

# A New 'Labor Party' For Britain

By HERBERT ZAM

Since leaving the Labor Party, the British Independent Labor Party has steadily declined in membership, and also in influence in most sections of the country. Precisely at a time when the opportunities for revolutionary work inside the Labor Party were greatest, after the ousting of MacDonald and his clique for their complete capitulation to Baldwin, the ILP separated itself from the main body of the politically organized workers in the expectation that these workers would soon flock out of the Labor Party. But things have not worked out that way. The workers renewed their hope in the Labor Party after the cleansing, and instead of flocking out began to return in great numbers. The expectations of the ILP did not materialize.

Now even the ILP leadership realizes this. An effort is being made to undo the damage. At its last convention the ILP decided to launch a campaign for labor unity, not through affiliation with the Labor Party, but through the launching of a super Labor Party. The text of the decision reads:

"The ILP welcomes all tendencies for united action by the working class in the class struggle, and would welcome a federal association of workers' political organizations which would permit freedom of propaganda and action. Within this Federation joint action would be taken on a program of maximum agreement, whilst the parties within the Federation would retain freedom of criticism and action on other issues, including their own press, platform and program, and the right to vote separately in Parliament."

It is obvious, with the exception of the last point, that what is described here is the manner of functioning of a labor party. Even the last point has been carried out in practice, although outlawed by the statutes. Consequently, the decision of the ILP is in essence a recognition of the need for being associated with a labor party, and a refusal to recognize that the

present Labor Party meets the bill. It is true that efforts have been made from time to time to transform the Labor Party into a highly disciplined organization, limiting the independence of the affiliated sections. But in practice, the federated character of the Labor Party has remained unchanged. No effort was made to enforce the "standing orders" even against the ILP at the time of the dispute. The ILP became frightened at the possibility of enforcement of these rules some time in the future and ran out.

Even if the proposals of the ILP are carried out and the super-Labor Party is established, what guarantee is there that the same dangers will not arise? Will there not be tendencies for super-centralization? Will there not be MacDonalds in it? Will the component elements be materially different than they are today? Obviously not. Therefore, the proposals of the ILP are either utopian or a subterfuge, a refusal to recognize the errors of sectarian existence and boldly return to the Labor Party. The ILP cannot solve its difficulties by grandiose schemes of new super-parties. It must base itself on the realities of today—and those realities demand that the ILP, the main revolutionary force in the British working class today, return to the Labor Party and continue its work for revolutionary Socialism. The Socialist League has shown that such work can be done even under the present structure and leadership of the Labor Party. The ILP today has no real reason for refusing to follow its example.

## Communists and The Labor Party

The predicament of the ILP has become greater since the "new line" of the communists,

part of which is a campaign to be permitted affiliation with the Labor Party. When the ILP left it was somewhat under the pressure of the communists, who were at the time in the throes of their "third period" mania. Upon leaving the Labor Party, the ILP entered into a permanent united front with the CP which came to an end when the CP broke it to support the candidates of the Labor Party during the last election.

The campaign of the CP for affiliation is already having some success, thus thoroughly refuting both the ILP and the former CP arguments that revolutionists cannot come into the Labor Party. At its last conference, the Miners' Federation decided, by a vote of 283,000 to 238,000 to vote, in favor of CP affiliation provided the CP "accepts and abides by the constitution of the Labor Party." Since the unit rule is compulsory at the Labor Party Conference, this means that the 521,000 votes of the miners will be cast in favor of CP affiliation.

While CP will not be admitted this year, if the CP line remains the same, it is almost certain that a favorable vote is only a matter of time. The present line of the CP is so much like that of the Labor Party that only the differences and prejudices of the past stand in the way of affiliation.

The ILP is constantly contradicting its own claims that the Labor Party can no longer be influenced. In a recent issue of its organ the "New Leader," there is a report of a session of parliament entitled "Revolt Becomes Revolution." It is a description of how, in a vote on armaments, the ILP parliamentary delegation secured the support for its posi-

tion, first of 64 Labor members, and then, by continuing the militant fight, of the entire Labor delegation. If that could be accomplished from the outside, not among rank and file workers but among the parliamentary "bureaucracy," how much more could be accomplished on the inside? Is not this report of the "New Leader" a most telling argument against the present ILP policy and in favor of affiliation?

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## Communist-Social Credit Alliance in Canada

A brilliant example of the workings of the new communist policy of alliances with anybody in order to secure "results" is brought to the attention of the CALL by Monroe Sweetland, new chairman of the Socialist Party in Oregon. In Edmonton, Alberta Province, Canada, there was an election for alderman. The communists were so anxious to have "unity" that they withdrew their own candidate in favor of the candidate of the Social Credit party, in spite of the fact that the CCF, which is the Canadian Labor Party, also had a candidate in the field. The CCF very correctly refused to endorse the Social Credit candidate, since the first requirement for the building up of a real Labor Party is severance with the old (and new) capitalist parties.

In the city election in Portland, Ore., the communists supported Ralph Clyde, the Townsend candidate for Mayor. So we see that this is not a Canadian aberration, but part of the new "broad" line of the communists, to whom the Socialists have become "sectarian" because they refuse to embrace Aberhardt, Townsend, Roosevelt and other false saviors of the people.