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Woe to the Vanquished--Mussolini Slogan

Jobless Masses Unite Ranks

An Analysis of the Washington Unemployed Convention and the Task Ahead

By MAX SHACHTMAN

A long and decisive step has been taken to put an end to the division of the organized unemployed workers of this country into three separate national organizations and countless local groups. By virtually unanimous vote, the delegates assembled in convention in Washington last week in the auditorium of the Department of Labor brought about the amalgamation into one body of the Workers Alliance of America, the National Unemployed League, the National Unemployment Councils, the American Workers Union (a Missouri organization) and several other local and state-wide organizations of the jobless.

The name of the new organization, as agreed upon by all its constituent bodies, is to remain that of the group which had the largest representation at the Washington convention, namely, the Workers Alliance of America. Similarly, the principal officers of the new Alliance have been drawn from the old one.

There can be no two opinions about the progressive nature of the merger. The separation of the unemployed workers into organizations which were not far removed from enlarged editions of the political organizations mainly responsible for their formation or maintenance, has proved to be a costly division of energy and efforts. It may even be added that, just as on the trade union field, so among the unemployed, workers should be organized not upon the basis of their political beliefs, associations or sympathies, but upon the basis of the simple and adequate fact that they are workers—in the case of the trade unions—or that they are unemployed (or part time, or relief) workers in the case of the organizations of the jobless.

The indispensable corrolary to this principle is that in both cases the field must be left entirely free for any member who may be so inclined to agitate in a loyal and comradely manner for the particular political, economic, philosophical views he may hold. The workers demand of their employer that hiring be not confined to those of one sex, creed, race, color or political view. This demand is usually accompanied by the right which every worker in a plant takes to himself: to agitate among his shopmates for any views he may have. The two propositions have at least equal validity in the broad organizations of the working class.

Advantages of Unity

The unification of the organizations of the unemployed is therefore correct generally speaking, and even more correct and urgent in the present circumstances. Assembled under one banner, and determined as they are to maintain the most intimate contact with the organized trade unions, the masses of the unemployed who have already understood the need of organization will be imbued with a greater spirit of self-confidence and consequently of militancy. The disunity of the jobless gave the ruling class and its government indubitable advantages in the struggle between the two forces. The unification not only takes these advantages out of the hands of the enemies of the unemployed, but gives the latter a corresponding and hitherto unpossessed superiority.

The whole outcome of the struggle to ameliorate the lot of the jobless and the relief workers—to the extent that this can be accomplished under the capitalist system which inexorably creates their wretched conditions—now depends entirely upon the extent to which the unemployed combine with their new solidarity a militant policy of action, a policy of class struggle. Without the latter, even the completest unity can mean nothing at all, or worse yet, can become a treacherous consolation.

Politics and the Unemployed

It is especially from the latter standpoint that the situation is far from reassuring. The course of the convention registered several deficiencies in the movement which, in our opinion, require the earliest possible rectification. The fact that these shortcomings relate to political questions in no sense conflicts with our previous contention that the unemployed cannot merely be the appendage of a political party, a disguise for it. For, from the latter view one must not for a moment conclude that political ques-

(Continued on Page 4)

Jail 1,000 Bolsheviks in Chile

Under the cover of martial law proclaimed to break the railway men's strike, the Chilean government has arrested over 1,000 Bolshevik-Leninists.

Among those who have been imprisoned and deported are comrades Jorge Levin, Carlos Videla-Aquiles Jara, Quinteros, Luis Lolis, Juan Vergas.

Our Chilean comrades, who have a great influence upon the trade union movement of the country, assumed their posts at the very forefront of this struggle and the strike.

IN STALIN'S PRISONS

Dr. Ciliga Continues Series on Persecution of Revolutionists Under the Stalin Regime

EDITOR'S NOTE:

"Question: Is it a criminal offense to speak against Communism in the Soviet Union?—M.C.

"Answer: No. There is complete freedom of speech in the U.S.S.R. Any person can have and can voice any opinion about Communism or about the Communist Party, or about its policies, or leaders. . . ."—Daily Worker, April 16.

Now read the testimony of Dr. Anton Ciliga who was jailed for five years in the prisons and exile camps of the Soviet Union for differing with the Stalinist bureaucracy on questions of policy. Ciliga, a member of the Political Bureau of the Jugoslav C.P., came to the Soviet Union an exile only to find, through bitter personal experience, the repressions against revolutionists more severe than in his native land. Another installment of this series will follow in the coming issue of the NEW MILITANT.

By DR. ANTON CILIGA

III. In the Prisons at Leningrad and Verkhne-Uralsk

I spent five months (from May to October 1930) in the Detention Prison in Leningrad. During the first part of this term, up to the conclusion of the investigation, I was committed to a small dark cell with several other prisoners. During the latter part of the term, while awaiting my sentence, I sat in a large cell, intended for 23 people, in which there were from 80 to 110 of us. The occupants of the large cells were continually changing and in view of the fact that 4 to 5 large cells were let out together for 15 minutes into the yard, I had the opportunity to become acquainted with a great many prisoners with hundreds of "cases" and the fate of hundreds of individuals.

These were the days of the mass uprisings of the peasants against the Stalinist collectivization, the days of mass executions throughout the whole of Russia, the days of the famous execution of the "Forty-Five" so-called wreckers. During this time prisoners in our jail were taken out almost daily to face the firing squad. Except in rare instances, the press carried no news about these executions. But once I witnessed the following case. The morning papers, which had been just brought in, contained a dispatch that the death sentence of so-and-so had been "carried out." But this man was still alive, sitting, entirely unaware, among us in the cell. The entire cell, the whole tier fell into a frenzy, into horror . . . but a few minutes later this oversight was "corrected," and the man led from the cell to face the firing squad. . . .

I also became acquainted here with the methods by which certain

(Continued on Page 3)

Huge Student Strike Nears

350,000 Expected to Join in Protest Against War in Nation's Schools

Over 350,000 students are expected to leave their classes on April 22 at 11 A.M. in the third nation-wide students' strike against war. Called by the American Student Union, the strike has been endorsed by a number of college presidents and professors as well as leaders of other student organizations. The New York Teachers Union and other local unions have pledged support to the strike.

While in the colleges and universities the students will hold their own demonstrations, in the high schools, where "peace assemblies" are being called by the administrations, the A.S.U. urges student participation on four conditions: that it be student controlled; that student resolutions be permitted and recognized as part of the national action. Whether or not the conditions are granted, there is little doubt after last year's experience that the assemblies called by the school administrations will in most cases be patriotic rather than anti-war demonstrations.

Warn Against Intimidation

Two national strike calls have been issued by the A.S.U.: one for the colleges and universities and a "milder" one for the high schools. Warning against intimidation by the authorities, the college call states: "To surrender the militancy and purpose of this strike at the first sign of opposition is to pave the way for far greater retreats and concessions later"; a view that is made meaningless by the provision permitting A.S.U. participation in administration controlled assemblies in the high schools.

The call describes the strike as a "rehearsal for the future" and calls for support of the Oxford Pledge (not to support any war in which the U.S. government is involved).

A Confused Slogan

"War anywhere is war everywhere; stop the aggressor!" (the new formula of the "peace is indivisible"-pro-sanctionist conception of the Stalinists) is among the slogans in the strike call. And in another section of the same call we find:

"With genuine neutrality circumvented, a strike of 350,000 students for the principle of no loans, credits or supplies to belligerents will indicate that at least the student population of the United States has learned the lessons of the Nye inquiry."

Can one logically support the slogan of "Stop the aggressor"—and at the same time "principle of no credits or supplies to belligerents," which includes both "aggressors" and "defenders"? Yet, the Stalinists do so **in practice!**

At the Cleveland congress of the American League Against War and

(Continued on Page 3)

Fascist Army Overruns Ethiopia

Two Internationals Reveal Bankruptcy Once Again

With the capture of Dessye and the announcement by the Italian forces in Africa of plans of a three-day march at the end of which it is expected to take the capital city of Addis Ababa, the main immediate objective of the Fascist invasion of Ethiopia seems to be definitely assured.

The occupation of the capital which now appears inevitable will undoubtedly be a severe moral blow to the defenders, and little more will be left to the courageous Ethiopians save the continuance of sporadic guerrilla warfare to prevent the Italians from completing the subjugation of this last of the "independent" lands of Africa.

At Geneva, meanwhile, the Italian representatives, haughtily exuberant with victory, have laid down the victor's peace terms in accordance with the old Roman war-cry which is the shibboleth of all modern imperialist pirates: "Woe to the vanquished!" From the intimated terms, it is clear that the Italians plan simply to convert Ethiopia into a colony, to humiliate her to the depths and to inflict such penalties upon her for her fight for independence as will constitute the maximum guarantee against the future resumption of the struggle against the invaders.

The Fascists are bluntly contemptuous not only of Ethiopia but also of the great "guarantor of peace," the League of Nations. Mussolini's representatives, demonstratively ignoring the League, insist upon negotiating exclusively with Ethiopian representatives, without even the presence of League representatives, and in a locality ostentatiously removed from the League seat, Geneva. As a "concession," it is reported from Geneva, Italy may "permit a League observer to be present at the direct negotiations on the condition that he remained silent and took no part in them. That would be tantamount to the League's blessing them in blank." (N.Y. Times 4-17.)

The pathetic protests of the Ethiopian delegates to the League are, of course, entirely unavailing, as was to be expected. Since October 1935, when by quasi-unanimous vote the League Council labelled Italy the "aggressor," the pacifists of all colors and kidney, from the French Radicals through the Second International to the Third International have been singing the praises of the League of Nations as an instrument of peace and the protector of small nations whose independence was in jeopardy. From both Brussels and Moscow came blasts of drug fumes calculated to put the independent working class movement to sleep with the consolidation that the League, by virtue of sanctions, would take care of everything.

The League bandits, however, were preoccupied with all the considerations in the world save that of the independence of Ethiopia. While Mussolini's modern and infinitely superior war machine has inexorably crushed the woefully inadequately equipped Ethiopian forces, the rival imperialist powers in the League jockeyed about to improve their own respective world positions.

Indeed, without the active support of the independent international working class, the isolated struggle of the Ethiopians was doomed in advance. To expect tribesmen by themselves to triumph over a modern, industrially-backed imperialist army, is preposterous. But it is precisely the working class movement which failed of its obligations. More exactly, the Second and Third Internationals, with all their braggart manifestoes and bluster and bluff, once more disclosed their utter bankruptcy.

They collapsed in Germany, in Austria, in the Saar, in Spain. And now, in face of one of the most shameless imperialist aggressions in our time, impudently conceived and insolently executed, the two old Internationals have once more failed. The tragedy of the whole Italo-Ethiopian struggle lies in the fact that in point of simple fact the working class movement did not react to strike even those simple blows at the Italian Fascists which they were in a position to deal.

THE OLD GUARD AND THE S P PRIMARIES

By JOHN WEST

In the recent New York State Primaries, both in New York City and up-state, the Militant Socialists won a substantial and decisive majority over the Old Guard. This result is particularly important in its prophecy of an equally progressive outcome to next month's national convention of the Socialist Party. From every forward-looking point of view, this repudiation of the Old Guard represents a genuine step in advance not merely for the Socialist Party itself, but for the developing labor movement in this country as a whole.

The extent of the victory of the Militants exceeded most predictions, even those of the Militants themselves. It is important and necessary to understand what accounts for the result.

Basically—as we have on numerous occasions pointed out—the factional struggle within the Socialist Party reflects new processes of ferment and differentiation which have been taking place within the advanced sections of the working class as a result of the Spanish, German, and Austrian events, the intensification of the war crisis, and the character of the post-1929 economic crisis. The ferment and differentiation are not, of course, confined to this country, but are reproduced in an analogous manner on an international scale. The central lesson drawn from the world events, with varying degrees of clarity, by increasing sections of workers within the orbit of the Second International has been: traditional social-democratic reformism is bankrupt, and serves only to lead the working class to disaster, and to sacrifice the working class to finance-capital in every crisis—to fascism as readily as to imperialist war.

This is, it will be observed, the negative half of the lesson which must be drawn if the full positive potentialities of these developments are to be achieved. It is necessary not merely to understand that social-democratic reformism is bankrupt; but, positively, to break sharply from Social-democracy; and this sharp break can be decisively accomplished only by embracing and adhering firmly to the principles of revolutionary Marxism. Half-way measures and ambiguities can provide a partial and temporary solution, can make possible even certain victories on the road; but anything less than the full conclusion will in the end cut short the progressive development, will route the advancing workers back to reformism, aside into the death-house of Stalinism, or down into futile isolation.

At each stage of the development, the basic underlying process appears only to a limited and to some degree distorted extent on the surface. The political differentiation takes on in the struggle an organizational form; and for a while it is the organizational contest which appears as paramount over the political issues—though it is the latter which in the long run determine the organizational expressions. The opposing slogans hide as often as they reveal the basic questions. Nevertheless, the process and the movement continue, and gradually re-shape the slogans.

Two Decisive Factors

The New York Primaries fight, itself a stage in the larger struggle, is highly instructive as an aid to our understanding of the process as a whole. If we examine the specific and immediate factors which account for the sweeping victory of the Militants, the following two seem to have been decisive:

(1) The Old Guard openly and consistently conducted its fight on the basis of conservative social-democratic reformism. Their campaign was a campaign of furious Red-baiting, in which the New Leader accused the Militants every week of being dyed-in-the-wool Communists, reds, Trotskyists, and revolutionists. But the majority of the dues-paying party members and the non-party enrolled Socialist voters have already absorbed the negative half of the lesson of the past three years; they have become convinced that hardened reformism is useless and worse than useless. Thus, this campaign of the Old Guard, though consistent and on the whole ably conducted, lost rather than gained support, recommended the Militants to the members rather than frightened the members away. The case of the Old Guard **against** the Militants was, in the eyes of the majority of the membership the best case that could be made **for** the Militants. In this sense, it might be said that the **New Leader** was the most effective agitational organ of the Militants; politically speaking, more effective than their own Socialist Call.

Ranks Activized

(2) A different kind of factor played almost an equally important role in this Primary struggle. For the first time in years, under the leadership of the Militants in the past few months, the Socialist Party of New York State showed real signs of activity. The Militants sent organizers up-state, renewed branches, made speaking tours, sent out communications, increased their participation in strikes and demonstrations. They conducted debates with the Stalinists—and out-debated them. The party felt some new blood in its veins. The Old Guard had completely neglected the rank and file of the party. And, indeed, the Old Guard is not greatly interested in the rank and file. It rests on institutions like the Forward, on the trade union bureaucracy, on fat retainers from the unions for Old Guard lawyers, on appointments by LaGuardia. In many ways, a rank and file is an inconvenience to the Old Guard. The membership was undoubtedly strongly impressed by this difference between the Old Guard and the Militant leadership. They responded to the Militant appeal for "an active, effective Socialist Party." They linked this slogan for "a democratic, inclusive party," and saw that together they meant a resolve to bring the Socialist Party out of the backwater in which it had been sleeping for a decade into the broader stream of the mass movement. Many members doubtless cast their votes for the Militants on this basis rather than from the more complex theoretic consideration—though the two are not, of course, unrelated.

The character of the struggle of the Old Guard is very strikingly shown by the issue of the New Leader (dated April 11) which followed the Primaries. Indeed, this issue sums up in brief the whole nature of the Old Guard. Significantly, we find a repeated insistence that their fight is a fight "for principle"; and repeated references to themselves as "Social Democrats" and to their principles as the principles of "Social Democracy." Their fight, they make clear, is absolutely uncompromising and intransigent.

"Voice of Social Democracy"

"The voice of Social Democracy," they threaten, "will be heard in Cleveland" (at the national convention). "The Social Democrats in the party," they warn, "know no surrender. They have just begun to fight." In an editorial headed "Our Fight for Principles" they herald the approaching end of the present struggle—"The long struggle of the New Leader for fundamental principles and policies is drawing to a close. . . ."

The feature article on the New Leader's Anniversary Banquet quotes from the speech of Louis Waldman: "Ours was not a fight, as some tried to make people believe, for the continuance in power of our side of the Socialist Party but for the fundamental program of Social Democracy. From that program we shall not recede, no matter who is in control of the Socialist Party."

This issue of the New Leader, furthermore, makes entirely clear what the Old Guard understands the fundamental program of Social Democracy to be. No opportunity is overlooked to crack down on "dictatorship" and to uphold "democracy": that is, to attack the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat, and to announce the adhesion of the Old Guard to the bourgeois-democratic state, whose agents in the working class the Old Guard prides itself on being, and aims to continue to be.

Bill Green Toasted

The biggest display of the entire issue is given to the speech of William Green, the guest of honor at the Anniversary Banquet—Green, whose long record of thorough-going reaction and treachery in the trade union movement has been climaxed during the past year by his firm resistance to every progressive development, by his bitter fight against the industrial unionists, by his dictatorial brutality in connection with the automobile workers, the rubber workers, the teachers, and the radio workers, by his pitiful cringing before the government on every possible occasion. Vladeck, at the banquet, paid fulsome "tribute to Mr. Green for his constructive leadership of the American labor movement and for his conduct as the champion of the oppressed."

The other featured trade-unionist among the speakers at the banquet was Matthew Woll, partner of Ralph Easley for years in the National Civic Federation, Hearst's chief red-baiting rival. Another leading article, proudly displayed in a box on the front page, is by Abraham Lefkowitz, co-leader of the Teachers' Guild, splitter of the Teachers' Union, and active dualist to the A. F. of L. The Old Guard, of course, is a great denunciator of "dual unionism"—except, naturally, when more "basic" issues are involved.

The strategic aim of the Old Guard is also given: "Confident," said Waldman at the banquet, "in the conviction that we represent on the political field the same program, the same principles, the same loyalty to labor exemplified in the British Labour Party, we are equally confident that with our allies of the labor movement the future belongs to our type of socialism." Abe Cahan looked forward to "the rapid development of fraternal relationship between the Socialist and labor movements in this country similar to that existing between the British Trades Union Congress and the Labor Party." The visit of Herbert Morrison of the British Labour Party to this country is hailed and advertised. And well might the Old Guard greet its British brothers: has not the British Labour Party set them grandiose examples in the technique of representing the interests of finance-capital within the working class? Was it not through the British L.P. that national unity was achieved in the last war? that the General Strike was broken? that the budget is balanced at the expense of the British workers? that British imperial policy is now being put across to the masses in the present war crisis?

Yes, the Old Guard knows where it stands. It stands for the tried and sure methods for bringing defeat and disaster to the working class; for the policies that assembled the workers for imperialism in 1914; the policies that defeated the revolution in Germany; the policies that greased the ways for Hitler, that shed the despairing blood of the workers in Austria and Spain. These policies it inscribes on its banner, and displays proudly and openly to the world.

Safety-Valve Labor Party

Nor is it to be imagined that these policies are defeated by the victory of the Militants in the Primaries, or by their probable victory at the national convention. The Old Guard looks ahead. It realizes that a broad rank and file is not vital to its plans. It sees the "model of the British Labour Party". And it aims, together with the trade union bureaucrats, to head off the development of the revolutionary party in this country, during the years after 1936, by harnessing the leftward movement of the workers into a reformist Labor Party controlled by it and the bureaucrats, together no doubt with various of the "progressives" and liberals. And it is confident that

(Continued on Page 4)

MALCOLM COWLEY: Portrait of a Stalinist Intellectual

The Saga of the Literary Cop Who Patrols the New Republic Beat for Stalin

By FELIX MORROW

An analysis is long overdue of the type of mind which the Communist Party has drawn to itself from the middle class intelligentsia. The latest and most shocking example of the product of this mind is the attack on Leon Trotsky, in the April 8 issue of the New Republic, by its literary editor, Malcolm Cowley.

Mr. Cowley has for some years been covertly stacking the cards against "Trotskyism" in his columns. Now, at last, he has openly played his hand. In what pretends to be a review of Leon Trotsky's "My Life"—six years after its publication!—Cowley delivers himself of a personal diatribe; nothing more venomous in tone, false in fact, and confused in thought, has been published against "Trotskyism" outside the official Communist Party press.

The significance of his "review" does not lie in the actual influence Mr. Cowley exerts among intellectuals. Cowley interests us, rather, as an illustration of the type of mind which has espoused Stalinism. He himself is undoubtedly unconscious of what he represents; for, as we shall see the character of his talents and the specific set of his emotions, as well as the quality of his mind, render him constitutionally incapable of understanding the implications of the political phrases he uses and the position in which they place him.

The Lost Generation

Mr. Cowley has called himself a member of the "lost generation" (the phrase is Gertrude Stein's). The lost generation consisted of that specific group of post-war intellectuals who were unable to integrate themselves in relation to their social environment. They could read no pattern into the war and its aftermath of imperialism, revolution and counter-revolution; and they sought to escape from what they could not understand. It is even too flattering to imply that they sought to understand and could not; their course was rather a purely emotional refusal to come to grips with the life around them.

They regarded politics as a mystery or a bore. The American scene was something to run away from, if you had the money. They sat around, these literary people—the word "intellectual" implies a training and disciyline which they did not have—in the European capitals, and the great post-war mass movements swept by their cafe tables and the Cowleys had not the faintest inkling of what it all meant. They looked upon individuals who concerned themselves with social problems or actively participated in the class struggle as a species of cultural barbarian. Those were the heroic days of the Communist International: the alternative destinies of Europe were poised on the edge of a knife; all who had eyes could see that the future of humanity, of culture, was with the masses. But to the Cowleys "the masses" were an object of distaste.

The Bohemian Life

The "civilized" life for these "intellectuals" consisted in the organization of esoteric literary cults with a ritual of gin, fornication and dandified rowdyism, which permitted the freest personal "expression" to everyone. Every fad had its own coterie and its own catchwords of the moment. After a brief period of sterile excitement these coteries would dissolve in a quest for new and more striking literary mannerisms. Everything was at a premium—except ideas.

The one member of the "lost generation" who really possessed creative talent of a high order, Ernest Hemingway, was the **minnesinger,** the immortalizer of the group. "The Sun Also Rises" was an unforgettable portrayal of their feverish bohemianism, their complete lack of social or personal responsibility, their utter disintegration and hopelessness. In "A Farewell to Arms," Hemingway explicitly stated, through the mouth of his chief character, the lost generation's distrust of abstract ideas and contempt for thought. Hemingway himself made great literature out of the chaos about him. Creative writers and artists are never lost. They are sustained by their work. But the group of which Cowley is representative substituted dramatic symbols, through conspicuous forms of public exhibitionism, to get the assurance that they, too, counted in the world. They possessed no creative talent; and their headless gyrations helped them to avoid the realization of this sad truth about themselves.

When the European currencies were finally stabilized and these literary **Valutaschweine** (as the Germans bitterly named those who fattened on the unfavorable rate of exchange) regretfully returned to America, they transplanted their cliques and brawls and gin-parties. Their American period was perhaps even uglier and tawdrier than their European stay. Europe had been for them a Roman Holiday; in America they made a habitual routine out of their petty vices. By 1928 they had pretty well exhausted their febrile ingenuity and were threshing about for new literary mannerisms.

The New Urge

The depression came close on the heels of this search for new styles to conquer, and further accentuated the bankruptcy of their old literary schools. The antics of the "lost generation" ceased to be amusing even to themselves and their friends. The grim realities of hunger, unemployment and pervasive economic insecurity crowded out of attention the petty feuds and monkeyshines of speakeasy bohemians, Parisian expatriates and "art for artsakers." Generous advances from publishers, good fees from magazines and lecture bureaus came to an end for many of them; not a few faced actual economic need. In the post-war years, they had caroused, unseeing and uncomprehending, among starving multitudes in the European capitals. Now, however, hunger and insecurity were striking themselves or their friends. Their psychological compulsion to find refuge and emotional security in a world which had collapsed around their ears was intensified a hundred-fold. But their new orientation, like the old, was hectic and unreflective, and equally exhibitionistic.

It became fashionable to "take positions"—avowals won not by study or reflection, but suggested by the dramatic possibilities of the situation and by what literary friend or foe was doing. Some became Catholic. Some became Babbitarian Humanists or Southern Agrarians. Some became "Communists." Some became Communist because others had become Humanist, and vice-versa.

Gorham B. Munson, whose career so closely parallels Cowley's, and with whom Cowley and his friends so frequently found themselves in critical and even in physical combat, is a case in point. After passing through all the coteries of literary Bohemia, the depression brought him to Irving Babbitt's reactionary Humanism and, finally, to the Social Credit Utopia of Major Douglas.

Malcolm Comes to... Stalin

Cowley was among those who proceeded to avow Communism. They did not know what it was but they had a notion that on the political scene it corresponded to what **surrealisme** represented on the literary scene. It was extreme. It broke with everything. It simplified things and made possible dramatic gestures which cost very little. It had a liturgy whose rhetoric left something to be desired, but which did have some fine, strong words like "class struggle", "proletariat", and "revolution." It was at least as authoritarian as the Humanism and Catholicism of their literery foes, thus providing them with the emotional refuge they sought. Yet it was much more exciting. A close friend of Cowley, Kenneth Burke, has explicitly formulated this rhetorical and religious approach to Communism in many recent articles.

The Cowleys were genuinely surprised when the Communist Party, with little following among workers and at that time none among the stylized intellectuals, greeted them with enthusiasm, and instead of giving them a political education and teaching them a little mental discipline, used them as window-dressing for phony united fronts. Communism came to the Cowleys with the suddenness of religious conversion; and like all new converts to a gospel, their zealotry was in inverse proportion to their knowledge. This was amusingly evident in their reactions to Lovestoneites, Socialists, and those who were defending Trotsky against the malicious slanders of the Stalinists. The Cowleys did not know what it was all about, but they were irritated whenever serious differences arose. If only, they groaned smugly, these eternal quibbles would let up! They read little of Marxist literature and understood less. Some leaders of the Communist Party had at the outset entertained the fear that these intellectuals would try to function as intellectuals, i.e., think. They were soon reassured; it became clear that their whole past had failed to prepare the Cowleys for such a function; only the most rigorous retraining could have transformed even the best of them; but the Communist Party would not and could not give them such a training.

Love at First Sight

Moreover, to their ignorance and unwillingness to learn, was added the fact that Cowley and people like him feared nothing more than being thrust into the outer darkness by those who were the official guardians of salvation by faith in Stalin and his works. Nor was it only fear; there was also affinity. These "intellectuals" knew what it was to assume an attitude and to refuse to defend it except by excommunication, excoriation and blows; they had conducted their literary struggles on that level. The irrationalism and bombast of Stalinism struck a responsive chord in the Cowleys, and they nestled comfortably and uncomprehendingly in the bosom of the Stalinist Church. They did not understand "the theory of social-fascism," but defended it. They did not understand what the "united front from below" meant, but they were sure that it was a fine thing. They did not understand the implications of "socialism in one country," but what was good enough for the Daily Worker was good enough for them. If this seems exaggerated, one has only to turn to one of Mr. Cowley's literary efforts as proof.

Cowley Spills the Beans

At the time of Hitler's coming to power, the Stalinists were **privately** saying that there had been no chance of a German revolution, that if there were a slight chance it was not worth taking because it would disturb the **status quo** and lead to a European war which would interfere with the Five Year Plan. **Publicly,** of course, the Stalinists were shouting that the revolution was on the order of the day, that Hitler would not last the next month, that already the masses were girding to smash him, etc., etc. The real line was for private distribution only. Cowley showed how little he understood by blunderingly giving away the real line (New Republic, April 12, 1933):

"Trotsky's alternative policy, with its continual threat of war [i.e., shattering of status quo] would be justified only in case there was an imminent chance of proletarian revolution somewhere in the West. Can it be reasonably expected?"

No, said Cowley. And in the same piece he gave one of the baldest (because unconscious) statements of the Stalinist "theory" of revolution. The American proletariat is weak, said Cowley. "But the chief obstacle to a revolution in this country is not the weakness of the proletariat; it is rather the strength of the middle class." How, then, win the middle class? The classic Marxist answer is that a powerfully organized and determined proletariat will draw to itself all those elements of the middle classes which have similar economic interests with the proletariat and which functionally and culturally stand to gain under socialism. The struggle to win the middle classes begins with the organization of the proletariat. Not so for Stalinism and Cowley: "the only thing that can turn us aside from that steep path into the sea (Fascism) is the influence on the middle classes of the Russian experiment, the success of 'socialism in one country.'" "The only thing!" Never was Stalinism stated more baldly—or indeed, stupidly; for to put it in such terms gives the whole show away.

Criticism a Crime

If painting Russia as a paradise is the way to stop Fascism and make the revolution, **any** criticism of the Stalinist bureaucracy becomes a crime. The distinction between hostile bourgeois criticism and revolutionary Marxist criticism of Stalinism is a distinction which the Cowleys are incapable of making. Any statement of doubt or criticism, they greet with bitter resentment. Unable to defend what they believe, they turn upon dissenting views with fierce impatience. They have lived too long without serious thought about social and political problems; they want only the luxurious emotional security they have won by their new allegiance; the labor of thinking is too high a price to pay for the truth.

Note what happened when the line of the Communist Party changed and all the earlier dogmas except the infallibility of Stalin were thrown into the discard. Without stopping so much as to draw a breath, or change their tone, or give any reasons, the Cowleys continued their chorus of amens to the pronouncements of Browder and Hathaway. Instead of the "dictatorship of the proletariat," the cry now became "the People's Front"—all the people, including Republicans and Democrats, not to speak of yesterday's Social-Fascists. The somersault was not unlike those of their literary past, when the slogans of "objectivism" followed the slogans of "expressionism" without very much concern for meaning or consistency.

It is only in relation to the foregoing background that Cowley's type and its significance can be understood. This background has accentuated his personal characteristics as a literary critic. The qualities he has displayed in fulfilling his post as literary editor mark a violent break with the previous literary tradition of the New Republic. Compare him with his predecessors. Francis Hackett was noteworthy because of his disciplined imagination and genial warmth, Philip Littell had a certain dry acerbity and intellectual incisiveness which one could enjoy without accepting his judgments, Edmund Wilson was always distinguished for the lucidity and sympathetic plausibility with which he rendered the visions of the great artists of our day.

Malcolm Cowley, however, is completely incapable of handling ideas. He cannot analyze them, cannot play with them, cannot place them in a significant context Consequently, he is compelled to confront ideas with **attitudes** usually irrelevant to the subject matter of his criticism, and asserted with rhetorical force rather than with precision. This gives to all of his criticism the characteristic quality of bluster. For bluster always results, when an attitude—even a valid one—is defended without insight, without qualification, and without imagination. One can almost predict in advance what Cowley will say and how he will say it. For his attitudes are formulated for him by political agencies, even for works of literature, and within the limits of his understanding he applies them to every work upon which he feels called upon to pass judgment. These attitudes Cowley **calls** Marxian. Since they are reached not by thought but by his sense for the dramatically appropriate, he invests them with the patter and jargon of Marxism without any conception of the real meaning of Marxian principles.

Cowley as a Thinker

In other words, Cowley has made a theory of criticism out of his incapacity to think. Or if he thinks, he thinks (so to speak) with his guts. Like most viscerally-minded people, he is baffled by ideas and arguments. Unable to respond on the same level, his responses became blocked and he is overwhelmed with a sense of frustration which can only be lifted by some violent release of energy. In his Left Bank literary days, he could break this frustration by a blow or a fight or, as he has confessed, by threatening to beat the head off a hostile critic like Ernest Boyd. But in print, the violent release of energy by which he breaks the impotence produced by argument is accomplished through abuse or denunciation or their equivalent in innuendo. Most often this means that when Cowley must review a book of ideas, he will write about its author. If he can deliver some thwacking slaps at the author, or the author's grandfather, he feels he has delivered himself of his critical obligations. Lately, he talks about the author's class, without even attempting to establish an organic connection between the ideas and the class.

A case in point that comes to mind is Cowley's review of a book on Pareto. Pareto is meat for a Marxist. It is an easy task for any competent Marxist to evaluate Pareto's ideas and show that they cannot adequately account for the structure and development of any social institution. But all that Cowley could grasp about Pareto is that a Marxist cannot accept his doctrines. And he promptly proceeds to "annihilate" Pareto by some choice epithets about Pareto's pretensions and difficult terminology. No argument, no development of the Marxist position—to understand which the poor fellow painfully scans every copy of the Daily Worker and the New Masses—and not even the faculty of stating intelligibly the position with which he disagrees.

Towards an "Understanding" of Marx

But it is when Cowley reviews books on Marxism that he reveals himself most, as in his piece on the English translation of Franz Mehring's biography of Karl Marx. To read Mehring's book for the first time is a profound intellectual experience for any intelligent radical; the book is one of the most attractive introductions to the intellectual life of Marx and his epoch. It is notable for the way in which it weaves a skillful pattern out of Marx's ideas and activities. Mehring presents Marx's ideas in their time and context, evaluates them, does not hesitate to take issue (not always happily) where he thinks Marx was wrong. The least one could expect of a critic of this book—not to speak of a Marxist critic—is to describe these extraordinary qualities of the work, to make a concise statement of Marx's contribution to the thought of mankind and to attempt to summarize—no matter how briefly—the significance of Marx's ideas.

Cowley's ideo-phobia prevents him from even suggesting why it is that Marx and not any of his contemporaries is the intellectual leader of the working class. Cowley probably does not know why. He cannot run the risk of attempting to say why, for fear of pulling a howler. What, then, **does** he do? **He graciously praises** Marx; praises him for having written poetry when he was a very young man, and for having read Aeschylus (and in Greek!); praises him for being a great lover, a Romantic rebel, a persecuted soul; praises Frau Marx, too, for being a devoted wife. Threshing about for some way to connect Marx with what he (Cowley) knows, Cowley hits upon the notion of pronouncing Marx to be "the spiritual contemporary of Baudelaire and Flaubert." In his blundering way, Cowley has picked out two men who represent in different ways the precise antithesis to Marx. The revolution of 1848, which brought Marx to revolutionary maturity, left Baudelaire an embittered reactionary. Flaubert cultivated a philosophy of personal isolation and the cult of literature for its own sake; he became one of the gods of the Left Bank pantheon of Cowley's post-war years. Another analogy of Cowley's is worth noting because of its perfect ineptitude. After the defeat of the revolution of 1848, he likens Marx to Lucifer proclaiming to his folowers, "All is not lost; the unconquerable Will," etc. At that moment, **in actual fact,** Marx was belaboring those emigres who were exalting the Will and thus confounding their desires with the state of actual affairs. One could go on like this from sentence to sentence; for Cowley cannot write a line even about the personal details of Marx's life which does not cry for correction. Not a word has he to say, however, about Marx's ideas. Marx's metaphors? Yes. But the sense of the metaphors? Cowley finds no room for that, in the longest review of the season. Reading Cowley's review, in fact, one would get the impression that "The Life of Marx" was a series of dramatic actions by a romantic man of letters. That Marx was a revolutionist is mentioned only once, and then with a sneer, as if that was the least significant aspect of his thought and life. "'He was above all a revolutionary' as ten thousand people have quoted from Engels' address at the grave." One is a revolutionary for Cowley, presumably, by temperament—something like being a poet. Ideas have nothing to do with it.

With an eye on those "Trotskyites" who are always giving him a pain in the neck by answering the slanders of the Stalinist press, Cowley tries to make Marx out as a man too proud to answer those who denounced him. "Marx did not answer these personal slanders," says Cowley smugly and wrongly. It would be truer to say that Marx never failed to answer any one who attacked him, even those who, like Vogt, Ruge and Bakunin, specialized in slander. Practically everything Marx wrote was an answer to somebody.

Discovering Trotsky

His review of Mehring's Marx, according to Cowley, brought a query from a reader who wanted to know why, if Marx was great because of the things recounted about him by Cowley, Trotsky was not entitled to the same kind of homage. This, says Cowley, led him to read Trotsky's "My Life" and to "review" it in the New Republic of April 8.

It is significant of Cowley's mentality—and of his purpose—that he does not refer to the voluminous political writings of Trotsky which have appeared in the six years since "My Life" was published.

The malicious dishonesty of his piece on Trotsky does not obscure Cowley's specious pretense of objectivity. He says he found his reader's letter "perturbing" and therefore "set myself the task of reading and reporting on Trotsky's 'My Life.'" Thus, he seeks to evoke the atmosphere of an unprejudiced judge, who is sifting the evidence in order to come to a fair decision. This piece of chicanery on Cowley's part is not fortuitous; it is a necessary part of the job he wants to do on Trotsky.

An honest controversialist would have no need of such devices. A trained Marxist is fair enough to his opponent to state the latter's position accurately and to use against him accurate and relevant material; but he disdains to simulate a neutrality he does not feel. This method of polemic has brought rich results in clarification of thought and enunciation of positions; it is the method of Marx and of Lenin, and all their work is written from this standpoint.

But this method is a closed book to Cowley. Its primary requisite is the mastery of ideas and the ability to weave them together, counterpose them, fuse them, apply them to facts and modify them when facts so dictate. In the light of our analysis of Cowley and his type, it is clear that this method is alien to him. Dealing with ideas is not his metier. He can confront them only with attitude and attitudinizing.

Moreover, Cowley's political masters forbid the use of analysis as a method in dealing with Trotsky and "Trotskyism." The true believers do not argue with Trotsky and those who stand with him. They shower abuse and denunciation of the vilest kind on "Trotskyites"; in the Soviet Union they shoot them, torture them, and imprison them; in other countries, not least in America, they attacked our meetings with clubs and brass-knuckles—all in the name of the revolution, of course. Even if he were capable of carrying on an ideological controversy with Trotsky, therefore, Cowley's mentors would forbid it.

Everything Goes

Cowley cannot, however, adopt his masters' methods against Trotsky, in the pages of the New Republic. First, because the liberalistic tradition still formally retains the doctrine that discussion of differences should be conducted on a rational basis. Second, because to attempt in liberal circles to assert that Trotsky is a counter-revolutionary would only provoke howls of laughter. The liberal (who is also a bourgeois) has a pretty clear picture of what the class lines are. He knows that Trotsky is a revolutionist and blood and bone of the proletariat. It is for this reason, indeed, that so many liberals feel more friendly to Stalin than to Trotsky; Stalin, apostle of the international status quo, is closer to them politically. Cowley can scarcely attempt to peddle the usual Stalinist balderdash about Trotsky; for a bourgeois-liberal audience, he requires a different kind of clap-trap.

The usual Stalinist methods are certainly not too low for Cowley. He uses them himself, he solidarizes himself with them, outside the pages of the New Republic. The murder and imprisonment of Bolshevik-Leninists in the Soviet Union does not stir him from his complacency. He has never been known to object to thuggery used against "Trotskyites" in America. After the ill-famed Madison Square Garden affair, when John Dos Passes and other writers addressed a letter to the Communist Party protesting against the physical onslaught on the Socialist meeting, Cowley refused to sign the letter or to make any protest. As a member of the editorial board of the Book Union, Cowley countenanced the publication of Barbusse's "Stalin," a combination of fantastic adulation of Stalin and character-assassination of Trotsky that is so repulsive, that even the more sophisticated Stalinists are embarrassed by it. Only a few weeks ago, before the collapse of the Stalinist slander that Trotsky was writing for Hearst, Cowley was hawking this slander around in literary circles. This is the measure of Cowley. The only reason he does not write as he **talks,** is that he can't get away with it in the New Republic, and that his usefulness to the Stalinists at this stage lies in "adding" his "outside" voice to theirs. In a pinch, Cowley will even deny that he is a Communist—meaning that he does not carry a membership card. He is more useful without one.

Character Assassination

Cowley comes on-stage, therefore, with his neutral make-up, on, and regretfully reports that Trotsky's autobiography is a "disappointing book." Why? There then follows an essay portraying a vain peacock, indeed a megalomaniac, a poseur and ham actor—whose name is Trotsky. This approach is calculated to reach an audience of liberals, who have not the information or Marxist standpoint with which to detect Cowley's nimble finger-work.

The attack on a man's character is one which, if plausible, makes a deep impression on liberals. The reason for this is simple enough. In bourgeois politics, the political differences between opposing groups are generally insignificant; and the liberal, is sophisticated enough to realize this fact. His choice in politics narrows down, therefore, to "choosing the best men." And since he will not draw the necessary consequences, the liberal continues to look for men of character even after it has become abundantly evident that his yesterday's choice may be a fine man but must carry out his class role. These considerations make the question of personality profoundly important to the liberal. That is why American capitalist politics is so largely a campaign of character assassination. And that is why Cowley chose this device with which to attack Trotsky.

But to Marxists, Cowley's "portrait" of Trotsky is not only a slander against Trotsky himself but, much more important, it is a slander against the very foundations of revolutionary theory. If what Cowley says about Trotsky were true, then we would have to radically revise our conceptions of the revolutionary process.

Revolutionists hold a very realistic view of the nature of revolutionary leadership. We view democratic control as compatible with the fullest authority in the hands of chosen leaders, and revolutionary advance as only possible when the leaders actually lead the rank and file. It is our contention that so long as democratic control remains alive in the revolutionary party, that party will tend to put its best leadership forward. The revolutionary struggle demands the best leadership available. Under capitalist democracy and fascism, puppets may rule—the leading strings are pulled from behind. But the revolutionary struggle, a struggle conducted by the vanguard of the proletariat, can be waged successfully only under outstanding leadership.

A Titanic Task

The demands made upon revolutionary leaders in the hour of the conquest for power are truly awe-inspiring. To be able to estimate the epoch, the year, the day, almost the hour at which to strike; to drive through the party an acceptance of that estimate; to weaken the opposing forces by every possible method before coming to a test of armed strength; to rally the myriad masses for that test, which lasts not one day or one battle but years of civil war and intervention; to lay the foundations of the workers' state even before the enemy is entirely vanquished; in the midst of civil war to call together the vanguard of the world proletariat and organize the assault on all the citadels of capitalism throughout the world—such were the tasks of the Bolshevik leadership from 1917 to 1923. These tasks could have used supermen; fortunately there were geniuses to do them, men who were intellectual giants and lion-hearted, men selfless enough so that they could be transformed into the embodiment of the historical process. Who was Trotsky? In those heroic six years "Lenin-Trotsky" was the synonym of the revolutionary movement. According to Cowley the man entrusted with these gigantic responsibilities, second only to Lenin's, was a peacock and a mountebank. Is this not the ugliest libel on the revolutionary movement?

An Ugly Libel

"With some people, it is more important to watch their fingers than listen to their arguments," Trotsky once said. Cowley is an example in point. His "portrait" of Trotsky is built up by downright misrepresentation of what Trotsky says. We can take space only for a few choice examples.

"In effect, this book is unjust to Trotsky and makes him seem smaller than life. In effect, **it reduces his tragedy to the dimensions of a personal quarrel. This** is partly the result of a story **that he brings forward to explain his fall from power.** It seems that when he was a second-year student in an Odessa high school, the boys 'gave a concert' to an unpopular teacher. A dozen of them were caught and punished, but Trotsky, the bright student, was not suspected. A particularly stupid and disagreeable boy named Danilov was so jealous of his intellectual prestige and so angry at his going scot-free that he accused him of being responsible for the whole affair—and the bright student was expelled, even though several friends came to his defense. 'Such,' Trotsky says, 'was the first political test I underwent.' He believes that **the pattern established in Odessa was repeated all through his life,** and that Stalin, whom he calls 'the outstanding mediocrity in the Party,' **played the same ignoble role as Danilov.** Other Bolsheviks helped Stalin because they were becoming **self-satisfied Philistines** and were made uncomfortable by Trotsky's revolutionary **virtue.** . . . But most people accept **a different explanation of his fall,** and one that makes him seem more important. Trotsky originated and refused to abandon the idea of the permanent revolution. . . ." (My emphasis.)

The interested reader will not realize the enormity of Cowley's dishonesty in the above paragraph unless he compares the phrases emphasized with those portions of Trotsky's book which they purport to deal with. Trotsky's book, though couched in the form of an autobiography, gives a great deal of space to the struggle between Leninism and the post-revolutionary reaction and its expression in the theory of "socialism in one country." So much so, indeed, that Trotsky finds it necessary to explain this in the Foreword:

"I have dealt in especial detail with the second period of the Soviet revolution, the beginning of

(Continued on Page 3)

LIFE IN STALIN'S PRISONS

Dr. Ciliga Continues Series on Persecution and Political Life of Imprisoned Revolutionists in the Soviet Union

(Continued from Page 1)

trials of wreckers were prepared and organized. One of the men who "confessed" spoke to me as follows: "They kept me in solitary confinement for five months, without newspapers, without tobacco, without my being allowed to receive packages (of food and clothing) or to see my family. I was starved and tortured by loneliness. They kept demanding that I confess myself guilty of acts of wrecking that never took place; I refused to assume responsibility for crimes I never committed—I was afraid of the consequences of such grave self-accusations, but the prosecutor kept assuring me that if I was really for the Soviet power, as I said I was, then I must prove it by deeds: the Soviet power was in need of my confessions, and therefore I must give them. I need not be afraid of the consequences because the Soviet power would take my unreserved confessions into account, and give me an opportunity to work (he was an engineer), and enable me to expiate my sins through work. I would immediately be permitted to receive visits from my family, obtain newspapers and packages, and go out for walks. But if I persisted in remaining stubborn and kept mum, I would be treated ruthlessly and not only find myself subjected to repressions but my wife and children would be persecuted as well. . . . For months I refused to capitulate, but then things became so hard, I was so lonely that it seemed to me that the future could hold nothing worse in store. In any case, I became indifferent to everything. Then I proceeded to sign everything the prosecutor demanded."

The consequences? He was immediately permitted to receive newspapers, visits, books, packages, and was transferred to a common cell. The G.P.U. kept its promise. His lot was improved by his false self-accusations (and his accusations of others, although he made no mention of them directly to me). But why does the G.P.U. insist upon forcing such false testimony? Obviously in order to shift the responsibility for the difficulties and failures in the fulfillment of the Five Year Pan from the Government onto the shoulders of the engineers—that is the answer. In this jail I later ran across many similar cases.

In the Leningrad prison I was also treated to the spectacle of people compelled to spend the entire day standing in the corridor before the doors of the prosecutor's office—without food or sleep—or, subjected to 16-24 hours' grilling in order to force from them "confessions" wanted by the G.P.U.

There is no sense in deluding oneself that these inquisitorial tortures are, if you please, applied only to the representatives of the former ruling classes, or to the bourgeois intelligentsia, and the middle classes. No. They are applied to workers. I saw a sailor who, on being led out from the cell, was several times told that he was going to face the firing squad. He was led out into the yard, and then brought back to the cell.

"After all, you are a worker. We don't want to shoot you down like a White Guard. As a worker you should make a clean breast of it. . . ."

The sailor persisted in refusing to confess. But as a result of these tortures he went half-mad. Then he was left in peace. They insisted that he confess his fictitious participation in a fictitious plot against Stalin. This happened not after the Kirov affair in 1934, but long before, in the year 1930.

Persecution of Chinese

All that I witnessed in the Leningrad prison came as a frightful blow to me. Until then I had the highest regard for the G.P.U. This was another one of the phases which demonstrated to me that the degeneration of the once revolutionary power had gone much further than I had presumed. I immediately protested to the prosecutor against these horrors, tortures, false accusations, and "confessions."

Upon the conclusion of the investigation of my case, I sent a letter to the collegium of the G.P.U. and the C.E.C. of the U.S.S.R., demanding that I be permitted to depart abroad. My communication was left unanswered. There was no need to treat us with ceremony, for we were only representatives of a small Balkan people. Together with my Yugoslav comrade Deditch, I was shipped off to the political prison in the Urals. The question of my returning home was postponed indefinitely. As I found out later, the treatment accorded us was quite "respectable." After all, I was a European, a man, as Hitler would say, belonging to the white race.

But so far as Chinese and all other "Asiatics" are concerned, the present Soviet rulers deal with them much more unceremoniously: they are generally not recognized as political prisoners. Thus, for instance, the students, the Communist Oppositionists of the former Chinese University of Sun Yat Sen in Moscow were either shipped to the worst exile areas and into concentration camps where only criminals were sent, or they were simply handed over for extermination to Chiang Kai-shek (they were placed on board of a ship which goes from Vladivostok to Shanghai).

Comrade Deditch and myself were removed from Leningrad in the middle of October. True to its methods, the G.P.U. did not tell us where we were being taken. Only in Chelyabinsk did we learn that our destination was Verkhne-Uralsk. We arrived there on the evening of November 7. Throughout the day, from our car windows, we could observe the October parades, the celebrations in the cities of Troitsk, Magnitogorsk, and other places through which we passed. Everywhere against the sky rose the foundations, walls and chimneys of factories, power plants and industrial giants in process of construction. A new America, cruel and mighty sprouting over one-sixth of the terrestrial globe. . .

The three of us, all Yugoslavs (comrade Draguitch was brought there three months later) spent 2½ years (until May, 1933) in the Verkhne-Uralsk political prison—(a political isolator, in Russian terminology). This prison is an old military jail, a structure three stories high on the steppes of the Ural Cossacks. The bottom story of the prison is very cold. One has to wear overshoes and sheepskin throughout the entire winter, sitting in the cells of the first tier. The inside window panes become covered during the night with a thick sheet of ice.

The food is the traditional fare of the poor Russian mouzhik: bread and gruel for dinner and supper, day in and day out, from year to year. In addition we got a tiny portion of bad fish or of canned, and often half-rotten meat. Conflicts broke out several times over the rotten meat. Once a week we were given **vinaigrette** (a sause made of vinegar and oil—Ed.). This day was considered a holiday. Two times a year—on May 1 and on November 7—we received a slice of white bread. But even this modest and monotonous fare was given us in inadequate quantities. The portions were slightly increased only after the 18-day hunger strike in 1931. The quality, unfortunately, remained unchanged.

When, in the beginning of 1933, we began reading in the papers about the workers' delegations that were being sent to Germany to visit the prisoners there, we were seized with downright envy! If some workers' delegation or a democratic delegation would only arrive from abroad to pay us a visit, to take a look at what is going on, and observe how we are living in the prisons, concentration camps, and exile! But for some reason or other, the self-same leaders of the foreign working class organization, and the self-same democratic lawyers who grow indignant at any protest against the terrors of Hitler Germany keep quiet and remain unconcerned about measures, quite similar in nature, taken against workers, peasants and revolutionists in Stalinist Russia.

* * *

The Hunger Strikes

In 1931 we went through an 18-day hunger strike in our prison. It passed peacefully, and most of the demands were granted. This was the only case of a peaceful settlement of a conflict. During the 1930 conflict, during one of the harshest winters, in the month of February, the prison administration—the self-same G.P.U. — used the water hose, sprayed the protesting prisoners with ice water, broke the windows, and shut off the heat. During the conflict in 1929, the G.P.U. went even further—after they were doused with water from the hose, the prisoners were bound hand and foot, and, in this condition, soaking wet, hog-tied, without any food, they were left lying on the cement floors for three days and three nights—"in solitary confinement." Such is the juridical label for these abominations. In the 1934 hunger strike, which was held in protest against the arbitrary automatic and universal extension of the prison terms, the Communist Oppositionists were once again hog-tied and subjected to forced artificial feeding, and then, they were transferred either to concentration camps or to other prisons.

Heavy Casualties Among Prisoners

Several of the imprisoned female comrades among the Bolshevik-Leninists, among them Lena Danilovich, slashed their veins in protest against this bestial treatment. The consequences of this regime proved catastrophic for a number of comrades. In addition to two grave cases of insanity—Vera Berger and Victor Krainy, who were transferred to an insane asylum—there was the serious psychical illness of Marusia Ivanova, whose name is famous throughout all of Siberia as the heroine of the civil war and of the underground struggle against Kolchak. After a long drawn out struggle, the G.P.U. agreed to free her from jail but refused to let her go to her relatives, sending her instead into exile. One of the prisoners, Andrey Grayev, became stone-blind in the prison after the brutal acts of the G.P.U. in February, 1930.

The imprisoned Communists lived in their cells and took their walks in the prison yard in groups (3-5 cells together, 25-30 people); they composed the "communist sector" (all told, 140-180). The Socialists of all parties (Russian and Georgian social democrats, Zionists and left S.R.s), the anarchists and individuals from the Right S.R.s and the Maximalists were placed in different cells and composed another, an anarchist-socialist sector (50-80 people, approximately ten to each of the above mentioned organizations).

Each sector had its own "household" economic organization, headed by an Elder and a "Minister of Finance." Each collective was represented by the elder in dealings with the prison administration, while the "Minister of Finance" had charge of the treasury of the sector. In the event of struggles with the administration, both sectors harmonized their actions, supporting each other in this or that form, but otherwise the relations between the two sectors, even as regards the day to day routine, were rigidly differentiated. The illegal post office was organized jointly.

Political Life

In the political domain the Communist sector was divided into a number of groups and shadings, almost each of them with its own separate organization, its own committees, its own publications. The Five Year Plan shook up the entire 170 million population of Russia. The Plan represented a real technological, and, in part, an economic revolution (or, at any rate, as could be sensed even back in 1930, an attempt at such a revolution). The social and political problems which the Five Year Plan posed before all thinking people could not fail to arouse in the prison a profound ferment, new seekings, and, in part, a crisis in old ideologies. The intense and more or less fruitful search for answers to new questions was accompanied by an inevitable sharp internal struggle.

In 1933-1935 the situation in the country had become more clarified, the theoretical questions had assumed a more distinct and integrated form, and, on this basis, there occurred a new crystallization of the prisoners into several basic political groups, among them the unification of all the Bolshevik-Leninists into a single organization. I, too, took the liveliest part in the struggle of groups and ideas, in the search for the theoretical definition of all that was taking place at that time, and everything that had occurred during the entire 16 years of the revolution, and in the search for the definitions of the lessons of the Russian Revolution and the new revolutionary tasks. The large numerical strength of the Verkhne-Uralsk collective of the political prisoners, the presence there of qualified representatives of all tendencies and shadings of revolutionary thought in Russia for the last 20 years helped greatly to facilitate the attainment of definite results.

Under conditions that doomed the entire country to silence, or, rather, to subservience and compelled men to repeat parrot-like an obviously false official ideology, the large and internally cohesive jail was transformed into a laboratory of ideas. The prison became the only place for free sociological research. I attempted to make fundamental use of my compulsory presence in this prison, this tiny island of liberty.

Ciliga's Prison Conclusions

I was of the opinion that aims and results justify sufferings and victims. As a consequence, I arrived to the views of the so-called ultra-Lefts. I became convinced that the fundamental and decisive breaking point in the Russian Revolution occurred in 1920-1921, when the initial steps of the workers towards gaining control of production came to an unsuccessful conclusion, and when, as a result, the bureaucratic state-capitalist organization of industrial production triumphed, being subsequently correlated under the N.E.P. with concessions to private capitalist elements in agriculture and trade. These concessions were liquidated, by and large, during the period of the Five Year Plan, after which there was established in Russia the system of far-flung bureaucratic state-capitalism in the domain of economy, supported by a regime of Bonapartism in the sphere of politics.

Because of these views I left the "collective of the left Bolshevik-Leninists," and became one of the initiators of the unification of the so-called ultra-Left groupings. This unification took place only after my departure from Verkhne-Uralsk. "The Federation of left Communists" (consisting of extreme left Bolshevik-Leninists, a section of the D.C.ers, Workers' Opposition, followers of Myasnikov) was organized there. This Federation numbered 25 people. The re-united organization of the Bolshevik-Leninists consisted of 140. A section of the D.C.ers and "independents" remained outside both these united groups.

(To be continued in next issue)

Student Strike

(Continued from Page 1)

Fascism they supported the program which includes a call for "genuine neutrality." Officially, the Communist Party favors legislation pledging the U. S. government to sanctions against the aggressor. **But this position was not presented at Cleveland.** Similar "inconsistency" is displayed by the Y.C.L. in the American Youth Congress.

In the A.S.U., the Young Communist League has the predominant voice in the national committee. The slogans for the student strike were arrived at in agreement with the Y.C.L.ers on the committee. The result has already been stated.

Pacifism has always been rampant among the students—during peacetime! This pacifism was easily converted into the most frenzied patriotism during the last war. "Rehearsals" for action against war when it breaks along pacifist lines can have only this effect. For the militant struggle against war, pacifist and patriotic slogans and concepts must be rejected. In the concrete situation this implies above all a struggle against the widespread Rooseveltian illusions of the students and the social-patriotic position of the Young Communist League.

NEW MILITANT

with which is merged

THE MILITANT

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SATURDAY, APRIL 18, 1936

Malcolm Cowley

(Continued from Page 2)

which coincided with Lenin's illness and the opening of the campaign against 'Trotskyism.' The struggle of the epigones for power, as I shall try to prove, was not merely a struggle of personalities; it represented a new political chapter—the reaction against October, and the preparation of the Thermidor. From this the answer to the question that I have so often been asked—'How did you lose power?'—follows naturally." (Pp. v-vi.)

One need but thumb through the book to see that the "personal quarel" myth is completely exploded by Trotsky; it might be said that the **raison d'etre** of the book is to explain the **political content** of his struggle. It is an out and out fabrication when Cowley says Trotsky brings forward the Odessa school story "to explain his fall from power" and that Trotsky believes that Stalin "played the same ignoble role as Danilov." Trotsky **does** use terms like "self-satisfied Philistines" to describe the **psychological effects** of the **political reaction** expressed by Stalin's national Bolshevism; it is crystal-clear in the book what Trotsky is talking about. When Cowley counterposes this with a "different explanation of his fall"—so magnanimously!—he is either deliberately lying or he is too ignorant to understand what he is reading.

One further example of Cowley's trickery: "But the least admirable quality he reveals is a vanity that is always striking poses and playing roles," writes Cowley; and as proof he weaves together some incidents in Trotsky's life, each one distorted sufficiently—by the simple device of describing them in semi-humorous language! If Trotsky makes a forced march in the Civil War back to his main forces, Cowley describes it as "General Phil Sheridan riding twenty miles to Winchester." If Trotsky is forcibly carried into exile, Cowley has him "carried downstairs **kicking and squirming.**" So that, having painted a picture at his own sweet will, Cowley can sagely conclude: "In all these episodes there is a mixture of profound drama with actor's parade, and sometimes with actor's parade in circumstances that make it seem trivial and unpleasant." Truly, Cowley is just an honest judge who discovers that Trotsky's "personality seems less sympathetic than the reader had expected." Expected!

The above examples of Cowley's method must suffice. That method is not peculiar to him, but is employed by other Stalinist intellectuals when writing in liberal publications. Louis Fischer uses it; so do others who write for The Nation and the New Republic.

Who was defeated when Trotsky was defeated? Only Trotsky, apparently, in Cowley's estimation. Yet his own few sentences on this point (if Cowley understood them he would never have written them) indicate the true answer. "The revolution in Western Europe was checked in 1923, with the failure of the last German uprisings. In 1927, when the Chinese revolution was also suppressed, most Russians decided that their only hope was to develop socialism in their own country. Trotsky the internationalist was thus defeated by events in Shanghai and Berlin." Not only Trotsky; **the world proletariat was also defeated.** Brandler's policy of 1923, Borodin's policy of 1927,—this was the policy of Stalin based on the "theory of socialism in one country"; Cowley can scarcely be expected to know—he knows so few things about the revolutionary movement—that Stalin's policy was already formulated in those days, and not after 1927. "Today his tragic burden is that he has been defeated by historical forces," Cowley says of Trotsky. Yes, the world proletariat has been defeated by "historical forces," but Stalinism is the "historical force" which made that defeat possible.

One wonders whether Cowley realizes how much he is revealing when he writes: Trotsky "has not only been expelled bodily from the country he helped to win, but also painted out of its pictures and deleted from its schoolbooks." We know that these Stalinist methods are countenanced by Cowley, who is one of the editorial sponsors of the book, written along the specifications of painting out the picture of Trotsky from the October Revolution, signed by Barbusse. Does Cowley understand the implications of this method of struggle against "Trotskyism"? What does it mean, when the Stalinists cannot meet Trotsky's arguments on the level of logical argument? When they try to conceal from the Soviet population not only Trotsky's ideas, but even his historical achievements? When prison or worse is the punishment for **speaking** or writing that Trotsky is not a counter-revolutionary? When such methods are employed against proletarian opponents in the nineteenth year of the revolution? Has it ever dawned upon Cowley that there is no warrant for the Stalinist pogrom-tactics in Marxist-Leninist theory? Does he know that they are as alien as is Fascism to the revolutionary tradition? But Cowley knows nothing; he only knows that he stands with Stalin, and anything that is good enough for Stalin is good enough for him. Just let Cowley know the line.

This, the reader will say, sounds more like the task of a policeman who must enforce the law, than the role of the critic whose intellectual duty is to analyze and interpret. Yes, it does sound like a policeman; and Cowley by natural inclination, past training and present allegiance, functions in the pages of the New Republic as a literary cop. He is a minion of the law of Stalin—a cop patrolling his beat in the book review section of the New Republic with ready-made memoranda drawn up for him by his Stalinist masters. Like most of the beef-eaters patrolling our streets, in a simpler world he would have been a farmer, suspicious of the ways of city folk, good with cattle, simple and content so long as the seasons kept their appointed rounds, but sullen and savage when perplexed by a problem. In our world he is a prize exhibit of the kind of "intellectual" who has been won by the Communist Party. They can use no others.

WORLD OF LABOR

Polish Bund Flays Stalinists for Pogrom Incitement Against 4th Internationalists

By JOHN G. WRIGHT

POLAND

The Polish C.P. has not been behind-hand in following out the social-patriotic line of Stalinist diplomacy, and of the Seventh World Congress of the C. I. The Polish Stalinists run second to none when it comes to proclaiming the love they feel for their Polish Fatherland, and their readiness to defend its frontiers against "foreign aggressors". The real enemies of the Polish people, according to the Stalinists (who masquerade under the name of "Lefts"), is a small gang of Fascist plotters at the head of the Government who are bent on selling Poland to Hitler and his Nazis.

As elsewhere, so in Poland, too, the Stalinist social-patriotic campaign, their beating of the drums for a "People's Front" is accompanied by a vile campaign of slander against the most consistent opponents of the Stalinist treachery in Poland as elsewhere—the "Trotskyists". Upon the entry of the Trotskyists in Poland into the Bund and into the Polish Socialist Party, the Polish Stalinists have "redoubled their efforts".

Under the heading: **"The Campaign against the 'Trotskyists'".** The Volkszeitung, the Warsaw organ of the Bund (March 11, 1936) takes cognizance of the most recent piece of Stalinist abomination, a circular issued by the Warsaw C.E.C. of the Communist Youth and addressed to the students, and the working class youth, on the subject of . . . the "Trotskyists."

The Volkszeitung article begins with the statement that the Bund has always looked upon the Trotskyists" as a part of the international proletarian movement (even though small numerically)". The writer then goes on to comment as follows:

"We have always viewed with astonishment and deep concern (not to use a harsher term) the bitter, arbitrary and envenomed struggle that the Stalinists have waged against the small groups of Trotskyists. One might have imagined that after the Comintern had changed its approach towards the non-Communist movements, the Stalinists would also modify their struggle against the Trotskyists; that an end would be put to the previous venomous methods of struggle which they have directed against this group. Just the opposite has been the case. Not only has there been no modification in the struggle against the Trotskyists, but, on the contrary, it has been made still sharper—if that is conceivable.

"We have before us a circular signed by the Warsaw C.E.C. of the Y.C.L., addressed to the students and the working class youth and devoted entirely to the Trotskyists. We have no intentions of replanting in the columns of our paper the flowers of this circular: we refuse to do the authors of this circular such a favor. Everyone who has had the occasion to read it, and who is not afflicted with Stalinist myopia, has had to agree that its contents cannot be appraised otherwise than as an incitation to a progrom against the Trotskyists.

"While this mimeographed circular has been read by a few, there are, however, many who have had the opportunity to hear Stalinist speeches or to read the so-called "Left" publications. And they, too, have been compelled to recognize that what the "Lefts" permit themselves in relation to the Trotskyists is absolutely unheard-of! Twisted quotations, the most senseless canards, abusive epithets—all these do not quite exhaust the entire arsenal of 'weapons' they employ against the Trotskyists".

The writer of the article then points out of the Stalinists that the Trotskyists, who are members of the Bund, have not only obligations towards the party, but that the party has also a duty towards them: "We, therefore, hold it necessary to stress that in addition to the right to defend their views fully in the ranks of our party, our comrades are entitled to one other right, namely, the right to be defended by the party!"

Should any member of the Bund fail in his obligations to the organization, he must be called to account. He will be judged but not "in accordance with reports carried by the 'Left' papers."

(From the tenor of the remarks in the Volkszeitung article, it is clear that the Polish Stalinists have appointed themselves as spies to snitch on the "disloyal acts" of the Trotskyists who have entered the Bund.)

The writer disclaims any knowledge of disloyalty on the part of the Trotskyists. He points out to the Stalinists that the Bund is "not a barracks", and that differences of opinion are permissible in its ranks, "because in our party every member has the right to defend whatever views he deems to be correct."

In any case, the manner in which the Trotskyists deport themselves is purely the internal business of the Bund, for the latter to decide, and not for the Stalinists.

The article concludes with the following warning:

"We will not tolerate any atempt on any body's part to conduct an incitation to a pogrom against them (i.e., the 'Trotskyists')".

* * *

Appropriately enough, the Stalinists are unfolding their pogrom campaign against the Trotskyists practically at the same time that that Polish Fascists are intensifying their anti-semitic propaganda, and staging actual pogroms against the Jews. A monster protest strike against this Fascist drive was held on March 17, in Warsaw.

The rising tide of reaction in Poland is, naturally enough, accompanied by a violent drive against the living standard of the workers. A wave of strikes has been spreading through Poland for the last two months (since February).

Early in March, the struggle of the textile workers in the city of Lodz, and the surrounding region, developed into a general strike in that area. The Warsaw textile workers were prepared to come out also, but the strike was shortly settled.

Sporadic outbursts elsewhere, among the chocolate workers, the taxi drivers, the miners, etc. have been flaring. All these struggles are purely defensive in character. Thus, 500 miners struck at the state mines near Cracow, remaining underground, because the Government introduced a two day lay-off per month.

At Lodz the textile workers struck to compell the manufacturers to abide by the contracts signed in 1933. The General Strike was called off after the manufacturers promised "to maintain the terms of the agreement", and also to preserve the 46 hour week, as well as to "mitigate the methods of introducing rationalization" into the industry.

The Warsaw organ of the P.P.S., Robotnik, stated, in commenting upon the settlement of the Lodz strike, that it was "quite a success".

A week after the supposed settlement of the strike, the papers reported that in the Lodz area, 800 small textile mills were still out on strike, together with 3,500 knit-goods workers.

The police methods throughout Poland have been unprecedented in their brutality. The friction between the workers and the police came to a head in Cracow, where more than 10,000 workers demonstrated on March 23 against the harsh police methods used on March 20, in the city of Cracow, against striking workers.

The demonstration was staged despite the strict police orders prohibiting it. When the police charged, the demonstrators erected wooden barricades. The struggle lasted the entire afternoon. The police charged with drawn sabers, and from the first opened fire. Eight demonstrators were killed on the spot. More than fifty were wounded, including several women. Two of the wounded died in the hospital.

The bestiality and ruthlessness of the police aroused the Cracow workers to a fighting pitch. And when a few days later, the funeral procession took place, thousands marched in the procession, a hundred thousand lined the streets, and the police were conspicuous by their absence.

The brutality in Cracow has stirred the workers of Poland as few events have in recent months. But there has been no mitigation in the offensive of the bosses against the living standards of the workers.

So far as can be gathered from the reports, all the struggles of recent months have been under the leadership or with the active participation of the Bund and the Polish Socialist Party. Hundreds of socialists were arrested during the Cracow events, as well as in the various strikes.

Analysis of the Akron Strike And the Role of the C I O

By A. J. MUSTE

The analysis of the recent strike in the Goodyear Tire and Rubber plants in Akron centers about three points: the role and temper of the strikers themselves; the role of union officials and in particular John L. Lewis's Committee for Industrial Organization; and that of the working-class political parties and groups.

In tackling the Goodyear Company, the strikers were pitting their forces against the biggest of the tire and rubber companies, which had one of the oldest, and until the recent strike most "successful" company unions, and which had very important connections with big corporations in steel and other industries. Thus Tom Girdler of Republic Steel is on the Goodyear board of directors and offered his strike-breaking troops to Goodyear. On the other hand, the intensely competitive situation existing in the industry was favorable to the strikers in that Goodyear could not afford to lose business to other companies. From another standpoint it was this very competitive situation leading the companies to devise means to cut labor costs which brought the combination of wage-cuts, speed-up, increased hours and lay-offs by the Goodyear Company against which the workers revolted.

Vigilantes Crushed

The militancy and solidarity of the Goodyear strikers marked the high point in the class struggle for 1936 and in some respects for the entire recent period in American labor history. Before the Goodyear men were assured of support even from their own local and international union, they closed down the Goodyear plant and militantly and successfully defied an injunction. Immediately thereafter the workers in the Firestone and Goodrich plants and in most of the other industries in Akron as well as the Project Workers Unions were mobilized. They were set to pour out of the plants en masse and institute a general strike at any attempt by any agency to break the Goodyear picket line by force. When in one of the last weeks of the strike, the company inspired the organization of a vigilante organization on a large scale and publicly appealed for violence against the strikers and their leaders, six thousand strikers gathered on the picket line openly armed with clubs and other weapons and challenged the vigilantes to do their worst. After all their loud talk, the so-called "forces of law and order" decided that their aim was simply to rally public opinion for an early settlement of the strike. The strikers maintained their ranks and their spirit to the very end. Whatever was gained, in the strike, and that was considerable, was gained because of this.

Role of C.I.O.

The role of Lewis's Committee for Industrial Organization in the Akron strike, as in other situations in this period, was not a simple one and no simple and completely final estimate of it is possible. There is, on the one hand, no question that the C.I.O. made contributions to the strike. The moral influence of its support counted for a good deal. The trained organizers sent into Akron by the Committee had an important share in building up the excellent strike organization. The fact of C.I.O. endorsement doubtless helped in getting financial support from union bodies throughout the country, though that given by the C.I.O. and the unions affiliated with it was utterly insignificant.

There is, however, much to be said on the other side. The C.I.O. came out in support of the strike only after the workers had shut down the plant. It made no effort, although repeatedly urged to do so by militant strikers, to extend the strike to Goodyear plants in other cities, an elementary step. By speech and action C.I.O. representatives sought to tone down rather than capitalize to the utmost upon the militancy of the Akron workers. They agreed to permit tires to be moved out of the plant though the strikers were against it and there is every reason to believe that railroad men would not have moved any freight cars if a picket line had been maintained across the tracks.

An Agency for Roosevelt

That the C.I.O. is an agency for rallying Roosevelt support from among the unions and the workers generally has been openly demonstrated since the close of the Akron strike with the organization by Lewis, Hillman, Berry etc., of the Non-Partisan Labor Committee. The Akron strike furnished an illustration of the equivocal role to which this leads in strike situations. It is generally understood that the "influence" of Lewis and other trade unionists with Roosevelt had an important bearing on keeping the militia out of Akron—in an election year in a key state. But this means, for one thing, that in "gratitude" votes are to be coralled for Roosevelt and for another thing that the strikers must be restrained so that the politicians may plausibly contend that there is really no need for calling out the militia. Obviously, too, it is fantastic to suppose that labor leaders who base themselves upon Roosevelt can possibly push employers in the basic industries to a settlement that costs them anything. And this point is of crucial importance in considering the strike settlements which the C.I.O. will support or be "forced" to make in situations like Akron.

Industrial Unionism in Mass Production Industry

The McGrady Arbitration

Now the C.I.O. was prepared to accept the McGrady arbitration proposed at the beginning of the strike. The effect of accepting it would unquestionably have been a betrayal of the strike. The role of the C.I.O. representatives in the March 14 "settlement' which was rejected is not wholly clear. That is not the case with regard to the March 21 terms, the acceptance of which brought the strike to an end.

Admittedly these terms were an improvement on those of the previous week. Admittedly also they did not offer the strikers even that minimum (of assurance, for example, that Goodyear would no longer finance the company union, nor recognize its representatives) which they had laid down in a compromise proposal, from which already certain important demands had been eliminated, the previous week. It is also a matter of public record that the C.I.O. representatives suddenly launched the most vigorous, even feverish, public activity in order to get the strikers to vote for the acceptance of these terms and so wind up the strike. If the C.I.O. opposed acceptance of the March 14 terms, it has to explain what induced it to make such frantic efforts to put over only slightly improved terms a week later. There is not the slightest indication of any important change during that interval either in the general objective situation or in the temper of the strikers. In the effort to put over the March 21 terms the C.I.O. representatives who had themselves been the object of C. Nelson Sparks's "red scare" campaign during the week put on a "red scare" against the Workers Party, Communist Party, "radicals" generally and the present writer by name, stooping lower than A.F. of L. reactionaries have ever gone in similar situations in which I have been involved by saying to reporters that I must be acting for a strike-breaking agency which just wanted the strike prolonged so as to make money by cracking workers' heads. It was in such an atmosphere of hysteria that the strikers voted to accept the March 21 terms and ended the strike, after the more militant elements among them had criticized the terms and indicated their preference for continuing the fight, but stated their readiness to accept loyally whatever decision might be taken by the majority.

Now in the first place any child can see that the terrific effort that was required, the barrage that had to be laid down in public and private, to put the settlement over disposes completely of the argument that either the general run of strikers or the more conscious, militant elements were tired or discouraged or for whatever reason wanted to get back to work on pretty much any terms.

How the Agreement Carried

Secondly, it disposes of the argument that the terms themselves were so clear and so desirable from the strikers' point of view that any criticism or opposition could spring only from dense ignorance or actual treason to the union. The Rubber Workers officials and the C.I.O. were able to put them over only by taking a vote in an atmosphere of hysteria and without giving the strikers a minute for real study of the terms. Two large sheets of mimeographed material of a very complicated nature were handed them as they came to the meeting where the vote had to be taken, and this in spite of the fact that the strikers had been told two days before that they would be given several days to study the proposals.

One argument that has been presented by defenders of the C.I.O. role is that funds were low, money for feeding strikers was running out and the strikers were afraid to go on under these circumstances. One unwillingly admits the audacity of the cynicism that is implied here. It is generally agreed that the C.I.O. with some of the mightiest unions in the country attached to it gave a paltry few thousand dollars to the strike fund. Let us restrain any indignation which the situation might occasion, and simply observe that no group which thinks that the employers in the basic industries in this country can be licked on the basis of putting a few thousand dollars into a strike against Goodyear Tire and Rubber involving fifteen thousand workers can expect to be taken seriously.

Timidity of Local Leaders

Still another argument used by the defenders of the C.I.O. role is that the local and national officials of the Rubber Workers Union were weak and timid, did not want a vigorous and large-scale struggle, would not ask for money which had virtually been put at their disposal. If they had only followed the wishes and the lead of the C.I.O. much more might have been won. It taxes our credulity to pretty near the breaking point to believe this. An organization with prestige and money offers a victory and a union to a group of new and ambitious union leaders on a silver platter, and the latter decline the gift!

But let us assume there is some basis for the argument, then what follows? That these weak-kneed leaders and their course must be backed up by the kind of red-baiting campaing Germer of the C.I.O. along with Burns of the Rubber Workers launched in the closing hours of the strike? That the "heat" must be turned on as was done, on the militants among the strikers to force them against their will to accept this situation? Obviously, if the job of organizing the basic industries is to be taken seriously, then in such a crisis a (supposedly) genuine and competent leadership must fiind means of rallying the masses as against a false and incompetent leadership. We may surmise that John L. Lewis who still maintains arbitrary provisional presidencies under his own direct control in most of the soft coal districts of the U.M.W. is not likely to see eye to eye with the rank and file or insurgents as against officials in such situations. But that is another reason for concluding that he cannot be relied upon to see the job of organization in the basic industries through.

There is but one logical conclusion. Whether in so many words or not, Lewis's real master, i.e., Roosevelt and the interests and forces which he represents made it clear: "This thing has gone far enough. Goodyear is giving all it will give without a regular fight. That we will not stand for. We will not hold back the militia any longer. Wind it up at any cost." And when it was wound up the rubber companies, Goodyear included, had the 36 to 40 hour week although only a month before a U.S. Department of Labor Committee had stated flatly that there was no excuse for the abandonment of the 30 hour week. Furthermore, the companies laid the basis for recouping any losses and fattening profits by an increase in the price of their product!

Parties in the Strike

Finally a word about the role of political parties and groups. The local S.P. in Akron is small and attempted no distinctive role. The S.P. leaders in Akron were attached to the C.I.O. and played no independent part.

The Stalinists had some influence on some of the militant rank and filers. When the "red-baiting" started in the closing hours of the strike, the Stalinist representatives took to crawling on their bellies before the union bureaucrats in the abject manner which has become so familiar by now and so easy for them. They declared uncritically for the settlement terms before seeing them and laid any opposition that was being voiced at the door of "crazy Trotskyists." This, despite the fact that one who reads between the lines of the Daily Worker articles following the strike, gets even there a confirmation of every criticism we have made in this article. In exchange the C.P. received an "apology" from Vice President Burns of the Rubber Workers Union for having included them among the critics of his course. To date they seem not yet to have gotten a similar public vote of confidence from John L. Lewis or even from Adolph Germer but perhaps these will also be obtained eventually—for a price!

The Workers Party group in Akron has for two years been in close touch with the militants among the rubber workers. Through them they played a highly creditalbe part in the strike in line with the policies sketched in this articdle. The Akron strike, like all the recent strike struggles, demonstrated the key position of a group of progressives and militants including conscious revolutionary elements. The better organization of these elements is a crying need.

To summarize: Militants must make every use that can be made of the C.I.O. They rightly support any specific correct measure for which the C.I.O. may stand, for example industrial as against craft unionism. At no time can they simply uncritically identify themselves with the C.I.O. or foster the illusion that the C.I.O. as such can be trusted to carry through the terrific struggles which we are bound to see in the basic industries.

The solidarity and militancy displayed by the Goodyear strikers and their fellow-workers in Akron achieved substantial results. They tied up the great Goodyear plants. They smashed an injunction. They made a farce out of the vigilante movement. They forced Goodyear to negotiate with a union committee. They won some concessions in the settlement. They laid the foundation of a union, having proved to themselves that they could stick together and fight. They are carrying their struggle forward now in the plants—well aware that the fight has not ended but has just begun in real earnest.

The S. P. Primaries

(Continued from Page 1)

this is the kind of Labor Party which could alone be built on a mass basis in this country. And it understands that, under present conditions, the Labor Party agitation can be utilized as by far the most effective weapon against the progress of revolutionary ideas among the masses and the strengthening of revolutionary organization.

The Old Guard, then, is fighting a principled and uncompromising fight. On the whole, it has been a well-fought fight. The occasional slanders and exaggerations are perhaps the inevitable concomitants of such political struggles. The trouble with their fight has been not the lack of principled character, but that their principles were wrong. And, in this case, not merely wrong from the point of view of the historical interests of the working class, but also out of line with the wishes and opinions of the majority of Socialist Party members and enrolled voters.

Lessons for the Militants

But, in spite of the fact that the Militants won in the Primary contest, there are lessons for the Militants to learn from the general character of the fight which the Old Guard conducted. The campaign of the Socialist Call compares in many respects unfavorably with the campaign of the New Leader. During the months preceding the Primaries there was only one substantial article published in the Call making a principled political attack on the Old Guard. In the time intervening before the national convention, the Call has a chance to remedy this defect by setting itself the task of clarifying political issues, of stating and exposing before the party membership the precise political character of the Old Guard and its policies, of lifting the struggle determinedly from a merely personal and organiational plane. Only in this way will the factional struggle be in the fuller sense educational and invigorating, instead of petty and disintegrating, for the party as a whole. And only in this way will the Militants lay the firm basis for broader and deeper leftward developments in the days ahead.

For this reason, there is occasion to be concerned over references to possibilities of "conciliation with the Old Guard" which have been made since the Primaries. Naturally, individual workers who hold reformist positions are and should be eligible for Party membership, if—from whatever motive—they are prepared to work loyally within the framework of the Party. But here it is a question of the Old Guard as such. The Old Guard, it is true, makes clear that the only possible "conciliation" from its point of view would be triumph for itself and its ideas; and consequently there is little probability that any kind of actual organizational conciliation could be arived at under any formula. But the real danger in talk of "conciliation" is not an organizational question.

Danger of Conciliation

The real danger is that behind such talk there can readily creep a tendency to conciliate with Old Guard ideas and policies, a tendency to retreat from the leftward front so far won, and march back along the road of disaster. What has been won can be held only by boldness, not by timidity; social forces are in continual motion, and positions can be maintained only by further advance and attack, never by resting in the trenches. The Old Guard has suffered a severe setback organizationally; now is exactly the time to follow the blow up with others still stronger, and to add to the organizational the more powerful and more lasting political weapons.

Unification of the Unemployed and the Task Ahead

(Continued from Page 1)

tions, politics in general, can or should be excluded from the organization of the unemployed or of any other group of workers. It would be even more absurd to try this among the jobless than almost anywhere else. For, whereas the average trade unionist directly confronts his "individual boss" every day in the week and the "political state" only infreqeuntly, the unemployed worker faces the "political state"—the government—every single day of his life. This important fact, stressed by more than one delegate to the convention, should be enough to indicate how exceptionally preposterous it would be to attempt to rule out "political questions" in such a movement—be they questions of capitalist politics, the capitalist government, or working class politics.

The convention was divided, so to speak, into two parts. The first was devoted to the sessions of the old Workers Alliance, which culminated to all intents and purposes when the resolution in favor of unity was adopted by an overwhelming majority of the votes. The second part was participated in by all the fusing groups and it was here that the elections of the officers and the National Executive Board and the adoption of resolutions took place. Apart from the fact that every single session was presided over by the same chairman—a custom which we do not find healthy or fitting in the labor movement—there were other features of the convention which revealed what we consider its essential and very serious weakness: the absence of firm, consistent and well-prepared guidance. With the exception of the question of unification itself, on which the leadership of the W.A.A. took a positive and generally correct stand, its sails were set in such a manner on virtually every other convention question that they could be blown by winds from almost any direction.

What the Stalinists Wanted

With the bulk of the National Unemployed League having merged into the Workers Alliance even prior to the general amalgamation, the essential problem before the convention boiled down to the fusion between the Alliance, led by militants of the Socialist Party, and the Unemployment Councils, led by the Stalinists.

Now, although only a reactionary would oppose unification with the Councils because they are headed by Stalinists, at the same time only a miraculously naive person would throw prudence and vigilance to the winds when effecting such a unification. For a grown-up person to be taken in by the pious humility and amicableness of Benjamin, who represented the Councils, is really inexcusable. The Stalinists are motivated in their conduct by the interests of the unemployed to approximately the same extent that the writer is animated in his actions by his concern over the flora and fauna of sunken Atlantis.

To put the matter bluntly and squarely, the Stalinists today see in the movement of the unemployed—as in every other movement—(1) a vehicle for the formation of their fraudulent "Farmer-Labor" or "People's" party, and (2) a recruiting ground for the war of the "good, peace-loving" imperialists against the "bad, bellicose" imperialists, presumably in the interests of the "defense" of the Soviet Union. That is why their energies were bent so exclusively towards committing the new organization to their views on these subjects, or preventing committments to contrary views, and, to further these ends, towards obtaining as firm—even if anonymous—a measure of control of the new organization as

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Maurice Spector will speak on the "Changing Line-up in European Diplomacy," dealing specifically with the question of "Sanctions," at Irving Plaza Hall, 8 P.M. Sunday, May 3. THERE WILL BE NO MEETING ON SUNDAY, APRIL 26.

A Report of the Recent Convention at Washington

the relationship of forces and their renowned skill at manipulation would permit.

'Militants' Disorganized

To the extent that the organization of the unemployed must deal with such problems—and it is impossible and incorrect to avoid them entirely—it was the job of the progressive elements in the convention to counter the tactics of the Stalinists. More easily said than done, however!

The Stalinists came to the convention in the usual manner. They were prepared in advance to act on every question, and what is more, to act as one man. In a word, they were a disciplined political force. The same cannot be said of the Socialists. Except for Lieberman of Pittsburgh and one or two others, the Old Guard of the S.P. was not even represented at the convention (work among the lowly jobless is hardly a dignified occupation for a respectable social democrat!). But while the bulk of the Socialists in the W.A.A. are supporters, in the S.P., of the Militants, and even count among the best Left wing elements, there was no noticeable unity, and certainly no efficiency in action, in their conduct during the convention.

No Unity in Action at Meet

On those questions in which the Stalinists are vitally interested—and rightly so; everybody else should also be—such as the Farmer-Labor party, the C.P. representatives showed both aggressiveness and unity. Barring isolated cases, the representatives of the S. P. showed neither quality. It was evident to the observer that not only did the S. P. Militants at the convention display a deplorable lack of unity of opinion (which is far from a vice, providing the prevailing opinion is a correct one), but what is worse, this lack of harmonious view was translated on the convention floor, in negotiation committees and in other committees, into a lack of **unity in action**—that is, into an absence of discipline.

The entirely proper sentiments of many of the S.P. Militants to organize a unity of action, while it resulted in remedying conditions in some measure, did not prove sufficiently effective in attaining that necessary level of discipline particularly demanded by the presence of the organized Stalinist phalanx.

The Farmer-Labor Party

We limit ourselves to a few illustrations.

There were really three views represented in the convention on the "Farmer-Labor" party: the familiar Stalinist view; the S. P. Militants' view in favor of a "genuine" Farmer-Labor party but not in 1936; and the revolutionary Marxian view held by many of the delegates of the former National Unemployed League. Aroused out of their hypocritical meekness when the question arose toward the very end of the convention, the Stalinists stormed and shouted from floor and platform in favor of their standpoint. A few Socialists also took the floor for contradictory speeches in line with their own views. But the representatives of the third tendency sought in vain for even the five minutes allotted to discussion speakers.

Important for our theme, however, is the fact that, leaving apart the principle differences we have with the Militants on the question of the F.L.P., they are entirely correct in their resistance to any committments that would tie them to the kite of a Stalinis Farmer-Labor Pary hoax in the 1936 elections. Nevertheless, even though they were presumably a minority in the convention, the Stalinists virtually shouted through a "substitute motion" by their spokesman, Weisman, worded in such a manner as to leave the door wide open for the C.P. agents in the W.A.A. to maneuver the organization into precisely the position the Socialists do not want to take. How? Mainly because the Stalinists acted on the rule of every man as one, while the Socialists acted mainly on the rule of every man for himself.

The War Question

Similarly on the question of war. With trifling exceptions in formulation, the resolution originally drafted by some of the Militants in the W.A.A. was flawless from a working class standpoint. It pledged the organization not to support the capitalist government of the U.S. in any war it may undertake, **regardless of who its allies may be.**

Now, this last clause is far from a trifle, for if you wish, it is around this "trifle" that the Stalinists are already recruiting troops for French imperialism. Are the Stalists against imperialist war? Absolutely! They will vote against it any day in the week and twice on Lenin's birthday. But, if the imperialist government fights a war against another imperialist government in alliance with the Soviet Union, then, do you see, it is no longer an imperialist war. Or, if the "capitalist" government is allied with the Soviets in a war against another "capitalist" government, the former somehow ceases to be "quite" a capitalist government and its war is not "quite" a capitalist war.

Is this merely a question of petty factional bickering between Stalinists and Marxists? If it is, then at the same time it involves nothing less than the life of the labor movement, and literally, the lives of millions of workers in the world war to come. It is such a "trifle" that the hawk-eyed Stalinists promptly pounced upon it, with the result that the phrase underlined above was deleted from the final draft of the resolution. The Stalinists were vigilant, aggressive, organized. The Militants were not, with the result that they ceded ground where they had no need to, where they should, instead, have advanced.

The "Independents"

The contrast of firmness and looseness, manifested in these two situations, was not absent in other convention fields. The Councils acted as a unit, as did the C.P. stooge organizations in the so-called "independent caucus" which was rigged and framed with all the expertness that comes from years of Stalinist training. The W.A.A. acted like anything but a unit in the convention, and the S. P. Militants acted like anything but a unit in the W.A.A. Result: the work of the Stalinists was facilitated, both politically and organizationally. Even flagrant (and characteristic!) acts of disloyalty of the Stalinists—such as was involved in the violation of agreement made on representation from the "independent caucus"—could not be counteracted by the unorganized Socialists.

This is not only an indication of the road that must still be travelled by the Left wing in the Socialist Party—a road which the presence at the convention of splendid rank and file workers gives high promise that they will take. But it is also a matter which justifies apprehensions about the course which the Stalinists will take in the immediate period to follow, during which arrangements are to be completed for the holding of various unification conventions on state-wide scales. A repetition of what happened in Washington, on an even more injurious scale, is inevitable, unless its lessons are learned and steps are taken accordingly.

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The N.U.L. Delegation

A word remains to be said about the ranks of the former N.U.L. Its delegation of close to 100 men and women from the field made an impressive showing, especially by the side of the—financially—infinitely more resourceful Stalinist Councils, whose convention had only a score more in attendance. A lamentable contrast to this showing was made by Arnold Johnson, former national secretary of the N.U.L. and belated convert to Stalinism after months of protestations of fealty to the Fourth International. Despite all the C.P. support and Daily Worker ballyhoo behind him, Johnson was only able to muster a good baker's dozen from nowhere in particular for his "convention," which promptly dissolved into the "independent caucus." The business meeting of the former N.U.L., after a report by a special investigating committee which heard both Johnson and the loyal officers (Ramuglia, McKinney, Selander), voted unanimously to endorse the action of the officers mentioned in removing Johnson from office in the emergency he had created, and in joining forces with the Workers Alliance.

The delegates present at the N.U.L. convention could count themselves among the most devoted and experienced front-line fighters in the movement of the unemployed, and for that matter, in the labor movement generally. Their entry into the ranks of the united organization, reinforced by the election onto the new National Executive Board of such well-known militants as Ted Selander of Toledo and Sam Gordon of Allentown, brings to the merged movement the best of the traditions of the National Unemployed League, the best of its fighters, its experience, its ranks—constituting, all together, one, and not the least, of the guarantees for the great future of aggressive struggle that the new Alliance has before it.