american socialist quarterly

summer 1934
vol. 3 no. 2
25 cents

the american socialist quarterly

Vol. 3 No. 2
Summer, 1934

Official theoretical organ of the Socialist Party of America

Published quarterly at 7 East 15th Street, New York
by the American Socialist Quarterly

Subscription One Dollar a Year

Application for entry as second class matter is pending.

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On the Eve of Our National Convention

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IN the past year labor in America has been more active than at any time in the last twenty-five years. Strong unions have entrenched their position. Weak unions have grown in strength. New unions have sprung up in unorganized trades and territories. There is new life and a new spirit everywhere.

The farmers in many sections are waking up. They are becoming aware of their class interests. The lull that followed the spontaneous outbreak of farm strikes is at an end. Fortified by their previous experiences, the farmers have now realized that they, too, are exploited workers. They are coming to recognize that their enemies are not "city folks" or "reds", but the dairy trust, the grain speculators, and the banks.

It has been a good year for the Socialist Party. Not since before the war have we seen such growth in membership and such enthusiasm. Our lecture bureau has come back to life and has sent fine speakers all over the country. Our summer training schools have equipped young socialists for active work in the movement. There will be twelve such schools this summer instead of four. Many new pamphlets have been published and our literature has reached thousands of new groups. The party has acquired a theoretical organ, the American Socialist Quarterly, which is doing splendid work for socialism. State and local organizations have taken a new lease of life.

But the most important thing is not the increase of activity of all these groups. **It is the fact that they are working together.**

I have traveled around the country a great deal in the past year and I have seen a real growth of class solidarity. I have seen miners marching side by side with their daughters, shirt workers in the Amalgamated. I have seen hosiery workers helping and instructing unemployed organizations, taxi strikers, biscuit workers. I have seen organized farmers helping and instructing newly formed hosiery unions and shoe workers' unions in their strikes. I have seen the unemployed marching with the farmers. Everywhere, on picket lines in strike meetings, in union councils, I have seen the Socialist Party playing an active part in labor's struggles.

In Pennsylvania last summer all but two of our organizers in the great "shirt tail revolution" were socialists. In Cleveland, where for years the unions and the party were miles apart, I find that the party now holds its conventions in a union hall, the welcome guest of the unions, and that party workers and speakers are in demand in every labor crisis. In Philadelphia and Camden socialist leadership has formed several new strong unions. In New York the party has been active in the strike of the taxi drivers, the needle trades and where ever labor has had to fight for its rights. In Detroit and Wisconsin the comrades have taken part in the struggles of auto workers. It is the same in Chicago, in Pittsburgh, in Milwaukee, in St. Louis, everywhere.

Wherever I go I am welcomed by the unions, not merely as a labor leader but as chairman of the Socialist Party. The unions are beginning to realize that when they need speakers for meetings, teachers for classes, pickets, hand bill distributors, they can turn to the Socialist Party. Young Socialists are playing an increasingly active role inside the unions, as organizers, secretaries, and rank and file leaders. Many unionists are joining the Party.

The trade unions are drawing closer to each other and to us. The farmers are drawing closer to the city workers and to socialism. Now, as never before, we have the opportunity to build the Socialist Party on a working class base, and to make it the fighting organ of the workers.

There are some who feel that a new mass party is needed

to crystallize this new class consciousness among the workers and the farmers. It is the function of the Socialist Party to be this mass party. Those workers and farmers who believe in labor political action independently of the parties of capitalism, and their numbers are increasing daily, can be won for socialism. The indifferences, the hostility of a year ago no longer exist.

The workers are realizing that they can put no faith in any Messiah. The liberal elements, that a while ago seemed anxious to found a "third party" movement, have been captured by Roosevelt. The so-called insurgents in Congress are clinging to their old party affiliations. Labor is left to itself. And this is a good thing.

We are approaching a convention which will be a landmark in the history of socialism. Never was a strong Socialist Party more needed. Never have we had greater opportunities to build one. We face a national and state campaign which gives us a splendid chance to interpret the so-called New Deal and to win for socialism those who are beginning to tire of empty promises and want something better. We must continue and expand our work of cooperating with unions, unemployed, and farm groups. We must build up our training schools, improve our locals and branches, put out more and better literature, raise more money, put more men in the field.

Our task in Detroit is not an easy one. We must find ways and means for carrying out our program. We must lay down the party line to be followed in the next two years. We have no time for petty disputes and disagreements, no energy to spare for factional fights. Everything we have is needed to put across socialism. The workers need our message and our help and in many places are eager to hear us. We must not fail them.

Problems Facing the Party

MAYNARD C. KRUEGER

I.

THE trend of the international socialist movement is undoubtedly to the left. Whether this trend to the left is too slow or too scattered or too belated for the salvation of the Labor and Socialist International remains yet to be seen.

The new program of the Social Democratic Party of Germany is an illustration of this trend, as are also the recent pronouncements of Otto Bauer. In both Germany and Austria, however, the leftward movement became significant only after crushing defeat at the hands of a victorious fascist dictatorship.

Under these circumstances it would be unwise for the Socialist Party of America to settle back in mental comfort and point with pride to the fact that we have usually been in a left minority in the International,—that in 1920 we applied for membership in the newly-formed Third International, or that following the war we were a part of the Vienna Working Union. For it is almost impossible to see any major distinction between the policies of the Socialist Party of America during the period of post-war "prosperity" and the policies of the defeated Social Democracy of Germany.

Even before the war, the general assumption in the SPA as in the Social Democratic parties of Europe was that the Party would come to power by casting a majority of the votes in an election. Events of recent years cast doubt on the validity of that assumption. The question of the road to power is unimportant to a revolutionary party only if it does not grow in strength. But the greater its strength, the greater the probability that its road to power will not be chosen by itself but will be determined by the type of opposition it meets.

As the Party grows, it is interested in displaying its

strength. An election is one means of measuring strength. Other means of accomplishing the same purpose are the strike and the demonstration. The election, the strike, and the demonstration are three different ways of showing how many people can do the same thing at the same time under the direction of the Party. Of the three the election is the easiest to operate.

For a revolutionary party to place its reliance solely upon the electoral machinery, however, as a means of recording the strength of its claim to power, would be to adopt one of the most disastrous errors of the German Social Democrats. The strike and the demonstration,—the other weapons of ascending to power, must not be allowed to remain undeveloped; and when once developed they must not be allowed to grow rusty through disuse. Whether a growing socialist party in this country will come to power by means of an election, by means of a strike or a May Day, depends more upon the type of opposition it meets than upon anything else.

This does not mean that the Socialist Party renounces democracy, but that rather it renounces the post-war trend away from the analysis of democracy presented by Morris Hillquit in 1920 and reaffirms the correctness of that analysis:

> In a capitalist regime the whole machinery of democracy operates to keep the ruling class minority in power through the suffrage of the working class majority, and when the bourgeois government feels itself endangered by democratic institutions, such institutions are often crushed without compunction. . . . Similarly, working class democracy, i.e., the system of political and legal rights granted by the transitional socialist state, is also a class institution. . . . Only when all class distinctions will disappear in the pure socialist society, will actual equality, political and economic, prevail.*

Otto Bauer wrote in the New Leader of May 4, 1934:

> In this sense we remain democrats: the freedom of the individual to form and propagate his own convictions, and the freedom of the people to decide jointly according to the convictions of the majority, remain our aims. But the revolutionary dictatorship must first strip the capi-

*Hillquit, From Marx to Lenin, p. 58-60.

> talists . . . of their economic power before the genuine freedom of the individual and before real self-determination will be possible. Our aim is not the restoration of bourgeois democracy of yesterday, but the revolutionary dictatorship as a transitional form to a real socialist democracy.

To this admirably clear statement only two things need be added. First, Hillquit's term "working class democracy", signifying equality between producers only, undoubtedly carries our meaning to the American worker and farmer better than the European term "dictatorship of the proletariat". And, second, we in America should not wait until after a fascist victory to subscribe to Bauer's statement and reassume the Hillquit position of 1920.

There is one other major question on which a reversion to a previous position is necessary. In 1914, in testifying before the United States Commission on Industrial Relations, Morris Hillquit said that

> . . . the Socialist Party, or at least the majority of its members, believe that the present leadership of the American Federation of Labor is somewhat archaic, somewhat antiquated, too conservative, and not efficient enough for the objects and purposes of the American Federation of Labor. That is the general socialist position.

The official attitude of the Party toward trade unions has always involved cooperation while criticizing, and it must remain so. But during the years following the war, when both the Party and the unions were losing numbers the criticism was largely omitted, and "cooperation" came to mean, in effect, getting along well with the union leaders in order that a bit of their exaggerated prestige might slop over on the Party.

There is today an encouraging increase in socialist activity in the union movement, and along with it something of a revival of the old freedom of criticism. If in 1914, the leadership of the American Federation of Labor was archaic, antiquated, conservative and inefficient, it is doubly true under present circumstances. It might be added that all of those adjectives apply equally well to the form of organization of the American Federation of Labor.

One indication of this trend toward freer criticism is the paragraph which the April Convention of the Socialist Party of Illinois insisted upon inserting in Preliminary Agenda Number I on Labor Unions:

> As socialists we deplore the drift of the official American trade union movement into a policy of pure and simple business unionism as distinct from class-conscious unionism. In many Internationals and in the A. F. of L. itself, many officials of high rank and influential position have stooped to collaboration with employers and with capitalist government officials. Continued participation of union officials in the National Labor Board in spite of its adverse decisions is but one instance of this disastrous policy.
>
> The continuation of this policy is resulting in the demoralization of the spirit of the American labor movement exactly as it did during the war.
>
> We condemn the general lethargy and the lack of genuine interest among many union officials in organizing the unorganized and particularly in organizing the unskilled and semi-skilled in most of the basic industries.

II.

It is unlikely that the question of the "united front" with the Communist Party will be a major question facing the Party in the future. The Communist Party has repeatedly shown itself to be thoroughly opposed to the united front as a means of united action.

It is also unlikely that the question of the formation of a Farmer-Labor Party on a national scale will be before the Party in any real sense within the near future. There is at present no such movement on the horizon, and no mass labor organization ready to sponsor one. For that very reason, however, it would be wise for us now to establish the criteria by which we should judge the genuineness of any future movement to establish a Farmer-Labor Party, and to lay down the conditions of our participation. Adequate criteria are suggested in Resolution Number I in the Preliminary Agenda. Repetition of the mistakes of hundreds of short-lived local labor parties and farmer-labor parties might thereby be avoided.

A more immediate problem is that of the proper role of socialist elected officials in municipalities. The towns in which socialist mayors were elected shortly before the entry of the United States into the war are today, with a few honorable exceptions, the most difficult places in the country to establish and maintain functioning locals of the Party. This is partly because many members of the Party innocently thought that to elect a socialist mayor was to complete the social revolution, or at least a long step in that direction. The Municipal Report adopted unanimously by the NEC at its Reading meeting last year was a step in the direction of a solution of this problem. This report recalled the virtues of "Popularism" and urged greater emphasis upon legislative positions, and less upon administrative offices. Certainly the probability of soon electing numerous municipal officials could be faced by the Party with greater safety if all of them saw their function with the eye of M. V. Baxter, who, nearing the end of his second year as Socialist Mayor of West Allis, Michigan, wrote.

> A socialist official upon taking office, must raise his right hand and swear to support capitalist rules—and in so doing he automatically swears away his allegiance to the working class. A true socialist cannot take the prescribed oath without certain reservations in the back of his head. For this reason it seems questionable whether socialists should accept administrative positions in which they swear to enforce capitalist rules. Perhaps it were better that we should confine our campaign activities strictly to legislative positions until such time that we are strong enough to change the rules. In such positions, in the meantime, we can serve best as gad-flies protesting capitalist legislation and its enforcement.

III.

The effectiveness of the Party as a revolutionary instrument will be determined by the manner in which its organization functions not less than by the correctness of its theoretical analysis. Our major problem is the building of an organization strong enough so that what it thinks and says will carry weight. Probably the most important single factor

in determining the manner in which an organization functions, either in normal times or in times of crisis, is its press.

Any party which sets itself the difficult task of overthrowing the capitalist system must be able to make decisions. Conventions and executive committees exist in order that those decisions may be made in a democratic manner. The carrying out of those decisions, however, depends upon the communication system of the Party. That communication system is the party press. Upon the press depends the ability of the organization to act in concerted fashion, and upon the press depends the impression which the Party makes on friends and sympathizers. A paper with a national circulation is just as essential to a functioning organization of national scope as a local paper is to a functioning local organization.

The question of ownership and control of the socialist press is a question with a long history, dating back to the DeLeon days. DeLeon was a dictatorial and vindictive hothead who used a party-owned press to perpetuate his control. When his tactics finally forced a split in the Party, the new organization resolved never again to permit the Party itself to own and control a newspaper. This policy, which has prevailed down to the present time, was of one piece with the tendency toward decentralization and toward state autonomy.

Even within the last few years we have had the spectacle of state organizations refusing to send in lists of local secretaries to the national office for fear the national office might write them letters. In 1933 a serious attempt was made to insert in the Ohio State Constitution a provision that the Socialist Party of Ohio "shall affiliate with the Socialist Party of America" on the ground that the power to affiliate implied also the power to disaffiliate. In fact, there have been actual cases of state organizations withdrawing from the Socialist Party of America.

Most of our socialist papers in this country are owned and operated either by individual socialists or by non-profit associations open to all party members. Neither of these types of control has avoided serious conflicts on important matters of policy between the nationally circulated papers and

the National Executive Committee. Control by an association inevitably means sectional or local control by the party members in the locality in which the association holds its meetings. This raises few serious questions where it is a sectional or local paper that is concerned, but in the case of a nationally circulated paper it makes democratic control impossible. Ownership by one or more party members, as individuals, places the paper somewhat further out of reach of the Party than does the association device, and of course makes the course of action which the paper will take in time of crisis very uncertain, as was amply illustrated by the experience with the "Appeal to Reason" during the War. The power of the National Executive Committee to drop a paper from the approved list means very little if the paper being dropped is in a position to take its circulation along with it.

The argument raised against party ownership and control of the socialist press in DeLeon's day was that it placed unwarranted power in the hands of a few party officials. But the problem is not solved by placing that power in the hands of a few self-appointed individuals or in the hands of an association not responsible to the Party membership.

If the Party cannot own and control its own press in the interest of the organized socialist movement then in what terms may we state our claim that we are able to run the government of the United States in the interests of the workers and farmers? Either the Party will control the press or the press will control the Party.

Fascism's Challenge and Socialism's Answer

DEVERE ALLEN

MOST essential of all at the present juncture is clarity and education, to spread within the Socialist Party and outside its ranks a comprehension of what fascism really is. I do not set myself up as an unassailable authority, but nevertheless I have sometimes been appalled, as I have gone about the country, at the jumble of confused notions I have encountered.

Fascism is not mere brutality and repression, not simply a phalanx of colored shirts, not the neurotic expression of anti-Semitism, not even, as yet, a fully-organized, a self-conscious theory of government. We have had abundant cruelty, autocracy, racial hatred, and militaristic pageantry within our own frontiers and in foreign lands, long before the ebullient Benito came down by train to lead his Black Shirt legion on that fateful day of October, 1922.

Like many another social movement, fascism arose as a semi-idealistic desire to regenerate a frustrated, backward, over-humbled country . . . curiously enough, at first, through the media of art and poetry. The end of the War, with its added disillusionment and its ceaseless training in the ideology of violence, created one of those numerous conjunctions of historic circumstance of which the ambitious young Black Shirts took full advantage. To overlook the admixture of idealism with the self-seeking of the leaders, is to underestimate fascism's intrinsic popular appeal; to elevate the product of a trial-and-error development into a philosophy of the state, as some radicals seem to do, is to exaggerate deliberate fascist planning to the point of fantasy.

What then, is fascism? Whatever it was in the beginning, and however diversified it may be today, it possesses certain almost universal characteristics by which it may be

recognized. It is, all but invariably, an economic pattern. To be sure, each fascist regimen has produced its own gradations; but at bottom these are substantially the same. When Mussolini grandiosely announced a few months ago that he was about to consolidate the corporative state, he was carrying forward to its logical conclusion a scheme which had existed in practice for a decade. For, by a series of corporative wheels within wheels, his mechanisms of government rotated around the industrial syndicate. Interestingly enough, this form of corporative organization, comprehending within its industrial circle the employers and workers of each productive unit, had a medieval prototype in the corporations fostered by the Catholic Church; which may be one of the reasons why, after an initial period of resistance, Catholicism has characteristically made terms with fascism, then given it reluctant praise, and finally moved on to enthusiastic eulogy. This corporative rule, however, was not exactly planned, in the sense with which the term has arisen from Soviet foresight and organization, but was rather an escape from a rising labor dominance. The incredibly naive comparisons of this "company union" government with the industrial representation system of Soviet politics has no basis in fact, the outward resemblances bearing no inward identity whatsoever.

Fascism, too, is always nationalism—but a nationalism based on semi-pathological ideas of imperialist expansion. The American romantics who solemnly prate about the superior advantages of "discipline" for the chaotic tendencies of modern youth, seldom know what is actually taught in the textbooks of fascist countries, what fancies of ancient imperial glory are implanted in the minds of the youthful millions, how thoroughly the younger generation is being made ready for buccanneering adventure. "What is so terrible," asked Goethe, "as ignorance in action?" Submerged in a mental manipulation through censorship and propaganda, no fewer than ten million young men, in the major fascist countries of Europe alone, are being groomed for warfare, and worse than simply that—for slaughter on behalf of aims as ignoble as any ever advanced in history by the preposterous inventions

of madmen. We have to look deeper than honest resentment at fascism's cynical disregard of elemental decency and its hated assaults on revolutionary aspiration. In racial experience, which proves human incapacity to ward off protracted sterile periods generations long, we can find the only true criterion with which to measure the fascist menace. Nothing less is involved than a throw-back, a sort of social atavism, to primitive and insufferable conditions of racial association. It is from this perspective that historians, decades hence, will assess it. At present, anything that can be done by socialists to contribute realism to the peace movement and aid in the struggle against the militarization of youth, will be a legitimate part of its fight on fascism.

Fascism is typically a promised land for the middle class. In Italy, at the close of the War, the common soldiery who had been promised the land, found the pledges unfulfilled; the officer class, which had been offered bright pictures of itself at the head of the government, discovered that there's many a slip 'twixt lithographs and political reality. In Germany, a central weakness of the Social-Democratic movement was its hesitation when it came up against the landed proprietors; the flaw proved fatal because it gave an excuse for all kinds of doubts in the marginal rank and file and bred additional compromises from within. Thus when the despair of the peasants and agricultural laborers, always somewhat inarticulate, attached itself to the vocal protests of urban artisans and the poorer strata of professional workers, it was easy for demagogues of the Nazi stripe to provide a pillar of showmanship by day and a column of golden promises by night. Not gullibility, but economic desperation, leads to government by impressario. In Germany, as in Italy and Austria and elsewhere in the fascist world, real wages of the middle-class groups had been driven down closer and closer to a mere subsistence level. As shown in the report of the committee of economists which made a careful study of German workers' welfare under the auspices of the International Federation of Trade Unions, the War had not affected the economic status, appreciably, of the poorest-paid, who were

given the index figure of 100 both in 1913 and in 1922, the most nearly "normal" post-War year. The ratio of the skilled workers to the lowest-paid group, however, had declined from 163-to-100 in 1913 to 108-to-100 in 1922. An even more drastic downward drift followed in the subsequent post-War years, affecting every section of the lower and upper middle class. Meantime, Social-Democratic irresolution had killed hope of relief in that quarter, while communist tactics had aroused fear and resentment among the center elements. In that situation, Hitler's rise to power was not nearly so illogical as it appeared to many commentators from afar.

That fascism, even if it sounds like soap-box jargon to say so, is a device to prolong the capitalist system, ought to be plain to everyone. Singularly, it is not plain at all, perhaps because the average person discounts the implied notion of a purposeful fascist-capitalist conspiracy. Yet the conventional adulation of Mussolini is not confined to the salons of the rich or the exuberance of pool-room dictators. Thousands of workers, as often as not the very ones who rail at Hitler because of the Brown Shirt crusade against the Jews, are convinced that a dose of Mussolini's management, which has brought "prosperity" to Italy, would be helpful here. If anyone insists that logic will triumph in cases of complex social situations, let him ponder the existence, in Europe, of a sizable Jewish fascist body whose influence extends at least through three important countries and is not absent from Germany itself. Nothing is more necessary than a constant education of the workers in the truth about fascist "improvement" of their fortunes. That the propaganda has no factual basis is proved by innumerable non-partisan reports. Italy, in 1932, had 2,003 bankruptcies, more than five times the number in Great Britain; in 1931 the number of unpaid promissory notes was 1,663,716 as against 306,703 in 1922; wages have gone down from twenty-five to forty percent in the outstanding industries while prices have dropped only fifteen percent; the number of passengers carried on Italian railroads—those marvellous barometers of fascist progress which always run on time (though they didn't when I was in Italy in 1931)—

was only 80,272,000 in 1932 as contrasted to 100,145,000 in 1923; in 1931 there were 8,190 forced sales of property for non-payment of taxes, whereas in 1922 the number was 1,357; although taxation has jumped about fifty per cent, the consumption of sugar has fallen from 3,470,000 quintals in 1927 to 2,995,000 in 1932 and of table salt from 295,000 tons in 1927 to 178,000 tons in 1932; in the last budget public works were reduced by 1,600,000,000 lire while 600,000,000 lire was provided for armaments. Italy could not hope to escape the effects of the depression; but contrary to popular opinion, it has fared worse than many another country. It has fared as well as it has only by dipping into the funds started years ago for social services, including social insurance.

The international character of fascism must be made better known. Between them, Il Duce and von Goering have demonstrated that if you can make a better man-trap, the world will beat a path to your door. Sir Oswald Mosley derived his tactical inspiration from the lips of Mussolini, and Hitler's famous ceremony of unification at Nuremberg last year was attended by eight of the British Black Shirts. The same thing is true of almost every fascist movement on the globe. Mussolini, who recently declared that "The historical objects of Italian policy are Asia and Africa," held at Rome last December a great Congress of Asiatic students, with five hundred present from India, Persia, Arabia, and other Asiatic countries. This gathering, which established a permanent Confederation of Asiatic Students working in close collaboration with the Fascist Academy, may yet turn out to be the most significant gesture of fascist imperial ambition. Through January the Indian papers, for example, rang with exalted statements about fascism in Italy and Germany; loud praises of Hitler were sung by Indian journalists; Mr. Sekumar Deuskar, the Indian painter, who had studied at Munich, presented to the Indian Institute of the German Academy a picture entitled "Europe and India," showing the two regions personified in a pair of women tenderly embracing with a blond and brown boy playing in the foreground, while in delicate symbolism at the top of a staff, aloft over the affecting

scene, stood a Nazi swastika. It was only later, when Goebbels called Gandhi an agent of bolshevism and came out with three cheers for British imperialism in India, that the viper of doubt crept into this idyllic Eden of international good will.

A strong link exists between the centers of fascism and such outlying trading posts as the Belgian National Legion, the cohorts of Major Quisling in Norway, the 15,000 followers of Birger Furugoard in Sweden, the six or more fascist groups in Denmark, the Gil Robles reactionaries in Spain, the Dutch National Socialist Party, the Irish Blue Shirts, the Australian New Guard, and the farflung manifestations of the same trend in Latin America and the Far East. That a monetary link also is suspected by many governments is clear. It is not, however, so elementary a matter as international propaganda and organization; behind these indubitable factors lie common conditions to be seen in the economic structure of depression-capitalism.

Here are the main differences, obviously, between the reactions of socialists and middle class humanitarians. The latter see chiefly the more sensational episodes; Socialism must deal with the underlying causes and their social products. The temptation for socialists is, naturally, to revert to slogans and contend, with truth, that "the answer to fascism is Socialism"; to assert it, in the grandiloquent spirit of manifestos, that "in organization will victory be achieved." But this still leaves us where we are. In such an article, I can of course do little more than make certain preliminary suggestions for a policy; fortunately, in spite of the speed with which a fascist rule by trade associations is being erected in this country, our own solons of the shirts have mainly been egregious mountebanks and popinjays. But these are not the ones who count. Against deep-going and threatening social trends, as centered in the National Recovery Act and the peripheral groupings around it, a program must be hammered out—at Detroit in principle, later in detail. For discussion these points might be considered:

1. **Win the middle class away from the fascists by standing conspicuously as the sincerest exponent of economic and**

political democracy. It is symptomatic of the dire experience through which world Socialism has been passing that until this sentence is explained, to some it smacks at once of rank conservatism. But what is here suggested is not, for example, that vague defense of "democracy" urged by our comrades in the leadership of the British Labor Party, which has substantially been a defense of capitalist government illuminated by humane precepts and more generous moods. A thoroughgoing workers' democracy is envisaged. This much is undeniable: fascism has not done well thus far where the masses have had any appreciable experience with even a limited self-rule. The French provinces are strongly anti-fascist; the Swiss people voted down a near-fascist proposal last March, over-riding both parliament and president; Socialism has been gaining markedly in most of the more democratic lands. To abandon all hope that the conquest of a government for the workers may be achieved without planned violence and terror is to play the game as fascism would like to have us.

On the other hand, as asserted by R. H. Tawney recently in the *Manchester Guardian:*

> "Ordinary men will not worship indefinitely at the shrine of democracy if it appears that the deity is always hunting or sleeping, still less if it becomes evident that he is too ladylike or too cowardly to attempt to protect either himself or them.
>
> If they are to be rallied to the defense of democratic government, its champions must convince them that democratic government will redress economic injustices, however powerful the interests mobilized in defense of them."

2. **Prepare specifically, nevertheless, for the probable refusal of capitalism to permit a change of power, even by a majority, without sharp struggle, frankly developing (a) revolutionary technique for such a crisis, with (b) a transitional workers' dictatorship.** There are those who see a contradiction in these two policies. The contradiction is illusory. We do not know, as yet, exactly how capitalism will succumb to the pressure of events. Just possibly, it may be superseded without the anticipated bitter crisis, by parliamentary means.

Far more likely, it will resist by force a rising labor movement and seek to deny labor the right to rule even though the workers constitute a majority. Still more likely, it may collapse, amid increasing chaos, in which case not to be ready with a revolutionary organism to take control for the rescue of the voiceless masses—whether as a majority or not—would be sheer betrayal.

Where we shall err, I gravely suspect, will be to split into factions, each forecasting the detailed nature of the crisis and each insisting that the Party shall follow one approach and only one. What I am suggesting is that we put forward a program expressive of our preference, which I take without argument to be an orderly if sufficiently speedy change; yet without hypocrisy or guile to be prepared for a more rigorous eventuality. No one can label this policy mere reformism; nor can it, on the other side, be classed with that unfortunate methodology which from the start cries out to the masses a lack of faith in their capacity to govern, assumes that they can never be won, offers dictatorship as a tyrannical first resort, and ends by driving them into the camp of the enemy, with whom they have tragically come to identify their own self-interest.

3. **Unsparingly revise revolutionary tactics up to date.** Many socialists imagine that those within the movement who continuously urge non-military methods of resistance and revolt do so from a narrow dogmatism which attempts to bend Socialism into a pacifist straightjacket. As a rule, quite the opposite is the case. Changes of the profoundest character have taken place in the ratio of Authority-power to Revolutionary-power since the World War. Weapons of offense have developed in geometrical progression while defensive instruments have progressed in arithmetical rapidity. It is rarely, in a modern industrialized nation (unless perhaps at the end of a great war, and not certainly even then) that the workers will ever be able to resist or revolt by arms in such a favorable equation, even, as last February in Vienna. It is right for pacifists to argue, if they wish, on grounds of principle; but the case is strong enough on grounds of sheer

expediency. We need both a revolutionary will, at the opposite emotional pole from passivism, along with a sound revolutionary technique. In all probability, while there is no such thing, strictly speaking, as a general strike, a prompt, well-organized and disciplined, semi-general strike, as a considerable body of evidence already indicates, will increasingly figure as the central factor. Of course, we must have a militant labor movement first; but it would be a travesty of sound strategy to insist upon waiting until a pervasive labor movement is erected, and then trying to convert it. Rather, we should plunge into our socialist share of that task with a definite crisis-technique in view.

4. **As rapidly as possible, every practicable contact should be made with soldiers, sailors, and police in an effort to persuade them to a sympathetic attitude toward workers' organizations; and as the struggle becomes transferred, partially or completely, from the political to the industrial field, attempts should be made to enlist them in the workers' cause to the point of refusing to use repression in a revolutionary situation.** No counsel quite so promptly makes the superpatriots scream with fury. But even the most absolute pacifist ought to welcome this effort to avoid bloodshed, unless he is reluctant to abandon military guarantees of a privileged propertied condition. It is, indeed, a critical revolutionary factor. There is a significant contrast between this method and that advocated by the unrealistic fire-eaters who alienate the armed forces themselves through talk about "turning the guns upon your officers"—advice which reveals not a little military amateurism as well as an ignorance of human psychology.

5. **Take full account of the psychological bases of fascism.** Aldous Huxley has recently undertaken to prove that fascism is exclusively psychological in origin. Needless to say, one must consider his conclusions wrong and his arguments grossly oversimplified. Nevertheless, he is right, as anyone who has studied fascism at first hand is likely to agree, in ascribing some of its major social controls to mental maladjustments. The socialist's danger, in his correct insistence upon economic motivation, is a failure to see that even

empty stomachs can better be borne in solidarity, under the force of strong group emotion, to stirring music and snapping banners. We have hesitated, as much from temperamental diffidence as from conviction, to emulate the colorful spectacles and the resultant **esprit de corps** of the fascist columns. Although we want no private armies, in fire we ought to be surpassing them. Outside a few large centers, and usually even there, our meetings are drab affairs, repellent to the eye and ear of youth; the singing in our average local would make the early cave men stir uneasily in their graves; we lack that sparkle and color and buoyancy which give a cause momentum. We need not covet the asininity of Rotarian tonsil-exhibitionists. But we can, possibly, come alive.

Socialism and the Farmer

DARLINGTON HOOPES

RECENT census figures reveal startling facts concerning farm living standards in the world's richest nation. We find that the average farm home occupied by its owner is worth $1,135, that 44% are worth less than $1,000 and only 4% are worth more than $5,000. The average value of those occupied by tenants is less than $500, while 66% are worth less than $1,000, and only 1% more than $5,000. Only 34% of all farm homes have telephones, 15.8% have running water (without which decent bath and toilet facilities are impossible) and only 13.4% have electricity. Tenancy and mortgage debt are on the increase, and living standards have sunk to a bare subsistence basis. Rent, interest and taxes have beaten the American farmer down, until like his old-world brother, he is a peasant bound to soil by debt. It thus appears that the farmer is no better off under capitalism than is the industrial worker.

The American farmer, in particular, is reputed for his independence and his willingness to struggle for better things. We should therefore expect to find him joining hands with the city worker to abolish the robber system which oppresses both. The Socialist Party should appeal to one as much as to the other, but such has not been the case. A recent study shows that while industrial workers make up only 28.9% of the population, they furnish 59.5% of our members, while the agricultural workers with 21.4% of the population form only 3.6% of our members. This is indeed food for thought. Obviously there is something wrong. The socialist program has not appealed to the farmers, in America or in Europe.

If we are political realists we will face this problem squarely. We shall not duck the issue by saying that the farmers are individualists, that they think they are petty capitalists, and are therefore opposed to Socialism. The slightest

investigation will disclose that many farm organizations favor public ownership of banks, railroads and public utilities. They want federal marketing agencies and co-operative societies to displace the "middle-men", so that they can receive the "cost of production for their crops" which is simply their way of saying the "full value of their toil". They demand that the government take over the farm mortgages and thus **abolish interest** which is good socialist doctrine. The tenants and share-croppers will surely not object to the abolition of rent, through the public ownership of the land which they work provided they are permitted to continue to occupy it. In other words, many farmers agree with a large part of the socialist program.

Why then do we find so little support among rural workers? I believe there are two main reasons: first, we have scared them away by implying that we would take their farms from them, and second, we have not included their immediate demands in our platform to the same extent as we have those of the city workers.

Socialists have generally taken it for granted that under socialism farm land must be socialized and worked collectively. Ultimately that may be the case, but the fact remains that farm production has not yet developed to the stage where it is ripe for socialization. The one-family farm is still the unit of production. The farm is the farmer's home. Right or wrong, he desires more than anything else to retain possession of his home. If he thinks we are going to take that from him, he is going to be against us, no matter what advantages we may offer.

Why shouldn't we allay his fears by definitely declaring in our platform that we will protect working farm owners in the possession of their farms? The big thing is to socialize the banks, railroads, natural resources and the developed industries. The farmer wants that and will help us do it if we will stop threatening to take his farm. Are we going to make the same mistake as our European comrades have made and drive the farmers into the fascist camp? They and those immediately dependent upon them make up over one-fourth of

our voters. With their solid opposition we will have a very slight chance of obtaining power through the ballot. We may capture the cities and industrial states but not the nation. Remember our comrades had 66% of the vote in Vienna, but only 42% in Austria as a whole. If they had made as strong an appeal to the farmers as to the city workers, Dollfuss could not have crushed their movement. After all, if we don't attain power, we cannot socialize any industry. We must have a large farmer vote in order to win. Why drive him away by demanding something for which his industry is not ready? Let us work together to socialize the industries that are developed.

About a year ago I was really thrilled by the proposal of voluntary socialization of owner operated farms. As one who was born and raised on a farm and who a few years ago was active in the Grange and Milk Producers' Association, I felt that this was a great advance over the usual socialist farm program. I included it in a proposed plank for our platform, and wrote a long letter explaining its advantages to some fifty comrades throughout the country. A few endorsed it wholeheartedly but every active farmer vetoed it. A high official of the Grange opposed the idea because "the ambition of every farmer is to own his own home". He went on to say that we could win the farmer to Socialism if we would advocate the restoration of "home ownership on the farm free of interest and high taxes and give him direct access to the final market by federal marketing and processing agencies." Socialist farmers seem to agree that even the suggestion of voluntary socialization will alienate rather than attract the support of rural workers. In the face of such opposition from those most familiar with the psychology of American farmers, I am convinced that it would be unwise to include that plank in our platform.

Some comrades will no doubt contend that acceptance of Marxian economics requires us to insist upon socialization and collectivization of all farms. It seems to me that this argument ignores the very important fact that unlike industry, agricultural production is still in the one-family farm stage, and is not ripe for socialization. Instead of expanding, many

large so-called factory farms have failed during the depression. Even if it were sound economics, it would be the very worst kind of psychology. If we are to win power by political action, we can't afford to drive away one-fourth of the voters.

Furthermore, our 1932 platform does not even propose public ownership of farms held by absentee landlords. Why should we continue to alienate the support of working farm owners by implying that we favor complete socialization, when we haven't the courage to openly appeal to the share-croppers and other tenant farmers, who according to the 1930 census make up 42.4% of all farmers, by a plank calling for the abolition of landlordism! Wouldn't it be better socialism, as well as better politics, frankly to seek the support of both groups by demanding that titles to all farms operated by others than working farm owners be taken over by the public, and stating plainly that we will protect working farm owners in the possession of their homes?

Taking up the matter of immediate demands, we have never hesitated to endorse unemployment insurance, minimum wages and shorter hours for industrial workers. Isn't it just as good Socialism to take over the farmers' debts and abolish interest or at least reduce it so it will cover carrying charges only? Certainly we favor transferring the burden of taxes from farms and homes to incomes, inheritances and excess profits. Why not free the share-cropper from the clutches of the banker by advancing him cash for seed, implements and livestock? If it is all right to guarantee city workers a living wage, why not guarantee the farmer a market for a certain quantity of his staple crops at a price fixed at the beginning of the season to cover the cost of production? We realize that we can't win the support of the urban workers for our ultimate goal unless we advocate measures which will ease their conditions and increase their security now. The same principle holds true with the rural workers. They need Socialism as much as their city brothers, but only by including their immediate demands in our platform can we open their ears to our message.

The time for our National Convention is rapidly ap-

proaching and it is of vital importance that we carefully discuss this entire subject. As a basis for discussion let us consider the following as a proposed section on "Agriculture" in our 1934 National Platform:

We advocate public ownership not only of the banks, utilities, and natural resources, but also of the farm-machinery factories and the so-called "middlemen", that is, those industries engaged in the processing and distribution of farm products which under private ownership rob the farmer by buying his crops at less than the cost of production and selling them to the consumer at prices several times as high.

We recognize that the one-family farm is still the unit of farm production, and that the farm is the home of the farmer, and we will protect him in the possession thereof, but we must not permit landlords or other farm owners to exploit tenants, share-croppers and other farm workers. We therefore propose that titles to all farms operated by others than working farm owners be taken over by the public, and farmed by present tenants or share-croppers through use-leases or used for experiments in co-operative farming or other public purposes.

As immediate relief measures we propose:—

1. That the burden of taxes be shifted from farms and homes to incomes, inheritances, excess profits, etc., such taxes to be collected by the federal government and distributed to municipalities for school and road purposes.

2. That the federal government take over all debts on farms operated by working owners, and reduce the interest rate to actual carrying charges.

3. That where necessary the federal government make cash advances to share-croppers and tenants for seed, implements, and live-stock.

4. That working farmers be guaranteed a market at fair prices agreed upon at the beginning of the season for a fixed amount of their staple crops.

5. That federal marketing agencies be created and farmers' and consumers' co-operative societies encouraged to take over the processing and distribution of farm products

with a view of wiping out "middlemen".

6. That social insurance against adverse weather conditions be provided.

7. That national, regional, and state land utilization boards be formed for the purpose of discovering the best uses of the farming land of the country, in view of the joint needs of agriculture, industry, recreation, water supply, reforestation, etc., and to prepare the way for agricultural planning on a national and, ultimately, on a world scale.

You will note that all of the planks in the 1932 platform are included. In other words, the changes are additions. Let us list them in order. They are:

1. A repetition of the demand for public ownership of banks, utilities and natural resources, together with the farm-machinery factories and the middle-men. The farmer favors this and we should emphasize it in his part of our platform.

2. Recognition of farmers' desire to retain possession of his home.

3. Definite demand for the abolition of exploitation of farm workers through rent and low wages by the taking over by the public of titles to farms operated by others than the owners, coupled with a suggestion of co-operative farming.

4. Definite demand for the abolition of exploitation of farm workers through interest by the assumption of debts of working farm owners and the making of cash advances to tenants.

5. Call for protection against violent price fluctuations as to fixed amount of farmers' product. The limitation to a fixed amount is necessary in order to avoid over-stimulating production.

As stated above this program is suggested as a basis for discussion. It is not original with me. It is merely a summary of ideas proposed by comrades throughout the country who are in close touch with farmers. It is my hope that it will draw the attention of our membership to this most important problem.

Immediate Demands

DAVID P. BERENBERG

THERE are some socialists who hold that we should limit ourselves to a program of one single point: the complete and immediate abolition of capitalism and the establishment of socialism. They argue that any program of immediate demands is reformist, rather than revolutionary in tendency; that in so far as any immediate improvement in the condition of the worker is possible, we delay the revolution by ameliorating the position of the workers and by undermining their revolutionary ardor; that we deceive the worker by making him believe that capitalism can be transformed into socialism by gradual stages; that, finally, capitalism will make no real concessions in any case, and that therefore the time spent in agitating for an immediate program had better be spent in preparing the revolution.

This is analagous to the position of a general on the field of battle who refuses to scout the enemy, who boldly and bravely refuses (as if this were possible!) all skirmishes and all partial engagements, and who conserves his strength for, and stakes his all on, one grand assault on the enemy's capital. This may be magnificent, but it is not war.

There are other socialists who imagine that capitalism can be destroyed by an insidious sapping process. First one demand is put forward, and granted, only that another may be advanced. Progressively wages, hours and the conditions of labor are improved; progressively the political rights and powers of the working class are extended; legislative control over industry grows; social legislation (e. g. old age pensions, workmen's compensation, unemployment insurance, etc.) is enacted; the principle of government ownership is applied to an ever widening area of industry. Little by little the power of capital is by these measures circumscribed and hedged about with restrictions and limitations, and gradually re-

placed by a system of socialization which will one day become socialism. This is neither magnificent, nor war.

Between these two extremes lies the true socialist line. It is impossible for socialism to take the position that in the class struggle, as it proceeds from day to day it cannot be concerned with the food, clothing and shelter problems of the workers. A socialist leadership that says to the workers: "Your daily battle for a life that is bearable is of no concern to us. Forget the needs of to-day and join us in the preparation for the final conflict" must be prepared to have the workers ask "When is the final conflict to take place? To-day? To-morrow?" And if the answer is, as it must be, "We do not know. We are not in a position to determine the date of the final conflict," then the workers must, and will, answer: "In the meantime we must eat."

The worker is not a philosopher. He is a human being with human needs. He lives in a predatory society that teaches, by precept and example, that only he has privileges and advantages who uses his powers of body and mind to attain them. He has no thought of sitting quietly by while others take from him his bread, his roof and his clothes. He will fight to defend the living standards that he has attained at the cost of great sacrifices. He will fight, if the occasion presents itself, to extend his present share of the world's goods. This, to the worker, is the essence of the class struggle. Any extension of this struggle into a philosophy of history comes later, and is the product rather of relatively detached observers than of primarily active participants. Anyone, however, who is not in and of this struggle is alien to the spirit of the workers and will be rejected by them.

Marx and Engels knew this well. The Communist Manifesto lists a series of immediate demands which are described as "pretty generally applicable". The task of the revolution as they see it is "to raise the proletariat to the level of the ruling class, to win the battle of democracy." They describe the ultimate aim of the revolution: "The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralize all instruments of pro-

duction in the hands of the State,—i.e. of the proletariat organized as the ruling class." But they add that "in the beginning this cannot be effected except by means of despotic inroads on the rights of property, and on the conditions of bourgeois production; by means of measures, therefore, which appear economically insufficient and untenable, but which, in the course of the movement, outstrip themselves, necessitate further inroads upon the old social order, and are unavoidable as a means of entirely revolutionizing the mode of production".

It will be noted that Marx and Engels conceive of their immediate demands as applicable after the seizure of power by the proletariat. They are nevertheless advanced before the seizure of power, that the proletariat may know what the revolution intends to accomplish immediately as well as ultimately.

Danger arises, however, when the program of immediate demands is thought of not as a series of measures "which appear economically insufficient and untenable, but which outstrip themselves", but as ends in themselves. Often enough those who tend to make of the immediate demands the whole of the socialist program assert that this is not their intention; that such a description of their position maligns them; they are thoroughly conscious of the ultimate aim, but that it is futile in the circumstances to emphasize that aim; that it is better strategy, so long as the final socialist goal is still far in the future, to stress the immediate program. It has been asserted that the difference between a reformist and a revolutionary position on the question of the immediate program is a matter merely of emphasis. This is perhaps true, but it must then be conceded that the question of emphasis becomes one of primary importance. It is possible, for example, merely by careful emphasis completely to vitiate the whole of the socialist program. In the hands of people skilled in the use of words it is possible even to render lip service to the ultimate socialist aim, and then, by laying emphasis heavily on the immediate demands, to make it appear that these, and not the socialist goal are the true concern of the party. That many, in and out of the party, believe this to be true cannot be ques-

tioned.

The statement of the ultimate aim of the socialist movement in the national platform of 1932 is an example of what can be accomplished by subtle emphasis.

> "The Socialist Party is to-day the one democratic party of the workers whose program would remove the causes of class struggles, class antagonisms and social evils inherent in the capitalist system.
>
> "It proposes to transfer the principal industries of the country from private ownership and autocratic, cruelly inefficient management to social ownership and democratic control. Only by these means will it be possible to organize our industrial life on a basis of planned and steady operation without periodic breakdowns and disastrous crises."

Compare this with the unequivocal wording of the Communist Manifesto.

> "We have seen above that the first step in the revolution by the working class, is to raise the proletariat to the position of the ruling class, to win the battle of democracy.
>
> "The proletariat will use its political supremacy, to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the State,—i.e. of the proletariat organized as the ruling class; and to increase the productive forces as rapidly as possible."

Here there is no talk of "principal industries"; all capital is to be taken over. Here there is no ambiguous phrase such as "social ownership"; the proletariat is to be the ruling class, and the means of production are to be centralized in the hands "of the proletariat organized as the ruling class."

Of course, it may be argued that there are no real differences between the statement in the Manifesto, and that in the 1932 platform. We shall be told that we are dealing with a "matter of emphasis." That is precisely the point I wish to raise. Why is the 1932 platform statement so careful, while that of the Manifesto is so direct? For whose benefit

is "proletarian" ownership changed to "social ownership"? Why does "all capital" become the "principal industries"? Can it be that a certain tenderness for liberal and middle-class elements, and perhaps for certain labor elements that think of themselves as middle class, dictates this cautious wording? If the difference between the two phrasings really resolves itself into a matter of emphasis, if they do not really diverge subtly in meaning as well, why not adopt the wording of the Manifesto in our next national platform?

A sound movement emphasises the ultimate aim, and subordinates the immediate demands to that aim. It conceives the immediate program, not as ameliorative and reformistic measures designed to make capitalism tolerable to the workers. Nor is it the function of the Socialist Party to advance measures that will tend to cure a sick capitalist system, and that will so help to prolong its life when it is perhaps on the point of self-destruction. We must think of our immediate program as measures that "outstrip themselves, necessitate further inroads upon the old order, and are unavoidable as a means of entirely revolutionizing the mode of production." Are the demands of the 1932 platform so conceived? Do they not rather read like the program of a party of liberal reform than like a revolutionary appeal to the proletariat?

I quote a few of the main items in that program:

"A federal appropriation of $5,000,000,000 for immediate relief for those in need, to supplement state and local appropriations.

"A federal appropriation of $5,000,000,000 for public works, etc."

"Legislation providing for the acquisition of land, buildings and equipment to put the unemployed to work producing food, fuel and clothing and for the erection of homes for their own use."

"A comprehensive and efficient system of free public employment agencies."

"Government aid to farmers and small home owners to protect them against forecloseures; and a moratorium

on sales for non-payment of taxes by destitute farmers and unemployed workers."

"Public ownership and democratic control of mines, forests, oil and power resources, public utilities, etc., etc."

"The operation of these publicly owned industries by boards of administration on which the wage-worker, the consumer and the technician are adequately represented."

"A constitutional amendment authorizing the taxation of all government securities."

Space forbids the printing of the whole program. The items given here are representative. They disclose the sad fact that the main difference between the socialist program of 1932 and Roosevelt performance in 1933 and 1934 is quantitative and not qualitative. There are sound socialist demands in the platform, demands that with proper emphasis would be in the spirit of the Manifesto. There are other elements in the program that a bourgeois reform administration can grant, has in fact granted.

This fact, instead of being the incentive for a closely critical examination of our program, becomes to some a cause for congratulation. The enemy has stolen our thunder! We have forced the capitalists to come to us for measures of reform. A few may even find a degree of "socialism" in what Roosevelt is doing.

Precisely there lies the danger of such a loosely conceived and carefully written program as that of 1932. Far from entrapping the liberal and middle-class elements that it is patently designed to catch, these will say with much justice that much that we call for can be more readily obtained from a Roosevelt. In fact, these elements voted for Roosevelt in 1932 in the expectation that he would grant much that is here demanded, nor were they deceived. When no Roosevelt, and no Wilson, is on the horizon, these same elements will vote the socialist ticket and for this program "as a gesture of protest." But they have no faith that we shall ever have enough power to enact any part of the program and they desert, as they always have done and quite rightly, when a leader from their own class espouses reforms that, after all,

capitalism can grant in an extremity and still remain capitalism. When times are normal, when no crisis confronts capitalism, the numbers of the liberal elements who are interested in these reforms is negligible. Yet our platform writers go on writing programs of this nature, and do not realize that the ghostlike and unreliable character of our support is in large measure traceable to the character of their platforms.

That such a program does not lead to Socialism, the framers of the 1932 program do not realize. A revolution of the proletariat is not made by liberal members of the middle class. The workers are alienated by a movement dominated by the wish to placate middle class liberals. Where they are not alienated they are deceived into believing that Socialism can be obtained by gradual concessions granted by the capitalists.

Nothing is farther from the truth, and it is our duty to say so. The capitalists will not concede even so much as Roosevelt is trying to exact from them for their own ultimate good, unless they are forced to do so. We must realize that, no matter what the pressure that is exerted upon them, they will never concede anything essential unless first stripped of their political power by the revolutionary proletariat. While they have the power, rather than yield any essential capitalist position, they will let loose the forces of fascist reaction, as they have done in Germany, Italy, Austria and Jugo-Slavia.

It is our duty to make this clear, and to present our immediate demands in the spirit of the Communist Manifesto as measures that only the proletariat, through its own power can attain. If the proletariat is not yet ripe for the demands that it must make, it is our part to show the way. A socialist party that tones down its demands to what it imagines the workers will accept, is no leader of the proletariat.

Our quarrel then does not lie with immediate demands in themselves, but we are concerned with their nature and with the intention behind them. A prosy, lengthy diffuse program, like the platform of 1932, written with no clear philosophy back of it, and including planks inserted to please this group and that, is of no value. Let us have done with

political jobbery. What we need is a concise program written in terms of the workers' need for bread here and now, and then in terms of the workers' need for power to make their demands effective. Such a program will do more than all the subtleties and word-weavings of the last twenty years to clear the air, and to convince the workers that the Socialist Party is the party of the proletariat.

A WORD ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTORS

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Education and Propoganda

ANDREW J. BIEMILLER

IT is important to make clear at the outset of this article that education and propaganda are not mutually exclusive, particularly in reference to the socialist movement. Rather are they slightly different aspects of the same process—that is, explaining our concepts and getting people to accept them.

Education is the attempt to accomplish this end with a comparatively small group of people, propaganda a similar attempt with masses of people. In education we try to make people understand every step of our reasoning and hence reach our conclusions; by propaganda we try to make people who are unwilling or unable to go through the complete process accept our conclusions.

Much nonsense has been written and spoken about education. Education, we are told, is teaching people how to think; propaganda what to think. This difference seems to me artificial and absurd. What we are concerned with is teaching people what to think about. We must be frank in recognizing that in all our educational and propaganda work we are approaching a certain set of facts and occurrences with a distinct point of view. There is nothing to be gained by camouflage.

Both education and propaganda work for Socialism during recent years have been seriously neglected. Socialist educational work should have as its chief objective the training of men and women for leadership in our movement.

In training leaders for our movement there are three particular subjects which must be taught. They are (1) techniques, (2) Marxian theory, and (3) working class history.

One of the saddest commentaries on the present state of the socialist movement is the almost complete lack of able leaders and officials. An efficient secretary or organizer stands in isolated splendor. This condition is our own fault. We

have not endeavored in recent years to give instruction in the rudimentary techniques of running a branch efficiently, or of organizing virgin territory. We have taught precious few how to organize smoothly running meetings, or how to raise money. Some of our speakers use methods calculated to turn their audiences against them rather than to interest their listeners in the socialist program. In other words, we must put emphasis on the tools of our trade. If we don't, all our theoretical knowledge is useless. The most correct theoretical position avails us nothing without an organization to put it into effect.

Without a sound grounding in Marxian economics and history, the most technically perfect organizer in the world will sooner or later betray the party because he has no fundamental basis for making his judgments. Although our party in its manifestoes has asserted its Marxian character, knowledge of and training in Marxism has been almost non-existent. Much of what has existed has been the result of accident rather than design. Too often we find the curious anomaly that some of our leaders have a clear understanding of Marxian economic theory but no understanding of our social and historical theory, or vice versa.

The third essential to be stressed in our educational work is a knowledge of labor and socialist history. Very few know anything of the role played by the American working class in our history. Fewer know the history of the socialist movement in the United States. And only a handful know anything about the international socialist movement.

Knowledge in these three fields is essential for true leadership. Chances for laboratory work become more widespread every day. Opportunities for class work must be provided on a much wider scale than heretofore. But a word of caution regarding teachers for such classes must be sounded. There is unfortunately a widespread opinion in our movement that any academician, as soon as he joins the party, or even in some cases if he only expresses sympathy with the movement, is equipped to teach theoretical classes. This is far from the truth.

The average academician, particularly if he is a college teacher, is used to relying upon an excellent library and a group of students who know how to use it and have time to do so. He counts on a certain academic background, but very little experience of life or desire on the part of his students to tie up his course with practical problems in their lives. He knows nothing of the working man's problems, his social and economic background, his vocabulary, his ability for absorbing the written and spoken word.

Fifty years ago Gruntvig founded the Danish Folk School movement to take care of the educational needs of the intelligent adults who wanted education without research. The foundation of the folk school movement, which has produced in the Scandinavian countries the best educated population anywhere in the world, was what he called "the living word." By this he meant more than the difference between the written and spoken word; he meant the informal lecture by a teacher who considered himself the instrument for bringing together the written knowledge and the minds of his students. A teacher who cannot speak to his students in their own language, with a knowledge of their own problems and a desire to clarify them through his teaching, instead of merely imparting distant facts, is not a teacher at all, in the folk school definition.

Such teachers may have had academic training or they may not; certainly the possession of college degrees does not indicate their ability to teach. It is essential that they know intimately the lives of the workers, their abilities, and interests. They must be so thoroughly familiar with their students that it would be quite impossible for them to make the blunder which I heard one of our speakers make in addressing a group of women factory workers and referring to Thursday as "maid's night out."

We need two types of classes. First we should have advanced classes in socialist theory for those with sufficient background to be able to absorb it and do some independent study, and with sufficient qualities of leadership to know what to do with it. A second and wider phase of socialist educa-

tional work pertains to that fairly large number of rank and filers who are hungry for information. Their desires can best be met through lecture and forum series and through elementary class work. As a rule they do not have the time for any intensive study on their own part. They are looking for information and that information should be furnished them through the media above mentioned.

In our propaganda work where we are trying to reach the broad masses of the people, our most effective media are the press, demonstrations, mass meetings, literature, and the radio. We should never forget that in our propaganda work we are trying to attract broad masses of people to our general position, rather than attempting to explain specific points at issue.

Our speakers and writers who are engaged in this work must have a good understanding of mass psychology. They must understand the use of slogans and catch phrases. They must have a good grasp of the peculiar development of American institutions. They must be able to write and speak in a language familiar to the workers. They must deal with current problems which come close to the every day lives of the workers and their families. Probably the most successful of our propagandists will be those who come from the actual ranks of the working class.

Our press today is in terrible shape. In the first place, its circulation is woefully small. In the second place, it seems either designed to attract only those already converted to a socialist position or it becomes super-opportunistic. Possibly our most important task is the building of a widespread circulation for a socialist press which will be Marxian in outlook but written in non-technical language. Our increasing membership among rural groups makes the building of such a press of major importance, since these groups cannot be reached by meetings, demonstrations, classes, and the other propaganda available in cities.

One of the most noticeable improvements in our propaganda during the past few years has been in our pamphlet literature. More new socialist pamphlets have been written

and wider circulation for them achieved during that period than in the previous decade. I believe it is essential that this work be fostered and that the price of pamphlets be kept at an absolute minimum so as to achieve a wide circulation. The "Issues of the Day" series inaugurated by the national office must be expanded to include pamphlet material on matters of every day interest to workers and farmers. As an illustration I believe there is a crying need for a popular pamphlet on the dairy industry.

Our pamphlets come under the head of both propaganda and education, since they are intended for all groups, advanced party members and unenlightened non-members. Our greatest recent achievement in the way of serious educational material for those who want to understand the bases of Socialism has been the acquisition of the American Socialist Quarterly. Through this magazine we hope to continue thorough discussion of fundamental problems confronting the socialist movement.

We must also pay increasing attention to graphic and pictorial presentation of socialist propaganda. We can learn a great deal from modern advertising techniques in this regard.

Another propaganda vehicle which we must exploit more fully is the radio. Probably the two individuals who have the most far reaching hold on the masses of the American people at the present time are Franklin D. Roosevelt and Father Coughlin. The major reason for their popularity is consistent use of the radio. And on this score again let us remember that the modern farmer frequently has a radio. Such meagre use of the radio as we have made to date has brought excellent results. The weekly program of the Reading local for instance has been of invaluable aid in building up the movement in that area. WEVD has likewise been of value to the New York movement in that area. A weekly national hook-up plus more local enterprises should bring fine response. The best type of program would probably be a socialist commentary on the most important news events of the week. Broadcasts could be financed at least in part by sale of special literature in connection with the program.

To properly coordinate and develop the various subjects mentioned above, it is essential that a department of education and propaganda should be established in the national office. Those who recall the Information and Literature Departments which we once had, will realize its value. The functions of this department could be coordinated under one head who of course would work under the direction and supervision of the national secretary.

It would be the duty of this department to build up our literature, to establish correspondence courses, to supply information for speakers, to run a lecture bureau, to keep in close touch with local educational projects, to run a series of summer schools, to take charge of a national wide radio program series as soon as possible, to establish resident schools for the training of socialist officials.

Another valuable function of this department would be the stimulation of socialist research on economic and historic problems. When one considers how few books have been written by socialists in the U. S. during the last decade, the need for this work becomes all too evident. There is great need for more volumes like Simons' "Social Forces in American History," Oneal's "Workers in American History," and Berenberg's "America at the Crossroads."

We have a bigger start in this direction than many realize. The national office does supply Notes for Speakers. It is developing a pamphlet service. It will aid in the holding of about a dozen summer schools this year. And it has routed many speakers. But everyone close to the problem knows that our present service is woefully inadequate, due primarily to lack of finances.

We must during the next year grapple with this problem in a realistic and determined manner. If we do not coordinate and expand those services which already exist, we shall be left by the wayside. A centralized and uniform educational and propaganda department must be established.

The Socialist Youth Movement

ARTHUR G. McDOWELL

TWENTY-ONE years ago this May the National Committee of the Socialist Party set about federating the scattered young peoples groups of a socialistic inclination, into a national organization. Much as the Socialist Party organizationally has been rebuilt practically from the ground up since 1927, so the present Young Peoples Socialist League dates from around the beginning of 1929. Not until then had the Socialist Party recovered sufficiently from the steady decline that followed 1919, to extend the aid in terms of finance and personnel which alone makes possible a youth movement of any sort.

The first appearance of the Young Peoples Socialist League was coincident with the beginnings of the Socialist Youth Movement internationally in 1907. The initiative came from younger party members and resulted in the establishment of groups in both Chicago and New York in May of that year. At the Socialist Party Convention at Indianapolis in 1912 it was decided to recommend to party locals that they aid and encourage the formation of Young Socialist Leagues "for the purpose of educating our youth in the principles of Socialism—and that this education be combined with social pleasure and athletic exercise."

In the fall of 1913 the National Executive of the party set up the "Young Peoples Department" with Joseph Rogers of Chicago, as the first secretary. A survey revealed 42 distinct local Leagues "professing a belief in the logic of Socialism." Large city leagues existed in four or five cities, Rochester boasting 500 members, Los Angeles 800, New York 400 and Chicago and Buffalo only slightly less.

The League grew rapidly from 1914 on. A perfected constitution was adopted by referendum vote, William Kruse of New Jersey was elected as national secretary and promptly

appointed as Director of the Young Peoples Department by the party. The American League had kept in touch with the provisional International Socialist Youth organization, established by the Berne conference of Young Socialist groups in 1915 in an effort to reconstruct shattered Socialist Internationalism and unify opposition to the continuance of the World War. The young people felt that their young European comrades were gloriously brightening the pages of the history of international socialism so blackened by the weak-kneed surrender of the main section of the Socialist International in 1914.

The 1917 convention adopted the historic St. Louis declaration on the entrance of the United States into the World War, and pledged the socialist movement to resist that war. The YPSL with its 157 circles and 5000 members gladly rallied to that courageous program and felt the bitter brunt of war-capitalism's suppression. The national secretary was indicted for seditious activity. The year 1919 saw the youth movement, together with the rest of the socialist movement, reach its peak and start on a disastrous decline. In a futile attempt to prevent the bitter factionalism attending the communist split, the Socialist Party in its 1919 Emergency Convention in Chicago altered the semi-autonomous relation of party and youth movements to make the YPSL completely independent. The first YPSL national convention was held in Chicago shortly thereafter and the secretary demonstrated the sharp upswing in revolutionary sentiment in reporting an enrolled membership of 10,000.

This was the last report indicating a growing socialist youth movement made for a decade. The national secretary chosen by referendum vote to succeed Kruse (who had resigned to serve his sedition sentence) secretly joined the Workers Party (Communist). He was ousted when discovered, but called a convention in his own authority where a majority voted to turn the League over to the communists.

For ten years the shattered YPSL led a precarious existence. Momentary revivals were followed by collapse. For lack of funds conventions were postponed and abandoned.

The National Executive committees designated by conventions to give responsible leadership never met for similar reasons. The party promised aid which never came.

Early in 1929 a reviving youth movement first found expression in the East, where Greater New York YPSL members took the initiative in the formation of an eastern district organization. The party was moved to appoint a sub-committee of the NEC which reversed the tradition of the past ten years by proceeding to secure both funds and a national director for the League in the person of Frank Manning. This was the beginning of a new socialist youth movement.

Following a crisis in the affairs of the organization late in 1931 precipitated by the resignation of the then national secretary, the YPSL was finally restored as a department of the national office of the party. At the party national convention in Milwaukee in 1932 the YPSL was declared to be "part of the Socialist Party". The party undertook to pay the salary of a full time national YPSL secretary and set aside a definite part of the party dues for YPSL work.

At the sixth national convention of the YPSL in Cleveland in the late summer of 1932 a new constitution was adopted which marked several changes. The age limit was lowered from 30 to 25, and relations with the party were set forth in detail. The obligation of YPSL members over 21 immediately to join the party was established. The seventh convention in 1933 went further by recommending to the 1934 party convention the admission of members at 19 if they have been in the YPSL two years. This is a recognition of the party's need for the services of younger trained people in part, but also is meant to discourage the tendency to make the YPSL a "Youth Party". In addition, two new national functionaries were created, an educational and an industrial director. The duty of the industrial director, according to the report of the organization committee, is to encourage members of the YPSL to become active in the economic struggles of the working class and to supervise these members in their activities in trade unions, unemployed groups, etc.

It has been the tendency for the socialist youth organiza-

tions to recruit only the better paid and better educated of the working class youth. These elements have tended to interest themselves in self-education and cultural matters rather than in politics or trade unionism. Most of the activities of the YPSL of America, 1913-1919, likewise came under the head of education and social programs.

Surveying the American social scene in 1932, the YPSL found that there had been an intensive development of organized recreation under the auspices of churches, settlement houses and the public schools and colleges, since the war. This was in addition to the vast machinery of commercialized sport and amusement under the sponsorship of interests bitterly hostile to everything the socialist movement stands for. It is not too strong to paraphrase the old Marxist dictum by saying that in America "Sport is the opium of the people", particularly of young people.

Under such changed conditions, a movement built up so markedly around "social pleasure" as the pre-war YPSL had been, was not a practical possibility. The generalized idealistic and intellectual appeal characteristic of the YPSL in the years of reorganization not only gave the movement a very narrow group to build on permanently, but meant an overwhelming proportion of students as seen in '32. A healthy desire to appeal to the youth in the working class as well as to train YPSL'ers in the methods of leadership of "struggle organizations", was behind the establishment of the industrial secratariat.

The national executive committee chosen at the Cleveland convention chalked up several accomplishments to its credit. A national paper, the Challenge, was launched and firmly established as the official organ of the movement with a steadily, if slowly, growing circulation and influence. The newly founded educational department under Gus Tyler produced the first of a series of serviceable outlines for educational work. The industrial department definitely directed the interest of the youth movement toward organized labor, and prepared the members for active participation in the trade union organization drives that followed the NRA, and in

which the YPSL did at least its proportionate part to reestablish socialist leadership and influence in the mass organizations of labor.

This was abundantly shown at the 1933 Reading convention. Meeting in the midst of the strike torn eastern Pennsylvania area, the convention heard the story of eastern labor's spectacular revolt from the lips of its own industrial organizers who had been actively cooperating with the struggling new unions. The committee that brought in the report on the industrial department actually contained a majority who were trade union members.

This Reading convention of 1933 marks the beginning of a mature movement. The concentration on the creation of a working class base implied in the previous convention's setting up of the industrial department was enthusiastically reapproved. With the lessons of Hitler's recruiting of youth, particularly university youth, for fascism in mind, the convention faced the problem of a specialized student department.

Attention was turned to the loosely grouped student clubs associated with the League for Industrial Democracy, which itself had originally been founded by leading socialists in 1905 as the Intercollegiate Socialist Society. In December of 1933 a conference of the Intercollegiate Student Council at Washington, D. C., established the Student League for Industrial Democracy under its own national executive, and affiliated the new organization with the International Socialist Student Federation, a part of the Socialist Youth International.

The YPSL convention further faced the problem of the student by setting its own student secretariat alongside the industrial. This secretariat is to handle relations with the S. L. I. D. and has in addition the problem of the direction of the important YPSL work among high school students. Confronted with the limitation of the small numbers at their command, the YPSL has laid down the "Vanguard Tactic" as the role of the young socialist for some time to come. This tactic briefly is that of a group who consider themselves a revolutionary vanguard and function as a disciplined unit

within broader youth organizations and youth institutions. YPSL members within any larger body or institution must form committees to decide on common policy and action in the furtherance of socialist objectives.

There was some gingerly handling of the problem of building a mass movement of youth under socialist leadership. The '33 convention voted to adopt a uniform with emblem and the International Socialist Youth salute. These were attempts at the technique of a mass movement which recognized that desire for conformity and regimentation is stronger among youth than among adults. Any socialist youth movement of mass proportions will have to cultivate the uniform, salute and show tactics which the fascists exploit so cleverly, and will run strongly counter to the prejudices of the highly individualistic type of person who make up such a large part of the articulate membership of the Socialist Party.

For the present the YPSL is concentrating on the development of a nucleus of socialist educated youth and the training of definite classifications of functionaries of the socialist movement. An expanded list of functionaries is gradually being required of the YPSL circle, including secretaries, organizers, educational directors, industrial directors, student directors, cultural directors, literature, "Challenge" agents and propaganda directors. YPSL membership and circles are up to the 1917 level.

The educational department has published seven bound mimeographed study outlines of socialist subjects. A National Cultural Committee is at work and has already made available dramatic material. A song book with music, and posters, are on the press. The Red Falcon movement, a movement for workers' children from 8 to 14 years of age (the beginning of YPSL age) was launched by active New York YPSL members under the leadership of Phil Heller in June, 1932, and is now beginning to take root in the country at large. The Falcons are under the direction of a National Committee on which the YPSL and the Socialist Party are jointly represented.

The YPSL is watching with a friendly and hopeful eye,

the attempt of the Workers' Gymnastic and Sports Alliance to knit together the varied workers' sports groups of European origin into a united American workers' sports group aligned with the Socialist Sports International.

In the summer of 1933, for the first time since affiliation with the Socialist Youth International in 1923, the Young Peoples Socialist League of America was represented at a meeting of the Executive, held in connection with the emergency conference of the L. S. I. in Paris. Dave Lewis of Montreal was the delegate and voiced the practically unanimous sentiment of the American movement in joining with the French and Spanish delegations in expressing sharp dissent with the previous policy of the Socialist Youth International which even more than the Labor and Socialist International, had approved and had been completely dominated by the conservative philosophy and tactics of the German movement. Particularly provoking to other socialist youth sections was the admission on the part of the German group that illegal work had not been prepared or organized in Germany until a month after Hitler's election and until their organization had been completely outlawed and their press destroyed. The setting up of a Latin American secretariat under the wing of the Spanish youth section should lead to the development of more significant socialist youth movements outside of Europe. The YPSL has already aided in setting up a Canadian YPSL movement.

To sum up with an eye to the future: two main tasks confront the youth movement. The first, that of training workers for the socialist movement and its work, is fairly well understood and its importance appreciated by the socialist movement nationally, although state and local support is all too frequently grudging and unsympathetic. The most significant advances along this line have been made since the YPSL developed enough leadership of its own to take the initiative nationally in the formulation and supervision of a program. This has been more easily possible as a consequence of the great measure of autonomy traditional to the YPSL, subject only to the authority of the Party National

Executive.

The second task, that of winning large and strategic groups of youth to socialist leadership, is neither well understood nor its importance appreciated. Youth in industrial capitalist civilization, and particularly in time of crisis, composes a group with problems as special as those of industrial worker, agricultural worker, etc. In 1933 persons under twenty-five made up one-fourth of the unemployed in Germany and in Denmark and one-third in Sweden. Unemployment in this group is steadily increasing in the United States even when falling in general. To equip the YPSL to win this group will require an entire shift of socialist policy. The party at present invests in the YPSL with a view to getting back its investment with interest in organizational terms. Far from the situation in 1917 when the party urged younger party members to join the YPSL, the party now urges them out of the YPSL into the party even before they are of party age, and in many communities in the last three years the YPSL organization was reversing the normal relation by running party work in addition to YPSL.

This may be necessary for the present emergency of party re-establishment but must not be continued beyond the moment of its absolute necessity. At the earliest possible moment the socialist movement must think in terms of winning the youth as just as important a job as winning organized labor and calling for an outlay of party funds and personnel equal to that importance. For youth in America will either be won for Socialism in Our Time, or for Fascism in Our Time.

BOOKS RECEIVED AND WORTHY OF NOTE.

The Economy of Abundance by Stuart Chase
The Macmillan Co., N. Y., Price $2.50

The Idea of National Interest by Charles A. Beard
The Macmillan Co., N. Y., Price $3.75

What Marx Really Meant by G. D. H. Cole
Alfred A. Knopf, N. Y., Price $2.00

The Crucifixion of Liberty by Alexander Kerensky
John Day, New York, Price $2.75

Reflections on the End of an Era by Reinhold Niebuhr
Charles Scribner's Sons, N. Y., Price $2.00

Refreshing Voices from Germany

HAIM KANTOROVITCH

"Socialism's New Start". A secret German Manifesto by Miles, with a preface by H. N. Brailsford. N. C.L. C. Publishing Society, Ltd. London. 142 pgs. Price two shillings.*

I

Germany again. Readers may complain. Yes, Germany again, and whether we like it or not it will be Germany for quite a time to come. The great work of critical analysis and appraisal of the rise and decline of the revolutionary movement in Germany is certainly not finished. It is just beginning. Just as Marx utilized the revolutions and counter-revolutions of his time in order to study the laws of revolutions of his age, so we will have to study the revolutions and counter-revolutions of our time to learn the general laws of revolution in our time.

"Socialism's New Start," a secret German manifesto by Miles,** is a fine and really important beginning in this direction. Its fearless analysis and criticism of the social democratic and communist parties and its Marxist analysis of the rise and essence of fascism, is at this time probably of greater importance for the countries where fascism has not yet arrived, than for countries like Germany and Austria where fascism is already in power. What Miles has to say is history to the fascist countries, but it is a grim warning to the socialists of the democratic countries. In his preface to the British edition, H. N. Brailsford says: "The problems . . . with

*A special American Edition "Socialism's New Beginning", is now being published by the League for Industrial Democracy, New York, with a special American preface by Norman Thomas, in addition to the Brailsford preface. Price 35 cents.

**The book though signed by "Miles" is believed to represent the expression of a group rather than that of an individual comrade.

which this group is grappling, are also in some degree our own. The capitalist reaction has not yet fallen upon us with the brutal intensity that it has developed in Germany. But for us also at home, as well as abroad, the liberal era of capitalism is ended. We too are faced, if not by a "totalitarian" capitalist state, at least by a politically united capitalist class. For us also the slump has been the signal for the coming of a new phase of imperialism. We too have hugged our illusions about the value and permanence of political democracy. We, too, were tempted under impotent labor governments to forget our goal, the conquest of economic power, for us also a 'new start' based on clear and courageous thinking is imperative."

This long quotation from Brailsford's preface is reproduced because it seems that he speaks not only for Great Britain, but for the entire Socialist International. "A new start based on clear and courageous thinking" is imperative at present for the entire Socialist International. It may even be more important for the American party than for the large and strong European parties. Just because the American socialist movement is as yet small and weak, just because it is as yet facing, not the problem of conquering and holding power, but the problem of organizing an American Socialist Party, it is well for it to clearly understand what is it organizing for. The entire tactic and strategy of a party is after all based on its ideas of probable future events. American conditions may be radically different from conditions in other countries; the psychology and the traditions of the American masses may be different from the masses of other countries. This difference must certainly not be overlooked by American Socialists. American Socialists can not simply take over European ideas and make them their own without adapting them to the specific American conditions under which they will have to be applied. It would however be wrong and even harmful to stress these national differences to a point where all similarities between capitalism, fascism and Socialism of other countries, are forgotten. Moreover American capitalism has shown itself to be a good and dili-

gent pupil of European capitalism. Its Americanism does not prevent it from following in the footsteps of European capitalism, when it finds it profitable.

II

For the world at large, the leaders of German Socialism are still the old leaders of the old German Social Democratic Party, Otto Wels, Stampfer, Hilferding. The socialists, however, who remained in Germany and who are conducting their illegal socialist work under the conditions of the Hitler dictatorship no longer recognize these leaders. The author (or authors) of "Socialism's New Start" have very little that is good to say about these leaders. They believe on the contrary that the old leaders have learned very little from their own tragic experiences. They do of course understand that the struggle against Hitlerism in Germany can be neither legal nor democratic, that this struggle must be revolutionary. But, what do they hope for? What, according to them, should be the objective of the proletarian struggle in Hitler's Germany? They look forward, the author says, to a new Weimar constitution.

What the socialists in Germany think of their erstwhile leaders may be summarized from the following paragraph in the introduction to the book:

> "One more word with regard to the social democrats in exile. They themselves have emphatically stated that the new leadership of the party would be born out of the struggle in Germany, and that the only task of the old officials in exile would be to leave the field clear for it. Very well, this new leadership is now knocking at the door. It will fulfil its task as it has fulfilled them up to the present moment. The time has now come for the old officials of the party abroad to keep the promise with which they took up their propaganda work in exile."

An appeal like this may sound very strange to the average reader. The leaders who are appealed to now, to leave the new party alone, are the people with knowledge and experience who have performed great services for the German Socialist movement in the past. It was they who built up that powerful German movement. Is it their fault that ob-

jective conditions beyond their control have destroyed everything that they created? Karl Kautsky has indeed published an article in defense of the old leadership. His article was a pathetic appeal to the new movement not to discard the old leaders. It is not rare in the history of movements that leaders who were not only necessary but indispensable to a movement become its fetters. An old leadership that can not adapt itself to the new times, that may be too old to change its view according to new conditions, becomes the death hand that stifles the party which they helped to create. And old leaders will fight for their leadership! In time the conviction grows up with them that what is important is above all their leadership and not the movement itself. The conservatism of old party leaders has caused more harm to revolutionary parties than anything else.

Criticism of the old party and party leadership in "Socialism's New Start" is unsparing. The German Social Democratic Party could not have organized a fighting revolutionary party, because it has given up the idea of the class-struggle. It has "regarded the interest of the working class and the employers as essentially identical (although they might differ in details) and equally depended on the welfare of the bourgeois state and the prosperity of capitalist economy. It had in all doubtful cases, to marshal its forces in support of this state and the maintenance of the capitalist system."

Those who know anything about the post-war theories of social reformism will easily recognize in this the theory that Socialism cannot be introduced while capitalism is sick. It is the theory of "approaching capitalism not only as heirs but also as physicians," a theory embraced, whether expressly or indirectly by many socialist parties and socialist leaders of the purely democratic type.

But the author of "Socialism's New Start" does not content himself with repudiating the theories and tactics of the German Social Democratic Party during the post-war period. He thinks that the roots of the evil lay much further back than the post-war era. The German Social Democratic Party is said to have been a revolutionary Marxist party before the

war. During the war it changed Marxism for revisionism and lost its revolutionary character. Miles does not agree with this. It is, he believes, "an illusion to think that German social democracy was at heart a revolutionary Marxist party up till August 1914. . . . Its objective had always been at the most, a bourgeois democratic republic." Of course, fighting for a democratic republic under the monarchy was in itself revolutionary. This the author admits.

This criticism of the pre-war history of the German Social Democratic Party is treated very inadequately in the book. On the face of it, it does not sound true. An examination of the theoretical literature of pre-war German Social Democracy will show that it clung vehemently to Marxian doctrines, and such concepts as the class struggle, social revolution and even the dictatorship of the proletariat. The trouble with the German party was, and this is now happening in many other parties, that it completely divorced its theory from its practice; clinging to Marxism in theory it completely disregarded it in practice.

III

The German revolution was not made by the German social democrats. But that does not mean that the German workers did not make the revolution. It is true, the revolution was the result of the defeat in war, but right after the collapse of the monarchy the workers of Germany remained the only class in society that was capable of taking over the state, of reforming it, and using it. Political power was not conquered by the German socialists. It was turned over to them by the former rulers because it was the party representing the only revolutionary class in society. The leaders of German social democracy were not revolutionary minded. They did not want a revolution. But the workers were in a revolutionary mood. The situation was revolutionary. The workers looked up to their leaders, and what did these leaders do?

"In order to protect this bourgeois republic from the impetuosity of masses and the advance of the revolu-

tion, it disarmed the proletariat in a series of sanguinary struggles, but on the other hand armed the bands of officers, the reactionary 'Burgerwehren' and supported the Free Corps,—in short all those reactionary organizations out of which grew up the N. S. D. A. P." (the Nazi-party.)

In the years following the revolution social democracy remained true to its social reformist principles and tactics. The "interests of the bourgeois state" always took precedence over the interest of the working class. Instead of treason to their socialist principles they called it being practical, (How American it sounds!) and prided themselves with their "sense of responsibility." Karl Kautsky gave a true picture of the German Social Democratic Party when he said in his "Bolshevism at a Deadlock," that "The German Social Democratic Party was transformed after the revolution of 1918 into a conservative party, for a revolution after the revolution is inconceivable."

The leaders of the German Social Democratic Party were too old and too conservative for the new times. They approached and evaluated the new revolutionary situation from their old liberal-democratic point of view which they had held for decades. They could not realize that this epoch of liberal-democratic capitalism had ended, that the decline of capitalism had set in, and that this era of decline of capitalism makes necessary a strongly centralized class-dictatorship. This dictatorship seems to be unavoidable. It is only a question which class shall exercise it. The German Social Democratic Party refused to exercise it, and it was left for Hitler to do so.

The book also contains interesting and valuable chapters on the Communist tactics which helped Hitler achieve his victory, and the economic background of fascism, of Soviet Russia and other important subjects. Space does not permit the analysis of these chapters separately. No review can do justice to this book anyhow. The reader will have to read it for himself.

Book Reviews

"The Choice Before Us", by Norman Thomas

The Macmillan Co., N. Y., $2.00

"The Choice Before Us" is tersely fascism or socialism. The contraction of capitalist economy is proving to be not *a* crisis of capitalism but *the* crisis of capitalism. The reductio ad absurdum of capitalism finds starvation amidst plenty, unemployed men and idle factories, wage-cuts to insure return to prosperity.

In the economic sphere the class-relationships are well defined. The class-lines are drawn taut. But, in the socio-political arena confounding developments have taken place. Advanced bourgeois democracies, Germany and Austria, find themselves not the conventionally predicted precursors of a socialist commonwealth, but instead the victims of an atavistic fascism bringing in its wake the vilest practices of medievalism. The powerful labor movements of both countries are virtually destroyed.

The problem, therefore, for our stricken comrades and fellow workers in Europe was not that of choosing socialism or fascism, but instead, having chosen socialism how they could effectuate it.

Our problem here in America is two-fold:

1. How can we persuade the workers in America to choose socialism ?

2. Having chosen it, how can the movement achieve socialism while avoiding the mistakes which the German and Austrian movement committed?

The first is largely programmatic and organizational, the latter, tactical and theoretical, embracing the whole range of issues discussed in socialist circles for decades—the nature of the bourgeois state, the role of democracy, exceptionalism, dictatorship of the proletariat, etc.

The first problem is treated more extensively in Thomas' earlier work, "America's Way Out". But one should not fail to read those sections of the book under review which analyze

the various radical parties and groupings in the American labor movement. A particularly excellent series of proposals for a labor policy for the S. P. A. is contained in the chapter "Social Forces in America". Comrade Thomas demonstrates a competent grasp of the problems before the labor movement generally, and the A. F. of L. in particular. He suggests certain structural changes the A. F. of L. must undergo if it is more effectively to undertake the tasks which even its narrow and confined "pure and simple" philosophy dictate. Democracy within the unions, organizing the unorganized, organized labor and the unemployed, workers' education, independent political action, etc., are intelligently and vigorously discussed.

Today, when the workers must organize as rapidly as possible into trade unions in the war against possible fascism, it is incumbent upon the Party and its leadership to place more emphasis on the economic than on the political and educational activities. Comrade Thomas, were he able to devote his full time to the Party, could lend immeasurable and lasting aid to the Party and the workers, especially should the Party at the Detroit Convention adopt the very proposals for a labor policy which he offers in his book. He would then be in a position to promote a program which he so well devised. (Parenthetically, it may be stated that a large part of his labor program is contained in resolutions submitted by the N. Y. "Militants" to the convention.)

In contemplating the second problem Comrade Thomas reflects on the complexity and difficulty of the problems before socialist tacticians and theoreticians. But one must confess that Thomas lamentably subscribes, in part, to the same gradualism and constitutionalism which characterized the European movements and which he deplores when analyzing their downfall. One is unable to find anywhere in this book a clear statement of how our comrades in Europe could have wrested and retained power. At one point the author caustically observes that as a result of their habitual participation in the conduct of capitalist industry and a devitalizing devotion to parliamentarism, the German movement was almost inevitably destined for the doom which ultimately befell it, thus

proving to be in the words of Comrade Thomas, "a convincing indictment of the folly of workers who put their trust in *capitalist* (italics author's) democracy and its automatic working or in the chance of driving to power without struggle through a process of endless nose-counting in endless elections". Should workers stop relying on "endless nose-counting" and determine to struggle, what form of state shall they set up in the transitionary period?

Thomas by implication refutes the contention that reforms under capitalism are not steps towards socialism, for he speaks of "taking over the banks" as "a step towards socialism" p. 90) and evaluates the T. V. A. as a plan that "could be called socialist". On p. 223 Thomas holds that "some of the machinery we are getting under the New Deal will be useful for the easier achievement either of the cooperative commonwealth or of the totalitarian state, depending entirely on which group presses forward to power."

And yet, the perplexed reader is cautioned on p. 207 that "no Socialist Party . . . can permit its followers to identify democracy with rigid constitutionalism or to encourage the delusion that the present scheme of government in America is suitable to the new society or the transition to it."

The quandary many socialists are facing in America is the following: conceding that the transition must be one of a dictatorship by a party or a class, can we, at this stage, hinder the organization of essential prerequisite institutions which labor must have before it can effect any transition by proclaiming our intention to set up this transitional state?

Comrade Thomas in common with all socialists urges that we utilize all the opportunities which bourgeois democracy offers us for the organization of the workers—but when he analyzes the tragedy of Germany one feels in reading his latest book that Comrade Thomas himself is not committed to any definite program for the period of revolutionary transition.

MURRAY BARON

A History of Socialist Thought in the United States

"Loose Leaves from a Busy Life", an autobiography by Morris Hillquit—Macmillan Company—New York. Price $2.50

Many books have been written about the socialist and labor movement in the United States. Some of them contain important facts which undoubtedly will help future generations to understand the development of socialist thought in this country. Yet none of them contain such an abundance of facts relating to the socialist movement in the United States, as are found in Morris Hillquit's last book: "Loose Leaves from a Busy Life", which the leader of American socialism completed in the final days of his life.

This is quite natural. Morris Hillquit was one of the founders of the socialist party in the United States. He guided it with his leadership from its very inception until he breathed his last. He was therefore in a position to write the history of the American socialist movement not as an outside observer; not merely as an active party member, but as one who led and guided the socialist party through the various storms it encountered on its way. Hillquit was the leading spirit at all important party deliberations; he formulated its policy and he outlined its course through the various crises. He did not have to dig into archives to look for facts. He had them stored up in his memory, for he lived them through.

It is for this reason that Hillquit's book was so well received in the literary world. For the first time the history of the socialist movement in this country was written by one who played the leading role in that movement, one who helped to make that history.

But Hillquit's book is more than a history of the socialist movement. He was not the type of socialist who restricted his activities within the narrow confines of his party. His activities, especially in the pre-war period, extended to many progressive and radical circles. His ability as a lawyer brought him to the defense of a number of important cases of political persecution which stirred the liberal conscience of this country. As labor attorney he took an active part in formulating the policies of a number of large unions, and he

thus came into intimate contact with the labor movement.

Hillquit could therefore speak with authority not only about the socialist movement, but also about the labor unions, as well as about the radical movements which swept through this country in the last fifty years.

Hillquit's autobiography then is in reality a history of radical thought in the United States for the last half century.

"Loose Leaves from a Busy Life", however, is not a mere record of historical events. Hillquit presents a number of interesting personalities from the radical intelligentzia; he acquaints his readers with the most prominent leaders of the socialist and labor movement; he puts on parade many interesting figures from the political life of the country. But these figures are not mere shadows. Hillquit presents them body and soul, with all their human qualities as well as faults.

Take, for instance, such personalities as Eugene V. Debs, Meyer London, Samuel Gompers, Abraham Cahan, or Victor Berger. Hillquit devotes only a few lines to each of them, but in those few lines he gives a characteristic portrait of them, both as to their outward appearance as well as to the role they player in their sphere of influence.

Hillquit's book suffers a bit from the fact that he squeezed too much material into a short space of 332 pages. For this reason the book acquires a dryness here and there. Nevertheless it is not devoid of dramatic accounts of a number of important events. The story of the famous St. Louis resolution and the entire chapter on the Odyssey of the Peace Council are examples of Hillquit's ability to hold the reader spellbound with his dramatization of a narrative.

The war period is treated in the book more extensively. This is due to the fact that Hillquit considered this period the most important not only in the history of American socialism, but also in the socialist movement the world over. During this period international socialism lived through the greatest disappointments, then revived hope, followed by concerted attacks from various quarters.

With the outbreak of the war international socialism practically collapsed. Many prominent socialists deserted

their parties and joined the orgy of the patriots. Socialist fought against socialist. International brotherhood gave way to international carnage. But soon a ray of hope brightened the socialist horizon. Russia overthrew the Czar and proclaimed a socialist republic. This was followed by revolutions in Germany, Austria and in many smaller countries. Hope ran high for the world social revolution.

However, reaction set in. The communists, with their determined effort to break the socialist movement, and the black and brown shirted fascists, with their ruthless annihilation of Marxists of every description, brought new dangers to international socialism. One disappointment followed the other, one greater than the other.

The war had a profound influence upon the author. In the preface to part II of the book Hillquit tells us that "the war affected the course of his life and modified his whole outlook."

This modified outlook he acquired to a greater extent after the debacle of German socialism. This is quite evident in the final chapters of the book.

One who followed Hillquit's leadership in the socialist party and compared it with his writings and public utterances on socialism, must have felt some contradiction in his conception of socialism in theory and in practice. When it came to socialist theory, Hillquit was a 100 per cent revolutionist. "Socialism," says Hillquit, "is not a pacifist creed. It is a philosophy of struggle." Yet in his practical application of the socialist theory, he was rather moderate and pacific.

The failure of German democracy and the destruction of the strongly organized socialist and labor movement by the Hitler Brownshirters, aroused a doubt in his mind as to the efficacy of the policy of "Gradualism", pursued by the German social democracy and approved by himself to a great extent. He ventures the opinion that "on the face of it the methods of Russian Bolshevism have, to date, scored a clear victory over those of German Social Democracy."

Hillquit's book is an important contribution to socialist

literature and no socialist, or radical, or any man of intelligence, can afford not to read it.

B. LEVITIN

The Struggle for Revolutionary Socialism.
by Heinrich Ehrlich.

Translated by Anna Bercowitz and Haim Kantorovitch. Published by the Bund Club of New York. 64 pages. Price 25 cents.

During the interval between the fascist victories that crushed its two strongest sections, the Labor and Socialist International met in emergency conference, last August in Paris, to plan action (1) against the menace of fascism, (2) against the threat of war, and (3) for working class unity. Never has an International Conference met under more critical circumstances, and seldom have results been more barren.

The lesson of the German debacle was faced squarely only by a small minority of the delegates. We in America may derive some satisfaction from the fact that a majority of our delegates were in that minority, and further, that its views have very recently found widespread acceptance in the Socialist Parties of France, Spain, Poland, Belgium, and even in the German Party itself.

Heinrich Ehrlich, veteran leader of the Polish Bund, with the aid of Jean Zyromski of France and Clarence Senior and Maynard Krueger of the American majority delegation, led the minority's fight for an avowedly revolutionary program at the Paris conference. His candid and vigorous report on the conference, published under the title "The Struggle for Revolutionary Socialism" is an important contribution to socialist literature which in these critical days of reorientation no comrade can afford to miss.

"There are still a considerable number of leaders in the L. S. I.," says Ehrlich, "who believe that all that is necessary to solve the difficult problems of the movement is to gloss over them in their speeches. .... A few have a shallow concept of internationalism and cannot raise themselves above the narrow circles of their own national movement." In the

face of serious crises the L. S. I. spokesmen maintain an "official optimism: reports that glowlingly cite the 'unanimity', 'unity', 'readiness to fight' that seemingly prevail in the International... In contradiction to the reformists on the one side and the communists on the other, we maintain that what is most essential to the proletarian movement is clarity and truth."

Ehrlich then describes the confusion and indecision in the conference discussions, particularly in reference to Germany, and the evasiveness and ostrich-head-in-the-sand character of the majority resolutions; relates several small but revealing incidents of the sessions; and presents the revolutionary program of the left minority. (Both majority and minority resolutions are contained in the report of the American delegation, available from National Headquarters).

Valuable analyses of the conference of the independent left parties (I. L. P., Norwegian Labor Party, etc.) of the Communist International, and of the Trotskyist proposed Fourth International are also included in Comrade Ehrlich's pamphlet.

In the language of the minority resolution, of which he was principal author, Comrade Ehrlich believes "The German events condemn at one and the same time the failure of the communist policy of division and the reformist policy of Socialism." He is convinced that the Comintern is condemned to bankruptcy by its own sectarianism, that there are many fine revolutionaries to be found in the I. L. P. and other independent left parties but that they are at present isolated from the masses, that the growing radicalization of the workers in all countries will compel the parties of the L. S. I. to adopt revolutionary tactics, and that consequently left wing socialists should remain within the L. S. I. and seek to transform it, meanwhile striving for unity of all working class parties, Socialist, Communist, and independent.

PAUL PORTER.