

SOCIALIST APPEAL

Vol. III, No. 94 Saturday, December 23, 1939

Published Weekly by the
SOCIALIST APPEAL PUBLISHING ASSN.
at 116 University Place, New York, N. Y.
Telephone: ALgonquin 4-8547

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General Manager: Assistant Manager:
GEORGE CLARKE SHERMAN STANLEYSubscriptions: \$2.00 per year; \$1.00 for six months.
Foreign: \$3.00 per year; \$1.50 for six months. Bundle
orders: 3 cents per copy in the United States; 4 cents
per copy in all foreign countries. Single copies: 5 cents.Reentered as second class matter December 4,
1939, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the
Act of March 3, 1879.FIGHT WITH THE SOCIALIST
WORKERS PARTY FOR:

1. A job and a decent living for every worker.
2. Open the idle factories—operate them under workers' control.
3. A Twenty-Billion dollar Federal public works and housing program.
4. Thirty-thirty—\$30-weekly minimum wage—30-hour weekly maximum for all workers on all jobs.
5. Thirty dollar weekly old-age and disability pension.
6. Expropriate the Sixty Families.
7. All war funds to the unemployed.
8. A people's referendum on any and all wars.
9. No secret diplomacy.
10. An independent Labor Party.
11. Workers' Defense Guards against vigilante and Fascist attacks.
12. Full social, political and economic equality for the Negro people.

Kuusinen's "People's
Government of Finland"

The Stalinist press has had very little to say about Kuusinen's "People's Government of Finland," since it was "established." We should like to hear a little more about it and about the backbone of this government, the Finnish Communist party. How strong a section of the working-class and peasantry backs it? What is its membership—if only in round numbers? Just what are the claims of the Kuusinen "government" to sovereignty?

We ask these questions because a painstaking study of the records of the Comintern fail to provide us with the answers. More accurately, our study provides us with evidence on the basis of which one can come to only one conclusion: the Communist party of Finland has been practically non-existent for years in any shape or form and, consequently, Kuusinen's "government" has no constituency to represent. We propose to prove this fact to the satisfaction of any Communist party member or sympathizer who is seriously trying to understand the present events.

From 1918 to 1933

The Communist party had been illegal in Finland for some years before the present events, but that is scarcely the explanation for its impotence. The capacity of the Finnish revolutionists to function under conditions of illegality and terrorism has been established time and time again since the end of the civil war of 1918. A hundred thousand Finnish workers and peasants were struck down by Mannerheim's White Guards aided by German troops—well over 30,000 executed and dead of hunger and sickness in the concentration camps, the others tortured and then imprisoned for long terms. Despite this frightful blood-letting, the Socialist Workers Party was organized by 1920, was joined by the vast majority of the organized workers and at once assumed control over the trade unions. After its affiliation to the Comintern, twenty of its leading members were accused of high treason, condemned to long prison terms, and the party press banned. Nevertheless in the elections of 1921 the party received 128,000 or 14 per cent of all the votes cast.

In 1923 some 140 more leading party members were arrested, in 1924 some 189 more; more than 400 years of imprisonment were meted out to them. In the elections of 1924 a make-shift workers and peasants party was set up to participate in place of the official Comintern party which had been forcibly dissolved; it received 11.6 per cent of all the votes. In 1925, again, there were mass persecutions, and again illegalization of the party; it was represented in elections by a "Socialist Workers and Peasants" party which in 1927 and 1929 received 12 and 14.5 per cent of all the votes. Again in 1930 the Communist party was proscribed, its property seized and 269 of its members accused of high treason and convicted. This was the time of the peak of the Fascist Lappo movement. The illegal Communist movement withstood the Finnish fascist storm, however, and retained its mass character up to 1933.

Thus, during fifteen heroic years of struggle, from 1918 to 1933, the best sections of the Finnish workers and peasants remained adherents of the Comintern. Neither the blood-letting of

the civil war nor the ensuing waves of persecution and illegality shook them from their loyalty. That loyalty was at last shaken, not by the Finnish bourgeoisie, but by Stalin. When he ordered the German Communist party to go down into the dust without striking a blow against Hitler, the Finnish workers lost their faith in the Comintern. And the Moscow trials gave the Finnish Communist party its knockout blow. Stalin's "socialism" as experienced by the Finns of Soviet Karelia, just across the border, grew more and more abhorrent—until today the point has been reached where Mannerheim can, without any difficulty, mobilize the Finnish proletar-

The Official Record

As a matter of fact, the Stalinist movement has made little pretense, during the last two years, of possessing a Communist movement in Finland. Here is what is revealed by an examination of the files of the Comintern weekly, *World News and Views* (formerly the *International Press Correspondence*). During the entire year of 1938—in 52 issues—Finland appears only twice in its elaborate index—two minor articles neither of which even mentions the Finnish Communist party. It is ironical to note that one of those articles approvingly quotes a Helsingfors workers' mass meeting resolution for defense of the independence of Finland, and goes on to comment:

"The organized working class of Helsingfors is emphatically in favor of defending the independence of the country. But it demands that the army shall be purged of those elements who want to drag Finland in the wake of the Nazis' war policy."

The other article complains that Holsti has been forced to resign as Foreign Minister because of his hostility to Nazi pressure!

As with these two articles, so in the general report on "May Day in the Various Countries" for that year, there is no mention of the existence of a Finnish Communist party.

During 1939 the Comintern weekly again mentions Finland only twice. The first time to report that "The toiling population of the country has taken up with enthusiasm the slogan issued by Tanner" against fascism (Jan. 7)—the same Tanner whom the Stalinists now claim represents no section of the toiling population. In Manuilsky's report to the Eighteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (March, 1939), there is a lengthy and verbose section on "The situation in the Communist Parties." In boastful language it mentions many parties, including many which have no real existence; but among those mentioned the Finnish Communist party does not appear! Likewise in the general report on May Day for the year, there is no mention of the Finnish party. The "Premier" of the "People's Government," O. Kuusinen, contributes (March 18, 1939) a lengthy article on "Twenty Years of the Communist International." It mentions many things and many parties—but not the Finnish party. Reports appear of the congresses of the various Scandinavian parties, at which fraternal delegates appear from the parties in the neighboring countries—but never a representative of the Finnish party.

The second reference to Finland in the year 1939 appears in the Comintern weekly of July 15, an article entitled "The Finnish People for Democracy." It reports the results of the July 1 elections: "The results of the Finnish parliamentary elections on July 1 prove that the people of Finland are for freedom and democracy and against fascism." It records 500,000 votes for the social democrats, an increase of nearly 50,000 over 1936. It records no votes for the Finnish Communist party, not merely because that party was illegal; the party itself was illegal, as we have pointed out, in almost every election, yet up to 1930 managed to express itself in the elections; it records no electoral activity for the Finnish Communist party because that party had, in the intervening years, completely lost its following.

In that July 15 article, the Finnish Communist party is mentioned—the first and last mention of it in the Comintern weekly during a period of two years! It is mentioned in a curious context: the ban on it should be lifted, anti-fascist prisoners should be released, etc.

"These measures would be best calculated to mobilize the people for the defense of Finland's independence and frustrate the big Finnish bourgeois plans of the Lappo fascists for drawing Finland into the fascist war of conquest."

The final collapse of the Finnish Communist party to the point where it is mentioned once in the last two years in the Comintern weekly—that is a clear index to the stature of the party which "established" a "People's Government" for Finland.

There is no better gauge of the enormously reactionary role of the Stalinist bureaucracy than the post-war history of the Finnish working class. A proletariat with a long and glorious past—it was in the vanguard in the Revolution of 1905—and which quickly recovered from the civil war of 1918, which tenaciously resisted capitalist terror and illegality and showed its strength even by the bourgeois index of electoral results, was finally driven into the arms of the Finnish bourgeoisie by Stalin.

By Dwight Macdonald

SPARKS IN THE NEWS

Understatement Dept.

"Experiments in how best to entertain soldiers back of the Maginot Line have shown that movie shows come first, cards second and games like dominoes third in popularity. . . . Few men show any disposition to read books, possibly because there is always too much interruption."—news report in a recent N. Y. Times.

Death, Inc.

In previous columns, I have noted how the former sharp distinction between war and peace has become blurred in our age, until by now war has been absorbed into the normal, everyday routine of life under capitalism.

This seems to hold true of both the bourgeoisie and the workers in this war. As to the former, the British Government announced a few weeks after the outbreak of the war that it would pay compensation for all damages to civilian life, limb and property "due to action by or against the King's enemies." In announcing this policy, Sir John Simon, Chancellor of the Exchequer, explained: "The risk is one which affects us all and a particular person or a particular property which is struck is a casual victim of the general peril which the State is engaged in doing its best to resist." Thus war is officially recognized as one of the normal hazards of doing business under capitalism, and the shopkeeper whose windows are shattered by German bombs can collect from the State for them just as if the damage had been done by His Majesty's police officers in the discharge of their duty.

The British business man can also insure himself—with private firms—against the hazards of peace. "Armistice insurance" is now one of the regular forms of insurance in London. For a premium of ten pounds on every hundred pounds worth of business, a business man can fully insure himself against all losses which might result if the war ends in the next two months. For every additional month after that, he must pay ten pounds more.

For the workers as well, this war has taken on something of the character of normal peacetime activity. In the last war, workers began functioning as soldiers only when they put on their uniforms. This time in uniform they still retain the character of workers engaged in some vast industrial undertaking. Thus one recent news item from the Maginot Line read: "So great are the distances that the troops actually ride to work on bicycles. We passed details of them

pedalling up from their living quarters to gun positions. . . ." The phrase, "ride to work," is significant.

Another report describes the new field uniform of the British Army: "The Highlanders whom General Gort visited were in their picturesque uniforms. . . . The day was one of the last occasions on which these and other Scottish troops will appear in the field in their traditional uniforms. The change is being rapidly made from the peacetime uniform to 'battle dress'—a most unromantic but eminently practical costume for combat, consisting of a one-piece khaki overall with a zipper fastener down the front and snaps at the trouser bottoms to keep out the mud."

Kilts and tartans give way to zippered khaki overalls. The soldier has become a mass production worker who wears overalls and rides to work on his bicycle. If the war drags on this way much longer, whole industrial towns may spring up behind the lines, inhabited by families of soldiers. The infantry "worker" will kiss his wife goodbye in the morning and tramp, or cycle, off to "work," a rifle on one shoulder and a well-filled lunch box and thermos of hot coffee under the arm. The thoroughly tamed trade union bureaucracies in France and England will then raise some inspiring new slogans: TIME AND A HALF FOR OVERTIME IN THE TRENCHES! NO OFFENSIVES ON SATURDAY AFTERNOONS AND SUNDAYS!

Anthology of War Poetry, No. 1

Bernarr MacFadden, publisher of pulp magazines, last year offered a \$1,000 prize for an official song for the U. S. Army Air Corps—hitherto songless. I reproduce below the first verse of the winning ditty, officially approved by Major General Henry H. Arnold, chief of the Army Air Corps:

Off we go into the wild blue yonder,
Climbing high into the sun;
Here they come zooming to meet our
thunder,
At 'em boys, Give 'er the gun!
Down we dive spouting our flame from
under
Off with one helluva' roar!
We live in fame
Or go down in flame
BOY! Nothing'll stop the Army Air
Corps!

*NOTE (by publisher of song): For radio, substitute "ter-ri-ble".

In the World of Labor

By Paul G. Stevens

Australian Labor Bucks
Conscription for War in Europe

Resistance to the draughting of youth for imperialist slaughter goes on in one form or another in all the belligerent countries. It is only rarely, however, that censorship allows a glimmer of the true situation to break through to see the light of day.

In Australia, for instance, our comrades of the Communist League (Fourth International) carried on a vanguard struggle against the so-called National Register, long before the war started. They explained patiently that the registration of all man-power by the government was merely a prelude to conscription. All the opposition parties, including the Labor Party and the Stalinists, supported the government then, and ridiculed the idea that Australia was preparing to conscript youth for war overseas.

When the war broke out, the Menzies Government finally proclaimed its intention to put conscription into force. However, the Sydney Sun, pro-Government organ, explained on October 23: "They (the conscripts) will not bleed for Imperial ambitions or capitalistic advantage. They will simply learn how, if an enemy attacks their own country, Australia, to put up a good fight against him, instead of being pitched, untrained, into massacre."

Now we learn that this last shred of deception has been dispensed with and that an Australian Imperial Force is to be raised and "would proceed overseas early in 1940." This was the announcement made by Prime Minister Robert G. Menzies in the Australian House on November 29.

After going along for months in support of the government measures on the ground of their purely defensive character, the Labor leaders find themselves hard put to go the whole hog when the naked imperialist content of the war preparations is revealed.

The New York Times of November 30 reports: "A motion by the leader of the Labor Party, John Curtin, that Parliament go on record as opposing the dispatch of an Australian Imperial Force to fight in Europe was defeated today in the House of Representatives. The government defeated the Curtin motion by only 33 to 28."

The strong vote for the Curtin motion is indicative of the tremendous unrest which serves as pressure from the ranks upon the Labor leaders. The laboring masses have boycotted the National Register from the first. The voluntary recruitment system initiated by the government at the outset of the war was a flop.

Whether the Labor skates in Parliament and in official control of the unions will be able to stem the tide, whether the government will be able to make use of the pro-Hitlerite treachery of the Stalinists to derail the workers, is still a matter of conjecture. In their bi-weekly paper, the *Militant*, our Australian comrades wind up their exposure of conscription in the following words:

"Menzies' conscription can be defeated. The workers are willing to follow a militant lead, as was shown by the National Register boycott. It is necessary that their opposition be mobilized and expressed by the medium of mass meetings, demonstrations and above all, by the enunciation of a clear-cut anti-capitalist policy." (The *Militant*, November 11, 1939).

That the Australian Fourth Internationalists are doing their bit toward mobilizing the workers in this direction is evidenced clearly by their paper and by the successful mass meetings in Sydney and Melbourne, which they carry on incessantly despite the war regime.

Comrade Franz Meyer
Imprisoned in Antwerp

At the beginning of September, our comrade Franz Meyer, member of the International Communists of Germany (I.K.D.) was arrested in Antwerp, Belgium.

Comrade Meyer was charged with furnishing anti-war cartoons to the weekly paper of our Belgian Revolutionary Socialist Party, *La Lutte Ouvriere*, under the name of Holz.

Here is an example of the "justice" meted out by the so-called "Socialist" Minister of Foreign Affairs, Paul Spaak, to a man whose alleged crime is that he puts his art in the service of the struggle against war. Is Belgian "democracy" really in such a poor state of health that it has to resort to the use of police measures against cartoonists and caricaturists? Is Spaak's conception of the "democratic right of asylum" one in which a refugee artist from Hitler's Germany is to be subjected to the same type of persecution as in Nazi Germany?

Meyer has been imprisoned since September. What is the accusation filed against him? Why is he being held incommunicado? What intentions does the Spaak government have with respect to this refugee revolutionist? Is this rebel artist to be deported and turned over to Hitler's hangmen?

Every class conscious worker, every upright writer and artist has the right to demand an answer from the Belgian "democracy" on the case of Franz Meyer.

Swedish Section of "International
Front Against War"
at head of Reaction

Stalin's invasion of Finland has called forth a tremendous reaction in Scandinavia. Sympathy with the attacked Finns reaches deep into the workers circles. The reactionaries are utilizing the situation for an attack on civil liberties. In Sweden the Communist paper *Ny Dag* has been banned and the government has ordered the press distribution bureau, which has a monopoly over the sale of papers on the streets and at the kiosks, to stop the distribution of the paper. Instead of protesting against this unheard-of coup of the government, the representative in parliament of the Swedish Socialist Party, Flyg, has become the advocate of even stronger measures. In a speech at the Riksdag session of December 2, he declared that it was "absurd" to grant Swedish democratic rights to the "agents of a foreign power" and demanded more appropriate measures on the part of the government. This adaptation of Flyg to the moods of reaction is not only cowardly but stupid. For, it is clear that the attacks of Swedish reaction against freedom of the press will not be halted at the doors of the Stalinists. Already, the weekly of Ture Nemann, "Tross allt," (In Spite of Everything), has been confiscated because its criticism of the Hitler regime is "too sharp." Nemann has been hauled into court for that. Flyg is simply digging his own grave.

Flyg's party is a member of the "International Front Against War," the successor of the London bureau. What attitude do Lovestone, Brockway and Pivert take towards the actions of their Swedish confreres?

Their
GovernmentThe 1940 Legislative
Program of the CIO

The CIO's Legislative Program for 1940, which was made public this week, deserves careful study. However inadequate we may think it, however much we may disagree with part or all of it, its contrast to the Platform of American Industry (the manifesto of the National Association of Manufacturers that I discussed last week) is immediately apparent and in all respects favorable to the CIO. The CIO document says something, and what it says is relevant to the concrete realities of present-day life. The N.A.M. said nothing; its platform is a meaningless jumble of abstract rhetoric. There is little doubt that the CIO deliberately intends to have its program appear in the public eye as the direct challenger of that of the bosses.

The C.I.O. States the Problems

John L. Lewis has many times proved himself a sensitive reflector of the moods of the workers in this country. This, indeed, is the source of his great strength and superiority as a labor leader. (That he ruthlessly exploits and perverts these moods for reactionary ends is another matter.) He is the shrewdest of opportunists, riding on the crest of proletarian mass sentiment. It was in this way that he took triumphant leadership of the industrial union movement, leaving behind in his wake the case-hardened old fogies.

The new CIO Legislative Program gives witness once again to Lewis' sensitivity. In clear and open fashion, the Program states, and states correctly, the really major problems facing the American working class. Every worker will find himself in agreement on the statement of problems. There is no twaddle about "Hull's trade treaties" or "balanced budgets" or "municipal corruption," with which the boss press is now filled in an effort to confuse the people, but: the war, jobs, and democratic rights.

"The Congress of Industrial Organizations urges for the serious consideration by the Federal Congress a legislative program based upon certain fundamental objectives: (1) The United States must keep out of involvement in the foreign wars; (2) The attention of this country and the energies of our Government, industrial and labor leaders of this country, must be directed toward the immediate solving of the problem of unemployment; (3) The democratic rights and institutions of this country must be preserved and maintained; and (4) There must be continued assurance and protection of the rights of labor to organize and bargain collectively as the cornerstone for the preservation and extension of any economic and social program."

These points are elaborated in the body of the program. In addition there are sections on the Wagner Act, the Fair Labor Standards Act, Social Security, Health, Housing and Taxation. So far as they go, no exception can be taken to what is advocated in these sections. The demands, it is true, do not in any case go far enough if we judge them in terms of the needs of the masses, but their direction is undoubtedly right. As a matter of fact, they are more adequate and enlightened than I remember in any comparable CIO or AFL document in recent years.

In passing, it is worth observing that the old CIO policy of calling for "no amendment" to the Wagner Act, as the means of fighting against reactionary attempts at amendment, has been changed to a counter-attack. The CIO now demands amendments of its own directed toward strengthening the Act in labor's interests by providing criminal penalties for employers' offenses against the Act, prohibition of government contracts to firms violating the Act, and prohibition of the splitting up of industrial unions.

What Is Left Out

From what I have said so far, it might seem that I ought to urge support and acceptance of the Program as a suitable platform for the Socialist Workers Party. Indeed, I do believe that most of its specific proposals ought to be supported by the S.W.P. and by all workers.

But a Program has a history; and must be judged by what it omits as well as by what it says. If we examine this CIO Program from a more extended point of view, we must add new conclusions.

The Program, for example, says nothing about whom labor must fight against in order to achieve its objectives; nor how to carry on the fight for them; nor—also most important—what the record of Lewis has been in the past fights for similar objectives.

The Program advocates a minimum of 3,000,000 jobs in public works, plus public jobs for all youth who are out of work and out of school. In the past also Lewis has been for jobs; but he persuaded the workers to fight for them by putting all faith in Roosevelt, who was the man who cut the jobs.

The Program advocates keeping out of war. In the past, too, Lewis has spoken against getting into the war; but he has been and remains a part of the Roosevelt machine which is itself the chief war-making apparatus.

The Program demands democratic rights for labor. But in the past Lewis has got the workers to support the candidates of the Republican and Democratic parties, who, once in office, are the ones who smash those rights.

The Program advocates decent housing, medical service, social security. But it says not one word against the rotten system of private property and private profits which, so long as it continues, guarantees that the workers will never have decent housing or medical service or social security.

This is the record, and this is why the Program, from the point of view of Lewis and his fellow-bureaucrats, is a fake, designed not to organize the workers for a real struggle toward the objectives of peace, jobs and freedom, but to head off such a struggle and to keep them tied to things as they are.

This does not mean that the Program should be just forgotten (as Lewis will forget it when the time for voting comes). It means that if its progressive aims are to be realized, the workers, and especially the CIO members, should take the struggle for those aims out of the hands of Lewis, and fight in closed, militant and independent class ranks.