

Internationalism — Our Banner

By MAURICE SPECTOR
Co-Editor, New International

If there was one pillar of the early Comintern that seemed more unshakable than Gibraltar, it was its intransigent internationalism, its basic policy of world revolution. The Communist International was conceived during the world war in the course of the revolutionary struggle against social patriotism.

The collapse of the Second International was due to its opportunistic adaptation to the capitalist legality of the national state. To pillory the social patriotism of the Social Democracy, to attack its policy of coalition government, to denounce its fetishistic support of bourgeois democracy, its voting of military credits, all this was part of everyday communist agitation and propaganda. Whenever the international situation sharpened, the air resounded with Comintern pledges to work for the transformation of any imperialist war into a civil war.

Lenin's Teachings
Every communist knew that Lenin had drawn two decisive conclusions from the law of the irregularity of capitalist political and economic development: (1) that, contrary to the opinion of Kautsky, it was possible to begin the revolution in a single country, without waiting for the rest of the world; (2) that it was impossible for a single country to achieve the victory of socialism without the advance of the frontiers of the revolution in the industrial West. There was no ambiguity about this.

Again and again he repeated that the existence of the Soviet republic alongside the imperialist states was in the long run impossible. One or the other would triumph. The big historical problem of the October revolution as he saw it, and as the entire Comintern appeared to agree, lay in resolving the international problem by means of stimulating and organizing the world revolution.

So long as the post-Leninist struggle inside the Russian Communist party proceeded on such apparently separate questions, as workers' democracy, the lessons of the German communist failure of 1923, the experiences of the Anglo-Russian committee, and economic planning, many communists of the West, increasingly restive over the turn of events and the character of the Russian discussions, were still uncertain. In many cases it still seemed possible to reconcile the conflicting views within the framework of the same party and International. Loyalty to the Communist International permeated such militants to the core, and decisions would involve a rupture with what they had been accustomed to regard as "the General Staff of the World Revolution" were not taken lightly.

The Final Straw
What shook their faith in the post-Leninist Moscow leadership to the point where "loyal" acceptance of the majority thesis was no longer possible, was the final emergence of the Stalinist theory of "socialism in one country." The stand that the Russian Opposition made against this revision of Leninism proved to be a stand against the Stalinist counter-revolution. There were friends of the Opposition who thought that Trotsky was unduly magnifying the issue and allowing himself to be outsmarted. The Brandler-Thalheimer group attempted to minimize the issue as academic. Even close sympathizers of Trotsky, reading his Critique of the Draft Program of the Comintern during the Sixth Congress (1928) wondered if its author was not anticipating too much and too readily.

Experience itself has established that the official adoption of the theory of socialism in a single country, a product of the ebb of the revolution in Europe, and the defeats administered to the working class, has become the fully rounded out formula of Stalinist social-patriotism and the degeneration of the Comintern.

Renunciation of Revolution
The tactics of the Leninist Comintern in a period of capitalist stabilization were necessarily different than in a period of stormy assault on the capitalist fortress during a revolutionary crisis. But the policy of Stalinist national socialism involved a renunciation of the proletarian revolution itself. Since the adoption of that policy the consequences for both the Soviet Union and the international proletariat have been increasingly tragic. What happened, objectively speaking, is that Stalin joined Hitler in crushing out the revolutionary spirit of the working class vanguard. Even their methods became indistinguishable.

With every retreat from the policy of world revolution, with every new improvisation of popular frontism, the advance of

fascism became more rapid and more powerful. Fascism is today on the offensive. The Munich pact signals the complete bankruptcy of the whole edifice of collective security. The Popular Front is a shambles.

The Stalinists sold out the interests of the French working class for the sake of "the defense of the Soviet Union." Their "realism" has left the Soviet Union in a position of the greatest isolation. After absorbing Czechoslovakia, as he had absorbed Germany before that, thanks to the cowardly passivity of the Comintern, Hitler is now proceeding with plans for the political and economic hegemony of Europe and the future partition of the Soviet Union.

There Is No Substitute
It has been proved that the revolutionary aid of the Western workers cannot be replaced by imperialist alliances without catastrophic results for the October revolution. The Permanent Revolution, the special object of Stalinist hatred, has been replaced by permanent executions. National socialism in Russia has destroyed the soviet super-structure, replacing it with a totalitarianism as complete as Hitler's. The "socialist accumulation" of the five-year plans under Stalin rivaled the infamies of early capitalist accumulation.

Twenty years after the October revolution and the "complete victory of socialism," Denny of the New York Times reports that the coming winter in the U.S.S.R. is expected to be one of the hardest. The old familiar queues stretch for blocks. Twenty years after, the masses still wait for a pair of boots, an overcoat, a dress, a bottle of milk, a pound of butter.

Undermine the Only Force
The one force that could solve the Soviet Union's "international problem" was the working class and this is the force that the Soviet Union has consistently undermined. The policy of Soviet national socialism has been to use the workers abroad merely as diplomatic cannon fodder. Armaments are greater than ever, the power of Hitlerism has expanded, and the workers have been filled with the virus of social patriotism.

The masses deep down are against imperialist war. They are ready to struggle for peace. The task is to show them that peace is attainable only by a struggle for power. But the Stalinist parties join with the most extreme reactionaries and nationalists in their agitation and incitement for war.

The Stalinists, like Browder in the United States, no longer even talk of the "defense of the Soviet Union." They proclaim their readiness to go to the defense of their own capitalist "fatherlands." They urge their own capitalist classes to protect and further their investments in colonies and markets abroad, so that the "democracies" can checkmate the fascists in South America or China!

The sole repository of the revolutionary internationalism of the early Comintern is now the Fourth International. The small groups of the new International in all countries have courageously struggled against the current of social-patriotism and uncompromisingly exposed the sources of Stalinist corruption. The Fourth International can have no illusions that it has the present strength to deter the imperialists in their war-provocations, or save the U.S.S.R. from inner degeneration or outside attack. This strength must come from the masses and the successful penetration of the masses by the revolutionary Marxists.

It became possible then to understand the reasons for the great defeats suffered by the Communist International, the stagnation of that once great body, the paralysis that invaded the whole international as a result of the stranglehold of the Stalin bureaucracy, and also, the nature of the factional impasse in the C. P. of the U. S.

Nation-wide Expulsions
In all the leading centers of the C. P., organizers, functionaries, active rank-and-file communists, and above all, the youth, rallied around the banner of the International Left Opposition. Expulsions followed declarations of solidarity with the aforementioned three comrades. Physical violence, intellectual terrorism, political and moral bribery failed to stem the growth of our movement. The most heartening aspect in the whole situation was the manner in which the young revolutionaries resisted the pressure of the bureaucratic machine.

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IN THEIR FOOTSTEPS



First Youth Conference Was Held In Chicago In November, 1929

By ALBERT GATES

Our movement has traveled a great distance in the ten years that have passed since comrades Cannon, Abern and Shachtman presented their declaration to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the United States announcing adherence to the Russian Opposition. Prior to that, the great problems of the world movement and the sharp disputes inside the Stalinist never greatly concerned the C. P. Its decisions relating to these questions were formally taken in response to requests of the ruling bureaucracy in the Soviet Union. The struggle of the Russian Opposition was regarded as a "Russian affair" which was a bothersome interference with the inane and permanent factional disputes in the American C. P.

The Stalinist movement was struck with consternation to find that Trotskyism had found its way into the ranks of the Party. How could it be? It was already declared to have been irrevocably defeated and destroyed in a dozen different revolutions and in a dozen conferences, not least of which was the 6th World Congress. Yet, when the suppressed documents of the Russian Opposition and the writings of Leon Trotsky were made known to the revolutionary workers in the United States, the Left Opposition was born and began to attract around it a wide circle of sympathizers.

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tion in the world movement. The degeneration of the Young Communist International was traced to the invasion of the Stalin bureaucracy which transformed the youth movement into a factional instrument in the spurious struggle against Trotskyism. It showed how the American youth organization was deteriorating as a result of conditions in the Party and closed with a ringing call for support of the Left Opposition. This first document was signed by three members of the National Executive Committee of the Y. C. L. and thirty leading youth functionaries, representing six districts. New layers of supporters arose and the expulsions continued from coast to coast.

At the first conference of the Left Opposition, held on May 17, 18, and 19, 1929, the Communist League of America was formed. The conference was held on the far west side of Chicago, a city which has given birth to so many workers' organizations. It was the first time that many of the comrades had met each other. Of the thirty-one delegates and thirteen alternates present, a large proportion were youth. They came by automobile, rode the rods, and hitch-hiked to Chicago. They were tired, hungry and broke. But these difficulties in no way effected the spirit of enthusiasm of the comrades who understood that they were engaged in the great task of revitalizing and rebuilding the revolutionary movement.

The spirit of the young comrades was contagious to all the comrades who came from different parts of the country with a variety of experiences and with years of service in the movement. These young comrades took an active part in the conference deliberations and were destined to play a key role in the future development of our organization. The presence of a large number of youth delegates and alternates (in some cities our organization was composed entirely of youth) made necessary the holding of a sub-conference to discuss the tasks of the youth.

The Youth Meet
Thus, our first youth conference was really in the nature of an adjunct gathering of the formation conference of the Communist League. We were concerned primarily with the manner in which youth work could be carried on under conditions where the main task was to firmly root the League and popularize the program and platform of the Left Opposition. At that time we still conducted ourselves as an expelled faction of the Communist Party, as a propaganda organization.

The youth conference, attended by about fifteen regular delegates and alternates, held a long and serious discussion of its tasks. We decided that our main task was the building of the Communist League. A separate youth organization was out of question. However, wherever forces permitted and the situation was favorable, the younger comrades were to conduct special activity among the Communist youth as well as detached and unorganized revolutionary youth.

Since that conference a good deal of progress has been recorded. Within a year, the question of a youth organization became a practical one. We began in New York with the organization of a Marxist Youth Club. Similar organizations were set up in other cities. In November, 1931, YOUNG SPARTACUS, the first Left Opposition youth paper, made its appearance. With the paper as a base our youth movement continued to grow and in 1932 the Spartacus Youth League was formed.

Looking back over the past years, it is extremely heartening and gratifying to note that, with but few exceptions, all the young comrades who participated in the first conference and who aided in the founding of YOUNG SPARTACUS and the Spartacus Youth League are still with us. They are no longer engaged in youth work. But they are active and leading Party workers. An entirely new layer of young revolutionaries have taken their place. Our early youth organization carried out its basic task. It trained politically and organizationally experienced revolutionaries for Party work. This fact alone testifies to the tremendous vitality of the revolutionary ideas of our movement.

Our youth movement of the present is fortunate in many ways. It enjoys the heritage of ten years of long struggle. It is a revitalized revolutionary theory, the theory of Marxism. The past two decades form a tremendous school of revolutionary experience which is theirs. And it is permeated with the glorious spirit of revolutionary internationalism.

But above all, our youth organization is fortunate in that it is associated with a Party which understands its problems and is prepared to lend genuine aid in their solution. The Y. P. S. L. can count upon the intimate comradeship of the Party and its leading cadre, so large a number of whom have themselves emerged from the revolutionary youth movement.

Pages from the History of the Youth Movement

By NATHAN GOULD
National Organizer, Y.P.S.L.
When the Communist League of America (Opposition) was formed, its membership was composed of a large number of youth expelled from the Young Communist League. Yet there were not sufficient forces in this small organization to permit the launching of a separate youth section. All forces were necessarily concentrated in the effort to build a strong Communist League organization.

Early in 1931 the National Committee of the C.L.A. took steps to prepare for the organization of a youth section. A sub-committee of the National Committee of the C.L.A. was elected. It was the National Youth Committee of the C.L.A. and was instructed to organize and conduct work in the youth field. The original committee was composed of the following comrades: Herbert Capellis, Joe Carter, George Clarke, Charles Curtiss, Al Glotzer, George Ray, Max Sterling, Hank Stone, and Martin Abern representing the National Committee of the C.L.A.

Publish "Young Spartacus"
On the initiative of this committee "Young Spartacus" the organ of the National Youth Committee, was published as a monthly. The first issue of "Young Spartacus" appeared in December of 1931 under the direction of an editorial committee of Abern, Carter and Ray. The paper (chief work of the National Youth Committee in the first period) was published only through great sacrifices. Appearing first as a 4-page tabloid it was enlarged to an 8-pager in September, 1932, and remained so until the beginning of 1936 when the S.Y.L. entered the Young Peoples Socialist League.

Also, under the supervision of the National Youth Committee, youth committees of various branches of the C.L.A. were established with the object of carrying on youth work on a local scale.

It was not until November 8, 1931 that the efforts of these committees bore fruit in the actual launching of a youth organization in N. Y., the Marxist Youth Club. The Marxist Youth Club was however not officially a part of the Trotskyist movement although its sympathies were with it. On Feb. 7, 1932, the Marxist Youth Club changed its name to "Spartacus Youth Club," adopted "Young Spartacus" as its official organ and thereby became the first Trotskyist youth organization in America. This Club set as its tasks the education of its membership in the "teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky" and "to build a fraction in the official Young Communist League and win its ranks for the opposition."

New Clubs Organize
The Second "Spartacus Youth Club" to be formed in America was organized in Chicago in August 1932. It was the product of months of effort on the part of comrades N. Sath, C. Curtiss and N. Gould. It began with a membership of 8, grew to 15 within 2 months and continued to flourish in activities and influence during the existence of the S.Y.L. The Chicago organization composed almost entirely of expelled Y.C.L.'ers, endorsed "Young Spartacus" as its official organ and affiliated to the Chicago local of the C.L.A. thus becoming its official youth section.

In the next two years (1933 and 1934) S.Y.L. clubs were formed in Minneapolis, Youngstown, Los Angeles, Newark, Kansas City, and San Francisco. These clubs however did not exist or function as a national organization. They were actually autonomous bodies or, more accurately, under the direction and guidance of the respective local branches of the C.L.A. The activities of these clubs were primarily educational, and fraction work in the Y.C.L. This naturally obtained from the perspective to reform the Y.C.L.

First Convention
The early period was devoted to laying the basis for a national organization by building "clubs" in new territories and strengthening those that already existed. It was not until the summer of 1934 that the S.Y.C.'s were joined together into a National League and not until after their first national convention in December of 1934, that they really began to function as such.

By the time the First National Convention convened in N. Y. in December of 1934, the S.Y.L. had grown under the leadership of comrades Glotzer and Carter from the Marxist Youth Club of 30 members in N. Y. (1931) to an organization of about 150 members with branches in New York (5), Chicago (4), Newark, Youngstown and Los Angeles. The Convention marked a great step forward. It acted upon all important problems before the S.Y.L., adopted resolutions on the

Y.C.L. (no longer a revolutionary youth organization) and on the Y.P.S.L. It became the official youth section of the Workers Party, newly formed from a fusion of the C.L.A. and the American Workers Party. It endorsed a call for the formation of the Fourth International and the Fourth Youth International and it affiliated to the youth section of the Committee of Four calling for the Fourth International. It endorsed the decisions of the International Youth conference (Stockholm Youth Bureau) at Holland held in Feb. 1933, and the work of the representative of the National Youth Committee at that conference—comrade Glotzer.

The First National Convention
The First National Convention of the S.Y.L. also adopted a vigorous plan of action aimed at increasing the membership of the organization and making the S.Y.L. a factor in the struggles of the American youth. The Convention elected comrade Gould the National Secretary and comrade Garrett as editor of the "Young Spartacus." In addition it elected a national bureau composed of Reva Crane, Bill Streeter, Jane Ogden, M. Garrett and N. Gould.

Organization Grows
The year following the convention was one of vigorous work and growth. There was a great deal of work in united fronts, in anti-fascist and anti-war work; work in the C.C.C. camps among the youth in the armed forces became very modestly. Mass meetings, tours, student and industrial work, defense work especially around the Scottsboro case, active participation in the International movement (The S.Y.L. was

the first to denounce the machinations of the centrist dominated Stockholm Youth Bureau and finally broke with it after its impotence as a force for a 4th youth international was exposed). The branches of the S.Y.L. were active in unemployed struggles and in strikes. For the first time members of the S.Y.L. led strikes of young workers in Chicago, in Philadelphia and in Southern Illinois. "New branches were formed in Boston, State College, Pa., Philadelphia, Columbus, New Haven, San Francisco, San Diego, Akron, Allentown, Minneapolis and Detroit. The Spartacus Youth League became a national organization.

Merge with Revolutionary Y.P.S.L.

The Second National Convention of the S.Y.L. held in March 1936 decided to disband the S.Y.L. and to enter the Y.P.S.L. which was moving very rapidly to the left. Approximately 500 members of the S.Y.L. throughout the country entered the Y.P.S.L. in April of 1936. The Spartacus tendency in the Y.P.S.L. merged with the revolutionary left wing in that organization. Eighteen months after the entry of the S.Y.L. into the Y.P.S.L., the revolutionary elements by an overwhelming majority took over the convention and the organization of the Y.P.S.L. The "new" revolutionary Y.P.S.L. (endorsing the policy of the Socialist Appeal group in the S.P.) began its career after the September 1937 convention with approximately 1,000 members. In the Y.P.S.L. were embodied the spirit and the great revolutionary tradition of the old "Spartacus Youth League."

The Early Days

(Continued from page 4)

find out or is not the mere fact that they were expelled unanimously by the Polcom sufficient for you as a guarantee to treat him as an enemy of the party today?

"SULKKANEN: You put the question in a very incorrect way. One has to find out things before one can fight anybody."

Instructive dialogue! A few months later, Lovestone, himself expelled, was compelled to plead in vain with the party members "to find out" what he stood for before they decided to "treat him as an enemy of the party." In our case, the mere fact of our expulsion was considered enough, and God help any party member who, before condemning us, had the impudence to want to find out what we stood for. In the subsequent "trials," Lovestone-Foster and Co. did us many a good service by expelling out of hand any party member who wanted "to find out things," for in every case, once the expelled comrade did "find out," he entered enthusiastically into our ranks.

"BURGLARY BOLSHEVISM"

Our present headquarters may not be very sumptuous, but they are certainly less modest than those we started with. For many months after our expulsion, our "office" was one of the rooms in Jim Cannon's home on East 19th Street, New York; then—progress!—one desk in a room of my home on the next street. On December 23, two months after our expulsion from the party, our "office" was raided in its occupants' absence, raided not by the police but by Messrs. Lovestone, Stachel... and the G.P.U.—a job just as thorough, we dare say, as the one recently accomplished on the private residence of the same Jay Lovestone, by the same G.P.U., in connection with the fight in the auto workers union. Times change...

Everything in sight was taken, once the door was jimmied open by the experts. Four days later, in Lovestone's Daily Worker, there began a really hair-raising exposure of the "American Trotskyists" in good Hearst style, based on what had been stolen from our "office." A subscription to our paper, the MILITANT, had been sent in for Amos Pinchot, showing, according to the Daily Worker, our connections with "out and out bourgeois individuals." The Freiheit embellished the story by writing of "a series of documents about the American Trotskyists which demonstrate that they are allied with big capitalists who give them money to carry on their propaganda against the Communist Party." (Among the Daily Worker's subscribers at that time were the National Association of Manufacturers, Warner Brothers and the Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Fleet!)

No less damning was proof of our illicit relations with Max Eastman who, as Trotsky's translator, had given us a letter of introduction to the publishers of "The Real Situation in Russia" asking that we be allowed to see the press clippings. This purloined evidence of our cynical counter-revolutionary activity was duly reproduced in the Daily Worker.

Another reproduced letter revealed the existence of a Mr. Sard who seems to have been interested also in music, and director in this country of "Schubert Week," he had apparently visited President Coolidge in order, with the aid of the Vienna government, to facilitate putting over the commemoration of the great composer. The Daily Worker did its very best to argue that, barely started, we had already joined in a sinister plot with American imperialism and the Austrian government (but why the Austrian, or only the Austrian?) to overthrow the Soviet Union.

In a couple of days, the "sensational exposure" petered out. But we never got back our documents and letters; we never got back the petty cash and money orders that had been stolen; and Marty Abern never got back his five beautifully-bound volumes of the Inprecor, which probably repose to this day on the shelves of Mr. Jack Stachel, noted contemporary advocate of democracy and law and order.

The Sequel

There is a very interesting sequel to this burglary, which inaugurated a large-scale campaign of meeting-disruption gangsterism and violence against our movement first by Lovestone and the Stalinists, and then by the Stalinists. The sequel occurred some eight months later, shortly after the expulsion of Lovestone from the party. He was charged with having burglarized the National Office of the Party and lifting a lot of documents for his ousted faction. The moral indignation of the remaining party leaders may well be imagined. One of them, William Abrams, wrote a comment on the affair in the Freiheit of September 1, 1929, which merits perpetuation as a document:

"And it is to you, former comrades—again, not to those who ran after a Lore, a Salutsky and other pestilences—that I come with the question: Don't you think that the same tactic is applied against Cannon as is criminal when applied to the Communist Party? Don't you think that breaking into the offices of the Central Committee and of Section One, the taking away of documents and lists from there, is an act that must be condemned?"

These two plaintive sentences say everything that is necessary—about Burglary-Bolshevism, about William Abrams, about the man he called his "former leader," Jay Lovestone, about the whole poisonous mire of Stalinism.

Amaze Your Friends!
Confuse Your Enemies!

Come in costume to the
HARVEST MASQUERADE

at
Irving Plaza
15th Street and Irving Place

November 5th
8:30 P. M.

Swing Band • Entertainment
Competitions • Elegant Prizes

Admission: 50¢ with Costume
65¢ without

Aspices:

Socialist Workers Party