

THE FIGHTING WORKER



WORKERS OF THE WORLD
UNITE!

Organ of the Revolutionary Workers League of the U. S.

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SPAIN'S MASSES FIGHT FOR LAND AND BREAD

The election "victory" of the people's front, which stalinism heralded as a smashing defeat for world fascism, has settled nothing fundamentally. Since the "victory" general strikes have occurred in several cities. The peasants of Extramadura have seized the land in defiance of the new government. Workers and farm laborers have burned convents and churches in many localities, destroyed luxurious manor houses and estates of the hated nobility and landlords.

The Azana government is doing everything possible to stem the rising tide of revolt. Fascist bands run wild in the streets, and running gun fights are frequent. The Azana regime is reluctantly taking some nominal measures against the right and slashing out against the workers and peasants at every opportunity.

The elections momentarily sidetracked and diffused the pressure of the masses. The capitalists will be able to consolidate even further to the right of the treacherous Azana, who is being considered as a candidate for president on the peoples front slate, unless the working class acts independently in its own interests. For this it requires, first of all, an independent revolutionary party, Soviets, and armed detachments of workers and peasants. If the working class does not break loose from the liberal bourgeoisie, present a program for the road to power and put forward revolutionary policies both domestic and foreign for the workers government to follow after the seizure of power, and above all, now, without delay, arm and organize its combat forces, the present struggles will end in defeat for the proletariat.

Sharp internal crises wrack the stalinists and socialist parties. Under the slogan of organic unity both parties threaten to split. The right wing of the socialist party and the stalinist leadership vie with each other in their loyalty to the government, striving to confine the struggle to the channels of capitalist legality. The rank and file, however, especially, among the socialists where the left wing has a temporary advantage, press for direct mass action against the forces of reaction and, "if necessary," against the government. The heroic sacrifices made in the previous Spanish revolt and the Austrian event clearly show that the will to power alone on the part of the rank and file in the socialist party, without a Marxian program, without a Bolshevik leadership, without a revolutionary party, cannot take power.

The stalinists demand that "if the Azana government does not fulfill its promises" (!) a broad peoples front government should be established. On the other hand the socialist left has declared for the first time in favor of building the Workers Alliance united front movement on a national scale. The stalinists and socialist right favor the perpetuation of the peoples front which means the continuation of the hegemony of the bourgeois-republican regime.

The Workers Party of Marxist Unification established by the recent fusion of the Spanish Communist Left (Trotskyists) and the Workers and Peasants Bloc of Catalonia (Maurin), allowed itself to be sub-

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League Convention Step Toward Marxist Party

History was made at Chicago at the convention of the Revolutionary Workers League. A handful of delegates came together on the 29th of February, discussed the problems of and issues before the working class and adjourned on the fifth of March. The entire convention was a modest affair. There was no publicity ballyhoo; no swarm of reporters trying to crash the gate and get statements from those close to those in a position to know; none of the trimmings that go with "important" events. None the less we made history there.

The main issue before the convention was the question of the international and national line. Both questions revolve around the fundamental issue: collaboration with the class enemy or struggle against it in peace and war. This is a settled question among Marxists. But in recent years there has been a decisive loss of ground for the ideas of Marxism and especially this fundamental idea. The social democrats, of course, have never embraced it. The stalinists have now abandoned it completely, and through their peoples front-organic unity line are pursuing a course of making the working class a meek follower of the so-called progressive and liberal capitalists. The coincidence of the stalinists and social democrats in this fundamental question has introduced an enormous confusion into the world working class movement.

Against this line which leads only to treachery our convention raised again the banner of Marx and Lenin: uncompromising struggle against the class enemy in both peace and war, both on the international and national fields. What this line looks like in its international aspects can be seen from the synopsis published on page two.

NATIONAL LINE

On the national side distinct contributions were made to the revolutionary movement. With the endorsement of these published before the convention in our theoretical organ, INTERNATIONAL NEWS, a beginning was made toward the elaboration of a Marxist program the keynote of which is the application of the ideas of Marx and Lenin to the specific conditions obtaining in the United States. In short, we are beginning to talk American. With the adoption of these on American Imperialism, the Negro Question, and the Latin American Revolution important contributions were made toward the solution of the unsolved theoretical, problems of the American revolution.

As against the reformist course of the stalinists, the old guard socialists, the right centrist socialist militants and the trotskyst capitulators; who are all moving in the direction of a farmer labor party, our convention declared for the creation of an independent revolutionary working class party standing four square on the platform of class struggle under all circumstances and at all times in peace and in war.

The creation of this party in irreconcilable struggle against the other parties and tendencies in the move-

ment is the most important task of the Marxists. For on its success depends the overthrow of capitalism. The main line in building this party is the independent activity of the Marxists in the class struggle to sink its roots in the decisive strata of the American working class.

A very significant decision was made in relation to our political, mass work. Realizing that the overthrow of capitalism was a task which had in addition to its political and theoretical sides a strategical side of decisive importance, the convention voted unanimously to concentrate the League's work in the decisive economic industrial and agricultural area of the United States, which will also be decisive from the point of view of the strategy of the actual overthrow. That is the area shown in the map above—the Great Lakes area. Here are located a number of the basic industries, the decisive food crops, the second most important financial center, the backbone of ALL political movements in the United States. Here is located the bulk of the decisive sections of the American proletariat which will make up the revolutionary army of tomorrow. In line with this decision the League press and headquarters are to be moved to Chicago in six months.

INTO THE CLASS STRUGGLE

The trade union and unemployed policies adopted by the convention are the channels by which the political line can be transformed into action in the class struggle and the creation of a fighting communist party moving steadily on the road to overthrow capitalism.

Thus sound steps were taken on the theoretical, political and economic planes to break through the isolation from the class struggle in which the Marxists have been confined for years in the old Communist League of America and then in the Workers Party during the year-long bitter fight against the opportunist road to the masses of Trotsky-Cannon-Muste.

On the problem of fusion with the groups which the League is negotiating the convention laid down the line that fusion with centrist forces and other Marxist groups on a Marxist programmatic basis is the auxiliary line for building the revolutionary party in the United States. THE MAIN LINE with or without fusion IS the same: THE INDEPENDENT ACTIVITY OF THE MARXISTS IN THE CLASS STRUGGLE. The specific decisions are recorded on page two.

There were serious shortcomings, too. Chief among these was the absence of delegates from the mines, steel mills and factories in the basic industries generally. This was the result of the past with which we have done forever. By the next convention by consistent application of the line of this convention will go far to overcome this shortcoming.

On the whole the convention went far to consolidate the Marxist force in the American labor movement. A long step forward was taken to build a revolutionary party in the United States, and the Fourth International.

Negro Congress

The National Negro Congress, held in Chicago from February 14th to 16th, was a festival of opportunism. The Congress called on "Black America" to resist white capitalist exploitation and discrimination and fight for equal citizenship as a race suffering at the hands of another race. It calls upon Negroes to support Negro capitalist as the duty of the race. Negro businessmen are asked to support Negro labor organizations. By every means at its disposal the Congress sought to foster racial consciousness instead of class consciousness.

Among the many resolutions passed the worst were those which dealt with business the sense of which has been given in the above paragraph, and the one on the church which asks the Negroes to rely on god.

The stalinists who united with the socialists and the worst Negro nationalists to put this congress over made a protest against these outright

bourgeois policies but tamely accepted the decision which went against them.

The line of the Congress is the line behind the Scottsboro Defense Committee which organizes prayer meetings to "free" the boys. On this basis no struggle against capitalism is possible either in defense of the Scottsboro boys, against discrimination, lynching, or any of the abominable injustices which the Negroes suffer in this capitalist paradise.

The answer to this stuff is the fighting solidarity of the entire working class including the Negroes against their class enemies whether these be white, black or any other color. We are for class struggle and class consciousness, not racial struggle and racial consciousness. Our road is the road to the revolution and the overthrow of capitalism; the road of the National Negro Congress and the stalinists and socialists who support it is the road to alliance with the bourgeoisie against the workers. Negro and White.

The Workers Vote

How shall the workers vote in the fall election? They will have a selection of the two parties of the exploiters, the Democratic and Republican parties, and the Farmer-Labor Party of the Stalinists and Socialists, which if consummated will be the Third Party of capitalism, and will represent the interests of the middle class. The workers cannot vote for any of these parties and expect to move one step forward. Rather a vote for any and every non-revolutionary working class party is a step backward, and is how revolutionists should NOT use parliamentary action.

The Revolutionary Workers League has an answer to this question. It will be of special importance to class conscious workers. Which Road for the Workers in the Fall Election. Watch for the next issue of the FIGHTING WORKER.

Join the Young Workers League

DEMONSTRATE MAY 1, AGAINST CAPITALISM

May Day this year finds capitalism on the offensive almost everywhere. Spain is the only striking exception. In the Soviet Union, stalinism treacherously holds the shield of socialism over the forced retreat in the direction of capitalist property relations as the latest dispatches clearly show. War is already afoot in Africa and threatens in the Far East. In Europe a gigantic struggle is taking place for positions of advantage and alliances for the impending world conflagration.

The workers are on the defensive. The treacherous peoples front policies of the class collaborationist-stalinists and social democrats—ties them to the capitalist state and delivers them bound hand and foot to the class enemy. The Marxists are smaller in number and isolated, a mere handful struggling against what appear to be insuperable odds.

In the United States the capitalists pursue their preparations for the war almost unhindered by the workers who are completely without revolutionary leadership. The stalinists and the socialists of all shades clamor for a Farmer-Labor party and throw reformist dust in the eyes of the class.

But the situation is far from hopeless. The attacks of the capitalists will force the workers to resist creating opportunities favorable for Marxist propaganda and the growth of the revolutionary force. For that we are working and preparing.

Against the line and slogans of the reformists and centrists we, the Marxists, raise the following slogans for May Day and the struggle against the enemy:

IN PEACE AND WAR THE ENEMY IS AT HOME—THE CAPITALIST CLASS!

AGAINST IMPERIALIST WAR—FOR CLASS WAR FOR A WORLD COMMUNIST SOCIETY!

DEFEND THE SOVIET UNION BY EXTENDING THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION; BY OVERTHROWING AMERICAN IMPERIALISM; BY BUILDING A NEW COMMUNIST PARTY IN THE SOVIET UNION AND THE FOURTH (COMMUNIST) INTERNATIONAL!

AGAINST THE PEOPLE'S FRONT—FOR THE INDEPENDENT CLASS ACTION OF THE PROLETARIAT!

AGAINST THE ROOSEVELT SECURITY AND RELIEF LAWS—FOR SOCIAL AND UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE AT THE EXPENSE OF THE EMPLOYERS AND THEIR GOVERNMENT!

AGAINST THE CLASS COLLABORATIONIST CRAFT (GREEN) AND INDUSTRIAL (LEWIS) UNIONISM—FOR CLASS STRUGGLE POLICIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNION STRUCTURES!

AGAINST THE CAPITALIST AND MIDDLE CLASS PARTIES (REPUBLICAN, DEMOCRAT, FARMER-LABOR, LABOR)—FOR AN INDEPENDENT REVOLUTIONARY WORKING CLASS PARTY!

THE END OF THE WORKERS PARTY

A complete contrast to our convention was the first and last convention of the Workers Party held from February 28 to March 1. The Workers Party was founded a little more than a year ago. In its Declaration of Principles was written: "At all times and under all conditions the Workers Party (read: revolutionary party) maintains its organizational and political independence": "the Socialist Party is not a party of revolution but of reform and pacifism." The genuinely revolutionary workers in the Socialist Party can carry out the implications of their position only when they break with reformists and social patriots and unite with the Workers Party and the New Internationalist".

The ideas expressed in these sentences are correct. On this basis Lenin built the Third International. But shortly after the Workers Party the Cannon leadership began to put over an entirely different line: to liquidate the Workers Party into the Socialist Party. This is now a matter of history and has been discussed in these columns in previous issues. The international labor movement is also acquainted with the important facts. In January Trotsky cabled his endorsement of the liquidation.

The "convention" was called for the purpose of putting an official stamp on the liquidation which had been arranged through negotiations with leaders of the militants in the Socialist Party behind the back of the Workers Party. This "convention" took four important decisions in the following order:

(1)—It opened by expelling the Marxist Action Group which opposed the liquidationist line of Trotsky-Cannon-Muste.

(2)—It expelled the capitulators to Stalinism (then the latest of a continuous stream beginning with Budenz.)

(3)—It voted to liquidate the Workers Party into the Socialist Party (the first vote was 51-23; the second ballot was unanimous.)

(4)—It elected a national steering committee.

Then it adjourned.

The convention decisions have not been made public. Cannon-Muste are making the continued existence of the Workers Party. In the meantime they are sneaking into the Socialist Party of reform and pacifism! Through the Holland Tunnel like Gitow and Zam? No. There is more than one road to the swamp. Through the trade union fractions of the Socialist Party as in New York; through individual applications as in Oakland, New York and other places by becoming the official Socialist Party and building as in Minneapolis. Beggars cannot be choosers.

Oh, yes, lest we forget—by abandoning the NEW MILITANT for a page in the SOCIALIST CALL and by giving up their group in the Socialist Party thereby subordinating themselves to the discipline of the reformists centrists and pacifists.

The stalinists, the old guard socialists, the Lovestoneite brokers for organic unity between the stalinists and the socialists are making political capital out of the capitulation of the Trotskyists. All of them are saying: we told you so. And are drawing the conclusion that their line is the correct one for the worker to follow. But they are united in one thing. They maintain a complete silence about the Marxists who parted from the Trotskyists and are building the revolutionary movement. This is a conspiracy of silence by the opportunists against the Marxists.

The liquidation into the Socialist Party is not the end of the degeneration; only a new chapter. Already they are voting for a Farmer-Labor Party! The American Trotskyists walk in the footsteps of their: European and Latin American predecessors who have blazed a trail for them. In France the Trotskyists entered the Socialist Party; they became Champions of organic unity; now they are for a people's front of action. The story of their degeneration in Chile is described in another column. It is on this road that our former friends have embarked. This road leads to the abandonment of the Fourth International in action and then in name.

SPAIN

(Continued from Page 1)

merged in the left election bloc and shares responsibility with it for its betrayal. Following the election this party announced that the proletariat must now rely only upon its own forces (as though it should not also do so!) and that an attempt is being made to draw the left socialists into joint action on a program of building Workers Alliances, trade union unity and the independent struggle of the proletariat with a view to ultimate fusion if a Marxian programmatic agreement can be reached.

If that could be accomplished it would be a big step forward. But the leadership of this party shows by its present program that it has a basic error on the most fundamental question of the day—the road to the Fourth (Communist) International. It declares merely for a new international and fills this with the content of organic unity of the treacherous parties of the second and third internationals and itself. This theoretical error which the Revolutionary Workers League pointed out in INTERNATIONAL NEWS, number five, led to the participation of this party in the peoples front election bloc. Unless corrected it will lead to further errors and degeneration, and not to unification on a Marxian program.

Peoples Front In Chile

Through reports in the capitalist press we learn of the establishment of a "Peoples National Front" in Chile. The present coalition "against Fascism" is made up of the following parties: Radical Party (major bourgeois opposition party); Communist Party (Stalinist); Communist Left (Trotskyist); Radical Socialist Party; Socialist Party (Grove); and the Democratic Party. The last four named formed the Left Parliamentary Bloc in 1934 to defend democratic rights against reaction.

At that time the Chilean Trotskyists were seized with panic at the rising Fascist threat and combined with the Socialist Party and two petty bourgeois organizations to stop the menace—in parliament! Later this piece of opportunism which went without public criticism from Trotsky was given a wider range outside of parliament. The organization of the Peoples Front is only a logical development from the first error. On the part of the Trotskyists it was motivated by exactly the same considerations which led the French Trotskyists to enter the French socialist party. These are different forms of the same anti-Bolshevik tendency. Incidentally in France the Trotskyist, Zeller, has come out for a peoples front of action.

It is characteristic of the American Trotskyists who are without doubt the most corrupt specimens of their tendency to report the arrest of their Chilean comrades but to cover up their opportunist course.

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tion; Washington, D. C., April 13—American Imperialism Prepares for War; Allentown, April 16—The Program Against Unemployment, A Report on the Washington Unemployment Conference.

In line with the decisions of our convention to concentrate our activity and locate our apparatus in the Great Lakes Area, comrade Streeter national secretary of the Young Workers League, has left New York to work in Chicago. He is stopping in a number of cities to do organization work: Philadelphia, April 19; Pittsburgh, April 21; Columbus, Ohio April 23; Fort Wayne, April 25; Chicago, April 26.

Unemployed Unite On Program of Class Collaboration

After seven years of unemployment and crisis the most important national unemployed organizations met in Washington from April seventh to the tenth and united into the Workers Alliance of America. Unity was achieved by sacrificing program. Unity was obtained upon the basis of a CLASS COLLABORATION PROGRAM which is centered around the endorsement of bills presented in Congress by middle class politicians, by the endorsement of the Farmer-Labor Party, and by the endorsement of the Green-Lasser trade union position.

A contradictory process could be noted at the convention. The majority of the delegates reflected the surging class pressure from below; while the political leadership of the unemployed organizations which united represented revisionism, disintegration, and a class collaboration line. The unemployed conference revealed the process at work in the workers' political movement. An upsurge and forward movement on the part of the class in the United States and a decline and backward step by the leadership, reflecting the demoralization following almost two decades of revolutionary defeats crowned by the German debacle.

The major political tendencies represented at the conference were the socialist Militants who controlled the Workers Alliance; the Cannon-Muste Socialist Party group who controlled the major group of the Unemployed League and had delegates from the Workers Alliance and independent organizations; the stalinists who controlled the Unemployed Council and had delegates from the Workers Alliance, and from the minority group of the Unemployed Leagues and a few independent organizations; the Old Guard Socialists with representatives in the Workers Alliance; and the Revolutionary Workers League with a delegate from the Workers Alliance and from an independent organization. Financial difficulties prevented over a half

dozen of our delegates who were elected from appearing.

Besides these political tendencies, other political tendencies present gave the convention its coloring, although they had no official delegates. Lunden of the Farmer Labor Party, a representative of the WPA, and Morrison of the A. F. of L., addressed the convention and spoke for a Farmer Labor Party. Norman Thomas for the socialists, and Mother Bloor for the stalinists, joined hands with the middle class politicians in calling for a Farmer-Labor Party.

The outstanding political factor of the convention was the bloc of the socialist Militants, the Cannon-Muste socialists, and the stalinists and their UNANIMOUS agreement on the program of unification, against the struggle of the delegates who fought for a class struggle program and against the Farmer-Labor Party.

The political bloc of these three tendencies on a class collaboration program, carried with it a bitter organizational struggle against one another for organizational concessions and posts. Political unity and organizational difference always reflects opportunist blocs against the left.

The Cannon-Muste forces capitulated completely to the socialist Militants line of class collaboration. They refused to raise one finger against the program and resolution. They had members on the resolution committee. They had members on the Executive Board. They did not speak or vote against the PROGRAM for unity, THE FARMER-LABOR PARTY, The Green-Lasser trade union line, and the steamroller methods used against the delegates fighting for a class struggle program. They voted FOR these points.

Only delegates Howley and Oehler spoke and voted against the class collaboration unity line, and for unity on a class struggle line.

The Old Guard socialists voted against Unity as such.

Cohen, Cowan, Krueger, Papcun, Shipley, Steed, Others Join League

Since the last appearance of the FIGHTING WORKER a number of workers have joined with the Marxist forces in the United States to work together for the creation of the Fourth International and a revolutionary party in the United States. They have come from the Workers Party, the Spartacus Youth League, the Young Communist League, the Zionist movement and no political party or organization. Among these who joined are such mass workers as Andy Steed and Jim Shipley of the Illinois Workers Alliance, members of its Executive Board; G. R. Papcun, a leading trade unionist of St. Louis. George Papcun known throughout the Great Lakes area and beloved for his tireless work and unflagging devotion to the revolutionary movement; C. B. Cowan, former member of the District Bureau of the Communist Party and National Adjutant of the American League of Ex-Servicemen, and others.

The full list follows: Steed and Shipley of the Illinois coal fields

Papcun, Fallik, Pitts, Tisone, I. Weinstein, Strauss, Leo London and two others—all of Youngstown, O.

Son Howley, and A. Davis of New Castle, Pa.;

J. and S. Donahue and M. Davis of Chicago.

C. B. Cowan, J. Pierce, Hilda Seaman, Jack Stein and Al Raymond of Cleveland.

Jeff Rall of Kansas City.

G. R. — of St. Louis

Paine of Washington, D. C.

J. Marlen and M. Erger of San Francisco.

The Marxist Action Group of twelve comrades and five others in New York City; Cohen, Zotzman, Ogden, Drake, Edwards, Lynne, Dane, Wexler, Hines, Goldstein, Douglas, Shapiro, Abe Kruger, Ble-

cher, Bradford, Hirshkowitz, Schack, Ogden and Drake were members of the National Committee of the Spartacus Youth League; Cohen was a member of the New York District Committee. With the exception of Bradford and Hirshkowitz who resigned from the Young Communist League to join the Young Workers League, Schack who came to the Youth organization from the left Zionists; Krueger who resigned from the Socialist Party; and Steed and Shipley all the comrades listed above came from the now defunct Workers Party and Spartacus Youth League.

Four members of the Revolutionary Workers League, recoiling from the magnitude of the tasks which confront the Marxists in the struggle to forge a revolutionary party, decamped to the "Workers Party" which is entombed in the Socialist Party and were expelled. The names of the capitulators are Arthur Brandmark, I. and S. Greenberg and I. Brode. George Marlen who found himself in hopeless contradictions with the line of the convention withdrew and was expelled. (No one can resign from a Bolshevik organization.)

Through the acquisition of militants full of enthusiasm, willing to work and sacrifice and the cleansing of its ranks of tired, demoralized and sectarian elements the revolutionary movement grows and solidifies itself. The Revolutionary Workers League and Young Workers League are on the way.

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A CHALLENGE TO A DEBATE

To the Cannon-Muste Socialist Party Group,
(Formerly the Workers Party U. S.)
55 East 11th Street, New York City.
To the National Steering Committee:

The Revolutionary Workers League invites your group to debate us on the question, "Should Revolutionists join the Socialist Party?" or "Should We Join the Socialist Party to Build the New Fourth Communist International?" Our organization has selected a committee of three and asks that your group elect a committee of three; the joint committee to arrange the details of the debate and to agree upon an impartial chairman.

Our committee is ready to meet with your committee at any time. Inform us when and where we can meet with your representatives and our committee will be on hand. Or inform us when your committee will call at our National Office.

Yours for a Fourth International,
Hugo Oehler
National Secretary.

Note: We have not received any answer!!

LEAGUE TOURS

The national convention which closed in Chicago on the fifth of March was the springboard for a number of tours by the returning delegates.

OEHLER

Indianapolis, March 11, Columbus Ohio, March 12; Youngstown, Ohio, March 13; New Castle, Pa., March 14; Pittsburgh, Pa., March 15; State College, Pa., March 16; Harrisburg, Pa., March 17; Allentown, Pa., March 19.

BLACKWELL

Detroit, March 6; London, Canada, March 7; Toronto, Canada, March 8; Hamilton, Canada, March 9; Niagara Falls, March 10; Buffalo, March 11; Rochester, March 12.

OKUN

Comrade Okun was sent on an organizing tour and instructed to remain in each city as long as the work there required. Accordingly no dates are listed. He covered the following places: Illinois coal fields (Peoria, Bloomington, Springfield,

Gillespie, Staunton); St. Louis, Kansas City, St. Louis, Chicago, Detroit, Fort Wayne, Cleveland, Buffalo, Rochester, Utica. The Canadian Immigration Officers refused to permit him to enter "their country."

On March 15, comrade Lewis went to Washington, D. C. On March 19 comrade Streeter went down in connection with the Congressional hearings on the youth act. On the 29 comrade Oehler is going down to speak on the foreign policy of the Roosevelt administration. On March 15 comrades Fox, Garber and Eiffel went to Davenport from Chicago to assist in the organization of a public meeting in reply to the pacifist propaganda of General Smedley Butler. In connection with his trip to the Washington Unemployed Unity Convention to which he was a delegate from the Illinois Workers Alliance, comrade Oehler made a short speaking tour:

Philadelphia, April 12—The Peoples Front and the Spanish Revolu-