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Unite Against Union-Wreckers!

(Continued from page 1)

In that case, you can be sure they will soon find out what disruptive "factionalism" really means.

The National Maritime Union, raised up through heroic struggles of militant and self-sacrificing seamen, gives the latest example and warning of what Stalinite domination of a union really means. A servile belly-crawling attitude toward the bosses; the signing of agreements which shame the labor movement; an internal regime of bureaucratic terror and expulsions; the factional exploitation of the union for every twist and turn of Communist Party politics—that is what Stalinite domination of a union means, as the latest example of the National Maritime Union again demonstrates.

No, the militant and progressive members in the U.A.W. must give a different and more responsible answer to the Stalinite drive for control of their union. They cannot stand as neutrals on the sideline of the struggle either. If the militants in the auto union want to save their organization from such a fate, they need an active policy now in the present critical situation. That policy can only be the broadest united front in the union against a disruptive alien force. This is just as logical and just as necessary as solidarity on the picket line against a gang of scabs trying to break a strike. At bottom it is the same thing. And that is what it has already come to on the West Coast waterfront.

SUPPORT MARTIN

The policy here recommended does not imply extensive negotiations over questions of program, etc. It does not necessitate formal agreements of any kind. The most important facts are already known, and the duty of responsible militants is clear. In the crisis provoked by the Stalinite bid for power, the militants have no choice but to support the Martin administration as against the Stalinite - Frankenstein combination. And this support should be given openly, frankly and aggressively.

To be sure, the progressive and militant forces in the U.A.W. have grievances, and serious grievances, against the Martin administration. We have spoken of them before and will speak of them again. I am not suggesting that these criticisms be muffled or put aside. On the contrary, it is reasonable even now to point out that the opportunist policies and bureaucratic practices of Martin have alienated many of the best fighters in the ranks and made them easy victims of the Stalinist demagoguery.

But even in criticism it is necessary to respect proportions and concrete circumstances. The U.A.W. under the Martin leadership remains, by comparison, the most progressive of the C.I.O. unions and by far the most democratic. The victory of the Stalinists would swiftly put an end to all that. You have only to look around a bit to see what happens to a union that falls into the hands of the Stalinists and their stooges and bribed agents. To prevent that happening is the first task, and one that cannot be postponed.

IN OTHER UNIONS

The same problem confronts the militants in numerous other organizations at the present moment. As this is being written the convention of the pocket book makers is split in two; Stalinists and gangsters combined to "end factionalism." The West Coast sailors are fighting it out with the Stalinists on the picket line to protect their closed shop agreements. By and large the same policy is required everywhere. The class-conscious militants, while insisting on their right of constructive criticism, must always be ready for common action with all other bona fide unionists to defend the

unions from external assault by the bosses or internal disruption by the Stalinists. Properly speaking, these are two sides of the same task.

The second is an even more immediate and pressing problem than the first. The Stalinists are a greater danger to the trade union movement than all the bosses precisely because they attack from within. They sail under false colors in order to deceive and befuddle the workers. They disrupt the unions with hypocritical cries for "unity." They preach solidarity only in order to betray the workers more effectively. Stalinism is the worst and most destructive disease of the labor movement of the world. Stalinism is deception, disruption and treachery organized and subsidized on an international scale. It is high time to diagnose this disease and quarantine the labor movement against it.

The Sheriff Knocks

For a long time the Stalinist slander machine, with the estimable *Daily Worker* in the lead, has felt free to exercise, without fear of punitive consequences, its "democratic" prerogative to indulge in the most poisonous calumny of its political opponents and of all and sundry who in any way incur the wrath or displeasure of the Communist Party chieftains.

On May 3, Supreme Court Justice Meier Steinbrink awarded \$25,000 damages against the *Daily Worker* to Mrs. Edith Liggett of Brooklyn in a libel suit which the Stalinist scandal sheet deemed it unwise to defend. The *Daily Worker*, in its well-known style, had referred to Mrs. Liggett and her husband (the late Walter W. Liggett, murdered Minneapolis editor) as enemies of the labor movement.

The fact that the Stalinists did not defend the suit speaks for itself. Now that they are to pay, and pay heavily, for the privilege of slander, they may feel constrained to tread more warily in the future. They have already another libel suit on their hands, the action brought by Local 544 of the Teamsters Union in Minneapolis, which is claiming substantial damages against the *Daily Worker* for libelling both the union and its officials. This suit is expected to be heard in the near future.

The results of this suit cannot, of course, be foretold as yet. But the decision in the Liggett case is an indication of what may be expected when the professional slanderers are compelled to confront those whom they have slandered.

As our readers know, the Stalinist press here is like its kin everywhere. About a year or so ago, the leader of the British trade unions, Walter Citrine, was given a favorable verdict against the slanderers of the London *Daily Worker*. Shortly after the Radek-Pyatakoff trial in Moscow, the Prague courts compelled the official Stalinist rag in Czechoslovakia to make a public retraction of its calumnious statement that the German Fourth Internationalist emigre, Erich Wollenberg, was a Gestapo agent. And only a few weeks ago, the French courts decided in favor of the libel action brought by the Menshevik emigre Theodore Dan, whom the Stalinist organ, *L'Humanite*, had declared to be a fascist agent, associated with the other "fascist spies" who were tried in Moscow's frame-ups.

The Stalinist liars, pilloried in public, are finding their profession a very costly one.

Lifeguards of Capital

The following letter appeared May 10 in the correspondence column of the Stalinist *Daily Worker*, without editorial comment:

Editor, *Daily Worker*:

The writer is certainly glad to see that there are a few newspapers in this great country that will continue to uphold the hands of President Roosevelt, and if half of those who are knocking and trying to tear down would join those of us who are trying to save the economic system or at least make it work, we would be sure to avoid what is happening in Europe.

(signed) John J. Lang.

Is it not high time that members of the Communist Party, who honestly believe they belong to an organization dedicated to the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a socialist society, took stock of their position? Is it not high time for them to ask themselves seriously in which direction they are really going?

UNITE AGAINST HAGUE!
Form Workers' Defense Committees!

An Editorial

The struggle now raging between gangster-mayor Hague and the people of New Jersey for the restitution of their democratic rights has tremendous significance for every American worker.

Not in isolated Harlan County or in rural California, but in the industrial appendage of New York itself, a petty boss has established a dictatorial, anti-labor regime. The elementary rights of free speech and free assembly have been nullified for every critic of Hague; arbitrary arrests and illegal jail sentences meted out to them by his judicial servants; C.I.O. labor unions placed under a ban. This is the way Fascism begins!

The insolent defiance and repeated provocations of the Jersey despot have aroused every militant element in the labor movement against him.

HAGUE GETS AWAY WITH IT

After a week of intense excitement, Hague's foes went forth to challenge him on Saturday at a public meeting. Both sides understood the importance of the occasion. Hague mobilized his whole reactionary army in Journal Square.

The liberal New York Post said in its leading editorial that morning: "The entire country is watching the proposed civil liberties mass meeting this evening and will know whom to blame if Boss Hague carries out the violent threats of his underlings... The 'deportation' of Norman Thomas last week has created a situation in which American citizens must either insist on civil liberties in Jersey City or knuckle under for good to Jersey City's arrogant dictator... Nothing succeeds like success—and if Mayor Hague gets away with the warning uttered by Governor Moore's secretary that eight hundred men with sections of rubber hose will prevent a meeting, other tinpot dictators will be encouraged to do likewise."

What happened? Hague got away with it! Without a fight he chalked up a complete victory.

Why was Hague permitted to get away with it? Who was responsible for the fiasco? What must be done to get rid of this menace? These are questions every worker and every radical ought to ask himself. His life and liberties depend upon a correct answer to them.

The arrangements for the demonstration were in charge of the Stalinist International Labor

Defense. Its president, Marcantonio, took public responsibility for calling off the meeting. In the face of a reactionary threat, the Stalinist leadership cravenly crawled on its bellies and surrendered without a fight.

Instead of going forward to meet the gangster army, they retreated before the Jersey Hitler just as the German Stalinist leaders, despite the great labor organizations behind them, succumbed to the Nazi battalions.

SURRENDER WITHOUT BATTLE

The liberal generals talked more belligerently but acted no less spinelessly than their Stalinist comrades-in-chief. "O, there never was a braver crew than these liberal Congressmen, they marched right down from Washington and marched right back again."

The Stalinists were able to plead the desire to avoid personal danger as a pretext for their capitulation only because they and their friends had made no preparations to organize or call out the workers of Jersey City in a counter-demonstration against the Jersey Hitler's forces.

Representative O'Connell insisted that he and Bernard were only beating "a strategic retreat in preparation for a new offensive when the organization of the masses has been brought about."

He should be forced to make good his words. The C.I.O. unions, directly endangered by Hague's dictatorship, ought to invite him to come to Jersey City and speak under their auspices. He will need protection. The organized workers of the region and their friends can furnish it to them in the same way that they have protected themselves against scabs and police in their recent strike struggles.

Enough of begging Roosevelt to proceed against one of the national vice-chairmen of his own party! They work hand in glove. Hague uses the Federal patronage (relief, etc.) furnished him by the Roosevelt administration to force the unemployed to do his will!

Let the workers rely upon their own strength and their own independent action. Let them defend themselves with all the means at their disposal.

The militant and forthright action of the employed and unemployed workers of Jersey City alone can unseat the Hague regime and wipe that black spot off the political map.

Inside the N. Y. Painters' Union

2. In the Grip of Racketeers

In our first article we gave a picture of conditions in the painting industry, in the past as well as in the present.

How did these terrible conditions come about? Where was the union—and its leaders? What did they do to prevent such a mess? If they did nothing—why not? What is the present union administration doing to help the painter out of his fix? What can be done? These are questions every painter should ask himself. An understanding of the answers that such questions call for, is the first step to finding a way out of the troubles the painters are faced with.

In the following lines we shall try to find some of these answers.

In the boom days after the World War, the apparent stability of the capitalist system gave rise to many illusions widespread in their influence. Prosperity—the professors of economics and the highly-paid journalistic apologists for the profit system told us—was here to stay. The differences between bosses and workers, they said, were fast being wiped out: the whole American population was developing into one single class—the class of profit-sharing stockholders. They anticipated Huey Long's famous slogan with a slogan of their own: "Every Man a Capitalist."

The entire officialdom of the American Federation of Labor, marching in the tow of the boss class from the earliest days of Gompers' rule, was completely filled with this false capitalist way of thinking and with this phoney optimism. The labor skates in every A.F. of L. union went in for all kinds of get-rich-quick schemes: labor banking, labor insurance, etc. Since wages in the unions they controlled—mostly those in the skilled crafts—were fairly high and work plentiful, they were able to hand down this spirit of self-deception to the rank and file, to a considerable extent. In return, they received a free hand from the latter for their "legalized" racketeering schemes—their so-called "business-unionism." From "le-

galized" racketeering to illicit business-unionism was but a short step.

Graft Flourished

Just as graft and racketeering flourished in municipal government under the reign of Tammany's Mayor Jimmy Walker, so these same vices grew into bloom in New York's building trades under the rule of "Czar" Brindel, Tammany's ally in the local labor movement. Prohibition had raised the New York underworld to the status of a big business concern. Gangsters like "Legs" Diamond and "Dutch" Schultz became heads of tremendous "interlocking directorates" of racketeering. Through the beginnings of racketeering made by "Czar" Brindel and his crowd, these big shots of the underworld made their entry into the labor movement. When prohibition was repealed in 1933, they shifted their field of operations more exclusively to the trades unions.

Thus, when the economic crisis broke and burst the bubble of prosperity, the leadership of the building trades unions were left not only without plan or perspective—but far worse, thoroughly infected with the poison of racketeering and gangsterism. This situation only aggravated the already bad straits the union men found themselves in, due to depression.

Kick-backs Paid

In the Brotherhood, the rank and file painters who still managed to get a day's work here and there had to pay a heavy tribute in "kick-back" and other graft to the machine run by the gangsters "Lepke" and "Gurrah" under the Zausner administration in District Council No. 9. Most of the painters naturally found themselves out of jobs altogether, with not a word of hope from the union leadership.

Progressives in the union, who had been fighting gangsterism and who had forewarned against the illusions of "prosperity," slowly began to raise their heads. Their long years of patient explanation that capitalism, producing not according to plan nor on the basis of the needs of the population, was bound to bring about crises and depressions was borne out by events themselves. The rank and file began to hand them a hearing. The only protection for the workers against the misery of capitalist crises and boss exploitation, the progressives explained, was:

1. The realization that they are a class whose interests are en-

tirely and always in conflict with the profit-greedy boss class;

2. The knowledge that their only safety lies in reliance on their own organized strength;

3. The determination to conduct a militant struggle for the maintenance of union standards;

4. The organization of the unemployed in the alteration and maintenance fields;

5. The re-establishment of democracy in the union, cleaning out the gangster elements.

Dual Tactics of C. P.

The task of the progressives was made extremely difficult by the dual union policies of the Stalinists (Communist Party) in that period. The latter split the progressive forces, withdrawing a good section of them for the formation of their "Alteration Painters Union." The Stalinist "Alteration Painters Union," based on the conception of the Communist Party at that time that all A.F. of L. unions were "company unions," did untold damage to the struggle of the progressives.

They carried their destructive dual union tactics so far as to actually scab on jobs struck by the District Council of the Brotherhood in the general strikes of 1933 and 1934 when the bosses tried to take advantage of the demoralization in the union brought about by the depression and by gangsterism. The few Stalinists, like Louis Weinstock, who remained inside the Brotherhood, served like a millstone around the neck of the progressives because of their half-concealed sponsorship of and their apologetics for the scabby "Alteration Painters Union." The old line administration and its gangster allies could maintain themselves in power as long as they did only thanks to the policies of the Stalinists.

The crisis had, in the meantime, brought about a change in municipal politics. The big New York capitalists who, for years, had looked on tolerantly upon the extravagant graft grabbed up by Jimmy Walker and the Tammany machine, began to be alarmed increasingly as their profits shrunk. Through their mouthpiece, Samuel Seabury, they launched the attack on Tammany which resulted in the victory of the LaGuardia-Fusion ticket. LaGuardia, Seabury and Thomas Dewey, pledged to protect the bosses from the scourge of racketeering, began the clean-up which, aided by a press campaign, succeeded in ousting "Lepke" and "Gurrah" and brought about the

Leon Trotsky Challenges British Labor Party On Oil Land Expropriation

(The following letter was sent by Leon Trotsky to the London Daily Herald on the subject of the British government's demand for return of the oil property of the Mexican Eagle Oil Co., recently expropriated by the Cardenas administration.—Ed.)

The Editor, Daily Herald, London.

Dear Sir: In the vocabulary of all civilized nations there exists the word, cynicism. As a classic example of brazen cynicism, the British government's defense of the interests of a clique of capitalist exploiters should be introduced into all encyclopedias. I am therefore not mistaken if I say that world public opinion awaits the voice of the British Labor Party regarding the scandalous role of British diplomacy in the question of the expropriation of the Eagle joint-stock oil company by the Mexican government.

The juridical side of the question is clear to a child. With the aim of exploiting the natural wealth of Mexico, the British capitalists placed themselves under the protection and at the same time under the control of Mexican laws and the Mexican authorities. No one compelled Messrs. Capitalists to do this either by military force or through diplomatic notes. They acted entirely voluntarily and consciously. Now Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Halifax wish to force mankind into believing that the British capitalists have pledged themselves to recognize Mexican laws only within those limits where they find it necessary. Moreover, it accidentally occurs that the completely "impartial" interpretation of the Mexican laws by Chamberlain-Halifax coincides exactly with the interpretation of the interested capitalists.

Imperialist Cynicism

The British government cannot, however, deny that only the Mexican government and the Supreme Court of the country are competent to interpret the laws of Mexico. To Lord Halifax, who nourishes warm sympathies for the laws and courts of Hitler, the Mexican laws and courts may seem unjust. But who gave the British government the right to control the inner politics and legal procedure of an independent state? This question already contains part of the answer: the British government, accustomed to command hundreds of millions of colonial slaves and semi-slaves, is trying to fit those same methods also to Mexico. Having encountered courageous resistance, it instructs its lawyers hurriedly to invent arguments in which juridical logic is replaced by imperialist cynicism.

The economic and social side of the problem is as clear as its

defeat of the Zausner administration.

Stalinists Change

The Stalinist party, on orders from Moscow, had changed its "line" just about at the same time. From the extremism of the period between 1929 to 1934—when they preached that John L. Lewis, William Green, Roosevelt and Norman Thomas were all Fascists; when they maintained that all official unions were "company unions;" when they predicted that the struggle for the streets and the "proletarian revolution" were just around the corner—the international Stalin machine swung around to the opposite form of extremism: Roosevelt was now to be the savior of the country; Lewis and Green were now to be "brothers" and Norman Thomas a "comrade;" the proletarian revolution was now a pipe-dream of the distant, very distant future—the thing now was to build a "People's Front" or a "Democratic Front" with Roosevelt, LaGuardia et al.

Overnight the order came to "liquidate" the "Alteration Painters Union" and for all its members to join the Brotherhood. With the groundwork done by LaGuardia and Thomas Dewey, the Stalinist machine in the Painters Union, reinforced by the recruits from the defunct "Alteration" outfit, well-organized and financed, found it a fairly easy job to take over control of the District Council when the Zausner administration was ousted.

What exact methods they used in coming into power, how they have given "leadership" to the union and how their "policies" are made—these questions will serve as the basis for articles to come.

juridical side. The executive committee of your party would, in my opinion, act correctly if it created a special commission for studying what British, and in general foreign, capital has contributed to Mexico and what it has extracted. Such a commission could within a short period present to the British public the stunning balance of imperialist exploitation!

A Robber Clique

A small clique of foreign magnates, in the full sense of the word, pumps out the living sap of Mexico as well as of a series of other backward or weak countries. The solemn speeches about foreign capital contributing "civilization," about its assisting in the development of national economy and so forth, are the sheerest Pharisaism. The question, in actuality, concerns plundering the natural wealth of the country. Nature required many millions of years in order to deposit gold, silver, and oil in the subsoil of Mexico. The foreign imperialists wish to plunder these riches in the shortest possible time, making use of cheap labor power and the protection of their diplomacy and their fleet.

Picture of Oilfields

Visit any center of the mining industry: hundreds of millions of dollars, extracted by foreign capital from the earth, have given nothing, nothing whatever to the culture of the country; neither highways nor buildings nor good development of the cities. Even the premises of the companies themselves often resemble barracks. Why, indeed, should one spend Mexican oil, Mexican gold, Mexican silver on the needs of far-away and alien Mexico when with the profits obtained it is possible to build palaces, museums, theatres in London or in Monaco? Such are the civilized! In the place of historical riches they leave shafts in the Mexican soil and ill-health among the Mexican workers.

The notes of the British government refer to "international law." Even irony powerlessly drops its hands in face of this argument. About what kind of international law are we talking? Evidently about the law which triumphed in Ethiopia and to which the British government is now preparing to give its sanction. Evidently about that same law which the airplanes and tanks of Mussolini and Hitler are already announcing in Spain for the second year with the British government's invariable support. The latter held endless conversations about the evacuation of foreign "volunteers" from Spain.

Spain and Mexico

Naive public opinion long thought this meant the halting of intervention by the foreign fascist bandits. Actually the British government demanded of Mussolini only one thing: that he remove his armies from Spain only after he guaranteed the victory of Franco. In this case, as in all others, the problem consisted not in defending "international law" or "democracy" but in safeguarding the interests of British capitalists in the Spanish mining industry from possible attempts on the part of Italy.

In Mexico, the British government carries on basically the same politics as in Spain—passively in relation to Spain, actively in Mexico. We are now witnessing the first steps of this activity. What will be its further development? No one can yet foretell. Chamberlain himself does not yet know. One thing we can affirm with assurance: the further development of the attempts of British imperialism against the independence of Mexico will to a great degree depend upon the conduct of the British working class. Here it is impossible to evade the issue by resort to indefinite formulas. Firm resoluteness is necessary to paralyze the criminal hand of imperialist violence. I therefore finish as I began: world public opinion awaits the firm voice of the British Labor Party!

L. TROTSKY.

Coyoacan, D. F.

April, 1938.

P. S. — Several imperialist newspapers have attempted to represent me... as the initiator of the expropriation. Such nonsense does not even deserve refutation. I, a private person, enjoying the hospitality of this country, have learned only from the papers all the stages of the struggle of the foreign capitalists against the Mexican laws. But this was completely sufficient to form an opinion. To state this opinion aloud is the elementary duty of every participant in the liberating struggle of the proletariat.—L. T.