

THE END OF A JOURNEY

Ben Gitlow, Social Democrat

By H. BAIL

Some people still harbor the illusion that Gitlow's purpose in joining the Socialist Party was to strengthen the left wing forces. These would have been sadly disappointed had they heard Gitlow's maiden speech in Philadelphia, on January 25.

The meeting was arranged by the Young Peoples Socialist League and supported by the Socialist Party. Despite that, only about one hundred showed up and fully half of these were C.P. members, C.P.O. members and Trotskyites.

Felix Shows How

The preliminary speaker was David Felix who at one time flirted with the Revolutionary Policy Committee. The confusion in the mind of this "revolutionary" leader is appalling. "The results of the plebiscite in the Saar," said he, "despite the united front, convinced him that there is something wrong with the philosophy of socialism." Then he promptly proceeded to tell us that the S.P. is the party for revolutionary workers because of the spirit of democracy within the party. When asked how can one be a member of the S.P. while realizing that there was something wrong with the "philosophy of socialism" he had no answer. He also could not answer the question on party democracy when it was pointed out that the same party democracy expels members for belief in armed insurrection.

Gitlow Toes The Mark

But let's hear the main speaker. Gitlow opened up by stating that we have entered into a long period of reaction—explaining apparently his desertion of the proletarian revolution. His disagreement with the Lovestone group is due, he said, to their support of the Stalin regime in the Soviet Union.

German S.P. A White Angel

He then gave a historical review of events in Germany leading to Fascism and insisted that the C.P. is guilty for bringing Hitler to power. The chief fighter against Hitler, he said, was the Socialist Party of Germany. When I asked why his history did not begin earlier, with 1918-1919 to show the role of the Social Democracy in Germany in suppressing proletarian revolutions, he did not answer.

And listen to this. It is not the Communist International but the Socialist International that is going to lead the workers to revolution everywhere and he gives examples from Spain and Aus-

tria where the Communists "impeded" the revolution and the Socialists "led" the revolution.

Gitlow Goes Oneal One Better

That in America too—it is only the S.P. that can unite the working class for action—that the C.P. is a Moscow agency and that the C.P.O. is an exclusive sect with no influence on the labor movement and that anyway the Lovestone group is crawling on its belly back to the party. But this is not all. He showed his political wisdom by annihilating in 10 minutes the main principles of the revolutionary party for which he himself fought for 15 years. "Soviets," he says, "are a foreign word—it means nothing to the American workers. I do not know whether we will need it here." The Bolsheviks were for soviets in 1917 because they had Soviets in 1905. Where are our soviets in America? We may make a better job here without soviets than Stalin did with them. Armed uprising? We do not have to shout from the house tops that we are for it. It is enough that we know it among ourselves—why, even the extreme right winger (with a smile on Gitlow's lips) James Oneal is for force if fascism comes to power and anyway it is antiquated this barricades struggle—one government plane throws a bomb at you and no more revolution! That instead of studying Marx and Engels we better use our own heads . . .

There is Gitlow for you!

Gitlow Has No Answer

I took the floor and pointed out that Gitlow deserted every single revolutionary principle for which he fought for years. He is against soviets because we have none in this country. But there were no soviets in Russia prior to 1905 and yet Lenin realized that this is the only suitable form for a workers government. That in ridiculing an armed uprising and barricade struggle Gitlow actually swallowed the socialist view of "growing into socialism peacefully." That Gitlow purposely overlooked the role of the German S.P. during 1918 and 1919 in order to whitewash German social democracy and accuse the C.P.G. of everything. That we of the C.P.O. are fighting for a change of the tactical line of the C.I. on the whole line and not merely for reinstating our leadership. What did Gitlow answer? What could he answer? He looked lost. I think it became clear to all present, that not only is Gitlow thru with the revolutionary movement but that he has lined up with the most reactionary wing of the S.P.