

1,087 Vote for Bolshevik-Leninists in Paris S. P. District

Question Box

By A. WEAVER

Question: Can we not get rid of booms and depressions merely by putting all taxes on land and not on the products of the workers?

Answer: There are several fallacies in this conception, which is held chiefly by the Single Taxers. The first consists in assuming that it is, ever has been, or will be, possible to tax anything which is not the product of a worker. Land, without labor, produces practically nothing for human use and it is only when the energies of man are combined with nature that articles of use are created. When the State, be it Slave, Fendal, Capitalist, or Proletarian, applies taxes, it merely appropriates that which has been created by the work of humans whether this tax is assessed in money or in kind, on land, incomes, inheritances, or any other form of wealth. Placing taxes on land alone merely affects a change in the form of tax and therefore in the share of this burden which the different classes in society must bear. Nothing else.

The second fallacy lies in the assumption that taxation can level out the economic cycles of capitalism. Taxes are merely part of the wealth which is created, and, merely appropriating this portion in no way changes the mode by which wealth is produced. Tax as you will, under capitalism, the anarchy, competition, and economic cycles will and must continue. Otherwise capitalism cannot exist.

It may be here argued that the intention is to tax the capitalists so heavily as to practically force the system out of existence. Here we come to the chief fallacy implied in the above question. Who will do the taxing? The government? But the present government is the instrument of the capitalist class, which has no intention of using its own weapons to commit suicide nor to permit others to use it in dealing it a death blow.

It is therefore indulging in useless abstractions to attempt to figure out how to get rid of capitalism by means of a capitalist government. There is only one way: The capitalist state must be destroyed and be replaced by the workers state.

E. V. ST. PAUL

Question: How do you account for the fact that the state of Ohio seems to be the center of strikes whereas these only seem to be flaring up spasmodically in other parts of the country?

Answer: We can only here advance a supposition since it is impossible to gauge at any particular time all the molecular processes that are generated by the class struggle. In all probability the tempo of the struggles in Ohio, relative to the rest of the country, flows from two chief factors:

1. The objective factor, i.e., the concentrated nature of Ohio industry. If we take 1929 statistics as a basis, 24.2 percent of the workers in the manufacturing industries of this country worked in establishments employing each over 1,000 people. As compared to this, 32.1 percent of the workers in the manufacturing industries in Ohio were concentrated in such large industries, and this figure is exceeded by only three states in the Union: Michigan, with 45.3 percent, Connecticut, with 34.2 percent, and Indiana with 34.1 percent.

2. The subjective factor. People with revolutionary consciousness, particularly members of the Workers Party, have taken leading positions in the struggle.

In this historical period, the entrance of Marxism into the class struggle is, of course, the decisive element.

Question: Where can I find the statement, attributed to Stalin, in which it is stated that the Social Democracy and fascism are twins?

Answer: In the pamphlet "What Is Happening in Germany?" by Fritz Heckert, published by the Workers Library Publishers in June 1933. Heckert states as follows (p. 20): "... As early as 1914 (?) Comrade Stalin gave a definition of the development of social democracy into fascism that in its exactness and its clear-sightedness is unsurpassed (!!!), a definition that was made the basis of the Comintern and the policy of the C.P.G.:

"Fascism—said Comrade Stalin—is a fighting organization of the bourgeoisie, an organization that rests on the active support of social democracy. Social democracy is objectively the moderate wing of fascism. ... These organizations do not contradict each other but complete each other. They are not antipodes, but twins. ..."

Further on in the pamphlet, Heckert, ranting against Trotsky, says: "The facts (!?!), then, have in a cruel fashion unmasked the counter-revolutionary meaning of the 'platform' of the social-Hitlerite Trotsky, who has striven to prove that social democracy and fascism are not twins, but antipodes." (p. 23)

First Battalion of Workers Militia Marches in France

On June 19, a monster demonstration took place in Paris. In commemoration of the Commune, some 250,000 workers paraded and demonstrated before the Mur de Federes, at the Pere Lachaise cemetery.

The demonstration took place, so to speak, under the sign of the Stalin-Laval Communique. As reported in l'Humanite and the Pravda practically the entire demonstration was devoted to expressions of love to Stalin. What neither the l'Humanite, nor the Pravda dared to report was that thousands upon thousands of workers, the left wing of the S.F.I.O., syndicalists, anarchoists, Doriotists, and, of course, the Bolshevik Leninists expressed themselves in no unmistakable way about the "great Leader's" consummate betrayal. This time the import of the "leader of the world revolution" was all too clear. And such slogans as "Down with National Defense!" "Civil Peace is War!" "Down with the renegade Stalin!" "Stalin see au dos!" (Kick Stalin out!) plentifully punctuated the line of march.

By no means the least, vociferous, was the detachment of the first workers' militia, 300 strong that participated in the demonstration, carrying on high its own proletarian version of the Mosaic code: "For one eye, both eyes, for one tooth, the whole jaw."

This first detachment comes as the result of the vigorous propaganda and work of the Young Leninists, who formed the initial nucleus of the present detachment.

The beginning is always the most difficult. Having achieved the first step, it will be much easier now to build and drill subsequent detachments. Other iron detachments will come on the morrow.

spoke in the name of Constructive Revolution was compelled to dissociate himself from the traitors in the P.O.B. (Belgian Labor Party).

He exposed the true depths of the reactionary nature of his tendency by condemning as wild-eyed romanticism all the formulations relating to the arming of the workers.

The Centrist Verbiage Zyranski took the floor as the spokesman for the motion of his tendency, the Bataille Socialiste.

He began by stating that very rarely he had found himself in so complete and close agreement with a motion. There is no doubt of it. The motion of the Bataille is the best possible specimen of centrism. It faces on the one side toward reformism and on the other toward revolutionary ideas. It deals with reformism in the vaguest and most cautious manner possible, clothing itself with the vaguest formulations, and then deals a blow straight at the heart of revolutionary ideas. It is in essence a collection of phrases that blinds those voting for it to nothing.

La Verite, in commenting on Zyranski's speech, observes that after listening to Zyranski speak so much about "revolutionary force" it could not but recall Pivert's criticism (which had appeared in the La Verite in a previous issue, as an answer to an open letter to him) of those who babble in general about arming, without envisaging the actual, concrete link in the

chain. Says La Verite, "the criticism applies perfectly to Zyranski, whose sole reliance in the struggle is to arm himself with phrases."

The Will to Revolution It is significant that after the revolutionary phrase had its fling, there was expressed before the Congress the will to revolutionary action. That is what comrade Balay did in his speech, in vigorous and concise terms. (Balay is a member of the C.E.C. of the Seine District, he is the leader of the T.P.P.S., the socialist defense squads. He subsequently signed the resolution of the Bolshevik-Leninists). He pointed out that those who had just spoken of revolutionary force never had the courage to take the slightest political responsibility for the T.P.P.S., and he cited instances known to everybody: the rue Feydau affair, etc. (in the case of the rue Feydau, an attack by the Fascists occurred, while the party leadership refused to permit the T.P.P.S. to protect the places that had been designated for attack). Comrade Balay supported the Bolshevik-Leninist motion because in his opinion it was the only one that posed the problem of the seizure of power in a lucid and responsible manner, and he was enthusiastically cheered by the revolutionists at the Congress.

Severac (assistant secretary of the S.F.I.O.) then repeated his stock phrases against "romantic insurrectionalism." He expressed his

total lack of understanding of the situation in a single phrase which threw the assembly into convulsions. "Haven't we still got plenty of liberties?" asked Severac. Severac can only propose to "continue" and wait. Carry on propaganda. Undoubtedly Severac prefers the sanatorium to the concentration camp, but if he is permitted to "continue," it will be the concentration camp. Nevertheless, contrary to what occurred during the last Federal Congress of the Seine District, the impression was obviously conveyed that Severac this time did not rush to attack the vague motion of the Bataille, which smacks of the Toulouse self-defense motion which Severac had himself voted for. It was against the concrete proposals and methods which find expression only in the motion of the Trotskyists that Severac aimed his fire. Severac's attitude once again testifies to the fact that two policies are confronting one another, one the policy of catastrophe and pacifism, the other, the policy of the Bolshevik Leninists, the policy of revolution. The motion of the Bataille Socialiste seeks to balance itself in the middle; it is only a screen being erected to cover up the gulf between reformism and revolution.

Pivert on the Tightrope Pivert provided the "surprise" of the conference. He did nothing more or less than defend the Bataille motion by means of the slogan in the motion of the Trotskyists. It was with considerable astonishment, that those who applauded Pivert during his speech heard as his conclusion, that he was supporting the Bataille Socialiste motion. After everything he had said and written to the contrary; after he had written and stated that he for one wanted a concrete and actual motion, that it was necessary to tie up the seizure of power with the war (against national defense); that one must not throw phrases about arming in general, but build the real link in the chain: the workers' militia—after all this, and more, Pivert signed and proclaimed his adherence to the motion which is in direct contradiction to what he has said and written, and he refused to vote for that resolution which was fully in accord with his expressed ideas. . . .

In other words, one advocates the concrete road of revolution, but while waiting, one takes to the road that runs half-way and in between. This attitude on Pivert's part is all the more damnable because it serves to screen from the eyes of the workers the real problems facing them.

What is his motivation? He thinks by conciliating the prejudices of the province to "capture the party." The classic argumentation of Centrism—always putting organizational questions as primary to the political issues.

Rotten Arguments for a Rotten Cause—the Road from Class Struggle to Civil Peace

At the present time as during the war when Lenin denounced them, swarms of theoreticians rise to the theoretical and scientific defense of the fact that the Communist International has accepted national imperialist defense.

The first ones to date are not worth much.

1. In his long speech at the general membership meeting, Thorez wrapped himself in the mantle of a "great historical example, comrades." That is to say, the attitude of Marx and Engels who supported up to September 4, 1870 the war against the French Empire. And consequently the Communists may support the war against German fascism.

Social-Patriotic Dishrags

The trouble with this threadbare argument is that it has already been worn to shreds in the hands of Vaillant, Guesde, Scheidemann and Kautsky during the war of 1914. And it is a fact that in the joint articles in "Against the Stream," Lenin and Zinoviev proved that the war of 1870 was a national war, resulting from the bourgeois nationalist movement of the German people, which was democratic, unifying and progressive. It is the class content of the war, its significance in the history of the emancipation of classes that dictated the attitude taken by Marx and Engels toward the close of the historical period of continental national wars. But what is the class content of a war of French imperialism? If Thorez wants to use this argument in support of his position, it is only fitting that he should follow Guesde and Scheidemann. Even Cachin can explain that to him.

Moreover, in this war of the imperialist epoch, Marx and Engels supported Bebel and Liebknecht in their refusal to vote war credits to Bismarck, not to be compared with Laval or Wiegand.

Abusing a Good Example

2. Ducloux comes next. He reminds us that when the hangman Kornilov waged his offensive, Lenin practiced the tactic towards the Kerensky government, not of supporting the latter but directing all forces against the main enemy.

We popularized this example during the Red Plebiscite and throughout the entire course of events in Germany: at that time the German Communist Party, instead of conducting against Hitler the tactic of Lenin against Kornilov, chose rather to make a united front with the German fascists against the sorry socialist government of Braun-Severing in Prussia. This meant victory for Kornilov-Hitler.

But today it is Ducloux who resorts to the example. It is no longer a question of the united front with the "social-fascists" of yesterday upon the common class front, but of an improbable construction in which a Hitler is always tantamount to a Kornilov, but where the Kerensky "to be supported after a fashion," becomes Laval-Wiegand. That is, not the puny reformist Kerensky of the democratic revolution who was smothered by history but mighty French imperialism.

Lenin's "Conditions"

It must be added that the wretched numskull remains triumphant to the end. He continues with the quotation: "Allowing for necessary changes, Lenin wrote, we equally push to the foreground at this time the redoubling of the agitation for what may be called 'partial demands' (there you see you have the immediate demands, etc. . . .)"

But the quotation does not end there, and here are the partial demands that Lenin listed: "arrest Millukov, arm the Petrograd workers, call in the troops of Kronstadt, Vyborg and Helsingfors, dissolve the Duma, arrest Rodzianko, legalize the transfer of the landed estates to the peasants, establish workers control over food supplies and industry."

This is it that Lenin, who goes on to exhort the soldiers to rise against the generals and officers who had declared themselves for Kornilov, rises to fling in Ducloux the call for a "workers' militia."

3. Thorez, Ducloux and Gitton keep repeating to anyone who listens to them: "we are no deserters. As Lenin called upon us, we shall participate in every war, no matter how reactionary it may be." As a matter of fact, Lenin declared that the communists and the workers will participate in wars imperialist may unleash. Upon this point we must discuss with our comrades of the left wing of the Socialist party who declare themselves for "the launching of an insurrectionary strike in reply to the war."

General Strike Against War

If the Marxist-Leninists reject this slogan it is assuredly not on the grounds of principle. But the mechanism whereby wars are unleashed by imperialist powers and

Platform of the Bolshevik-Leninist Group in French S.P.

1. Fierce struggle against the ideas and methods of reformism, a complete and final break with the advocates of collaboration with bourgeois parties (Neos, Gradualists, etc.) in France and throughout the world. The struggle against reformism does not exclude, but demands the struggle for reforms. The reformists who stand on bourgeois legality betray the struggle for reforms. Condemnation of the method of the German Social-Democracy, "The Lesser Evil," which led to the worst possible evil, Fascism.

The Struggle for Power 2. Necessity of revolutionary struggle for power, of armed insurrection for the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, as the only method of transforming capitalist society into socialist society.

The struggle against bourgeois democracy does not exclude but demands the struggle for the defense and extension of workers' rights in the democratic period. This struggle becomes all the more pressing as against the various forms of the dictatorship of finance capital (Fascism, Bonapartism, etc.)

Condemnation of the method of Austrian Social-Democracy in attempting to gain 51 percent of the electorate, a method of passivity and gradualism which can only lead to defeat.

Recognition of the soviet of workers, peasants, and soldiers as the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat: a form historically established by the experiences of the Russian revolution of 1905 and the revolutions at the close of the war.

3. Recognition of the international, and by the same token the permanent, character of the proletarian revolution, corresponding to the imperialist nature of the present epoch of capitalism. Condemnation of all deviations of a national character in the policy of the proletariat ("France is not Germany or Italy"—"We love our

country," etc.)

Revolutionary Defeatism 4. Intransigent opposition to national defense under a capitalist regime. Recognition of revolutionary defeatism as the only consistent proletarian policy. Denunciation and complete break with hypocritical and false social-pacifism as well as social-patriotism. The necessity of systematically pointing out to the workers that without the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, no international tribunal, no conference on the reduction of armaments, no "democratic" reorganization of the League of Nations, will save humanity from imperialist war.

5. Revolutionary defense against imperialism and against internal counter-revolution in the Soviet Union, which remains a proletarian state because of its social basis and the predominant form of property. Necessity of mercilessly unmasking the false methods of the Soviet bureaucracy and especially its foreign policy. The utilization, for the defense of the U.S.S.R., of the contradictions between the various imperialist states must not in any case mean capitulation before the bourgeoisie of the proletariat of an imperialist state temporarily allied with the Soviet Union.

6. The revolutionary struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat demands secret, systematic and persevering propaganda in the army.

7. Necessity of supporting, not in words but in deeds, every movement for emancipation among colonial peoples or oppressed nationalities up to and including the right of these peoples to secede from the mother country. The right to self-determination of the peoples of Alsace-Lorraine, including the right of secession from France if they wish.

8. Necessity of carrying on a struggle for the revolutionary regroupment of the proletariat on an international scale, that is to say, as a consequence of the collapse of the Second and Third Internationals, the building of a Fourth International based upon the theoretical and strategic principles laid down by Marx and Lenin.

9. Persevering work in the trade unions, cooperatives, and other mass organizations to win them over to the cause of proletarian revolution. Systematic struggle against the reformist bureaucracy of the trade unions.

10. Struggle for the realization and then for the preservation of trade union unity on the basis of workers' democracy and the right of political groups.

11. Control of the activity of the leaders, the officials and of the press by the entire party. Control of the activity of every member of the organization.

12. Orientation of the work of the party sections toward the factories. Setting up of nuclei in the factories.

13. Effective support by the party of strikes and other economic struggles of the working class.

14. Condemnation of the federalist structure which is suited to a purely parliamentary activity under a bourgeois democracy. Necessity for a democratic centralist structure based upon a revolutionary policy and operating in conformity with the demands of such a policy.

15. Necessity of carrying on a struggle for the revolutionary regroupment of the proletariat on an international scale, that is to say, as a consequence of the collapse of the Second and Third Internationals, the building of a Fourth International based upon the theoretical and strategic principles laid down by Marx and Lenin.

Preliminary results of the voting in the provinces for delegates to the Congress were as follows: MOROCCO—

Out of a total of 301 voting at the federal congress on May 30, the motion of the Bolshevik-Leninist group received 185 votes as against 117 for the motion of the Bataille Socialiste. 10 mandates from Morocco will be cast for the B.L.G. motion at Mulhouse.

MARNE—

Out of 700 votes cast at the Congress at Vertus the B.L.G. motion received 120 votes, thus giving them 5 mandates.

FINISTERE—

Thanks to the work of Comrade Behel one-fourth of the Carhaix section voted for the Bolshevik-Leninists. The work had been carried on for scarcely a month.

RIIONE—

15 percent of the votes were won by the B.L.G., thus giving them nine national mandates.

VAUCLUSE—

The Avignon section gave one national mandate to the B.L.G.

TARNE-ET-GARONNE—

The B.L.G. gained three mandates as against four for the Bataille Socialiste, and at

YONNE—

Two mandates were received by the Bolshevik-Leninists.

Just before going to press we received the information relating to the results of the second ballot taken at the Federal Congress of the Seine District. In this vote the Bolshevik-Leninists of France received 1,073 votes for their motion, over a fifth of all the votes. Three delegates, Balay, Molinier and Naville were elected to the Mulhouse Congress.

The main point on the agenda of the Federal Congress of the Seine district, on the eve of the National Conference of the S.F.I.O. (Socialist Party of France) at Mulhouse (June 9) was the "Struggle against the Crisis and the Seizure of Power."

The division of the votes on the first ballot was as follows: Bataille Socialiste resolution (the left-Centrist group, who have the majority in the Seine district—2,581 votes; Lebas-Severac resolution—1,306 (the leadership of the party); Resolution of the Bolshevik-Leninists—805.

Action Socialiste resolution—125. Constructive Revolution resolution—182.

C.A.S.I. resolution (the "extreme left")—95.

Abstentions—445.

The resolution presented by the Bolshevik-Leninists has already been printed in the New Militant. And it need only be added that the speeches of the Trotskyists in defense of their positions were in sharp contrast to the vague "leftism" of the other delegates, without a shade of the false optimism which pervaded the "leadership" as a consequence of the latest municipal elections.

We reprint below a summary of a report of the Congress, from the May 25 issue of La Verite (organ of the Bolshevik-Leninist group in the S.F.I.O.):

The Bolshevik-Leninist Position

In his speech comrade Molinier stressed the only possible revolutionary concrete measures which must be undertaken by those who really want to take the road of revolution. He aimed his attack at the motion of the Bataille Socialiste which speaks of the seizure of power without recognizing the need of the general strike or of creating the embryonic organizations of the workers' state (the Mass Committees). Also, the latter motion lists some excellent prescriptions for the struggle, such as general armament without so much as hinting at the actual and concrete link toward that end: the workers' militia.

Comrade Gerard followed by emphasizing the typical contradictions of centrism which pervaded the motions presented.

It was quite in the nature of things that the motion of the Bataille Socialiste could have as its signatories at one and the same time those who were the partisans and those who were the opponents of direct revolutionary action. This motion, said comrade Gerard, was a colored screen, on which anyone could project his own particular color.

Comrade Naville devoted himself to the exposition of the concrete implications of the seizure of power, linking it up with the actual situation (the Flandin government, the state of the party and of the working class). He pointed out that the policies of the leadership of the party were incompatible with a real struggle for power.

Speaking of parliamentary illusions, Naville took as an example, supporting it by facts, the experience in Italy. The Italian Socialist party despite its considerable electoral successes was none the less annihilated by Fascism, which was weakest in the electoral field. His speech created a profound impression.

The experience in Belgium had dealt a serious blow to the supporters of de Man. So that, itard whomany or Italy"—"We love our