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**Gerson, Meet Gerson!**

This is by way of an invitation to Simon W. Gerson, a member of Browder's Communist Party who not long ago secured, and still holds, a comfortable position as assistant to Borough President Stanley Isaacs of Manhattan. We invite the Gerson of 1938, an adept in crooning "The Star Spangled Banner," to meet the Gerson of 1936.

In 1936—so long ago that he may possibly have forgotten it—Gerson thought, or pretended to think, very little of ex-radicals who became pensioners of the LaGuardia Fusion administration. In fact they made Gerson highly indignant.

Thus in the *Daily Worker* of May 10 in that year of grace, when Gerson and his friends still fancied themselves as "Reds" (at any rate, "pinks") we find in his column, "Civic Virtue":

"This is a column about has-beens—has-been radicals now occupying posts in the LaGuardia administration. They're a rather sad lot, these radicals who have tasted of the political fleshpots and found them sweet. Many know better and frequently feel uncomfortable. The social conscience is willing, but the flesh is weak. Most of them try to justify their present situations to themselves with all sorts of quaint theories."

Assuming Gerson to have been sincere—which in the light of his subsequent record we would hardly be entitled to do—Gerson did not think much of the La Guardia administration in those days. He thought still less of the has-been radicals serving it and "going along" with measures such as the sales tax and the beating of unemployed demonstrators.

"Such social conscience as they have left," he declared, "dictates that they cry out against these things. In his heart of hearts your ex-radical in the administration knows that were he not a La Guardia jobholder he'd be protesting these infamies."

We do not for a moment suppose "social conscience" is troubling Gerson any more than it did the has-been radicals about whom Gerson wrote so feelingly two years ago. Having himself tasted the political fleshpots and found them sweet, he feels constrained to silence regarding the present-day infamies of the LaGuardia administration, justifying his position with all those "quaint theories" summed up in People's (pardon—Democratic!) Frontism.

We introduce the Gerson of 1938

to the Gerson of 1936. If a Stalinist is still able to feel embarrassment, the face of the 1938 Gerson must be awfully red. Beg pardon—yellow!

**Reorganization Bill**

After passage by the narrow margin of 49-42 in the Senate, the debate over the bitterly-contested Reorganization Bill has been transferred to the House of Representatives. Present indications are that it will carry the House in an amended and modified form, and be sent to conference within the next few days.

The fight over the Reorganization Bill has stepped far beyond the halls of Congress. Spurred on by raging editorials and stormy radio demagoguery, a flood of telegrams, letters, petitions, delegations is swamping Washington. All the mighty pressure, direct and indirect, of the Administration is being marshalled against the opposition.

Nothing in the bill itself can explain the passions which have been aroused over it. Its recommendations, particularly in their now amended form, have been commonplace in Washington for a decade. Hoover, especially, advocated them both while a cabinet officer and while president: a fact which is now causing him not a little embarrassment.

It is true that the bill, under the guise of efficiency and coordination, increases the concentration of power in the hands of the executive, thus exhibiting the universal tendency of bourgeois democracy in its days of decay and breakdown. It is this which justifies the negative votes of the two Farmer-Labor senators.

Ironically enough, however, the outstanding proposal of the bill—elimination of the comptroller-general, and substitution of an auditor-general who would be an officer of Congress—on the whole increases rather than lessens the control of Congress over expenditures.

But, in any case, it is not the organizational measures in the bill which are in reality the focus of the fight. As always in crucial political issues, questions of organization are subordinated to underlying political interests.

The problem is not whether to "organize efficiently," but, who is to do the organizing, and for what?

The fight here thus takes its place as a further development of the contest over the court bill last spring, over the wages and hours bill in the special session, and over the anti-lynching bill both in the special session and in January.

As in the other contests, the New Deal forces are aligned against a coalition of most of the Republicans plus the right-wing, chiefly the southern, Democrats. The struggle over each succeeding issue hardens the coalition, and drives the wedge ever deeper between the two groups.

As has been repeatedly stressed in these columns, this development is the most momentous in American politics of the past eighty years. It would be absurd to become lost in the abstract merits of specific bills under consideration. We are witnessing the dissolution of the traditional capitalist party line-ups. The process has now gone so far that nothing short of the outbreak or immediate threat of war—and perhaps not even that—can stop it from maturing before the next presidential election.

**A LETTER FROM CHINA**

Following is the second and concluding installment of a letter received from a Chinese comrade in Shanghai, describing the present situation in China. The first installment appeared in last week's issue of the "Socialist Appeal."—Ed.

At first sight, the present situation is quite difficult to understand, for, on the one hand, Chiang Kai-shek, against the will of all other leaders, takes a decided stand in favor of continuing the war, while on the other hand H. H. Kung, who was opposed to the war from the very beginning, is made president of the reorganized Executive Yuan, with Gen. Chang Chun, notoriously pro-Japanese, as vice-president. Both appointments are symptomatic of a desire for capitulation to Japan.

This seeming contradiction is explained by the following facts. Continuance of the war is impossible. In my journeyings over the various war fronts I found widespread apathy towards the war. All classes, from workers, peasants, soldiers and merchants, to the petty bourgeois masses and the bourgeoisie, desire peace. The toilers feel keenly the increased difficulties of living, but none of them show any fear of becoming "slaves without a country." They do not care very much whether their oppressor is the Kuomintang or the Japanese militarists. Their demand is for food.

**A Lesson From History**

I recall what happened during the German invasion of the Roman Empire, when the slaves and plebeians of Rome even welcomed the barbarian invaders. This attitude originates, in part, from the political backwardness of the toilers. More importantly, it proves that the national struggle cannot abolish the class struggle. It is unfortunate that the Japanese militarists are wiser than the "theoreticians" of the Stalinist international. While the Stalinists trail at the heels of Chiang Kai-shek in demanding that the hungry toilers fight for national independence without struggling to improve their livelihood, the Japanese robbers give some rice and a little money to the refugees. In such circumstances, how can the toilers be expected to risk their heads for the sake of empty national slogans?

Since the retreat from Shanghai there has never been a serious battle waged by the Chinese soldiers. (This was written prior to the commencement of the great battle now raging in Central China for control of the Lunghai Railway, in which the morale of the Chinese troops seems to have been at least temporarily bolstered—Ed.) At the first sound of the enemy's guns, the soldiers throw away their rifles and desert. Their only thought is to secure some money and civilian clothes so that they may run back home. I report this by no means in order to slander the Chinese soldiers, but in order to give you a real picture of the war. I cannot blame the soldiers who—especially those provisioned by the provincial warlords—are so poorly provisioned and have such miserably thin clothing that they can-

not fight in cold weather. Now the mood of the soldiers is well known to Chiang Kai-shek. He realizes more than the others that continuance of the war, in view of the passivity of the U.S.S.R., Britain and the U.S.A., is impossible. But to end the war now is also quite impossible, for (1) the Japanese insist on Chiang Kai-shek's retirement from politics and (2) Chiang's own army has been all but destroyed in the battles near Shanghai and by the mass desertions at Nanking.

**Chiang's Danger**

If peace were to be concluded now, the Kuomintang government would be dominated by the Kwangsi clique and other military forces, including the Eighth Route Army. Since the commencement of hostilities both the forces of the Kwangsi clique and of the Eighth Route Army have been greatly strengthened.

Chiang Kai-shek's present position may therefore be described thus: Continue the war until the time for capitulation has ripened. When will the time be considered ripe? When Chiang's twenty new mechanized divisions, now being completed and trained in Hunan province, are established!

When that time arrives, Chiang will continue the war against Japan until the final victory only if the international situation has changed in China's favor. Otherwise, with his new army guaranteeing his superiority over other military cliques, he will make peace with Japan. The latter alternative, in my opinion, is the more probable. That is why Chiang takes a strong attitude in form, but in fact is quite disposed to compromise.

**Masses Feared**

The Kuomintang still fears a rising of the masses more than it fears the Japanese invaders. All mass organizations are obliged to register with and submit to the control of the C.C. Group, that is, the Sixth Department of the Military Affairs Commission. All partisan troops and political training departments in the army are dominated by the Blueshirts and the C.C. Group. Political prisoners are not everywhere released, but only those fortunate enough to have been imprisoned in such big cities as Nanking and Hankow, or in places close to the fighting fronts. Relations between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party are not good. Only the offices of the Eighth Route Army in the big cities are legalized. Organizations of the Communist Party in various cities are still obliged to exist secretly and illegally, except in the territory occupied by the Eighth Route Army. But the top bureaucrats of the Communist Party, such as Wang Ming and Chou En-lai, enjoy full "democratic rights."

The Stalinists have founded a daily paper in Hankow, the *Hsin Hwa Jih Pao*, which devotes much of its space to attacking the "Trotskyite bandits." It slanders the Chinese Fourth Internationalists as the "hired dogs" of Japanese imperialism. This anti-Trotskyist campaign was started by Wang Ming, who arrived in Hankow from Moscow six weeks ago, bringing with him

two instructions: (1) Attack the "Trotskyite bandits;" (2) prepare the seventh congress of the Chinese Communist Party (the sixth took place in 1928!).

**Stalinist Slanders Protested**

So far as I know, the shameful slander of the Stalinists has won them nothing, but has lost them the sympathy of many progressive intellectuals. Publication of a story in their daily stating that our comrades in Hsichow had organized hundreds of peasants to serve as "plain-clothes troops" of the Japanese imperialists, caused many Communist Party sympathizers to send in strong protests to the Hankow office of the Eighth Route Army.

The Eighth Route Army still gets a monthly subsidy of \$800,000 (Chinese currency—Ed.) from Chiang Kai-shek. Numerically, this army has increased greatly, since it has not yet waged any heavy battles against the Japanese invaders. At the beginning of the war, its prestige grew from day to day. But now its prestige is declining, because of the bureaucratic regime instituted by the commanders and the passivity of the U.S.S.R. towards China's struggle.

A few months ago, about 100,000 revolutionary youth went to northern Shensi (territory occupied by the Eighth Route Army—Ed.), but during the past few weeks many of them have returned, disillusioned by the bureaucratic control of the Eighth Route Army. The outlook for this army is not bright. Having abandoned its revolutionary social program, it can be no longer distinguished from the armies of the Kuomintang. Soon its revolutionary authority will be completely exhausted.

**Regroupment Begins**

Within the Eighth Route Army a regroupment has begun. Many revolutionary elements, led by Chang Kuo-tao and Hsü Hsiang-chien (famous as commanders of the Eighth Route Army when it was known as the Red Army—Ed.) openly opposed the new Stalinist policy of capitulation to the Kuomintang. After an internal struggle, Chang Kuo-tao finally capitulated to Mao Tse-tung, but the influence of the opposition which he led (not by any means Trotskyist) is still growing. Just because of this, Wang Ming and his cohorts need the anti-Trotskyist campaign in preparing the seventh congress of the Chinese Communist Party.

If the war of resistance is continued without a revolutionary social program, that is, if the struggle for national emancipation is not linked with the struggle for a better life for the toiling masses—then the war is doomed to failure and the Eighth Route Army will share this fate.

Political leaders of various groups, from the Kuomintang to the Communist Party and the National Salvation Association, blame everything on the backwardness and passivity of the masses. These gentlemen forget only one thing: the Chinese masses are too hungry and too cold to be able to comprehend the ideology of the national struggle. They can fight for the nation only when they are sure that they will be fighting at the same time for the improvement of their own livelihood. A friend of mine very aptly summed up the present situation when he said: The Japanese invaders will be welcomed by the people once they stop looting and ravaging women in the regions which they occupy.

**Kuomintang Criticized**

To some extent, the democratic movement has arisen in Wuhan (Hankow). In analyzing the reasons for military defeats, people begin again to criticize the Kuomintang regime. The idea that "war is the continuation of politics by other means" is beginning to be understood by many progressive elements. At the beginning of the war, many revolutionists had the mistaken idea that the Kuomintang regime had become all right just because it was waging war with Japan. They did not know a rotten regime can never wage a victorious war.

Our strength (the strength of the Communist League—Ed.) is too small to face adequately these great events. Nevertheless, we have prospects for growth. The disillusioned Stalinist followers and the masses of revolutionary youth are our recruiting reserves. But still the immediate perspective is not a great one. For in face of the disorganization of the Chinese proletariat and the complete ruin of the national economy, there is no adequate social base for a Marxist proletarian political party.

Comradely,  
**FU LING.**  
 Shanghai, February 22, 1938.

**F. L. P. Becomes Cog In Roosevelt Machine**

(Continued from page 1)

was this accidental. Senator Victor Lawson, chairman of the platform committee, stated that the "peace" plank had taken longest to prepare of the whole platform; it is therefore an accurate index of the war line of the party leadership.

At the height of the anti-war sentiment against the Naval Appropriations Bill, there was a temporary cleavage between the openly pro-war Stalinists and the semi-pacifist Benson wing. Under strong pressure from the workers and farmers of Minnesota, the Farmer-Labor delegation came into conflict with the Roosevelt administration on the war question, and therefore into conflict with their Stalinist allies.

But in the last few weeks it has become clear that the two groups have patched up their differences. A "clever" line has been developed to enable the Farmer-Laborites to support Roosevelt in essence and yet to prevent a collision with the anti-war unions and farmers. This line was enunciated on the floor of Congress by Representative John T. Bernard in the Naval Bill debate on March 16.

**Bernard At Work**

For the record, Bernard and the other Farmer-Labor congressmen recorded themselves against the bill, but Bernard as their spokesman devoted himself to a defense of Roosevelt's main policy, going so far as to declare that "the suggestion that he (Roosevelt) contemplates foreign aggression is a vicious slander."

In the same spirit, the convention platform recorded itself against increased armament, but was silent on Roosevelt's motivation for expansion of war armament. The peace plank "advocates cooperation with all forces genuinely seeking peace" (which by Bernard's definition and the convention telegram includes Roosevelt!); favors "nationalization of all war munition plants" (that hoary demagogic slogan based on the false theory that not all capitalists but only the munitions makers seek war); calls for prohibition of sales to "aggressor warring nations" (thereby enabling the government to choose sides in any war with the prior benediction of the Farmer-Labor Party); digs up the threadbare slogan of the American Legion, "draft wealth in time of war" (precisely the bit of demagoguery which is being employed to make more palatable the Sheppard-May Bill!).

Actually, the proposal to "draft wealth" is a transition to open participation in conducting the war. A further step in this direction was taken by the March 26 issue of the Farmer-Labor Leader, which featured the proposal of Howard Y. Williams (vice-chairman of the convention) for "democratizing" the

Sheppard-May Bill by having workers' representatives taken into partnership in the conduct of the war!

**Stand On Relief**

The platform committee had before it the relief demands of the Minneapolis labor movement, but instead brought in a perfunctory plank providing for continuation of W.P.A. and relief. No mention of the pauper's oath, of unionization, of union rates on W.P.A., etc! Walter Frank, himself a Benson man, speaking for the Minneapolis Building Trades Council, received short shrift in an attempt to amend the plank from the floor, being voted down by the trained seals. It was only when the Stalinist floor-leaders took fright at the reception this plank would get in the unions, that Frank was called back to make his motion again. It was then voted up by the same people who had voted it down a few minutes earlier! But that this was pure lip-service was made clear when Frank and others tried to secure a further series of amendments, providing for a State Housing Authority Act, a special session of the state legislature to deal with relief, etc. All such amendments were voted down in short order.

**Support Supreme Court**

The conservative, not to say reactionary, tone of the convention was indicated by the debate and vote on the proposal of Robley Cramer, editor of the *Minneapolis Labor Review*, to include in the platform a call upon Congress and state legislatures to repudiate the right of the U.S. Supreme Court to veto legislation. "Let's not tear down everything," cried the spokesman for the platform committee. Another spokesman declared "we" wanted judges influenced by "neither money nor votes"—as if independence of the will of the people made judges more impartial! To cap it all, the convention voted to delete a previously-adopted amendment providing for election of federal judges, going back to the position for appointive judges, the "radical" item being to reduce their terms from life to... ten years!

**A Packed Convention**

Demands presented to the Farmer-Labor State Committee by a committee of the Minneapolis Board of Union Business Agents, for adequate representation of the trade unions at the convention were ignored. Unions were limited to a single vote each while paper organizations and petty-bourgeois war clubs were apportioned the main body of voting power. Of the 1,200 delegates present, 400 were from Stalinist-controlled St. Louis County, casting one-eighth vote each. Yet all votes were viva voce! Every voice was heard except the voice of labor.

**National Committee Plenum Meeting In N. Y. Next Week**

NEW YORK.—A full meeting of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party will take place here from April 15 to 18 in order to review the work of the three months since the founding convention of the party in Chicago and to take up the vital matters currently facing the party and the working class.

The agenda will include Labor Party developments, trade union problems, and the war crisis, with particular emphasis on specific tactics in the anti-war struggle in this country and the tasks of Fourth Internationalists throughout the world. Some of the sessions will be open to all members of the S.W.P. and the Y.P.S.L. Details will be announced later.

**Mass Meeting Scheduled**

A large mass meeting at the Hotel Center, 108 West 43rd

Street, will be held Thursday evening, April 14, as a preliminary to the National Committee plenum.

All branch meetings and other party activities for April 14 are being called off, so that the members of Local New York can turn out for the mass meeting in full force.

Among the speakers will be James P. Cannon, National Secretary of the S.W.P., and Max Shachtman, editor of the *Socialist Appeal*, just returned from Mexico, one of whom will report on the Mexican crisis revolving around the expropriation of the oil fields. Other speakers will include Vincent Ray Dunne and Farrell Dobbs, of Minneapolis, and B. J. Widick, Labor Secretary of the party who has just completed a two months tour through the East and the Middle West.

**Roosevelt Trimming Sails In Mexican Oil Struggle**

(Continued from page 1)

detachments of organized workers throughout the country were being armed and trained by army officers. On the other hand, the oil companies, preparing for their holy war, were busy at work disrupting the workers' ranks, and arming the fascist reaction.

**Cardenas Was Willing**

Cardenas was all the more willing "to ease the tension" by an "exchange of diplomatic compliments" since his efforts are directed toward confining the conflict within limits which will preserve the sympathies of the workers for his bourgeois regime, check the warlike Mexican reaction and prevent a final showdown with foreign imperialism.

The question asked by the bourgeois press, "whether the exchange of amenities is merely an interlude in the battle," seems to us very much in order. The fumes of Roosevelt's pacifist incense are intended to divert the attention of the workers from the still existing anti-Mexican economic sanctions through which Yankee imperialism hopes to gain, by diplomatic maneuvers, new concessions to replace the old.

The \$150,000,000 invested in the expropriated oil fields are only a small part of the total two billions of American investments in Mexico, which would be en-

dangered by an incautious or violent move. Moreover, the American oil investments are mostly of ancient date, long since repaid by fabulous profits.

**British Are Losers**

The real losses are suffered by the British competitors, who have made recent investments. Roosevelt has no inclination to pull British chestnuts out of the fire. And the last resort—a civil war for exclusively "internal" reasons—still remains in Rockefeller's pocket. American arms for the Mexican reaction continue to flow over the Rio Grande.

Another factor has undoubtedly played a certain role in the verbal retreat of the State Department. The apparently successful negotiations between the Mexican government and the British adventurer in international oil intrigues, Rickett, together with a New York financier, Smith, "injected a new element in this situation—the possibility that Mexico could sell her petroleum immediately," thus giving the government adequate funds. (This statement was made by Kluckhohn, oracle of Standard Oil, and he must know.)

**Rickett's Role**

On whose account Mr. Rickett works is as yet unclear. In any event he freed Cardenas of the necessity of direct dealing with Japan and deprived the "democracies" of Standard Oil and Shell of an important instrument in the deception of the people.

Keeping the anti-imperialist fight always within the bound-

aries of his capitalist regime, Cardenas has at his disposal only a limited range of maneuvers with rival imperialisms. The Rickett deal would give him a certain breathing spell. But, at the same time, it shows that the national bourgeoisie of a semi-colonial country, when it advances two steps in its anti-imperialist struggle, must immediately retreat one step by leaning upon another foreign financial group. It remains to be seen whether the oil rivalries operating behind the scenes will precipitate new internal upheavals in Mexico.

**Effect On Workers**

From the point of view of the proletarian revolution, the oil expropriations are of two-fold importance: first, the Mexican masses have learned that foreign imperialism is not invulnerable; and second, the taking over of the oil fields by the national bourgeois state will inevitably hasten class differentiation in Mexico. The workers and peasants, now living in illusions of "national unity"—sanctified by the Stalinist Toledano with quotations from Lenin—will learn to understand that the cause of their independence rests not only on the fight against foreign imperialism but also and above all on their class liberation.

In this connection the treacherous role of the American Stalinists merits a few words. In a declaration of the Central Committee, issued April 1, 1938, Foster and Browder addressed a humble appeal to Roosevelt's common sense. Against the imperialist slavery of the Mexican

people, they find not a single word to say. They tremble for only one reason: they fear that Hull's economic war "will weaken and isolate the influence of American democracy (read: colonial exploitation) in Latin American affairs as a factor for promoting peace (that is, the maintenance of American imperialism). It will aid the German, Italian and Japanese instigators of fascism and encourage them to proceed more boldly in Central America and South America along the path undertaken in Brazil."

They merely forget to mention that Roosevelt has, in the meantime, succeeded in buying back the Brazilian pupil of Mussolini and Hitler with thoroughly democratic and peaceful dollars.

**For Mexico Liberation!**

As faithful lackeys of American imperialism, Foster and Browder climax their appeal with a war cry: "Keep Mexico and Latin America safe for democracy! Enforce the good neighbor policy!"

The class-conscious workers of the United States have as much contempt for the "good neighbor" smile of Roosevelt as for the democratic hypocrisy of the Stalinist leaders. They stand unreservedly for the complete liberation of Mexico from the imperialist yoke. They will not relinquish the struggle against all measures of the Roosevelt administration, economic or military, open or secret—devised in the interests of American landowners, however "honest" or corrupt, and oil magnates, however "democratic" or fascist.

**Mass Rally**  
**DOWN WITH THE WAR-MAKERS!**  
**HANDS OFF MEXICO!**  
 Speakers  
**James P. Cannon**  
 National Secretary, S.W.P.  
**Max Shachtman**  
 Editor, Socialist Appeal  
**Farrell Dobbs**  
 Mpls. Trade Union Leader  
**Albert Goldman**  
 Labor Attorney  
**B. J. Widick**  
 Labor Secretary, S. W. P.  
**Lois Orr**  
 Just Back From Spain  
**THURSDAY, APRIL 14, 8 P. M.**  
**HOTEL CENTER**  
 108 West 43rd Street  
 New York City