

From Left Socialism To Bolshevism

By ERNEST ERBER National Chairman, Y.P.S.L.

The revolutionary party must be attracting to itself all the best in the movements around it. Lenin pointed out to the foreign communists at the time of the founding of the Communist International that Bolshevism did not only develop by disagreements and splits but that "Bolshevism had proved a unit, it had drawn to itself all that was best among the currents of socialist thought close to it."

The Bolshevik core that emerged from the corrupted body of the Communist Party of the U.S. to found the Left Opposition had its share of conflicts in the last ten years. Its break with "fellow-travellers" of the moment like Ludwig Lore and Louis Budenz and with die-hard sectarians like Oehler and Field are described elsewhere. But like a Bolshevik tendency that knows how to swim against the current without bowing its head, the "Trotskyite" movement drew to itself all that was best in the current of socialist thought close to it."

Merger with A.W.P.

The merger with the American Workers Party not only strengthened the movement by adding experienced cadres of militants who had proven their mettle in the struggle, but also gave the movement some valuable lessons in the realm of working with and assimilating elements who were approaching a revolutionary position through the experiences of life in another tendency. These lessons proved invaluable during the next great strategic turn undertaken by the movement.

This turn, the entry into the Socialist Party, was necessitated by the whole course of development that followed the bankruptcy of the Communist International under Stalin and the task of merging the principles of the small Bolshevik vanguard with the leftward moving Socialist militants around them. That the appearance of a left wing in Social Democracy in the post-war era could only come as a result of the bankruptcy of the Communist parties was nowhere better illustrating than in the U. S. Beginning with 1919 and continuing until 1923, the Socialist Party passed through a series of splits that drew from it virtually every single member who stood to the left of Morris Hillquit, including 85 percent of the youth movement. The S.P. struggled along as a slightly-living corpse from 1924 until 1929. It consisted of grossly opportunist municipal machines in Milwaukee and Reading, national language groups held together on a cultural and social, rather than a political basis, and the Jewish Daily Forward with a treasury and considerable influence in the New York labor movement.

Move Left with Depression

The crisis that began in 1929 and the mass unemployment that spread over the country during the succeeding months, turned the attention of thousands, particularly young workers and students without a future under capitalism, toward the political movements on the left. The hysteria of "third period" Communism, with its almost daily adventurist demonstrations, its disruptive role in the mass organizations, its theory of social-fascism and "united front from below," repulsed thousands of sincere young rebels and forced them to look elsewhere for a means of expressing their revolt against the chaos and misery about them. Beginning with 1930 these young people began flowing into the Socialist Party and the Young People's Socialist League in increasing numbers.

The "Old Guard" of Social Democracy first welcomed these new recruits, naively believing them to be material for a rebirth of a reformist Socialist Party. They soon discovered, however, that these people had not rejected revolutionary views when they passed up the C.P. but had merely turned to the S.P. as a momentarily more convenient vehicle for the free expression of these views.

Conflict Takes Form

By 1932 the conflict had taken somewhat definite forms, dividing the party into two more or less amorphous groups that went under the name of "Old Guard" and "Militants." The "Militants" began, as their name indicates, as primary opponents of the do-nothingism of the Old Guard rather than as political opponents. The conflict, however, soon found its proper channel. This development was given a great impetus when history, for the benefit of the new Socialist generation, once again exposed Social Democracy during the German events in all its revolting corruption, aggravated by senility. The Austrian revolt of 1934 accelerated the discussion on Marxist prin-

iples, particularly the discussion on the "road to power." By the end of 1935 the "Militants" had gone a long way in political development. Only a fool could fail to see that their cohabitation under one roof with the "Old Guard" was no longer possible. Marxists were forced to ask themselves where this potentially revolutionary force in the S.P. would go. With the Seventh Congress of the C.I. in the summer of 1935 and the shedding of the "third period" idiocies, there was a possibility that the Stalinists would intervene in the revolutionary development of the S.P. and draw off the bulk of the left wing.

Entry of Workers Party

The leadership of the Workers Party, sensitive to the changing currents about them, reacted to this new situation by proposing the entry of the "Trotskyites" into the Socialist Party. This bold step was taken in the spring of 1936 and, not accidentally, coincided with the departure of the "Old Guard" at the national convention in May.

Even before the final split with the "Old Guard," political differentiations were taking place in the "Militant" group. A right wing under Altman played the role of obscuring the political nature of the struggle and re-echoing the political line of the Stalinists, even to opposing the entry of the Workers Party. The group opposed to Altman was composed of Party groups in New York and Chicago and the majority of the Y.P.S.L. The publication of the Socialist Appeal in Chicago under the editorship of Albert Goldman resulted in a clarification among the left wing "Militants" and the beginning of a separation between those genuinely concerned with the building of a revolutionary party and the centrists who followed the leadership of Herbert Zam and Gus Tyler.

Revolutionists Unite

As a result of the preparatory work of the Socialist Appeal, a revolutionary nucleus was developed that readily merged with the Bolshevik current from the former Workers Party. These "native" Socialists proved the link by means of which increasing numbers of left wing Socialists were drawn to the Fourth Internationalist current until the alarmed bureaucracy took steps to expel the revolutionists from the party. The dead hulk of the S.P. today is visual evidence of the ability of the Bolshevik current to draw the revolutionary elements to itself.

Common principles and common experiences have long ago obliterated all differences between former S.P.s, and the original "Trotskyite" core. Like the Bolshevik Party, we have cemented the revolutionary elements from diverse currents into one unit, prepared for ideological struggle against our enemies on a greater scale—the struggle for the leadership of the American working class.

Y.P.S.L. Convention Greetings for \$1

Readers of the Socialist Appeal will be glad to learn that they can send \$1 personal greetings to the Tenth National Convention of the Young People's Socialist League, which is being held in Chicago during the Thanksgiving weekend. This convention, designed to transform the Y.P.S.L. into a fighting mass revolutionary youth organization, needs and deserves the support of the readers of the Socialist Appeal.

Our sole means of financing our Convention will be the magnificent two-color printed program book, dedicated to the heroic martyrs of the Fourth International (Klement, Sedoff, Wolf, Reiss, Moulin and the hundreds of others who have laid down their lives in the struggle for the socialist emancipation of mankind). The dedication article is written by Max Shachtman. Outstanding among the other features of the program book are greetings from Leon Trotsky, in the form of an article entitled, "The Role of Revolutionary Youth," and greetings from our various sections in Europe now engaged in the daily life-and-death struggle against fascism and imperialism.

You will want to own a copy of our program book. You can guarantee yourself a copy and, at the same time, do your bit in assuring the success of our all-important Convention, by sending in your personal greetings NOW. We are still taking orders: full page, \$10; half page, \$5; quarter page, \$3. But we are making a drive for \$1 personal greetings, which will entitle you to a free copy of the program book and the inclusion of your name amongst the supporters of the revolutionary movement. Send all greetings to: National Convention Arrangements Committee, 160 N. Wells St., Rm. 308, Chicago, Illinois. The National Convention Arrangement Committee.

THE REVOLUTIONARY MARXIST PRESS Ten Year Record of Struggle and Progress

By MARTIN ABERN

SELLING THE SOCIALIST APPEAL



MARTIN ABERN Business Mgr., New International



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On October 27, 1928, James P. Cannon, Martin Abern and Max Shachtman were expelled from the Communist Party of the United States, by the latter's Central Executive Committee at a Plenary Session, for espousing the platform of the then Russian Opposition led by L. D. Trotsky. Simultaneously, Maurice Spector was expelled by the Canadian C.P. Anticipating the bureaucratic action of the Foster-Browder-Lovestone Communist Party leadership, we made swift preparations to present our case to the Communist Party ranks and to the working class, and two weeks later, on November 15, 1928, there appeared *The Militant*, published as the organ of the Opposition Group in the Communist Party. 5,000 copies were printed and distributed widely in New York and throughout the United States.

Only a Handful

Hard work, as never before or since, went into the publication of the semi-monthly *Militant*. There were at the beginning but a handful of comrades to publish, distribute and sell the paper. Resources were slim, but the comrades rallying to the Opposition Group in the various cities were intensely devoted to its cause.

With its publication, along with dissemination of the contents of the "Real Situation in Russia" (the program of the Bolshevik-Leninists in Russia and containing also the sections on the falsification of the history of the Russian Revolution) the eyes of members of the C.P. and Y.C.L. began to open and the Opposition Group made headway very slowly but steadily. Our forward march was also made easier by the publication of documents showing the extreme Right Swing the Russian Party was then making (rise of Kulak influences; slowing down of industrialization, etc.).

Communist League to rally. But, as evidence, too, of our continuing close ties to the official Communist Party, we began the publication in *The Militant* of the thesis of the former Minority (Cannon-Foster bloc) in the Communist Party, entitled "The Crisis in the Communist Party of the United States," directed against the Lovestone-Wolfe majority. But more important, *The Militant* began publication in serial form of the now famous and historic "Criticism of the Draft Program of the Communist International" by L. D. Trotsky, a copy of which had been smuggled out of Russia after the Sixth Congress of the Communist International through Comrades Cannon and Spector.

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Campaign for the Weekly

On February 15, 1929, *The Militant* published the newly-drafted Platform of the Opposition Group. Discussions began. On May 17-19, 1929, the Chicago convention of our forces convened, and the historic Communist League of America was formed—another great milestone of our progress. But with the organization of our forces nationally, there came greater ambitions and immediate goals. The semi-monthly *Militant* was being issued regularly, but was already proving insufficient for our needs. After thorough deliberation, especially a consideration of our small numerical forces and the financial strain it would mean, it was decided nevertheless to conduct a campaign to raise a fund for a weekly *Militant*. The sum set was \$1,500—an amount which would seem like a \$25,000 campaign now, considering the relative number of members and sympathizers then and today.

Moreover, the campaign for a weekly *Militant* was linked to the aim of purchasing our own printing equipment—first, a linotype—in order to ensure the weekly's appearance. Despite initial doubts and hesitation, the organization as a whole swung into the campaign with high morale and confidence. Six months later we had our linotype machine. On Nov. 30, 1929 the first issue of the weekly *Militant* appeared. Not long afterward we secured a printing press and with the devoted aid of comrades and sympathizers, the weekly continued to appear regularly.

But the achievement of a weekly *Militant* and our own printing plant, small and crudely equipped as it was, both mechanically and in labor power, meant even more for our organization and movement. It made possible the creation of *Pioneer Publishers*. There commenced a period of publication of pamphlets and books, small and large, by the Communist League of America, and later *Pioneer Publishers*, which brought strength and prestige to the revolutionary movement in the United States and also throughout the world, particularly in the English-speaking nations. A list of the pamphlets and books issued would fill a few pages alone. Suffice it that in this way the literature of the revolutionary wings in Russia, Europe, Asia and North America became widely known, which not all the machinations and

sulted in suspension of the *New Militant*; but soon the revolutionists found a press to express their views. Utilizing the *Socialist Appeal*, a printed organ issued in the S. P. by Albert Goldman, the left wing forces soon developed the *Appeal* into a monthly magazine. A year ago the *Appeal* was converted into a weekly newspaper and as the official organ of the S.W.P. it continues the revolutionary traditions of the *Militant* and *New Militant*.

Events of a Decade

Our press has recorded through this historic decade of 1928-1938 all the significant events of the period and has truly offered guidance to the revolutionary forces and the labor movement generally in all fields. A few of these major events—which, by the way, also definitely record stages in development and attitude of our own organization—were: the decline of Bolshevism and the rise of Stalinism in Russia; the events in Germany—the development of German Fascism; the struggles in France; the rise and fall of Popular Frontism; the developments in Spain before and during the civil war; "prosperity" and the economic and social crisis in the United States; labor struggles; the C.I.O. movement; the growth and foundation of the Fourth International, and so forth at great length. All this forms part of the record of our press.

One must mention, too, if only in a word, that the youth movement managed to issue *Young Spartacus* and now the *Challenge*, thereby laying a sound foundation for the mass movement of youth which our Youth organization must and can build.

Building the Press

It is not necessary to dilate in florid and many words the simple fact: The press is our major organizer. By now this should be ABC to every member of our organization, and each member should put as a first task the need to build and spread widely the circulation of all our press: *Socialist Appeal*, *The New International*, *Challenge*, *Pioneer Publishers* pamphlets and books. In this connection it may be well to point out that on each occasion when a special effort was made with our press; when issues and emergencies of great significance arose and our movement endeavored to react in stronger and better organized fashion to them, our movement made big gains—in prestige, and politically and organizationally. On three occasions in past years the weekly *Militant* or *Appeal* was transformed for brief periods into a tri-weekly. These were on the occasions of the rise to power of Hitler; the time of the "hotel strike" in New York, and only a few weeks ago the events in Czechoslovakia. Those achievements show the road the press must travel. For a permanent, larger and more frequent *Socialist Appeal*; for a greater *New International*. BUILD THE PRESS!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Insertions in this column are 25 cents for five lines. Copy must be in at the APPEAL office before 6 o'clock Monday evening.

NEW YORK, N. Y.

"VECHERINKA" Saturday, Oct. 29, 9 P.M., at the home of P. Nesson, 321 Second Ave., arranged by the "Friends of the Russian Bulletin." Antoinette Konikow of Boston will be the guest of the evening. We'll sing, dance, eat and drink. Bring your friends.

DEAR GERT: Meet me at the Upper West Side Party, Saturday, Oct. 22, 9 P.M., at 916 Ninth Ave. (59th St.). We have the latest recordings, the best drinks, and the most interesting games. Admission is only 25 cents—Joe.

Dear Joe: You bet I'll be there. —Gert.

BIG Y.P.S.L. CONVENTION affair sponsored by the Hunter, C.C.N.Y. Day and Washington Heights Circles. Admission 20 cents. Cards—Games—Refreshments—Dancing. Oct. 22, 9 P.M. Epstein, 63 Wadsworth Terrace Ave., B'way-7th Ave. to 191 St.

SOCIAL AND DANCE with Swing Band, this Sat. night, October 22, at 301 W. 29th St. (nr. 8th Ave.). Tendered by Local 4, Unemployed and Project Workers Union. Admission 15c.

PHILADELPHIA, Pa.

MAX SHACHTMAN will speak on "Ten Years of the Left Opposition" and in commemoration of the October Revolution, on Friday, Nov. 11th at 1035 Spruce St., 8:30 P.M.

ON FRIDAY, Nov. 5th, James P. Cannon will speak on "The Present Situation in Europe." Same address and time as above.

Fascism and Big Business By DANIEL GUERRIN Price on Publication: \$2.00 Advance Orders: \$1.50 Mail your order today. Pioneer Publishers 100 Fifth Avenue New York

MINNEAPOLIS, MINN. TWO STUDY COURSES: "Fundamentals of Socialism"—6 Lessons W. W. Norris, Instructor "History of American Labor Movement"—6 Lessons Felix Morrow, Instructor Classes held every Monday evening beginning Sept. 26, 8 P. M.

SOCIALIST FORUM Every Sunday at 3 P.M. beginning Sept. 25. Dealing with current subjects of local, national and international interest. Good Speakers. Socialist Workers Party Hall, 919 Marquette Ave. Admission Free.

RUSSIAN BULLETIN No. 68-69, featuring several important articles by Leon Trotsky. Single copy 20c; 1 year \$2. Subscriptions and single copies on sale at Labor Book Shop, 28 East 12th St., N.Y.C.

WANT ADS LARGE, NICELY furnished room. Two closets, radio, separate entrance. Use of good revolutionary library and good set of recordings. Brooklyn. See S. Stanley, Appeal office.

ASK FOR THE APPEAL AT YOUR NEWSSTAND

SOCIALIST APPEAL Vol. II—No. 46 Saturday, October 22, 1938 Published every week by the SOCIALIST APPEAL PUBLISHING ASSOCIATION at 116 University Place, New York, N.Y. Telephone: National Office: ALgonquin 4-8547 Subscriptions: \$2.00 per year; \$1.00 for six months. Foreign: \$2.50 per year. Bundle order, 3 cents per copy. Single copies 5 cents. All checks and money orders should be made out to the Socialist Appeal Entered as second-class matter September 1, 1937, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1979. MAX SHACHTMAN, Editor HAROLD ROBERTS GEORGE CLARKE Associate Editors S. STANLEY, Business Manager

Appeal Army

Best Issue of Appeal Yet! From every viewpoint this issue of the Appeal, celebrating the 10th anniversary of our movement in America and the founding of the Fourth International, is the best we have published! In size, content and significance it surpasses all others and is something our movement will long be proud of. Thousands of extra copies were printed and are being circulated all over the country on the basis of orders sent in advance. We urge comrades and friends to send in their comments on this issue—we'll print a cross-section of these remarks next week and the week after. One matter, however, having to do with the ever-present matter of finances. This issue was, it goes without saying, a heavy drain on our exchequer! Only the additional sacrifice of comrades in New York City enabled us to go through with it. At the end of this week, we are sending out to all branches and agents the regular financial statement of their debt to the Appeal. We must have especially quick replies this time! We're doing our share by providing you with numerous and excellent issues of the paper. Try to clear up the entire back bill, if possible. And we guarantee even greater successes in the very near future. Subscriptions: The splendid pick-up in new and renewed subs lately has shown that it is really very easy to get subs for the Appeal. Look at New York City's record for the past few weeks! This has been done solely on the basis of following-up the special, anti-war issues and getting subs from interested readers. We'd like to be averaging about 50 per week within a short time and there is no reason why not. It's easy to get subs for the Appeal! Here's the list of subs that came in last week: NEW YORK CITY 18 Massachusetts 4 Illinois 3 Ohio 3 Detroit 3 Pennsylvania 2

Remind No. 1: Send in payments for the World-Congress issue right now! Notice: Because of the heavy costs incurred in printing this issue, we are forced to cancel the originally announced costs. ALL copies (including extras) will cost branches and literature agents 3c per copy. This cancels the former price of 4c for regular bundle-order copies and 1c for extra copies. Remember! 3c each copy of the 12-page issue. Send all contributions and subs to: SOCIALIST APPEAL 116 University Place New York, N. Y.

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Proletarian Greetings from the New York Downtown Branch After ten years, forward with the Fourth International to the victory of Socialism!