may "permit a League observer to be present at the direct negotiations on the condition that he remained silent and took no part in them. That would be tantamount to the League's blessing them in blank!" (N.Y. Times 4-17.)

The pathetic protests of the Ethiopian delegates to the League are, of course, entirely unavailing, as was to be expected. Since October 1935, when by quasi-unanimous vote the League Council labelled Italy the "aggressor," the pacifists of all colors and kidney, from the French Radicals through the Second International to the Third International have been singing the praises of the League of Nations as an instrument of peace and the protector of small nations whose independence was in jeopardy. From both Brussels and Moscow came blasts of drug fumes calculated to put the independent working class movement to sleep with the consolidation that the League, by virtue of sanctions, would take care of everything.

The League bandits, however, were preoccupied with all the considerations in the world save that of the independence of Ethiopia. While Mussolini's modern and infinitely superior war machine has inexorably crushed the woefully inadequately equipped Ethiopian forces, the rival imperialist powers in the League jockeyed about to improve their own respective world positions.

Indeed, without the active support of the independent international working class, the isolated struggle of the Ethiopians was doomed in advance. To expect tribesmen by themselves to triumph over a modern, industrially-backed imperialist army, is preposterous. But it is precisely the working class movement which failed of its obligations. More exactly, the Second and Third Internationals, with all their bragging manifestoes and bluster and bluff, once more disclosed their utter bankruptcy.

They collapsed in Germany, in Austria, in the Saar, in Spain. And now, in face of one of the most shameless imperialist aggressions in our time, impudently conceived and insolently executed, the two old Internationals have once more failed. The tragedy of the whole Italo-Ethiopian struggle lies in the fact that in point of simple fact the working class movement did not react to strike even those simple blows at the Italian Fascists which they were in a position to deal.

THE OLD GUARD AND THE S P PRIMARIES

By JOHN WEST

In the recent New York State Primaries, both in New York City and up-state, the Militant Socialists won a substantial and decisive majority over the Old Guard. This result is particularly important in its prophecy of an equally progressive outcome to next month's national convention of the Socialist Party. From every forward-looking point of view, this repudiation of the Old Guard represents a genuine step in advance not merely for the Socialist Party itself, but for the developing labor movement in this country as a whole.

The extent of the victory of the Militants exceeded most predictions, even those of the Militants themselves. It is important and necessary to understand what accounts for the result.

Basically—as we have on numerous occasions pointed out—the factional struggle within the Socialist Party reflects new processes of ferment and differentiation which have been taking place within the advanced sections of the working class as a result of the Spanish, German, and Austrian events, the intensification of the war crisis, and the character of the post-1929 economic crisis. The ferment and differentiation are not, of course, confined to this country, but are reproduced in an analogous manner on an international scale. The central lesson drawn from the world events, with varying degrees of clarity, by increasing sections of workers within the orbit of the Second International has been: traditional social-democratic reformism is bankrupt, and serves only to lead the working class to disaster, and to sacrifice the working class to finance-capital in every crisis—to fascism as readily as to imperialist war.

This is, it will be observed, the negative half of the lesson which must be drawn if the full positive potentialities of these developments are to be achieved. It is necessary not merely to understand that social-democratic reformism is bankrupt; but, positively, to break sharply from Social Democracy; and this sharp break can be decisively accomplished only by embracing and adhering firmly to the principles of revolutionary Marxism. Half-way measures and ambiguities can provide a partial and temporary solution, can make possible even certain victories on the road; but anything less than the full conclusion will in the end cut short the progressive development, will route the advancing workers

back to reformism, aside into the death-house of Stalinism, or down into futile isolation.

At each stage of the development, the basic underlying process appears only to a limited and to some degree distorted extent on the surface. The political differentiation takes on in the struggle an organizational form; and for a while it is the organizational contest which appears as paramount over the political issues—though it is the latter which in the long run determine the organizational expressions. The opposing slogans bide as often as they reveal the basic questions. Nevertheless, the process and the movement continue, and gradually re-shape the slogans.

Two Decisive Factors

The New York Primaries fight, itself a stage in the larger struggle, is highly instructive as an aid to our understanding of the process as a whole. If we examine the specific and immediate factors which account for the sweeping victory of the Militants, the following two seem to have been decisive:

(1) The Old Guard openly and consistently conducted its fight on the basis of conservative social-democratic reformism. Their campaign was a campaign of furious Red-baiting, in which the New Leader accused the Militants every week of being dross-in-the-wool Communists, reds, Trotskyists, and revolutionists. But the majority of the dues-paying party members and the non-party enrolled Socialist voters have already absorbed the negative half of the lesson of the past three years; they have become convinced that hardened reformism is useless and worse than useless. Thus, this campaign of the Old Guard, though consistent and on the whole ably conducted, lost rather than gained support, recommended the Militants to the members rather than frightened the members away. The case of the Old Guard against the Militants was, in the eyes of the majority of the membership the best case that could be made for the Militants. In this sense, it might be said that the New Leader was the most effective agitator of the Militants; politically speaking, more effective than their own Socialist Call.

Ranks Activized

(2) A different kind of factor played almost an equally important role in this Primary struggle. For the first time in years, under the

leadership of the Militants in the past few months, the Socialist Party of New York State showed real signs of activity. The Militants sent organizers up-state, renewed branches, made speaking tours, sent out communications, increased their participation in strikes and demonstrations. They conducted debates with the Stalinists—and out-debated them. The party felt some new blood in its veins. The Old Guard had completely neglected the rank and file of the party. And, indeed, the Old Guard is not greatly interested in the rank and file. It rests on institutions like the Forward, on the trade union bureaucracy, on fat retainers from the unions for Old Guard lawyers, on appointments by LaGuardia. In many ways, a rank and file is an inconvenience to the Old Guard. The membership was undoubtedly strongly impressed by this difference between the Old Guard and the Militant leadership. They responded to the Militant appeal for "an active, effective Socialist Party." They linked this slogan for "a democratic, inclusive party," and saw that together they meant a resolve to bring the Socialist Party out of the backwater in which it had been sleeping for a decade into the broader stream of the mass movement. Many members doubtless cast their votes for the Militants on this basis rather than from the more complex theoretic consideration—though the two are not, of course, unrelated.

The character of the struggle of the Old Guard is very strikingly shown by the issue of the New Leader (dated April 11) which followed the Primaries. Indeed, this issue sums up in brief the whole nature of the Old Guard. Significantly, we find a repeated insistence that their fight is a fight "for principle"; and repeated references to themselves as "Social Democrats" and to their principles as the principles of "Social Democracy." Their fight, they make clear, is absolutely uncompromising and intransigent.

"Voice of Social Democracy" they threaten, "will be heard in Cleveland" (at the national convention). "The Social Democrats in the party," they warn, "know no surrender. They have just begun to fight." In an editorial headed "Our Fight for Principles" they herald the approaching end of the present struggle—"The long struggle of the New Leader for funda-

mental principles and policies is drawing to a close. . . ."

The feature article on the New Leader's Anniversary Banquet quotes from the speech of Louis Waldman: "Ours was not a fight, as some tried to make people believe, for the continuance in power of our side of the Socialist Party but for the fundamental program of Social Democracy. From that program we shall not recede, no matter who is in control of the Socialist Party."

This issue of the New Leader, furthermore, makes entirely clear what the Old Guard understands the fundamental program of Social Democracy to be. No opportunity is overlooked to crack down on "dictatorship" and to uphold "democracy"; that is, to attack the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat, and to announce the adherence of the Old Guard to the bourgeois-democratic state, whose agents in the working class the Old Guard prides itself on being, and aims to continue to be.

Bill Green Toasted

The biggest display of the entire issue is given to the speech of William Green, the guest of honor at the Anniversary Banquet.—Green, whose long record of thorough-going reaction and treachery in the trade union movement has been climaxed during the past year by his firm resistance to every progressive development, by his bitter fight against the industrial unionists, by his dictatorial brutality in connection with the automobile workers, the rubber workers, the teachers, and the radio workers, by his pitiful cringing before the government on every possible occasion. Vladeck, at the banquet, paid fulsome "tribute to Mr. Green for his constructive leadership of the American labor movement and for his conduct as the champion of the oppressed."

The other featured trade-unionist among the speakers at the banquet was Matthew Wolf, partner of Ralph Esley, for years in the National Civil Federation, Hearst's chief red-baiting rival. Another leading article, proudly displayed in a box on the front page, is by Abraham Lefkowitz, co-leader of the Teachers' Guild, splitter of the Teachers' Union, and active dualist to the A. F. of L. The Old Guard, of course, is a great denouncer of "dual unionism"—except, naturally, when more "basic" issues are involved.

The strategic aim of the Old

Guard is also given: "Confident," said Waldman at the banquet, "in the conviction that we represent on the political field the same program, the same principles, the same loyalty to labor exemplified in the British Labour Party, we are equally confident that with our allies of the labor movement the future belongs to our type of socialism." Abe Caban looked forward to "the rapid development of fraternal relationship between the Socialist and labor movements in this country similar to that existing between the British Trades Union Congress and the Labor Party." The visit of Herbert Morrison of the British Labour Party to this country is hailed and advertised. And well might the Old Guard greet its British brothers: has not the British Labour Party set them grandiose examples in the technique of representing the interests of finance-capital within the working class? Was it not through the British L.P. that national unity was achieved in the last war? that the General Strike was broken? that the budget is balanced at the expense of the British workers? that British imperial policy is now being put across to the masses in the present war crisis?

Yes, the Old Guard knows where it stands. It stands for the tried and sure methods for bringing defeat and disaster to the working class; for the policies that assembled the workers for imperialism in 1914; the policies that defeated the revolution in Germany; the policies that greased the ways for Hitler, that shed the despairing blood of the workers in Austria and Spain. These policies it inscribes on its banner, and displays proudly and openly to the world.

Safety-Valve Labor Party

Nor is it to be imagined that these policies are defeated by the victory of the Militants in the Primaries, or by their probable victory at the national convention. The Old Guard looks ahead. It realizes that a broad rank and file is not vital to its plans. It sees the "model of the British Labour Party." And it aims, together with the trade union bureaucrats, to head off the development of the revolutionary party in this country, during the years after 1936, by harnessing the leftward movement of the workers into a reformist Labor Party controlled by it and the bureaucrats, together no doubt with various of the "progressives" and liberals. And it is confident that

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