

## In the World of Labor

By Paul G. Stevens

### Congress of French Workers and Peasants' Socialist Party (P.S.O.P.)

Two weeks ago, on May 28-29, the French Workers and Peasants Socialist Party held its first regular congress in the proletarian center of Saint-Ouen, a suburb of Paris. Some 160 delegates, representing close to 5,000 members, gathered there to sum up the party's experiences since the split with Leon Blum's S.F.I.O. and to outline a course of action for the future. Representative of the drift leftward of various strata who have broken with the parties corrupted by social reformism and Stalinism, this gathering has its importance for the development of the revolutionary movement toward the building of the new, Fourth International.

As was to be expected, the Saint-Ouen congress was not at all a homogeneous body of thought. Most of the participants had only recently left the ranks of the old parties. The centrist current of Marceau Pivert still proved to be predominant. But the revolutionary Marxist tendency made considerable headway in the course of the sessions.

On the all-important war question, the revolutionary defeatist position put forward in the motion drawn up jointly by Jean Rous (formerly of the French Fourth Internationalist party, the P.O.I.), Daniel Guerin, the author of "Fascism and Big Business" and Lucien Wetz, the leader of the P.S.O.P. youth, received 59 votes, the same number as the motion of the Pivert tendency drawn up by Michel Collinet. An outright pacifist motion received 26 votes and a motion by Lucien Herard attempting to strike a middle course between the Rous-Guerin-Wetz and Collinet motions received 45 votes.

A practical motion on anti-war activity, however, proposing to exclude in the future collaboration with such alliances in France as the Keep America Out of War Committee in this country, received 53 votes as against 120 for the Pivert motion endorsing such alliances.

Highly significant for the revolutionary current was the result of the discussion as to whether membership in the Freemasonry organization was compatible with membership in the P.S.O.P. After a heated debate, the Guerin motion for incompatibility received the highest vote, 76, while two separate motions opposing Guerin's each polled 62 and 50 votes respectively. This problem which touches upon the very essence of the proletarian character of the party is bound to continue to agitate the P.S.O.P. in the future if one is to be guided by the great concern and dissatisfaction shown by many unattached rank and file worker delegates at the fact that the leader of the party is still a Freemason.

On the trade union question, a motion proposing the organization of party fractions received 62 votes, while one opposing organized party work in the unions received 122 votes.

Finally, on the international question, the congress voted to affiliate with "International Marxist Center" (formerly the "London Bureau") by a vote of 120, against a motion by Wetz proposing non-affiliation for the time being which received 42 votes. An amendment by the latter recommending that an invitation to the coming conference of the "International Marxist Center" in September be extended to the Fourth International was accepted by agreement after considerable discussion.

## On the Line . . . with Bill Morgan

Traveling is about the fondest thing I am of especially when there is plenty of scenery and a nice comfortable seat from which to look at it and then too, you meet the most interesting people and find out all kinds of new facts which help to broaden the mind and open the eyes like the story about the Mormon named Huberdub who was a nice quiet homebody until he had a revelation which is the result of consuming too many oysters and bananas just before going to bed.

Huberdub was a quiet little guy like I said and was respected by all his Mormon neighbors when all of a sudden he announced to the citizens of Utah that the divine spirits had dropped in unexpected in the middle of the night and told him that there was a lot of easy pickings in the dead center of the big snow covered mountain across the valley and that he is elected to organize the farmers for the purpose of extracting said valuable minerals without losing no time.

### Faithful Buy a "Dream"

So he sure enough collects a lot of dough and gets a gang of volunteers who are willing to work for shares in the promised take instead of cash money which is after all pretty material stuff and not at all to be compared with a barn full of gold, etc. and this Huberdub bird starts work on a hole in the side of the Rocky Mountains which he calls the "Dream Mine".

After several years of digging and blasting and at the same time collecting plenty on shares the Mormon top committee decides that enough is plenty and that this revelation does not smell exactly kosher and they hand Huberdub his walking papers. But there is a lot of poor folk who figure their investment should not be forgotten just like that and they hang on with some donating the sweat of their brows and others mortgaging the family homestead in the hope of retiring on the fat of the land when the "Dream" breaks down and the promised dividends begin to flow like Huberdub said the Angels said.

This goes on for a long time because the more the poor suckers put into the scheme the more they hang around and the harder they work until one day a few weary workers corner Huberdub and put the question right to him with the aid of strong language and a couple of pick-axes which they have learned to use with dexterity if I may use such a word.

### Huberdub Falls Fast

Huberdub is nobody's fool and he stalls off the neck-tie party with a bigger whopper which is that it is no less than an International Plot of the Government and Bankers and city folks not to accept Huberdub's "precious stones." So back to work for the suckers

A good deal of time was taken in a discussion of the "Trotskyist infiltration" of the party, attacks against the Trotskyists being made mainly by the defenders of the Freemasons in the course of the dispute over whether the membership in the latter organization was compatible with membership in the P.S.O.P. The attacks fell flat when the speakers of the revolutionary tendency refused to be hornsogged into an anti-Trotskyist campaign and insisted on the discussion of the political content of the motions and resolutions proposed. The attackers did manage, however, by sheer weight of numbers to push through an organizational statute requiring eighteen months' continuous membership in the P.S.O.P. of former members of other proletarian parties before they are accorded equal rights with the other party members. The statute received 96 votes and was opposed with 88 votes and 16 abstentions.

All in all, the congress, as recorded in the votes quoted, showed that the leftward development of the P.S.O.P. has not by any means been concluded, that consistent revolutionary sentiment within its ranks is sufficiently strong to augur well for the future. By the way, on the matter of practical party work in the period ahead, the Marxist minority declared that just as in the previous period, when it proved itself in action, it would have no difficulty in collaborating with the party leadership.

### Willie Gallacher, M.P., and British Imperialism

Recently the Appeal reported the formation in England of the "Friends of the Irish Republic," an organization which has set as its task the organization of a revolutionary socialist party in Ireland and which has already held demonstrations in London of a mass character. That such a move was in the cards goes without saying ever since the degeneration of the Communist party which has left the field in the Irish fight against British imperialism to the heroic but muddled and utopian terrorists of the I.R.A. What finally gave the impetus to the move may be gathered from such an item as the following which we reprint from the Militant of London:

"During the Great War to End War, 1914-18, the workers of the Clyde and other industrial centers insisted on fighting for better conditions and workers' rights. They caused a great deal of annoyance to the government which denounced them as unpatriotic and disloyal. Among these disloyal and unpatriotic workers was one William Gallacher.

"Now Mr. Gallacher is Communist M.P. for West Fife—and is he loyal? When Mr. Chamberlain made a statement to the effect that Northern Ireland was to be exempted from conscription in order to give scope to its loyalism, Mr. (late comrade) Gallacher rose in his wrath. No longer was he the Clydeside militant who defied Lloyd George and the engineering bosses, but one of the boys of the bulldog breed, stirred to his innermost depths because his patriotism had been called into question. He demanded to know 'whether the Prime Minister in making such a declaration about North Ireland is not casting a slight on Scotland, Wales and Northern England.' Truly, as the party of which Gallacher is a member so frequently remarks, times have changed."

The whole no-strike policy of the Stalinists stems from their line of working for a military pact between the imperialist U.S.A. government and the Stalin bureaucracy. To accomplish this, they bleached their ultra-red in politics to a light saffron, and carrying this into the trade unions, used their former militant reputation to suppress and discourage militancy, divert strikes up blind alleys, etc., in order to prove to War-Deal Roosevelt that they had something to offer in return for a pact. To War-Deal Roosevelt, worried about labor's resistance to war propaganda, particularly the seamen's section, this was a welcome help, particularly with regard to maritime, even if he does not openly thank the "boys."

The effect of the above policy was "verbal agreements" with the shipowners, excepting one or two contracts with minor companies, which were blithely violated, the shipowners being convinced that the N.M.U. would not fight. When the membership finally became aroused, the Stalinist leadership finally managed to get a blanket contract with the freighter companies, but with a score of loopholes that the company could take advantage of to nullify anything worth while. Particularly rotten is the clause guaranteeing the company against crew action. Is it any wonder that Curran had to down the strike in "hot oil"? For if he had authorized the crews to take action against loading hot oil, the freighter companies would have declared the agreement nullified, and this would have doubly exposed Curran and Co., by showing in action how worthless the agreement was, basically. (Contrast this with the successful refusal of S.I.U. crews, under S.I.U. contracts, to take "hot oil.")

A further development: Because of the above mentioned policy of working for a U.S.A.-Stalin pact, Curran and Co. had to go down the line with the government fink halls and fink training ships. (This is the real reason, not the garbage about S.I.U. or A.F.L. backdoor shipping.) Therefore,

the tanker strike fiasco, the King trial, and the Gulf autonomy action, reflect the crisis that the N.M.U. is in as a result of the whole past policy of the Stalinists. Unless this is understood, any attempts at a progressive solution of this crisis by the bona fide militants in the N.M.U. will prove fruitless, and will result only in a large section of the N.M.U. membership losing all faith in unionism. It can all be summed up as follows: A policy of bending the knee to the shipowners, a no-strike policy, depending on the government, etc., have made of the N.M.U. an organization of 50,000 weak. By contrast, the S.U.P., following a class struggle policy, i.e., recognition of the shipowner as the seamen's natural enemy, a strike policy, and no dependence on the government, but only on its own strength and that of brother unions, have made it an organization of 5,000 strong.

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## N.M.U. in Crisis As Strike Ends

Stalinist Leadership Doomed Strike by Playing Ball with Government—Gulf Seamen Show Way to Progressive Action

(Continued from Page 4)

members of the N.M.U. were forced to accept on freighters by order of Curran, thus being compelled to fink on their own striking brother members. Except for two or three insignificant companies with which contracts were signed, the strikers were obliged to end the strike without gaining any of their demands.

The situation is full of evidence that the strike was horribly bungled from the beginning, chief item being the careful preparation of the King trial months ago designed as a diversion of the membership's anger from the Curran machine's mounting record of betrayal of their interests. The King trial and expulsion proceedings are being handled in the best Moscow Trial fashion. There is no question, of course, of King's actual guilt. This has been known for some time, particularly by Curran and the Stalinists. But the danger here is that the leadership is unloading its own crimes on associates who participated equally with them, attempting to connect them with the bona fide militants so as to smear the latter and prevent their becoming a center of organized progressive opposition.

Bent Knee to Bosses

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N.M.U. men packed the Hoffman Island training school. Is it not curious that shortly after the strike began, the school suddenly found room for a helluva lot of new men? Is it, perchance, possible that, as N.M.U. members report, there were suddenly a lot of nice finky jobs offered on struck tankers to Hoffman Island government-trained "union men," who showed what they had really learned, by patriotically grabbing the jobs?

Gulf Shows Way

The present status of the action is: The strike is over, the boycott continues, and, although the former crews have little chance to get their jobs back, the N.M.U. leadership still hypocritically holds out the idea that in a very short time they will be able to control the tankers again. How? Members should try to get aboard the tankers (the company, of course, will welcome them back with open arms) fight the Standard Oil company union, by quoting the Wagner Act, using the N.M.U. crews who have not reached port yet, as a base for further organization.

Yet in spite of the terrible mess the Curranites have made of things, the prospect for a progressive reformation of the union exists. It is reflected, even if not always with full clarity, in the Gulf action of declaring itself an autonomous body, within the N.M.U., but paying no dues to New York, nor accepting its decisions. Full details are not available as we go to press, but the salient facts are, in addition to the above:

(1) The Gulf evidently is not taking the fatal step of breaking completely with the organization, but seems to be following roughly the strategy of the West Coast Firemen, in fighting the Headquarters organization, where the main power of the Stalinists is concentrated.

(2) The Gulf announces that it will issue a paper, expressing its own point of view. We hope that the Gulf will have learned from the Mariner's Club experience, and that it will come forward with a positive program. A purely negative fight will only result in further confusion, and enable enemies of labor to infiltrate into the Gulf opposition and discredit it, as happened with the Mariner's Club. Further, the Stalinists are fully capable of exploiting any purely negative opposition, to their own ends.

The main fight must be on the basis of a positive progressive program, in contrast with the reactionary program of the Curran-Stalinists. In this way the membership on the Atlantic will be able to choose between two definite lines, clearly, and in this way, if the Gulf proposals are of the positive progressive character that we think they will be, they will be able to swing the Atlantic District membership to their side, unify the two coasts, and be in a position to consummate unity with the West Coast organizations of maritime labor which are so essential for the very continuance of maritime unionism.

Indications are that the Gulf's understanding of progressive maritime unionism is very close to that of the S.U.P. If such is the case, then the Gulf will progress in influence, and will be able to play a real role in the fight to establish one national union in maritime based on a progressive, class-struggle policy.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

CAMP SEVEN OAKS. Eatentown. N. J. Tennis. Swimming. Ping-pong. Plumbing. \$2.50 per day. \$14 a week. Car leaves every Friday at 7 p.m. from 58 E. 4th St. to Camp. Make reservations, please! You may also pitch your tent at Seven Oaks. We equip it and you can have use of Camp Kitchen. \$20 for the summer. Phone: Eatentown 515.

BY POPULAR DEMAND! Repeat performance of "Bury the Dead," presented by the Theatre of Youth at the Downtown Labor Center, 51 East 7th St., Sat., June 24, 9:30 P.M. Dancing, refreshments. Subscription 25c. Auspices, Downtown Branch.

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### Toward the Party Convention

## On Mass Work and Its Relation to The Struggle Against Stalinism

By JAMES P. CANNON

Since the death of Lenin and the beginning of the decline and degeneration of the Russian Revolution, the most important and decisive factor in the defeats of the working class has been the Stalinized Comintern. An understanding of this central problem has been and remains the key to fruitful revolutionary work. At all stages of the struggle to reassemble the scattered and disoriented elements of the proletarian vanguard, the analysis of Stalinism occupied first place. Those who misunderstood this misunderstood everything and condemned themselves to futility and defeat. Only those who gave the right answer to this question—the and the Fourth Internationalists alone did this—were able to move forward and gain strength.

This holds true also for the present and the near future. The center of gravity in all revolutionary work shifts from ideological battles in the isolated circles of the vanguard to mass agitation and the penetration of the workers' mass movement. Here also Stalinism is the most formidable obstacle. Those who ignore this obstacle or deny its existence soon bump their heads against reality. The struggle against Stalinism can in no way be moderated. The forms and methods of the struggle, however, must be adapted to changed circumstance and new environments. We have yet to do this effectively.

Mass work is a simple enough prescription, but those who try to over-simplify its application have very painful experiences. It is a big error to think good will and hard work alone are enough to gain a leading influence in the mass movement. Parties and groups which operate on such a simple formula usually work for the benefit of others less addicted to Christian ideas.

### "Ignoring" the Stalinists

In the past we have heard many lectures on the art of simplified mass work in the Socialist Party, especially from its most stupid wing, the "Clarityites." With a self-assurance born of ignorance and inexperience, they explained how they would win over the masses, including the Stalinist workers, simply by setting a good example of "constructive work" and "ignoring" the Stalinist Party. We know what happened to them, and to others like them. To the extent that they built or helped to build organizations, the disciplined machine of Stalinism took the control away from them and put them to work as errand boys and stooges (Workers Alliance, Auto Union, etc.).

No, you cannot ignore the Stalinists. More than that, you cannot gain a single inch of ground and hold it in the trade unions without an intelligent and unrelenting fight against Stalinism. This, to borrow an expression from Grover Cleveland, is a condition, not a theory. Stalinism in the United States has taken on the proportions of a mass movement and has become an evil power of tremendous scope in the trade unions, especially in the more progressive and militant sections. How can any comrade active in the trade union movement conceal this fact from himself? It stares him in the face at every turn. And why should we wish to conceal it? It is necessary to face reality and deal with it. Otherwise we are fumbling in the dark.

Our comrades, with perhaps a few exceptions, understand this very well. Fascist sentiments toward the Stalinist turncoats and finger-men do not infect our movement very seriously. But what we do not yet understand—and we are all more or less culpable on this score, I think—is how to fight Stalinism most effectively in the light of the new developments and under new conditions. Great changes have taken place in recent years, in our own position and in the position and the composition of the Stalinist Party. It is now generally recognized that the degeneration of the Stalinist Party along the lines of social patriotism has become definitive. There is no longer any attempt to conceal it. The pretended revolutionists of yesterday are down on all fours before the imperialist masters. Browder's taste for shoe leather is like a perverted lust. The main concern of the assorted Browders is to convince the masters of the sincerity of their renegacy.

### Fighting Stalinism Today

All this has brought about a change in the position of Stalinism and our relation to it. In days past we had to fight Stalinism for influence over the proletarian vanguard. In the main that chapter is closed. The class-conscious revolutionists (naturally, ex-revolutionists do not belong to this category) have turned away from Stalinism. The new recruits who constitute the overwhelming majority of the present membership and sympathizing circles of the Communist Party are utter strangers to Marxist doctrine. This transformation imposes not a slackening of our fight but different methods of conducting it.

We began our struggle primarily with programmatic criticism addressed to vanguard workers who knew something about the doctrines and traditions of the revolutionary movement. They were capable of interesting themselves in such questions as "the theory of

socialism in one country" and the whole train of theoretical and practical consequences flowing from it. Those who responded to our critical work have constituted the basic cadres of our movement. This was work well done. It was an unavoidable stage in our development, the prerequisite for all that is to follow. It was in essence a factional struggle within the restricted circle of the vanguard.

Our error consists, not in continuing the fight against Stalinism with unabated vigor—that is necessary, more than ever—but in clinging to out-moded methods and types of argument. The average Stalinist worker of the present day finds most of this over his head. What does "socialism in one country" mean to a worker who lacks elementary instruction in the meaning and principles of socialism? What does a deviation from Leninism mean to one who vaguely associates Lenin in his mind with historical figures of bourgeois democracy like Jefferson and Paine? We must find a different, simpler approach to the present day Stalinist worker. We have to take note of the great differences between him and the Stalinist militant of ten and fifteen years ago and address him accordingly. Above all, we must distinguish between deceived workers in the ranks and the conscious scoundrels of the C.P. bureaucracy.

### A Basic Distinction for Us

This latter point is all-important for our future success. Without realizing it we have been slipping into the same error we once criticized in the Comintern during the frenzy of the "third period," when Social Democratic leaders and workers were all lumped together indiscriminately.

The composition of the Stalinist movement has been profoundly changed. Much of it is worthless, that is sure. The complete adaptation of Stalinism to bourgeois democracy and patriotism has had the effect of attracting toward it a good-sized horde of petty-bourgeois dilettantes and pseudo-intellectuals who are nothing more than liberals of an especially unattractive variety. But in addition to this trash the C.P. has acquired a strong following of a different kind in the trade unions. Discount all the careerists who are bribed by the C.P. to serve it, and all the stupid ones and weaklings who are terrorized, and there still remains a veritable army of militant but un-schooled and misguided workers who support the Stalinist party and constitute the backbone of its power in the unions. We will begin to make real advances in the mass movement when we learn how to approach these workers and win them over.

They have not come to the C.P., either as members or sympathizers, as the result of a deliberate study of its present program, but in the course of struggle. They have been attracted to Stalinism by a combination of factors—its aggressive methods, its demagoguery, the memory of past militancy, the lack of another strong force articulating their sentiments of discontent, etc. They have not in their hearts joined the C.P. to fight for "democracy." It is not their ambition to maintain the status quo which spells privation and misery for the great bulk of them; but rather, in some way, by collective action to change it. Between these deceived workers and the cynical bureaucracy of Stalinism there is an enormous chasm.

### A Deep Contradiction

The contradiction between the leadership and the proletarian sections of the ranks is perhaps deeper in the Stalinist Party than in any workers' organization in history. The more openly the bureaucrats announce their apostasy and confirm it in deeds, the deeper must this contradiction grow. The ranks of the C.P. continually seethe with discontent which is smothered by repressions and expulsions, only to break out afresh. Browder's announcement of a new purge of "spies and wreckers" is eloquent testimony to the internal crisis of the party. This crisis is in its whole essence a reflection of the irreconcilable conflict between the aspirations and desires of the shamefully deceived workers in the ranks and the bureaucrats' cold-blooded and deliberate betrayal of the movement to the imperialist war machine.

Expulsions take place continually. But due, I think, in large part to the ineptness of our work and our lack of a proper approach to the Stalinist workers, too many of them simply fall by the wayside in disillusionment and despair.

We must re-examine this question. We must learn how to appeal to and reason with the former in a friendly and comradely manner and denounce the latter in the tone they deserve as betrayers of their own membership.

We must take thought once again of the tactic of the united front. Did it not serve in its day as the best means of separating workers who aspired to struggle for better things from leaders who sabotaged and betrayed that struggle? Why can it not serve again as a revolutionary weapon against the most corrupt and consciously treacherous clique of leaders the history of the labor movement has ever known, the foul bureaucracy of Stalinism?

## MASS MEETING

Greet The Anti-War Convention of the Socialist Workers Party! Hear The Internationalist Position on War!

Chairman: JAMES P. CANNON

Reporter for the Political Committee: MAX SHACHTMAN

Speakers: V. E. DUNNE of Minneapolis, GENORA JOHNSON of Flint, GLEN TRIMBLE of San Francisco, GEORGE CLARKE of Detroit, REUBEN PLASKETT OF NEWARK, NATHAN GOULD, National Secretary Y.P.S.L.

FRIDAY, JUNE 30, 8 P.M.

Irving Plaza, Irving Place at 15th Street

ADMISSION 25c