

'France for the French!' Is Now Stalinist Call

By Charles Orr

There once was a time when the cry of the French fascists, "La France aux Français" (France for the French) was vigorously contested by the cry of the revolutionary Parisian workers, "Les soviets partout" (Soviets everywhere). That was before the People's Front. With the signing of the People's Front pact the more revolutionary slogans of the Communist Party, to which adhere the elite of revolutionary France, the Paris workers, were immediately

hushed up in order not to injure their compact with the Radicals and various anti-fascist and anti-clerical allies. But still, no one thought that, while the workers settled into a mood of bewildered discontent, the leaders of their "vanguard" party would actually take up the fascist slogans of "La France aux Français", etc.

Showing True Colors

Many people, to whom the People's Front was only a temporary plot of the C.P. to lure the middle class into a revolution by the back door, find these latest extremes inexplicable. But for the Marxists, who have watched the record of the Communist Party and the People's Front in Loyalist Spain, this last painful development is only logical. It was precisely in such a revolutionary situation as Spain, where political parties and organizations show their true colors most clearly, that the People's Front broke down to the point of excluding and oppressing its revolutionary elements—and the "new type of democracy" to be introduced by it is rapidly approaching the most repressive toriyism.

In France the test has not yet been put to the C.P., but each day it moves further to the right. Towards the end of September a big yellow poster, announcing a speech by Marcel Thorez, "the young Communist chief", begins with this super-patriotic slogan, "France for the French" and calls all Frenchmen to the defense of their country which is being threatened by dirty foreigners—who put bombs in the headquarters of steel magnates, who steal submarines and who kidnap White Russian generals. (This is completely in line with the government campaign against foreigners which is heartily endorsed by the fascists and reactionaries as a way of cleaning the country of the thousands of German, Italian, Polish, Balkan and Spanish political refugees.) Another big C.P. poster appearing the first week in October screams, "Enough! For a long time now our country has been the theatre of aggressions and provocations..."

"The French want to work in peace and conserve their liberties,

the sacred heritage of our fathers. The French intend to remain the masters of their own house. They intend to take care of their own business between themselves and give themselves whatever reforms may be fitting. To keep the peace, liberty and independence of France, the Republic must do away with this shady army of provocateurs..." The poster ends with the logan: "Long live the the union of the French nation!"

Living Costs High

The extraordinary rise in prices, which has long since wiped out the gains of the workers from their June, 1936 strikes and the Popular Front social laws, is embarrassing the Communists, as the most ardent supporters of the Front. They recently felt called upon to bring out a poster on this subject. It proclaims, in part: "Everything is going up!

"Bread which was 1.80 f. a kilo, has gone to 2.60 f.—Milk, which was 1.20 f. a kilo, has gone to 1.80 f.—Butter, which was 16.00 f. a kilo, has gone to 25.00 f.—

Sugar, which was 3.50 f. a kilo, has gone to 4.60 f.

"Other food products, clothing, shoes, transportation, postal rates, all are going up.... Who is responsible for the High Cost of Living?" Follows an attack on the "big capitalists" who attack the franc, the "powerful trusts" who "decree the rise in prices to increase their already exaggerated profits" and the "large, all powerful food handling companies—the Maggi & Co.—who collect milk, butter etc. at prices insufficient for the producers in order to sell them at exaggerated prices to the consumers, thus realizing scandalous profits." (Note the bait to the small shop keepers).

"The rise of prices can be stopped by putting a quick end to capitalist oligarchs...., by submitting the trusts to the control and effective watch of the state in order to reduce their monstrous profits, by limiting the profits of the great food companies."

And the climax to this expose, which does not even do credit to a reformist, is another parody of "Frenchmen, Unite!"

P.S. The CP recently brought out a special paper, "Le Conscrit" written for the conscripts in the army. The front page is adorned with words and music to a song entitled, "La Belle France". Among the other counsels addressed to the "soldier of France" we find the command: "No illegal work!... Do not edit clandestine papers. Fight to get the papers of the Popular Front admitted into the barracks."!!! A comment on Popular Frontist illusions of changing the nature of the capitalist state. "Attitude toward the under-officers: Do not hold them responsible for everything that goes wrong. They are only executive agents." Other articles describe the glorious history of the French army, explain how "the Communist deputies defend the soldiers (the under-officers and officers, it explains below) in the Chamber," and give other songs to sing while marching and working.

Bucks County Local With Left Wing After Hearing Cannon Debate Felix and Sandwick

By John F. Dwyer

QUAKERTOWN, Pa.—Local Bucks County, Pa., comprising the branches in South Langhorne, Quakertown, and Perkesie, issued a call for all groups of the Socialist Party to come and present their point of view at a county membership meeting on Sunday October 24. The Secretary of the Local, comrade Nicely, received an acceptance from the Appeal group. Jack Altman wrote back that since there was no Appeal group within the party that it was impossible for him to speak, and asked that his expenses be paid if he came. Clarity did not even reply.

When the meeting started, David Felix of Philadelphia asked for permission to address the group as a representative of the National Office of the Socialist Party, present only to investigate the situation in the Local. He was given the floor and after a windy attack on the Appeal group, declared that since there were members of an "enemy party" present he could not discuss matters concerning the inner life of the S.P. He declared that Local Bucks County was acting in violation of the rulings of the N.E.C. by even listening to Appeal speakers. The chairman of the meeting, comrade Ruth, who has been in the Socialist Party since 1905, declared that as long as he had come to hear the different points of view he was going to hear them and he did not care if the

National Office approved or not. Calling upon Charles Sandwick, Clarity alternate to the NEC, to speak his piece, the meeting was opened. Sandwick, in a replica of Felix's speech declared that it was not his intention to speak on the internal situation. Felix and Sandwick then slid out of the meeting.

The entire audience remained seated and comrade James Cannon was given the floor for the Appeal group. In a brilliant talk Cannon reviewed the past year in the S.P. and the role of the Appeal group in crystallizing the revolutionary elements within the S.P.

During Cannon's talk Sandwick had sneaked back to his seat and now asked and was given, the floor to speak for the "Socialist Party". His talk was a distortion of the facts of the case as was shown by comrade Cannon who tore every argument presented by Sandwick to shreds.

A discussion followed in which questions were asked of both speakers of such a nature as to demonstrate again Sandwick's inability to make a clear defense of his position. Although no action was taken at the meeting it was clear that the revolutionists of Bucks County will not stand for the violation of the best S.P. traditions and convention decisions. They will support the convention Call of the left wing in Chicago in November.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES

The Coming Elections in Russia

The official date for the first election under Stalin's Constitution has been finally set for Sunday, December 12. The electoral campaign was officially opened on October 11. The ruling clique is uneasy, if not panic-stricken, by the newly aroused political activity among the masses, and is mobilizing its forces on an unprecedented scale against any unpleasant surprises. The press, especially Pravda, has been concentrating for weeks on the elections, issuing one "alarm signal" after another.

Says Pravda: "Only a political blockhead can suppose that the election campaign, as well as preparations for it, will go by without rabid attempts on the part of the enemies of Soviet power to cause injury and do dirt to our Fatherland." (September 18, 1937).

This theme is constantly harped on, with especial stress on the rural population as the source of greatest danger. Thus on October 8, Pravda editorializes: "Elections to the Supreme Soviet constitution the continuation of the struggle with the class enemy, who will not let the opportunity slip to befuddle the most backward section of the collective farmers, and lead them astray."

For the first time in many moons, the press refers not only to the "Trotskyist-Bukharinist agents of Fascism" and bourgeois nationalists, but also to the Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionists as enemies to guard against and "root out". Column after column is devoted to admonitions to agitators that it is essential for them to keep their ears sharply cocked as "to what is being said and what is being complained of" — and immediately to inform the authorities.

Komsomolskaya Pravda for October 5 asserts that reports from the provinces provide ample proof that, as the elections draw closer, "with every passing day, the hostile elements are mobilizing, often skulking behind a mask of loyalty and devotion to the Soviet power." The enemies, it asserts, resort largely to the weapon of "poisonous rumors, slander and gossip, anti-Soviet anecdotes, jokes and quips" calculated to undermine confidence in the government. To combat this "flood", all the teachers of primary and secondary schools—900,000 in number—have been mobilized by a special decision of the party and the Komsomol. Each teacher is expected to send in a written pledge of the work he or she binds himself or herself to do before the elections to combat these "anti-governmental rumors, anecdotes, etc."

Over and above this, there has been an unmistakable growth in influence of the priests. The organ of the trade unions, Trud, has been reporting for months the growth of religious tendencies even among miners and factory workers, especially in the Don Basin. Responsible for it are, of course, the Trotskyists, who "have penetrated into the Atheist Alliance to undermine the anti-religious front" (Trud, August 27).

The apparatus is banking a great deal on the co-operation of the "non-party Bolsheviks", the entire new labor aristocracy, the Stakhanovists, the badge and decoration wearers, the various office and record holders, especially "the rural intelligentsia, chairmen of kolkhozes, brigade leaders, tractor and combine operators, etc." And yet Pravda reports that "preparation for elections in the villages are unsatisfactory".

The fear of oral propaganda, great as it is, is overshadowed by the ruling clique's panic lest its press fail it in the emergency. The ruthless purge of the newspaper editorial staffs was calculated to guard precisely against this contingency. The havoc this has created seeps through the editorials of Pravda. "It is an absolutely intolerable fact that a great number of regional newspapers are without editors" (Pravda, Oct. 5). Not only does Pravda warn constantly that the newspapers, especially the regional ones, are "not prepared for the campaign"—incidentally, the trade unions have been especially under fire and their central organ Trud, it is charged "has printed almost nothing about the elections during the entire month of September"—but it keeps harping on the fact that "among the personnel or regional editorial boards hostile elements are still thriving who utilize the sloppiness and illiteracy of the editors to carry on anti-party anti-Soviet propaganda". (Oct. 5). "Many editors of regional, provincial and autonomous republican papers have not passed the test of loyalty" (September 17). In fact Pravda goes so far as to charge that the Soviet press nationally is being utilized as a tribune for the propagation of anti-Soviet agitation in the guise of "exposing enemy ideas", in the guise of deliberate "typographical errors", "slips of the pen", "awkward formulations", etc. Says Pravda, "Among the basic methods of enemy work in the press is, above all, the propagation of enemy ideas under the guise of condemning them" (October 5).

Everything indicates that repressions, far from decreasing during the electoral campaign under the "most democratic constitution in the world", will become intensified.

The Purges Continue

Pravda for Oct. 3 verifies the rumored arrest of Vareikis, secretary of the Far East party district. Together with him, the entire editorial board of the Pacific Star was likewise arrested.

The Cost of Living in France

The cost of living is sky-rocketing. Taking the prices for 30 staple commodities as 100 for the year 1914, the prices in July of this year rose to 600, in August to 613, in September to 640. Unemployment, which has been dropping slowly, is again on the increase. The figures for the week of October 2 indicate a rise of more than 2,000 unemployed, for a total of 370,512. Strikes, illegal under the Popular Front regime, are beginning to flare up again.

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 2
at 8:45 P. M.
EUGENE LYONS.
European Correspondent will
talk about his new book
"Assignment in Utopia"
(Soviet Russia)
Discussion — Admission 50c.
THOMAS PAINE SOCIETY
88 Seventh Avenue South
In Old Manhattan N. Y. C.
(7th Avenue Subway—
Christopher St.)
Admission 40 cents with this
Ad. or mention Socialist
Appeal.