

## THE PARTY DISCUSSION CONTINUED

# THE LaFOLLETTE REVOLUTION

By LUDWIG LORE.

(Article II.)

It will be always a matter of gratification to me that in the period when our executive committee and our party allowed itself to be infected by Comrade Pepper with the virus of the third party madness, our group—the New York group—had not only the political wisdom to come out immediately against the most dangerous piece of opportunism, upon which any revolutionary movement has ever embarked, but that it had the courage to stand up under the wave of popular disapproval and official ostracism that is always the lot of those who dare to oppose the decisions of our leaders, before the latter have become convinced, by the grim logic of circumstances, of the error of their ways.

In the discussions during and after the LaFollette era, various motives were imputed to me to account for my stand on the petty bourgeois third party. Nothing that I could say at this time, I believe, could describe my fundamental position that prompted my opposition more convincingly than brief excerpts from a number of articles that appeared in the New Yorker Volkszeitung on this subject.

On December 9, 1923, immediately after the publication of the November thesis, I wrote the following:

"... They (the present minority) say: 'Where such third parties, calling themselves farmer-labor parties, of workers and exploited farmers come into existence we must become a part of them. But it must be our policy to win all workers and exploited farmers away from the third party and to organize them in an F. L. P. class party.'

"It is easy to see what the majority (now the minority) of the executive committee contemplates. It feels, rightly, that large proportions of the working class will be drawn by a so-called F. L. P. under the control of petty bourgeois elements and capitalist politicians, and that it therefore becomes necessary to adopt a tactic of boring from within similar to that of the T. U. E. L. in the labor unions. But they overlook the fact that labor unions and political parties are two widely different things, which certainly cannot, in practical questions, be judged by the same standards.

"But there is a more important consideration. The American worker must not be confused. Neither directly nor indirectly should the Communist movement assist in wiping out the class lines that the socialist movement, in the many years of its pioneer work, helped to draw. It is true, today the American worker has not class feelings. Only a exceedingly small percentage knows the word class consciousness. Still, in the American party literature as well as in the heads of the most progressive proletarian elements this word has a very definite concept which we all have helped to establish in our fights against Gompersism, against the Johnstonian primary election policy, and by the propagation for an independent class policy directed against all capitalist parties. . . ."

On December 18 an editorial under the heading, "The District Convention of the W. P.," contained the following:

"... And even then the thesis which provides for the possible entry of the Workers Party into a petty bourgeois third party would have been voted down had not Comrade William Z. Foster, who had come to the convention as a guest, cleverly drawn the red herring of anti-Gompersism into the debate. This determined a number of delegates, who up to this time had been in opposition to the thesis, to turn. So, for instance, six delegates from the Finnish branches, instructed against the thesis, were won by Foster's illogical Gompers argument."

After expressing the hope that the question will go by default, the article proceeds:

"The third bourgeois party will be possible only if the democratic and republican parties both nominate conservative reactionaries. The republicans have their Coolidge. . . . But if the democratic party should be so incredibly stupid as to nominate an Underwood—i. e. a reactionary whom not even the A. F. of L. could support

—then, to be sure, the formation of a third party becomes a possibility. And since LaFollette is a warm admirer of the A. F. of L. president, Mr. Gompers would go with flying flags and glaring trumpets into the camp of the new party, having taken good care, however, that the W. P. and the F. F. L. P. have no place in this illustrious gathering. And again: LaFollette may be very liberal and unprejudiced. But surely he is much too good a mathematician not to know that numerically the support of the A. F. of L. machine is much more important than that of the leaders of the class conscious workers. . . ."

On December 30:

"... For the simple reason that there will be no third party of the kind we are dreaming of, LaFollette will have the masses behind him just as little as did all other would-be Moses of the petty bourgeoisie, and without the masses he will not leave his republican flesh pots. . . ."

"... It is a long way to Tipperary. There are no short cuts. There is only one way, the straight—and therefore the shortest way—to mass education and to a mass movement of the proletariat. He who believes that mass parties can be maneuvered out of the ground is in danger of losing his way and going dangerously astray.

"... And because we are in favor of this mass education along the straight path we wholeheartedly support the F. F. L. P. which will bring those elements within the circle of our influence, with whom we can and must work, whom we must reach if we wish to create a strong and inclusive labor and small farmer party."

On January 2, under the title, "Good News from Chicago":

"... This proposition is fraught with grave dangers for our party and for the entire labor movement in the United States. It is based upon a (in our opinion absolutely false) conception of the existing political situation, upon an incorrect understanding of the intentions of the radical bourgeois politician of the LaFollette-Borah type and a gross exaggeration of the influence of the left wing in a bourgeois third party. . . ."

On January 17, this was followed by an article in answer to an editorial published in the Hungarian "Uj Elore" entitled, "The Workers Party and the Middle Class," from which we quote the following:

"... Our Hungarian party organ attempts to create the impression that the supporters of the third party alliance were in favor, and the opponents of this unnatural union against the bringing of the factory workers into contact with the petty bourgeoisie. That, of course, is not the case. We, too, are very definitely in favor of reaching the farmer and the townsman who is doomed to disappear in the proletariat with our propaganda, of making them, if not members of the Communist Party at least sympathetic toward it. Not only do we not oppose propaganda among the farmers, but we have always actively supported it. . . . The writer of the Elore article overlooks another fact which is strongly emphasized in the thesis of the C. E. C. majority, namely, that it is not the purpose of this move to win the middle class or working class elements, but that the going into the LaFollette alliance is intended only as a maneuver by which the proletarian elements are to be separated from the petty bourgeois party and turned over to a working class party. That would mean not only that we will not attempt to bring the LaFollette movement under the influence of our Communist ideas and line of thought, but that, on the contrary, we turn them into our most intense enemies, embitter them by representing ourselves to them in the role of the splitters of a great united front movement, thus hindering the very things which Stalin and the Elore editors consider absolutely essential for the success of the American revolution. . . ."

Need we say more to prove the utter fallacy of the argument that the New York group was opposed to third party participation because it was so much like LaFollette, that it was afraid to lose its identity? Is there in

## CLEVELAND COMRADES WILL GREET THE NEW YEAR WITH BIG DANCE

(Special to The Daily Worker)

CLEVELAND, O., Dec. 29.—A serpentin and confetti ball—this is the affair to which all Workers Party members and sympathizers and lovers of a jolly good time should come on New Years Eve, Wednesday, Dec. 31. The committee has arranged for a peppy orchestra, there will be lots of refreshments available, and in order to see the New Year started on its way, dancing will continue after midnight.

A large hall, with a splendid floor has been secured at the Institute, 2491 East 55th St., opposite the East Technical High School. Admission 50c per person. Come and bring your friends and help make this the biggest affair yet held by Local Cleveland.

these editorials anything that has not been said in these columns again and again during the last three weeks by representatives of the majority thesis in their opposition to new F. F. L. P. overtures?

The consistent opposition of our group to the "policy of maneuvers," of which Pepper and Ruthenberg were so proud, had brought down upon us the accusation that we are opposed to all maneuvers at all times, and are therefore out of sympathy with an important phase of Communist policies. Nothing can be further from the truth. It so happens that some of the most important members of the N. Y. group are men and women whose entire work in the party has consisted in the direction of Communist maneuvers in the labor movement. Practically every one of us did valuable work in the class farmer-labor party movement, so long as we believed it had a chance for success. I, myself, during this time, together with the comrades of the German group, carried on a campaign for increased propaganda possibilities in an important German working class organization, the Workingmen's Sick and Death Benefit Fund, that has opened up for us a valuable field for our work. What we did oppose was the attitude assumed by our comrades that "we would maneuver capitalism into a corner," and that "we would maneuver LaFollette out of the control of the working class and farmer elements in his own party," because we knew our own weakness, and appreciated the dangers attendant upon a policy of alliance with this would-be farmer-labor party under the control of the petty bourgeois.

Nothing can be achieved by a tactic of bluff. Some of us live under the delusion that the political opponents, whom we would outmaneuver, are ignoramuses, and look down upon them from the heights of their superior wisdom. It is about time that we understood that our real strength is known and that we are only hurting ourselves when we insist upon exaggerating our accomplishments. The time will come, when the Workers Party will be able to undertake large scale maneuvers and to undertake them successfully.

What Happened at the Chicago Convention?

When I see the frantic efforts that are being made by the two groups to burden each other with the responsibility for Lore's misdeeds, I cannot help but think mournfully of those days, not more than a year or two ago, when I was still the respected friend and co-worker of the present minority group. Until the national office was moved to Chicago, I was Comrade Lovestone's trusted confidant, and altogether was treated with a great deal more consideration than has fallen to my humble share since I cast my lot with the "syndicalist" group. Before I left New York for the Chicago convention, just a year ago, I was told by a mutual friend here that Lovestone would meet me at the Chicago railroad depot on my arrival. Lovestone, who had been obliged to get out of bed at 4 o'clock of a very unpleasant December morning in order to meet me, dangled, after a few preliminaries, a most enticing list before my eyes, a list of names in the handwriting of Comrade Ruthenberg. My name stood at the head of this slate that the Ruthenberg-Lovestone-Pepper group was prepared to propose to the convention. I informed Lovestone that I had one main purpose at this convention, to oppose the LaFollette alliance with all my might. At a secret session of the convention Pepper moved that the entire third party question be submitted to the C. I. for final decision. It was, of course, understood by the entire convention that this was the strongest possible bid for our support. As is usually the case when Pepper maneuvers, he made his reckoning without his host. Our group unanimously voted to support the present majority, because we felt in general our orientation was more in harmony with the Foster-Cannon conception.

Who was this Lore whom Pepper, Ruthenberg, Lovestone were so anxious to place at the head of their C. E. C. slate at the end of 1923? The same Lore who had written the Seratti and Paul Levi articles that are being used now to create the new fake issue of Loreism in the party!

Meet me at the  
**T. U. E. L. BALL**  
at WEST END WOMEN'S CLUB,  
37 So. Ashland Blvd.

where all the live ones will celebrate in  
regular New Year's Eve style.

**50c A PERSON ADMITS YOU**  
to the last dance of the season and the first  
one of the new year.

Auspices, TRADE UNION EDUCATIONAL LEAGUE.

LOCAL CHICAGO