

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

v. XI, no. 5

VOLUMES

LABOR DONATED

PRICE 10¢

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SHALL WORKERS
SUPPORT
A LABOR PARTY

DOLLAR-POUND STRUGGLE

LEFT, RIGHT & CENTER: A REVIEW

REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS
LEAGUE
U.S.A.

SHALL WORKERS SUPPORT A LABOR PARTY?

The traditional two party system in the United States still dominates the political arena in 1949 after seventy five years of bitter struggles and attempts of the working class to find expression in the halls of Congress. In this whole period the working class have had no direct elected representative in our parliamentary system. The absence of actual worker's representative from a party expressing the program and interests of the working class has left the field wide open for liberal and progressive capitalists to speak "for" labor. In most cases they represented third capitalist parties, such as the Greenbacks, Populist, Farmer-Labor Parties, Progressive Party, etc.

Today, we have less representatives in State and national offices from third capitalist parties than in the past. This in spite of the fact that widespread agitation for the Labor Party has been carried on by left wing trade unions, the Socialists, the Stalinists, the two Trotsky groups and other liberal elements in the Wallace movement, etc.

The 1948 elections with Henry Wallace having the support of large sections of liberals and labor party elements revealed a wide split in the ranks of trade union and workers organization leaders. The 1924 third party behind Robert M. La Follette and Bert Wheeler, with A.F. of L., Brotherhoods, and Socialist Party backing had far greater strength at the polls than Wallace obtained in 1948.

What is the reason for this lack of political enlightenment and inability of the liberal capitalists and social reformist labor leaders to crystallize their own political machine to bring pressure against the monopolists through direct political action as well as through trade unions and other indirect means?

There are several reasons, but the main reason has been the objective condition of American imperialism. In this whole period of the re-division of the earth among the imperialist powers 1861-1871; 1898-1905; 1914-1918 and 1939-45 the United States in each struggle came out victorious. This enabled the capitalists of the United States to retain their favorable internal and international position at the expense of the defeated powers.

In this whole period while Europe was overcrowded, the United States was moving westward toward the Pacific releasing pent up class struggle in migrations westward. Even though this process already reached its apex just before the first world, (when the war slammed the door shut on large scale immigration from Europe) the fact remains that even today there still continues a shift westward although it is different than in the past.

This objective condition plus the area under the economic roof of American capitalism helped hold back political development of the American masses. With the natural resources, (waterpower, coal, iron, etc.) and a vast internal market unknown to a Europe criss-crossed by German borders, French border, Italian borders, Austro-Hungarian borders, etc., the United States organized such powers of mass production and accumulation of which the overseas rivals could only dream.

On this basis the two party system, which in England existed as the Conservative-Liberal Party fight for several decades, maintained itself much longer in the United States. In the U.S. it appeared as the Sam Gompers' formula of "reward your friends and punish your enemies", a bourgeois-reformist ideology that acts as a stone wall against the minority social-reformist trade union and labor leaders who want a Labor Party or some other form of a third capitalist party.

Add to this the fact that the parliamentary system set-up in the United States and the state election laws are so complicated and discriminatory against any form of a third party that most progressive and liberal elements took the path of least resistance and worked through the existing apparatus of the two-party system within each state and then organized a loose progressive caucus nationally that traditionally oversteps party lines for reactionary, centre and progressive capitalist blocs.

These conditions, so closely related to the underlying material factors, were able to disrupt and nullify any attempt of the exploited and discriminated millions to rally to independent political expression against the two party system. That is, independent of the two old parties—no independent working class action. Any student of American politics knows that the majority of the population always have been ill fed, ill housed, ill clothed and exploited to the n^d degree by the monopolists.

These material obstacles were not the only reasons. Another reason is the false theory developed within the ranks of the workers' organization on the questions of parliamentary action and the state. These unscientific theories advocated by the majority of the working class political groups have played havoc with the consolidation and growth of a genuine working class movement.

Some of these theories are not new but they should all be listed to refresh our memories and reveal their importance in the present political arena in the country void of any working class representation.

The social-reformist false theory that the existing state machinery of the capitalists can be used by the working class to gradually take real steps toward socialism.

The social reformist bureaucratic concept that places the main emphasis on elections, parliamentary action and makes an auxiliary fight out of the struggle at the point of production. To do this, the trade union leaders and other social reformists do not necessarily have to have direct representation in state and national legislative bodies. They also carry this through existing government "labor" agencies. Outstanding examples in this "by proxy" parliamentary action was the ability of the labor agents of the capitalists to carry with them the so called "Marxists" and radical labor element in the organization of the millions into the CIO and the AF of L as a result of the depression of the thirties and the war mobilization of the forties mainly by stressing existing rights of labor to organize under the NRA, the Wagner Act, etc.

This lack of understanding of the state and its parliamentary structure on the part of the revisionists working class political or-

ganization results in class collaboration tactics and strategy instead of class struggle policy; results in chasing the rainbow in government agencies and only giving lip-service to the fight at the point of production.

The revisionist concept of the so called Marxist organizations which advocate a Labor Party—the position of flying two flags before the working class, their own party and the Labor Party flag—is most effective in preventing the working class from taking any INDEPENDENT class action in the sphere of parliamentary activity as well as other more class tasks.

Among many negative factors the joining of the Labor Party by the so called Marxists results in a permanent bloc on the Parliamentary field with the social reformists, bourgeois reformists and liberal capitalists. This policy, of the Labor Party, ties the so called Marxists bag and baggage to the policy of the liberal capitalist wing. It negates independent working class action. It replaces the correct temporary UNITED FRONT tactic for a specific action in struggle against capitalism with these above named elements by a permanent parliamentary bloc. The correct united front bloc is outside of the sphere of parliamentary activity, below parliamentary action in the day to day class struggles of the masses.

The theory is also advanced and has reached the stage of practical politics in many European countries since the twenties of a Labor Party government and the participation in the government, not as an opposition to the government but as part of those responsible for government. Such as a coalition government; such as a post in the government by so called Marxist organizations. It is not only the Stalinists and Socialists who have been guilty of this capitulation to the capitalist state. In Spain the anarchists and the POUM were also guilty before Franco captured power. The Trotskyites have been too small to taste the fruits of victory, but the Labor Party theory, the Labor Party Government it hopes to establish contains within it the seeds of what the Stalinists and Socialists and others have long ago practiced.

The Trotskyites and all others who are for a Labor Party have not yet reached this stage of development in the United States. But the Trotskyites who want to build a Labor Party and elect representatives of that party to legislative bodies want them to oppose the anti working class measures of the Democrats and Republicans today. But the day after tomorrow when the Labor Party takes power (as in England and other countries) then what? That Labor Party in the United States no matter how radical in PROGRAM can only do in action what all Labor Parties have done in POWER. They will take those necessary measures (sugar coated in the name of labor), with some reforms to hold in check the workers) which will save capitalism from the social revolution. You lend your name and your activity to build a Labor Party that one day will be in power, that party which can only serve capitalism when the two party system fails. You are misled now and you may be honest enough when to reject the deeds of the Labor Party government. But it will then be too late. You will have wasted all these years, all this energy directing the workers into a Labor Party, directing them along a false road that leads to saving instead of overthrowing capitalism and its

exploitation of the masses.

It is one thing to work in reactionary unions, to stay where the masses are, to educate and win them over to the REVOLUTIONARY MARXIAN PARTY. It is entirely something else to work in unions or any place and in the name of Marxism, to win the workers over to a LABOR PARTY. That is the crime of those who claim they are Marxists and advocate a Labor Party.

But our clever and smart Labor Party advocates, such as the Trotskyites will reply that they are not like the Stalinists and Socialists. They will oppose the false and reformist program of the right wing Labor Party leaders, while still a minority in the Labor Party, and instead will advocate a revolutionary solution. This is more than a contradiction in terms; it is a contradiction in living reality. You cannot advocate a revolutionary solution (Marxian) and in the same breath advocate a Labor Party. The fact that you claim you are Marxists, and you lend THIS prestige, this heritage, to building a Labor Party means that you are directing, through your day in and day out propaganda, the working class to a Labor Party solution of the problems of capitalism. The Labor Party solution of the capitalist problem cannot be revolutionary; it can only be reformist.

The Trotskyites are like most muddle-heads. They advocate in WORDS in theory, a "revolutionary" Labor Party; something that cannot exist in REALITY; but from day to day in DEEDS they are HELPING THE social reformists and liberal capitalists BUILD A REFORMIST LABOR PARTY.

The Trotskyites have the burden of proof they must deliver. They advocate a revolutionary Labor Party. They must prove that there is such an animal. On our side our burden of proof is very simple. From our theoretical and practical point of view there can only be a genuine party of the working class; by that we mean the party which represents the INTEREST of the working class and the historical interest of mankind. That party can only be the revolutionary Marxian party. If the Trotskyites mean that the revolutionary Labor Party they help build will be a revolutionary Marxian Party they are also wrong. Because you cannot build a Labor Party TODAY which has a reformist program, which even the Trotskyites will admit, and then tomorrow when we win a majority in the Labor Party we will transform it into a revolutionary Marxian Party. This is also impossible to accomplish, so this road is also ruled out. The Trotskyites are still flying two flags to the class. Could they mean by revolutionary Labor Party something different than a revolutionary Marxian Party? Obviously, since the ability to transform a reformist party, a mass party into a revolutionary Marxian party is out of the question they can only mean revolutionary without Marxism. But again we are back where we started. Such a revolutionary Labor Party, void of a Marxian program, cannot OVERTHROW CAPITALISM. Such a "revolutionary" Labor Party can only REFORM, save, capitalism and beat back the onrush of the social revolution.

We will concede, there could be a "revolutionary" Labor Party in name—but not in fact. That is why we make it clear that a Labor Party can only be REFORMIST. When we speak of revolutionary we mean in fact as well as in name, we mean revolutionary Marxism.

The Labor Party position of the Trotskyites goes even deeper as a

careless growth into the theory of revolutionary Marxism. If it is correct to help build a REFORMIST POLITICAL PARTY (Labor Party) it is also correct to support reformist candidates. This is not just theory, this is reality. When the Trotskyites were liquidated into the Socialist Party under instruction from Leon Trotsky they supported Norman Thomas as in the 1936 election campaign.

Let us review this question from another angle. If you can liquidate your organization into a REFORMIST organization, such as the liquidation of the Trotsky organization into the Socialist Parties (the so called "French Turn of Leon Trotsky") then it is not only permissible to build a reformist Labor Party, but it is a tactical and not a principle question to support in election reformist candidates. Such was the case in the 1948 elections when the Schachtman Trotskyites allowed their members to vote for any of the three candidates—the SLP candidate, the Cannonite candidate or Norman Thomas the open unashamed reformist of capitalism.

This problem goes deeper still. If it is not a principle question to maintain the political and organizational independence of your revolutionary Marxian organization and you can liquidate into a reformist organization, then it is not only a tactical question when and how to liquidate your organization and a tactical question when and how to build a Labor Party, and a tactical question when and how to support reformists for elections to government offices—but it is also a tactical question, from this theoretical premise, when and how to support a LABOR PARTY GOVERNMENT, and a tactical question, when and how to join any other THIRD CAPITALIST PARTY. For example, the Schachtmanite position in New York city in regards to the liberal Party. It is also a tactical question from this premise when and how to support either the Democratic or Republican Party in this state or that city—depending upon how "liberal" it is, and every student of American politics knows that some left wingers in the two old parties are every bit as liberal and pro-labor as the majority of Labor Party candidates or Labor Party representatives in England, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the Scandinavian countries and what have you.

Let us summarize this aspect of the problem and deal with other important aspects of the problem by saying that the position of flying two flags before the class by the so called Marxian organizations, the building of a Labor Party is the greatest asset these organizations have to recruit members and to keep them afloat upon the turbulent political storms that have stripped to the bone so many attempts to build revolutionary Marxian parties. This recruiting asset of the small groups that help build a Labor Party has blinded them to a danger that far outweighs this asset. That danger is this:

The Labor Party is a fundamental revision of the principles of revolutionary Marxism, and since it deals with so many ramifications of the organizations activity, recruiting, trade union work, parliamentary work, participation in governments, the state, the road to power, the political and organizational independence of the revolutionary Marxian organization, the support or defeat of our imperialist in war, class struggle activity vs main emphasis of parliamentary activity, United fronts in action vs a permanent bloc on the parliamentary field, and practically every other problem of Marxism, this means that you are

taking in new recruits but not only are they lowering your political level; but the entire theoretical leadership of the so called Marxian organization are daily watering down more and more your theoretical baggage, revising Marxism more and more as the Labor Party grows, as you take part in the Labor Party--as capitalism declines within the country. It can be said that to the degree that you succeed in gaining more recruits to your "Marxian" organization on the basis of the Labor Party, to that degree and ratio your program of Marxism will be revised and watered down.

We have dealt with different kinds of parties so we should deal in more detail with the Labor Party and find out just what KIND of a party it really is. Parties like other social conditions flow out of the existing social order we live under and parties are class instruments for power politics. In advanced capitalist nations one finds many different parties but after reducing them to their common denominator, the class struggle, we can with not too much difficulty find out the kind of a party it is. Not only must one watch its program and principle statements from time to time but above all one must watch its deeds. The Labor Party of England has a high sounding program that appeals to workers who want a change in their favor. When the Labor Party was the party of opposition it could act very radical. But the Revolutionary Marxists long, long ago predicted its course when in power. It has been in power more than once now and we can see the results. They are facts any advanced worker knows. They speak for reformism and for capitalism. Not in form but in content what we see in the British Labor Party is a mirror of what the Labor Party in America would be if and when it gets in power.

One can say that if a certain party does not represent the interest of the working class in the present stage of decay capitalism then it can only be a party of capitalism, be it the first, second, third, fourth, or fifty party of capitalism. In other countries there are many capitalist parties, with representatives in office. Because in this country power has been shared so long by only two parties, and all the other attempts at building a third party of capitalism have failed we speak of the Labor Party as the third party of capitalism. But when it does become a national force, well established in election function it may be the fourth or fifth party, but party of capitalism and not working class it will be.

Our line of demarcation is not so complicated as it looks on first sight. We say that since the only scientific program to represent the interest of the working class is revolutionary Marxism, the only party that can really represent this class is the revolutionary Marxian Party, no matter what name it goes under. At different times historically it used different names, such as Socialist, Communist, Bolshevik, Spartacus, etc.,. But we can assure you it will not be the Labor Party as such.

We do not claim that the Marxian party is the only working class political organization; nor do we claim that the Marxian party is the only revolutionary political organization. The different social reformist, centrist, ultra-left, anarchist, etc., are all working class political organizations and some of them are also revolutionary. But since none of them have a REVOLUTIONARY MARXIAN PROGRAM they do not represent the interest of the working class, even though they speak in

the name of the working class as many left wing democrats and Republican politicians speak in the name of labor.

To merely say you speak for labor does not necessarily mean much. No more than to say you are Marxian mean that you are revolutionary Marxian. The program, words as well as the actions, deeds must be investigated to see if it is true.

The key question which will lay down this line of demarcation to see if a party can be called revolutionary, and a working class party vs. one of the capitalist parties, is the question of state power and what you are going to do with it.

If the organization says that we cannot take power through the existing state machinery of the capitalists; that we must destroy this state machinery of the exploiters, and build our own based upon the working class--that party is working class and revolutionary, even though it may not be revolutionary Marxist. But if the party says it will use the existing state machinery of the exploiters to slowly transform capitalism for the workers, even though the word socialism is not used--that party is a capitalist party in program, even though it may be a working class party in FORM, such is the Labor Party. Other more complex structures are the Socialist Parties in the different countries. Although they claim to be Marxian, often take part in revolutions, and are working class in FORM; they too, are reformist and therefore capitalist in content. By that we mean that these parties that are "revolutionary" and working class in form but which do not have a scientific program for the overthrow of capitalism and for the establishment of the worker's rule with progressive steps towards socialism (Revolutionary Marxism) those parties end up sooner or later in critical times, when they are called into the government, as supporters of capitalism against the social revolution.

Let us take some living examples, and compare them with the Labor Party, the Stalinist Party, the Anarchists in Spain, etc.,. Even if the Labor Party would adopt such a radical policy and program it still leaves us right back where we started. It would still be a party which defends and upholds the capitalist system. The only exception to this position is where the RED ARMY as in Eastern Europe took over and THEN set-up its Stalinist Parties. But even this exception does not favor the Labor Party--the so called Marxists who want to build a Labor Party.

When Cannon says he don't want a reformist Labor Party and is working to build a revolutionary Labor Party he is begging the question. What he wants is one thing. What he does today is another thing. Today he is helping BUILD A LABOR PARTY and it is the reformist Labor Party regardless of what he wants tomorrow. The Trotskyites would only have to ADVOCATE the building of a Labor Party in their press; they would not even have to raise a finger today to help build it--but the mere fact they have a program for a Labor Party and propaganda for a Labor Party makes them guilty of flying two flags and directing workers into a REFORMIST Labor Party. But of course the Trotskyites are in ACTION doing in their small way what they can to build a Labor Party, a third party of capitalism.

Or is Cannon advocating a revolutionary Labor Party with a program like some of the Socialist Parties programs when revolutions are taking place in those countries? Even this will not get us over the hump. We are still advocating a party to save capitalism; not a party which will overthrow capitalism. Even if Cannon gets this "revolutionary" Labor Party; in this country; and even if the Trotskyites are sincere but very confused programatically; than when they get ready to overthrow capitalism, the very party they spent so many years, their life energy to build--will be the party which will give the orders to drown in blood the workers, like the "revolutionary" parties of Stalinism, in Spain, in China, etc, etc, etc.

When Browder was in grace under Stalinism he advocated a Labor Party "not reformist and yet not revolutionary". Words are cheap. Cannon goes him one better he wants a "revolutionary" Labor Party.

Even when we only had theory to base our arguments on we rejected the Labor Party as a party of capitalism. Now we have historical facts of the Labor Party in action; in power, and we know it can be nothing but a third party of capitalism in the United States. (Look at the British Labor Party).

Not only do the Trotskyites want a revolutionary Labor Party but they also talk against the Peoples Front in Europe. But don't get confused. One must see if they are arguing from a principle point of view or a tactical point of view. For example, the Trotskyites have their own independent organizations today. But this is only tactical. Give us another historical junction in this or that country and they will again liquidate into the Socialist or some other reformist organization. (At the time this article was being written the British Trotskyites did liquidate into the British Labor Party.--Editor's note) The Trotskyites through the Cannon faction put up their own candidate in the 1948 election. But this was only tactical. Give them the right set-up and they will support some reformist Labor Party candidate. Because their program advocates such as they did in action yesterday. The Stalinists were the second force with Wallace. There was not room for the Trotskyites in this narrow set-up. Give them a bigger pond to swim in, with radicalization and big trade union endorsement and the Trotskyites will join the bandwagon.

The same with the Peoples Front. The form is different but the CONTENT is the same. The Peoples Front is a form suitable for certain countries with their own type of parliamentary system. In the United States, England, Australia, etc, where the parliamentary forms are different the Labor Party fills the same bill. The Peoples Front is nothing more or less than a bloc of radical capitalist and social reformists; it is a third political organization of capitalism which tries to hog-tie the worker behind them. That is identical in content what the Labor Party is wherever it exists. Where the Peoples Front is a bloc of parties for Parliamentary ends; the Labor Party organizes the members of several parties which support it into a dual separate political party for the same ends.

The Trotskyites and others like them who are for the Labor Party tell us that they have safeguarded their position against the reformist leaders within the Labor Party just as they safeguard their position in the trade unions against the reactionary leaders in there.

They tell us that it is true that the program the Labor Party advocates does not go far enough. But they say, we are a minority and we will push them farther and farther to the left as we educate the workers. They tell us that they have their own revolutionary program of their own party. This is their safe-guard.

This line of argument which many left Labor Party members give is confusing many things. By concealing your own program and supporting the minimum or partial program of the Labor Party you are partners with the reformists in leading the workers into a blind alley of parliamentary activity. You again drag out of the closet the completely false position of, "Critical Support and material aid to the Reformists." Sure, you point out that the Labor Party program is not left enough, your program is better. But to the worker that is SUPPORT even though critical. That is, you give MATERIAL AID. in many different forms--to REFORMISM. You become the left tail to the reformist kite. You are against the Peoples Front? Yes? But what did you do in the Spanish Revolution? You supported the Peoples Front of Spain against France. You gave political support with criticism, you gave material aid. This is the role of the Trotskyites in Spain, in France, etc. This is the role of the Trotskyites in the United States: Critical support of reformism, the Labor Party is SUPPORT OF REFORMISM no matter how you be the question.

Likewise, you confuse trade unions with political parties when you argue that we do the same thing in the Labor Party as we do in unions. Unions are working class organizations. They are instruments that can be used at the point of production with proper class struggle leadership. But the Labor Party is a capitalist organization in CONTENT even if working class in form. But the trade unions are working class organizations in content even if they are dominated by capitalist agents. You have turned the problem inside out. You have confused revolution in capitalist "parliament", with revolutionary work in mass workers organizations dominated by capitalist agents.

You have confused a bloc, caucus or united front in the trade union field on a "minimum" program, with unity with the reformists in a Labor Party where the reformists put forth a "minimum" program on the political field. The first is permissible; the latter is revisionism.

The program that you write on in the Labor Party, which the so called Marxian Parties admit does not cover their maximum program can only be a program for immediate demands within the framework of capitalism, a legislative program of class collaboration which can not even speak of the final emancipation of the working class.

The so called Marxian organizations which advocate a Labor party have through the Labor Party formed a bloc in Unity with the SOCIAL PATRIOTS and have broken the ranks and the unity of the working class. We may not be at war at the moment, but there are always war preparations and steps toward war and the Labor Party leaders support the major war moves of their respective capitalist class, even though they give lip-service to talks of peace. The Labor Party of England is a good example while talking for peace it prepares British Imperialism for war through

the North Atlantic Pact under American hegemony.

Those who are for the third party of capitalism, the Labor Party have broken the ranks of labor and have united with the ranks of the left capitalist elements.

The record of the Labor Party and the Farmer Labor Party in this country is as foul as the Labor Party in England. The treacherous examples may not be as numerous in this country; but the deeds are the same. The Farmer Labor Party in Minnesota helped the bosses break strikes. In New York the Labor Party helped place in office a Mayor who helped break strikes, and also supported a strike breaking Governor.

The big danger immediately ahead confronting the workers in the United States is not fascism. That is a danger of a future date. And since reformism is an immediate danger and trap for the American working class the Labor Party support is the best way to serve reformism against revolution at present.

The Revolutionary Workers League wants unity, class unity not Labor Party unity with the left capitalists. The united front, the Leninian concept of United Front action for immediate struggles against capitalism is needed, not a unity on the parliamentary field with reformists but a united front at the point of production against capitalism. A united front on the parliamentary field with social reformism favors the reformists. A United Front in day to day activity at the point of production with reformists who dominate workers organizations FAVORS THE CLASS STRUGGLE ELEMENT against the reformist leaders.

We will fly one banner, our own banner, the banner of revolutionary Marxism.

We are in principle opposed to the Labor Party. Tactically, where revolutionists and Marxists are members of trade unions that have affiliated to the Labor Party, automatically making the revolutionists work inside of these Labor Parties (and the trade unions) presenting the correct position in theory and action for genuine working class unity.

The Labor Party is no short cut to a big membership. It is no short cut to power. The Labor Party is a capitalist trap, set by impatient, get-rich-quick labor opportunists who play into the hands of the radical capitalists.

The Labor Party cannot solve the needs of the working class. Only a revolutionary Marxian Party can do this. If you say that it is best to wait for a revolutionary Marxian Party it will take too long, you are in reality saying that you refuse to sacrifice for a genuine worker's party and instead you will go along with the stream of radical capitalist and social reformists and hope to outmaneuver them somehow. But in the end you, not they, will be the ones outmaneuvered. There is no Labor Party short cut to power. The "short cut" is to break from the reformists and centrists, no matter how small your forces are, to get busy and in building a revolutionary Marxian Party. This kind of hard work, clear program and patience is the only road to success for the exploited.

Our final advise comes from a letter Engels wrote to August Bebel, December 11, 1864. Although he does not deal with the Labor Party, he does deal with the role and actions of the exploiters when their social order is at stake. What Engels says about the way the exploiters act, has direct bearing upon present day problems.

"As to pure democracy and its role in the future I do not share your opinion. Obviously it plays a far more subordinate part in Germany than in other countries with an older industrial development. But that does not prevent the possibility, when the moment of revolution comes, of its acquiring a temporary importance as the most radical bourgeois party ... and as the final sheet-anchor of the whole bourgeois and even feudal regime. At such a moment the whole reactionary mass falls in behind it and strengthens it; everything which used to be reactionary behaves democratic.... This has happened in every revolution; the tamest party still remaining in any way capable of government comes to power with the others just because it is only in this party that the defeated see their last possibility of salvation. Now it cannot be expected that at the moment of crisis we shall already have a majority of the electorate and therefore the nation behind us. The whole bourgeois class and the remnants of the feudal landowning class, a large section of the petty bourgeoisie and also of the rural population will then make the most extreme revolutionary gestures, and I consider it very possible that it will be represented in the provisional government and even temporarily form its majority. How as a minority one should not act in that case, was demonstrated by the social democratic minority in the Paris Revolution of February, 1848. In any case our sole adversary on the day of the crisis and on the day after the crisis will be the whole collective reaction which will group itself around pure democracy, and this, I think, should not be lost sight of."

In other words, when the revolution approaches the Labor Party, or any of the other social reformist parties, such as the Socialist or Stalinist can and will become the rallying center for reaction, in extreme revolutionary phrases for capitalism to save their tottering system from the social revolution.

After the first world war the reactionaries flocked to the Socialist Parties to save capitalism from the parties of the Third International. In such countries as England and the United States the form is different. As in England, the most likely variant, in the U.S., for the final radical and democratic geture of capitalism to save itself will be the Labor Party. Cannon's dream of a revolutionary Labor Party will have some truth- a counter revolutionary party against the proletariat.

July 10, 1949

HAVE THE WILL TO BUILD THE PARTY AND THE MASSES WILL COME TO YOU

—LENIN

THE DOLLAR-POUND STRUGGLE

The recent Washington Conference of the ABC powers and the devaluation of the Pound, which was immediately followed by devaluation of over a dozen other nations, and which will inevitably force the United States to make adjustments in its own currency, is an event which will throw light upon a more important struggle, the antagonisms within the imperialist camp in the post war world of decay. The devaluation steps were important from an immediate and secondary aspect of this conflict. It is only a surface aspect of the increased trade war among the victorious allies or the capitalist nations.

Devaluation by itself is almost meaningless. Only when it is understood in relation to the policy behind it does devaluation bring light upon the subject. Money as a form of the medium of exchange and the price of commodities can be manipulated by governments for many ends and purposes. Since the capitalists have practically withdrawn gold from the money market and have eliminated gold from the money exchange field, the old capitalist ratio of gold and commodities is now only a bookkeeping device in the strictest sense.

If devaluation is carried through with a freeze in the prices of commodities, the wages and salaries, and the rent, interests and profits, then devaluation is primarily used, not as an internal measure, but primarily as an international measure against other countries. In the case of England and the Labor Party of capitalism it was primarily a measure and a form of DUMPING on the international market. Hitler and Fascism used one method just before 1939; now England uses another method today. But if devaluation is also accompanied by a shake up of prices, wages and profits, etc, then it is also used as a class instrument within the country for one class and against other classes.

Concretely speaking, there can be no devaluation which ONLY affects the relations outside of the country, no matter what Sir Stafford Cripps and the Labor Party say. Devaluation invariably means a readjustment of the internal market to the international market. There is no wall between the two markets, and the strongest force economically can gain its advantages in the new alignment regardless of paper motions and resolutions passed in behalf of labor. Since the State of England is a capitalist state, even though it is a "labor government" and since the economy in ALL of its basic essentials is capitalist the obvious conclusions can be nothing more nor less than a further beating down of the workers and poor farmers standard of living. True, the exploiters of different ranks will also pay more here and there, but that is the same condition in content but different in degree when famine hits a country and when one says it is too bad that the rich must pay so much on the blackmarket for food---while the masses starve to death.

The workers in England will be lined up by the Labor Party to sacrifice more for the survival of British imperialism. The mere fact that two prices will be maintained; a high one at home for the workers and a lower price for dumping in the international market reveals the decadent capitalist relation. In order to maintain capitalist ownership and capitalist profits dumping is carried through. If there were planned

economy, not capitalist stop-gap "planning" as in England, than the whole population could live better.

Part of this problem, even though it does not seem related is the nationalization of industry, etc, in England. This is heralded as steps toward socialism, and both wings of the Trotskyites in this country have a majority of their members who think that nationalization under their labor party will also be progressive. But facts in England prove that nationalization in all its aspects merely represents the state taking over the "white elephants", the sick industries that can no longer compete and make a profit in the internal and international market. It is a policy of the whole capitalist class and their state--and the workers doing the spade work--to reorganize and save the sick industries for capitalism so the more healthy industries may survive. The Labor Party in England (and in America tomorrow) is not the grave digger of capitalism; it is the doctor called in through the democratic form trying to save capitalism from the proletarian revolution. Everyone who has followed the conservatives (and Churchill) in their recent gathering and their program to take over the government again know that Beaverbrook, Churchill and all agree to keep the social reforms and the nationalization up to the present stage. They know the Labor Party has done a masterful service for British Imperialism.

Their devaluation program is a PART of this attempt to save some of the wreck of the British Empire after world war two. It dove-tails into the general plan to prevent England from slipping into a worst position in the struggle for world markets. To regain the lost world markets England and its Lords must not only rebuild and reorganize its sick industries internally with labor peace, in the name of labor as a long range measure; they must also fight back now, NOW, against the encroachment of reorganized "defeated" Germany and other nations.

The Pound devaluation will enable the British capitalists to dump commodities on the international market cheaper than they sell them at home. Although American imperialism knew of this, agreed with this, and it will take some of their markets, they nevertheless, are in a bitter trade war with the British. Its one of those antagonisms--in decay capitalism--that while fighting for world domination; the United States must at the same time help in one form or the other the most important nations and the strategical military spots from falling into the hands of Stalinism or in the hands of revolutionary Marxism? Toward this end the Labor Party in every country now and tomorrow, and the Socialist Parties, are partners of imperialism against the social revolution.

England's Labor Party devaluation for the interests of British Imperialism was followed up by bloc arrangements. Europe, under French leadership tried to organize a counter-offensive against the British. The line up seems to be as follows: The Dollar controlled area; the Pound controlled area; the European bloc; the USSR bloc; and the attempt of Argentina and Spain and other reactionary and fascist elements to organizing their agreements to play one of these blocs against the other.

In this trade war, in which the devaluation is a mere surface condition, the United States holds the upper hand. Its emergence from the second imperialist war with its basic productive forces expanded and untouched by war destruction, plus its dominant position enables it to

call the tune. England is slipping fast. But England is still trying to be an equal partner with the United States rather than the junior partner she actually is. The Marshall Plan on the one hand in helping hold off proletarian advances, has nevertheless, intensified the world wide trade war now developing for the narrowing markets. The political crisis in France which seems to be permanent, has been aggravated by the Pound-Dollar struggle. This struggle between England and the United States (in gentleman form now) has also intensified the difficulties of the new state of Israel. Their financial condition is worsening and much more capital is needed if the immigration they promise to achieve will be taken care of. Devaluation hit them hard.

England is trying to get a bigger share of the world markets by many means the United States State department frowns upon. For example England has its fight with the European bloc which cuts through the Marshall Plan and the Atlantic Pact. England wants a different policy in the Ruhr than the United States. England wants to give Tito air lift aid if Stalin starts civil war in Yugo-slavia. England is in a hurry to do business with the new China, and in many other fields Wall Street does not like. We do not speak of England as though the United States is right. On the contrary, the weaker of the two, England must take the initiative to survive. The strength of the United States enables her to sit back and leave the impression England is tipping the cart. This is the same policy America applied to Germany, Italy and Japan just before the second imperialist war. Her strength enabled her to leave the impression that the others were guilty. In both cases the real culprit is Wall Street banditry.

This is only one aspect of the US-GB antagonism. The Dollar has replaced the Pound as a reflection of the position of American capitalism as compared to British Capitalism. You remember the first imperialist war of 1914 forced the pound from the top position in the world. But from 1914 to 1939, although the Dollar was strong enough to push the Pound ground; it was unable to REPLACE IT on the international field. Today, even though we have the several blocs on an international scale in monetary exchange, the fact remains that the dollar and its gold reserve, not to speak of its productive capacity calls the tune on a world scale.

10-22-49

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LEFT, RIGHT, & CENTER: A REVIEW

Sidney Lens presents a history of the American trade union movement from its inception to the rise of the labor bureaucracy which he calls "business unionism". He also presents a history of the political movement in its beginnings to the formation of the Socialist Party, through its gyrations, the IWW, the formation of the Communist Party, its factional struggles, and the organizations formed, a brief resume of the Trotsky movement. It contains a detailed section on the strikes, struggles and role of the trade union movement in the post-war period. But what is most significant is the political program it presents for the working class. It is only because of the nature of the program that is here presented that brings the book to attention.

He points out that business unionism arose in the period of capitalist development when the system could afford to grant concessions and reforms. Further, since this bureaucracy is limited to its own interests it cannot fulfill the needs of the workman.

Lens presents the old reformist and labor-faker position with new book covers. In the period of the depression the unorganized moved towards class channels of struggle. The bureaucratic labor skates such as John L. Lewis and Murray beheaded and led this movement into a strait-jacket by forming the CIO and limiting its scope to their policy of class-collaborationism as opposed to revolutionary politics. "The New Deal was born precisely because private enterprise couldn't get out of the depression rut... unless it builds (capitalist class-Ed. note) the steel foundation of a higher standard of living in America, it will go out of business and be replaced by another social order. Each day of old-line thinking brings American capitalism closer to the precipice." Lens presents the "new" answer for saving the capitalist class. He proposes the formation of a labor party and as a transition to it an "educational alliance of progressive, socialist, and semi-socialist elements within the unions, whether AFL, CIO, or independent, as a counter-weight to both Stalinism and business unionism."

But he then completely whitewashes the "business unionists", the labor fakers, by saying that "nothing in these lines is meant as a personal affront to Murray, Green, or anyone else; nor is there any question of their sincerity or devotion to the cause of labor." Through 430 pages Lens deals with these characters on the basis of their objective relationship to the trade union movement. They are leaders and as such they play a social role. To separate the role of their characters into subjective and objective is only an other way of backhanded apology. But if one takes the working class point of view these bureaucrats can only be attacked as some of the most treacherous, deceitful, and dishonest in history. Actually however, Lens' program and those who support the idea of labor partyism objectively tie themselves to the coat-tails of the trade union bureaucracy in one form or another.

Walter Reuther and his cohorts in the UAW-CIO are characterized as the left wing of the trade union movement. Lens places his support behind this grouping and says that Reuther's collaboration with Murray and Green leaves a false impression. But what about Reuther's support of the Democratic Party and President Truman? He exposes himself as another labor faker in the trade unions. The militancy and democratic

characteristics of the auto worker's union can only be attributed to the rank and file worker being on guard against the constant attempts of the capitalists on the outside and the Reuther bureaucracy from within to consolidate control.

Involve the rank and file worker into the struggle, make the individual Joe Worker feel that he really "owns" those unions, that he is an organic part of them, will the political, social, and economic weapons of labor be forged to meet the impending crisis." As the movement toward depression grows, and the pressures and struggles of the rank and file increase, the labor party whose embryo is composed of the hodge-podge socialists, radicals, and non-Stalinists will lead the workers to a reform of the system, as opposed to its overthrow. The labor bureaucrats have long enough played their role of tying the workers down to the capitalist system, and the New Deal did an effective job when the labor bureaucracy could do longer control the scope of the workers struggle by its few palliatives. But once again the reformists recognize that a new "New Deal" must be revived, this time in the form of a labor party, much broader in expanse to straddle the coming wave of workers opposition to the tyranny of depression, and imperialist war.

WHAT LENS OMITTS

While Lens is reliable in accrediting the sources for the material in his book, he omits naming the source for his "unique" analysis of the formation of the CIO. The thesis is that the CIO was formed to head off the militancy of the unorganized workers from going outside the boundaries of class collaborationism.

Lens is not aware of an important suppressed section of information about the formation of the CIO and therefore does not present a factual picture. The facts are that just before the formation of the CIO the old workers Party which was a merger of the Trotskyites and the Muste force had OVER A HUNDRED trade union officials from one end of the country to the other organized as leaders of local progressive trade union groups. They were calling for the organization of the unorganized into industrial class struggle unions and they were making great headway. They has a head start on Lewis and the Stalinists.

But with the "French Turn" and with the steps toward liquidation of the Trotskyites into the Socialist Party, and with this the expulsion of the Left Wing by Muste, Schactman, and Cannon and later the dropping out of Muste and his forces the powerful progressive trade union group was smashed and scattered on the rocks of entry into the socialist party. The Stalinists then moved up and took the place of this force and made their unholy alliance with Lewis.

Lens also omits one complete chapter in presenting a history of the American political movement. On page 262 in his chapter on "The Turning Point" he pictures the period when Trotsky called upon the French Trotskyites to liquidate into the Socialist Parties instead of building a new International. He relates how Cannon had denied that the Workers Party in this country would follow the same course. But he omits all reference to the history of this Left Wing when it was bureaucratically expelled by Cannon, the fact that it comprised an International tendency. No mention is made of the Revolutionary Workers League

and the role it has played in the class struggle.

ATTACKS STALINISM TO SUPPORT CAPITALISM

One of Lens' main points is that an unflinching attack against Stalinism must be made in the labor movement. He relates many of the maneuverings and double-dealings of the Stalinists in the Trade Unions. But he exposes the true nature of his position when he says, "A strong labor movement, with its own political weapon, would have made possible an effective struggle against Stalinism in China, Greece, and innumerable other places." This is a complete distortion of the picture which white washes the role of American Imperialism. The civil wars and revolutions in these countries are a struggle of the workers and peasants against their own ruling classes who are buttressed by the millions in dollars of American Imperialist support to the counter-revolution and as such it plays the dominant role as the frontal and main enemy of the working class. To maintain this political position means that eventually, as the antagonism and struggle with Stalinism on the part of the Imperialists increases, those supporting such programs as Len's, will be in the camp of the Imperialists against the workers.

Stalinism is incorrectly characterized as holding a position of the Center. Stalinism is a social-reformist force within the ranks of the working class, which plays a counter-revolutionary role. As such its strategy and tactics change as the class struggle, but its program remains unaltered.

Although Lens is very critical of the Stalinists he does not present a position of attack against the Stalinist from the left; he presents instead an attack from the right, from the labor party-liberal position. If Lens is criticizing Stalinism why does he not present a Marxian position, why does he hid in the cellar an appraisal, criticism, or evaluation of Revolutionary Marxism, not Stalinism, not socialism, not Trotskyism, but revolutionary Marxism and its relation to the American Labor Movement today?

This book has been properly praised by many bourgeois liberals, social-democracy, and right wing centrists, since it presents a program and approach wide enough in scope to embrace them all. This book should be titled, "Another Program For Social Democracy."

10-14-49

Errata: On page 12 in the article on THE POUND-DOLLAR STRUGGLE the fourth paragraph line 3 should read as follows- Devaluation invariably means a readjustment of the internal market to the external market. There is no wall between these two markets. And the strongest force economically can gain its advantages in the new alignment regardless of paper notions and resolutions passed in behalf of labor.

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