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ON THE LABOR PARTY

A RESOLUTION OF THE S.W.P.

The decline of American capitalism and the social crisis ensuing therefrom have already called forth the greatest trade union organizing campaign in American history, which brought with it a wave of strike struggles unprecedented in scope and revolutionary implications (the sit-down strikes). At the same time the experiences and results of these herculean efforts of the American proletariat have demonstrated the inadequacy of the purely economic struggle to solve even the most pressing immediate problems of the workers. The precipitous decline in economy, as a result of the new crisis adds new millions to the ranks of the unemployed, cancels out the gains of the strike victories and even threatens the existence of the newly built trade unions. Instinctively sensing the inadequacy of trade unionism alone under these circumstances, the workers have begun to turn in million-masses toward political action. The further development of the crisis is certain to strengthen this tendency.

The organized participation of the workers in politics under the aegis of Labor's Non-Partisan League represents a profound departure from the old Gompers school of labor politics, although on the surface the two may appear to be identical. In the past the labor bureaucracy confined itself to "endorsing" this or that "friend of labor" on the capitalist party tickets. In the 1936 presidential elections, and in virtually all municipal and state elections since, we have seen for the first time a systematic and increasingly determined effort to organize and mobilize the political strength of the workers as a single unit. This new movement, represented by the L.N.P.L., must be characterized as a stage in the development of the labor movement from complete subservience to the political parties of big capital to an independent party of the workers.

BUREAUCRATS RESTRICT MOVEMENT

The fact that the movement as yet remains within the formal framework of the Democratic Party is in part due to the conscious restrictions placed upon it by the bureaucracy and in part to the as yet unclear aims of the masses. On the other hand, the increasing aggressiveness of this movement on the political field, and its mounting demands for more concessions and repre-

ing pressure to bear on the bosses. The old ascan trucks of the city cannot haul even a fraction of the traffic but the action itself has succeeded in breaking the employers' front and forcing the smaller trucking companies to sign separate agreements. That LaGuardia and the capitalist class generally was forced into this action by the formidable strike is proved by the acceptance of heads of the state and local Chambers of Commerce as directors of the City's "trucking business."

But the strike is not over. And it will not be over until the bosses' associations or its leading members sign on the dotted line of the new contract. Until that time, a sudden reversal of the present situation cannot be excluded as a likelihood. On the contrary, the bosses will be prone to believe that the confused set-up now prevailing will cause a relaxation of the vigilance of the strikers. And from others, now "friendly" to the drivers, the possibility of a "double-cross" is also not out of the realm of possibility. These things have happened before. Victory has been snatched out of the hands of workers on countless occasions when everything appeared settled.

The New York truck drivers must be vigilant for themselves and for the labor movement of this city and of the nation if their magnificent strike is not to be derailed from its present objectives. The eyes of the nation's workers are on the drivers. They are providing the first answer to the problem of unemployment.

And in this answer it is necessary to show not only what is to be done but how it can be done!

During the past three months the membership of the Socialist Workers Party has been engaged in an intensive discussion on the question of the attitude of the Party toward the labor party movement. This discussion has now been concluded with a referendum vote of the membership.

By a decisive majority, the membership has adopted a position on the labor party movement, expanding and altering to a considerable degree the position heretofore held in this country by the Fourth Internationalist movement. The resolution is published herewith.

sentation for labor—an attitude which has already impelled the workers in important local instances to put up independent or semi-independent tickets—testify to the profound impulse of the masses of the workers toward completely independent political action. This impulse is progressive and must consciously and deliberately be aided at every step by the Socialist Workers Party.

Parallel with the developing sentiment for an independent party of the workers, and in large measure interwoven with it, there is a powerful trend in the direction of a new bourgeois liberal party designed to include and swallow up the incipient movement of the workers for independent labor political action. Under further pressure of the social crisis this trend can and most likely will also gain strength, the present Democratic Party may be split wide open and a new party of the democratic bourgeois front emerge, with the labor bureaucracy occupying a prominent though politically subordinate place. Against such a development, as against the present attempts of the bureaucracy to subordinate the workers to the Democratic Party, we counterpose the slogan of independent labor political action through a labor party.

RADICAL CHANGE IN TACTICS

At the time of our national convention, we took insufficient account of the new developments in the labor movement, especially in their political aspects, and fell into the error of repeating abstract formulas on the question of the labor party which, in the light of great new developments, had become obsolete. It is necessary now to reconsider the question and to make a radical change in our tactics in regard to the developing labor party movement. Over a period of years we have discussed and debated this question with the opportunists only in the abstract. That could not be otherwise, because neither a labor party nor a formidable movement for its creation was anywhere to be seen. In these discussions we saw only two aspects of the question—a labor party which did not exist in reality, but which the opportunists sought to suck out of their fingers, or a possible fully developed labor party some time in the future.

We now have to gear our practical activity toward a third and hitherto insufficiently appreciated aspect of the question—namely, a powerful mass movement in the direction of the labor party which has not yet taken a clearly defined shape. We have always said that, confronted with a fully developed labor party, based on the trade unions, we would take a positive attitude toward it and most likely participate in it. We are now confronted with the necessity of concretizing this general point of view and of taking a direct part in the present developing MOVEMENT for a labor party and of working with all our strength to push it on the road of independence.

PRINCIPLES NOT INVOLVED

The question of the attitude toward an existing labor party has never been a question of principle for revolutionary Marxists. No more should our attitude toward a genuine mass movement for a labor party be so considered. In our tactics we have always taken our point of departure from the concrete political situation and the tendencies of its development. Several years ago, before the crisis of 1929 and even later, until the appearance of the C.I.O., we could have hoped that the revolutionary, that is, the Bolshevik party would develop in the United States parallel to the radicalization of the working class and succeed in becoming the head of it. Under these conditions it would have been

absurd to occupy oneself with abstract propaganda in favor of an unheralded "Labor Party."

The situation since that time, however, has radically changed and it would be inexcusable to close our eyes to it. The powerfully developing trade unions under the conditions of a deepening crisis of capitalism will project themselves all the more irresistibly upon the road of political struggle and upon the road of crystallization into a labor party.

BUREAUCRACY WILL RESIST

If the official leaders of the trade unions in spite of the imperious voice of the situation and the growing pressure of the masses preserve a reserved position on the question of a labor party, it is precisely because the deep social crisis of bourgeois society now imparts to the question of the labor party a considerably greater sharpness than in all preceding periods.

Nevertheless we can with sufficient assurance predict that the resistance of the bureaucracy will be broken. The movement in favor of a labor party will continue to grow. A revolutionary organization occupying in relation to this progressive movement a negative or neutrally expectant position will doom itself to isolation and sectarian degeneration.

The Socialist Workers Party, section of the Fourth International, clearly realizes the fact that in virtue of unfavorable historical reasons its own development lagged behind the radicalization of wide layers of the American proletariat and precisely because of this the problem of creating a labor party is placed upon the order of the day through the whole course of development.

WILL SUPPORT LABOR PARTY

Consequently, the Socialist Workers Party gives positive and unambiguous support to the labor party movement in general and to all its local manifestations. It supports the affiliation of trade unions to Labor's Non-Partisan League as well as to local units of the movement having an independent or semi-independent form (Farmer-Labor Party of Minnesota, American Labor Party, etc.) and, in favorable circumstances, the National Committee authorizes its members to join branches of these bodies based on individual membership.

While the Social-Democrats, Lovestonettes, etc., advocate a labor or farmer-labor party with a purely reformist program and more or less confine themselves to unprincipled cut combinations under cover of this slogan—the Socialist Workers Party advances its program of transitional demands in order to fructify the mass movement in favor of a labor party and lead it in a revolutionary direction.

PARTY INDEPENDENCE PRESERVED

Preserving its own full organizational and political independence, the Socialist Workers Party carries on systematic and irreconcilable struggle against the trade union bureaucracy which resists the creation of a labor party, or attempts to convert it into an auxiliary weapon of one of the bourgeois parties. Explaining and propagandizing its program of transitional demands in the trade unions, at meetings, and so forth, the Socialist Workers Party indefatigably exposes on the basis of the living experience of the masses the reformist and pacifist illusions of the trade union bureaucracy and its Social-Democratic and Stalinist allies.

When and how the labor party will be formed, what scope and mass base it will acquire in the period ahead and through what stages and splits it will pass, the future will disclose. Defending the labor party from the attack of the bourgeoisie, the Socialist Workers Party does not and will not, however, take upon itself any responsibility for this party. In relation to the labor party in all stages of its development, the Socialist Workers Party occupies a critical position, supports the progressive tendencies against the reactionary, and at the same time irreconcilably criticizes the half-way character of these progressive tendencies. For the Socialist Workers Party the labor party should on the one hand become the arena for recruiting revolutionary elements, on the other a transmissive mechanism for influencing ever wider circles of workers. In its very essence the labor party can preserve progressive significance only during a comparatively short transitional period. The further sharpening of the revolutionary situation will inevitably break the shell of the labor party and permit the S.W.P. to rally around the banner of the Fourth International, the revolutionary vanguard of the American proletariat.

Pinning 'em Down

By JAMES CASEY

VAST FIELD AWAITS S.W.P.

With the fall election campaigns in full swing and for the far more important reason that the world faces its darkest days since 1914, it seems from this corner that recruiting should play a major part in the life of every member of the Socialist Workers Party during the next few weeks.

The S.W.P., young, vibrant, healthy, and today the only political organization in America that stands four-square on a platform of revolutionary socialism, is gaining steadily in membership, but these increases reach out only to the fringes of the fertile fields open for recruitment.

There are now between nine and ten million workers affiliated with the C.I.O. and A. F. of L. and a sizable percentage of this number are ripe for enrollment in a party of militant action. There are between twelve and fifteen million unemployed men and women, most of whom are unorganized and certainly their places are within the ranks of the S.W.P. Then there are millions of working-class housewives to whom the party has to address itself.

Unless the recruiting work is accelerated and pressed to fruition on the widest scale during this critical period, the tasks of the past weeks in drafting, studying and passing these on the weighty national and international questions will have lost much of their practical reward.

Not will recruiting have appreciable and lasting results without careful consideration and adoption of the proper approach. In this connection, it may be said without any hesitancy that the unprincipled methods of recruitment fostered by Stalinist leaders will never for a moment be countenanced by the S.W.P.

During the last few years a number of membership drives were conducted by the Communist Party, amid much fanfare and the blare of trumpets. At the conclusion of each such campaign, branches, sections and districts were regaled with reports "on the splendid accomplishments of the leading cadres."

If the C. P. had retained even a small fraction of the men and women "signed up" during these drives, its membership today would be at least a quarter of a million.

HOW THE C. P. JUGGLES FIGURES

In 1936, Earl Browder told the C. P. rank and file and the capitalist press that the party had 50,000 members. About the same time his report to the C. P. Central Committee placed the membership at 28,000. Now Browder claims 75,000 members for the Stalinists. If the disparity between the accurate figure and Browder's capacity for truth-telling remains the same as in 1936, the C. P. membership today should be somewhere around the 40,000 mark.

In the earlier statement to his Central Committee, Browder reported that only 20 per cent of the members were in the party longer than two years. If one considers that at least one-third of the older members are installed in paid functionary jobs, it is seen that there are really very few veterans left in the party.

There are many bureaucrats in the C. P., who are hopeless renegades from Socialism, and these will remain in the party until Stalin finally scuttles the ship and the whole caboodle.

On the other hand, there are thousands of C. P. members who are very much in the doubtful column. Many of them, who were recruited through the use of spurious catch-phrases such as "fighting for democracy" and "fighting against bureaucracy" will hasten out of the party once they learn it is the very anti-thesis of a democratic body, in any sense of the term, and that its own bureaucratic apparatus smells to high heaven.

These newcomers were enrolled in the C. P. through misrepresentation and downright charlatanism. Hence S.W.P.ers must establish the closest relations with C. P. rank and files, so that they will not be lost to revolutionary activity when completely disillusioned by the Stalinist misleaders, as were thousands before them.

HOW OUR RECRUITERS SHOULD SPEAK

To the workers on W.P.A. projects and relief rolls, recruiters should speak in hard dollars-and-cents language—in language receptive to the ears of hungry American workers.

At the last session of Congress, the Workers Alliance asked ten billion dollars for relief and W.P.A. jobs. The New Deal administration, to which this Stalinist-controlled group has just renewed its pledge of fealty, responded with an appropriation of a billion and a half. A few days ago the same Stalinist-dominated body, at a convention session, asked the New Deal administration for only \$6,500,000,000 to be expended "over a period of six years for relief and recovery."

One may pause at this point to inquire whether Roosevelt has kept his relief pledges to the "forgotten man" and, also, whether the Alliance is fulfilling its purported mission as an organization for the unemployed. The answer is so obviously No! in both cases, that I must apologize for formally posing the questions.

The last figures of the U. S. Treasury Department place the gross 1936 income for all American companies at \$132,276,820,000. It is estimated that the 1938 income would be about five to seven billions under that total. If, at the next session, the Great Liberal and his Congress were to place a ten per cent direct tax on gross income for emergency relief, the funds from that source alone would be over twelve billion dollars for one year and the administration might well add a tax on the huge "bonus salaries" of the economic royalists of whom Roosevelt talks so much. Such a move might cause Big Business to suffer a cut in the net profits, but it would alleviate nation-wide distress among workers and farmers and could, in a slight measure, redeem the false promises of the New Deal spokesmen and their stooges.

The afore-mentioned figures reveal that not only has Roosevelt violated his campaign pledges but that the Stalinists' Workers Alliance has shown scandalous leniency in its new requests for funds apparently to save the administration more embarrassment.

Consumers, in general, must be apprised, in the course of organizational work, of the burdens placed upon them by the profit system.

Government figures show that workers earning \$2,500 or less annually pay twenty-two million dollars daily in indirect taxes to city, State and the Federal treasuries. More than 63 per cent of all taxes are of the "hidden" variety. Thus a housewife is taxed one pork chop for every three she purchases, or three eggs for every dozen. There are fifty-three different kinds of hidden taxes in one loaf of bread. These include taxes for the farm tractor, grain elevator, country roads, freight, producers' surplus income, etc. All the workers, professionals and farmers affected by these taxes belong in the ranks of the S.W.P. or its periphery, and they must be rallied to fight the wage cuts that come in the form of the hidden levies.

The S.W.P. may be still too young to elect its own candidates in the fall elections, but a vigorous nation-wide recruiting drive could so strengthen the party as to make it an important factor in coming campaigns and in the daily life of America's masses.

Open Letter to the Members of the C.P.

To the Members of the Communist Party:

For four years your leaders have told you to put your faith in the democratic nations. They have said that the system of collective security, support by the great democratic powers, would stop fascism.

Today the democratic nations have shown their true colors, have made clear the real meaning of their "democracy." They have handed Czechoslovakia, and with it control of all central Europe, over to Hitler.

For four years your leaders have made the Franco-Soviet pact the keystone of their world policy. Today that pact is not worth the paper on which it is printed.

For four years your leaders have preached the doctrine of the People's Front, have told you that it would lead to victory over reaction, and have enlisted millions upon millions of workers under its slogan.

Today the People's Front everywhere lies in shambles. It was the Popular Front Government in France, put into office by all organizations making up the French Popular Front, which handed central Europe over to Hitler.

Your leaders, in great part, justified their policy by telling you that the People's Front, and the support of the democracies, would guarantee the defense of the Soviet Union.

Today the Soviet Union stands in more terrible isolation than at any time in its entire history. The Soviet Government had to learn from the press dispatches about the agreement to liquidate Czechoslovakia.

Your leaders promised that their policy would lead to the defeat of fascism and the defense of the Soviet Union. But instead they have led to fascism everywhere, and to the isolation of the Soviet Union.

The world now trembles on the brink of the most terrible catastrophe in all history. We believe that the majority of you are at one with us in your wish and resolve to wipe fascist tyranny from the face of the earth, to defend the Soviet Union, and to advance the cause of the workers against reaction everywhere, and to achieve the freedom, peace, and security of a socialist society.

In the name of these great ideals, we call upon you to demand an accounting from your leadership. Events, themselves, prove that it has deceived you, that its policies have led to disaster, that these policies have betrayed the struggle of the workers throughout the world and have made easy the road for the advance of Hitler and international fascism.

By remaining silent you share the responsibility for these disasters, and that betrayal, and guarantee the continuance of defeat.

There is no longer room for doubt. The full meaning of Stalin's road is now made pitilessly clear by history itself. That road leads inescapably to the annihilation of man's hopes, and to the triumph of reaction, tyranny and barbarism.

But there is another road: The road marked out long ago by Marx, Engels and Lenin. It is the road for the unity of the working class in the struggle against its enemies, whatever labels these enemies may wear—whether fascist, democratic, liberal, socialist, communist—or however else they may disguise themselves. The enemies of the working class are all those, of whatever breed, who support and behold the system of capitalist exploitation, all those who use or support the state power of the capitalist nations, democratic and fascist. Only on the basis of uncompromising socialist enmity to these enemies, and to every capitalist state, can the unity of the working class be achieved.

Black as Europe looks today, the march of fascism can, and must and will be stopped. But only one force can stop it: the

class strength of the workers. Against this force no power on earth can stand. But the class strength of the workers can be assembled only when the workers themselves take their fight into their own hands, break with all those who wish to tie them in the camp of the enemy, and strike out independently and boldly in their own interests and toward their own aims. The workers must fight their own war, a war of the exploited against the exploiters, a class war of the proletarian revolution for socialism. Only this war will defeat Hitler—Chamberlain, Daladier, and Roosevelt—defeat them by wiping out the whole system which breeds Hitlers and Hitlerism.

There is not much time left.

We call you back to the path of Lenin, of the glorious leaders of the October Revolution, whose names are recorded indelibly in the record of mankind.

FOR THE UNITY OF ALL WORKERS OF EVERY NATION!

AGAINST THE LIES AND DEFEATS AND TREACHERIES OF COLLECTIVE SECURITY AND THE PEOPLE'S FRONT!

AGAINST THE FRAME-UPS AND MURDERS OF REVOLUTIONISTS AND MILITANTS OF THE WORKING CLASS!

AGAINST IMPERIALIST WAR!

FOR THE DEFEAT OF HITLER BY THE OVERTHROW OF CAPITALISM!

FOR THE UNITED SOCIALIST STATES OF EUROPE! THE MAIN ENEMY IS IN YOUR OWN COUNTRY!

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