

# LOVESTONE'S LABOR PARTY BOOK: "THE GOVERNMENT—STRIKEBREAKER"

By WM. Z. FOSTER.

In the present party discussion, one of the main contentions of the C. E. C. is that the farmer-labor Communists tend strongly to liquidate the Workers Party by pushing it and its interests into the background and by making their "class" farmer-labor party an end in itself. With high indignation the self-styled "Marxian trunk" of our party repudiate this accusation. They declare that with them the farmer-labor party is the merest instrument for the building of the Workers Party, and that they never for a moment forget that they must use it to develop the prestige and leadership of the Workers Party amongst the masses.

After which, it is highly instructive to take a look again at Jay Lovestone's book, "The Government—Strikebreaker." This book is a striking proof of the correctness of the contention that the "class" farmer-labor party slogan, as proposed by the minority, leads directly, under present conditions, to opportunism and liquidation of the Workers Party. Lovestone's book is labor party propaganda pure and simple. It ignores the Workers Party altogether.

"The Government—Strikebreaker" has 371 pages. It is by far the most pretentious literary effort ever made by the Workers Party; and the subject it deals with—the government as a class organization and what to do about it—is one of the most vital consequences. In this book, considering all the expenditure of money and effort, and with such an important subject, was a splendid opportunity for the Workers Party to make effective propaganda for itself. Indeed, in the very nature of the subject, the book, to be of real value to the Workers Party, had to demonstrate clearly that the Communist program alone indicates the only way the workers can emancipate themselves, and that the Workers Party is the only party capable of leading the working class to the overthrow of capitalism.

But, Lovestone's book does none of this. It forgets entirely the main objective of building the Workers Party. It is concerned only with the formation of a labor party. The book appeared in 1923. Lovestone, like Pepper, and so many others, was already obsessed with the labor partyism which at present so sharply characterizes him. He undertakes an elaborate analysis of the capitalist state, showing how it operates as an instrument of the capitalist class against the working class. But then, instead of bringing the Workers Party to the fore, by demonstrating its function as the vanguard of the proletariat and by outlining its immediate program and ultimate goal, he actually leaves the Workers Party out of the picture altogether. His book degenerates into nothing more or less than an argument for a labor party. This costly publication, which should have been a powerful exposition of Communist principles, policies, and organizations, turns out to be merely propaganda for the labor party.

The extent to which Lovestone shoves aside our party is almost incredible. In the whole bulky volume the Workers Party is actually mentioned only once. That and no more. This lonesome mention occurs on page 334, when Lovestone merely incidentally, in his usual role of disinterested spectator, remarks briefly that the W. P. delegates were not seated at the C. P. P. A. conference in Cleveland in 1922. So intent is he on boosting the labor party as an end in itself, that he does not even consider it worth while to state why they were not seated or what their program was. Indeed, at no point in the whole book does he even indicate that the Workers Party favors the formation of a labor party, or tell why it does, or what its labor party policy is. He says absolutely nothing about the big fight the Workers Party was then making thruout the labor movement for the labor party. He does not point out the limitations of a labor party, nor does he even remotely indicate the necessity for the revolutionary Workers Party to lead the workers to the revolution. He is so intent upon making propaganda for the labor party that he ignores the Workers Party completely.

This systematic suppression and obliteration of the Workers Party is what the farmer-labor Communists call keeping the Workers Party in the foreground and exploiting the labor party movement for its benefit. But we of the C. E. C. majority dub it what it actually is, a policy of opportunism and liquidation.

Lovestone's book is an advocacy of the labor party as an end in itself. There is no other conclusion possible from a reading of the book. While Lovestone indicates the class character of the state and at least hints that the workers must abolish it, he by no means says that the Workers Party is necessary to do the job. His analysis leads merely to an argument for the formation of a labor party. The assumption is that such a party is sufficient. From the text there is no chance that a reader could get any information about, or an appreciation of the Workers Party and its role. The Workers Party is simply not in the

book. Seemingly its only function is to humbly pay the heavy bills for this opportunistic labor party propaganda and to modestly put its name on the book cover as the publisher.

In his recent article, Comrade Manley estimates that \$50,000 had been directly spent in our labor party propaganda. This is a fair estimate, altho Comrade Ruthenberg evasively disputes it. To it should be added the high cost of Lovestone's book, which is labor party propaganda de luxe. Since his book came into question, the minority comrades who engineered its publication are very shifty and indefinite about what it cost to produce. But considering the extensive research work done and the expensive make-up of the book, it must have cost \$3,000, if not more.

Comrade Lovestone wrote the book in his best opportunistic style. Not only did he keep the Workers Party out of it altogether, but he also carefully edited out revolutionary expressions and references. He was desperately anxious to be respectable and to make a good showing with the labor partyites. It is a glowing example of the kind of propaganda our party should not make.

In the present party discussion, Comrade Lovestone constantly excludes quotations, however inappropriately, from Marx, Lenin, Zinoviev, and other revolutionary leaders. An inexperienced reader would conclude that these men were the great originators and defenders of the "class" farmer-labor party. But in his opportunistic "The Government—Strikebreaker," Lovestone disposes of them very nicely. He does not quote one of them. Altho Lovestone attempts the fundamental Communist task of analyzing the capitalist state, explaining the robbing of the workers thru the wages system, and of finding a remedy for this exploitation, he never finds it necessary to mention the names of Marx or Lenin, or of any other world-known revolutionist once in the entire book. In fact, except for myself (I am quoted a number of times) all the authors cited are thoroughly respectable bourgeois. Not even the taint of socialism is upon any of them, much less Communism.

In making his opportunistic analysis of the state and in providing his quack remedy of a labor party, Lovestone had little use for the sayings of revolutionists, American or foreign. When he analyzes the state his authorities are not Marx or Lenin, but Woodrow Wilson, Beard, Fluke, McMaster, Bryce, and similars. When he wants an authority on the exploitation of the workers he tells us what was said by Representative Ricketts, whoever he may be. Various reactionary politicians and economists illuminate his points on wages. Sen. Shields and Allen Smith expound on the class nature of the courts and the "class character" of the persecution at Herrin was most forcefully "exposed" by A. W. Kerr, attorney for the defense—I thought the Workers Party had had something to say upon that subject.

Lovestone's book deals largely with the textile, mining, and railroad strikes of 1922. But not a word does he say about the policy of the Workers Party, or of the part played by it in these struggles. In the whole book there is not a single quotation from the Worker or from any statement of the Workers Party. On the other hand, the book is just packed with quotations from reactionary papers, politicians, labor leaders, and economists. When he indicates the growing class consciousness of the workers in the struggles mentioned, he cites not the Worker, but the Railway Clerk. When he wants an appraisal of the significance of the Herrin trial, he takes it from a manifesto of the Illinois farmer-labor party.

So it goes, all thru the book. Respectables and fakers crowd one another's heels, so much so that there is no room, or, in Lovestone's conception, need for revolutionaries. The Workers Party and the revolutionary movement in general are kept well in the background. This fits in very nicely with the labor party conclusions at the end. One thing that makes me feel queer is the various quotations from the Labor Herald and myself. How come we in such respectable company? We are the only revolutionary sources quoted in the entire book. Why pick on us, Comrade Lovestone? What did we ever do to you that you should include us in such ultra-orthodox company? But, perhaps, the explanation is that by calling the Labor Herald "the well-known trade union magazine" and myself "one of the ablest and leading advocates of amalgamation," you figure that we are kosher enough to get by. Certainly you do not link us up any way with the Workers Party, whose identity you are so careful to suppress all thru the book.

Since, in the party discussion, I have pointed out that Lovestone's book advocates the labor party as an end in itself, the minority comrades are making the most desperate efforts to explain it away. They say my own writings are no good. But even if we admit this, how can it excuse the self-admitted great Marxian, Lovestone, for his farmer-laborism? They

also say that even Lenin sometimes wrote pamphlets without directly advocating the Communist Party. But can we (as yet) compare Lovestone with Lenin? And whoever heard of Lenin, who about all others taught the principle of always keeping the Communist Party in the forefront, writing a 371-page book, leaving all mention of the Communist Party out of it, and concentrating his whole argument in a demand that the working class work for a party rival to the Communist Party? No one, of course. Then the argument is made that Lovestone's book has been translated in Russia. But what of that? That lends no endorsement of his farmer-labor party deviations. The Russians are far from endorsing in toto all that they translate and publish. This is a matter of common knowledge. They have translated Upton Sinclair's books, the life of Henry Ford, Taylor's works, and many others far from Communist in conclusions.

Lovestone and his minority followers may squirm as they will. But his book speaks for itself. It is a clear

case of labor party opportunism. It is an advocacy of the labor party, not to the advantage of the Workers Party, but at its expense; it puts forward the labor party, not merely as a tactical maneuver, but as a substitute for the Workers Party. Even when labor party sentiment was strong in the whole country, we, in our reaching for the masses, committed many opportunistic errors, of which Lovestone's book is only one glaring example. But now, when the labor party movement has amalgamated itself with the LaFollette movement, the continuance of our labor party policy, by causing still more reckless efforts to get hold of the masses, would lead us into a veritable morass of opportunism. The health of our party would be greatly endangered. The discarding of the farmer-labor party slogan, as the C. E. C. thesis proposes, and the concentration of our activities to the united front policy as outlined by the Comintern, offers the only way to build the Workers Party into a mass Communist Party.

## MINORITY MUMBO-JUMBO— THE FARMER-LABOR PARTY

By JOSEPH MANLEY

ARGUMENTS put forth by leaders of the minority, in the present party discussion, carry me in memory back to the dear dead days of the romantic past of the minority. In these days of farmer-labor knight-errantry, when the central executive committee operated in a bucolic Polyanna atmosphere created by those of the minority who saw the (LaFollette) revolution—just around the corner.

The C. I. decision and what happened at the Cleveland C. P. P. A. conference seem not to effect at all the methods of reasoning or the line of argument of the minority. Their myopic methods produce a distorted picture of events that suits and bolsters up the preconceived conception of the minority—that right or wrong we must have a farmer-labor party. By twisting and turning the merest everyday happenings in the labor movement, into "debacles" for the policy of the majority and howling victories for the minority. And all this they swear to, not in the name of God but of Marx.

Back of all this minority distortion and exaggeration lies much that is personal desire and ambition. When I was a member of the Pepper caucus it was the chief object of the group to have Comrade Ruthenberg accompany Comrade Pepper to Moscow. Comrade Ruthenberg in spite of our importunings did not go across. He probably felt that the big thing for him would be to organize for the St. Paul convention while Pepper and Foster fought it out in Moscow. Then when Foster got back he would be faced with a fait accompli—a farmer-labor party.

In this Comrade Ruthenberg reckoned without his host. In spite of all information to the contrary Foster got back before the St. Paul convention, and brought with him a decision which changed basically, insofar as the LaFollette maneuver was concerned our whole conception and program.

The lesson I learned from Foster's first reading of the C. I. decision to the C. E. C., was that our farmer-labor movement was nothing short of a united front at the top, which all factions alike were equally responsible for. My experience was that the majority were the quickest to recognize this conclusion and the correctness of the C. I. decision itself, and it was this factor more than any other which won me away from the minority, and eventually led to my joining the majority.

I too have said that Comrade Lovestone is the most logical thinker of the minority. But Comrade Ruthenberg also, on occasion is logical. Is it not logical for Comrade Ruthenberg to continue to hang on to the name of the farmer-labor party? He it was, who consistently pushed it whenever he could. In his official capacity as secretary, before the holding of the July 3rd, 1923 convention, he got out subscription lists for donations to the campaign for a federated farmer-labor party. These lists brought about a near crisis in the negotiations between us and the old farmer-labor party. He wrote the platform of the ill-fated federated that was organized at the Chicago convention. He wrote manifestos issued by it. He attended the first St. Paul conference to arrange for the St. Paul convention. He and I perhaps more than anyone else became steeped in the farmer-labor movement. He went to the February gathering of the C. P. P. A. at St. Louis; and well I remember that on his return he wrote a thesis in which he said nothing but a miracle could prevent the organization of a labor party at the coming Cleveland July 4 convention of the C. P. P. A.

As I have intimated Comrade Ruthenberg's supreme effort was made after Pepper and Foster left for Moscow. He organized many farmer-labor parties thruout the east, all for the St. Paul convention. To still maintain the necessity of this past work is the secret of Comrade Ruthenberg's present logic. All the noise made in organizing these parties, all the money spent on them and their delegates to

the St. Paul convention furnishes the basis of the present alleged sentiment found by the minority for the farmer-labor party. The only real sentiment for a farmer-labor party I can find after months of close observation all over the country is in the ranks of the minority itself, or those with an opportunist inclination. It this logic founded upon events that are dead and gone that is responsible for the intransigent attitude of Ruthenberg and others.

The leaders of the minority are busy citing "facts" to prove either the existence of actual organization of or sentiment for, a farmer-labor party.

Let me cite an actual fact bearing upon the existence of an organized farmer-labor movement in one typical F. L. P. state—South Dakota. The farmer-labor party of South Dakota was an organization, composed mostly of bankrupt farmers and some industrial workers. Its two well known leaders, were Tom Ayres and Alice Lorraine Daly. Miss Daly several years ago polled over 40,000 votes for governor of South Dakota. Ayres is far superior to Mahoney both for political honesty and as a sincere farmer-laborite. Ayres in the two day conference immediately before the holding of the St. Paul convention stood with us against Mahoney who wanted to keep the Workers Party out of the St. Paul convention. In the convention itself Ayres, again rallied his fifty delegates—mostly farmers—to stand with us. Again at a caucus of his delegation Ayres with the assistance of three Finnish Communists from South Dakota put the delegation on record to stay in the convention, even if LaFollette was not nominated. But all Ayres influence availed him nothing against the wave of LaFollette hysteria. When the delegation returned to South Dakota, they demanded and insisted that their farmer-labor party go for LaFollette, in spite of the fact that LaFollette's gang set up a duplicate organization in South Dakota and generally double-crossed the farmer-labor party. Ayres and the South Dakota farmer-labor party went with LaFollette. Today, Ayres is no longer active in the political life of the farmers but is writing insurance for a living. And the South Dakota farmer-labor party is broken up and scattered to the four winds. This is an instance of the "seperatness" from the LaFollette movement, of the farmer-labor movement that the leaders of the minority try hard to find or create even in their own imagination.

The minority's proof of the existence of the sentiment is cited by them in the Massachusetts C. P. P. A. conference. The facts as I found them on a recent trip to Boston was that the Massachusetts C. P. P. A. conference was not representative of the C. P. P. A. itself as generally constituted. The Massachusetts conference was ignored by the Railroad Brotherhoods and the bulk of the A. F. of L., unions affiliated with the Central Labor Union. Those actually participating were the A. C. W., the I. L. G. W., the Jewelry Workers and the Machinists along with a bunch of fraternal and benefit organizations. The delegates who favored a farmer-labor party were either members of our own party or influenced by its late campaign. Our own party members who were delegates, appeared to be caught more or less unprepared and did not execute their manouevr as instructed by the C. E. C. with any degree of brilliancy. Whatever the reason for this, it is significant that the D. O., Comrade Ballam who was charged with the responsibility of directing the maneuver, was not even present and he now issues a tirade against the majority on the grounds of his own peculiar "dialectical" presentation. Surely Comrade Ballam will hardly claim that the narrow basis of the Massachusetts C. P. P. A. gathering he speaks of, was hardly broad enough for even a left wing farmer-labor party. In the halcyon days of the farmer-labor party movement in Massachusetts and after repeated attempts I could get nothing more there than a mere committee for