

The RED FLAG

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Joint Declaration for the New International*

“Conditions demand the welding together of the advanced workers into a new International . . . on the principles of Marx and Lenin.”

In full realization of the great historic responsibility which rests upon them, the undersigned organizations have unanimously decided to combine their forces for joint work for the regeneration of the revolutionary proletarian movement on an international scale. As the basis for their activity they lay down the following principles:

1. The mortal crisis of imperialist capitalism which has taken the props out from under reformism (social-democracy, the Second International, the bureaucracy of the International Federation of trade unions) poses imperatively the question of the break with reformist policy and of the revolutionary struggle for the conquest of power and the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship as the only means for the transformation of capitalist society into a socialist society.

2. The problem of the proletarian revolution bears, by its very nature, an international character. The proletariat can build a complete socialist society only on the basis of the world division of labour and world co-operation. The undersigned categorically reject, therefore, the theory of “socialism in one country” which undermines the very foundation of proletarian internationalism.

3. No less energetically must be rejected the theory of the Austro-Marxists, centrists and left reformists who, under the pretext of the international character of the Socialist revolution, advocate an expectant passivity with regard to their own country, in reality delivering thereby the proletariat into the hands of fascism. A proletarian party which evades the seizure of power under the present historic conditions, commits the worst of betrayals. The victorious proletariat of one country must strengthen its national dictatorship by socialist construction, which remains of necessity incomplete and contradictory until the working class seizes political power in at least a few advanced capitalist countries. Simultaneously, the victorious working class of one country must direct all its efforts to the extension of the socialist revolution to other countries. The contradiction between the national character of the seizure of power and the international character of socialist society can be resolved only by courageous revolutionary action.

4. The Third International, which grew out of the October revolution, laid down the principles of proletarian policy in the epoch of imperialism and gave the world proletariat the first lessons in the revolutionary struggle for power, fell victim of a chain of historical contradictions. The treacherous role of the social-democracy, the immaturity and inexperience of the communist parties led to the breakdown of the post war revolutionary movements in the East and in the West. The isolated position of the pro-

letarian dictatorship in a backward country gave an extraordinary power to the ever more conservative and nationally-limited Soviet bureaucracy. The slavish dependence of the sections of the Comintern on the Soviet tops led, in its turn, to a new series of grave defeats, to bureaucratic degeneration of the theory and practice of the communist parties, to their organizational weakening, so that the Comintern proved not only incapable of fulfilling its historic role but became more and more of an obstacle in the way of the revolutionary movement.

5. The advance of fascism in Germany put the organizations of the working class to a decisive test. The social-democracy once more confirmed the designation given it by Rosa Luxemburg and revealed itself for the second time as “a stinking corpse.” The overcoming of the organizations, ideas and methods of reformism is the necessary prerequisite for the victory of the working class over capitalism.

6. The German events revealed with no less force the collapse of the Third International. Despite its fourteen year existence, despite the experience gained in gigantic battles, despite the moral support of the Soviet state and the plentiful means for propaganda, the Communist party of Germany revealed, under conditions of a grave economic, social and political crisis, conditions exceptionally favourable for a revolutionary party, an absolute revolutionary incapacity thereby showing conclusively that despite the heroism of many of its members it is no longer able to fulfil its historic role.

7. The position of world capitalism; the frightful crisis which plunged the working masses into unheard of misery; the revolutionary movement of the oppressed colonial masses; the world danger of fascism; the perspective of a new cycle of wars which threaten to destroy the whole of human culture — these are the conditions which imperatively demand the welding together of the proletarian vanguard into a new (Fourth) International. The undersigned obligate themselves to direct all their forces to the formation in the shortest possible time of this International on the firm foundation of the theoretic and strategic principles laid down by Marx and Lenin.

8. While ready to co-operate with all the organizations, groups and factions which are actually developing from reformism or bureaucratic centrism (Stalinism) towards revolutionary Marxian policy, the undersigned at the same time declare that the new International cannot tolerate any conciliation towards reformism or centrism. The necessary unity of the working-class movement cannot be attained by the blurring of reformist and revolutionary conception, or by an adaption to the Stalinist policy, but only by combating the policies of both bankrupt Internationals. To remain equal to its task the

New International must not permit any deviation from revolutionary principles in the question of the insurrections, the proletarian dictatorship, the Soviet form of the state, etc.

9. By its class basis, by its social foundations, by the incontestably prevailing forms of property the U.S.S.R. remains even to-day a workers' state, that is an instrument for the building of a socialist society. The new International will inscribe on its banner as one of its most important tasks the defence of the Soviet state from imperialism and internal counter-revolution. Precisely the revolutionary defence of the U.S.S.R. places upon us the imperative task of freeing the revolutionary forces of the entire world from the corrupting influence of the Stalinist Comintern and of building a new International. Only under the condition of complete independence of the international proletarian organizations from the Soviet bureaucracy and the tireless unmasking of its false methods before the working masses is a successful defence of the Soviet Union possible.

10. Party democracy is a necessary prerequisite for the healthy development of revolutionary proletarian parties on a national as well as on an international scale. Without freedom of criticism, without the election of functionaries from top to bottom, without the control of the apparatus by the rank and file, no truly revolutionary party is possible. The need for secrecy under conditions of illegality changes completely the forms of the internal life of a revolutionary party and makes wide discussions and elections difficult, if not altogether impossible. But even under the most difficult conditions and circumstances the basic demands of a healthy party regime retain their full force; honest information of the party, freedom of criticism and a real inner unity between the leadership and the party majority. Having suppressed and crushed the will of the revolutionary workers, the reformist bureaucracy turned the social-democracy and the trade-unions into impotent bodies despite their membership numbering millions. Having stifled inner democracy, the Stalinist bureaucracy stifled also the Comintern. The new International, as well as the parties adhering thereto, must build their entire inner life on the basis of democratic centralism.

11. The undersigned create, by delegating their representatives, a Permanent Commission assigning to it the following:

- the elaboration of a programmatic manifesto as the charter of the new International;
- the preparation of a critical analysis of the organizations and tendencies of the present-day workers movement (theoretic commentary to the Manifesto);
- the elaboration of theses on all the fundamental questions of revolutionary strategy of the proletariat;
- the representation of the undersigned organizations before the outside world.

Signed:

E. BAUER, International Communist Left Opposition.
J. SCHWAB, Socialist Workers' Party (Germany).
J. P. SCHMIDT, Independent Socialist Party (Holland).
K. SNEEVLIET, Revolutionary Socialist Party (Holland).

* The above text has been revised and consequently differs slightly in wording from the version published as a leaflet.

WHITHER THE I.L.P.?

By LEON TROTSKY

The latest political decisions of the National Council of the British Independent Labour Party show clearly that after its break with the reformists this party continues to move leftward. Similar processes are to be observed in other countries: a left wing forms within the social democratic parties which splits off at the following stage from the party and tries with its own forces to pave for itself a revolutionary path. These processes reflect on one side the deep crisis of capitalism and of reformism which is inseparably bound up therewith, and on the other — the inability of the Comintern to group around itself revolutionary currents within the proletariat.

In England, however, the situation is complicated more by an unheard of combination. Whereas, in other countries, the Comintern continues to treat the left socialist organisations as "left social fascists" and as "the most dangerous counter-revolutionists," a permanent collaboration has been established between the I.L.P. and the communist party of Great Britain. How these leaders of the Comintern combine this collaboration with the theory of "social fascism" remains a mystery. In the July issue of the theoretical organ of the Comintern Fenner Brockway, the newly appointed Secretary of the I.L.P., is called a "counter-revolutionist" and therefore. Why the British Communist party made a united front this time not from below but from above, moreover, with leaders who prove to be "counter-revolutionists," and a united front made not for one single practical action but for collaboration in general, — no mortal can solve these contradictions. But if the principles be left aside, the matter can be explained very simply: under the exceptionally favourable conditions of Great Britain the Comintern managed completely to isolate and weaken its British section by the ruinous policy of the Anglo-Russian Committee, the "third period," "social-fascism" and the rest; on the other hand, the deep social crisis of British capitalism pushed the I.L.P. sharply towards the left; not heeding consistency or logic the totally discouraged Comintern grabbed this time with both hands the alliance proposed to it.

We could have and should have welcomed and heartily supported the collaboration of the I.L.P. with the communist party had it not been based on evasiveness, suppressions and ambiguities on both sides.

Of the Communist Party the National Council says that it is "revolutionary in outlook as ourselves." That is all that we learn with regard to the appraisal of the communist party and of its policy. Every serious and thinking worker will inevitably ask: why are two parties necessary if they have both an equally revolutionary outlook. This worker will be even more astonished upon learning that the leaders of one of the equally revolutionary parties consider the leaders of the other party as "counter-revolutionists" and "left social-fascists." Possibly the National Council refrains from a critical estimation of its ally so as not to undermine the alliance itself. But an alliance of revolutionary organisations which is based not on open mutual criticism but on diplomacy will be thrown over by the first gust of the political storm, like a house of cards.

The theses of the National Council explain the bloc with the Communist Party, first as a step towards the united front, secondly as a stage in the creation of a mass revolutionary party. Each of these two arguments has its weight; but mechanically placed side by side they contradict each other. The theses repeat that the united front should embrace any and all organisations of the proletariat insofar as they wish to participate in the struggle: the Labour party, the trade unions, even the Co-operative party. But we know well, and not from literature but from the tragic experience of the German catastrophe, that the Comintern rejects the united front with reformist ("social-fascist") organisations. How does the I.L.P. intend to build a united front with reformist organisations in alliance with the com-

munist party: only from below and under the leadership of the Communist bureaucracy guaranteed advances? To this question there is no answer.

Mentioning in passing that the bloc with the Communist Party has pushed certain sections of the "official movement" to the right, the National Council expresses the hope that these prejudices can be conquered by an active participation in daily struggles. The fact that the reactionary prejudices of the leader: of the Labour Party and of the General Council of trade-unions do not frighten the leaders of the I.L.P. only does the I.L.P. credit. Unfortunately, however, it is not only a question of prejudices. When the communist bureaucracy declares that reformism and fascism are twins, it not only criticises the reformist leaders incorrectly, but it provokes the rightful indignation of the reformist workers. The times, it is true, say that the criticism of reformism should correspond to actual facts and push the reformist workers forward and not back; but the Communist Party is not mentioned in this connection by one word. What can be made of the theory of "social-fascism"? And how can the policy of the united front be built on this theory? To pass such questions in silence in the resolution does not mean to remove them from life. An open discussion could possibly force the Communist Party to adopt a correct position; diplomatic evasiveness can only pile up contradictions and prepare a new catastrophe for the next mass movement.

Workers! Save the lives of Torgler, Dimitrov, Papov and Tanev. Demand the release of all workers at present in the hands of the Fascist murder bands.

Without defining in principle their attitude to official communism (stalinism) the theses of the National Council stop midway in their relation to reformism. The reformists must be criticised as conservative democrats and not as fascists, but the struggle with them must be no less irreconcilable because of it, since British reformism is the main hindrance now to the liberation not only of the British but also of the European proletariat. The policy of a united front with reformists is obligatory but it is of necessity limited to partial tasks, especially to defensive struggles. There can be no thought of making the socialist revolution in a united front with reformist organisations. The principal task of a revolutionary party consists in freeing the working class from the influence of reformism. The error of the Comintern bureaucracy consists, not in the fact that they see the most important condition for the victory of the proletariat in the leadership of a revolutionary party — that is entirely correct — but in that being incapable of gaining the confidence of the working masses in daily struggle, starting as a minority in modest roles, it demands this confidence in advance, presents ultimatums to the working class and disrupts attempts at a united front because other organisations are not willing to hand it over voluntarily the marshal's baton. This is not Marxian policy but bureaucratic sabotage. A secure and firm victory of the proletarian revolution — we repeat it again — is possible only under the condition that a revolutionary, that is a truly Communist, party will succeed in gaining the firm confidence of the majority of the working class before the overthrow. This central question is not touched in the theses. Why? Out of "tact" with regard to the ally? Not only that. There are deeper causes. Insufficient clarity of the theses with regard to the united front flows from the incomplete realisations of the methods of the proletarian revolution. The theses speak of the necessity "to wrest the control of the economic system and the State from the capitalist class and to transfer it to the working class." But how solve this gigantic problem? To this pivotal question of our epoch the theses reply with a naked phrase: "this can only be achieved through united action of the working class."

The struggle for power and the dictatorship of the proletariat remain abstractions which can be easily dissolved in the amorphous perspectives of the united front . . .

In the realm of ready made revolutionary formulae the bureaucracy of the British Communist Party is immeasurably better equipped. Precisely in this lies now its advantage over the leadership of the I.L.P. And it must be said openly: this superficial, purely formal advantage may under the present circumstances lead to the liquidation of the I.L.P. without any gain accruing to the Communist Party and to the revolution. The objective conditions have more than once pushed tens and even hundreds of thousands of workers towards the British section of the Comintern, but the leadership of the Comintern was capable only of disillusioning them and of throwing them back. If the I.L.P. as a whole should enter to-day the ranks of the Communist Party, within the next couple of months one third of the new members would return to the Labour Party, another third would be expelled for "conciliatory attitude towards Trotskyism" and for similar crimes, finally, the remaining third, disillusioned in all its expectations would fall into indifferentism. As a result of this experiment the Communist Party would find itself weaker and more isolated than now.

The I.L.P. can save the workers' movement of England from this new danger only by freeing itself from all uncertainty and haziness with regard to the way and methods of the socialist revolution and by becoming a truly revolutionary party of the proletariat. There is no necessity of inventing anything new in this field: all has been said well by the first four congresses of the Comintern. Instead of feeding on bureaucratic substitutes of the epigones it is better to put all the members of the I.L.P. to the study of the resolutions of the first four congresses of the Comintern. But this alone does not suffice. It is necessary to open a discussion in the party on the lessons of the last decade which was marked by the struggle between the Stalinist bureaucracy and the Left Opposition. The content of this struggle was made up of the most important stage of the world revolutionary movement; economic and political tasks of the U.S.S.R.; problems of the Chinese revolution; the policy of the Anglo-Russian committee; methods of the united front; problems of party democracy; the causes of the German catastrophe. This enormous cycle of problems cannot be passed by. These are not Russian but international problems.

In our epoch a revolutionary party cannot but be international. What is the position of the I.L.P. on this? Having entered into an alliance with the communist party the I.L.P. has not determined its international position. It broke with the Second International and made an alliance with the Third, but it also enters into a labour alliance with left socialist parties. This alliance, in its turn, is not homogeneous. There are elements in it which gravitate towards bolshevism, but there are also elements which pull towards the Norwegian Workers' Party, that is, in reality towards the social-democracy. What position does the I.L.P. take on all these questions? Is it willing to share the fate of the historically already doomed Comintern, does it want to try to remain in an intermediary position (which means to return by round about ways to reformism), or is it ready to participate in the building of a new International on the foundations laid by Marx and Lenin?

To the serious reader it is clear that our criticism is least of all inspired by animosity towards the I.L.P. On the contrary, we see too clearly that if this party should ingloriously disappear from the scene socialism would suffer a new hard blow. And this danger exists and it is not far removed. In our epoch it is impossible to remain long in intermediary positions. Only political clarity can save the I.L.P. for the proletarian revolution. The aim of these lines is to help revolutionary clarity to pave its way.

August 28th, 1933.

L. TROTSKY.

On the Need for the New International

A CONVERSATION

A. It is time to break with the caricature of an International which is in Moscow. It is impossible to bear even a shadow of political responsibility for the Stalinists. We have been very prudent and very patient with regard to the Comintern; but there is a limit to everything; now that, before the sight of the entire world, Wells on the one side, Stalin on the other, have placed Hitler in the saddle, now that the Comintern, despite the catastrophe, has proclaimed its policy infallible — no man of judgment will any longer hope that this clique can be "reformed."

B. The clique certainly not, but the Comintern taken as a whole?

A. One must not be deceived by general phrases. The "Comintern as a whole" is an abstraction, not to say an empty expression. The command is in the hands of the Stalinist clique. For six years now there has been no Congress. Who has trampled under foot the statutes? The clique. By what right? By the right of usurpation. Not one section, not one local organisation, not one paper has dared to breathe a word about the necessity of an international Congress. This means that, in fact, the fate of the "Comintern as a whole" lies in the hands of an irresponsible clique.

B. That is incontestable, but isn't that just how the matter stood a year ago, when we had not yet withdrawn the slogan of the reform of the Comintern?

A. No. That is not how the matter stood. A year ago one could still hope to save the situation in Germany. We did everything in our power to throw light on the logic of the situation. If the Comintern were a viable organisation, its leadership could not have failed to hear the voice of events: it is absolutely impossible to expect a more powerful voice. And if the Comintern remained deaf this time, it means that it is a corpse. In still another respect a decisive change has taken place. Last year the German Communist Party still existed. In the whirlpool of great events, it had to reckon with the working masses. One was able to hope with a certain right — up to the hour of the verification — that the development of the struggle of the masses would not only make Thaelmann's Central Committee turn about, but also the praesidium of Stalin-Manuilsky. That did not take place. Of the German Communist Party, nothing has remained but an apparatus which grows weaker every day and becomes increasingly alienated from the masses. The point has been reached where the Central Committee prohibits the illegal local organisations from publishing their articles and appeals: the duty of the local committees is but to reprint the revelations of the Manuilskys and the Heckerts. Every movement of thought represents a mortal danger for these people. The victory of Hitler is not really a "defeat" for them; it has freed them from all control from below. . . . But now that the strongest party of the Comintern has left the stage, there is decidedly no way, no canal and no lever left by which to act upon the clique which commands the Comintern.

B. Can the German Communist Party be spoken of as the strongest party of the Comintern? You seem to forget the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

A. No, I have not forgotten it. Even if one recognises that the C. P. S. U. is a party (in reality, within the administrative cadres of the C. P. S. U., which change according to the will of the clique, several parties are conducting a covert struggle against each other), this party is, in any case, not an active section of the Comintern. The Soviet workers have no idea of what is happening in the proletarian movement in the West: nothing is communicated to them or, still worse, they are ignobly deceived. In the Political Bureau itself, with its present composition, there is not a single person who knows the life and the struggle of the world proletariat, to say nothing about the theory of Marxism. Finally, the C. P. S. U. possesses no means of expressing its opinion on the international questions. From the party have been snatched the Congresses, the meetings, the discussions, the press. Not a single Soviet journal has even

dared to pose the question of the correctness of the policy in Germany. In general, nobody dares to pose questions; everybody is obliged to wait in silence for replies. And they have seen Hitler arrive . . .

The slogan of the "reform of the Comintern was, for us, never a hollow phrase. We counted on reform as on a reality. Developments follows the worst road. That is precisely why we are compelled to declare that the policy of reform is exhausted to the very end.

B. Is it then possible for us to leave the Centrist bureaucracy the banner of the Comintern?

A. One should not be misled by ambiguous formulae. What is understood by a banner? A program? But it is long since we have rejected the program adopted by the Sixth Congress as a pernicious admixture of opportunism and adventurism. In the course of several years, basing ourselves on the lessons of events, we counted upon changing the program of the Comintern by internal means. Now this possibility has disappeared at the same time as the possibility of "reform." To the miserable eclectic program of the Comintern, we must oppose our Marxian program.

B. And the first four Congresses of the Comintern?

A. Naturally, we do not abandon them. All the more so as the Stalinists have long since renounced them and given them over to us. Our program — we will build up on the foundations established by the first four Congresses: it is

WHY THE RED FLAG IS LATE

Last month we said that our financial position was desperate and that without help we could not publish the usual size paper. We had some help but by no means sufficient and we have thus been compelled to publish late and date this issue "October-November."

The next number depends on you comrade reader. We have tons of material waiting to be published but have no money. Send all you can spare; collect as much as you can and help to sell as many copies as you can.

an irreproachable Marxian foundation, it is our foundation. The lessons of the recent years — only the Left Opposition has translated them into the language of Marxism.

B. The opponents will, in spite of everything, say that we are renouncing the banner of Lenin.

A. The Opponents have been shouting that for some time, and all the more loudly the more they trample in the mud the heritage of Bolshevism. As for us, we shall say to the workers of the entire world that we are taking upon ourselves the defence of the banner of Marx and Lenin, the continuation and the development of their work in the intransigent struggle not only against the reformist traitors — that goes without saying — but also against the Centrist falsifiers of Bolshevism, the usurpers of the banner of Lenin, the organisers of the defeats and the capitulations, the corruptors of the proletarian vanguard: the Stalinists.

B. Then what is to be done about the C.P.S.U.? What is to be done about the U.S.S.R.? The opponents, won't they say that we consider as lost the work of the workers' state and that we are preparing the armed insurrection against the Soviet Government?

A. Certainly they'll say it. They have been saying it for some time now. What else can they say to justify their ignoble persecutions of the Bolshevik-Leninists? But we are guided not by the calumny of the opponents, but by the actual course of the class struggle. The October revolution, with the Bolshevik party at its head, created the workers' state. Now the Bolshevik party no longer exists. But the fundamental social content of the October revolution is still alive. The bureaucratic dictatorship, in spite of the technical successes acquired under its reign (in spite of itself), enormously facilitates

the possibility of a capitalist restoration. But luckily, the point of a restoration has not yet been reached. With favourable internal, and above all international, conditions, the edifice of the workers' state can be regenerated on the social foundation of the Soviet state, without a new revolution. For a long time we have reckoned that we would succeed in reforming the C.P.S.U. itself, and through its intermediary, in regenerating the Soviet regime. But the present official party bears much less of a resemblance to a party than two or even one year ago. The party congress has not taken place for more than three years and nobody talks about it. The Stalinist clique is now carving down and reconstructing its "party", as if it were a disciplinary battalion. The aim of the purging and of the expulsions was first of all to disorganise the party, to terrorise it, to deprive it of the possibility of thinking and of acting; now the repressions have as their aim to prevent the regeneration of the party. Yet, the proletarian party is indispensable if the Soviet state is not to perish. There are many elements for it, but it is only in the struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy that they can be brought to the surface and united. To speak of the reform of the C.P.S.U. would mean to look backward and not forward, and to assuage one's own mind with emptied formulae. In the U.S.S.R., it is necessary to build a Bolshevik party again.

B. But isn't that the road of civil war?

A. The Stalinist bureaucracy conducted the struggle against the Left Opposition even in the period when we were quite sincerely and with conviction for the reform of the C.P.S.U. The arrests, the deportations, the fusillades — what are those if not the civil war, at least in embryo? In the struggle against the Left Opposition, the Stalinist bureaucracy was the instrument of the counter-revolutionary forces and by that fact, it isolated itself from the masses. Now the civil war is placed on the order of the day along another line, between the counter-revolution going over to the offensive and the Stalinist bureaucracy on the defensive. In the struggle with the counter-revolution, the Bolshevik Leninists will obviously be the left flank of the Soviet front. The fighting bloc in coalition with the Stalinists will flow here from the whole situation. It should not however, be thought that in this struggle the Stalinist bureaucracy will be unanimous. At the decisive moment, it will break up into fragments and its component elements will meet again in the two opposing camps.

B. So the civil war is inevitable?

A. Right at the present moment it is taking place. By maintaining the present course, it can only become more acute. With the further impotence of the Comintern, with the paralysis of the international proletarian vanguard and under the conditions of the inevitable growth of world Fascism, the victory of the counter-revolution in the U.S.S.R. would be inevitable. Naturally, the Bolshevik-Leninists will continue their work in the U.S.S.R. regardless of the conditions. But the saving of the workers' state can be effected only by the intermediary of the world revolutionary movement. In all of human history, the objective conditions for its regeneration and its rise have never been so favorable as now. What is lacking is the revolutionary party. The Stalinist clique can rule only by destroying the party, in the U.S.S.R. as in the rest of the world. One can tear oneself away from this vicious circle only by breaking with the Stalinist bureaucracy. It is necessary to build a party on a fresh spot, under a clean banner.

B. And how will the revolutionary parties of the capitalist world be able to act upon the Stalinist bureaucracy in the U.S.S.R.?

A. The whole question lies in the genuine strength. We have seen how the Stalinist bureaucracy crawled before the Kuo Min Tang, before the British trade unions. We see how it is crawling now, even before petty bourgeois pacifists. Strong revolutionary parties, truly

(Continued on page four).

TOM MANN'S REPLY

On the Need for the New International
(Continued from Page Three)

capable of fighting against imperialism, and consequently of defending the U.S.S.R., will compel the Stalinist bureaucracy to reckon with them. Much more important is the fact that these organisations will acquire an enormous authority in the eyes of the Soviet workers and will thus finally create favourable conditions for the rebirth of a genuine Bolshevik party. It is only on this road that the reform of the Soviet state is possible without a new proletarian revolution.

B. So then: we abandon the slogan of the reform of the C.P.S.U. and we build up the new party as an instrument for the reform of the Soviet Union.

A. Perfectly correct.

B. Is this tremendous task commensurable with our forces?

A. The question is put erroneously. First of all, it is necessary to formulate clearly and courageously the historical task, and then to assemble the forces for its resolution. Certainly we are still weak to-day, but that does not at all signify that history will grant us a delay. One of the psychological sources of opportunism is the fear of great tasks, that is, the lack of faith in revolutionary possibilities. However, great tasks do not fall from the sky: they emerge from the course of the class struggle. It is in these same conditions that one must seek the forces for the resolution of the great tasks.

B. But doesn't the over-estimation of one's own forces often lead to adventurism?

A. That is absolutely correct. It would be pure adventurism if we were to "proclaim" that our present organisation is the Communist International or if, under this name, we were to unite ourselves mechanically with various other oppositional organisations. The new International cannot be "proclaimed": it still has to be built. But one can and one should, from to-day onward, proclaim the necessity to create a new International.

Ferdinand Lassalle, who was no stranger to opportunism, nor to adventurism, nevertheless magnificently expressed the fundamental requirement of revolutionary politics: Every great action begins by the assertion of what is. Before replying practically to the questions: How is a new International to be built, what methods are to be applied, what delays are to be fixed — it is necessary to assert openly what is: **The Comintern is dead for the revolution.**

B. On this point, in your opinion, there can no longer be any doubt?

A. Not a shadow. The whole course of the struggle against national-socialism, the conclusion of this struggle and the lessons of this conclusion — equally indicate not only the complete revolutionary absence of the Comintern but also its organic incapacity to learn, to mend its ways, that is, to "reform" itself. The German lesson would not be so crushing and so unimpeachable, if it were not the crowning piece of ten years of the history of Centrist blundering, of pernicious errors, of ever more frightful defeats, of increasingly fruitless sacrifices and losses and, in connection with that — of a complete theoretical devastation, of a bureaucratic degeneration, of psittacism, of demoralisation, of duping the masses, of uninterrupted falsifications, of the banishment of revolutionists, of the selection of functionaries, mercenaries and pure lackeys. The present Comintern is an expensive apparatus for the weakening of the proletarian vanguard. That's all. It is not capable of doing more.

Wherever the conditions of bourgeois democracy open up a certain space, the Stalinists, thanks to the apparatus and to the cashbox, simulate a political activity. Muenzenberg has now become a symbolical figure of the Comintern. But who is Muenzenberg? He is an Oustric* on the "proletarian" arena. Empty slogans, which engage one to nothing, a little

*Oustric: Notorious French financier, industrialist, shady stock speculator, trust magnate, intimate of politicians in all camps, swindler. Finally brought to trial and condemned.—Trans.

(Continued on next Column)

"I Count it My Duty."

Tom Mann has sent us the following letter, date September 7th, in reply to our 'Open Letter' which appeared in last month's Red Flag:

"Dear Comrade,

I have read the letter addressed to me which appears in the Red Flag. When in China in 1927 I attended the opening of the Chinese Communist Party Congress at Hankow, and I considered Comrade Chen Du Siu and his colleagues a capable and courageous body of comrades, when the arrests and imprisonments followed I have on many occasions at public gatherings emphatically protested against the imprisonment and demanded the release of all class war prisoners.

If my signature is of any value by way of protest or demand I am ready to append same, and I count it my duty to continue to develop opinion till it shall be equal to demanding and securing the release of our comrade.

(signed) TOM MANN.

(Continued from Column One)

bit of Bolshevism, a little bit of liberalism, a stock exchange of journals, literary drawing rooms where friendship for the U.S.S.R. has its price, a theatrical hostility towards the reformists, changing easily into a friendship for them (Barbusse!) and, what is important, a well-adorned cashbox, independent of the working masses that's what Muenzenbergism is. Living politically on the alms of bourgeois democracy, the Stalinists still demand of it — the crowning point — that it strike down the Bolshevik-Leninists. Can one sink lower? ... Yet, let but the bourgeoisie seriously lift the Fascist or the simple police fist, and Stalinism draws its tail between its legs and retires docilely into the void. The Comintern in agony can give nothing to the world proletariat, absolutely nothing, save evil.

B. That the Comintern, as the central apparatus, has become a brake on the revolutionary movement, it is impossible not to acknowledge. But what about the national sections? Are all of them in the same stage of degeneration and decadence?

A. After the German catastrophe, we have seen, in Austria as well as in Bulgaria, how the Stalinist parties are liquidated without resistance on the part of the masses. If the situation is more favourable in some countries than in others, the difference, despite everything, is not very great. But let us even admit that one section of the Comintern or another is conquered by the Left Opposition: the morning after this fact, if not on the eve, it will be expelled from the Comintern and it will have to seek for itself a new International (something of that sort happened in Chile). Cases of that kind took place also during the appearance of the III International: thus, the French Socialist Party transformed itself officially into a Communist Party. But that did not change the general direction of our policy with regard to the II International.

B. Don't you think that thousands of "Stalinists" sympathetic to us will move away from us in fright when they learn that we are breaking away finally with the Comintern?

A. It is possible. It is even likely. But it is with all the greater decision that they will join with us at the following stage. It must not be forgotten, on the other hand, that in every country there are thousands of revolutionists who have abandoned the official party or who were expelled from it, and who did not join us in large measure because, in their eyes, we were only a faction of that same party with which they were disgusted. An even greater number of workers are right now separating from reformism and seeking a revolutionary leadership. Finally, in this situation of putrefaction of the social democracy and the collapse of Stalinism, a young generation of workers is rising for whom a stainless banner is needed. The Bolshevik-Leninists can and should form the axis of crystallization of all these numerous elements. Then all that is of a living nature in the Stalinist "International" will shake off its last doubts and will join us.

The Anti-War "Fighters"

Right from the very beginning, when the World Anti-War Congress was first mooted, the Left Opposition, in all its sections, endeavoured, not only to expose its make-up, but, to reaffirm the attitude, and principles of Lenin on the question of war.

It was in order to achieve this end that the L.O. representatives entered the Congress held at Amsterdam, August 27th—29th, 1932. Not to oppose the fight against war but to seek a solution that would build up a real working-class organisation, with proper Communist leadership.

How necessary that task was has been abundantly stressed lately.

Professor Albert Einstein was a member of the original Committee which called the Congress. Much use has been made, by the Communist Parties identified with the Communist International, of the name of Einstein. True, it was said, he is a pacifist, but he is ready to resist the danger of a new war.

How little truth there was in this claim, and what little right the Comintern has to make use of his name in anti-war work is shown by Einstein recently. Not only has he attacked Soviet Russia; not only has he broken off his relations with the Anti-War united front committee; but he has actually advocated Belgians joining the army of their country.

"I say frankly that if I were a Belgian I would not refuse military service in the present circumstances but on the contrary would accept it with wholeheartedness and with a feeling that I would be contributing to the salvation of European civilisation."

Following Einstein's spectacular exit from the Anti-War Committee, on the grounds that he discovered through the pamphlet of the Labour Party that it was a Communist organisation, Bertrand Russell (Earl Russell) likewise disassociates himself:

"I severed my connection with the Anti-War Movement some time ago as soon as I discovered that it was a Communist body in disguise. This had been concealed from me at first by an impressive list of non-Communist names and by the title of the organisation, which as I subsequently discovered, by no means correctly represented its aims."

These defections should go a long way to enlighten all workers anxious to fight war; and the falsity of THIS type of United Front against war, under the guidance of the Comintern so unably led by Stalin. Workers! Back to Lenin, and his methods!

WHAT NEXT IN AUSTRIA?

We have still a few copies left of number two of the "Red Flag." This issue contains the article "IT IS NOW THE TURN OF AUSTRIA" by Leon Trotsky which, although written some months ago, is still the clearest Marxist analysis of the opposing forces in Austria.

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