

Socialist Party --- A Study in Bankruptcy

By JAY LOVESTONE.

Nationally the socialist party doesn't amount to a row of pins as an organization. Except for a few centers like Milwaukee and Reading, the socialist party has no local organizations. In these two cities, the organization is maintained on the same basis that the republican and democratic parties are kept up—government office patronage. In Milwaukee and Reading the socialist party is, practically speaking, an out-and-out third, petty bourgeois party. In New York, whatever organization there exists, subsists on the funds of the yellow Jewish Daily Forward and retired insurance agents, liberal bourgeois widows, and a handful of lawyers.

But ideologically, the socialist party still has some following. This is true nationally. Debs may be dead, but whatever is left of the following of Debs is still in the main going to the socialist party in election campaigns. Of course, as a distinct force of opposition in the everyday struggles of the workers, the socialist party is at most a minimum quantity. Not only are socialist party officials usually lined up on the side of the reactionary trade union bureaucracy but very often they are the pacesetters in the vicious moves made against the left wing and the militants in the labor movement. As a parliamentary force, however, the socialist party must still be somewhat reckoned with by the labor movement tho its strength even in this field is steadily dwindling.

The present convention of the socialist party marks a further loss of even the slightest pretence at socialist character this party formerly used to make. We cite four outstanding events at this convention to make our point emphatic and conclusive.

The Class Struggle—Unconstitutional
Those of us who were once in the socialist party will recall the class struggle pledge that applicants for membership had to sign. In those days the socialist party at least made a gesture—empty as it was—at belief in this fundamental principle of Marxism. Today, the socialist party under the pretence of thorough Americanization, has already deleted from its constitution the section providing that only those who believe in the class struggle shall be eligible for membership. The American constitution framed by merchants, speculators and land barons, has become the source of inspiration for the American socialist party.

One recalls a significant parallel moment at the last convention of the United Mine Workers of America. For years the constitution of the United Mine Workers of America, particularly its preamble, smacked of socialist thought and showed definite imprint of socialist influence. At the convention of the United Mine Workers of America, held in Indianapolis in January, 1927, Lewis and his union-wrecking agents succeeded in deleting from the constitution and

preamble of the union, the sections referring to the class struggle and socialism. Lewis' machine also amended the constitution of the United Mine Workers to persecute workers engaged in coal digging.

Clearly, the vilest section of the corrupt trade union bureaucracy is setting the pace for and giving the leadership to the socialist party.

What Lewis and his henchmen did in 1927 to the constitution of the United Mine Workers of America, Hillquit, Berger, Thomas, Maurer and company did to the last remnant of socialist ideology in their party constitution a few days ago. We may confidently expect that the next time the socialist party convention meets, if there will be a next time for this corpse, it will decree decisive measures against workers who, by choice instead of by accident, came to this country.

Blind to Class Conflicts.

The socialist party convention didn't say a word about the activities of its party in the present sharp class struggles. The socialist party has no program for such decisive battles of the workers as the 13-months miners' strike, the struggle wave of textile strikes, the struggle in the needle trades industry, the rising tide of discontent in the railway unions, and the movement for a genuine labor party. We must give the socialist party leadership credit for keeping quiet about its role in these struggles. Insofar as it did anything at all, it participated most valiantly on the side of reaction and against the workers.

All the socialist party convention could say about the most important strike in the history of the American labor movement, the present miners' strike, is to call upon the strikebreaking government, which has been issuing hundreds of injunctions and eviction orders against the miners, to nationalize the coal industry. That's Hillquit's solution. This is Maurer's panacea. Maurer has been significantly silent about the miners' struggle, tho he is still president of the Pennsylvania State Federation of Labor, a body which one may natur-

ally expect to be vitally concerned with the coal diggers' strike. To ask for nationalization of the coal mines by the Coolidge government, by the Mellons, the Fishers, and the Schwabs, is to ask for support from a hangman. But this is the role of the socialist party today. Instead of exposing the government for what it is, Hillquit, Thomas, Berger, Maurer and their ilk are working overtime to strengthen the old and develop new illusions among the workers regarding the character of fraudulent American democracy.

Imperialism Endorsed.

There was a time when even the opportunistic socialist party did not dare endorse the League of Nations. Now Mr. Hillquit feels that his party has made sufficient progress as a full fledged member of the camp of the enemies of the working class to hand out bouquets even to the League of Nations. The League of Nations is held up by the socialist party before the workers as a panacea. On this question, the socialist party is even far to the right of such weak-kneed, petty bourgeois politicians as Borah, Norris and Shipstead. The latter are opposed to the League of Nations. They see in the League of Nations an instrument of imperialist aggression. Hillquit sees in the League of Nations an agency of liberation of the colonial masses.

The extent to which the socialist party is today dominated by capitalist ideas is made painfully evident by the remarks of Hillquit anent the imperialist invasion of Nicaragua by Wall Street troops. To quote the New Leader, the mouthpiece of the decadent socialist party, "The highlight of the address came in his words on the Nicaraguan adventure:

"Of all the monstrosities perpetrated by our government, this is the most revolting. What is it that we are doing in Nicaragua? If it is war, it is unauthorized and unsanctioned by the people or congress. If it is not war—N is murder."

In this moment of highest excitement on the part of Mr. Hillquit, he unblushingly admits his organic kinship with Mr. Coolidge in Washing-

ton, and the strikebreaking marines in Nicaragua. Mr. Hillquit is not complaining against the imperialist aggrandizement of the American government. He is not seeking to mobilize masses of workers and exploited farmers against the Yankee imperialist domination of Latin America. All he is interested in, as a first class lawyer, is the legal sanction, the congressional authorization for this imperialist onslaught. It is not the murderous crime against the Nicaraguan masses that he is protesting against. This "brains" of the socialist party is vitally concerned with maintaining every legal fiction and camouflaging most effectively the outrages committed against the Nicaraguan people so that the American working class will not be aroused sufficiently against the Wall Street government.

Berger Shakes Hands with Kaiser.

The whole farce of the socialist party convention came to a head in a very dramatic way. The New York press reports that for nearly four minutes the socialist party convention stood with bowed heads in a demonstration of the keenest appreciation of the successful westward trans-Atlantic flight by German monarchist agents. During the last imperialist war Kaiser Wilhelm II appealed to all his loyal subjects in Germany, China, United States and elsewhere, to rally to the banner of Prussian imperialism. This appeal did not fall on deaf ears, as far as Mr. Berger was concerned. Mr. Berger was opposed to America's entering the last war not because he was against American imperialism from a working class viewpoint but because he was for German imperialism.

Just now, while the impending imperialist war is in the making, Kaiser Wilhelm II, who owes his head still being on his shoulders solely to the Bergers, Hillquits and Thomases of Germany, sent a cable of congratulation to Von Huenefeld, pilot of the Bremen. On the same day, the socialist party convention, which has re-elected Victor Berger as its national chairman, congratulated Von Huenefeld, who was piloting the plane flying the colors of the old German monarchist regime. Von Huenefeld is expected to be a nationalist candidate in the coming elections in Germany.

Under these circumstances, Messrs. Hillquit and Berger must have kept clearly in their minds the congratulations to Von Huenefeld by the National German Officers' League, reading in part: "It fills us with grateful pride that the spirit of German officers conquered the ocean and received respect for the sacred colors of black, white and red in far away parts of the world."

If any honest workingman or woman still has any illusions about the character of the socialist party let him or her examine what happened at the last convention. There is no room today in the socialist party for any honest workingman who has the slightest bit of class consciousness or class pride in him.

It is no wonder that the socialist party is being given permission to use the radio to transmit its poison to the American workers. While the socialist party is thus enjoying the courtesies and friendship of the worst open-shoppers in the country, the Communists are fighting on the picket lines, are organizing the unorganized, are leading strikes, are violating injunctions en masse, are resisting wage cuts, are facing persecution of their press, The DAILY WORKER—in short, are vigorous militant participants in the class struggle.

Here is the difference between the Workers (Communist) Party and the socialist party. The workers will choose right. That is why our Party is growing. That is why the socialist party is dying.

Foreign Born Workers Have New Paper

The first issue of the "Foreign Born Worker" came out with the March-April number. The "Foreign Born Worker" is a mimeographed 8-page paper, published by the Council for the Protection of Foreign Born Workers, 39 Union Square, New York City, an organization which has rendered and intends to continue rendering signal service in fighting the numerous deportation bills in congress, bills born out of the 100 per cent American pay-tribotic societies by the open shop bosses, for use as a club over the foreign born workers in case the latter show signs of not being satisfied with their servitude.

The current issue of the "Foreign Born Worker" is devoted to showing up the Aswell bill in the house, which provides for compulsory registration of all non-citizens; the Johnson bill, providing fresh excuses for the deportation of foreign born militant workers, and the Box bill, which would bring Latin American workers under the quota law. There are several well-written short editorials in the paper.

A feature living up the little paper is "News Bits," containing paragraphs of interest to the foreign born workers. An article of particular interest is "The Foreign Born Worker in the Ford Industry." The sketches in the "Foreign Born Worker" are above the average.

Labor Libraries

ANN ARBOR, Mich., April 17.—Valuable labor libraries are maintained at the University of Michigan here as well as at the University of Wisconsin, consisting of labor newspapers, original manuscripts, current bulletins of trade unions and many books.

Three "Leaders" of the Bankrupt Socialist Party



Leaders of the bankrupt Socialist party. Left to right are Norman Thomas, socialist presidential candidate. James H. Maurer, candidate for vice president, and Victor Berger.