



SOCIALIST APPEAL

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5¢ per copy
10¢ if by
mail.

THE SOCIALIST APPEAL

Published every month by the APPEAL PUBLISHING ASSOCIATION
4452 North Hermitage Avenue, Chicago, Illinois

Vol. 1

June-July, 1935

No. 4

NOTES OF THE MONTH

DEATH OF THE N. R. A. NEITHER TO MOURN NOR TO PRAISE

That most of the labor leaders were shocked almost into insensibility by the decision of the Supreme Court, which put a quietus on an already expiring bird, is a clear indication of how great was the reliance of these leaders on the National Industrial Recovery Act. Willingly and enthusiastically they deluded themselves into believing that section 7a settled the whole problem of organizing the American working class. They thought they could point to that section and scare the boss into recognizing a labor union. Alas, the bosses were not so easily scared. They are made of tougher fibre than a great many labor leaders.

Millions of workers actually believed in the N R A to the extent that they were willing to go out and struggle for a right which they believed the government at last recognized. Undoubtedly, advantage could have been taken of the situation and we need not at all admit that section 7a was passed for the benefit of the working class to assert that it created a favorable psychological impetus for organization.

But the labor leaders looked upon section 7a not as an AID in the struggle to organize the workers but as a SUBSTITUTE for that struggle. They permitted themselves to be enmeshed in a net of boards and elections which killed the spirit of the workers and actually prevented organization. The golden opportunity for organizing the basic industries of steel, rubber and automobiles was not taken advantage of and that failure left organized labor with only slight gains in membership. Instead of struggling at the point of production they pleaded hat in hand before Roosevelt and his boards. What a miserable spectacle!

Upon What Will Labor Leaders

Rely Now?

Then came the bolt from the venerable Judges of the Supreme Court who did not, it seems, consider the embarrassing position into which their decision would hurl the valiant leaders of American labor. Whatever gains were made in the past two years by organized and unorganized labor are threatened with extinction. It is true that good-hearted employers solemnly announced that they would do nothing to interfere with wages and conditions

of labor set by the codes but one might as well believe hogs that promise not to eat if taken before food. The American Federation of Labor leaders are men of some wisdom and they really do not believe the captains of industry when they promise not to cut wages and these labor leaders are therefore disturbed not only because the workers might suffer but also because the organizations of which they are the leaders will be affected.

To state that the decision which invalidated all of the NRA codes has created a crisis for the American labor movement does not at all mean to give a belated endorsement to the NRA and to suggest that the workers must struggle to have it reenacted. It simply means that under the circumstances it must be recognized that to rely on some legislative enactment as a substitute for the NRA to defend the standards of labor against attack is to make the same blunder that was made when faith was placed in the NRA.

There is no course left open for organized labor other than the course of struggle. Not only can the gains thus far made be kept intact. More can be won than has already been won provided there is no hesitation, no cringing, no reliance upon some saving legislation.

Absurd indeed would it be for us to expect that an obvious lesson should be taken to heart by labor leaders who have been trained to look to the government to organize the workers. And all indications point to the fact that the Wagner Labor Disputes Bill is the next piece of legislation which the AF of L leaders

will look to as a substitute for struggle.

The fears of the Communist party and of some other radical groups that the Wagner Bill is dangerous because it provides for compulsory arbitration are exaggerated. It is true that in so far as it provides for mediation and arbitration after both sides have consented, it lays the base for interminable delays which inevitably sap the strength of the workers. It is also true that once having given its consent to mediation a labor union cannot withdraw that consent. These are very serious dangers. Nevertheless the greatest danger involved in the Wagner Bill is not in its content but in the fact that the A. F. of L leaders will not use it as an aid for struggle but as a substitute for it.

NO EXAGGERATIONS IN THE SOCIALIST CALL!

If there is any movement that is and must be based on objective truth it is the revolutionary socialist movement. No one should be able to question the facts which form the foundations of the theory and practice of that movement. To be a socialist propagandist, lecturer or writer means to be so scrupulous about factual matters that no listener or reader would assume to raise any doubt about them.

There is a prevailing assumption that the capitalist press is not to be relied on; that it is full of bluff and exaggeration in the ordinary news of the day; that in dealing with labor matters it distorts and falsifies the facts. That assumption is

largely a correct one and socialists have made great capital out of the fact that a great number of people are inclined to doubt the veracity of the capitalist newspapers.

Socialist newspapers must have a reputation for veracity which is spotless. In the last analysis it is the only way to gain the confidence of the great majority of people. Especially must revolutionary socialist papers be careful not to distort or to exaggerate.

The above remarks are induced by the fact that a report appeared in the Socialist Call giving the number of those participating in the May 1st demonstration in Chicago as five thousand. The correct number could not have been more than two thousand at the utmost and fifteen hundred would have been the safest estimate. We do not know who is responsible for the exaggerated number nor the motive of the one who is responsible. We know that those who were present and read the report in the Call must have shaken their heads and consciously or unconsciously begun to doubt all the reports and all the figures given in the Call. A very dangerous and unhealthy situation!

Should the Call continue that way then it is inevitable that the number of those who from their own experience know that the Call exaggerates will increase to an extent where its effectiveness will be greatly diminished if not destroyed. The responsible parties must be warned and if that is not sufficient must be eliminated.

Nothing more dangerous to our

movement can be imagined than the absurd idea that one has to color the news in order to generate enthusiasm; that one should not report the exact truth because our weakness would then become public. Our movement is weak it is true but that weakness cannot be glossed over and concealed by exaggerations; it can be eradicated only by correct policies and one of those correct policies is to cling closely to the truth and not create illusions of strength.

It would seem that the attitude of intelligent revolutionists to the Stalinist press should deter any socialist reporter or editor from following the path of the communists. The confused and bewildered communists actually admit that the Daily Worker lies, but excuse the lies on the ridiculous theory that it does no harm and one has to fool the masses. That the communists have raised exaggeration and bluff to a system is to be expected. Any movement that is based on principles that cannot stand the test of critical examination is bound to rely on untruths.

A revolutionary socialist paper such as the Call must champion the truth as no other paper. It must be accepted as axiomatic that every factual statement in the Call can be relied on and if some mistake does creep in it will be immediately corrected if it is found out. Only in such a way can the Call gain the confidence of the membership of the party and of the working class in general.

STALIN "UNDERSTANDS AND APPROVES"

Pierre Laval, representing

French imperialism visited Moscow, there to have a friendly chat with Joseph Stalin, "first disciple of Lenin and the beloved leader of the world proletariat".

Now there is nothing that is wrong for the revolutionary leader of a revolutionary country to meet and discuss matters with a representative of a country the government of which protects its capitalist masters in their exploitation of tens of millions of colonial slaves and is ever ready to suppress with blood and iron any attempt of the working class to better its conditions. So long as there is only one country where the proletariat is the ruling class so long will there be the necessity for that country to come to agreements with capitalist countries.

Certainly, there is nothing wrong for the Soviet Union to obtain the help of one imperialist country against another imperialist power and thus utilize for its benefit the antagonisms existing between various capitalist nations. In doing so however the revolutionary working class of the world must not be confused and led to believe that an imperialist government has overnight become the friend and supporter of a working class government. Great care must be taken lest it appear that the Soviet Union places its stamp of approval upon the acts of any imperialist government and thus weaken the struggle of the working class against that government.

It may be necessary at times, for diplomatic purposes, for the one representing the Soviet Union to leave many things unsaid

and even to say things which are nothing but diplomatic evasions. In such a case the revolutionary party or international must come out with a statement of the whole truth which would leave no doubt as to the true nature of the situation. If the Communist International were in truth a revolutionary international and not a pawn in the hands of Soviet foreign policy the difficult problems which are a necessary result of the existence of one proletarian country in a capitalist world could be solved in practice.

Under no circumstances however is it necessary or permissible for one who assumes to be and is actually the leader of the Soviet Union and the Communist International to issue a statement which can have but one interpretation, and that is that capitalist France is justified in her "national defense policy". That goes way beyond what any diplomatic representative of the Soviet Union has the right to say, let alone a representative of a supposedly revolutionary international. A statement of such a nature can in the very least create tremendous confusion and at the worst lay the foundation for social chauvinism and defense of one's "fatherland".

It is interesting to note the difference in the texts of the statement given out by Stalin and Laval as published in the New York Times and in the Daily Worker. The former had the following clause in the statement: "Above all the duty falls upon them (France and Soviet Russia) in the interest and maintenance of peace, not to allow the means of their national defense to weaken in any sense. In this re-

gard, M. Stalin understands and fully approves the national defense policy of France in keeping her armed forces at a level required for security". The Daily Worker had the following version: "It is precisely in the interest of the maintenance of peace that these states are bound in the first place in no way to weaken their state of defense which in France is maintained by armed forces on a level corresponding with her need of security." Even the latter version is bad enough but the fact that "Stalin understands and fully approves" is diplomatically omitted is very interesting. Thus "conscience doth make cowards of us all."

Only a simpleton would hesitate to choose the text given in the New York Times as the correct one.

It would be absolutely wrong to jump to the conclusion that, because of the statement issued by Stalin, the French Communist party will immediately cease its struggle against the militarization of French youth and against French armaments. It may be that in self-defense the French party for the time being will intensify its struggle against the Laval program of huge armaments. Any attempt by the Communist party of France to act in accordance with Stalin's statement at the present moment and come out in favor of the program of the French capitalist class would mean the death of that party in short order. Not even the confused and bewildered members of the party would tolerate such a sudden betrayal.

At the present period Stalinism cannot afford openly to draw logical conclusions from its theories and statements. The re-

sult is an apparent contradiction between what Stalin says and what the Communist parties say, but this contradiction cannot last very long. Opportunism in theory inevitably leads to the same in practice and we can predict with assurance that in all probability the Communist party of France will find some way at a critical moment to justify, for the sake of the "struggle against Hitler and for the defense of the Soviet Union", support of the French bourgeoisie. Meanwhile confusion becomes worse confounded.

Revolutionary Socialists, not tied to the mental apron-strings of Stalinism, can think and see clearly in the matter of the relationship of Soviet Russia to the capitalist world. It is not in principle wrong for the Soviet Union to enter the League of Nations or to make a military alliance with a capitalist country, but it must be recognized that such an act is a result of the weakening of the natural ally of the Soviet Union, the revolutionary proletariat, and the consequent weakening of the Soviet Union. Revolutionary Socialists will under no circumstances cease their struggle against their own capitalist governments even though it may happen that their government might be an ally of the Soviet Union in some war. The actions of revolutionary Socialists will be determined by their profound conviction that for the Soviet Union to lean upon agreements with capitalist countries is to lean upon a broken reed and that only the revolutionary proletariat can in the long run save the Soviet Union.

Quite interesting is the fact that the right wing socialists are praising Stalin for his "re-

alism" in making an alliance with France and blaming him only for not entering into a similar alliance with them. They spoof at Trotsky's "revolutionary romanticism" in insisting that only the forces of the world revolution are the basic forces for safeguarding the existence of the

Soviet Union. Interesting and instructive. Making alliances with bourgeois governments is something that rightwing Socialists are adept at.

Stalin may understand and approve. Also the right wing social democrats. But not the revolutionary Marxists.

THE NEW YORK OLD GUARD ANSWERS THE
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

By Max Delson.

At the Buffalo meeting of the National Executive Committee the left wing of the New York party presented a bill of grievances against the New York State organization and against Local New York. The charges were made and evidence was submitted to prove these charges to the effect that the State and Local organizations violated the national constitution, made moves towards secession from the national party and suppressed democratic procedure in Local New York.

The New York State organization refused to rebut the proof submitted.

In spite of the defiant attitude of the New York State Organization, the N.E.C. adopted a compromise resolution embodying nine points. These nine points were ably analyzed in the May issue of the "Socialist Appeal." The N.E.C. required substantial compliance within a six week period, not merely a verbal reply. during the six weeks period, the N.Y. State committee did nothing

to carry out the directions of the N.E.C. At the end of the six week period the State Committee submitted a written reply to the N. E. C.

Does this answer indicate a change of heart on the part of the State Committee? Is there any recognition in this reply that the Socialist Party in New York State and its most important local have violated basic Socialist ethics? Clearly not. It is written in the spirit of one who has been seriously aggrieved and is still defiant. In its reply the NY State Committee first administers a spanking to the N.E.C. It attempts to give the N.E.C. a lesson in constitutional law. It accuses the N.E.C. of having perpetrated the following crimes:

1. Creating distrust and disrespect in the party.
2. Violating the National and State Constitution.
3. Characterizing the State Committee as a group.
4. Encouraging guerilla warfare in the party and building of a

dual organization.

5. Unfair treatment to New York State.
6. Discourtesy to N. Y. State.
7. Encouraging disunity in the party.

After having outlined its seven points against the N.E.C. the state committee then proceeds to answer the nine points.

The State committee promises to comply with point "1" calling for "the adherence to resolutions of the N.E.C. providing for the ineligibility of advocates of communism and violence in the party."

The N.E.C. has failed to define communism. The State committee has its own views on what communism means. It has characterized the Declaration of Principles as a communist document. Those who support the Declaration of Principles are therefore communists. It follows that members of the S.P. who favor the Declaration are subject to expulsion. Those who seek to enter the party because they believe in the Declaration of Principles are ineligible. Is there any reason why the State Committee should not hasten to assure the N.E.C. that point one will be rigorously adhered to by the N.Y. State organization?

The grievance committee and membership committee will be kept working overtime, while this heresy-hunting proceeds at an accelerated rate.

The State committee sustained the Buffalo Revolutionary Policy Committee expulsions after the N.E.C. ruled that it was opposed to retroactive disciplinary measures, merely for activities

connected with the R.P.C.

Anything to rid the party of members who are in disagreement with the Old Guard!

On point "2", retraction of its repudiation of the Declaration of Principles, the state committee generously concedes that the Declaration of Principles was legally adopted but insists on its right to point out that it constitutes a repudiation of Socialist principles.

On point "3" "that the local, State and National constitutions be rigidly enforced", here the State committee registers righteous and outraged indignation. The State Committee definitely denies that it is violating the party constitution. At the same time it demands that the NEC comply with the party constitution. Not a word about its violations of the National constitution in respect to the position the State committee took on the Detroit Declaration or on its refusal to admit members of the YPSL; no attempt to justify its flagrant disregard of the State Constitution with respect to a referendum which it initiated to change the state constitution; no explanation of the amendments which were submitted, which virtually takes control of the party out of the hands of the membership of the party and places it in the control of the enrolled socialist voters; no explanation of why local New York was not disciplined for failing to call a membership meeting duly requested in accordance with the by-laws of local New York! All these flagrant violations the State committee conveniently covers with its righteous indignation!

On point "4" the State committee makes a tremendous concession by offering to negotiate with the N.E.C. It clearly does not comply with this point which expressly requires the State committee to rescind the resolution which forbids locals from accepting to membership members of the Y P S L who are qualified within the National constitution and the resolution of the N.E.C. The State committee in a legalistic argument seeks to pervert the clear direction of the constitution relating to the admission of members of the YPSL into the party. And meanwhile the State committee pretends to register indignation at the suggestion that it has wilfully and deliberately violated the party constitution.

In reply to point "5" the State committee contends "the state of New York has always insisted that proper party ethics be maintained in discussion of party members, or on the criticism of party officials, its committees"....etc. The answer continues, "We hope that in the future the N.E.C. will not permit statements attacking the integrity of the party to be made part of your official record." It concludes this point by stating that point "5" is too vague to be adopted. The State committee has completely ignored or forgotten the attacks made by its State Chairman in the capitalist press on the party and leading members of the party. The New York Times and other capitalist papers are replete with interviews and releases by Louis Waldman and other adherents of the Old Guard. The committee also makes no mention of James Oneal's scurrilous pamphlet "Pages from Party History" or of Oneal's bitter and unfound-

ed slander about party comrades in Indiana. It should be noted that one of the main reasons why the capitalist press is resorted to is because it is part of the bitter campaign to mobilize public sentiment against the party. The State committee goes merrily on its way, continuing to violate not only its own decisions, but the decisions of the NEC whenever it suits its requirements.

The State committee slides over point "6" which requires that the Local and State committee of New York shall promptly dispose of all questions of membership and organization, etc., in dispute, in a democratic and constitutional manner. In its reply it does not mention the fact that a bill of particulars was submitted to New York State Executive Committee and the N Y State committee covering the whole question of Local New York. The N. Y. State committee does not function in a vacuum. Most of the leading members of this committee have actually participated in the acts of which we complain. The State committee knows that this was a request of the NEC that the illegal and undemocratic acts perpetrated in Local N Y be rectified.

As to point "7": One of the most outrageous acts ever committed in the socialist movement was the forcible ejection, without notice, of the YPSL in Local N Y from its headquarters in the Rand School. The YPSL refused to be tools in the hands of the Old Guard, and insisted upon acting as comrades loyal to the Socialist party of the U S A. Local N Y in its blind resentment drove them out of their headquarters. Even today local N Y is

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seeking to starve the YPSL into submission by depriving them of funds. A dual organization, called the Young Socialist Alliance, has been set up by local N Y and is receiving funds which rightfully belong to the YPSL. Here again in answering this point the hypocrisy of the State committee's answer is obvious. Everybody knows that the YPSL organization in New York has been the mainstay of the party organization. It was in the forefront of every struggle and clearly was the most disciplined section of the Socialist movement, yet for purely factional purposes, the YPSL was thrown out. The State committee in its reply is condoning the outrageous action of local New York.

As to point "8": The N E C directed the New Leader to restore its former constitution and cease to be a factional organ. It is commonplace knowledge that the New Leader is a creature of the State committee and of Local N Y and it is of course the official organ of N Y State. In reply to this point the state committee denies that it has jurisdiction over the New Leader Association. This is of course absolutely false even legalistically, since the committee could withdraw the official standing of the paper if it refused to abide by the committee's decisions. The real reason for the committee's attitude is made clear by its open approval of the actions of the New Leader association and the antiparty position taken by the New Leader on matters now troubling the party. It has the effrontery to deny that the New Leader is a factional organ. It insists that the policies of the Leader are those of the Socialist party, accepting social demo-

cracy as its foundation. Here again, by implication, it attacks the Declaration of Principles.

Point "9", requesting that both local NY and the State committee shall report such progress as has been made in accomplishing the purposes thereof, etc., is answered as follows: The State committee indicates that it has complied by serving its reply within the six week period, but denies that the NEC has any authority to request local N Y to reply to the N E C committee and insists that all communications be made through the State secretary. The State committee goes on to state that the left wing in New York was responsible for the failure of the "harmony committee" which was elected by the executive committee of Local NY. I was a member of this so-called "harmony" committee whose function was to work out a plan for reorganization and action for local N Y. It was clearly understood that theoretical questions were not to be considered by this committee. However the majority of this harmony committee, consisting of old guard members, insisted on raising theoretical questions. Practically all of the time of this committee, contrary to the expressed desire of Jack Altman and myself, was consumed in the discussion of theoretical questions. The left wing members of this committee did not seek to impose any of their views on this committee or on local N Y. This committee failed because the old guard deliberately injected issues not within its purview, upon which they know agreement was impossible in order to prevent the likelihood of harmony.

Not only is the reply of the State committee inadequate but in

addition thereto it does not give the slightest inkling that in the future it will act differently than it has in the past. Once again the whole controversy is thrown into the lap of the NEC. The issues herein involved transcend state lines, in spite of Louis Waldman's desire to resurrect the pre-civil war shibboleth of the theory of states' rights. If the S P is to survive it must be considered as an entity and not as 48 separate parties.

Are the issues involved in this controversy local in character? Certainly not! While the New York State committee urges the theory of states' rights, it is busily at work making alliances with other local and state organizations. By those very actions they have taken this controversy outside of New York State.

What is involved here is not merely a factional struggle between two opposing groups in New York. The problem is more fundamental.

At the Detroit convention the Old Guard lost the ideological and organizational control of the party. I am convinced that they are more concerned with the loss of the organization than their theoretical leadership. Before Detroit this group dominated the party; since Detroit its prestige influence and power have waned. The leaders of the Old Guard have important economic stakes, directly or indirectly, in the socialist movement. Most of them are on the payroll of party institutions or have positions in affiliated fraternal organizations and the trade union movement. After Detroit they are left with only one stronghold, New York. Loss of the New York

state organization and of local N Y would have been the crushing blow to them. Only with this in mind can we understand the brazenly dictatorial and antisocialist methods and tactics which they have employed in order to maintain power in New York. Charters of left wing branches have been revoked, members of the YPSL have not been admitted into the party, factional branches have been set up, and many applicants have been denied admission into the S P - all in the name of fighting "communism" - but all with the real aim of retaining power.

The theoretical problems raised by the Old Guard in relation to the Declaration of Principles, and the cry of communism, are false issues injected into this controversy for the prime purpose of obscuring the real purpose of the Old Guard to recapture organizational control of the S P and to maintain their present strangle hold on party institutions.

Julius Gerber is one of the Old Guard leaders. He is considered one of their most important strategists. Some time ago, he characterized the struggle now going on in the S. P. as war and stated that any tactics are fair in war. They are using just such tactics.

Is there any possibility of reconciling the differences that now exist in the party? Is it possible to isolate some extremists such as Louis Waldman from the rest of the leadership of the Old Guard? The Old Guard is itself answering these questions in the negative. Louis Waldman is their accepted leader. Not a single one of his actions or words has ever been repudiated

by the Old Guard and all his other utterances are featured in the New Leader.

James Oneal in a recent issue of the Leader definitely stated that a split in the party is inevitable and that if it does not take place now, it will occur at the 1936 convention.

A split in 1936 will be disastrous. The Old Guard are preparing for just such an eventuality. Either they will regain control of the organization or they will smash or split the party. If they regain control of the organization they will proceed to wholesale expulsion of those who are opposed to their policies. A continuation of the present policy of inaction on the part of the NEC between now and the next convention will spell disaster and disintegration of the S. P. A split can be averted but only if the NEC exer-

cises its authority. The acts of commission of the Old Guard; its flagrant disregard of party regulations and party principles and its resort to unsocialist conduct must be remedied by the NEC. This can be accomplished in only one way - the revocation of the New York State charter.

Although some members may leave, they will be in a very small minority and will afford us an opportunity of building a real socialist party in this country. It will also clear the party of deadening influence of people who refuse to do socialist work, but at the same time prevent others from building a party. There are tremendous opportunities before us. We must utilize them in the fight for socialism. The N E C is charged with a grave responsibility. If the NEC fails to act now, the Old Guard may destroy itself, but in so doing they will also destroy the Socialist party.

CONVENTION OF SOCIALIST PARTY OF
ILLINOIS CLARIFIES ISSUES

By Rudolph C. Olson.

Neither the number of delegates nor the number of branches represented by the delegates at the convention of the S. P. of the State of Illinois, held in Decatur, would justify any feeling of great exultation as to the strength and activity of the party in this state. The party of Illinois, in the same way as the party all over the country, and the revolutionary movement in general is not making the pro-

gress that it should and that we would like to have it make. The delegates present did not fool themselves into thinking that satisfactory progress had been made in the last year but were anxious to lay plans to stimulate the growth and influence of the party in the coming year.

Meeting at a time when several hundred members of the International Ladies Garment Workers

were waging a bitter struggle for the recognition of their union against a wealthy and obstinate employer of Decatur who had the full support of the city and state government, the necessity of strengthening our party by making it a party of revolutionary workers participating in and guiding the struggles of the working class was clearly evident to a majority of the delegates. When one delegate whose presence in the Socialist party is one of the mysteries of existence insisted that the party pay special attention to work in the churches, comrade John Fisher, a miner of Gillespie, effectively ridiculed the whole idea and the delegates passed a resolution to concentrate on the trade unions.

That a majority of the delegates had their eyes turned to the left and were anxious to make of the Socialist party a revolutionary instrument to lead the working masses in victorious struggle against the capitalist system was evident from the fight that was waged on the floor involving the resolution on party press and the resolution dealing with unity and discipline.

The latter resolution mentioned no names but it was clearly understood by everybody that it referred to the situation in New York State where the old Guard feels that it can defy the N.E.C. and the whole party. Those who spoke for or against the resolution correctly assumed that it was aimed at the New York Old Guard. The resolution stated that the constitution and Declaration of Principles, having been adopted by a referendum of the party membership after a thorough discussion, are not documents that can be scorned at

will. The resolution went on to say that it was the duty of the National Executive Committee to enforce discipline and deplored the hesitation and indecision of the N.E.C. in its duty to compel obedience to the constitution and Declaration of Principles. It was clear from the temper of the majority of the delegates that they insisted that the N.E.C. take more definite and drastic action to clear up the New York situation. The delegates were very well aware of the fact that the actions of the New York Old Guard were hampering the activities of the party throughout the country and that either discipline would be enforced or the party would be paralyzed.

When the press committee brot in a resolution making the Wisconsin Leader the official organ of Illinois a substitute reselution making both the Leader and the Socialist Call official organs was introduced and passed. Because the new Socialist Call was the only left wing weekly in the country, the majority of the delegates would not permit it to be ignored.

Another resolution which indicated the leftward tendency of the convention and which indirectly hit the reactionary attitude of the New York Old Guard was the one approving the action of the N.E.C. in welcoming unattached radicals and members of small revolutionary groups into the Socialist party. The Illinois party is open to all who sincerely want to build the party and especially welcomes those who because of their independent revolutionary attitude find no place in the Communist party.

One of the most important resolutions that was passed and one

which will undoubtedly anger that staunch "Marxist", Oneal, is the one dealing with inner party democracy. The N.E.C. of the party at its last session in Buffalo passed a resolution dealing with members of the Revolutionary Policy Publishing Association, which intentionally or not was so worded as to subject any member who believed in the necessity of the violent overthrow of the capitalist class to expulsion from the party. On the strength of the wording of that unfortunate resolution the Old Guard of New York felt that they could expel every member of the party who did not believe that socialism could be introduced by worshipping at the shrine of bourgeois democracy. The delegates at the convention, while declaring their opposition to those who would endanger the legal existence of the party by inserting advocacy of violence in an official program or document forcefully insisted upon the right of every party member to propagate his views within the party. The resolution clearly stated:

"In order to keep the membership of the party and the workers in general acquainted with all sides of the controversy & in order to guard the right of every member of the Socialist party to freedom of expression on such a vital problem we declare that there should be no limitation on the right of a party member to discuss in the socialist press and at party meetings the question of the road to power which includes the question of the violent overthrow of the capitalist system."

The N.E.C. was urged to clarify the resolution passed at its

meeting held at Buffalo so that there could be no misinterpretation.

No question was more realistically dealt with than the question of a Labor party. In a short and clear-cut resolution the fundamental propositions were laid down that a Labor party must be based upon organized labor and that it is the duty of the Socialist party to carry on a systematic campaign in favor of the formation of such a party because a Labor party would be a step in the direction of mobilizing the workers for the abolition of capitalism. The resolution was adopted unanimously.

The inevitable united front question was disposed of in short order. A representative of the Communist party was given the floor for ten minutes and naturally made so many misstatements that it became difficult for those who were in favor of considering the Communist party proposals for a united front to insist upon such consideration. The whole matter was tabled but it can be correctly stated that the majority of the delegates voted to table not because they were opposed to the united front with the communists on principle but because they felt that at the present time a united front on vague general issues would do the revolutionary movement no great good. The delegates who read the Daily Worker must have had an astounded look on their faces when they read that the Communist party representative was given a "tremendous ovation" after he completed his speech. Communism and truth are not exactly bedfellows.

As good as were the resolutions

that were passed the delegates realized that a revolutionary party cannot be built on resolutions only but that on the basis

of those resolutions the party must be stirred into activity so that it will become a vital factor in the labor movement.

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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE YIPSELS

AND THE OLD GUARD IN NEW YORK

(A Letter to the New York Yipsels)

Dear Comrades:

The New York comrades are no doubt anxious to know how the rest of the country reacts to the fight they are carrying on. Wide-spread approval or disapproval in the country at large will greatly affect their outlook and also their spirit. I do not know how many other midwest Yipsels' opinions I am voicing, but I imagine that a considerable number of the comrades who know what the issues at stake are, will probably agree with my view. Particularly, will those agree who are politically developed to the degree of seeing the connection between the present fight and the future development of the party and consequently the whole future complexion of the American labor movement.

I was prompted to write this letter because of the attitude of a minority on the YPSL National Executive Committee and its differences with the majority on the inner party situation, which threw into bold relief a school of thought in the party that well merits examination. The fact that a number of NEC members wanted to sit as judges in the

affair between the Old Guard City Executive Committee and the NYC YPSL and decide on the technicalities of the case, as to who had a greater amount of right on their side, greatly surprised the New York Yipsels who had looked to their NEC for full and unre-served support.

Yet the position of McDowell and the rest of the minority has a deeper basis than a mere attempt to be above factions and decide only on the evidence and the law without regard for the consequences. I believe the basic conception which divides McDowell and the New York Yipsels is the difference of opinion on the question of whether a split with the Old Guard is inevitable or not.

If one accepts the position that a split is inevitable, one adopts such tactics as will put one in a favorable position for a split. One fights uncompromisingly, knowing that compromise can only be temporary and might have a demoralizing effect on one's forces. One attempts to maneuver one's enemy into a position where he will have to take the overt step in the direction

of a split (and consequently, the blame) or will have to retreat thus weakening his prestige and following. Whether the New York Yipsels have consciously held this conception, I do not know. They have done a creditable piece of work in carrying it out in practice.

If one believes that a split is not inevitable, one then acts in a manner to avoid it almost at any cost. The most outstanding tactic is then compromise. One scolds both sides and enumerates the violations of ethics and law by both camps. One seeks out every unwise move to show that both sides are equally irresponsible.

The compromisers make a great fetish of technicalities. They write bewildering theses to show the logic of their position, balancing the authority of the N Y SEC against that of the YPSL NEC, the meaning of the simple English word "support" against the possible meanings the S P NEC might have had, and the authority of their logic against each and all who base their reasoning on a factional position instead of law.

Those who accept the inevitability of a split do not, nor should they, base their arguments on the simple fact that they consider the political position for which their side stands as being correct. Their arguments must be based on every ruling and precedent in their favor. They do not, however, deceive themselves by thinking that their position is the result of a study of all the legal and ethical questions involved. Rather they understand that all their legal and ethical arguments are used

to support a position already arrived at by the logic of the factional fight.

One cannot justify the position that a split is inevitable on a short-sighted view of the day-by-day developments only. For this, one must look backwards and forwards also. It is therefore necessary to review very briefly the past of the contending groups. On the surface the most obvious feature in the fight is the difference between the average age of the Militants and the Old Guard. This line-up on the basis of age (realizing, of course, the many exceptions on both sides) cannot be explained simply by the rashness of youth and the conservatism of age. It rather bespeaks a peculiar historical development of the Socialist party.

When the split of 1919 resulted in about 80% of the membership of the party going over to the Communist party or dropping out because of the inner-party fight, the Palmer raids, and the attractions of high wages, it left the Socialist party strength concentrated in a few spots like Milwaukee, Reading, and New York City, due in the first two cases to Socialist influence in municipal politics, and due to influence in the local trade union movement and the Daily Forward in the latter. The Communist split had carried off most of the younger party members and almost the whole youth movement. The party control was left in the hands of men already set in their opinions and constituting a right wing theoretically. The years that followed saw the influence of the party narrow even more to just the above-mentioned centers (and, of course, the more

or less stable foreign federations). These years of capitalist prosperity and general workingclass aloofness from radicalism made the Old Guard feel more correct than ever for having resisted the Communists when they were prophesying the Social Revolution in 1919.

With the crisis lowering living standards and bringing on unemployment, the Socialist party entered a new period of development. To the Old Guard the crisis meant a justification in their faith that capitalism would break down. Now was the time to build up the Socialist party they had nursed during the Coolidge boom days, into a strong political mass movement to capture political power. Theoretically, their outlook remained the same. Their numbers were reinforced all over the country by other Old Guardists who had dropped out and were now coming back into the party. The party experienced a revival. And for the first time in years, large numbers of young people forced into action by the depression came into the party. Well I remember the first branch meeting I attended in 1932. Out of some 40 present, hardly more than 3 were under 30 years of age; the rest averaged around 50. Due to the youth being carried off by the Communist split and the years of inactivity, there had developed a situation where a whole generation was missing in the party.

The younger people joining from 1929 on, were seeking a way out of an economic calamity. They wanted action and more action. The Old Guard, still moving by the inertia of the years before 1929, looked upon them as novices who lacked both knowledge

and experience. Almost all of the first differences between the Old Guard and the Militants were on questions of practical activity. Here in Chicago, the Old Guard was not charged with being reformist, but rather with being inefficient in administering the County office. On theoretical questions there was little occasion for difference of opinion until the Detroit Declaration of Principles.

Of great importance is the fact that the philosophy of the Old Guard has not changed since the Hillquit group broke away from the Socialist Labor party more than 35 years ago. If anything, they have shifted to the right. They are firmly convinced that they were correct in every major question in the past and are correct now. They built the party and their policies preserved the party. Any newcomer is not worth refuting, he is only to be told his place.

The Militants joined the party looking to it as the best means to find a way out for depression-ridden America. They rebelled against Old Guard control because of lack of activity. However, they sooner or later developed politically to the degree where they saw the Old Guard's attitude on activity linked up with the Old Guard's conception of the road to power. Consequently, the point of emphasis in the fight, particularly in New York, where the Militants have not displaced the Old Guard and must still fight them ideologically, shifted ever more to the deeper political questions involved. In Chicago, where the Militant victory in 1932 was a comparatively easy one, the Militants are correspondingly less developed

theoretically.

If the situation were as in the years from the split of 1919 to around 1924, it would be much simpler. Young people going to the left during this period, went to the communists either directly or after a short stay in the Socialist party. The extreme difference of political questions, the one party composed of elderly men preaching a theory of growing into socialism, the other party with much youthful energy preaching revolution and having all the attendant romantic glamor, presented an easy choice and youth usually chose the latter.

Today, however, the situation is different. The tactics of the Communists, the falsehoods in their press more than anything else, repulsed large numbers of intelligent youth. The depression drove them to the left. The Communist tactics drove them away. Where were they to go? The Socialist party was not accepted because they agreed with it, but as a political necessity. Not only did they join the S P, but they stayed, despite, or perhaps because of, the bellowing of the C P. The essential fact is that these young people were driven in the direction of a revolutionary party by the objective factors but entered a party of reformism as the lesser of two evils.

Such elements in the midst of a party of reformism had not the opportunity for a rapid education in revolutionary Marxism. They groped about in unbelievable confusion in looking for theories to stand on that were neither those of the Old Guard nor of the C. P. Due to their sectarian

isolation, the minority communist groups never even reached them. The effect of the MacDonald betrayal was great, only to be pushed aside by the greater lessons of the German catastrophe. The great inspiration and lessons of the Austrian Civil War shock them to their depths. Here were practical answers to theoretical questions they were pondering over. The political education of the Militants has begun. It can end only with an understanding of Revolutionary Marxism.

These events did not stir the Old Guard, with the exception of the sentimental feelings aroused by the Austrian events. Why should it stir them? They had always been correct. These events are occurring in Europe. America is different. Nor will future events in Europe move them. And events in America will move them as it did their German counterparts, in the direction of defeat.

The fact of the Militants moving to the left continually and the Old Guard remaining stable is the cause of the irreconcilability of the conflict. As the Militants develop and understand more clearly the necessity for a revolutionary Socialist party, understand it because the study of theory and daily practical lessons teach it as both teach the bankruptcy of the C. P., the chasm between them and the Old Guard widens. The impending class wars in France, if they occur in the near future, are going to have a tremendous effect on this tendency.

The conflict between the two groups is decisive. The progress of the struggle can only deepen and widen the gap. Once one un-

derstands this, as I believe the New York Yipsels do, one looks with grave distrust at any attempt to compromise. McDowell does not believe a split inevitable. He thinks a compromise possible. He cannot support the Old Guard. To support the Militants makes a split more probable. Therefore an attitude of "A plague on both your houses!"

I can readily see how the New York Yipsels who were expecting support from their N E C without "ifs", "ands " and "buts", looked upon the attitude of scolding both sides and trying to build a "logical" position in the middle on the basis of technicalities.

Should the NYC YPSL be canonized? If this is accomplished by declaring that they acted in accord with "socialist law and ethics", then yes. But let us not canonize them because they acted in accordance with "socialist law and ethics". Let us canonize them because upon the success of the fight against the Old Guard hinges the future of the party. Is this factionalism? Yes! Just as every decision of the S P NEC is made with its effect on the factional fight in mind. As every decision of the N Y SEC and NYC CEC is made with its effect on the factional fight in mind. Just as the actions of the N Y C YPSL EC were made with their effect on the factional fight in mind.

If a split is inevitable, there can be no retreat. A retreat brings on demoralization. Because of this the establishment of the Socialist Call marks a distinct Militant victory. It was decidedly an offensive move. Militant forces can rally around it and its growth will buoy up their courage.

Since the Militants find it necessary to keep the Call a non-factional publication, there is a distinct need for a left-wing theoretical publication. The establishment of the Socialist Appeal in Chicago was to meet this need. Nation-wide support must be mobilized to make it a printed magazine or to establish some other in its place. It is obvious that the ASQ cannot fill this need. The establishment of such an organ will have as healthy an effect (if not a healthier one) as the appearance of the Call.

Beyond this a national leftwing caucus or conference must be called to determine a program and course of action. Such a conference will solidify the Militant forces and carry the offensive further. An offensive that will stop only when the Socialist party has become the revolutionary party of the American working class.

With Socialist Greetings,
Ernest Erber.

HARRY LANG AND CRITICISM OF THE SOVIET UNION

By Albert Goldman.

The almost unanimous reaction of members of the Socialist par-

ty against Harry Lang's articles in the Hearst press dealing with

conditions in the Soviet Union is conclusive proof that the party will take a correct attitude in defending that country whenever it will be attacked by its enemies. The baiting which the Socialist parties the world over have been subjected to by the Stalinist Bureaucracy, thru the Communist parties of the various countries, has not succeeded in pushing the vast majority of the membership of those parties into the camp of the enemies of the Russian workers. The theories of social-fascism and the united front from below, the inconceivable slanders hurled at both leaders and rank and filers of the Socialist parties, the disruptive and destructive tactics of the Stalinists would ordinarily tend to alienate the working class masses, not under the influence of the Communists, from Soviet Russia; but fortunately for the revolutionary movement and for the country of the Russian workers, the members of the Socialist parties have almost instinctively, if not theoretically, made the necessary and correct distinction between the country of the Russian proletariat and the Stalinist bureaucracy keeping the Russian workers under its heel.

At present, we need not worry that the militant members of any Socialist party will refuse to defend Russia against the attacks of any imperialist country. The sympathy of all conscious workers for the Soviet Union is threatening to go to such an extreme that they will forget to make the distinction between the Soviet Union and the Stalin clique in control and refrain from criticizing the harmful and dangerous actions of Stalin and his servile followers for fear of harm-

ing the Soviet Union. That kind of an attitude carries as much danger as the attitude of bitter hostility to the Soviet Union because of the insane tactics of the Stalinists.

Necessity for Criticism

Revolutionary Socialism was born out of a criticism of capitalist conditions and capitalist theories. It can live only by virtue of constantly criticizing itself and subjecting everything including its own theories and tactics to a critical analysis. Let revolutionary socialism cease to be critical and it becomes a dogma incapable of fulfilling its historic task. To approve everything that is done in the Soviet Union or even to keep quiet about those things which we do not approve for fear lest some harm come to Russia because of our criticism is an attitude which no revolutionary socialist can accept. That attitude not only does not help the Russian workers but is dangerous to their cause and to the cause of the revolutionary movement all over the world.

No more loyal and more revolutionary socialist ever lived than Rosa Luxemburg and yet while she was in a German prison she criticized the Bolsheviks for some of their tactics. It turned out later that she was misinformed about what was going on, but that does not alter the fact that she did criticize them at a time of civil war and foreign intervention. It is only under Stalin that the theory of the infallibility of the leadership of the Soviet Union came to prevail and criticism of that leadership to be considered as "counter-revolutionary." To surrender the

right and obligation to criticize what any leadership does anywhere is to surrender what should be the most outstanding characteristic of all revolutionary socialists, insistence on critical analysis and intellectual integrity.

There are some who are worried lest the criticism which we level at Stalin and his satellites might furnish ammunition to the enemy. Will not the capitalist press pick up our attacks and use them to confuse and antagonize large numbers of people? It is highly questionable that a correct criticism from a revolutionary socialist can be used by the reactionaries for their own purposes. Because a criticism from a revolutionary viewpoint draws revolutionary conclusions highly dangerous to the reactionary forces.

But even assuming that here and there the capitalist press will pick up and distort a criticism of conditions in the Soviet Union by a revolutionist, the harm that this might bring is infinitely less than the harm which is bound to result to the revolutionary movement if we keep silent with reference to those conditions which should not exist and which are largely the result of the bureaucratic regime in the Soviet Union.

Essential To Distinguish Between Things Criticized

It is all a question of the purpose of the criticism and whether or not it is intended to discredit the proletarian revolution or to aid it. And furthermore it is a question of what is criticized, whether the things attacked are the inevit-

able accompaniment of a proletarian revolution in a backward country under unfavorable conditions or whether the policies of the bureaucratic regime are attacked, policies which are unnecessary and harmful to the cause of the Russian and the world revolution.

One thing is it to sympathize with the wailing of an old aristocrat who laments the loss of his privileged position and another thing altogether to decry the suppression of all democracy for the working class. To point to the low standard of living amongst the Russian masses without an explanation that the cause of such a low standard is due to the backwardness of the country and to the lack of aid from the working classes of the west is one thing; to describe the unnecessary hardships of the working masses in Russia and place responsibility upon the Stalin regime for its adventurous policies with reference to the tempo of industrial development during the latter part of the first five year plan is a criticism on a different plane. To mention the difference in the standard of living between the officialdom of the party and of the G.P.U. on the one hand and the lower paid category of workers on the other is a correct criticism, provided one explains that in a transition period between capitalism and Socialism differences in standards of living are bound to exist, but that the differences existing in the standards between different sections of the population in Russia are out of proportion and reflect the irresponsible powers of the higher officialdom.

One type of criticism is harm-

ful and the other beneficial to the interests of the working class revolution.

Lang's Attacks Reactionary

Measured by every conceivable standard, the articles of Harry Lang in the Hearst press are nothing short of a vile attack on the Socialist movement of the whole world. Coming at a time when there is considerable danger of an attack by Germany against Russia, at a time when Hearst is in the midst of a wild campaign to discredit the revolutionary movement in this country and above all the failure of Lang to make distinctions and explanations, the articles if read by any workers would tend to create tremendous confusion and antagonism not only towards Russia but towards the whole socialist movement. Hearst knew what he was about when he printed the articles; Lang, we must presume, also knew what he was doing when he resurrected those articles, printed some time ago in the Forward, for Hearst. The reactionary Hearst, however, got what he wanted; Lang got more than he bargained for in the form of the hostile reaction of Socialists.

But here it is necessary to clarify issues and make distinctions.

For a Socialist to write in the capitalist press is perfectly legitimate. Provided what he writes furthers the interests of the revolutionary movement. Many great socialists, Marx himself for that matter, wrote for the non-socialist press. It would indeed be a great thing if the capitalist press were to print all articles written by revolutionary socialists. Only a fanatic would

object to writing revolutionary articles for the enemy press. It is not the place where the article appears but the content of the article that is important.

Trotsky's Criticism Revolutionary

The Stalinists point to the fact that the capitalist press accepts articles from Leon Trotsky as conclusive proof that he is the "spearhead of the counter-revolution". But anyone not blinded by factional hatred reading Trotsky's articles in the capitalist press would readily admit that the revolutionary movement is not harmed in the least by those articles. That on the contrary many who are hostile to the Soviet Union because they do not understand what is going on there begin to understand and become friendly - not to Stalin it is true - but to the ideas represented by the October revolution.

Why does the capitalist press accept articles from Trotsky if the effect is favorable to the revolutionary idea? To look upon the capitalist press simply as an instrument of the ruling class to befuddle the minds of the working masses is a mechanical conception verging on the absurd. Only at a moment of great revolutionary upheaval does the ruling class press become so careful about its content that it ceases to pay attention to circulation. Under normal circumstances the element of circulation is an exceedingly important factor and if an article by a wellknown individual will add to the circulation, it might be printed regardless of the revolutionary character of that article. Only recently, McFadden's magazine "Liberty" published an article

by Trotsky wherein the latter showed that the difficulties experienced by communism in Russia would not exist after a working class revolution in this country and that there would be no such tyrannical bureaucracy in the United States as there is in Russia.

No wonder that the publishers took care to insert a boxed announcement that James Davis, ex-secretary of labor, would write an answer proving that Trotsky does not tell the truth.

If Lang's articles were of the sort that Hearst would be compelled to reply to, no one would criticize him for writing in the Hearst press. We must repeat: if we keep in mind the contents of the article, the purpose of its publication both of the writer and the publisher, and the effect the article has upon the readers, we can decide whether it was wrong to have such an article published in the capitalist press.

Accurate Picture of Russian Conditions Impossible Without a Theory

Is Lang truthful in his description of the incidents he claims to have seen while in Russia? Does he give an accurate picture of conditions in Russia? It must be stated categorically that it is impossible to give an accurate picture of what is going on in the Soviet Union without an understanding of the fundamental forces that influence the development of the working class revolution in the world in general and in the Soviet Union in particular. Without a knowledge of socialist theory and especially of the theoretical controversies that have been raging between Stalin and his opponents

with reference to the problems confronting the Soviet Union and the world revolution it is hopeless to attempt to evaluate conditions in Russia and to have any correct idea of the general tendencies of development in that country.

It has been said, correctly, that ninety-eight percent of the visitors to Russia come back with their presuppositions concerning conditions in that country confirmed. The contrasts are so many and so great that it is exceedingly easy to find those conditions which one expects. Tremendous construction and production and inconceivably bad quality; living conditions, for important people, that are as good as can be expected and desired, and for millions of workers an abominably low standard of living. Workers who are tremendously enthusiastic and those who are bitterly hostile to the regime. Peasants who tell you of the tremendous improvement in their conditions in comparison with the conditions existing under the Tsar, and peasants who shake their heads sadly and express longing for the days of old.

A devout communist visitor chooses those aspects of life in Russia which show the tremendous progress achieved since the revolution; a Harry Lang and a Ripley see only those conditions which seem to indicate that the revolution was futile and brought only harm to the people. An impartial and accurate traveler might report everything in its true colors but without a knowledge of revolutionary theory would be lost in a maze of contradictions. It is necessary to distinguish and explain and one

cannot do that on the basis of accepting the Stalinist mythology nor the vindictive distortions of Lang and other enemies of the Soviet Union.

What Lang reports might be the truth but if he does not mention that conditions have improved tremendously since 1933 and if he does not mention the phenomenal achievements in the development of industry his reports are only half-truths. Especially are his reports absolutely worthless if he does not distinguish between gains made as a result of the seizure of power by the Russian proletariat and the losses suffered since that seizure due to the bureaucratic Stalin regime.

Whom and What to Blame For Certain Conditions

Can one deny the tremendous suffering of the peasantry and the working class of Russia in the period when Stalin was insanely liquidating the Kulaks by administrative measures thus arousing such furious hostility amongst the peasants that they killed most of the live stock and caused hunger throughout the country? But whom shall we blame? The Bolshevik revolution or the initiator of the policy of forced collectivization, Stalin? Those who were most active in guiding the revolution were the very ones who objected to Stalin's policy of collectivizing one hundred percent of the peasantry regardless of the ripeness of conditions.

Recognizing the remarkable improvement in Soviet economy should not blind us to the fact that great harm was done to industry and to the workers in industry by the sudden change from

an exceedingly slow to a dizzy tempo in industrial construction. And how can one understand the whole problem of the industrialization of Russia and whom to blame for the errors committed if one is ignorant of the controversies raging with reference to that problem within the Communist party? The answer to the argument that Stalin recognized his mistakes and slowed down the tempo of construction as well as the speed of administrative collectivization is that there were those who like Trotsky warned about these blunders before and not after they were committed.

Events in Soviet Union Concern All Socialists

Owing to the vicious attacks made on the Soviet Union by the right wing Socialists there is the tendency on the part of many well-meaning members of the Socialist party to take an attitude of "Hands off the Soviet Union", which in practice means endorsing everything that is done by the Stalin regime. Both from the point of view of theory and of practice that is an incorrect attitude.

The founders of the socialist movement conceived of it as an international movement. Not because the proletariat of different countries were bound to help one another for some ethical or sentimental reason but because capitalism has created an international division of labor and the economic interdependence of the whole world. The working class of every country is vitally affected by the failure or success of the proletariat of any one country. It follows therefore that policies followed by a working class party in any one

country should be of interest to, because they influence the existence of, the working class of every other country. The international character of the socialist movement actually means that a member of the Socialist party of Japan has a right and a duty to follow and to criticize the tactics of the Socialist party of Venezuela or any other country.

The proposition that what happens to the working class of any country is of tremendous concern to the working class of every other country should be questioned by no one after the Hitler victory which set into motion a wave of reaction throughout the whole capitalist world. It is clear or should be clear to everyone following current events that the workers of Russia were most affected by Hitler's victory. Because of the fact that Russia is a workers' country the failures and successes of the Russian workers are of greater importance to the world proletariat than the failures and successes of the working class of any other country.

Even accepting the point of view that it is possible to build a socialist island in a capitalist world, that is, accepting Stalin's theory of socialism in one country, a critical attitude to the policies of the Soviet leaders still remains necessary. A major premise of that theory, if not the only premise, is that after socialism is built in Russia the whole world, becoming aware of the existence of a terrestrial paradise, would gravitate towards socialism with an irresistible force. Consequently the believers in that theory should watch carefully lest any mistake be made in the

process of erecting the socialist edifice. But alas! that theory seems to have the effect of destroying all critical faculties with reference to the problems of revolutionary socialism and they who have uncritically accepted that theory have relieved themselves both of the necessity of thinking about Russia and of the necessity of struggling to achieve the social revolution in their own country.

Conditions in S U Affect Socialist Movement Everywhere

To revolutionary Marxists who understand that to save the Russian Revolution it must be extended to the most important capitalist countries of the world everything that goes on in Russia must be followed closely and critically. . . We need not accept the official theory of socialism in one country to be convinced that conditions in Russia furnish powerful arguments for or against the socialist revolution in other countries. What a handicap revolutionists in capitalist countries are under when they are constantly compelled to explain why there is no democracy for the workers in Russia and why there are so many and such great distinctions in the living conditions of the different sections of the population. It is not so difficult to explain the low standard of living in the country which was economically undeveloped before the revolution, but it is exceedingly difficult to explain the existence of terror and the suppression of freedom of criticism seventeen years after the revolution and especially in view of the undoubted economic progress.

The harm that the communists have done to the revolutionary movement by exaggerating conditions in Russia is almost inconceivable. Hundreds of non-Russian workers during the first five year plan flocked to Russia after listening to verbal pictures painted of conditions in Russia by delegates who were given chicken for breakfast, dinner and supper. Most of those non-Russians workers either left Russia with disillusionment if not hatred in their hearts or remained there grumbling and sulking. Some no doubt became acclimated and were satisfied. But the latter cannot undo the damage suffered by the Soviet Union by virtue of the return of American and other workers disillusioned and disgusted. And it is not only the Soviet Union that is harmed; it is not only the communist movement that is harmed; the socialist movement also must suffer because of the fancy exaggerations of the "friends" of the Soviet Union.

Criticism of the Stalinist regime from a revolutionary Marxist viewpoint cannot weaken the Soviet Union in the slightest. Its intention is to strengthen that country and its effect is

the same. In the last analysis, the policies pursued by the leaders of the Russian workers are responsible for the strengthening or weakening of Russia. Criticism of wrong policies and bad leadership never does and never will harm the revolutionary socialist movement.

"Friends" of the Soviet Union, who give to every one of Stalin's platitudes a profound revolutionary significance and who justify every one of his zig-zags, will be the very ones to run for cover when a serious attack against the Soviet Union will be launched. Critics of the Stalinist regime from a revolutionary Marxist viewpoint, who are called "enemies" of the Soviet Union, will defend the workers' country not only against Lang, but also against the imperialists who are watching for the opportune time to destroy the Russia of the October Revolution. No one knows better than revolutionary Marxists that the destruction of the Soviet Union will set the clock of history back for many decades if not generations. But they also know that the real defense of the Soviet Union is the proletarian revolution in Europe and America.