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UNITE

THE MILITANT

Weekly Organ of the Communist League of America [Opposition]

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LEON TROTSKY

Open Letter to Vandervelde

Citizen Vandervelde,
A few years ago you addressed yourself to me with an open letter concerning, if I am not mistaken, the repression against the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionists. Generally and invariably, you stood up against the Bolsheviks in the name of the principles of democracy. It is your right. If your criticism did not obtain the intended result, it is because we Bolsheviks proceed from the principles of the revolutionary dictatorship.

The Russian Social Revolutionists, your co-religionists in democracy, opened up, in their time, the terrorist struggle against us. They wounded Lenin and sought to blow up my military train. Turned over to the Soviet tribunal, they found in you one of their most rabid defenders. The government to which I belonged authorized you not only to come to Soviet Russia, but to come before the tribunal as the attorney for those who tried to kill the head of the first workers' state. In your plea, which was reproduced in our press, you invariably appealed to the principles of democracy. It was your right.

On December 4, 1932, I stopped in transit with my traveling companions in the port of Antwerp. I had no intention either of advocating for the dictatorship of the proletariat or of coming forward as the defender of the Communists and strikers arrested by the Belgian government who, so far as I know, committed no assaults upon the members of the Brussels government. A few of my companions, and my wife with them, wished to visit Antwerp. One of them, for the purposes of his voyage, needed to get in touch with a consulate in the town. All of them were categorically prohibited from touching the soil of Belgium, even under escort. That part of the port where our boat was located, was carefully encircled. On both sides of the boat stood police sentries. From the deck we were able to pass under review the policemen of democracy, military as well as civil. It was an imposing spectacle.

The number of dicks and cops—you will permit me this familiar designation for the sake of conciseness—exceeded the number of sailors and dockers. The boat looked like a temporary prison; the adjacent section of the port, like a prison courtyard. The police chief took a copy of our papers—even though we were not entering Belgium and had not been authorized to disembark at Antwerp. He asked to receive my explanations for the fact that my passport is made out to the name of Sedoff. I declined to engage in any discussion with the Belgian police, with whom I had nothing to do.

The police officer tried to act with threats: he declared that he had the right to arrest anybody whom the boat's sailing route chanced to conduct into Belgian waters. I must, however, acknowledge that there were no arrests.

I request you not to find in my words any complaint. It would be ridiculous to complain about such a trifle in the face of what the tolling masses and especially the Communists are made to undergo throughout the world at the present time. But the Antwerp episode seems to me to be enough of a pretext for returning to your old "Open Letter", to which I did not reply at that time.

I hope I am not mistaken in counting Belgium among the democracies. The war which you carried on was—in that so?—the war for democracy. After the war, you were at the head of Belgium as minister and even as Prime Minister. What more is necessary to bring democracy to its complete unfolding? On that score, I think, there can be no discussion between us. Why then does this democracy nevertheless reek so much of the police spirit of old Prussia? And can one believe that the democracy which experiences such nervous convulsions at the chance approach of a Bolshevik, will prove capable of neutralizing the class struggle and of guaranteeing the peaceful transformation of capitalism into socialism?

In reply you will undoubtedly call to my mind the Ve-Cheka, the GPU, the deportation of Rakovsky and my own expulsion from the Soviet Union. That argument is beyond the point. The Soviet regime does not adorn itself with the bedraggled plumes of democracy. If the passage to socialism were possible within the state forms created by liberalism, the revolutionary dictatorship would not be necessary. For the Soviet regime, the question can and should be put of knowing if it is capable of teaching the workers the struggle against capitalism. But it is absurd to demand that the proletarian dictatorship should observe the forms and the rites of liberal democracy. The dictatorship has its rigorous methods and logic. The blows

(Continued on page 4)

Bridgeman Red Cases Revived

Supreme Court Ruling Opens Attack on American Communist Movement

A concerted attack upon the whole Communist movement is presaged by the decision of the Michigan Supreme Court, just handed down, which rules that all those involved in the famous Michigan Communist cases of 1923, must stand trial on charges of criminal syndicalism.

The scores of those arrested or indicted, date from a convention in Bridgeman of the underground Communist party some ten years ago. The first trial, that of William Z. Foster, resulted in a hung jury. The second trial, that of C. E. Ruthenberg, resulted in a conviction which was upheld by the State Supreme Court. The death of comrade Ruthenberg occurred during his appeal to the U. S. Supreme Court.

The revival of the Bridgeman cases is not merely an attack upon the Communist movement, upon the party and the Left Opposition, several of whose

members are also involved, but on the working class as a whole, which the bourgeoisie seeks to weaken by cutting off and imprisoning its most conscious vanguard. When the arrests were first made years ago, it was clear that the cases were directly connected with the numerous labor struggles of that period. The same holds true today. The fear of the growing discontentment of the masses is impelling the ruling class to revive an ancient case in the hope of depriving the proletariat of its leadership.

Against this vicious attack, it is necessary to mobilize the maximum strength of the whole labor movement. The Communist party, the leader of the proletariat, must be defended by every worker! A united front of solidarity must be erected around the militants involved, through which the bourgeoisie, its police and its courts, will be unable to break.

WE ARE COUNTING ON YOU FOR AID

The danger that we may be compelled to suspend the publication of the MILITANT as a weekly, must arouse the deepest concern of every friend of the Left Opposition in this country and impel him to prompt action. We have thus far been able to maintain the MILITANT by means of the most strenuous sacrifices. And that was the only way, because while the world crisis has laid bare the bankruptcy of the present social order and given a great impulsion to the revolutionary progress of the working class, it has also deprived it of the financial means with which to sustain it. We are not threatened with this retreat because the Left Opposition is losing ground in the United States. Quite the contrary. Our influence and prestige are greater at the present time than ever before; our views, stubbornly advocated for years in the face of countless obstacles, are verified by the events of every new day. The threat comes from the fact that the ravages of unemployment have so drastically affected our own comrades that those upon whom we could once rely for substantial and systematic contributions are far less, or not at all, able to make them today.

This does not mean for one moment that the situation is hopeless. It only means that the task of preserving the weekly MILITANT must be shouldered by a much greater number of comrades and friends. When we make the appeal for speedy assistance, it should be borne in mind that the MILITANT is our principal mouthpiece on a national scale, and not merely on a national scale, for it has been of signal aid to the young and sturdy Bolshevik-Leninist movements in Canada, in England, in South Africa and China. It is our main organizer, for where the weakness of our movement prevents us from sending a suitable comrade for work, we know that the MILITANT can

be relied upon to present the opposition standpoint to the most distant localities. It is our main educational center, for its columns teach those great historical principles of revolutionary Marxism which have been so dramatically verified by the history of the last two decades, and it teaches them not only in the light of the past, but in connection with the living unfolding of events week by week. Moreover, the MILITANT constitutes that hub from which radiate the spokes of our other activities and enterprises: the organ of the Opposition youth, YOUNG SPARTACUS; the organ of the Yiddish-speaking Oppositionists, UNSER KAMF; the organ of the Greek-speaking comrades, KOMMUNISTIS. Should the hub be smashed, the spokes would be left hanging limply in the air just as surely as the hub would fail to turn the wheel without well-connected spokes.

We have not been derelict in our efforts to maintain the weekly at all costs, because we are aware of the heavy blow that our movement would be struck by its collapse. We are confident that the same knowledge and spirit will animate all our friends to exert themselves to the utmost, to contribute generously in our present drive to save the MILITANT. The drive is Point One on the order of the day until the danger to the MILITANT is overcome. An early contribution is a double contribution, and we are anxious not to protract the campaign. The work that demands doing well will not permit it.

Therefore, every shoulder to the wheel, every comrade to his post. We are counting on our friends to carry us over the hump, to save the weekly MILITANT from collapse!
—MAX SHACHTMAN, Editor.

Send funds immediately to the MILITANT, 126 E. 16th St., N. Y. C.

MOSCOW LETTER

Stalin Banishes Zinoviev

The editorial board of the Bulletin of the Russian Opposition reports the following important news from Moscow.

"On November 24 and 25, 1932, the People's Commissar for Food Supplies of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic, Eismont, the Director of Soviet transportation, Tolmachev, the former People's Commissar for Agriculture, A. Smirnov, Dossor and various others, were arrested. Smirnov, Eismont and Tolmachev were accused of allegedly having formed a trinity with the aim of creating an organization for the overthrow of Stalin. Eismont is supposed to have refused a confession and to have proved that Rykov and Tomsky knew nothing of the 'trinity'."

Another group, Nemtchenko, Ginsburg and others, were also arrested on the same accusation.

"Kamenev has been banished to Minusinsk (Siberia) Zinoviev to Kustanay (in Kazakhstan); Sten to Akmolinsk; Shlepov to Taru. Riutin has been confined in the Chelabinsk solitary prison. To Smilga. It was proposed that he quit Moscow."

As we learn further, the work of the Russian Left Opposition is increasing and its contacts are growing. The report above characterizes the internal situation in the CPSU as well as the social processes in Soviet Russia. The next stage of the inner-Russian development contains great dangers. It is our task to follow the events with the closest attention and draw upon our resources to the full for the defense of the line of Lenin and Trotsky, as well as for the support of the work of the Russian Left Opposition.

Left Wing Victory In The I.L.G.W.U.

The thorough victory of the left wing in the elections for officers of Local 9, International Ladies Garment Workers Union (New York), is of tremendous significance for the movement. The victory was gained not only against the slate of the reactionary Right wing, but also against the joint slate of the anarchist clique and the Lovestone group. Local 9 is the second largest local of the union in the country, and the triumph of the Left wing gains additional significance from the fact that two weeks previously, it swept the ruling clique out of office in the largest local, Local 1, and secured the election of its own slate. The impending elections in Dressmakers' Local 22, where the Left wing is also presenting its slate, will most likely show similar, if not such decisive, results.

The gratifying results in these elections reveal a number of important points to consider. But its persistent blunders of the "third period" stripe, the Stalinist leadership of the Left wing gave sig-

(Continued on page 2)

Two Killed in New Illinois Mine War

Lewis and Operators Renew Terror Drive Against Miners

The Illinois mine struggle, which has been in progress since the latter part of last summer, has flared up anew in Taylorville. According to press reports a bloody gun battle such as has not been seen since the march to Franklin County has taken place in Kincaid six miles from Taylorville. A miner's wife and a scab lost their lives in the course of this conflict. Eleven strikebreakers were wounded as a reward for their endeavor to work the mine under the scab outfit of Lewis and company.

Taylorville, the scene of the affray, has been the center of the most violent struggle of the Progressive Miners Union to organize the coal diggers in a union controlled by the rank and file. Similarly it has been the focal point of resistance by the boss-controlled UMW of A and the vicious labor-hating Peabody Coal Company. The Peabody Coal Company has refused to sign up with the new union even though the wage scale they offer is no different from the UMW of A. They fear the militancy and the rebel spirit of the Progressive Miners union. They have enlisted gunmen, gangsters, and the National Guard to break the backbone of the new union. But all their intimidation, tear gas, bayonets and military terrorism has not budged the Taylorville miners a single inch.

Displaying the most indomitable persistence and the most intransigent courage, the Taylorville miners have remained on strike through these long months under starvation and brutality has become a normal occurrence. They have refused to be driven back to work under a union which has betrayed them every time they have given battle to the starvation program of the operators. By an overwhelming majority, the Illinois miners dispensed with the Judas services of Lewis, Walker and their ilk. But the defunct and decrepit UMW has continued its faithful services to the coal barons. Where their ability to persuade the miners to return to their company union has miserably failed, they have resorted to bullets and black-

Jacks in earnest cooperation with the National Guard.

This latest occurrence in Taylorville is the result of the scab-herding activities of these discredited hunks. At the summons of Peabody they have hunted out strikebreakers from the four corners of the United States and thrown them into the Taylorville mines. The scabs have worked under the protection of an army of armed "deputy sheriffs". Picket lines of Progressive miners were dispersed, thousands of miners were arrested, and several shot in cold blood. Due to this overwhelming force the picketers were temporarily forced to retreat. This picket line at which the shooting occurred has been the first effort at renewed activity on the part of the Taylorville strikers. The picketers were met at the mine gates by 150 deputy sheriffs who unquestionably opened fire. It appears that the picketers shot back in self-defense although the local Taylorville tyrant of the coal company says that the miners "were reported to have guns".

In spite of this very reliable testimony, five companies of the National Guard have again been brought on the scene to "enforce peace". "Enforce peace" means to assure the coal company and the Lewis union the right to work the mines with scab labor. But if experience proves anything it demonstrates that these hunks are going to have a hard time of it so long as the miners preserve their solidarity.

Opposition Youth at Chicago Conference

CHICAGO.—Some five to six hundred delegates, representing colleges and universities from every part of the country, including representatives from the Students League of Canada, Cuba, and South America, responded to the call of the National Committee for the Student Congress against War (initiated through the efforts of the National Students League) held at Mandel Hall, University of Chicago on December 28 and 29, to resolve upon a program of student struggle against the scourge of war and militarism. The Congress was made up of the widest variety of political views ranging from the socialists, pacifists, liberals, to the Communists (including the Left wing of the Communist party, the Left Opposition). Upon such a political background, dominated by an overwhelming number of delegates from the National Students League, and within that representation a majority of Communists, the Congress passed through stormy sessions, bordering at the close, upon split and disruption, and finally arriving at a working basis.

Rival Positions Presented

The first day of the Congress was limited entirely to speeches of a general character. The Congress was led off by Edmund Stevens, a member of the National Students League and Chairman of the National Committee for the Student Congress against War. He was followed by Joseph Cohen, also a member of the NSL and student delegate to Amsterdam Congress, who made the keynote address. The election of the conference committee were then completed. To conclude the morning sessions the symposium on "Imperialism and War" took place. The speakers at this symposium were Upton Close and Earl Browder. The former presented the position of pacifism. Browder followed with an exposition of the Communist position. In the discussion the sharp differences between the Communists and pacifists were signally displayed and gave evidence that the ensuing deliberations would be characterized by a similar sharpness.

The afternoon session was taken up with another symposium: "Anti-war Movements", discussed jointly, although from divergent points of view, by J. B. Matthews, secretary of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, Jane Adams, and Scott Nearing. Quite naturally, the highlight of the discussion was the speech of Jane Adams. In calling attention to a banner stretched across the hall, inscribed: "Fight Against Imperialist War", this grandmother of "pure pacifism" expressed her sorrow in no uncertain terms about rash students who wanted to carry on a fight "that was already won". "There are no more imperialist wars" because Great Britain, the last Empire, was already dissolved and is now a "commonwealth of nations"! We must struggle against other wars, this sage of pacifism made sure to point out, and then showed that the real danger lay in a future of class wars. Her speech served only to stir the mili-

(Continued on page 2)

"With Both Hands"

The internal position of the Soviet Union is making a new political turn inevitable and increasingly urgent, a turn that must be more radical than all those that preceded it. Everybody feels it. Many see it clearly. The bureaucratic leadership, standing at the focal point of the difficulties and the disaffection, preserves an obdurate silence. Perhaps because it does not yet know what road to tread? Or perhaps because it prefers to keep still about the already trodden road until it has become an irrevocable fact?

To "drive" the duped, lulled and half-stified party, unnoticed, upon a path it does not want to take—that is the tactical method of Stalin. The transition from the "dry" system to the "wet" in alcoholic beverages, was never decided by the party; on the quiet, the bureaucracy simply continued to raise the alcoholic content of light beverages in the interests of the state revenues, and in this way it brought the country from four to forty percent. The same method is applied by Stalin in every field. All the more necessary is it now to pay sharp attention to the maneuvers of the bureaucracy which is silently preparing a new "surprise" for the working masses. The symptoms of a secondary order must also be checked up attentively and distrustfully: by taking the whole situation into consideration, they might contribute to considering the bureaucratic leaders long before they have brought the new turn, which it may no longer be possible to make good again, up to forty percent.

The eminent American specialist for the construction of agricultural machines, Thomas Campbell, worked for a period of time as a technical adviser of the Soviet Union. After his return to the United States of America, he pub-

Stalin Bureaucracy and the U. S. A.

STALIN'S DENIAL

Months after the appearance of the book by Thomas D. Campbell which is referred to in the statement on it which we reprint here from an editorial in the latest issue of the Bulletin of the Russian Opposition, Stalin has found it advisable to publish a "denial" of the interview with himself which Campbell prints in "Russia, Market or Menace?" After the Opposition press in this country and in Europe had been filled with comments on this significant conversation between Stalin and the American bourgeois specialist, Stalin finally found it necessary to make some statement on the matter in order to extricate himself from an embarrassing position. The Stalin "denial", which successfully avoids refuting the essential passages of the interview as published by Campbell, was made for the theoretical organ of the Russian party and called to the Daily Worker several days ago. As will be seen, the comments made upon the whole question in the editorial of the Russian Bulletin still retain their pointedness and effect.

lished a book: "Russia, Market or Menace?". The high point of this book, at least politically speaking, is the report of an extensive conversation of the author with Stalin. This conversation, the authentic reproduction of which permits no doubts, as we shall see, deserves not only to be reprinted, but must also be submitted to an attentive consideration.

"As soon as we were seated I explained to Mr. Stalin through the interpreter that before we entered into any business negotiations I wanted to speak to him frankly and without offense in regard to my trip to Russia and several other matters which were on my mind. He immediately agreed to this and with one motion of his arm pointed towards the door, upon which his secretary left the room in about three steps. I then said to Mr. Stalin, 'I am very anxious, Mr. Stalin, that you should know that I am here without any intent of giving you any false impressions. I am not a Communist; I am not a disciple of Bill Haywood or Emma Goldman, and I resent many of the things which I hear about your government. Nevertheless, I am much interested in your agricultural development, as I am an agricultural mechanical engineer and have spent most of my life trying to develop mechanized agriculture in the United States. We had a poor crop in Montana this year, and the work which your government has offered me is interesting. I will not, however, make any kind of working agreement with your Government if it cannot be done absolutely independently of my political beliefs and strictly on a business basis.' Whereupon Stalin rose alertly from his chair, crossed to my side of the table, took my hand in both of his, looked me straight in the eye, and said, 'Thank you for that, Mr. Campbell. Now I know that I can believe you. Now I know that I can respect each other and perhaps we can be friends.'"

"He then motioned me to sit down, and asked me to continue. I went on to explain that we in the United States resented many things which we had heard about the Soviet Government, such

(Continued on page 2)

Japanese Resume Chinese Offensive

The military clique in control of the political fortunes of Japan has embarked upon the second phase of its military adventure of conquest in Northern China. Under some flimsy pretext the Japanese army, navy, mines and air force has laid waste to the city of Shangkwan. After a ferocious assault the Japanese forces with the use of armored cars, bombs and thrown from airplanes, cannonades, and all together paraphernalia, succeeded with a bombardment, the Japanese go on in repeating their raid on Shanghai a year ago. The whole Chinese garrison of more than 500 soldiers and about as many civilians, men, women and children were annihilated, and the city reduced to smoldering ruins by this terrific assault. The Japanese entered the city triumphantly. Then with the typical insolence that characterizes the Japanese militarists they demanded an apology from Chang Hsiao Liang the commander of the garrison. (Presumably because there weren't more soldiers of Shangkwan they could slaughter.)

The Japanese invasion will not stop with the capture of this northern city. It is but another step in the campaign of Japanese imperialists to carve a colonial empire out of Northern China. Grave international complications will no doubt ensue from this latest venture, with the ever-present threat of an attack on the Soviet Union looming in the distance. It is the duty of every worker to stand on guard against the outbreak of a new imperialist war and to protest the horrible slaughter of the oppressed Chinese people.

OPEN FORUM

Liebkecht-Luxemburg Memorial

Speakers:
MAX SHACHTMAN—JOSEPH CARTER

Friday, January 13, 1933
126 East 16 Street,
ADMISSION: 15c

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