

WORKERS
OF THE
WORLD.
UNITE

THE MILITANT



Weekly Organ of the Communist League of America [Opposition]

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Green and Co. at Vancouver

A.F. of L. Officialdom Continues to Serve Its Master

Delegates to the fifty-first annual A. F. of L. convention had to travel all the way to Vancouver B. C. to reaffirm its "time honored" reactionary policy of completely indorsing all the views of the aristocracy of finance as at present expressed by the Hoover administration. The only serious proposal, which could really be considered in the interest of labor, to come before this body, namely, the proposal for unemployment insurance, was rejected. No wonder the New York Times could take great comfort in this decision and say editorially:

"The action at Vancouver might well serve as an example of steadfastness and intelligent self-interest to nervous business men who have been behaving and talking as if the end of this familiar American world of opportunity, courage, energy and enterprise were here. They ought to be willing to wait a little while longer before throwing up their hands and calling for revolutions and miracles."

The A. F. of L. convention called neither for miracles nor for revolution. It was obsessed by only one idea—to strengthen the foundation pillars of hard pressed bourgeois society. It had to be done this time in a language interspersed with remarks somewhat foreign to this coterie of high salaried officials. But that was only an effort to deceive the workers into helping ram these pillars more securely with their own heads.

"With all the old slogans of bourgeois prosperity, of the fog of dinner pail, vanished into oblivion, a new language had to be adopted. This fact gives a different connotation to the apparently radical passages in Mr. Green's opening address, such as: "Because of this dislocation of our economic structure, because there is suffering in a land where plenty exists in abundance, men and women who are the victims possess inquiring minds . . . They are asking questions that are difficult to answer. They are wondering whether the system itself set up by society in every nation has failed . . . We may well ask the question, has capitalism failed?"

We could well answer: "Surely Mr. Green, it has failed miserably!" But he did not stop for an answer and did not seek one. He proceeded to show that he also had learned the art of calling the wolf to gain his own ends. He continued: "But I warn these people who through force and domination and dictatorship and brutality, exploit the masses of the people, forcing them down and down to the lowest depths of despair, that they can only drive them so far, and then they will turn eventually and rend those who do it."

This was not at all spoken to the working class. Nor did it intend the conclusion therefrom. It was the gang boss's plea to the master not to exact too much for fear that those he was to hold in subjection may turn upon him. The convention actions furnish conclusive proof of this contention.

Held in a period of the most serious crisis of capitalism, with millions walking the streets in vain search for work, and the masters without the slightest regard or scruples utilizing this opportunity to hammer down the standard of living, cutting wages right and left, the convention exuded eloquence but took not one single measure toward working class resistance. This convention kept the record of the A. F. of L. officialdom being more reactionary than so-called capitalist liberals. Although a rather strong section favored unemployment insurance the convention declared it "unsuited to our political and economic requirements". Instead it asked for more and better charity from capitalism and solemnly resolved to ask each employer to take on additional workers. Could the most hard bodied exploiter ask for anything better? The convention supported the Wall Street imperialists in their demand that before they are asked to forego any "just claims", meaning war debts, Europe be compelled to reduce armaments—not the United States. It went on record for extension of the ban on immigration. The convention rejected a proposal to defy anti-labor injunctions. And to cap the climax of this burlesque labor gathering the demand for 2.75 per cent beer went over with a whoop.

The executive council did not fail this time either to submit the traditional absurd review of favorable legislation gained by labor. 15 labor laws passed by Congress was the record claimed among which we notice such two as—modernization of three battleships at a cost of \$30,000,000 to be performed in the government navy yards, and requiring work on 11 new destroyers at a cost of \$51,700,000 to be performed in the same yards. From this splendid record the convention concluded to reaffirm its old policy of "rewarding our friends and punishing our enemies". As it has been applied, and there is no intention whatever of deviating from that—it has always meant the friends of capitalism.

In this whole setting any proposal or declaration which may on the face of it appear entirely valid, loses all significance. Thus, for example, to return again to the question of the A. F. of L. official view of working class redress in the present crisis, the principles of the five day week, of the shorter workday and of maintenance of the wage standard

were eloquently propounded in resolutions and otherwise. That becomes entirely meaningless without preparations for enforcement. The A. F. of L. can still, despite all serious deterioration, count almost three million workers in its ranks. Truly a formidable force if actually brought into action, particularly with present growing prospects of countless others getting ready to follow, once a serious lead is given. But this is precisely what is not wanted.

To conclude from this, however, that revolutionists can brush the A. F. of L. aside as hopeless, as company unions, as "social fascist" unions, etc., is worse than repeating the farce of this recent annual gathering of its high priests. The mere fact that they were compelled to make some revision of language employed, reflects the advance signs of the pressure coming upon them from below. This pressure is bound to grow with the continuation of the crisis and more so with the slashing into the standard of wages and working conditions. How far the officials will respond to this growing pressure is of no serious interest. No expectation whatever is to be placed upon that. Essentially they remain imperialist agents under all conditions. But a rank and file membership chafing under rising exploitation and finally getting into motion to resist, that is a different matter. And this is an actual prospect.

That this A. F. of L. convention perhaps was less vituperative against Communists and radicals only reflects the extent to which the present official party policies and practices have succeeded in actually separating the Left wing from the trade union bodies. It has succeeded, at least for the time being, in wiping out a once promising Left wing movement within these unions. Some very recent feeble efforts made by the party though as yet only on an isolated scale, to draw local A. F. of L. unions into some united front activities, should be welcomed as one step in the right direction. But it should also serve as a most serious reminder that now more than ever must the work of aiding and stimulating the pressure from the A. F. of L. union membership and gradually directing it into the channels of a Left wing movement, be taken up in earnest.

—ARNE SWAHECK.

—ARNE SWAHECK.

Growing Revolt against National Government Marks British Scene

LONDON.—

This week has seen the struggle against the National government's economies reach its highest point since the fight began. Not a day has passed without demonstrations of unemployed workers; demonstrations which by their size and militancy testified to the deep feeling and anger of the unemployed at the threatened reactions in their benefits.

Last Sunday over twenty thousand workers assembled in Hyde Park and, at the conclusion of the meeting, marched off to Wormwood Scrubs Prison, where several militants were imprisoned. On Tuesday evening, thousands gathered again in the Park; a deputation proceeded to the House of Commons with a petition against the cuts and in support of them the workers surged out of the Park, through the West End and gathered around Parliament. The police attempted to disperse them, there were baton charges, several scuffles between groups of workers and mounted policemen, and twelve arrests. When the deputation returned, the crowd formed up again and in spite of the police, marched away to the Park. In the Park, thoroughly aroused by the brutal methods of the police, they tore down railings and distributed the staves, carrying these in readiness on the homeward march.

In Manchester, Rochdale, Salford, Birmingham and a score of equally important industrial centers, great demonstrations took place whilst the campaign in Glasgow culminated on Thursday with a demonstration of 50,000 workers; police interference with the march caused trouble and a miniature battle took place, the workers using railings, bottles, and sticks against the police; the fight lasted well into the night. This by no means exhausts the week's story of demonstrations, baton charges and "skirmishes" between police and unemployed. But it is sufficient to show the widespread character, as well as the militancy of feeling, of the movement against the Economy cuts.

I have briefly recounted certain happenings of the last few days because they are of importance for the 'International Opposition. The party press here, as elsewhere, indulges in continual exaggeration and distortion of happenings and

there is a danger that comrades aware of this will tend to minimize the strength of the mass movement against the Economy cuts. It cannot be made too clear that there is a real, widespread and militant revival of the working class movement here and that, in spite of the stupidities of our party leaders, it finds its reflection in increased support for our party. But the effectiveness and durability of this "revival" must be greatly affected by the policy pursued by the party during the next few weeks.

A Turn-About

Today's Daily Worker issues a new call to the workers: partly due to the fact that in less than a week the cuts begin and partly because even a Stalinist official cannot altogether avoid seeing the obvious. Having refused from the beginning to work for united workers' councils, bringing into the movement the workers in industry as well as the unemployed, the party leadership suddenly realizes that the campaign has been largely an unemployed campaign and that, save in a few districts, there are no broad united front bodies influential enough to mobilize effective resistance. Had they, right from the start, set about getting all the workers, employed and unemployed, organized in each locality and linked up nationally in councils of action, they might now have been at the head of a powerful mass movement, with strength inside and outside of the trade unions and organized for action. Instead, at the eleventh hour, they are compelled to issue a last minute call, without having in any way prepared the road for such a call, for strike action. And even now they blunder. This is how it is done:

"How to stop the cuts? What can be done in the next few days to organize the wonderful fighting spirit evidenced on all sides? . . . The great need during the coming days is more and more activity, more factory gate meetings, demonstrations, mass marches, resolutions in the trade union branches and local Labour Parties, the building up of united front organizations—committees of action, Charter committees, unemployed committees, etc." (October 3, 1931.)

What a conception of organization for serious struggle! Here "Charter Committees", "unemployed committees" and "councils of action" mean the same thing: the "etc." is especially revealing. To such stupidity it is impossible to find an adequate reply: certainly, in this way will lie disaster for the movement. Careful explanation of the reasons why united workers' councils are needed; how they are to be formed and of whom they are to be composed; what attitude is to be taken to the councils already established, or in process of establishment, by the branches of the Independent Labour Party; what form of action is to be worked for and in what way—these elementary things have not been done in this latest pronouncement and as a result it is worthless to the workers and even may help to spread further confusion and uncertainty.

The statement already quoted also says in the usual panic-stricken way that "the lower scale will be paid out—unless the attack is defeated". There is exactly a week to build united workers' councils, to organize a strike and to bring the whole working class "on the streets".

To have done at the beginning of the struggle in a systematic way, what they are now, at this late hour, doing so badly and foolishly, would have advanced the revolutionary movement in England further than all the party's efforts for the last ten years. This was not done when it should have been done: worse even—those who suggested doing it were attacked as "sectarians" and now, in a frantic effort to develop the fight further, the party leadership screams out for workers' councils and for strikes—all in a week!

Most interesting perhaps has been the

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Banking Crisis in the U.S.

Attempt to Defend Gold Standard Proves to Be Costly

Summarizing the developments in the American banking situation from the last crisis in 1921 to the present, we find:

1. The number of banks has been considerably reduced. In 1921 there were 30,812 banks of all kinds in the U. S.; by June 30, 1930, there were 24,079; by the end of August of this year, 22,300.

From 1921 to 1930 there was a total of over 7,000 bank failures, the highest number in any year being 1,348 in 1930; so far this year, up to Oct. 17, there have been 1,498. The deposits in the banks which failed last year totalled \$865,000,000; those of the banks which have failed this year were over \$1,300,000,000.

Bank mergers affecting members of the General Reserve System (which are about a third of all the banks in the country, with about 60% of the deposits), included over 1,400 banks in the last five years alone.

Somewhat offsetting the above factors were the formation of new banks, especially in the last stages of the boom, and in a few instances, the reopening of banks which had failed or been closed.

The net result, however, was that between 1921 and 1930, the number of banks decreased 22% while total resources increased from under 50 billion dollars to over 74 billions, an increase of 48%. In other words, in 1921 the average bank had resources of \$1,600,

000; in 1930, nearly \$3,100,000.

Small Banks Failed

It is therefore clear that the banks which failed were mostly the smaller banks, and that the result of the combination of weeding-out by failures, and of mergers, was greatly to aid in the direction of bank concentration.

2. During this period, bank deposits increased from \$34,800,000,000 to \$55,700,000,000, or 54%; bank loans and discounts from 28.8 billions to 40.5 billions, or 41%; and bank investments from 11.4 billions to 17.9 billions, or 57%.

Industrial production, however, taking the 1923-25 monthly average as 100, did not show any such increase during the period. From the low point of 67 in the crisis year 1921, it rose to 85 in 1922, and 101 in 1923. The highest point reached thereafter was 119 in the boom year 1929; in 1928 it was 110; no other year was over 110, and the average for the entire period was 99.3. Last year it declined to 97, and this year is averaging around 90.

Nor did wholesale prices show any notable tendency to rise during this period. Taking 1926 as 100, the 1921 average was 97.6%, the highest annual average for the period was in 1925, at 103.5, from which point the general tendency was down, to 96.5 in 1929 and 86.3 in 1930.

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Funds Are Needed Immediately

It has become necessary for us to address an appeal for support for The Militant directly to our readers. To insure the regular appearance of our organ we have had only contributions made at a great sacrifice by the small but growing group of convinced Left Oppositionists and sympathizers. While in the sense of a burden, this has been a cheerful one, nevertheless it has by no means been easy. Now, the present large scale unemployment has hit our ranks heavily and multiplied the financial difficulties.

From its inception the Left Opposition proceeded with carefully laid plans to secure a sound financial foundation. Our literature, gotten out at a great sacrifice by the comrades who contributed personally, was conceived, in addition to its fundamental value to the movement, also as a means of steady income to aid The Militant. We resolved to discard the old fly-by-night methods which cannot result in strengthening the movement on a sound basis. We proceeded step by step to expand and secure our growth ideologically and organizationally. We believe we have taken some important

steps ahead. Nevertheless the objective difficulties have reached a point where the continued existence of The Militant is endangered unless a generous response is made immediately to our appeal.

We succeeded in re-establishing the weekly appearance of The Militant. It is not necessary for us to attempt to emphasize what this means. Our readers are in a much better position to appreciate its inestimable value, in cutting with the sharpness of a razor edge into the parasitic growth upon the Communist movement, to eliminate it at its source; its analysis of the problems con-

fronting the working class and its efforts to show the revolutionary way out. Our readers can appreciate the veritable arsenal of Marxian literature produced by our young group, the fundamental textbooks for the movement of today and tomorrow. Our readers can appreciate our well-aimed efforts to bring the events of the world revolutionary movement and its problems nearer to the American proletariat. We have even been able to give our material support through the generosity of our contributors to the young vixen Left Opposition in Spain. A collection of \$188.30 has been for-

Vote Communist in the Elections!

Support the Candidates of the C.P.U.S.A.

Although the elections this year occur in a so-called "off year" and are confined largely to municipal candidacies, they are nevertheless of considerable significance. For the ruling class, the elections are a rehearsal for the presidential and state elections next year when the two parties of capitalism, Republican and Democratic, will vie with each other in an attempt to get at the spoils of office, the reward which comes for faithful service to the capitalist exploiters. For the working class, it is an excellent opportunity to register its opposition to the murderous offensive which the bourgeoisie and its government has been conducting with particular relentlessness since the advent of the sharp crisis, to indicate on the parliamentary field the degree to which it has separated itself from the domination of the capitalist parties and the extent to which it threatens to intensify the struggle to defend its standards in the field of daily struggle.

The elections will serve as a barometer of the maturity of the American working class, to what point it has been heightened under the impact of the disillusioning post-"prosperity" crisis. A barometer does not create winds and storms; it records them. The elections too will not create the rising temper of the proletariat; they will register it within the narrow confines of the ballot box, a warning to the bourgeoisie, a source of encouragement to the working class itself—provided, of course, that the workers mobilize their voting strength behind the candidates of the only revolutionary party in the field—the Communist party.

Opportunities for Progress
Great opportunities are afforded the latter this year. The abatement of the crisis so solemnly promised by the bourgeois statesmen and economists is not even visible on the horizon. Quite the contrary: the approaching winter already shows that the sufferings of the past two years will be sharply accentuated. The manifest incapacity of the two big bourgeois parties even to approach a solution, or at least an amelioration of the crisis, open up to the revolutionists broad avenues of approach to the masses. Hundreds upon hundreds of thousands, if not more, who still believe in the efficacy of the vote, will seek to express their dissatisfaction, their resentment against the ruling powers, by casting hostile ballots.

That they might "ordinarily" turn to the party of capitalist reform, the Socialists, does not constitute so great an obstacle to the Communists. The latter have a solid foundation for an attack upon the party of Hillquit and Thomas. The miserable bankruptcy of the socialist parties in England and in Germany, to mention but two recent instances, to give the Communists a powerful weapon in breaking down the reformist tendencies in the advancing sections of the working class. The Communist party is the only one in the field that has not waited for the elections to give "promises" to the workers. Alone it has endeavored to mobilize the hard-pressed labor movement for militant resistance to the capitalist offensive, day in and day out. It alone embodies the link between the daily struggle of the workers and their final struggle for complete emancipation from capitalist oppression. It alone has earned the suffrage of the working class.

It is for the principles of Communism, for its militant struggle against the capitalist class, because of the fact that it is our party, the only fighting revolutionary party, the only workers' party, that it behooves every worker to support

it in the elections. But by this we do not mean that the class conscious militant can endorse everything that the party leaders have done in the past, or right now—the prejudice of the party's interests—or even the election progress and campaign which the Stalinist leaders are now conducting.

Opportunist Blunders

The official party pronouncements have made as their only criticism of the election campaign the fact that "in the ranks" there is a "sectarian under-estimation" of the elections and parliamentary activity in general. There is no doubt that this is true, and the outstanding instance of it is Boston. There, following the Daily Worker report that Minor had spoken to thousands of workers who cheered the Communist candidates, we found out that the party had simply forgotten to put up candidates. But such examples are relatively few. What is far more prevalent, and more dangerous, and a condition for which the party leaders cannot escape responsibility, is the opportunist character of the election programs which the party has issued in a number of cities. In some localities, the campaign has been reduced to a vulgar gutter level which must excite the envy of the Morris Hillquits. In 1917, in the stirring war days, the latter ran for Mayor of New York on a platform of five cent milk for the poor people. The Left wing at that time could find no scorn biting enough with which to condemn such a petty bourgeois reformer's platform. It is sad to have to make the comparison with the Communist party today. Yet, for days, the Daily Worker has been running editorial streamers on the "big" loose-or-bottled milk fight, "exposing" it, and declaring that "the issue is . . . the question of PRICE. In another article we will take this up. But here and now we say: Demand that milk, bottled or loose, be sold for no more than eight cents a quart" (D. W., 9-30-31.) The general election program, issued for New York, is hardly superior. The characteristic of the old socialist party reform platforms was that they contained dozens of demands, for anybody and everybody, set up for the purpose of providing a small plaster for every sore on the body of capitalism and of catching a vote from every possible element. The election platform of a Communist party must be distinguished from this by the fact that it selects the outstanding issues of the moment, reflecting the immediate needs and interests of the masses, which are not calculated to delude them into the idea that the sum of all these demands will serve to reform capitalism and satisfy the workers with it, but are rather aimed at mobilizing the workers, during the "ballot-box season", for an intensification of their daily struggles for existence. Such a requirement is not satisfied by the New York program, which contains no less than seventy-five demands, intended to satisfy everybody from bank depositors and ex-servicemen to child laborers and farmers. There is even a worse feature. A Communist election program puts forth immediate demands in the sense of using them to advance the proletariat to the revolution, which alone solves the contradictions of capitalist society. The struggle for the final aim is implemented, so to speak, by the struggle for immediate demands. The two must be set out as inseparable. The emphasis must be placed upon the final goal. Nothing of the kind is found in the party platform. One reads page after page of immediate demands, demands by the dozen, to come to the very end of the list with the casual insertion, Point 75, of the demand "for a workers' and farmers' government in the United States". In the agitational material accompanying the demands, the same blunder is committed. Towards the end, one finds—as a sort of afterthought—a reference to the inefficiency of the ballot-box and the need of overthrowing the present system as a whole.

What does the party platform need? It needs to concentrate upon a few outstanding demands, which the workers can remember and understand and fight for. They are demands like unemployment insurance, for large-scale, long-term credits to the Soviet Union, immediate government relief. These reflect some of the burning needs of the workers in the present crisis. They are issues upon which broad masses can be mobilized, in the factories, in the streets, in the trade unions. They can be rallying banners for active movements during the election campaign which will lift it out of the formal registry of the vote at the polls and transform the elections into part of the struggle which the Communists must lead for uploading from the workers' backs some of the burdens of the crisis.

With these criticisms in mind, which do not, however, change our fundamental estimate of the revolutionary nature of the party, we add our voice to its own: Vote for the party of the working class!

* N. Y. OPEN FORUM *

Fri., Oct. 30: Tom Mooney's Appeal For A United

Front --- by James P. Cannon

LABOR TEMPLE, 14th St., and 2nd Ave. Unemployed admitted free with Unem-
Admission: 25 Cents. Employed Council card
Questions and Discussion

The Militant, 84 East 10th St., New York,