

Hillquit's Tammany Hall Beaten by the Real Tammany Hall

By John Pepper (New York).

"The Albany Conference was a complete failure" — is the summary made, not by a Communist, but by Morris Hillquit. And we can add to it: The entire policy of the Socialist Party has shown itself in Albany a complete failure.

What was the Conference in Albany? Simply a continuation of the *National Cleveland Conference for Progressive Political Action*, on a *state scale*. The Cleveland Conference declared for participation in the primaries of the old capitalist parties on a *national scale*, but permitted the organization of labor parties on a *state basis*. The Albany Conference was a political convention of the labor movement of New York State. New York State has ten million population, and one and a quarter million organized workers. It ranks first in population and is the richest industrial state of the Union. The Socialist Party has its center of gravity in New York. New York is the only place where the Socialist Party has any influences in the trade unions. The tactic of the Socialist Party within the "*Cleveland Conference for Progressive Political Action*" ought to have succeeded in New York State, if anywhere. *And for that reason, the debacle of the Socialist Party in Albany is not merely an ordinary defeat, but a decisive collapse of its entire policy.*

What has been the entire policy of the Socialist Party during the last year? *An alliance with the conservative and reactionary labor leaders against the rank and file, and against the revolutionary development of the labor movement.* The Socialist Party has not once dared to attack Gompers in the last year. It fought against amalgamation, betrayed the Labor Party idea in Cleveland, slandered Soviet Russia, and barred the Communists from every labor conference whenever possible. All this has been done by the Socialist Party in order to win grace and favor with the reactionary labor leaders.

The Socialist Party has built its entire tactic *upon the labor leaders*. It has prostituted itself for Gompers, Johnston, Stone and Keating. It went to Albany as a prostitute. It put on its finest opportunist clothes, applied a thick coating of Gompers-rouge on its face, and perfumed itself with the strongest anti-Bolshevik patchouli. But all in vain. The reactionary leaders of the railroad brotherhoods were so much afraid of the labor party idea that they could not tolerate in their midst even the Socialist Party. The Socialist Party is weeping now, and is wailing that although it sought a compromise at any price, and although it offered everything it had, even its honor, it was thrown out of the Albany Conference nevertheless. We can't help it, but we have no compassion for the Socialist Party. Its tears and its wailing are but the tears and the wailing of a prostitute who has been thrown out without pay, by roughnecks, after a wild night. The Socialist Party demanded payment for her love, but the railroad leaders declared that it was merely love, and kicked her out.

The petty Tammany Hall of Hillquit dominates the Socialist Party completely, just as the real Tammany Hall dominates New York's Democratic Party. Hillquit went to Albany with the whole apparatus of his petty Tammany Hall; but to his great surprise he found there the real Tammany Hall of New York, in the persons of ex-mayor John Fitzgibbons and William E. Fitzsimmons, the Democratic attorney of several trade unions. Hillquit was surprised, but at first wanted to fraternize even with the Tammany Hall politicians; and the love between the real Tammany Hall and Hillquit's petty Tammany Hall was for a whole day really strong and stirring. But we all know that love can easily turn into hatred. Hillquit recounts in the *New York Call*: "The break came late Sunday night, after a day of seemingly cordial exchange of sentiment and harmonious cooperation. It was as definite as it was unexpected and inconsistent." And the *New York Call* reporter writes that the attacks of the real Tammany Hall against Hillquit "came dangerously near personal insults on the part of several Democratic Party leaders who secured the floor". Hillquit attempted all the cunning of an average lawyer; but Fitzsimmons, the Democratic attorney, understands the old game better than Hillquit. It was a spectacle for the Gods, as these two lawyers fought against each other. — Hillquit declared that Tammany Hall is "The most malodorous and corrupt political organization in America". Fitzsimmons declared that Hillquit's petty Tammany Hall, the Socialist Party, "has no good faith and is not honest". Hillquit declared that Fitzsimmons hasn't the right to speak in the name of the workers and that he represents the interests of the

Democratic Party. Fitzsimmons declared that Hillquit hasn't the right to speak in the name of the workers, and that he represents merely the interests of the Socialist Party. We believe that both lawyers were entirely right. *Of course, in the end, the real Tammany Hall remained victorious, and Hillquit's petty Tammany Hall was simply kicked out.* The scores of Socialist Party delegates voyaged proudly to Albany on a special ship. We are curious to know what special vehicle they used in their quick exit from the Albany Conference.

From Cleveland to Albany.

What are the causes of the debacle of the entire Socialist Party tactic?

We can say that, for us, this debacle of the Socialist Party tactic did not come unexpectedly as for the Socialist Party leaders. We predicted beforehand that it would happen that way. We wish to analyze now the chief reasons for the defeat of the Socialist Party.

First, the Socialist Party has allied itself with the reactionary labor leaders and has lost all faith in the rank and file. It hoped that the American development would ape the British development. It hoped that the conservative labor leaders of America would create a Labor Party in America, just as the conservative leaders of the British labor movement created the British Labor Party. The Socialist Party has once more shown that it does not understand the American labor movement, that it is an outsider. Gompers and Johnston are definitely allied with the capitalists or middle class politicians, and will never be leaders of the Labor Party movement. At Cleveland, the Socialist Party went so far in the service of the reactionary labor leaders, as to vote for participation in the primaries of the old capitalist parties, on condition that it would be allowed to vote for its own candidates. It wished to repeat the same game in Albany. In Cleveland it was tolerated, and in Albany it was thrown out. Why? What is the difference between the situations? The difference is that in Cleveland the Socialist Party was still necessary for Johnston, Stone, and Keating. The Socialist Party supplied them with ideology against the immediate creation of a Labor Party, and in throwing out the Communists. The Socialist Party was a tool in the hands of the reactionary labor leaders for deceiving the militant rank and file. But since Cleveland, there has taken place the July 3rd Convention in Chicago, and the Federated Farmer-Labor Party has been formed. Which means that the Socialist Party could not prevent the militant left wing of the worker and farmer movement from abandoning the Cleveland fake for progressive political action. As a result, the Socialist Party lost its value in the estimation of the reactionary labor leaders. In Albany it was no longer necessary. It was simply thrown out. It is truly a rare irony of fate that the reactionary leadership now brings up literally the same accusations against the Socialist Party, which the Socialist Party made against the Communists: that the Socialist Party wanted to capture the Convention, that the Socialist Party packed the Convention with delegates, and that they do not want to go with the Socialist Party because if they do, people will say they are Bolsheviks.

The Socialist Party will now parade as the hero of the Labor Party idea. It will say that it was thrown out because it fought for independent political action of the working class. It will tear open its shirt and show the wounds on its chest. But that's a fake. The Socialist Party has not defended for one minute the idea of the Labor Party—neither in Cleveland nor in Albany. If it has wounds, they are not on its chest, but on its buttock, from the kick of the reactionary labor leaders.

Capitalist Deed and Socialist Phrase.

The Socialist Party has been preaching for months that the situation is not ripe for a Labor Party—that the workers do not understand as yet the necessity for a Labor Party. Nor did they in Albany bring in a resolution for the creation of a Labor Party; and still less did they fight for the resolution of Campbell, the delegate of the Buffalo Trades and Labor Council, which was for the creation of a Labor Party. *Their only proposal was to postpone all action until 1924.* The reactionary railroad union leaders and Tammany Hall politicians had easy sailing. They had something positive and immediate to offer to the workers. They offered immediate participation in the elections of next fall, through the means of the old capitalist parties. Of course, it is a false and treacherous policy against the interests of the working class. But it is an immediate action. And dissatisfied workers demand immediate action. *The only tactic which would have made it possible to fight against the Tammany Hall politicians and the railroad union leaders would have been to urge the immediate creation of a Labor Party.* As against immediate action in alliance with capitalists, immediate independent action for the working class. The only possible tactic would have been action. But against action in the interest of the capitalists, the

Socialist Party had only the tactic of hesitation and passiveness. Hillquit declared at the Convention: *"Any definite policy would force a rupture"*. The Democratic Tammany Hall had easy sailing. Fitzsimmons declared against the postponement tactic of the Socialist Party: *"It's all right to have lovely dreams about what we can do away in the future in 1924, but we have got to do something now"*. The reporter of the New York Call writes: *"Many railwaymen declared they wanted something now, they wouldn't wait a year. Next year, several said, was so far off that to plan for it was a dream"*. *The Socialist Party could not win over the rank and file representation of the railwaymen, because it had nothing to offer them.* Against the definite capitalist policy of the railway leaders it did not have just as definite a labor policy, but only Hillquit's phrase: *"No definite policy"*. Against the capitalist *"Here and now"* it did not have the revolutionary *"Here and now"*, but only a *"lovely dream"* for the future.

The greatest lesson of Albany is that, against the real Tammany Hall, the petty Tammany Hall is powerless and useless. *Albany has definitely shown that the Labor Party of the American working class can be created only through the struggle against the capitalist parties and through the struggle against the reactionary labor leaders.* It has shown that everyone who does not fight against Gompers and Johnston, simply delivers the working class to its worst Republican and Democratic enemies.

A Manifesto of Georgian Mensheviks

Moscow, August 4, 1923.

The all-municipal Tiflis conference of former Mensheviks, attended by delegates representing 1800 Tiflis workers, for the most part old party members, has issued the following manifesto:

To the International Proletariat!

Comrades! Workers!

The all-municipal Tiflis conference of former Mensheviks has resolved to dissolve the Menshevik organization and to place itself beneath the banner of the Third (Communist) International. The central committee of the Menshevik Party of Georgia throws in our face the accusation that we are leaving the Menshevik Party under the pressure of the Tscheka and out of fear of reprisals. Comrades! Before the proletariat of the whole world we reject this accusation with all possible contempt. It is not merely individual persons who are leaving the Menshevik Party of Georgia at the present time, but masses of proletarians and peasants, and a large number of workers who for many years carried on illegal work under the rule of Czarism. No one dare venture to indict these masses who have sacrificed so much in the revolutionary struggle, and who remained at their posts under threat of death and imprisonment in the days of the Czar, of changing their political views, out of cowardice. The workers and peasants do not learn in academies, but in the school of practical struggle, and it is precisely in this school that we have come to the conclusion that we must remain no longer in the Menshevik Party. This party, which deservedly won laurels at the time of the first Russian revolution, when we were fighting against Czarist despotism, already began to lower its flag before the imperialist bourgeoisie during the great war, and with it the whole Second International. After the October revolution, the Menshevik Party of Georgia definitely entered on the path of counter-revolution, under the pretext of fighting for the independence of Georgia. Comparing the attitude of the Menshevik government of Georgia with that of the Soviet government replacing it, we became convinced that the former was driving the proletariat under the yoke of the bourgeoisie, whilst the latter led the way to the broad paths of socialism. For this reason alone we resolved to leave the ranks of the Menshevik Party. Our former Menshevik leaders, exiles abroad, spread there a report that the Moscow Bolsheviks were endeavoring to hold Georgia for imperialist purposes, have forcibly occupied it with their troops, and destroyed its independence. The parties of the Second International are zealously engaged in spreading these legends further, in order thus to frighten the West European working people away from communism.

Comrades, workers!

Know that truth and falsehood are skillfully intermingled in this legend. In the first place, our former leaders conceal from you the fact that they differed from the Bolsheviks up to the October revolution in being great Russian patriots; that they stood for a united and undivided Greater Russia; they reproached Lenin for his "defeatism", his cooperation in the disintegration of great Russia, since he demanded the right of self-determination for the oppressed peoples, even to the point of separation. Our