Department for Agitation and Education

Edited by Sam Darcy

TO ALL SINCERE SOCIALISTS IN THE SOCIALIST PARTY:

EDITORIAL NOTE: We print below the first section of a letter addressed to all Socialist Party members, explaining the difference between the Socialist and the Communist Party, and the issues involved in the present inner-fractional struggle within the Socialist Party. The letter is obviously of great interest to all thinking and active workers and farmers and sympathizers. We will publish the concluding installment in this section in the issue after the next one. In other words, next week's issue will contain the usual semi-monthly features of the Department for Agitation and Education.

DEAR COMRADES:

About a month ago the Communist Party adressed an Open Letter to the Socialist Party, in which we urged that since the Socialist Party spokesmen have frequently stated that their organization will fight for the interests of the workers, that we agree on a joint campaign of struggle along five issues which are of paramount importance to the working class. We formulated these five points so that any joint action on them would not affect the existing stated programs of either Party. In our letter we said, "Uniting on the five point demands outlined does obligate the Socialist Party to change its other principles, it does not obligate you to a struggle in the interests of the working-class and poor farmers for immediate improvement of conditions and against the attack on these conditions by the class".

It is now an historic fact that your California State Committee rejected our proposal. The stated reasons for their refusal are interesting, but really of minor importance. What is important, is that these leaders have continually fought against the workers to unite all possible forces to improve conditions. This deed speaks louder than the words they utter. We will discuss their explanation for rejecting our proposal further on. For the moment, may we quote the poem sung by the young militant elements in the Socialist Party who are beginning to fight its leadership, who sing to the tune of the "Ramblers":

"Oh, with Norman Thomas, Norman Thomas,
We go to the masses about the city—
Fighting for bread or die—
Norman Thomas, Norman Thomas,
Who always has another shift!"

The battle in UNITED CALIFORNIA S. P. is not merely one between the reactionary leadership of the Party and those who fight for real, united action of organized working-class conditions, the matter would be simple because the reactionary careerists now at the helm of the National Committee of the Socialist Party are becoming discredited. We know that many of the donations to the charity committee of 1923, 261 Socialists and comprising four Party in California alone, and the "Crime" of the Socialist Party during the war of the National Committee to support reactionaries and despite the left-wing split, but they are fed up to the gills and finally they had to quit.

However, the situation becomes complicated because a new group has arisen in the Socialist Party styling itself as left-wing, and pretending to repudiate all the past betrayals of the Socialist leadership, both in this country and abroad. They have even borrowed some of the militant language from our Party. But after careful consideration of their make-up, history and present role in the class struggle, we can only come to the conclusion that their left phrase-mongering is only aimed to deceive the masses in the hope of winning converts, but that actually this new so called left-wing is not one whit different from the present discredited leadership.

ISSUES INVOLVED

What are the basic issues involved? We have heard speeches by Norman Thomas, Stitt Wilson, and other such individuals whom you have allowed to speak for you. On every occasion that we have heard them, they stated that there is no difference so far as the ultimate aims are concerned between the Communist Party and Socialist Party. That these differences are only a matter of tactics to be employed in reaching these aims.

Nothing could be further from the truth, and Mr. Thomas is downright dishonest in making such a statement.

"Just another Communist epithet" you will say, but unfortunately, for Mr. Thomas, the unflattering epithet exactly fits him. This we will now prove.

June 15th, 1929, is just about four months prior to the crash which announced to the world that the most powerful capitalist power extant, namely the United States, was entering the deepest crisis in its history. On that date, in the "New Leader", the official organ of the National Committee of the Socialist Party, Mr. Thomas wrote an article called "Is Marxian Socialism Abreast With the Times?". That the article represented the opinion of the leadership of the Socialist Party is clearly shown by the fact that in an editorial introduction to this article, Mr. Thomas is called: "The leader of the American Socialist Movement". At that time, Thomas had already been presidential candidate for the Socialist Party. The editorial continues to say that Thomas "deplores the placing of Socialism in a Marxian straight jacket."

THOMAS STATES POSITION

Lack of space prevents us from quoting the entire article which we would very much like to do. However, in order to give our readers a brief idea of the article, we will quote several [illegible] of Thomas' [illegible]

"Marxian socialism [illegible] the effect [illegible] the [illegible] of the [illegible] march of [illegible] and [illegible]. The things that have happened and are happening in the field of human history and in the last quarter of scientific and philosophic thought impel us to RE-EXAMINE AND RE-STATE OUR FUNDAMENTAL THEORY."

"MARXISM IS AN OUT-MODED PHILOSOPHY"

1.—The change in philosophy and science since the Victorian era in which Marx wrote. Here certain things are fairly obvious.

a. "The philosophic temper of the Victorian era on the whole was far less presumptuous than the same temper of the time in Western Europe and even in America since the World War. Men today have less faith in their own destiny.

b. "THE MARCH OF SCIENCE.—More important than the philosophical aspect of the case and underlying it is the profound change that is taking place in scientific theory. * * * * * * Einstein has played havoc with the absolute * * * * Already theists and atheists, mystics and skeptics are rushing in to prove their pet theory. * * * * * * I shall not follow their example. * * * * * * Great ideas like the materialist conception of history in their deeper philosophic sense require new examination.

2.—"The change in our knowledge of psychology since the Victorian era.

3.—"The Clash of Nations and Races. The strength and persistence of both national and racial consciousness. It would hardly have been possible for the earlier scientific Socialists to dream that nationalism and racialism would have been so stupendous an obstacle to a realization of class solidarity, as they are in fact.

4. "Recent Economic Developments.—The Marxian forecast did not take account or sufficient account of certain things which are becoming familiar to our generation:

a. "The almost miraculous achievements of applied science in the increase of productivity.

b. "The arrest in the processes which Marx logically thought would lead to recurring crises and increasing misery, partly by remedial action of labor in the industrial and political field, and more largely by the appearance from time to time of new industries like the automobile industry in America to take up the slack and put profits back into new lines of productive work. These things * * * * * compel us to make a fresh examination from one angle or another of our theory of value of increasing misery.

5.—"The Complexities of Life * * * * * * require us to pay far more attention to questions of program and policy than was necessary for the earlier Socialists. * * * * * * It explains the hesitation of Socialists when faced with power.

6.—"The Solidarity of Labor.—George Bernard Shaw has recently shown what a fine case can be made for Socialism from a consumer's standpoint almost without reference to the class struggle. The appeal to the consumer is something Socialists must remember and emphasize. But I do not believe we can fail to reckon with the class struggle. There are classes within classes and the solidarity of the workers is not something instinctively realized but rather a great organizing social idea or 'myth'.

"Yet I do not want to come before our generation talking Marxism but Socialism, which is bigger than Marxism and has room in it for effective co-operation in practical achievements for all of us."

We have gone to some length to quote this article by Mr. Thomas because it establishes certain things beyond doubt. The philosophy under which Mr. Thomas is working includes:

1.—That Marxism is an out-moded philosophy.
2.—That Marxism has been proven false by modern science.
3.—That it is not in accord with the psychological condition of the people.
4.—That Marxian Socialism is false because of its international character and its failure to take account of the strength of national consciousness.
5.—That Marxian economics is wrong because it predicts recurring crises and increasing misery under capitalism.
6.—That the hesitation of Socialist leaders in taking power is due to the fact that they have not frankly discarded the Marxian program and have not adopted a new one.
7. That the new program must be directed, not to the working class, but rather to the middle-class.

PREPARE GROUND FOR FASCISM

Does not Mr. Thomas' own article reveal that every charge the Communists make that the Socialist leaders prepare the ground for Fascism, both in theory and practice, is true? Mr. Thomas says that Marxism must be discarded, that Socialism must adapt itself to the persistent national consciousness. Its appeal must be to the middle-class, and since capitalism has solved its crisis, not to attempt to abolish capitalism. How much different is this from Fascist theory.

Above all it confirms what we have said earlier in this letter: that the Communist Party and Socialist Party do not have the same aims, and differ more than in tactics. Mr. Thomas' article clearly shows that this entire program, especially as to its aim, is basically different from the Communist Party. Mr. Thomas makes out a complete case for capitalism, and the Communist Party has as its aim the complete overthrow of capitalism.

But remember that this article was written four months before the great crash of the fall of 1929.

Is it necessary to go into a detailed reply to Mr. Thomas' program? The last four years of profound crisis of capitalism has itself already discredited the largest part of Thomas' theories.

(To Be Continued)

SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBERS! REGISTER COMMUNIST!

The Rank and File of the Socialist Party in California, now in revolt against the corrupt bureaucracy, should realize that steps for the coming election campaign must be taken now.

You have one of two courses to choose from. Some of your leaders such as Sinclair in California, and Blanshard in New York, have already openly gone over to the boss parties, and are trying to pull you along with them. On the other hand, the best of your rank and file have already joined the Communist Party, or want a united front with it. It is apparent to most that it is futile any longer to try and make anything of the S. P. which is controlled from top to bottom by a reactionary bureaucracy.

The Communist Party is now collecting signatures, and sponsors who must be registered Communist, in preparation for an active state election campaign. The conduct of the campaign, and choice of the candidates, will be on a wide united front basis.

As sincere Socialists, your only course is to make possible a strong Workers ticket, against the lynch state government, against the hunger and war policy.

Therefore Register Communist! Sign Communist Petitions.