

In the Labor Unions

By B. J. WIDICK

The importance of labor unity is emphasized every time any kind of a meeting between CIO and AFL officials is reported in the press by the prominence given to those reports.

And when President Roosevelt's conference with John L. Lewis and William Green was announced it naturally was given widest publicity. For this was a very important meeting.

Each week that brings Roosevelt's determination to participate in the second world war to a stronger conviction, also emphasizes that the continued rivalry and struggle between the labor organizations disrupts the plans of the war machine. This has often been explained in previous columns in the Socialist Appeal.

Since "unofficial" intervention by Roosevelt through Madame Perkins brought no results, Roosevelt took the bull by the horns and summoned Lewis and Green to a conference.

Will Lewis Agree?

Proposals from the War Department to the CIO and the AFL on the role of unions in war time had been studied by the labor chieftains. A general picture of these proposals is given by Robert Bendiner in the current issue of the Nation.

"In the M-Day preview now showing before an exclusive audience of trade union executives, the program for labor is reliably held to look something like this: First an emergency period will be proclaimed, even before the declaration of war, during which the President will suspend the provisions of the Walsh-Healy Act, which requires the maintenance of specific labor standards in the manufacture of products bought by the federal government. During this period, and subsequently, the Employment Service, now removed from the jurisdiction of the Labor Department and placed under the supervision of Paul V. McNutt, will become a key agency, geared to distribute and furnish adequate supplies of skilled labor to all war industries and to prevent its diversion into armed forces."

War Dictatorship

Outright capitulation to these totalitarian — and shocking although not surprising — proposals of the War Department would sound the death knell of union independence, and expose Lewis and Green beyond all repair.

However, already a section of the AFL and the CIO leaders have accepted in principle the ideas of the militarists. The blast of the Navy Department against the CIO reflects its aggravation at the resistance it has thus far met from part of the top CIO circle.

Is it a wonder that Lewis entered the White House with trepidation? And that he was very silent after the conference, in marked contrast to his bombastic utterances after the conference last Spring with Roosevelt and Green?

Roosevelt talked cold turkey to the labor leaders at the conference last week. Last Spring he tried to use a big stick but it didn't have much weight behind it. For that was in the pre-war period. Now Lewis and Green understand, if they had any doubts, the deadly seriousness of the Roosevelt demand for labor unity behind his war program.

Clubbing was not necessary for Green. He has indicated often enough that he is ready to serve as an agent of the war machine at any time. But Lewis has been a bad actor, as his Labor Day speech indicated. Lewis is more subject to rank and file pressure. His coolness and reluctance to the Roosevelt program has been obvious.

Now comes the big test. Will Lewis try to outdo Green? Seek to utilize the plans of the War Department to establish himself as the chief lieutenant of the Army within the labor movement? Or can the ranks of the CIO put on more pressure and force Lewis to resist the reactionary proposals of Roosevelt. Can the CIO call for labor unity against the war program, instead of being forced into a unity behind the program? This is the vital issue before the American labor movement today.

The future of the labor movement rests on its accepting the road of struggle against the Roosevelt war plans, uniting behind a program of militant action to preserve its liberties, advance its organization, and obtain its rights in collective bargaining.

Labor and The Second World War

By J. R. Johnson

VII

The failures of Russia, the degradation of Russia, are in the last analysis due to the failure of the workers of the world to establish socialism. Had countries like France, Britain, Germany, and the United States followed the road to collective ownership and planned economy, what they would have done in twenty years would not only have lifted the workers and the entire population of these countries to undreamt of heights of social well-being and equality. It would have prevented the emergence of such a hydra-headed monster as the Stalinist bureaucracy and its corrupt spawn, the Browders, the Fosters, the Fords, and their kindred throughout the world.

Those who have studied the true causes of the rise and decline of Soviet Russia know that its history is an argument not against, but for socialism, an indictment not of collective ownership and planned economy but of the chaos of capitalism. It is capitalism that, using the cowardice and selfishness of the Stalinist bureaucrats, has managed to stave off victorious revolution and slowly drags the Soviet Union down into the blood and muck of world imperialism.

Without the socialist revolution in one or more of the advanced countries, Soviet Russia is doomed. That is the key to the understanding of Soviet Russia, yesterday, today, and tomorrow. No wonder that Lenin in the five years of his working life as ruler of the country publicly repeated this profound truth little less than fifty times.

Against War Means For Socialism

From all the above it follows that the struggle against war is the struggle against capitalism for the socialist society. The workers must fight against their own capitalists at every turn—in the factories, in the legislatures, against the WPA cuts, against the anti-alien bills, against the armament budgets whether large or small, against Roosevelt's foreign policy, against his ceaseless propaganda that America must prepare for a war in defense of "peace" and "democracy." Any concession to the capitalists on any front means just so much more freedom for them in their relentless drive to war. If war does come, the world will go forth that we must have "national unity" against aggressor. Then more than ever it will be necessary to continue resistance, legal and illegal.

The masses may be swept into the war. But those who recognize the true nature of imperialist war, though they may have to submit for a period, must never for a moment relax their opposition, but continue to seek ways and means of influencing the masses against the war. For history shows us that though the people, under the stimulus of fright, propaganda, and mass hysteria, may enter a war, the strain that it imposes upon them is such that revulsion soon begins. This can culminate, as it has culminated before, in a determination to sweep away those responsible for the slaughter, the suffering, the privation. In their recognition of the real enemy at home, they forget the supposed enemy abroad. That is what we must work for.

The revolutionary fighter against imperialist war must remember that it was not the statesmen who brought the last war to a conclusion. It was the revolutionary workers of Russia who, by the Russian revolution of 1917, made the first great break in the war. And the German workers, by their revolution against the Kaiser and his government, brought the 1914-1918 war to an end.

The Sham Fighters Against War

If the workers do not succeed in stopping Roosevelt from dragging us into the war, who will do it? Many so-called anti-war groups and persons tell the masses it is they who will. Test them all by their stand on the capitalist system. If they are not fighting to overthrow it, they belong to capitalist society and are in the camp of the enemy. Isolationists like Senator Borah fill the public press. But it is the finance-capitalists like Morgan who decide, and when they give the word and Roosevelt drags the people in, Borah will not call upon the workers to stop Roosevelt. He and his kind will say, "My country, right or wrong," and support the war with the rest.

The labor leaders like Lewis and Green follow Roosevelt like the trained lap-dogs that they are. In Germany, in Britain, in France, when the last war came these pampered, well fed, capitalist-aping lackeys called the workers to the colors. And in 1939 as in 1914 they have shown once more that as long as they can sit in the offices, draw their fat salaries, visit the best hotels in the company of "good society," they have no quarrel with capitalism and will support their imperialist masters in whatever way they are told to. Look for a moment at their record.

In 1918-1920 the capitalist system was rocking in Europe. The capitalists, utterly discredited, were hated by millions of workers and farmers in every country. All that was needed was resolute leadership. But these labor leaders, who had talked about socialism for twenty years or more, went to the rescue of capitalism and, having the confidence of the workers, preserved instead of overturning the system. The capitalists left them in control for a time and, when the revolutionary energy of the workers had been dissipated, rewarded the social-democrats with the fascist terror. Against fascism as against war the labor leaders were helpless, and for the same reason. Well paid and comfortable under the capitalist system, they work to preserve it, with the resulting ruin of both them and the workers who follow them. In America as elsewhere the social-democrat leaders support capitalism. They must be bracketed with the imperialist war-mongers and fought on the war issue without quarter.

(Continued in Next Issue)

The Last Time the Stalinists Peddled That "Radical" Line, The Nazis Took Power . . .

By GEORGE CLARKE

When a medicine man "makes a pitch," as they say in the circus vernacular, his one hope is that the crowd has changed from the day before. After all, the poor sucker who purchased a bottle of colored water to cure diabetes or an Indian herb to cure a skin infection, is not likely to give the fakir a friendly reception, certainly he won't bite the second time.

But when the greatest medicine man in the history of our times, the Stalinist leadership, brazenly set up shop at the same old stand for a second time, a lot of people either through ignorance or through design pass off his wares as the real article. And the commodity being peddled here is not some harmless patent medicine, but a poisonous policy that has delivered the workers into capitalist slavery on every continent of this planet.

We are not addressing ourselves here to the officials and leaders of the Communist party. They know better. They not only know what the policy was before this recent turn and before that change of line, but they know what the policy of the Communist International was under Lenin and Trotsky, when the International was revolutionary. These Stalinist officials are cynical and corrupt. They are bought off at so much a week and they know how to serve the boss. They try to alibi a defeat into a glorious victory; they seek to make the foulest of treachery look like heroic revolutionary action. We won't waste our time with the pitchman, but we'd like to talk to his audience.

Thousands of revolutionary workers in their Communist Party sincerely believe that after Molotov's speech in Moscow and Browder's speech in Boston, the Communist International has made a genuine turn toward a revolutionary policy. They believe that now the Communists will wage an uncompromising

struggle against capitalism and for socialism.

THE "NEW LINE" IS OLD STUFF

What most of the new followers of the Communist Party do not know is that the current wares of Stalinism were peddled once before to the workers of Europe and America—with fatal consequences.

The year 1929 marked a complete gyration in the line of the Stalinist International. Capitalism, they announced, had entered its "third period," and was breathing its last gasp. The workers were engaged in a vast "revolutionary upsurge." The task of the Communist Parties was set forth as the conquest of power.

Germany, it was declared, was at the very center of this revolutionary struggle. An official resolution declared that "of exceptional importance to the fate of the revolution in Europe and the whole world is the revolutionary upsurge in Germany."

And that was a true enough statement. The new economic crisis that broke loose in 1929 hit Germany most of all. German economy had never fully recovered from the depression it had sunk into following the war. Millions were unemployed. The middle class was discontented and restive. Cabinets were made and remade in quick order. The labor organizations, the Social Democratic and the Communist parties, piled up huge votes running into six and seven millions each for the workers' parties. Each election saw a greater swing to the left. It was true—there was a revolutionary situation in Germany. How did the Stalinist party meet this situation?

WHAT STALIN DID TO THE GERMAN WORKERS

The fate of the German workers was clearly in the hands of the Communist Party. No class-conscious worker expected anything but compromise, betrayal

and defeat from the Social Democratic Party.

But still millions of workers followed the Social Democratic Party. Their party numbered a million members. The trade unions under their control almost 7,000,000 votes in the elections. Before the workers could establish their own rule in Germany, it was indispensable that the influence of these corrupt leaders over the labor movement be broken.

The issue was at hand. German labor was menaced with destruction by the rising fascist hordes of Hitlerism. The workers clamored for unity and for a struggle to the death against this menace. The Social Democratic leaders had nothing to offer but the pious hope that "Germany was not Italy" and an armful of resolutions "deploring" and "viewing with alarm." The Communist leaders had the magnificent opportunity to force the bureaucrats of the labor unions and the Social Democrats to the wall with a concrete program for united action against the fascist gangs. The course of this struggle on the immediate issues would have soon brought the whole labor movement squarely before the issue of who was to rule in Germany. It would have smashed the fascists like an eggshell—as Goebbels later admitted could have been done without difficulty.

But the Communist leaders did nothing of the kind. Everything they did was designed to divide the workers, to pit communist workers against social democratic workers. In no case to unite communist and social democratic workers against the fascists.

They began with the insane theory that social democracy was the twin-brother of fascism. From that it followed that the main enemy of the workers was not the fascists but the social democrats. They pronounced Trotsky's program of united front "counter-revolutionary," and expelled from the party anyone who advocated it.

THE "UNITED FRONT ONLY FROM BELOW"

In the trade unions, the workers were abandoned to the tender mercies of the bureaucrats. All of the militants were withdrawn into a pure "revolutionary" trade union organization dominated by the Communist Party. The inevitable result was the division of the labor movement, the Social Democracy dominating the trade unions and therefore the employed workers in the factories. Only the unemployed followed the Communist Party.

On the streets and in the actions against the Brown Shirts, the movement was divided as with a knife. The social democratic workers were called upon to quit their organizations and join a "red united front from below." (Dimitrov now revives this slogan.) Naturally they did nothing of the kind although they would have eagerly entered a common front that respected their organizations.

Then, as if deliberately intended to enhance the distrust and suspicion of social democratic workers in Communist leadership, the Stalinist gang joined with the fascists in 1931 in Prussia in what came to be known as the infamous "red referendum" to oust the social democratic Prussian government.

While the fascists grew in numbers and in boldness, the Stalinists continued to play into their hands by their divisive tactics of "social fascism." The Social Democratic leaders could hamstring the struggle of the workers against fascism by citing the record of the Communists. And the record was rotten. In the Reichstag, Remmele, the Communist fraction leader, made his notorious speech: "We are not afraid of the fascist gentlemen. They will shoot their bolt quicker than any other government." Let the fascist take power, we will come next! This was how the loud "revolutionary" line of Stalin worked out in practice.

Disoriented by the tactics of Stalinism, the workers remained passive and quiescent in face of the fascist threat. Hitler's Brown Shirts grew in strength, unopposed, like a snowball rolling downhill. They became more arrogant, more ruthless. Until on a fateful day in January 1933, Hindenburg—the hero of the social democrats—called Hitler to the chancellery.

The fascists had arrived. This was the last chance for the "revolutionary" action the Stalinists had prated so loudly about. Soon the fascists would ride over the skulls and bones of the German workers. But the Stalinists lifted not a finger of resistance! The leaders had their passports. The workers were abandoned to the fate of concentration camps. The Communist Party collapsed like a house of cards.

WORKERS' FORUM

"LONG LIVE TROTSKY," SAID GERMAN WORKERS

Dear comrade: There is a typographical error on the front page of the November 3rd issue of the Socialist Appeal (Vol. III No. 84) which could have political significance.

In the story, "The Flame of Revolution Still Burns in Germany," which quotes the Sept. 24 report of the Berlin correspondent of the Paris Temps as to the underground revolutionary activity current in the blacked-out cities of Germany, the red-bordered placard found by the Nazi police on numerous walls in the old Communist sections of Berlin is quoted by the Socialist Appeal as reading: "Down with Hitler and Stalin!"

The slogan as reported by the Paris Temps actually read: "Down with Hitler and Stalin! Long Live Trotsky!"

As the readers of the Socialist Appeal will readily grasp, there is more than a slight difference in the two slogans.

Comradely, JOSEPH HANSEN

POLISH EX-STALINISTS CONTINUE PREVIOUS LINE

It is terribly sad to see the Polish-American workers, who followed Stalin's American agents until the invasion of Poland, flee from Stalinism directly to capitalist reaction. Instead of calling on the proletariat to bring about the international revolution, which would bring federated socialist republics in Europe, among them the Socialist Republic of Poland, they are crying: Revenge on Stalin, support the Allies, no class struggle now, we want to build a strong Polish State, and after that we shall talk about class struggle.

We heard these identical words after the last World War. Marshal Pilsudski talked like that. Hungry for the independence of their nation, the Polish masses believed him.

Poland is a poor country. Over 90% of its population eked out a living from primitive agriculture. To make the story short, the whole burden of building a great military machine was thrown on the shoulders of the agricultural and industrial proletariat, over whom there ruled a semi-dictatorship of clergy, landed aristocracy and police. And at the end of this road . . . the domination of Poland by Hitler.

The Polish army officers are now imprisoned in Rumania. The French and British imperialists don't want them freed, for the Polish army officers, if at liberty, might expose the treacherous failure of the Anglo-French to fulfill their promises to Poland. The Anglo-French are spreading false rumors about the imprisoned Polish officials, and have organized a puppet Polish government in Paris. Some eighty millions of Polish gold were transported before the collapse and are in the hands of the British and French governments. Those imprisoned cannot defend themselves, so the imperialists and their reactionary, clerical agents have an easy job of it.

It is not my intention to defend the Polish army officers, but even they are not reactionary enough for the Anglo-French. Certainly, when workers give help to the Polish "government" in Paris, they are not promoting the cause of the labor movement. Yet that is just what the ex-Stalinists are doing. The degenerate top agents of the Kremlin—Browder, Foster, Radwanski, Gebert, Kowalski, etc.—so poisoned the minds of these workers that they cannot distinguish right from wrong, a bourgeois interest from the interests of the working class. When listing the crimes of the Stalinists, this one should not be forgotten.

S. Dziengielewski Dickinson City, Pa.



An Unusual Opportunity Offered Workers in Marxist School Courses

The Fall Term of the MARXIST SCHOOL, which begins on Monday, Nov. 20, offers the prospective student a splendid opportunity to get the Marxist viewpoint on a number of the important problems of the day.

We urge all students to register at once. Registration can be made at the Labor Bookshop, 116 University Place, New York City, between 1 and 6 p.m. or by writing to the same address in care of the Marxist School. All courses consist of 6 sessions and cost one dollar per course. Some scholarships are available for unemployed.

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III. THE DESTINY OF THE NEGRO Tuesdays, 7:15 p.m.-8:40 p.m.
IV. ELEMENTS OF SOCIALISM Tuesdays, 8:50 p.m.-10:15 p.m.
V. ORGANIZING LABOR Wednesdays, 7:15 p.m.-8:40 p.m.
VI. THE WAR DEAL IN ACTION Wednesdays, 8:50 p.m.-10:15 p.m.
ALL CLASSES WILL BE HELD AT THE WORKERS CULTURAL CENTER, ROOM 201, 125 WEST 33rd ST., N. Y. C.

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Bundle payments for the Socialist Appeal have been slow in recent weeks with several of the large cities. It is imperative that the various agents and Party units proceed very quickly to make substantial payments on their bundle accounts, or the Socialist Appeal will find itself in a most difficult and acute situation.

The Philadelphia organization is now making special efforts for Socialist Appeal circulation and to liquidate its bills. The Flint Branch, F. Dart, Agent, has moved nicely recently in circulating the paper, and now that several of its members are employed again, expects to be able to increase the circulation.

The Los Angeles organization recently cut its bundle order, but nevertheless improvement can be registered, because both the circulation of the Socialist Appeal and The New International are now on a much sounder and surer basis.

Minneapolis and St. Paul are making another drive to obtain new subscriptions and renewals, realizing that building the circulation of the press is a most important task at the present time. In Youngstown, Socialist Appeal sales recently have not been so good, largely because, the comrades write, the headlines in the recent issues dealt with problems in local areas. However, Comrade

Dawes writes that they will still be able to dispose of their order of 100.

The Chicago organization is following up all contacts for contributions to the press.

The recently organized Ann Arbor unit has placed an order for 20 copies regularly of the paper.

The Columbus unit of the Y.P.S.L. is now making renewed efforts for the magazine and the Socialist Appeal and hopes to assist in improving the precarious position of the press.

Subscriptions were slow in recent days, 16 new subscriptions having reached the New York office and 7 renewals as follows:

Table with columns: Re-New, New, Total. Lists subscriptions for New York City, New Haven, Minneapolis, Los Angeles, Chicago, Cleveland, Glen Ellyn, Ill., Wellesley, Mass., Rochester, Evansville, Houston, Ann Arbor, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, St. Paul, Total.

In New York City, particularly in the Bronx, the comrades are confident of increasing the circulation of the Socialist Appeal. The membership of the Bronx Branch all entered very actively into the recent election campaign for councilman and distributed and sold the paper widely. The vote for Max Shachtman for councilman is indicative of their efforts, and the comrades are very confident of being able to follow through on the election results and obtain many readers for our press.

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