

THE FIGHTING WORKER

WORKERS OF THE WORLD
UNITE!



Organ of the Revolutionary Workers League of the U. S.

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Reformists Win at Socialist Convention

Under the sweep to the right in the world labor movement and in the United States the Socialist Party took a decisive step to the right at its nineteenth national convention at Cleveland. The offensive of the right wing on the one hand and the impact of the Trotskyist liquidation into the Socialist Party on the other succeeded in driving the Militants into the camp of reformism. Politically the right wing won.

To be sure it paid a price for its victory. The Old Guard of New York failing to carry its entire line pulled out of the party. But so great was the political strength of the right wing and so weak the left forces that even with the loss of the spearhead of the right wing it was able to swing the party clear into the camp of reformism.

Roll Call of Reformism

The reformist character of the party can be measured by the decisions taken there: the party is for the strengthening and maintenance of bourgeois democracy; it is against the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism advocacy of which is incompatible with membership; it is for building a reformist, two-class, farmer-labor party; its election platform hasn't one ounce of class consciousness; its trade union, unemployment and agrarian positions are out and out reformist; its decisions on the youth question were absolutely reactionary. There is literally not one positive feature to this convention.

The Perspective for the Socialist Movement is a Further Drift to the Right

Only one conclusion is possible for revolutionists: to split from this organization of agents of imperialism. All those who remain in it are uniting with the class enemy against the workers.

The Workers Vote

The State formally is the representative of the entire population of the country, but in reality it represents the interests of only one class—the ruling class. It is the organized political and physical power in the hands of the exploiting class for the defense of their property rights and for the oppression of the exploited class. This fact may be more or less hidden for a time by “democratic” forms such as a republican form of government, universal suffrage, a bill of rights, a theoretical equality before the law and so on—But the true nature of the state becomes obvious whenever the struggle between the classes reaches a stage in which the ruling class is—or thinks it is—in danger of being overthrown. Then all democratic forms are swiftly discarded. The Weimar Constitution of Germany was replaced by the Nazi dictatorship, the parliamentarianism of Italy was replaced by the Fascist Corporate State. In these substitutions neither the State nor its role lost its former essence. It remained what it was, the means of oppression in the hand of the ruling class but without the mask of democracy.

Capitalist Democracy A Fake

Even in countries where the rule of the exploiters is masked by democracy, the mask is very transparent. In the United States we have “democracy”. But the means of information and propaganda, are largely in the hands of the ruling class. The machinery for elections is under the control of the ruling class. How the votes are counted and discounted depends upon the ruling class. All the rules and regulations are laid down by the ruling class. Millions of Negroes are disfranchised. Millions of foreign born workers are excluded from the elections. Millions of native workers, on the go in search of jobs and thereby having no legal residence for the specified period of time in the state and district where they are located on the day of elections, are deprived the right to vote. Millions of young workers are denied the right to vote because they are not of legal age, though old enough to be exploited by the ruling class.

If in spite of all these handicaps, the workers succeed in electing a few representatives of their own, what then? What or who can prevent the ruling class from throwing out such representatives, as the Socialist Assemblers were thrown out of the assembly of the State of New York years ago? So long as you vote the way the exploiters want you to vote, you may have the right. But if you vote against them they can disfranchise you as millions of us are disfranchised.

The workers can achieve freedom and security only by overthrowing the capitalist state and the whole capitalist system. But we can never overthrow capitalism if we limit ourselves to the legal framework of the capitalist state and submit to the rules laid down

by our exploiters.

The Workers Vote

Then why participate at all in an election campaign? For the purpose of revolutionary propaganda and agitation, to expose in action the bourgeois system to the class. How shall we participate in elections organized by the capitalists against the workers? The Revolutionary Workers League says—through the Workers Vote.

We propose to set up parallel to the voting system of the capitalists a Workers Vote against capitalism. We propose to organize a vote of ALL workers in the United States, regardless of color, sex, citizenship in the United States, residence qualifications worked out by the capitalists, etc. Only the exploited workers, poorest farmers, etc. will be able to vote. And all those who toil who are over seventeen will be able to vote. Bosses and their direct agents will be ineligible. The workers will be asked to vote for candidates who stand on the platform of the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a workers' government.

In this way the vote of ALL workers, those permitted to vote by the capitalists and those disbarred, will be given an opportunity to vote against capitalism for a workers' world. And the sham democracy of capitalism can be exposed in the light of all workers.

Today we are weak and can put this proposition to work only on a modest scale. But as we grow in influence and size we can apply it more widely until it becomes a powerful instrument in the hands of the workers against the capitalists.

Auxiliary Tactics

As an auxiliary tactic, where possible, the workers will be asked to write in on the regular ballots in the capitalist election the names of the candidates in the Workers Vote election. And when we are strong enough we can and will run candidates in the capitalist elections too. But in all such cases parallel with the vote of our candidates in the capitalist election will go the Workers Vote for these and other candidates in the Workers Vote election.

This is a new idea. It is a revolutionary idea and will enable the revolutionists in the United States to make full use of the fake democracy of the American capitalists in the interests of the working class and the revolution. We are confident it will strike responsive chords in the thinking and sentiments of workers everywhere.

Because it is new there must be many questions about it. Workers are invited to write to the *Fighting Worker* for further information and also to tell us what they think about it. Future issues of the *Fighting Worker* will discuss other aspects of the question.

Bosses Clash over Riders for Donkey and Elephant

Now that the first term of the Roosevelt New Deal Group is coming to a close and the Democratic and Republican parties are preparing for their nomination conventions, the antagonism among the exploiters is revealed in a bitter clash for points of advantage through the control of the state delegations.

The Roosevelt New Deal imperialist group is waging a winning fight against its rivals for the control of the Philadelphia convention. The Republican Cleveland convention preliminaries are also witnessing a struggle between the same two dominating groups. In this case the Old Deal imperialist group has the upper hand at the present stage.

Struggle for Both Parties

Both leading imperialist groups endeavor to unite as subordinated factors other layers of the exploiters and sectional group interests and sections of the middle and working class. Both groups fight for control of the DECISIVE sections of the Democratic and Republican parties. Neither places its eggs in one basket.

Both groups and their allies are bitter enemies of the working class. The difference between them concerns difference in methods of subjecting the working class.

Rockefeller versus Morgan

The two dominating groups within the United States are the Morgan group and the Rockefeller group. Each group has allies among the lesser capitalists. Under the Roosevelt regime they have compromised on secondary points, found a working agreement on other conflicting points, but in the main have carried on a bitter struggle against each other nationally and internationally and today stand on the threshold of a more intense struggle for control in the 1936 election.

Al. Smith and others as staunch Democrats have ties directly or indirectly with Morgan and cast their lot, as representatives of the Liberty League with their master against the Roosevelt New Deal group, while the Progressive Republicans, the Farmer-Laborites are tied up with sectional financial and industrial interests that are tied to the Roosevelt New Deal group of imperialists.

The Rockefeller group has had the “inside track” under the Roosevelt administration. The Morgan group is waging a bitter fight against policies of the Roosevelt administration.

Most of the Senators and Representatives and other agents of the government who serve these dominating groups have connections with them that are difficult to trace. The imperialists, in the main, have this political relationship organized even better than their holding companies which hide their profits and control. The FIGHTING WORKER will unfold different aspects of the relationship between the Democratic and Republican forces and the financial and industrial rulers of the country. This will be followed up to expose the imperialist agents in the ranks of labor.

TROTSKYISTS BETRAY MARXISM

“Workers Party Calls All Revolutionary Workers to Join the Socialist Party” reads the headline of the last issue of the *New Militant* to be published. Politically what the bankrupt Trotskyists are saying is: break with Marxism, unite with reformism. This is the exact opposite of Lenin's slogan: break with reformism, unite the revolutionists in a party independent, politically and organizationally, of the opportunists. Precisely when world imperialism is calling on the Second International to prepare the workers for the coming war the Trotskyists hail the Socialist Party as the party for revolutionists. This is a betrayal of Marxism.

Abandon 4th International

It is therefore no accident that in the blurb with which these capitulators to reformism announce their end (known to the entire movement for months) there is not one word of the Fourth International, not a line about the most burning questions of our time, the struggle for a new Communist International. In fact the question of the revolutionary international is not discussed at all. The Trotskyists have abandoned the Fourth International to accept the Second International. It is their party!

What reason do they give for this disgusting capitulation? The Socialist Party, they say “has advanced toward the position of revolutionary Marxism on a number of basic questions.” What questions, Messrs. Trotskyists? Notably the war question? They say, “Why don't they name them all? Is the road to power one of them? Or the resolution making the advocacy of armed insurrection incompatible with membership in this party? Or the Commonwealth Plan which promises that the “Federal Government will provide protection for the American people for invasion”—and to spare “the American people” the “expense of unnecessary arming” by “eliminating the profit motive from national defense” through “the nationalization of the munitions and ship building industries.” Very revolutionary!!

For National Defense

What about the war resolution? The Trotskyists say this resolution goes “further in the direction of a Leninist position against war than any Socialist Party has ever done.” Does it come out for revolutionary defeatism? That is one decisive test of a Leninist position on imperialist war. It does not. On

the other hand the election platform calls for the “strengthening of neutrality laws.” Very revolutionary, indeed! And exactly in the spirit of Lenin! The Commonwealth Plan establishes the fact that the Socialist Party is for national defense! That is why the right wing voted for the war resolution! Only scoundrels of the American Trotskyist stripe can obscure this glaring fact. Only capitulators to reformism can cover the reformism of the Socialist Party with a red cloak!

But suppose that this resolution taken by itself was left. What then? The struggle against imperialist war is a struggle against capitalism which reaches its highest peak in the armed insurrection to overthrow capitalism. That is how Lenin put it. But the Socialist Party is against armed insurrection. It is for the “maintenance and strengthening of existing democratic institutions.” “The Socialist Party is for maintaining and strengthening capitalism. The Socialist Party cannot fight war any more today than it did in 1917. People who support capitalist democracy in peace will not and cannot overthrow it during war.”

The Trotskyists say that the departure of the Old Guard shifts the center of gravity in the party to the left. This is completely false. The right wing won politically at Cleveland. They forced through the decision on armed insurrection and the other reactionary decisions. It will swing still further to the right. If this party grows it will be on a definitely reformist basis. The Trotskyists promise to loyally help it grow. If the Trotskyists grow it will be as the left lackeys of reformism.

We Go On

As for us we stand fast by the idea of Lenin—the Second International, including the Socialist Party of the United States is an “agency of international imperialism within the labor movement pervading it with bourgeois influence, bourgeois ideas, bourgeois lies and bourgeois corruption.” War to the death on this agency of betrayal! War against the capitulators who smear a coat of red wash over it to hide their own shame!

The Workers Party is dead? Long live the Revolutionary Workers League! Forward to the building of the Fourth International against the Stalinists, against the Socialist Party, against the Trotskyists.

Read the Fourth International.

Blum Runs French Government - for Bosses

The French elections have given birth to the Blum government. This has been hailed by the Stalinists, Socialists and liberals all over the world as a victory for labor. Is it victory for the workers? Or is it, on the contrary, a victory for the capitalists over the workers?

The workers taking advantage of the present situation are engaged in a tremendous strike movement to improve their conditions. Blum, leader of the Socialist Party and the Peoples Front has come out against anarchy! Not the anarchy of capitalism which forces hundreds of thousands of workers to stop production to raise their wages and which is driving toward war—but against the “anarchy” of a magnificent strike movement. Blum the faithful servant of capitalism slanders the workers. The workers must reply: Down with Blum, the Socialist Party and the Peoples Front.

Blum's policies are plain: he has assured the imperialists of the entire earth that they have nothing to fear from him. He aims to insure “stability” — that is the normal, peaceful exploitation of workers and the preparation for war.

He is for living in peace with all the nations of the earth irrespective of their internal regimes or policies. Oppressed India and imperialist England he puts on the same plane! He is for order. That is to say he is for suppression of the workers in France and the sixty millions colonials in the French empire!

The Stalinists

The Stalinists also won a victory in the elections. Their central slogan was, “For a strong, free, and happy France!” Other slogans were: “Unity of the nation!” “We do not want a foot of foreign land, but we shall not permit a foot of our soil to be touched”—Stalin's non-revolutionary, national-socialist slogan, coined for the Soviet Union, applied by his disciples to imperialist France! To make sure that the French imperialists clearly understand that these “communists” include the French colonies in “our soil” which they promise to defend, their leader, Thorez, said: “It is true that we want that our people treat the Algerians and Indo-chinese as our ancestors of the First Republic treated the Negroes of the West Indies, whom they enfranchised and put on a footing of complete equality with Frenchmen.” Thorez conveniently forgot to add that when the Negroes of the West Indies interpreted this “complete equality” to include the right to decide whether they wanted to be “Frenchmen”

at all, and to declare their separation from France, the First Republic sent an army to bring them back into the fold of a “strong, free, and happy France.”

This is the basis on which these social patriots won their election victory! The French imperialists need not fear such a “victory” which makes good patriotic Frenchmen out of workers who yesterday still regarded them selves part of the international working class. The millions of workers who were determined to beat back Fascism have been made to believe that in order to do that they have to support their own oppressors against Germany and Italy and the oppressed colonials in Syria, Algiers, French Indo China.

The real significance of the left election victory is a defeat for proletarian internationalism, for revolutionary Marxism, a victory for French imperialism. Against a working class that has been taught to identify Fascism with German and Italian Fascism, and internationalism with a system of imperialist alliances, the French bourgeoisie does not need to employ the costly method of suppressing the working class by Fascism. The Peoples Front holds the workers down! The future may tell a different story.

Entirely misleading and treacherous is the propaganda of the Stalinists who shout that the Peoples Front victory is a stunning defeat for Fascism. They sow the illusion as the Socialists have done for years that the road to socialism lies along the parliamentary lines worked out by the capitalists to screw the lid of oppression tighter—with the help of the workers who are misled by their reformist leaders.

The present developments throw a harsh light on the policies of the reformists who are leading the workers on the path of national unity and subordination to the capitalists. Equally revealing is the light which is cast on the role of the Trotskyists who two years ago set out to push the Socialist Party into the camp of the revolution and gave up their organization to do it—in France and throughout the world. On them falls a great share of the responsibility of the workers to free themselves from reformist influences and build a revolutionary party.

The few internationalists who held out against the reformism of the Stalinists and Socialists and the opportunism of the Trotskyists confront tremendous obstacles in the struggle to build the Fourth International in France and its colonies.

End Negotiations with Field Group

On Friday, May 29 a series of physical assaults took place at the headquarters of the League for a Revolutionary Workers Party by members of the organization against other members. As a result the LRWP has disintegrated. For both these reasons the Italian Left Fraction of Communism and the Revolutionary Workers League have decided to break off negotiations for fusion with the LRWP.

The use of violence in the labor movement is a profoundly reactionary practice, except, of course, in self defense or against fascist and police hoodlums. We have suffered too much at the hands of the Stalinists and Cannon and company to easily forget the degeneration which this signifies. No political differences have yet been brought forward by either the Field group or the Stanley-Demy group. But such explosions in the political movement do not take place without having an underlying political reason. In this case the political differences have not been allowed to develop through discussion and political struggle but have been bureaucratically suppressed.

Read the Fighting Worker.

Collapse of New Zimmerwald Line

The conclusion is obvious: the New Zimmerwald line of the Field group which was its political platform before it was formally changed in the negotiations, was unable to consolidate the membership on a clear political basis. The group was unable to withstand the impact on it of the general drift to the right in the world labor movement and the shock of its own internal struggle. Thus at the first conflict it fell apart.

The Italian comrades and the Revolutionary Workers League will continue the negotiations without the LRWP. At the request of the Italian comrades the negotiations have been suspended, however, for two months to permit them to conclude a discussion in their ranks in the United States and internationally over the class character of the Soviet Union.

Comrade Okun handled the League's work in conjunction with the “Hunger March” on the Trenton, New Jersey State Capitol, and then took an organizational trip to New Haven and Boston. New contacts and subscribers for our paper were obtained. Later Okun covered the Pennsylvania area around Allentown with excellent results.

American Youth Act

In an attempt to split the ranks of the workers by separating the youth from the adult workers the “progressive” administration of Roosevelt has set up the National Youth Administration. The reformists who “attack” the administration really help the division along by proposing to “solve” the problem of relief for the youth by passing a bill through Congress, the American Youth Act. This act proposes to establish a separate youth administration and a separate relief set-up which assure a split between the adult and young workers. The Stalinists and Socialists support this act as the central feature of their propaganda in this field. They are conducting a purely reformist campaign which revolves around sending letters to Congressmen and lobbying in Washington.

The Young Workers League counterposes to this line of division and reform a clear cut line of struggle for relief together with the adult workers on a class struggle basis. It fought for this line at the recent New York State conference of the American Youth Congress. The reformists carried their line. Browder, who laid the basis for the support of Roosevelt in the coming elections, set the tone for the conference. No plans for mass activity to win better conditions were laid; the American Youth Act was advanced as the panacea.

The two lines were very clearly revealed on May 30th in the youth demonstrations which were held. The Youth Congress affair was held under absolutely patriotic slogans. Typical of the whole affair was the line of the Stalinists as expressed in leaflets distributed by them from which we give extracts: “On Memorial Day everything must be done to force our (!!) government to co-operate with those nations of the world which are striving by every means to maintain peace. . . let's . . . pay real homage to our fallen buddies.”

Stalinists Do Job for Bosses

The Young Workers League held its own demonstration in New York City. A small group of revolutionists marched through the streets behind such slogan as: “The Main Enemy Is At Home—The Capitalist Class; Turn the Imperialist War Into A Civil War!” The meeting which the Young Workers League held at the end of its parade was broken up by the Stalinists who thus serve the capitalists against the revolutionists.

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Puerto Rican Masses Fight for Freedom

The rumblings of the Puerto Rican revolution become stronger daily. The shooting of the Chief of Police, one of the most hated representatives of United States imperialism in the island; the almost daily demonstrations against imperialist rule; the tearing down of the flag that symbolizes this rule; and the raising of the Puerto Rican flag—all these and many other such acts show that the movement for independence is gaining mass support.

Alarmed by this movement the capitalist politicians are coming forward in Congress with bills to give Puerto Rico independence—of the same kind they have given the Philippines. One of these demagogues is the darling of the Stalinists, Marcantonio.

The enemy of the people of Puerto Rico is the enemy of the workers of this country, United States imperialism. “Our” capitalists own Puerto Rico as they own the United States. They oppress both peoples. As long as they rule, the “pursuit of life, liberty and happiness” is impossible for the working masses of either country. Their overthrow will free the masses of both countries.

Independence Bills—Hypocrisy

The United States imperialists will never of their own free will give independence to any people on the face of the earth. In fact they are now building the largest army and navy in the history of the United States in order to wage war against their capitalist rivals for the purpose of acquiring new colonies. The independence bills are capitalist hypocrisy to delude the masses into supporting “their” democratic government and the “progressive”, Roosevelt.

But the imperialists can be forced to grant freedom to the people of Puerto Rico. What is required for that is a working class revolution in Puerto Rico and the United States. Then and only then can the two countries be united in freedom. Until then unity between the two countries will mean nothing but joint oppression of both.

Unfortunately the independence movement in Puerto Rico is not being led by the workers but by middle class elements whose fear of the proletariat is even greater than their hatred of imperialism.

And in the United States the advanced workers are being taught by their reformist leaders, the Stalinists and Socialists, that they should confine their struggle for freedom from capitalism to the United States alone and to the parliamentary channels laid down by capitalism precisely for the purpose of making it impossible for the workers to achieve any real measure of freedom, not speak of freedom from capitalism, by this means. In short these misleaders are betraying the people of both countries and are serving the interests of imperialism.

The task of fighting for freedom for the masses of both countries is above all the task of building a

revolutionary proletarian party in both countries which will fight along the lines of Lenin's old party for freedom from all imperialism and against all its agents in the ranks of labor. That party can be only the Fourth International.

Socialist Party of Puerto Rico

The New Leader of May 23, organ of the Old Guard of the Socialist Party, has an article by one, Henry J. Cox, Flourishing Socialist Party Aids Workers in Puerto Rico. According to this article the Socialist Party there has ten thousand members, seven seats in the Insular Senate, thirteen members of the Assembly and mayors of twelve towns. A Socialist is Commissioner of Labor. Here is a force which could be a power in the fight for independence. But “The Socialist Party is also clamoring for statehood, believing it would simplify the present awkward system of sending a governor from Washington.”

In these last words is contained the entire policy of the Socialist Party of Puerto Rico: it is opposed to independence. It wants to reform colonial oppression to make it more efficient. These people are traitors.

Socialist Call Silent

The New Leader supports this policy unreservedly. The Old Guard are dyed-in-the-wool reformists. The Socialist Call, that sterling organ of the “revolutionary Socialists” of the Thomas stripe finds it compatible with its “revolutionary” principles to ignore the question entirely. Far be it from it to expose its lackey brothers in the colonies who prostrate themselves in the service of the oppression of the masses of Puerto Rico. Nothing is further from their thought than that they should make a political fight against the Old Guard reformists for their support of these traitors.

The Stalinist Puerto Rican paper, Lucha Obrera (Workers Struggle), announces the liquidation of the Independent Communist Party of Puerto Rico and the return to the ranks of the Communist Party of the comrades who a year ago declared for the Fourth International as the Independent Communist Party. We do not know whether this is true. We do know that a year ago the Independent Communist Party wrote to the Workers Party declaring for the Fourth International and asking that this fact be published. The liquidators in control of the Workers Party ignored this request and proved their revolutionary calibre by totally ignoring the situation in Puerto Rico and the struggles of the masses for freedom and bread. They have now found their true level with the Socialists in the Socialist Party.

If the liquidation of the Independent Communist Party of Puerto Rico is correctly reported it is another triumph for the opportunist international line of Trotsky and another step in the capitulation to Stalinism.

ORGANIZATION NOTES

Young Workers League

YWL Gains New Recruits

“Double the membership of the League in three months!” was the slogan of our first national convention. But today, only eight weeks since the convention, the membership of the organization stands at twice the figure it was at the time of the convention! Among the most recent recruits were two members of the Young Communist League, one in New York and one in Youngstown, who resigned from that organization because it is preparing to serve as a recruiting agent for American imperialism and joined the Young Workers League to help build the new revolutionary youth league.

Join the Young Workers League.
Join the Revolutionary Workers League.

Revolutionary Workers League

Central Committee Plenum

The First Plenum of the Central Committee of the League will be held in Chicago Saturday and Sunday, July 4-5. Besides the members of the Central Committee the active workers of the League are invited to sit in at the sessions with voice. The main points of the agenda will be: The Election Campaign; The Negotiations with the Italian Left Fraction of Communism and the League for a Revolutionary Workers Party; The Fighting Worker; and important organizational questions.

Following the Socialist Party National Convention comrades Okun and Fox toured the Ohio area speaking and doing organizational work.