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Stalin's Letter

THE press has just made the discovery that Joseph Stalin is a Bolshevik, a Communist, an internationalist. The paragraph in Stalin's letter to a Young Communist, published the other day, which furnishes the occasion for this sensation, is the following:

The international proletarian ties of the working class of the U.S.S.R. with the working class of the bourgeois countries must be intensified and strengthened; the political aid of the working class of the bourgeois countries to the working class of our country, and equally every kind of aid of the working class of our country to the working class of the bourgeois countries must be organized; our Red Army, Red Navy, Red Air Fleet, and Osoaviakhim (All-Union Society for Chemical and Air Defense) must be strengthened and consolidated in every way.

Now this may be news to Mr. Ludwig Lore of the *Post*, to Mr. Benjamin Stolberg of the *World-Telegram*, to Mr. Herbert Solow of the *New York Sun*, to Professor Hook and Professor Dewey. It may be news to the arch-"revolutionist" Edmund Wilson, who started out on his revolutionary career with a determination to take Communism away from the Communists. It may be news to Messrs. Fred Beal, Isaac Don Levine, Harold Denny, Max Eastman, and Eugene Lyons. It may be news to the egomaniacal Leon Trotsky, who has been laying claim to a monopoly on revolutionary sentiment and vocabulary. It is not news to Communists who have followed the writings and speeches of Lenin and Stalin, who understood the development in the Soviet Union, and grasped the ABC of revolutionary tactics.

Stalin, speaking for the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, has always maintained that while one may proceed to build Socialism in one country, especially a country like the U.S.S.R., so vast and rich in natural resources, the *ultimate* triumph of world Socialism, toward which the building of Socialism in the Soviet Union is an essential step, can be achieved only on an international scale, through the collaboration of the revolutionary proletariat in at least a few of the major

countries. That was the basic principle of the Communist Parties of the world. Stalin made this clear in his letter.

Trotsky, Zinoviev, and others, who later became spies and agents of fascism, denied the possibility of constructing Socialism in our country without a preliminary victory of the Socialist revolution in capitalist countries.

They wanted, in fact, to turn our country backward to the path of bourgeois development, camouflaging their retreat by false references to "victory of the revolution" in other countries. This is what the debate with these people was about. Further progress of development in our country showed that the party was right, and Trotsky and his clique not right.

The emphasis during the last decade on building Socialism in the Soviet Union was not a negation of this basic principle, but the most concrete application of it to a realistically understood objective situation. The basic principles of Communism are unchanging; the tactics of carrying them into life are variable. One of the troubles with most bourgeois commentators on the Soviet Union and its relation to the Communist International is that they confuse principles with tactics, mistaking adaptation of the latter, in keeping with changes in the world situation and the heightened danger of war, for crucial changes in the first.

Relief—But Not Enough

THE Roosevelt request for another \$250,000,000 for W.P.A. from now till July 1 reflects a considerable though incomplete victory for the Workers' Alliance, the C.I.O., and Labor's Non-Partisan League. This was dramatized when Roosevelt received Workers' Alliance President David Lasser and Secretary-Treasurer Herbert Benjamin on the day of the announcement. For over an hour Lasser and Benjamin explained the need for \$400,000,000 for W.P.A. jobs and \$150,000,000 for relief right now. Roosevelt agreed that if the \$250,000,000 is not enough, more will have to be gotten. His action is in response to the fight put up by people's forces against the Woodrum clause, which Tories sneaked into the current appropriation measure to make money then supplied last the whole fiscal year. Another factor was organized action in the field to cut red tape and quickly exhaust the 350,000 additional jobs made available recently.

The insufficiency of \$250,000,000 is now visible. The C.I.O. seeks \$550,000,000; the United States Conference of Mayors, \$400,000,000. A relief crisis grips Illinois, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and the cotton South. The A. F. of L.'s *American Federationist*, describing layoffs "particularly severe in manufacturing and agriculture," finds "a

rate of layoff almost equal to the worst depression winter." Through a sheaf of telegrams, from many states, handed to Roosevelt by the Alliance leaders, runs the refrain "misery" and "acute."

Roosevelt says three million have lost jobs since September. Acting W.P.A. Administrator Williams figures on increasing the rolls to 2,500,000 in March, then tapering off. Lasser and Benjamin believe several hundred thousand more could be hired. Simple arithmetic seems to bear them out. For the \$250,000,000 divided by four (months March through June) and again by sixty-five (dollars it costs per man per month) gives over 900,000 new jobs monthly, instead of the 500,000 Williams seems to have in mind.

The Crisis Problem Remains

ROOSEVELT's request is the first concrete action against the new recession. It bears out in principle our estimate, several weeks ago, of the healthy Washington outlook for more realistic handling of recession and reform questions.

But what a picayune beginning! As Workers' Alliance leaders told Roosevelt, three million *new* jobless by July 1 will have lost two and one-half billion dollars in wages, or purchasing power; putting \$250,000,000 into the pot replaces just one-tenth of the total.

The administration is planning a substantial attack. Washington is full of talk about a new building program for housing, roads, or both. Here again are points which progressives need to watch out for. There are indications Roosevelt is giving serious consideration to demands from industries for an "annual wage" for relief workers. The idea is increased yearly totals but at reduced hourly rates. The question is, wouldn't this jeopardize hard-won scales of the employed despite Roosevelt's insistence this must not happen?

The Workers' Alliance has proposed a Washington conference next month with the C.I.O., Labor's Non-Partisan League, and other union and progressive forces to take up the whole recession-relief question. Another item on their agenda may be means to execute in practice the paper labor-policies now embraced by New Dealers in Washington, particularly the right to organize. We hope to report fully, later, the story of how policies become reversed in the field, where administration is dominated by military toughies and reactionary machine bosses. There is a striking, untold example of this in Pendergrast's Missouri. It was illustrated recently in Colonel Somervell's New York bailiwick. Officials, particularly

New York State Welfare Department personnel, ordered the closing of intake departments to crush sit-downs. The effort is to induce relief applicants to turn against the Alliance—the organization fully recognized in Washington. Thus local officials take a leaf from Tom Girdler, anxiously fostering a “right to relief” movement as phony as was the “right to work” campaign built up during the Little Steel strike.

Anti-Red Rash

THE disease is contagious. Last week the New York *Herald Tribune*, in a series of leading editorials, called for an investigation of the Communist Party. The New York *Times* featured a raving assault on the Soviet Union by Carlo Tresca, whose anarchism was dressed up for the occasion as “anti-fascism.” The New York *Sun*, not to be outdone by the Stolberg “revelations” in the Scripps-Howard papers, ran a series of front-page amateur detective stories on the Rubens case by Trotskyite Herbert Solow. Samuel Untermyer wired from the South an offer to cooperate with semi-fascist groups in an effort to oust Simon W. Gerson, former *Daily Worker* reporter, who was recently appointed assistant by Stanley Isaacs, Borough President of Manhattan. Senator Copeland, who apparently learned nothing from the lesson of the last elections in New York, denounced Harry Bridges and demanded his deportation on the alleged ground that he is a Communist. Joe Ryan told a Senate committee that he was “sure” that Joe Curran, general organizer of the National Maritime Union, was a “Red.”

The line-up is significant. Anarchists and Hoover individualists, Trotskyites and expropriated Tammany politicians, labor racketeers and Wall Street spokesmen joined in the march on Moscow. Not one single fact was brought forward to support any of the wild statements which the press has featured. Bridges entered this country legally, as a previous investigation exhaustively proved. The “theories” of Tresca and Solow have been backed by nothing but rhetoric. The Senate committee which listened to Ryan told Curran that he needn’t bother to come to Washington because they had no “evidence.” The attack on Isaacs’s appointment has come only from those who attacked LaGuardia as a “Red” in the last election. The *Herald Tribune*’s “uncertainty” about the principles of the Communist Party could be removed by any one of the penny pamphlets which the party has distributed in the hundreds of thousands.

But the attack is not based on evidence which could possibly carry weight in a court of law. It is based on an emotional appeal,

a scare-psychology, the obvious intent of which is to prepare the way for a campaign against the labor movement. John Brophy and other responsible leaders of the C.I.O. know this and have publicly stated as much. The *Nation* and the *New Republic* pointed out editorially last week that to countenance this gang-up is to encourage what is only a prelude to a major move against civil liberties and collective bargaining. With the increasing strength of the labor movement and of the Communist Party, the reactionaries resort to more brazen measures, and they find anxious allies in the Trotskyites. The Red scare is ultimately a sign of weakness on the part of labor’s enemies, as the Roosevelt election in 1936 and the LaGuardia election in 1937 showed. And the most effective way of meeting this weakness, as these elections also proved, is not to remain silent but to open a counter-offensive against reaction.

But the Party Grows

IN the last seven years, the Communist Party of the United States has grown into a broad mass organization giving nationwide leadership in the fight against reaction and fascism. Its recruiting campaign just ended enlisted twenty thousand new members. To celebrate this event, and to bring forward with renewed emphasis the Communist program of uniting all progressive forces in the struggle for peace and democracy, the party is holding a four-day National Party Builders’ Congress. The high point of the congress will be the mass meeting at Madison Square Garden on the eve of Washington’s birthday, February 21. Among the speakers at this meeting will be Earl Browder, general secretary, and William Z. Foster, chairman of the Communist Party.

Schuschnigg’s Choice

THE Hitler-Schuschnigg conversation is an excellent example of what the Nazis mean by “appeasement.” The elevation of von Ribbentrop to the foreign ministry had led to well-founded rumors that Austria was slated for an early Nazi putsch and subsequent *Anschluss* with the Third Reich. Such an eventuality was obviously calculated to fire the European powder-keg. So Hitler, as an act of “appeasement,” summoned Dr. Schuschnigg to his Berchtesgaden retreat. The world was given to understand that out of the meeting would come an arrangement agreeable to both nations, which means that Austria would be left alone.

It now appears that Hitler told Dr.

Schuschnigg to choose between sudden death and torture. The first alternative meant the violent end of Austrian sovereignty through a Nazi reign of terror and possible German intervention. The second involved the entrance into the Austrian cabinet of a Nazi, Dr. Seyss-Inquart, as minister of the interior. Under this plan, the Austrian Nazis could afford to take power less hastily; Schuschnigg would surrender all control over them.

When Tories Turn “Pacifist”

THE spectacle of Ham Fish coming out as a critic of the navy bill would have been incredible several years ago. That it should happen today testifies to the very altered world situation under which we live. A die-hard reactionary like Fish is primarily opposed to any suggestion that the United States participate in concerted action to curb the aggressors. He even favors naval parity for Japan—in 1938—when Japan is in the midst of her most ambitious aggression.

What has happened to our most bitter reactionaries? Have they turned pacifists and non-resisters? It would be fatuous to think anything of the sort. The changed world situation has forced a change in reactionary policy. Not many years ago, the Ham Fishes were most inflammatory in their hostility toward Japan. That was before the international fascist offensive against democracy. Today, however, the American reactionaries feel such a community of interest with the fascist powers that they oppose all measures which the fascists interpret as a challenge. This political phenomenon has occurred in Great Britain and France, and it is to be expected here. Ham Fish has not become a pacifist, but he is willing to use pacifist phrases in behalf of his international allies.

Thunder over Hollywood

THIS week the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, which now organizes film and theater electricians, stagehands, etc., announced its intention of taking over all crafts in the movie industry as well as radio actors. This comes directly after William Green’s promise to the Associated American Actors & Artists, parent body of theater, film, and radio actors, that no I.A.T.S.E. raids would be permitted. How guilty Green and his executive council are in this threatened intra-A. F. of L. struggle can be seen from the fact that George Browne, chief of the I.A.T.S.E., is a vice-president of the Federation, a member of the Federation’s executive council and Green’s personal representative in the amusement field.

An interesting and menacing aspect of Browne's plan is that it would establish (wholly in films and partly in radio) a labor monopoly in the electrified amusement field exactly corresponding to the production monopoly in that field now being consolidated by Wall Street. But while film and

radio chiefs, and the bankers, would be glad of an I.A.T.S.E. class-collaborationist pseudo-industrial-union setup, and might declare a general lockout to install it, film and radio workers will not be pushovers. They will fight back.

The A. F. of L. Screen Actors' Guild,

plus half a dozen independent guilds including the important Screen Writers and Screen Directors, are prepared to resist the I.A.T.S.E., and in a showdown would undoubtedly find allies in such progressive Federation locals as the musicians, studio painters, and others.

The New Farm Act

NOT more than one congressman out of every ten is familiar with the features of the new farm act. Each year has brought with it a new farm bill, and each bill has been longer and more complicated than the preceding one. Even the official sponsors who had the job of steering the present act through Congress have had trouble simulating an emotion that remotely resembled enthusiasm.

At the special session called by Roosevelt, the farm measure passed by the House was completely stricken out and rewritten by the Senate. The Senate, following the proposals of the Farm Bureau lobbyists, favored more drastic provisions to bring about compulsory crop control.

Under the original A.A.A. the reduction pill was sugar-coated; the farmer was paid for taking land out of commercial production. But, under the present measure, the sugar-coating has been thinned, and the center is more bitter. When crops exceed given limits, the farmers may now be required to pay penalty taxes.

It is encouraging to find that even the Grange has split with the Farm Bureau Federation on the question of *compulsory* crop reduction, even though it does not object to reduction *per se*. Reduction hits the small farmer most severely. The Farm Bureau represents the large farmers who feel that, by pushing the small farmers out of the domestic markets, they will be able to sell crop "surpluses" resulting from the international race for "self-sufficiency." Per unit of product, the overhead expenses of the small farmer are much higher than for the large farmer; and though the small farmer curtails production, he cannot reduce fixed charges for taxes, mortgage, seed, and short-term loans. Cutting cash production sharply increases his cost of production per unit of product and makes him an easier prey for his large-scale competitor.

Unfortunately, the small farmers were completely unrepresented in the discussions on the new farm act in Washington. The Farmers' Union is just recovering from a bad case of Coughlinitis. Before it could effectively take part in the affairs of national legislation, it was faced with the task of

removing irresponsible leaders from key positions wherein they managed to sabotage any progressive program.

The C.I.O. has already gone on record in favor of cost of production for the farmers. Since cost of production is one of the major planks of the Farmers' Union program, it should now be possible to launch an effective campaign for its adoption next year, thereby proving to the farmers the value of farmer-labor unity.

Despite the limitations of the new farm act, it by no means represents a clear-cut victory for the Farm Bureau and the reactionaries. While they managed to get endorsement of compulsory reduction as a general principle, these provisions were finally whittled down to such an extent that only in the case of cotton are the quotas and penalties likely to go into effect this year. Moreover, the penalties themselves were reduced considerably.

In addition, it must be recognized that, with serious drought again threatening the farmers on the great plains, the continuance of government crop payments must be counted as a positive gain, since these payments have been the main source, and sometimes the only source, of cash income to drought-hit farmers. A further improvement comes in the increasing of the small payments and limiting of large ones. No corporation or person may receive more than ten thousand dollars per year in government payments on farm lands within a given state. The provision requiring the democratic election of county control committees is also to the advantage of the working farmers. In previous years, these committees have been completely dominated by the large farmers, the county agents, and the Farm Bureau, who continuously discriminated against the little fellows.

Whether the working farmers will get larger or smaller payments under the present act than they got last year has not been definitely determined. In recent years government payments have been cut considerably. As compared with the six hundred and thirty-six million dollars paid out under the 1934 program, payments last year amounted to three hundred and eighty million dollars.

The new act specifies no final figure. It states that the five hundred million dollars authorized by the earlier Soil Conservation Act shall be switched to the administration of the new farm measure. As past experience has shown, the authorization of five hundred million dollars does not mean that the Secretary of Agriculture is required to pay out this amount; it is a maximum and not a minimum. The new act adds, however, that additional sums may be appropriated later. Hence the question becomes one of who can exert more pressure, the farmers or the United States Chamber of Commerce, for this latter organization has been actively opposing the continuance of farm subsidies.

The progressives in Congress had a difficult time deciding how to vote on the new farm act. Some voted for it, and some against. If representatives of the dirt farmers had been present to offer concrete amendments, especially during the conference stage, many of the burrs in the present measure could have been removed. But even with respect to the worst feature in the new act—compulsory reduction—the farmers must still vote on this before it goes into effect. In fact, a two-thirds vote is necessary before the marketing quotas and penalties can be invoked on a particular crop. While the Negro sharecroppers and tenants in the South will not benefit from this provision, farmers in other sections of the country should have no difficulty in defeating this provision, if they so choose.

The main lesson, apparent from the confusion over the present farm act, is that steps must be taken to expand the farmers' markets if fundamental aid is to be given agriculture. The farmers' problems cannot be solved without reference to wages and unemployment. While the pay envelopes of the American workers remain thin, farm legislation that merely seeks to reduce agricultural production proportionately to this depressed labor income can bring little relief to the working farmers. The drafting and passage of this more basic legislation depends upon the speedy formation of a farmer-labor alliance with broad support from the rank-and-file.

"Oh no, you're not, Frank."



UNITED AMERICAN
ARTISTS - C.I.O.
Ned Hilton

HAGUE



A. Ajay

Squeeze!

CIO



Scott Johnston

Scott Johnston

Down with Hague!

THE cartoons on these pages are the artists' contributions to the C.I.O.'s benefit show at the Mosque Theater in Newark, N. J., Sunday night, February 20. The originals are to be sold that evening. Forty-five congressmen, educators, ministers, and business and professional people have sponsored the affair. Heywood Broun, who was accused by a Hague cop of exclaiming "Nuts!" during an oration by the Jersey dictator a month ago, will serve jointly with Will Geer as master of ceremonies. The demonstration on Sunday marks the beginning of the C.I.O.'s drive for 15,000 new members in Jersey City.