FROM OUR VIEWPOINT

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MAY DAY UNITED FRONT IN CHICAGO

A significant departure from precedent was made by the Chicago organization of the Socialist party when it offered a proposal to the Communist party for a united demonstration on May First. It is safe to say that hitherto the C.P. was always the one to initiate proposals for a united front. And in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred these proposals were and still are based on an incorrect understanding of the united front tactic. The Executive Committee of the Socialist party of Cook County decided that the united front was too important a thing to permit the Communists to take the initiative and distort its whole meaning.

The comrades in Chicago realized that the united front has only one purpose: to unite working class organizations that differ on fundamental principles but agree to act together for a certain specific objective. All ideas about organizing some permanent united front committees or organizations which under the circumstances can do nothing but carry on propaganda are incorrect. It is clear that the Chicago S. P. members would reject any proposals for a united front pact against war or for a Labor party. Assuming the correctness of the report of the Daily Worker with reference to the united front pact entered into by the S.P. of Terre Haute—a pact for a united front for a Labor party and against war—it is difficult to understand the theory which motivated the Terre Haute comrades to enter into such an agreement. A united front merely for propaganda is incorrect. And a united front against war at the present time necessarily must limit itself to propaganda.

It is of course obvious that even a united front demonstration on May Day is not the highest type of united front. But at least there is the element of common action in the demonstration itself and, if the slogans are agreed upon, there is the element of the specific objective. And if from a theoretical point of view the united front on May Day is not one hundred percent correct it is certainly correct that on the day symbolizing the international solidarity of the working class a united front demonstration should be arranged.

The most serious objection that was raised by some right wing comrades was that we would lose the support of organized labor by joining with the Communists. If it were true that without the Communists organized labor would march with us on May First our preference should be altogether for organized labor. But a realistic analysis convinced the Chicago comrades that most of that element of organized labor that would go out on a demonstration with the S.P. without the Communists would also come along in a united demonstration and some unions that would need the support of an organized demonstration would go with the united front demonstration. Our eyes must be mainly on organized labor but we must not forget that section of the militant working class under the influence of the Communists. Especially when our strength in the ranks of organized labor is nothing to boast about.

Care was taken with reference to the mechanics of organizing the united front. It was clear that we cannot simply call a conference to decide on all the questions involved in the united front. A committee was appointed to come to an agreement with the C.P. on all important problems prior to the calling of any conference. In any general conference the C.P. through its innocent organizations is able to dominate. We are determined not to permit a spurious majority to tell us what to do in any united front demonstration. The general objective of the demonstration, the slogans and the types of organizations to be invited must be agreed upon before any conference is called. A conference should be called largely for the purpose of mobilizing all workers' organizations for the support of the united front agreement.

While all the details have not as yet been worked out the Socialist party has proposed to center the demonstration around the slogans of unemployment insurance, the 30 hour work, against war and fascism and for socialism against capitalism. While great freedom should be allowed to different organizations in the wording of the slogans these fundamental ideas should be the heart of the demonstration. A joint committee will pass on all the slogans which any one wants to carry in the demonstration. The only questionable thing which the S.P. thus far agreed to is the holding of a joint indoor meeting in the evening of May First. It would seem that wherever possible a separate indoor meeting should be held by the Socialist party. On May Day we must do more than simply march in a united demonstration. We must also give our particular message to that section of the working class following our party. There are too many differences between us and the Communists to justify our surrendering the possibility of holding our meeting.

The Chicago S.P. has taken the road which in general should be followed by the left wing of the rest of the country: We should be the proponents and initiators of a correct united front, a united front of action for some specific purpose: we should oppose all sham united fronts the purpose of which would be simply propaganda.

HOAN PREFERENCES LA FOLLETTE TO COMMUNISTS

In Milwaukee the Communists are showing signs of some knowledge of correct tactics. In deciding to support the Socialist and Farmer-Labor Progressive Federation candidates in spite of the fact that those candidates repudiated Communist support, the Stalinists will undoubtedly gain considerably.

The Communists were exceedingly anxious to be permitted to join the Farmer-Labor Progressive Federation. And why not? Is it not the forerunner of the American type of People's Front? It is not representative of the mixture of proletarian and middle class confusion which is the whole essence of the Stalinist united front tactic? But alas for the Stalinists, the Socialists and the farmers under La Follette would not permit them into the Federation. Public opinion, by which is meant the opinion of the capitalist press, is too hostile to the Communists to permit the municipal Socialists and the petty-bourgeois reformists to play around with them. And so the Stalinists were left begging and pleading to Join the People's Front a la Wisconsin.

What could have motivated Hoan and the other municipal Socialists in refusing to accept the offer of support made by the Communists? It certainly could not be because of the insignificance of the Communists in Milwaukee. For we can be sure that if some insignificant pacifist or church club would endorse the Socialist ticket in Milwaukee, that fact would have been blazoned upon the front pages of the Socialist press. Could it be fear of the possible disruptive tactics which the Stalinists might use? No one who has followed the change of line promulgated in Moscow can possibly fail to see that the Stalinists are ready to kick the boots of any Socialist or petty-bourgeois leader who would give them a chance to do so by accepting their support.

As a general rule if organized labor is willing to come into a united front with the Socialists upon the condition that the Communists be excluded then the Socialists should go with organized labor. But in the case of the Milwaukee elections it was not a question of a united front but a case where the Communists offered their support after they had been excluded from the People's Front. There was no reason at all for rejecting that offer. The only explanation for the rejection is the fear of Hoan that he would lose the support of the good citizens of Milwaukee.

If there is any one who doubts that statement let him read the speech of Hoan printed in the American Leader of Feb. 28. It is a classic example of what kind of a speech a Socialist candidate for any office should not deliver. Any honest municipal reformer could easily duplicate that kind of a speech.

Revolutionary Socialists have fundamental differences with the Communists and with their blood brothers of reformism, the Social Democrats. But revolutionary Socialists will gladly accept the support of Communists and Social Democrats because they represent sections of the working class. And under proper circumstances revolutionary Socialists will support Communists or other kinds of reformists.

SOCIALIST OR LABOR PARTY CAMPAIGN IN ILLINOIS

The Socialist Party of Illinois at its convention to be held in Peoria, April 4-5, will be confronted with the exceedingly important decision whether to join a Labor party and conduct a campaign under the banner of the Labor party or whether to steer clear of all Labor parties and conduct a campaign under its own banner.

In Chicago a Labor party has been organized which is probably different from any Labor party in any part of this coun-
international proletariat, it is clear that under proper circum-
stances Marxists consider the red army an instrument of the
proletarian revolution. The question is: Should the Socialist
party of Illinois adopt a policy of accepting the Labor
party's demand to run candidates at the 1936 elections? If we
accept such an invitation would it lead to our Trotskyists being
united with the Labor party? Should the Socialist party
accept such an invitation would it mean the surrender of
their insistence upon revolutionary internationalism and
with it the revolutionary development of the international
proletariat? Is there any need for the Socialist party to
accept such an invitation? The question is: Should the
Socialist party join the Labor party and help run the Labor
party campaign? Since the Labor party is not a real Labor
party from the point of view of numbers; since our party
membership is not yet sufficient to distinguish between a
Socialist campaign and a Labor party campaign; since organized
labor including the old guard, the Stalinists, the Lovestoneites
have nothing to lose and everything to gain by their pseudo-
revolutionary camouflage; the Lovestoneites see another chance
of sharing in the flesh pots of Stalinism by the 1936 elections,
and if we accept such an invitation the Trotskyists will lie in
the following tactic: to conduct a campaign for socialism and
at the same time not be given the opportunity of running for
office. Thus thudded Litvinoff.

Some comrades will see in this an illogical tactic. How can we
think in doctrinaire terms our position will be most natural
and it should remain so for the time being. Socialist party
members active in the Labor party must come out against the
party which they will get from the horrible Trotskyists once they are
united with the Labor party. They are all united in warning
the poor lambs of the Socialist party as to the dreadful fleecing
of the Trotskyites into our party. They are greatly exercised over the
possibility of the entry of the Trotskyists into the Socialist
party and of asking the Socialist party to join the Labor
party. They did not but since revolutionary internationalism has
withdrew its support from the Trotskyists and its support for
the Trotskyists plus a majority of the rank and file of the
party plus working-class sympathy in other countries
is not so great as was expected.

With the obvious intention of exploring the possibilities of or-
the 1936 elections, the Labor party has called a convention to
be held at the same place and time as the convention of the So-

The old guard, the Stalinists, the Lovestoneites have all be-
gan organizing a State Labor party and of asking the Socialist
party to join the Labor party and help run the Labor party cam-
paign. What then? Should our membership and we should not hesitate to grant all the rights
of membership. The Socialist party of Illinois, if it wants to do anything for the
working class, must do everything possible to prevent the Labor party from
launching out upon an electoral campaign at the present time.

Taking all the factors into consideration it is clear that the
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LABOR PARTY CONFUSION

There are enough major mistakes in the resolution on the Farmer-Labor party passed at the Call conference held in New York and published in the Call of March 7, 1936, to make it absolutely unacceptable to any revolutionary Socialist. The closer we come to the actual formation of a Labor party or a Farmer-Labor party the more careful we must be and consequently, in drawing a resolution at the present moment when all kinds of Farmer-Labor parties are springing up, great care should be taken to stress fundamental principles which should under no circumstances be forgotten by any Socialist.

In the state of Wisconsin the Socialist party has joined the Wisconsin Farmer-Labor Progressive Federation; in Terre Haute the S.P. has made a pact with the Communists to work for a Labor party; in many sections of the country our party is contemplating joining some kind of a Farmer-Labor party. The question, in other words, has been taken out of the realm of mere theory and in entering the world of practice, we might find ourselves confronted by monstrosities which will set our party back rather than advance its interests and the interests of the labor movement.

Every resolution dealing with the formation of a Labor or Farmer-Labor party, passed at any Socialist conference, must stress the point that we do not believe that a Labor party will solve the problems of the working class. It is just because there is so little understanding of that simple but fundamental idea that it is so necessary to emphasize it. It is safe to say that most Socialists, even amongst those tending to the left, are in favor of a Labor party either because they believe that a Labor party is the one thing necessary to solve the problems of labor or because they have lost hope in the ability of the Socialist party to lead the working class to socialism. It is one thing to look upon the Labor party as a step forward in the struggle for socialism; it is quite another thing to consider it as able to solve any important problem confronting the working class.

The resolution published in the Call states that the S.P. should not “become submerged in the Farmer-Labor Party” and also states that eventually “only a revolutionary party with a Socialist program will be in a position to lead the masses to a working class victory.” But the whole tone of the resolution is that “eventually” we should think of building a revolutionary party. Whereas throughout the resolution the idea that it is NOW our main task and will be at all times to build a revolutionary Socialist party be as clear as crystal. The task of a Labor party is at most a subsidiary one and is not aimed primarily to gain a concession or two but to set the workers into motion on the road of independent political action.

At the present period of the development of capitalism it is inconceivable that a reformist Labor party can gain much in the way of reforms from the capitalist class. We are living in a period of the decline of capitalism and not of its upswing. And in such a period it is necessary to wage a revolutionary struggle in order to achieve any substantial reforms. It is as safe as anything can be to say that a real Labor party will not wage a revolutionary struggle. Our attitude to workers in trade unions who want a Labor party should not be the one which would deepen their illusions with reference to such a party. We must frankly tell them that we do not believe that a Labor party will solve their problems; that only socialism can do that and socialism is a revolutionary Socialist party. We must tell them that we favor such a party simply because it is a step in the direction of independent working class action and that we are willing to go along with them so long as they are not convinced that our party offers the correct solution.

“Either a Labor party or fascism” is the threat that is made by many a Socialist speaker who has not given any too much thought to the problem. And what reason is there to believe that a Labor party will be able to defeat fascism? If the Socialist and Communist parties of Germany could not defeat fascism will a reformist Labor party in this country be able to do so? You will say that the working class of Germany was divided. Was the Austrian Socialist party, who had under its banner practically the whole working class of Austria, able to defeat fascism? Unity is necessary to defeat fascism but it takes more than unity alone to achieve that result. We shall admit that in so far as the formation of a Labor party at the present time would raise the morale of the workers the struggle against a possible fascism would be made easier but it is the height of folly to expect that a Labor party will do away with the possibility of fascism. The struggle against fascism is essentially a struggle against a revolutionary Socialist party. To accept the alternative of Labor party or fascism is to fail right into the same error of the Stalinists who have accepted the idea of fascism or bourgeois democracy. They have forgotten that there springs out of conditions as they are and to do away with the possibility of fascism one must destroy these conditions.

While the resolution passed at the Call conference is way above the ordinary Socialist resolution dealing with the question of a Labor party in the recognition of the need of a revolutionary Socialist party, still the necessity of building such a revolutionary party is not sufficiently stressed. We must remind our comrades that it would be infinitely better for the working class if the necessity of a Labor party would disappear by the fact of the growth of the Socialist party. And it is not at all excluded that our party can grow to a point, before any Labor party worthy of the name is formed, where the formation of a Labor party would be a detriment rather than a step forward.

It should need no extensive argument to convince anyone in the least acquainted with the elementary principles of Marxism that we should strive with all our might to favor a Labor party rather than a Farmer-Labor party. It is axiomatic with all Marxists that the class struggle which will transform capitalist society into socialist society is a struggle primarily between the industrial wage-working class and the big capitalist class. A revolutionary Socialist party is a party which represents the historic interests of the working class or the people in general. The party of the working class must attempt to win the middle class masses away from the middle class parties and not unite with such parties. It can do so by fighting for the demands of the middle class masses to a greater extent than the middle class parties.

There are comrades who are so enamored with the false idea of a two class party that even when there are, practically speaking, no farmers’ organizations joining with labor organizations to form a party they insist upon creating a Farmer-Labor instead of a Labor party. There can be no objection to an organization of farmers accepting the program of the Labor party and becoming part of that party. But there should be decided objection to the idea of having a two-class party in the sense of organizations representing farmers getting together with labor organizations to form one party.

The formation recently of the Wisconsin Farmer-Labor Progressive Federation where the Socialist party joined with the LaFollette group to form a party (together with other groups) is a classic example of what kind of a party revolutionary Socialists should avoid if at all possible. This is a party where the petty bourgeoisie will have the complete hegemony instead of vice versa. But of course nothing else could be expected of a Socialist party such as the Wisconsin party which essentially is a “people’s” party.

While Socialists should exert all their efforts against the formation of a Farmer-Labor party, a different question arises where one is formed in spite of their opposition. To join such a party is permissible and necessary under certain circumstances; to help create one is impermissible and harmful.

If the above analysis is correct it is obvious that the resolution of the Call conference is quite defective. To be sure it intimates

Albert Goldman
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war governments. Our Party needs a complete and concrete anti-war program also in order to begin now to train the youth organization which is the heaviest sufferer of the war, in how to properly combat war and attendant militarism. This involves a training in fundamentals, that is, Marxism.

If we reject the theory of vanguardism (the concept that holds to the idea that the youth movement can lead the working class in the class struggle and to its final victory over capitalism), then it becomes all the more necessary for the Party to take in hand the political direction of the youth organization. It goes without saying, that such a direction has to be correct, and before the Party can be expected to politically direct the destinies of the youth organization, it must first give itself a thorough dosing of Marxism. We are compelled to recall at this point the conduct of the German and Austrian social democratic youth organizations. The former offered 700 of its units to the Kaiser for the purpose of prosecuting the war against the Allies, and the latter adopted the leading slogan for the organization: “On to Paris!” It is clear that this would have been impossible, had not the Parties in these countries set the example by their support to the war by the Central European Powers. By and large, however, the International Socialist Youth Union remained loyal to the principles of Marxism, in the last war.

The resolution of the Call conference, while it is an elaboration over the section on war contained in the draft program adopted at Bound Brook, New Jersey, leaves out a number of important and decisive questions that are mentioned there, if only by a word or sentence. The present resolution is totally inadequate however, not only in what is ommitted but also, in what it contains. In its present form it is strictly not a guide to the Party or the youth organization. It might be argued that the resolution is too short to permit of a detailed analysis, or a thorough one. But there is nothing which compels us to confine ourselves to a short resolution, unless we already have a lengthy programmatic declaration. The size of the resolution would not be a point of complaint were its contents complete and correct, without necessarily amplifying ideas. Let us proceed to the resolution.

In the opening paragraphs the resolution contains strictures on the conception of “good” capitalists and “bad” capitalists; the idea that it is necessary for the working class to support the democratic capitalist nations against the fascist capitalist nations. Quite correctly it rejects this social-patriotic conception. But against whom does the resolution speak out? Apparently, against nobody.

Yet, this conception, which means sending the working class to slaughter in the name of the myth of defending democracy (under capitalist rule) against fascism, is part of the war program of the Stalinists, who make up no small part of the organized labor movement, and a number of social democratic parties and leaders, including so-called left wingers (Bauer, Dan and Zyzomski). If this section of the resolution means anything, it has to state the origin of this theory and its proponents. Without that, we are shadow-boxing, afraid to set up before the real opponents. The resolution should say: this theory is advanced inside the workers' movement by the Stalinist International, by large parties in the social democracy, and by such leaders as Bauer, Dan and Zyzomski. If “we are opposed to all programs which rely on war by capitalist states to overthrow fascist dictatorships,” then we must state whose programs we mean. Not only that, we must explain our opposition to this, as well as other forms of social-patriotism.

The resolution warns against seduction at the hands of the League of Nations, since it is an instrument in the hands of Anglo-French imperialism. Quite correct. That has been the contention of Marxists since the inception of the League. But who champions the League of Nations? The imperialists? Quite correct! But we need no warning against them. We are however, in need of a warning against the agents of such ideas in the labor movement. It is within the working class movement that this point of view is conjured up before us. Here again it is the Stalinists, and the right wing social democrats who are the champions of the League of Nations at a time when it exhibits its worst features. The resolution, however, is deadly silent on this question.

The same could be said about the matter of sanctions. Once again we find organizations (Stalinists, trade unionists, social democrats,) in the labor movement urging sanctions against Italian fascism. The resolution, speaking out against the policy of sanctions because it is a weapon of one imperialism, or a set of imperialists against others, fails to explain why it is so acute a problem for the working class. It becomes such a decisive problem not only because in its application it would decisively affect the proletariat, but the more so, because sanctions were advocated by large sections of the labor and political movement of the workers. The resolution should have drawn the lessons of the plea for sanctions in the ranks of the working class by stating where it came from, how it arose, and how you can combat it.

The resolution speaks of the defense of the Soviet Union by the independent activity of the working class internationally. It speaks also of the necessity of remaining independent from soviet diplomacy. Why is it necessary to say this? It remains unexplained in the resolution. If the resolution contains such statements it ought to go on to explain what compelled them. It would have been necessary to show that the 3rd International has become subordinated to the diplomacy of the Soviet Union, which in turn is based on the nationalist conceptions of building socialism, held by the present Soviet regime. The same diplomacy desires to subординant all working class activity in the world to its national st needs. If we find it necessary to declare that our international independent activity for the overthrow of capitalism must not be subordinated to Soviet Diplomacy, we should then state very definitely that we pose internationalism against nationalism, as it is represented by the 3rd International. We would have to show the ramifications of Soviet diplomacy and how it affects the activities of the international labor movement. But here again, nothing is explained.

Should war break out despite anti-war efforts on our part, the resolution calls for a general strike to put an end to the war. To impose the general strike in a period of war requires the highest type of revolutionary organization. It means to bring you into sharp conflict with a ruling class which is organized to meet precisely such an eventuality by the use of armed forces. If the general strike is to mean anything in the way of stopping war, it implies the necessity of organizing the workers to meet the resistance of the capitalist state by the same weapons: to meet the armed assault of the ruling class with the armed resistance of the working class. Clearly, here is involved the whole problem of the struggle for power. The general strike is merely one phase of that struggle, although admittedly, one of the important phases of it. The resolution voices the Utopian idea that during a war a general strike can be called not as the initial stage of the overthrow of the capitalist class but simply to stop the war.

The resolution says nothing of pacifism. The program should analyze the movement which threatens the working class with impotence preceding the war and then ties it to the chariot of the imperialist powers once the conflagration begins. Revolutionary defeatism is referred to in passing. There is, however, no explanation of this great revolutionary tactic employed by the Marxists in the last war. A great deal of confusion exists here. The resolution does not explain the development of the tactic, cites no examples, and does not educate our movement. For our movement, the question of “revolutionary defeatism” (the resolution does not refer to it in exactly that form, and it does not necessarily have to use the two words so long as the concept is fully contained) is a comparatively new one and it is necessary to begin the education at once and without delay. Where would have been a better place to begin than in this resolution?

These random criticisms of the resolution are made with the aim of suggesting improvements for its final writing. The writer realizes that this is not a complete and finished criticism, but that important and decisive questions are posed. The war resolution ought to take up the following: the causes of war; the role of nationalism in its significance. For our movement, the question of pacifism, the League of Nations, sanctions, revolutionary defeatism (with which is connected up the question of the general
Kautsky has found the leisure to publish this re-
correct revolutionary leadership, a clear understanding of condi-
asinine and reactionary attitude to the barricade, as a piece of
tions for victory, far from the last place is occupied by the
Engels—not the youth, but the man 73 years of age!—from the
the political mood of the army, etc. However, among the condi-
tions. In the above quoted letter, Engels corrects Kautsky, in
popular masses as well as governments, several decades have
passed, as if he were referring to something self-evident; bar-
elapsed—discounting the half-forgotten Chartists—in the course
of which the strategists of capital have accumulated an enormous
passion; battle for the socialist barricades has not come as yet. It is necessary
capitalist countries, requires a painstaking Marxist accounting
of which the barricades have become "antiquated" only in the sense that the
of the very question of armed insurrection is "Blanquism." Con-
above, and if, at the same time, it is calculated not for decisive
or it must end in a colossal fiasco, or, finally, lead directly to the
become antiquated (they may, however, prove useful again should
1893, as follows: "You yourself remark that the barricades have
stood in Belgium and Russia. Are such cases possible in the
battles, the ruling class will make only such concessions as will
the army turn 1 3 or 2 5 socialist and the question arise of
exposition of Engels' views on a number of questions. Innumer-
October 17, 1905).
tions and methods of the general strike and its transition to open revolutionary struggle.

Engels' classification must not, of course, be taken dogmatically. In present day France not partial concessions but power is indubitably in question: the revolutionary proletariat or Fascism—which? The working class masses want to struggle. But the leadership applies the brake—hoodwinks and demoralizes the workers. A general strike can flare up just as the movement flared in Toulon and Brest. Under these conditions, independently of its immediate results, a general strike will not of course be a "putsch" but a necessary stage in the mass struggle, the necessary means for casting off the treachery of the leadership and for creating within the working class itself the preliminary conditions for a victorious uprising. In this sense the policy of the French Bolshevik-Leninists is entirely correct, who have advanced the slogan of general strike, and who explain the conditions for its victory. The French cousins of the S.A.P. come against this slogan, the Spartacists who at the beginning of the struggle are already assuming the role of strikebreakers.

We should also add that Engels did not point out another "category" of general strike, examples of which have been provided in England, Belgium, France and some other countries: we refer here to cases in which the leadership of the strike previously, i.e. without a struggle, arrives at an agreement with the class enemy as to the course and outcome of the strike. The parliamentarians and the trade unionists perceive at a given moment the need to provide an outlet for the accumulated ire of the masses, or they are simply compelled to jump in step with a movement that has flared over their heads. In such cases they come scurrying through the backstairs to the Government and obtain the permission to head the general strike, this with the obligation to conclude it as soon as possible, without any damage being done to the state crottery. Sometimes, far from always, they manage to haggle beforehand some petty concessions, to serve them as figleaves. Thus did the General Council of British Trade Unions (T.U.C.) in 1926. Thus did Journaux in 1934. Thus will they act in the future also. The exposure of these contemptible machinations behind the backs of the struggling proletariat enters as a necessary part into the preparation of a general strike.

* * * *

To which type does a general strike belong which is specially intended by the I.L.P. in the event of mobilization, as a means to stop war at the very outset? We want to say beforehand: it pertains to the most incon sidered and unfortunate of all types possible. This does not mean to say that the revolution can never coincide with mobilization or with the outbreak of war. If a wide-scale revolutionary movement is developing in a country, if at its head is a revolutionary party possessing the confidence of the masses and capable of going through to the end; if the government, losing its head, despite the revolutionary crisis, or just because of such a crisis, plunges headlong into a war adventure—then the mobilization can act as a mighty impetus for the masses, lead to a general strike of railwaymen, fraternization between the mobilized and the workers, seizure of important key centers, clashes between insurrectionists and the police and the reactionary sections of the army, the establishment of local workers' and soldiers' council, and, finally, to the complete overthrow of the government, and consequently, to stopping the war. Such a case is theoretically possible. If, in the words of Clausewitz, "war is the continuation of politics by other means," then

STALINISTS

(Continued from page 3)

the struggle against war is also the continuation of the entire preceding policy of a revolutionary class and its party. Hence follows that a general strike can be put on the order of the day as a method of struggle against mobilization and war only in the event that the entire preceding developments in the country have placed revolution and armed insurrection on the order of the day. Taken, however, as a "special" method of struggle against mobilization, a general strike would be a sheer adventure. Excluding a possible but nevertheless an exceptional case of a government plunging into war in order to escape from a revolution that directly threatens it, it must remain, as a general rule, that precisely prior to, during, and after mobilization the government feels itself strongest, and consequently, least inclined to allow itself to be scared by a general strike. The patriotic moods that accompany mobilization, together with the war terror make hopeless the very execution of a general strike, as a rule. The most inflexible elements who, without taking the circumstances into account, plunge into the struggle, would be crushed. The defeat and the partial annihilation of the vanguard would make difficult for a long time revolutionary work in the atmosphere of dissatisfaction that war breeds. A strike called artificially must turn inevitably into a putsch, and into an obstacle in the path of the revolution.

In its theses accepted in April, 1935, the I.L.P. writes as follows: "The policy of the party aims at the use of a general strike to stop war and at social revolution should war occur." An astonishingly precise, but—sad to say, absolutely fictitious obligation! The general strike is not only separated from the social revolution but also counterposed to it as a specific method to "stop war." This is an ancient conception of the anarchists which itself itself smashed long ago. A general strike without a victorious insurrection cannot "stop war." If, under the conditions of mobilization, the insurrection is impossible, then so is a general strike impossible.

In an ensuing paragraph we read: "The I.L.P. will urge a General Strike against the British Government, if this country is in any way involved in an attack on the Soviet Union..." If it is possible to forestall any war by a general strike, then of course it is all the more necessary to stop war against the U.S. S.R. But here we enter into the realm of illusions: to inscribe in the theses a general strike as punishment for a given capital crime of the Government is to commit the sin of revolutionary phrase-mongering. If it were possible to call a general strike at will, then it would be best called today to prevent the British Government from strangling India and from collaborating with Japan to strangle China. The leaders of the I.L.P. will of course tell us that they have not the power to do so. But nothing gives them the right to promise that they will apparently have the power to call general strike on the day of mobilization. And if they are able, why confine it to a strike? As a matter of fact, the conduct of a party during mobilization will flow from its preceding successes and from the situation in the country as a whole. But the aim of revolutionary policy should not be an isolated general strike, as a special means to "stop war," but the proletarian revolution into which a general strike will enter as an inevitable or a very probable integral part.

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