



SOCIALIST APPEAL

IN THIS ISSUE

E-D-I-T-O-R-I-A-L-S	PAGES
1. Hitler and War.	1 - 3
2. The Buffalo N.E.C. Meeting	3 - 6

A-R-T-I-C-L-E-S

1. Should Socialists favor a Labor Party? - by Albert Goldman	6 - 12
2. The Socialist Campaign in the 34th Ward - by W. B. Waltmire	12 - 18

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THE SOCIALIST APPEAL

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

HITLER AND WAR

Ever since Hitler came into power press-correspondents and political writers have been very jumpy about an immediate war which they predicted the Nazis were about to start. And every occurrence which could possibly be interpreted as indicating that hostilities were about to commence was heralded as the beginning of the catastrophe. In the prognosis of immediate war the correspondents simply gave expression to their fears and did not bother to make an objective analysis of the situation.

Two fundamental ideas must be kept in mind when anything is said or done by the Nazis which would seem to be the prelude to a war. One is that the Hitler government is not yet prepared to undertake a war against France. It has been rearming at a furious pace but it has not as yet reached a point where it could possibly challenge the supremacy of France, especially since an attack on that country would almost certainly bring England, Italy and a host of smaller countries to her aid. It is hardly likely that Germany will succeed in rearming sufficiently in the near future to risk a war with France.

Of course there is always a slight chance that some incident will precipitate a war between France and Germany in spite of the fact that neither country is prepared to fight the other at present. But incidents bring on wars only when the countries involved want them and not otherwise.

With the above idea in mind it could be predicted at the time that Hitler notified the world that Germany in defiance of the Versailles treaty would inaugurate conscription, that there was no great danger of any war between Germany and France. The latter country might be willing to launch a "preventive war" but it is hardly likely as the majority of the French people could hardly be won over to such an idea and surely England could not be counted upon for such an adventure. And as far as the possibility of an attack on France by Germany is concerned the announcement that from now on there will be a conscript army under Hitler's regime is hardly adequate preparation.

The second fundamental idea which can furnish a possible clew to a coming war is that Germany is not primarily interested in a war against France but in a

war against the Soviet Union. Hitler wants to recoup Germany's strength at the expense of the workers' country, feeling that there lies his greatest chance of victory. The reason why Hitler is looking to the east is because he correctly surmises that the capitalist countries are not anxious to have a proletarian dictatorship exist in the world if they can possibly help it. True, he has to obtain the consent and support of Poland in such an adventure but he has the rich Ukraine to offer to Poland in return for such support. He must also succeed in getting the consent of France and England but he figures that in addition to the general hostility which the capitalist countries have against the Soviet Union, France might be willing to give her consent to avoid an attack against her and England to destroy a danger to her eastern colonial possessions.

It was Leon Trotsky who first pointed out that the real danger of a war in the immediate future comes from the intention of the Hitler government to attack the Soviet Union. Naturally because it was Trotsky who said so he was called a counterrevolutionary by the Stalinists. As time goes on, it is becoming clear even to the Stalinists that the real danger to the Soviet Union is from the west and not from the east. While it would take a comparatively long time for Germany to rearm to a point where she could gamble on an attack against France, Hitler would be willing to take a chance on attacking the Soviet Union in the very near future, provided he would be assured that France and England would offer no resistance to such a move. And

in spite of appearances to the contrary, Hitler's chances of gaining the approval of France and England for an attack against the Soviet Union are much greater than the chances for a stable military alliance between France and the Soviet Union.

And in case of a war launched by Hitler against the Soviet Union, what are the possibilities of victory for the workers' country? Soviet diplomacy is feverishly seeking non-aggression pacts and even mutual assistance pacts to help her against Germany. The logic of Stalin's theory of socialism in one country shows promise of leading to a point where the Communists in France will howl for a French war against Germany in case of an attack by the latter on the Soviet Union. Stalin has placed his hopes not in the international proletarian revolution but in alliance with imperialist countries and in the League of Nations. The Communist International, guided by Soviet foreign diplomacy which in turn is determined by the absolutely false theory of socialism in one country, will be as capable of defending the Soviet Union as it was in defending the interests of the German proletariat against Hitler.

It would be wrong to state that the Soviet Union could under no circumstances enter into an alliance with one imperialist country against another or that it could under no circumstances become a member of the League of Nations. However, we must recognize that it is due to the weakening of the international proletarian revolution a weakening for which the Communist International is largely responsible,

that the Soviet Union is compelled to seek aid from alliances with imperialist countries.

We may and we must criticize the Stalinist bureaucracy and its actions in the Soviet Union, but we do so precisely because the Stalinist bureaucracy weakens the Soviet Union. Upon the revolutionary Socialist will devolve the duty of defending the Soviet Union from any imperialist attack because the defeat of the Soviet Union will mean setting back the clock of history for decades if not for generations. And the surest, in fact the only way to assure the existence of the Soviet Union, is for the working class to conquer power in the capitalist world.

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THE BUFFALO N E C MEETING

The paralyzing effect of the New York party situation on the whole party is so dangerous to the growth and effectiveness of the party that every meeting of the National Executive Committee must necessarily devote most of its time to that problem in the attempt to find some solution which will permit the party to go forward with the least possible friction and hesitation. That the internal conflict in New York has a detrimental influence on the party all over the country should by this time be evident to everybody. All attempts to isolate the New York situation and have other parts of the country ignore the fight there and proceed with party work is extremely short-sighted and bound to end in failure in the long run.

A great many comrades outside

of New York would like to ignore and forget New York and are inclined to give utterance to the thought: "A plague on both your houses!" Not only is such an attitude wrong theoretically but even from a purely "practical" standpoint it can lead nowhere. It is impossible for anyone in the party with any theoretical understanding of the fundamentals of socialism and of the function of the Socialist party to hold oneself aloof from a struggle between two fundamentally hostile conceptions of the nature of Socialism and of the role the party should play in effecting a change from capitalism to Socialism. And in essence that is the character of the conflict in the New York party. It is not simply a struggle of factions, that desire power for its own sake, but in order to carry out certain policies and give the party a certain general direction. And the party in New York is strong enough and influential enough to determine the general direction of the whole party. Consequently every conscious Socialist is compelled to take sides in the internal party conflict raging in New York.

And anyone in the least acquainted with the difficulties of the national office of the party in its effort to function effectively since the Detroit convention knows that from a purely practical viewpoint the New York situation is a problem that cannot be confined to New York. It is the source of a creeping paralysis and unless dealt with and settled properly will make effective work on a national scale well-nigh impossible.

Does settling the problem mean

that the N E C must arrive at a compromise on the principles which divide the two factions or must officially support the principles of either of the two factions? Not in the least. It is not at all necessary that the N E C offer the two factions a compromise of principles. That would be dangerous and it could not possibly be acceptable to the left-wingers waging a principled struggle. Between those who see the path to Socialism as the path of revolution and those who reject that path and consequently in effect reject Socialism, there can be no compromise in principle. From that statement should not be drawn the inference that at the present stage of the class struggle revolutionary and reformist Socialists cannot be in the same party. They can and should on the basis of a sincere desire for each group to permit the other full freedom of criticism and expression for the purpose of winning a majority of the party and of permitting that majority to gain power in democratic elections with the minority group loyally supporting the party and building the party.

The National Executive Committee of the party need not conceal its support of the views of either faction nor are individual members of the N E C obligated to refrain from participating in the factional struggle. The N E C should not under any considerations depose a majority group of any particular state and put in a minority group simply because it is in agreement with the views of the minority. That would constitute an intolerable usurpation of power. Just as it is the duty of the N E C to permit freedom of criticism

against itself and to refrain from using unconstitutional and undemocratic methods to prevent a minority group from gaining control of the party, so is it the duty of the N E C to see to it, in a struggle between groups in a State, that the group in power permit freedom of criticism and provide democratic elections for the group not in power. In other words, basing itself upon the national constitution and upon accepted principles of Socialism the N E C is in a position to define limits beyond which a factional struggle cannot go. It can and should demand from both groups compliance with the spirit and letter of the constitution of the party and with its fundamental principles insofar as they have been enunciated by a convention of the party.

The whole New York situation came before the last N E C meeting in a rather peculiar way. There should have been charges filed against the New York State Executive Committee specifying wherein it was guilty of some violation. The S E C should have been given the right to file an answer to the charges; a committee should have been appointed to listen to the evidence and on the basis of some findings the N E C should have taken some definite action or ordered the S E C to do certain specified things within a specified time. If the majority on the N E C felt that it could on the basis of its own knowledge of the facts come to some decision without the aid of a preliminary report by a committee it should say so and act accordingly.

Instead of some such procedure

as outlined above a motion "to show cause" why the New York charter should not be revoked was made. The motive of such a procedure is difficult to understand and it gave the right wing a chance to ridicule the whole thing. It looks as if some lawyer conversant with contempt proceedings in a capitalist court thought up such a bright idea. While the form of the procedure is not important, the simpler the procedure the better and it is to be hoped that the highly technical motion, "to show cause" will not be used again by the N E C or any local committee.

The object of the N E C as expressed in its letter to New York is to achieve unity and harmony. What kind of unity and harmony is not specified. From what has been said above, if the N E C wishes to achieve unity and harmony of principles that cannot be done. From the provisions of the letter it can be said that that was not the chief aim of the N E C. Certain provisions, however, come very close to that idea. For instance, paragraph One providing for "adherence to the resolutions of the N E C providing for the ineligibility of advocates of communism and violence in the party" has no sense with respect to the situation in New York. It is the State Committee that has kept out all those whom it suspected of any deviation from its right-wing principles. The militants not having power cannot pass on the admission to party membership. Obviously it was inserted as a concession to the right wing. The clause is dangerous because it does not define communism and does not specify what advocacy of violence is. Comrade Thomas's

explanation of communism as used in this paragraph, (made in the Socialist Call, Mar. 30) to mean the acceptance of discipline and direction from outside the Socialist party should be perfectly acceptable to everybody but we can be sure that Oneal's interpretation will be a very different one. Oneal has already misinterpreted that section as meaning advocates of "communism OR violence". The danger of paragraph One lies in its vague character, a fact which will give the old guard the opportunity to justify any expulsion.

Paragraph seven of the letter requiring that the Y P S L "be promptly reinstated upon the basis that it shall conform to the decisions of the local but it shall not be required to support any Socialist paper that engages in factional warfare" is a practical blow at the Yipsels, because outside of the condition mentioned which is quite vague, it places them under the control of the old guard before the whole problem is solved.

Points Two, Four and Six requiring the State Committee to issue a statement supporting the Declaration of Principles, to rescind the resolution forbidding locals to accept Yipsels as members in the party, and to dispose of all questions of membership and organization in a democratic and constitutional manner are points directed against the State Committee evidently on the theory that the N E C was convinced that the State Committee violated the constitution in those respects. If any future decision is made by the N E C it must be made upon the basis of compliance or non-compliance

with these points which are not specific enough but sufficiently so to make possible a decision whether or not they have been complied with.

An analysis of the whole letter leads one to the conclusion that it gives the old guard in power in New York the chance to continue dilly-dallying through negotiations, thus bringing further demoralization into the ranks of the party. For that reason Comrades Franz Daniel and Powers Hapgood are to be highly commended for opposing the letter, although we must admit that not what the letter itself contains but what will be done after the six weeks expire is the crucial factor.

It cannot be sufficiently emphasized that the expulsion of the right wing because it disagrees with the views of the maj-

ority of the N E C cannot and should not be the basis of any action. The State Committee of New York must be compelled to live up to the constitution and principles of the party and if it does not do so the N E C must not hesitate to act in the same manner as it did in Indiana.

In the New Leader Oneal talks openly of a split if not now then at the 1936 convention. He promises a possible split on the basis of differences of opinion. Let the right wing split on such a basis and its support in the party will be negligible. But it is up to the N E C to see to it that the right wing is not permitted to paralyze the party up to the time it decides to split. Hesitation and delay on the part of the N E C will set the party back at a time when it has the greatest opportunity to move forward.

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SHOULD SOCIALISTS FAVOR A LABOR PARTY?

By Albert Goldman

The failure of working class parties claiming to be based on Marxian principles to win the support of the American workers has been and is the primary factor in the periodical interest in and activity on behalf of the creation of a Labor party on the British model. Organized labor by which is meant the American Federation of Labor, has kept at more than a respectful distance from the Socialist party and from all other parties the purpose of which was to change the capitalist order of society. And unorganized labor contrary to

the theories of those who contend that unorganized labor is more radical than organized labor has followed in the political footsteps of the A F of L and as a result the workers have up to now been supporting either one of the two capitalist parties.

Many within the Socialist movement have expressed the opinion that the name "socialist" or "communist" has kept the workers away from parties bearing those names and have advocated a change of name as a method of weaning

the working class away from the Democratic and Republican parties. This very simple idea is still expressed by some socialists who write for and follow the American Guardian. To get socialism, in the opinion of these profound politicians, both the capitalist and working classes must be fooled. Others with a greater understanding of Marxism have looked to the formation of a Labor party as the instrument for tearing the working masses away from the capitalist parties. At the present moment the former tendency is shown in articles by Oscar Ameringer and George H. Shoaf in the American Guardian, while the latter tendency has found expression amongst members of the party both of the right and left wings who understand the difference between a third party and a Labor party and who understand that Socialists can have nothing in common with those who want to form a third party.

Numerically speaking a Labor party can of course also be a third party. Should a Labor party in the British sense of the term come into existence and contend for supremacy with the Republican and Democratic parties it would be a third party but only in that restricted sense. We must keep in mind that the term Labor party should be applied only to such a party that has as its base organized labor, in which organized labor plays the dominant role while the term "Third" party should be used to mean a party formed by middle class elements and in which organized labor, if it plays any part at all, will be of secondary importance. A party formed by a possible combination

of Huey Long, the Utopians, Townsendites, Upton Sinclair and Oscar Ameringer will be a "Third" party, while a party organized by the International unions of the American Federation of Labor will be a Labor party.

The reason for the present interest in the question of a Labor party is not difficult to find. The hopes aroused in the hearts of the laboring masses by the promises of the Roosevelt administration and particularly by the National Industrial Recovery Act are beginning to disappear. The rise in wages which several millions of the most underpaid workers obtained through the various codes was more than offset by the increased cost of living. Section 7-A which the officials of organized labor depended upon to bring the unorganized into the American Federation of Labor brought many more workers into company unions than into the Federation. While it would be wrong to allege that the faith of the masses in Roosevelt has entirely disappeared, enough disappointment has been generated in the ranks of organized labor to make even Green threaten vaguely about independent political action. We are still quite a distance from the time when the bureaucrats of the A F of L will come out for a Labor party, but the mere suggestion of such a thing has created a great deal of discussion in the radical movement.

To the amazement of everyone interested in the revolutionary movement the Communists blithely ignoring everything they said about the "social-fascists who advocated the formation of a Labor party", came out as the

champions of such an idea. This sudden change was of course kept a dark and mysterious secret from everybody including the Communists. Armed with instructions from the Moscow Holy of Holies, Browder came running to the Communist Social Insurance Convention and presented the Papal Bull. The consent, applause and veneration of the faithful who had just finished beating up the Lovestonites for advocating a similar idea showed that the idea of a Labor party was just as acceptable to the Communists as any other idea emanating from the Russian Mt. Sinai. The poor Communists who had only a day or so before religiously repeated the injunction against any Labor party now just as zealously urge the "rank and file" to form anything that might slightly resemble some kind of a Labor party. But what can one expect from a party that is nothing more than a religious cult worshiping the God Lenin and his Prophet Stalin?

For the purpose of showing one kind of a "Labor" party that we must shy away from it is worth while analyzing to some extent the nature of a Labor party as conceived by the Communists. If one understands the nature of the Communist united front from below the Communist conception of a Labor party can be easily grasped. Provided of course one can make any sense of the first idea which is highly problematical. The Communists do not want a Labor party which is a revolutionary party, nor do they want a party that is reformist. The closest one can get to their idea is that their Labor Party will be a revolutionary reformist party advocating revolutionary reforms. One who does

not know the Communists might say that that is about as far as they can possibly go in making confusion worse confounded, but those who know them well always expect one better.

Necessarily in the eyes of the Communists, no Labor party is a real labor party which is led by trade union bureaucrats or by Socialists. Such a party as the English Labor party is no Labor party at all since it has no Communists or "rank and filers" in the leadership. From now on we can expect to see a great many local "Labor" parties organized by way of a "united front" between the Communist party, all its numerous alphabetical auxiliaries, some liberal or possibly "socialist" minister and the housewives. Organized labor will of course be invited to be the tail to the Communist kite but we can count on the stony indifference of organized labor to such an invitation. Outside of the fact that Labor will not be in that party it will be a real "Labor" party. To the initiated it will be the Communist party under a different name. Those who are inclined to doubt the above prophecy should investigate the Communists effort to organize a "Labor" party in San Francisco where the Epic organization which no longer exists but which has been "captured" by the Communists, and the Utopian organization together with all the regular Communist auxiliaries have been invited to attend a conference for the purpose of forming a "Labor" party.

In contradistinction to the Communists we must clearly realize that a real Labor party at the present time in this country.

will have as its backbone the conservative International Unions of the A F of L and the leadership of such a party will undoubtedly be in the hands of the conservative officials of those unions. Those who have the dominant influence in the trade unions will have the same influence in the Labor party. It would be the merest folly for us to participate in the formation of any Labor party unless at least a very substantial number of powerful unions furnished a real labor base for such a party. And one can add that the unions necessary are more, many more than the Socialist needle trade unions. Local Labor parties are not excluded; in such parties the local labor unions must furnish the foundation.

But why, many will ask, should revolutionary Socialists occupy their time and expend their energy in organizing a Labor party? Are we not, should we not be interested primarily in organizing and in building a revolutionary Socialist party for the purpose of conquering political power? Why help create a party that will compete with the Socialist party and possibly in the future become an obstacle to the revolution?

If one thinks in an abstract manner and does not analyze actual conditions and social relationships one can easily come to the conclusion that it is no concern of revolutionary socialists to build any party but their own. Such is the method of reasoning followed by Comrade Shachtman in an article dealing with the problem of a Labor party in the March issue of the New International, organ of the Workers party. Using some general assertions which Trotsky made with

reference to the same problem, Shachtman without any attempt to analyze the specific class conditions existing at the present time easily solves the whole problem with the mere allegation that "there is no room in the present conditions of the class struggle for the stable existence of a Labor party."

What the conditions are, why there is no room is something left for the reader to imagine. Much easier is it to assert than to enter into an analysis. The closest that Shachtman comes to furnishing us with some argument and not merely with an assertion is that "assuming that it is formed in the United States it is more likely than not that it will take shape as a directly anti-revolutionary (ergo, anti-progressive) party." Leaving out the weak attempt at prophecy the assertion would have merit if it meant that to help in the formation of a Labor party at the present time would create a present anti-revolutionary force. The sentence does not really mean that but I am giving Shachtman the benefit of the doubt in order to furnish him with a sensible argument. And this brings us to the very crux of the problem.

Will the formation of a Labor party act as a progressive or a reactionary factor at the present time? Were there in existence now (and not in the indefinite future) a mass revolutionary party with a tremendous following in the working class then it would be an anti-revolutionary act to help in the formation of a Labor party. We can all agree to that. But even Shachtman will agree that his Workers party is not as yet a mass revo-

lutionary party. That is why he must have recourse to the vague phrase "it is more likely than not", speaking of some uncertain future. But we are interested in the present and neither we nor the workers in general can be satisfied with the categorical assertion that "the only genuine labor party is the party of revolutionary Marxism". And it is hardly necessary to retain a Sherlock Holmes to be certain that Shachtman means by that the Workers party.

Analyzing present conditions we must come to the conclusion that a Labor party will tear the working masses away from the two capitalist parties, something that no working class party has succeeded in doing, and will set the workers into motion in the right direction. To that extent a Labor party will perform a progressive function and thus justify its existence. And since it would be a progressive step we cannot simply be satisfied with sitting back and saying "if the workers take that step we shall join them". We must urge and convince the workers to take that step. Which means that we must at every opportunity attempt to convince the labor unions to form a Labor party.

Is there then no possibility at all of winning the masses away from the capitalist parties without a Labor party? It would be absurd to hold to such a proposition. We shall ultimately succeed in winning the working class to Socialism with or without a Labor party. We can only say that at the present period the formation of a Labor party would hasten the process of winning the working class for So-

cialism. Should it happen that millions of workers decide to follow the Socialist party (or let us make a violent assumption, the Workers party) before a Labor party comes into existence, it will then be our duty to fight against the formation of a Labor party.

That ultimately the Labor party, if formed, will become an obstacle to the revolution can be asserted with a great deal of assurance. The fundamental Marxian principle that a revolution requires a disciplined revolutionary party composed of the most conscious elements of the working class and led by experienced and decisive revolutionary Marxists would justify the conclusion that in all probability the bureaucracy of a Labor party will in a critical moment oppose the revolutionary party. Does this mean that we should oppose the formation of a Labor party now when it would constitute a progressive step because in the future it will be an anti-revolutionary force? We might as well oppose the formation of trade unions because in all probability the union bureaucrats will oppose the revolution in a critical moment. It would indeed be an exceedingly ideal situation if the revolutionary Socialist party would have no obstacles at all to overcome. But alas, we live in a real and not in an ideal world.

Will the Socialist party be compelled to surrender its existence upon the formation of a Labor party? Undoubtedly it will not be able to function as a party in the sense of putting up its own candidates for elections and have its own election plat-

form. To the extent that its influence will penetrate the Labor party to that extent will the election platform be what the Socialists will want it to be and to that extent will the Labor party candidates be members of the Socialist party. But in general the Socialist party will have to accept the organizational discipline of the Labor party. Under no circumstances, however, must the Socialist party consent to be liquidated. It must function as an organized group within the labor party carrying on its propaganda for Socialist aims and methods. It is only on the condition that the Socialist party will be given freedom to propagate its own ideas that it can think of consenting to enter into a Labor party. Should a Labor party be formed which will demand of the Socialist party that it surrender any of its fundamental principles before it can gain admission to the Labor party then it will be our duty to reject such a demand. It would then be our task to gain sufficient influence within the trade unions composing the Labor party in order to gain admission without surrendering any Socialist principle.

The fact, however, that in the beginning a conservative union officialdom would prevent our admission into a Labor party should not in the least make us opposed to such a party. The formation of such a party even though we would not be admitted would constitute a progressive step. And this alone should determine our attitude. It is hardly likely that under present conditions a conservative bureaucracy could for long keep the Socialist party out of a Labor party. If a La-

bor party will be formed it will be largely due to the pressure from below and Socialists have enough influence to compel the officials to admit us as a group

Within the Labor party our function will be to win more and more workers over to our viewpoint and to our organization. There will be no greater opportunity than a Labor party to bring our party into close contact with millions of workers who will be convinced by both our message and our tactics. We can build a revolutionary Socialist party large enough and influential enough to make an attempt to win political power independent of the Labor party if necessary. But we need not at present solve all the possible problems that might arise in the future in connection with the existence of a Labor party. It should be sufficient for us that right now the formation of a Labor party will be a tremendous step forward for the labor movement and consequently for the Socialist party.

There are comrades who seem to be of the opinion that we must not enter into any Labor party unless it accepts the ultimate aim of abolishing the capitalist system and introducing the cooperative commonwealth. It would be gratifying if the Labor party would accept the ultimate goal and that would not in the least obviate the necessity of a party composed of revolutionary Marxists. But it would be wrong to make the acceptance of that ultimate aim a condition to our entry into a Labor party. We must get it into our minds that a Labor party will in all likelihood, at any rate in the beginning, be

more reformist than the right wing Socialists. It might be formed simply for the purpose of trying to win some immediate demands and nothing more. But that is not the decisive factor for us. It is the fact that Labor will begin to act as a class on the political field and that a Labor party will set into motion forces beyond the control of the conservative officialdom that we should take into consideration above everything else.

The working class will come to accept the idea of following a revolutionary Socialist party not because all the workers will read our literature but because bitter experience will teach it that there is no other way out. The working class always tends to take what appears to be the easiest path and only after constant disappointments will it come to realize that the path of revolutionary struggle offers the only solution. This presupposes a revolutionary Socialist party that is close to the masses and participates actively in all their struggles, constantly teaching and learning from the masses. And while it is not absolutely essential that the working class pass through a period of reformism nor is it absolutely certain that it will, the greatest probability is that it will do so and the sooner and faster it goes through such a period via a Labor party the better for the revolutionary movement. In the present period of the decay of capitalism we can confidently expect that the period of reformism through which the working class will pass will be of short duration.

We must guard against any effort to form a Labor party prematurely. There is always the temptation to come together with a few unions either on a national or local scale and launch something that is called a Labor party but which is far from being such. It is incorrect for us to talk as if we can decide to form or not to form a Labor party. We are not the ones to launch a Labor party; organized labor alone has it in its power to do so. All that we can do is to urge and convince organized labor to take the initiative in forming a Labor party. There must be no playing around with "Labor" parties.

And with those members of the Socialist party who are anxious to unite with any and all middle class liberal elements to form a Third party there can be no compromise. When Oscar Ameringer writes: "I give not a whit what means it employs to reach the goal, be it third party, new party, old party or no party at all," he shows such utter middle class confusion and such amazing ignorance of the A B C of Socialism that the N. E. C. of the party would be justified in ordering him to attend classes in Socialism conducted for the Falcons. All that we can say is that it would be best for Ameringer, who is ready to support the Communists, Soviet Russia, Long, Sinclair and the Detroit Declaration of Principles, to follow "no party at all" to achieve his goal.

It must be understood from the outset that what the people grouped around the American Guardian want is not a party of

Labor but a party of the middle class. That Socialism can be achieved only by way of the class struggle is an idea totally unfamiliar to them. Between such "socialists" who might support the Detroit Declaration and the right wing socialists who oppose the Declaration but who understand at least that Socialism must depend for its realization upon the working class, we prefer the latter any time.

And the reason why a third party should be formed according to the proponents of that idea is because fascism is around the corner and a third party is the only instrument with which to save democracy. If in Germany neither the Socialist nor the Communist parties basing themselves on the working class could defeat fascism, how in the world one can expect a middle class party not based on labor to prevent the victory of fascism, is a mystery not easily solved. Perhaps Comrade Shoaf reasons that since the German working class could not defeat fascism it is best to depend upon the middle class. Just as logical to expect the capitalist class to bring Socialist into existence.

As a matter of fact some advocates of a bona fide Labor party urge the formation of such a party in order to defeat fascism, which everyone seems to see

around the corner. If fascism was victorious in Germany, Austria and Spain where there were millions of organized Socialist workers, there is less reason to expect that a politically backward Labor party will save this country from fascism. It will be the tactics which a future Labor party will follow that will determine whether or not fascism will win. If it will choose the policy of the "lesser evil" as the German Social Democratic party did, or if it will wait until the last moment as the Austrian Social Democratic party did, then we shall suffer the same fate as our Austrian and German brothers suffered. In and of itself the formation of a Labor party does not mean a victory against fascism nor the winning of some immediate demands. Whether or not that will occur will depend on the policies which a Labor party will follow.

The one almost certain thing that a Labor party will accomplish will be the beginning of independent political action on the part of the American workers and that alone is a sufficiently progressive step to justify our advocacy for the formation of a Labor party. As said above, it will set the workers into motion in the right direction and once set into motion they will undoubtedly find the path of revolutionary struggle.

The End.

FROM THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO OF MARX AND ENGELS:

In what relation do the Communists* stand to the proletarians as a whole? The Communists do

not form a separate party opposed to other working-class parties. They have no interests separate

and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole. They do not set up any sectarian principles of their own, by which to shape and mould the proletarian movement.

The Communists are distinguished from the other workingclass parties by this only: 1. In the national struggles of the proletarians of the different countries they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat independently of all nationality. 2. In the various stages of development which the struggle of the working class against the bourgeois-

sie has to pass through, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole.

The Communists, therefore, are on the one hand, practically, the most advanced and resolute section of the working class parties of every country, that section which pushes forward all others; on the other hand, theoretically, they have over the great mass of the proletariat the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement.

*NOTE: For definite historical reasons, Marx and Engels in 1848 chose to call themselves and their followers "Communists" rather than "Socialists".

THE SOCIALIST CAMPAIGN IN THE 34th WARD

By W. B. Waltmire

Our campaign in the 34th Ward of Chicago needs no defense. Results speak for themselves. Yet, because certain comrades insist upon condemning without a thorough knowledge of the facts, it may be just as well to set forth the truth about the campaign. Thanks to the editor of the Socialist Appeal, we have been invited to do just that.

As the occasion for our remarks, permit us to analyze an article written by Albert Goldman in the March issue of the Appeal. It is headed "Socialist Election Campaign" and written by the author apparently without any thorough knowledge of the facts. Because it is filled with so much mis-information and colored by so much wishful thinking

we cannot do better than answer the charges point by point.

CHARGE 1. "He (Waltmire) was interested primarily, if not only, in winning office and was not at all concerned in making Socialists."

ANSWER: In support of this allegation, the writer quotes from a speech made before a general membership meeting of Local Cook County in which we said; "In our ward we wanted votes; in the 5th ward they wanted members."

The literal text is doubtless correct (though we have only memory to consult), but the meaning implied is hopelessly perverted. To be sure, during the heat of the campaign our primary aim was

to gain office. Does it follow, therefore, that we were not concerned in making Socialists. Certainly not! The fact is more people got a Socialist appeal through the literature visits of our precinct captains during the two months of the campaign than could have been reached in two years following political methods generally used by party branches.

CHARGE 2. We are accused by indirection of having solicited votes on the grounds that the candidate was "good", "honest", "a church member", "a preacher", and not because he was a Socialist.

ANSWER: In support of this charge, Comrade Goldman refers to the campaign in the 5th Ward where Comrade Maynard Krueger was the candidate. Here, he thinks a real Socialist campaign was waged. As proof he compares the 614 votes which were cast for Comrade Krueger with the 3,245 for Comrade Waltmire. Krueger supporters may be considered, he concludes, as having voted, not only for the immediate demands contained in the platform, but for the idea of Socialism.

This is mere speculation on Goldman's part. Who knows without doubt what was in the voters mind when he marked the ballot? The conclusion is a creature of wishful thinking. For political purposes we emphasized clean government. The people know we need honesty and integrity in governmental affairs. We undertook to supply that need. One precinct captain remarked: "We searched the ward to find an honest man who would run. We found one. We can't help it if

he's a preacher." Is it anti-Socialistic to be a good man, an honest one, or even a preacher?

If the Comrades in the 5th Ward through poor campaign strategy failed to take advantage of the political possibility of clean government, it is not our fault. Moreover, without presuming to judge harshly, one cannot but suspect that one of the reasons for a small vote in the 5th Ward was not the candidate, his honesty or his professional standing, but the organizational methods used to put his claims before the voters. We used recognized precinct organization methods (without the chicanery of the old parties). The American people understand such political work and such work is essential to progress in the political arena.

CHARGE 3. "They admit that not one additional member was recruited into the party by Waltmire's campaign but think that of slight importance."

ANSWER: We admit nothing of the kind. Five members have been added to the local in the 34th Ward as a result of the campaign. Several more are ready to be admitted in the near future. No one need doubt our ability to build a party branch in the 34th Ward. We expect to take into membership those who should join as quickly as seems feasible.

But the main thing is the kind of members you get and the ability to hold them after they join. The 5th Ward Branch had about 75 members before the campaign and recruited some 23 more. But in all they were able to muster only

a very small vote at the polls. No doubt these comrades are good people and well versed in the theory of Socialism. But do they understand the game of politics? The party has numerous intellectuals who will not soil their hands with tedious political work. Such persons admit that they do not want to "go from house to house soliciting signatures on petitions." We had scores on the Northwest Side who never came near our campaign during the whole two months. Is it any wonder that in the last four years nearly 6,000 members have been added to our party branches and yet today we barely boast a paid-up membership of 500 members?

This is not to cast reflection on the faithful comrades either in the 5th or the 34th Ward who came forward with money and much valuable time to aid campaign work. The party could soon be a political power to reckon with in Chicago if we had branches made up of such persons. Better five members who will solicit votes for the party than twenty who will drink tea for it.

CHARGE 4. "Of course I can point to the fact that the 34th Ward is an old Socialist stronghold containing a radical working-class population"

ANSWER: We wish the allegations were a fact, but it is not. The 34th Ward is largely composed of sections which lie outside the boundaries of the old 15th Ward, which elected a Socialist alderman before the war. It is composed mainly of lower middle class groups and was formerly a Republican stronghold. It probably has more possibilities than

does the 5th Ward, but by no means presents an easy field for Socialist endeavor. Our contact with the average working-class and lower middle class family in this territory has taught us that they are in many respects more suspicious of Socialist ideas than University-trained youth.

CHARGE 5. "If the people who vote for a Socialist do not do so because he is a Socialist, but because they do not know that he is a Socialist, of what earthly use can that be for achieving the Socialist goal?"

ANSWER: The answer is "none whatever." But the charge is based on a false assumption: namely, that we hid our candidate's red convictions. This is pure idle talk, divorced from the facts. On every occasion we stated our Socialist connections. To be sure we did not ask voters to join the party before supporting our candidate and accepted votes gladly regardless of party affiliations.

But, had we desired to hide our connections, it would have been impossible. The red hunters and the Democratic party saw to that. The legionaires charged us, through the Hearst press, with being dangerously radical. The precinct captains in the Democratic made a special point of peddling the story that our candidate was "communistic". Rest assured that our votes came from those who knew we were radical.

CHARGE 6. "The idea that we should first be elected to office and then teach Socialism to the masses is so utterly absurd that it should not even be discussed."

ANSWER: Exactly so. But this

is not the idea which we used, though a few in our group urged it after discovering the prejudice in people's minds against the term "Socialism."

There is this to be said, however. It is not a wholesome thing for Socialists to allow themselves to be overtaken with a defeatist psychology. Some imagine "The greater the defeat, the more simon pure the socialism." This is pure bunk. Defeat is no badge of honor.

Socialism cannot be introduced without a well-organized public opinion supporting the Socialist ideal. Whether that support is won at the ballot box or through revolutionary action of soviets (as in Russia) is not so important as that it be won. One thing seems evident. If we cannot get people to vote for our program, there is little hope of getting them to take up arms on behalf of our cause just now. It may be too early to decide definitely what course we shall finally have to pursue to gain the Socialist commonwealth. But there can be no harm in getting as many votes at the ballot box as possible while historical events shape themselves in the American scene. Good Socialist representatives elected to office will certainly advance the cause meanwhile.

CHARGE 7. "A casual analysis of the campaign literature distributed by Waltmire and Krueger are said to bring out the sharp differences in the two campaigns to the great detriment of Waltmire."

ANSWER: Then more than a "casual" analysis should be made. It might shed some needed light. To

begin with both four-page leaflets were written by some one other than the candidates. The Krueger leaflet was compiled by a former Hollywood publicity man (presumably a Socialist). The Waltmire material was compiled by an oldtime member of the Party who knows the advertising and publicity business. No great difference so far.

The front pages of each of the folders were very similar. Each had the picture of the candidate, the ward in which he was running and other relevant material. The Krueger leaflet asked you to "Be Practical" and "Vote Socialist". It described the candidate as a teacher in the University of Chicago, a vice-president of the American Federation of Teachers, one who "knows the people's needs" and "will fight for their rights." The Waltmire leaflet urged voters to choose "forceful, intelligent representation in the City Council" and claimed that "the fighting pastor" of the Humboldt Park Community "has fought for fuller and better lives for the working class" and on such a basis should be elected.

The material on the two inside pages differs somewhat in approach to the voters. The Krueger leaflet proceeds on the thesis that the reader is primarily interested in the size of his income and offers him a chance to vote himself an income of \$5,000 a year by electing Socialists to power. It then goes into an argument designed to convince the voter that under the profit system this will never come to pass, notes that the New Deal is not Socialism, and finally calls for the abolition "of the scheme under which we are now trying to

live" and "The substitution of Socialism, which means the end of profits and the beginning of plenty for all."

On the other hand the Waltmire leaflet takes the psychological rather than the logical approach. It assumes the prospective voter wants to know something about the personal life and background of the candidate. This it supplies and then proceeds to point out that there is no cure for the sufferings of the people "under the present system of private ownership of the factories, bank credits, etc." Rather, we are informed, it is the candidate's conviction that "the present wages and profit relationship should be exchanged for a collective one in which the food, clothing, shelter and other physical necessities of life shall be produced sufficient for every man and owned for the people by non-profit and non-political government corporations." Further, "machines should be harnessed to the needs of all, not the profits of a few who own. This is for him -Socialism."

The back pages of each leaflet gives the immediate demands. Krueger's leaflet calls it "the Socialist Platform in this Aldermanic Campaign" and Waltmire's refers to "Immediate Measures". They are similar in many respects but Comrade Goldman does not like "cheaper milk" and "cleaner alleys." Well, if Comrade Goldman were to live in the section of the city where our branch is located, he would want both. Filthy alleys breed disease and death for workers' children. Without an adequate playground system, much of the child's play time is spent in these alleys.

They need to be cleaned up and we trust good Socialists will not object.

As for "cheaper milk" we asked for it on the good Socialist principle of "A Municipal Milk distribution system, owned by the City." It is very essential too, as most working-class children have far less milk than they need. Many children growing up in this section are stunted in height weight and physical vitality for lack of it. The sitting Alderman boasted that we lost plenty of votes by including that demand in our platform. If Comrade Goldman had his way, perhaps our votes would have been larger.

CHARGE 8. "Absurd it is to say that the Socialist Party is a political party only to the extent that it succeeds in winning votes. The Socialist Party is and must be a political party throughout the year, and not only during election campaigns."

ANSWER: True, it is absurd to claim that the Socialist Party is merely an organization designed to win votes on election day. We have never taken that position either publicly or privately. But, when it engages in an election campaign, that is its primary task for the moment. Meanwhile, Socialists should busy themselves, taking part in the class struggle through unemployed groups, militant union activity, etc. Members of the 34th Ward Branch have done that and will continue to do so. Local 1 of the Chicago Workers Committee is our special child. And we are in favor of strikes or anything else which will advance the cause of Socialism

The error that many Comrades

make is in thinking that by engaging in the day to day struggles on the economic field that the workers will follow them on the political arena. This will not necessarily follow. We know very prominent Socialists who get a wide hearing in union halls unemployed groups and liberal clubs who can't get votes. It is not because they are too radical, either. It is because the mind of the American worker must be trained to think socialistically in the political realm as well as the economic. This mistake is also the error of many communists in their party work. We know of many workers who think communist or socialist in the economic ideology and still act "Democratic" in their politics. Our task is to show these people the logical political implications of their economic thinking.

CHARGE 9. Comrade Goldman thinks "endorsed by the Socialist Party" on the Waltmire leaflet "a very curious formulation; that it "conceals Waltmire's membership in the party more than it reveals it" and that it was in effect "a slap in the party's face."

ANSWER: It is nothing of the kind. One party branch debated the propriety of that phrase for a whole hour, but would not spend a single minute in helping in the campaign. "Hours for debate but not one moment for action," toward a Socialist goal. That was evidently their idea of the class struggle.

What utter folly. And now Comrade Goldman wants to continue the foolish argument. What was said was this: "Having been endorsed by the 34th Ward Branch of the Socialist Party, I promise to represent the people as

set forth in the general program of the Socialist Party." That was a campaign pledge of faith to the party. Had we elected our candidate he would have been bound by that pledge to serve the Party's best interest in the City Council.

The term seems objectionable to some. But it is a matter of opinion on phraseology. We could not use the term "nominate" as some desired, because only persons who sign your nominating petition "nominate" the candidate for office. We could have used the term "sponsored" but to the average mind there is no distinction. We asked several "rank and file" workers and all agreed that the phrase "endorsed" meant that we were the candidate of the Socialist Party. The party must want a slap badly if such phraseology offends.

CHARGE 10. The attitude that "we must get results no matter how we get them" is self-defeating. It leads some into the camp of Upton Sinclair. In the end it will land us "in the hell of fascist concentration camp and the chopping off of our heads."

ANSWER: Yes, the attitude that we must get results no matter at what cost might lead to Epicism as in California, Huey Longism as in Louisiana, or Naziism as in Germany, where many Socialists joined Hitler's ranks in the hope that from it Socialism would come. Only we did not take that attitude, and never expect to. Had we taken such a course we might have been in the City Council now, but Socialism would not have been one whit nearer thereby.

Fascist concentration camps are

a very real menace in America, as everybody who pays much attention to present trends must realize. They are not so likely to arise however from political reformism as they are from radical indecisiveness at critical moments in the course of human history.

These camps become all the more potential realities while we argue fine points of Socialist theory and keep ourselves out of tune with mass sentiment.

What the Socialist Party (and for that matter every other Marxian party) needs to do is to hitch the ultimate Marxian solution to the mass temper and ideology of the hour. The masses feel - they do not think. We have got to supply leadership and ideology through which those feelings may be expressed - or else some one else will.

In 1917 the Russian masses of workers and peasants felt the oppressive yoke of hunger and war. They longed desperately for bread and peace. Lenin and the Bolsheviks offered to furnish that and thus gained their allegiance. Had the Bolsheviks spent the summer of 1917 gaining converts to their party, probably they would still be a despised group of underground revolutionaries rather than the dictators of Russia.

As our situation is different, our course of action must be new. Violent revolutionary theoretical talk is not in line with mass thinking, at the present moment. We are not in a war (although drifting there rapidly). The Democrats still furnish some bread. And so we need not sound notes that fitted particular historical

settings and situations two decades ago. Inner party councils should hammer out solutions to the problem of linking mass sentiment with party tactics.

Meanwhile the principle involved in the 1917 Russian situation is our principle for today. We go to the masses with what they feel and desire. And through that we lead them to what they need - and, ultimately, to the Socialist society. And this will involve good leadership as well as correct party programs and organization.

Moreover, as long as the ballot can be used, even under difficulties as it is today, it should be used. That is why we look forward to bigger and better Socialist election campaigns. And that is why we ought to begin now to organize for work on the political field. And if that method proves ineffective, or is withheld from us in the future, we shall still have to go forward until we do gain the Socialist commonwealth by the best means at our command.

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NOTE: While it is the purpose of the SOCIALIST APPEAL to educate the membership of the Socialist Party in the principles of Revolutionary Marxism, we are always ready to open the columns of this magazine to any member of the party who takes issue with the position we take, and desires to reply thereto. It is in this spirit that the above article is published. - Editors.