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DEVOTED TO THE THEORY OF MARXISM

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THE WORKERS VOTE

The 1936 Presidential election campaign in the United States will again constitute a test of how revolutionists should utilize parliamentary activity. Once more the elections find the reformists performing their usual role of treachery and betrayal. The Socialists and the Stalinists have issued, as one of their main slogans for the election campaign, the building of a Farmer-Labor Party. The Stalinists and their Lovestoneite supporters, and the Socialists and their Trotskyite supporters, confront the working class with reformist election programs. These parties and groups are still sowing parliamentary illusions and syndicalist prejudice among the masses.

On the other hand, only the Revolutionary Workers League is presenting a clear-cut Leninist concept on how revolutionists should utilize bourgeois parliamentarism. Unfortunately we are few in numbers. This will prevent our organization from conducting a large-scale campaign. However, the Revolutionary Workers League will present a revolutionary position on how to participate in the elections; a Marxian analysis and criticism of the programs and issues before the working class; and its own program, and to the degree of its organizational resources will participate in the coming election.

In conjunction with the modest election campaign to be conducted by the Revolutionary Workers League and the Young Workers League, the tactic of the Workers Vote will be utilized. The aim of the Workers Vote is to obtain the votes of all workers over 17 years of age for a revolutionary program representing the interests of the working class.

The disfranchising of large sections of the exploited population; the 48 different election laws, together with the whole structure of sham democracy, brings to the fore the need of the Workers Vote.

The Workers Vote is canvassed by Workers Vote solicitors, (representing the R.W.L.) in working class gatherings, house to house canvassing; in between the nomination convention of the R.W.L. and Election Day. The workers sign a Workers Vote list, casting their vote for our program and candidates. The same program and candidates will be listed on the official ballot (or write-in campaign where we are not listed on the ballot) for which the workers register their votes on Election Day.

Those who vote on the Workers Vote and who are qualified to vote on Election Day (according to the capitalist laws) will register their vote on election day by a write-in or sticker campaign. Due to our inability to obtain an official place on the ballot in the 1936 elections, the Workers Vote will constitute the major part of our activity.

The fact that the Workers Vote is carried on outside the framework of the capitalist elections, makes it an important connecting link between the main work within the sphere of extra-parliamentary activity and the auxiliary work of parliamentary activity. While the election activity is under the control of the

exploiters, their state and their political parties, the Workers Vote is under the control of the workers and their political organizations.

In this political sense the Workers Vote is supplemented by official participation in elections, even though the organizational aspects of the Workers Vote is a preparation for the election campaign.

The Workers Vote proposes: to expose the sham democracy of the capitalists, to enable the youth to vote for their class interests, to enable all workers to take a direct part in the campaign for a revolutionary program, to instill the embryo phases of the concept of the workers laws vs. the capitalist laws in the workers ranks. The Workers Vote will help us to bring out in clear relief the Leninist concept that it is impossible to transfer State Power from the Capitalists to the Working Class through parliamentary means.

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Note-

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THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL.

D. Morris

Business Manager.

THESES ON THE LABOR AND FARMER-LABOR PARTY

Reforms and reformism in developing Capitalism.

In its stage of development, capitalism was able to make economic and political concessions to the proletariat, but it actually made them only where the proletariat fought for them. This militant struggle for reforms, and the reforms actually gained as the result of the struggle, were progressive. The bourgeoisie, however, more and more succeeded in presenting these reforms not as gained through the struggle of the workers, but as either granted by the bourgeoisie of its own will, or as gained through these leaders of the proletariat, who had become the agents of the bourgeoisie in the ranks of the workers, i.e. the reformist leaders. Reformism, the practice and theory of gaining reforms as an end in itself, not as preparation for the overthrow of the capitalist system as a whole, grew in the labor movement on the social basis of the upper layers of the working-class, especially in those countries where the bourgeoisie fattened on super-profits from colonial exploitation allowing it to make considerable concessions to the "labor-aristocracy". Thus setting one section of the proletariat against the other: internationally, the proletariat of one country against all others (especially the colonials); nationally, the workers of one nationality, race, religious creed against all others; and, above all, skilled against unskilled workers, reformism fulfilled its task of splitting the working-class. The bribing of the upper layers of the working-class became the means of leading the class as a whole from the path of class struggle to that of class collaboration.

Reforms and reformism in decay Capitalism.

In its present period of decay, capitalism cannot grant these reforms. The economic basis of reformism has been wiped out. The United States is no exception. This situation leaves the door open for hollow political reforms without real economic content. In the past, European workers got not only economic reforms, but also their political counterpart.

This does not mean that economic gains cannot be made here and there, even tho the economic basis of reformism has been wiped out. Concessions made today, however, are made to the class marching toward power, threatening the rule of capitalism. A small sacrifice today in order to behold the movement tomorrow, that is the formula.

Reformism can live and grow even without gaining reforms. In the decay stage, when the working class is ready to seize power, reformism as a political movement is used by the capitalist class to stem the tide, to direct these struggles into safe channels. Once woven into the social structure, reformism does not die the moment its economic basis is destroyed. The political movement of reformism and its ideology can still rely on the capitalist system of which it is a part. But reformism today is reformism of the decay stage.

In those countries that have gone through the experience of this reformism of the decay stage (to be referred to hereafter merely as reformism), without a class party of the proletariat to direct the resulting disillusionment into revolutionary channels, the petty-bourgeoisie develops a new type of movement, - fascism.

Reformism and fascism.

Both reformism and fascism are created by the petty bourgeoisie as instruments of struggle against the big bourgeoisie, within the framework of capitalist society, that is, for its reform. By means of reformism, the petty bourgeoisie tries to lead the proletariat behind it, to utilize it against the big capitalists; by means of fascism, it tries to destroy it as an organized force, so that it (the petty bourgeoisie) and not the proletariat will get the benefit of the reforms which the fascist petty bourgeoisie hopes to force the big capitalists to grant. Both reformism and fascism are movements having as a goal the reform of capitalism. They necessarily become instruments of the bourgeoisie used primarily against the proletariat, and secondarily against the petty bourgeoisie itself. Sections of the big capitalists participate from the very outset in the building of both reformist and fascist movements by the petty bourgeoisie.

Reformism and fascism are two stages in the attempt of the petty bourgeoisie to play an independent role in the struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Where the proletariat fails to direct mass disillusionment with reformism into revolutionary channels, fascism is the answer of the petty bourgeoisie. In other words, where reformism on the one hand or the revolutionary proletariat on the other, have not yet been put to the test, there is no broad base for fascism to grow upon. In the United States, therefore, the approaching enemy is reformism, not fascism. Reformism is dangerous precisely because history shows it prepares the road to fascism.

Base of reformism in the decay stage.

Capitalism as a world system is in its decay stage. It can no longer grant economic concessions that could serve as a basis for reformism. But this fact is not true to the same extent in all capitalist countries. The strongest imperialist countries are able to bribe important sections of the working class even under decay capitalism by means of economic concessions. This is especially true of the United States, the strongest capitalist country in the world. In spite of the marked leveling out process, the division between the privileged workers on the one hand and the mass of unskilled workers and unemployed on the other will continue until the world hegemony of U.S. will be broken. There is therefore, more of an economic basis for reformism in the U.S. than in other strong links of the capitalist chain, England, for example. The relative economic condition of the American workers as a whole today compared with their standards of yesterday is lower and continues on a downward curve. As for the weaker links (Germany, Japan, Italy) this basis for reformism has been almost completely wiped out.

Basis of reformism in the United States- needs of the bourgeois

Today the bourgeoisie need more effective weapons to hold down the proletariat than those it employed in the developing stage. As the economic basis of reformism is wiped out in European countries, the bourgeoisie is forced more and more to replace (class-collaboration by corruption) by fascism (class-collaboration by terror). The situation is very different in the U.S. Here, reformism has never developed beyond a limited embryonic extent. The bourgeoisie has granted economic concessions openly thru their labor lieuten-

ants and not thru "socialistic" reformist leaders, who pose before the masses as fighters against the bourgeoisie. Considering they still grant certain economic reforms, the American bourgeoisie can utilize the variant of broadening the basis of class collaboration by corruption.

This road is especially necessary for the bourgeoisie as the proletariat becomes "Europeanized" (socially and economically restricted and politically active and class-conscious), and an ever-growing section of the workers enters the ranks of the permanently unemployed. But only a section of the bourgeoisie is capable of understanding this necessity and of taking the necessary measures of overhauling U.S. capitalism. The "New Dealers", struggling for their own sectional interests as well as for their class as a whole, must win the support of the working masses, both proletarian and petty bourgeois against other sections of the bourgeoisie. This twofold task (finding effective weapons against the proletariat and at the same time against the other sections of the bourgeoisie) forces the "New Deal" to broaden its base for class collaboration with the proletariat, which carries with it the collaboration of the petty bourgeoisie.

It is therefore clear why sections of the New Deal bourgeoisie support the movement for industrial class collaborationist unions on the one hand, and the movement for a Farmer-Labor Party on the other. This is not to say that the older methods of class collaboration are dropped. However, the craft type of class collaborationist union, though utilized by the Old Deal bourgeoisie, is forced to support the New Dealers, in order not to be swept aside by the tide of industrial class collaboration unionism which that section of the bourgeoisie support. On the political field, however, the new type of politicians the class relations is bringing to the surface, the Roosevelt and LaGuardia type of New Dealer are for the time still strong enough to utilize, and at the same time force into capitulation, the LaFollettes and Olsons, and with them, the whole string of Third Party advocates: the Thomases, Browders, etc. Sections of the New Dealers, nevertheless, are preparing the ground for and even help build, a more radical and "independent" opposition, with a more definitely anti-capitalist, "socialist" type of demagoguery: A Farmer-Labor Party. It is then that the smaller regional capitalist interests, represented by the LaFollette, Olson, Huey Long type, themselves threatened by ever-growing concentration of capital, will play the decisive role in harnessing the opposition of the worker and farmers.

Basis of reformism in the U.S. - The petty bourgeoisie

As a result of the agrarian crisis, class relations in the U.S. can be characterized by a large radicalizing rural population of petty proprietors, at a time when the proletariat has not yet created its own class party. In such a situation, the petty bourgeoisie always attempts to create a broad "party of the people". Their purpose is to harness the superior organized fighting strength of the proletariat to their struggle against the big capitalists. The objective situation today favors the creation of such a party. Subjectively also the rural and urban small owners are looking for a "way out" through a "Peoples Party". The majority of Negro petty bourgeoisie, oriented as a result of their special situation to follow a proletarian party if it existed, now, on the contrary, constitute one of the most important contingents for the formation of a petty bourgeois party. Sections of the urban middle class,

such as the small shop keepers pressed by the chain stores, professionals driven by overcrowding of their field, small manufacturers, traders, middle class students, etc., all give impetus to the reformist movements.

"The lower middle class, the small manufacturer, the shop keeper, the artisan, the farmer, all these fight against the bourgeoisie, to save from extinction their existence as fractions of the middle class. they are therefore not revolutionary. May more, they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of history."

----- Communist Manifesto.

Basis of Reformism in the United States - in the proletariat

The working class of the U.S. has not yet created its class party to guide and warn it against the trap of reformism. It has not even gone thru the school of independent political action in any form whatsoever. Neither in the period of developing capitalism nor since the decay stage has it experienced a period of socialist-tinged reformism. While the European proletariat went through the mill of reformism, the American workers were largely isolated. Today the American proletariat is undergoing a process of "Europeanization". It is being drawn into the world labor movement at a time when the world proletariat is defeated, demoralized, leaderless. The lessons the American workers are learning on this phase of the struggle therefore are negative: unity at all costs, between all workers, advanced and backward; unity of workers with the petty bourgeoisie, and "democratic" sections of the big capitalists. The great lessons of the past, including the October Revolution, were largely lost on the workers of this country. Their first "lesson" of the "Europeanization" process is - the People's Front. The Soviet bureaucracy, anxious to find a mass base in this country to be used as pressure for an alliance between the U.S. and the USSR, has thrown its weight behind the creation of a broad class-collaborationist "reformist" movement. The danger that the awakening American proletariat will first trail behind the petty bourgeoisie, cannot be overemphasised.

Perspective of Reformism in the United States.

A reformist party and movement in this country is not an economic or historical necessity. The more rapid tempo of American development did not bottle up the developing working class. On this basis the reformist movement was prevented from sinking roots in American soil. The most likely variant for the U.S. in the present decay stage is a period of reformism, short in duration, a caricature of the European movement, yet just as deadly to the working class.

Whether the bourgeoisie will be able to drive the awakening proletariat into the channels of reformism depends on the internal developments of American capitalism in relation to world capitalism and its effects on the world class struggle and on the economy and class relations in this country. All of this in turn will condition the rôle the proletarian vanguard will be able to play. A favorable situation in this country for the class and its party can rapidly transform the period of reformism into a period of revolutionary activity provided the revolutionary Marxist organization is equal to the task. "The Workers' and Peasants' Party can only be a basis, a cover, a springboard for the bourgeoisie." (Trotsky in 1928)

A Farmer-Labor Party is a reformist bourgeois party. It cannot be an instrument of the proletariat, but is an instrument of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat, and secondly an instrument of the petty bourgeoisie, utilizing the workers for their purposes against the big bourgeoisie. The aim of a Farmer-Labor Party can only be the (i.e. support) of capitalism.

reform
Farmer-Labor Party as a form of the Peoples Front.

The propaganda and actual organization of Farmer-Labor Parties has become the main instrument of the Socialist Militant and Stalinist agents of the bourgeoisie in the ranks of the workers, with which to gag the workers and hand them over to the "liberal" New Deal section of the bourgeoisie. The Farmer-Labor Party represents in the U.S. the counterpart of the "People's Front" in other countries; with this difference: In Europe, due to a higher state of the class struggle, it is not a question of dumping small propaganda groups like the SP and the CP in the U.S. into a "People's Party" (read Farmer-Labor Party). There it is a question of maintaining the existing reformist mass parties (possibly fused into an "Organic Unity" party) within a "front" of the petty bourgeoisie and the liberal section of the big bourgeoisie. The Farmer-Labor Party means a still more abject subordination of the proletariat than achieved by the People's Front. The Farmer-Labor Party is an attempt to stifle a backward, awakening, but not yet tested or defeated proletariat, while the People's Front in Europe has the task of controlling an advanced but already defeated working class.

Among the historical examples and experiences of the world proletariat can be listed the Populist movement of the U.S. in the 19th Century, The Non-Partisan League of the Northwest, the Kuomintang of China. These were all forerunners of which the Farmer-Labor Party of Minnesota is the latest example. It is false to speak of the gains gotten from the Farmer-Labor Party. Rather how much greater would the class gains have been if these energies had not been misdirected into petty bourgeois channels. There can be no doubt that Olson in the strike of Local 574 in Minneapolis, and his role in general, has stunted revolutionary development.

One class reformist parties.

In Europe, the awakening of the proletariat to independent political action (separate from the petty bourgeoisie) took place in the earlier, developing period of capitalism. The growth of reformism largely nullified this achievement. The mass parties of the proletariat (social-democratic or Labor) were not yet class parties of the proletariat. They did not represent the full interests of the class as a whole. The separation of the revolutionists from the reformists (achieved only in Russia in the developing period of capitalism) marked the beginning of truly independent political action of the proletariat, i.e. complete separation from the petty bourgeoisie.

Reformist parties serve the interests of the bourgeoisie. When the bourgeoisie can make concessions, this fact is hidden; but when they can no longer make them, it becomes obvious in all its nakedness. The role of the Social Democracy in 1914 and since the war has finally established this fact beyond dispute. Experience has confirmed the Marxist analysis that any movement aiming at the reform of capitalism, must serve the capitalists. In the earlier phases, the Social-Democratic and Labor parties, to the extent that they carried on class struggle activity and spread socialist ideology, played a progressive role. They were a definite step on the road towards independence.

With the establishment of definite proletarian class parties , through complete separation from the petty bourgeoisie, the progressive role of reformist parties came to an end. If this is true under developing capitalism, it is a hundred times more so under decaying capitalism. After the experiences of the war, of the October Revolution, of the reformist parties in the post-war period -- to repeat now the stage already outdated at the beginning of this century, would be criminal stupidity. What was progressive when the proletariat was still groping for the correct political forms to express and organize its aspirations, has become reactionary as soon as these forms were found and tested in struggle.

Affiliation to a Labor Party would mean subjectively to most workers in the U.S. a step forward to independent political action. But to the class interests of these workers it would be a step backward. By building up a philosophy of gradualism, legality, parliamentarism, the Labor Party prevents them from taking the next step towards independent political action. Objectively, therefore, the creation of a Labor party would not be a preparation for the formation of a revolutionary class party, but the most effective way of blocking it. It would be a trap to hold back the workers from the road to revolution. It would not be, as some advocates of the Labor Party argue, a school for the creation of a class party. The rôle of the British Labor Party as a brake on the development of the English proletariat should be sufficient warning against building this formidable obstacle to the road to power. To build a Labor Party is not to "help a baby walk today in order that it may run tomorrow". To a class a party is an instrument of state power. There is only ONE road to power, and only ONE kind of party that can lead to this goal: the revolutionary Marxian party. It is beyond the power of the class to use the Stalinist and Socialist parties as instruments of revolution, or to reform these parties, and it is equally as futile to endeavor to transform the Labor Party into such an instrument.

"Revolutionary" Labor or Farmer Labor Party.

There can be no such thing as a REVOLUTIONARY Labor Party. All such parties are reformist. The concept of a revolutionary Labor Party denies the role of the Marxian Party. It is a substitute that cannot fulfill the role assigned to it. Only a revolutionary class party can lead the struggle against WAR AND FASCISM. A Labor Party, since it is reformist, can only pave the way to war and fascism, just as the reformist Social-Democracy did in 1914, in 1923 in Italy and in 1933 in Germany.

Role of Labor and Farmer Labor Party.

A Farmer-Labor Party openly claims to defend the interests of two classes. In reality, this leads to the subordination of the workers interests to those of the petty bourgeoisie and thereby to those of the big bourgeoisie. A Labor Party, on the other hand, claims to represent the interests of one class. It is reformist, nevertheless, and expresses only the fears, protests, and aspirations of workers closest to the petty-bourgeoisie, and subordinates the interests of the proletariat to those of the bourgeoisie. In the final analysis, therefore, both the Labor Party and the Farmer-Labor Party are nationalist in outlook. Their foreign policy would be as

nationalist as that of the British Labor Party, supporting "its" imperialism in its oppression of the colonial peoples and its war preparations.

They accomplish their purpose by different methods based on specific national conditions. In England, for example, with a numerically strong proletariat and a weak farm population, a Farmer-Labor party could never take root. In the United States, on the contrary, where the leading industrial states have at the same time the leading agricultural areas, it is the two-class party which finds favorable soil. This is, of course, not true in all areas. In the industrial cities, class relationships are more favorable for the growth of a Labor Party. The character of the National party, however, would be based on the country as a whole, where the two class policies would be decisive for the local and state parties. Local and state "Labor Parties" within the national Farmer-Labor Party would play the role of drawing the more advanced sections of the workers into the latter.

Due to the fact that there are 48 different sets of election laws, no matter what the name of the party will be nationally, in each state it will be compelled to employ different names in order to get on the ballot. We will find Labor, Farmer-Labor, Socialist, Communist, Progressive, Commonwealth, etc., as names employed in the various states. Furthermore, it makes no difference if the party is based on individual or collective membership. The party, at bottom, will be a reformist organization.

The movement for a Labor and Farmer-Labor Party.

The leadership in the FLP movement today belongs to Governor Olson, Senator Nye and other representatives of smaller regional capitalism. The farmers, the city middle class, the intellectuals, the trade union leaders, the "Socialist" and "Communist" leaders, all trail behind them, in the order named, each trying to "bring pressure" on the force above them, but each capitulating when they capitulate. Olson capitulates to Roosevelt; so Thomas capitulates to Olson, and Browder to Thomas, that is to say, they all capitulate to Roosevelt in succession like a house of cards. It is obvious that conditions are not yet ripe for the launching of a national Farmer-Labor Party, since the New Deal bourgeoisie is so indisputably master of the situation. The FLP as a mass movement depends on the development of the economic situation in the U.S. and throughout the world. There can be no doubt, however, that larger masses of workers and petty bourgeoisie are turning towards this "solution" of their problems. The SP Militants and the Stalinists conceive of their parties practically as propaganda groups for the FLP, in which they hope to be more or less "independent" parts. Of the smaller groups, the Trotskyite Socialist Party group, opposed in words to the FLP, in action works for it. At the Washington Unemployed Conference, they actually voted for it. The Lovestonite CPO, on the other hand, counterposes a Labor Party to a Farmer-Labor Party, which, as shown above, is a snare for the two class party.

The propaganda for a Labor Party is far more dangerous to the future development of the proletariat than for a Farmer-Labor Party, since it helps confuse advanced workers who already see the treachery of a two-class party. Workers who learn to reject a reformist one-class party will not fall prey to the propaganda for a two-class party.

Our Road

The Revolutionary Workers League counterposes to the opportunist non-revolutionary Labor Party and Farmer-Labor Party, the line of INDEPENDENT ACTION OF THE WORKING CLASS THROUGH THE POLITICAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL INDEPENDENCE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY MARXIAN ORGANIZATION.

The proletariat can achieve its own emancipation only by emancipating all the oppressed. It can overthrow capitalism only in alliance with all the oppressed. But alliance with other oppressed classes presupposes separate organization of the proletariat.

Fractions in Labor and Farmer-Labor Parties.

Where members of the RWL as members of unions and other workers' organizations affiliated to a Labor or Farmer-Labor Party automatically become members of these parties they must openly organize as a RWL fraction, working under instructions from the Central Committee.

If the historical conditions leading to Lenin's proposal for the C.P.G.B.'s entry into the British Labor-Party could be repeated, then, but only then the same tactic could be considered.

Revolutionary Workers League
28 East 14 Street
New York City

Joint statement of the Italian Left Fraction of Communism and the Revolutionary Workers League.

The physical assaults which took place at the headquarters of the League for a Revolutionary Workers Party yesterday, May 29, both the initial assault by the Field minority group against Demby and Stanley and the retaliatory assault by the Demby group against members of the Field group later in the evening, over differences between them, and the disintegration of the entire group make it impossible to continue negotiations with the League for a Revolutionary Party looking toward fusion with it.

The use of physical violence to settle differences in the labor movement is a deeply reactionary practice which must be burned out of the labor movement and all those who resort to it, except in self-defence, or against fascist and police hoodlums, must be exposed. The history and traditions of the labor movement are categorical in their condemnation of such a practice. Our own experience at the hands of the Stalinists and the use of gangster tactics by the Cannon-Shachtman group in Philadelphia, in the summer of 1935 against its opponents have taught us a lesson too dearly bought to be forgotten.

To tolerate such practices or to condone them would be to lower ourselves to the level of the Stalinists and Cannon and Co. It would be unworthy of revolutionists.

The statement of Demby and his associates leaves unanswered the cardinal question of the political differences between his group and the group around Field. For his part Field also fails to present a political analysis of the differences. These physical assaults are therefore conclusive evidence of the decomposition of the entire group. We can draw the only conclusion possible under the circumstances: that the line of the LRWP, before its formal change during the course of the negotiations between it and the Italian Left Fraction of Communism and the Revolutionary Workers League, the New Zimmerwald line, or the London-Amsterdam Bureau line as it may be called, was unable to consolidate the membership on a clear principled basis to withstand the impact on it of the demoralization in the world labor movement and the shock of the internal struggle which broke out, with the result that at the first serious conflict it flew apart. The violence which accompanied this conflict testifies to the fact that the differences were deep seated, were unable to find a democratically controlled outlet through discussion and political struggle, but were bureaucratically suppressed.

The failure to define political differences and to indicate the road ahead leaves the question formally open as between the opportunist point of crystallization in the labor movement, the Socialist Party, or the revolutionary point of crystallization, the genuine movement for the Fourth International. But the failure to make a definite declaration does not favor the adoption of the revolutionary point of crystallization. Quite the reverse.

Particularly is this true of the comrades around Demby who condemn the line of Field as bankrupt but counterpose no line of their own. In the period of the rapid disintegration of the revolutionary movement on a world scale, only the firmest, clearest and boldest people will be able to withstand the impact of the right drift and

its impact on the Marxists. All the comrades who have not disgraced themselves by the resort to violence can serve the revolutionary movement now only by an immediate political declaration for the revolutionary road to the Fourth International.

The ILFC and the RWL will continue the negotiations on the same basis as that on which they have been conducted up to this point. At the request of the comrades of the ILFC, made by them on May 18th, the negotiations have been suspended for two months to permit the comrades to conclude a discussion in their ranks in the U.S. and internationally over the class character of the Soviet Union.

INTRODUCTION

The French Turn Crosses the Frontier.

Like the article on Organic Unity, which has been published as a supplement to the Fourth International, the French Turn Crosses the Frontier, was written in the summer of 1935 for publication in the internal bulletin of the Workers Party. The Cannon-Shachtman-Muste leadership suppressed it. It is published now because it is a programmatic document which gives a part of the fundamental position of the Revolutionary Workers League. Moreover, much of the material in it has never been published anywhere and is totally unknown.

The new orientation has not stood still since this article was written. On the contrary it has led the Trotskyists on a world scale into capitulation after capitulation to centrism and reformism. From time to time we have published reports of this degeneration. And we will continue to do so. After this article has been published in full we can set about bringing the record of capitulation and degeneration up to date in a comprehensive survey.

I N T R O D U C T I O N

The appearance of this article has been delayed several times. News of some important development in the movement for the Fourth International, which arrived just as we were about to write this, made it necessary to withhold publication. Inasmuch as these developments had a direct bearing on the question of the new orientation and almost all of them, in greater or less degree, fell within the scope of this article, there was no choice, therefore, despite an understandable irksomeness, to withhold publication in order to include the new material.

We were motivated in this delay, moreover, by another consideration. All of this material, and more which is available, irrespective of the position which it supports, must be made available to the entire Party membership, and much of it should be made public to the working class. The policy of the Cannon-Shachtman faction, which controls the Party press and a goodly number of the sources of information by virtue of their former official positions in the CIA and their present posts as editors (Cannon is editor of the NEW MILITANT, Shachtman and West editors of the NEW INTERNATIONAL; Cannon is also the editor of the INTERNATIONAL INFORMATION INTERNAL BULLETIN), has been to present only material which supports the new orientation of the International Communist League. Inasmuch as the bulk of the material tells heavily against the orientation, Cannon, Shachtman and their faction have not only no interest in presenting it to the Party and the class, but in suppressing it. In pursuing this policy they are loyal to their international faction. But they do the movement a great injury; they are warping the internationalism of our Party and arresting the development of the membership.

We are internationalists. We want the Party to be internationalist. The first condition of internationalism, as Trotsky has so often remarked, is timely, documented information. He who lifts even a finger to interfere with this vital process commits a crime against the movement. Against the cordon sanitaire of Cannon-Shachtman we declare war. What is suppressed must reach the Party membership. It is our highest duty to inform the Party systematically.

We can do it now. Information reaches us. We will transmit it to the Party membership - in detail. When the Party acts to smash the factional monopoly of Cannon-Shachtman and establish the normal flow of international material, what services we can contribute to internationalism and the press of the Party will, of course, flow through the ordinary channels of the Party. Until then we are forced to have recourse to these extraordinary means.

Information continues to arrive. The capitulator, Fersen, was refused admission to the Socialist Party in Spain. Fusion was achieved in Mexico. But a halt must be called somewhere. What cannot be included in this article will be published subsequently.

September 6, 1935.

T. Stamm
For The Left Wing.

THE "FRENCH TURN" CROSSES THE FRONTIER

THE INTERNATIONAL EFFECTS OF THE LIQUIDATION OF THE FRENCH COMMUNIST LEAGUE INTO THE SFIO - THE NEW ORIENTATION

When it was proposed, in the summer of 1934, to liquidate the French Communist League into the Socialist Party of France (SFIO), a number of us said immediately that it was the first step in a chain of identical steps that would follow in other countries; and that, consequently, the "French turn" was not and could not be, as was claimed, a tactical question for France alone, but the beginning of a new international orientation, anti-Marxist in tendency, which involved the liquidation of the independence of the only existing world revolutionary force - the International Communist League. We based our analysis on the character of the move itself, the motivations given for it and the arguments advanced to support it. In another article, we will take up those aspects of the question. In this one we continue the analysis of the results of the "turn" begun in the article "1087 Votes, What We Gave, What We Got". In that article we studied the results in the French labor movement; in this one we will study the results in the international labor movement. But this is so large a subject that we are forced to leave some of these results for separate articles; chiefly the effects in the United States on the Workers Party.

The first striking result is the fact that our contention, unfortunately, has been proved; the "turn", which was advanced as a tactical, exceptional experiment for France, has been applied now to five sections and a number of groups: France, England, Belgium, Italy and Switzerland. According to the minutes of the International Secretariat of the ICL of June 10th, the Polish section is considering the question of entry into the Polish Socialist Party and the Polish Bund. In Austria and Czecho-Slovakia there were no regularly constituted sections - only small groups. Entry into the Second International has been indicated to them. Attempts have been made to apply the orientation in a variety of forms in Spain, Mexico, Cuba, Chile and the United States. What began as a national, exceptional, experimental tactic for France, has been extended over a wide area and to many countries.

Crux Introduces The New Orientation

Let us see how this came about. The first attempt to extend the "turn" was made by Trotsky, using the pseudonym Crux, in a letter sent by him to "The International Secretariat and the Leadership of the Belgian section", dated November 1st, 1934. Copies were sent to the various sections of the ICL. The leadership of the Communist League of America mimeographed it and distributed copies to the membership on the eve of the League's convention at the end of November. This letter should be made available to the members of our Party so that every Party member can study it for himself.

In that letter Crux first extended the "French turn" in retrospect!. In speaking of the defeat of the Austrian proletariat he said: "The most formidable of crises came and passed entirely over the heads of those grouplets" (Left Opposition groupings) "despite the fact that there had always been broad sympathies for our ideas in Vienna. It is a very sad, but nevertheless invaluable lesson. It must be said now openly: Ever since the beginning of the crisis in the Austrian party" (the Socialist Party) "it was a supreme duty of our friends to enter the Austro-Marxist Party, to prepare within it the revolutionary current".

In the next paragraph, Crux argues that the "as yet brief experience of our French section already enables us to adduce a positive confirmation of the negative lessons of the Austrian experience". What is good for France would have been good for Austria! The conclusion for Austria is inescapable: to enter the Socialist Party. Then it is not a national tactical question for France; it is an international question.

In the following paragraph the "French turn" is extended to Spain! "I have not as yet received any documents on the recent events in Spain" (the October insurrection) "generally, and on the role played by our section. But the general line of development suffices to draw the conclusion that our Spanish comrades should have joined the Socialist Party there at the very outset of the internal differentiation which began to prepare that party for the armed struggle - - -". Still in retrospect! Moreover, and this is the decisive point - - - for Spain too; the conclusion is unmistakable: entry into the Socialist Party.

But the next paragraph extends the "turn" to Belgium in the present. "One of our Belgian comrades, who plays quite a part in the youth movement, has sent me some documents which describe the relationship existing among Jeunes Gardes Socialistes" (the Belgian equivalent of the YPSL), "the Stalinists and ourselves. And also, a little of the internal life of the JGS. The conclusion that I have drawn from those documents is that our young comrades should immediately join the JGS." (Emphasis in the original). And further: "I have become definitely convinced of the necessity of entering there, ever since I heard that the JGS, with whom our comrades are in contact, insisted that we come in and join them in their organization."

Here it is a question of the youth, not of the adult section, the Belgian Communist League. The question of the organizational independence of the youth section of the Marxist vanguard does not rest on the same plane as the independence of the vanguard; the part is not equal to the whole. But Crux does not make a distinction. In a letter written by Crux to the International Secretariat in February of this year, he remarks, in polemicising against Veroecken, opponent of the new orientation and former member of the IS: "Veroecken's trouble is that he separates completely the question of the Belgian youth and the question of the French entry and the experience of the French League". First France, then Austria and Spain and the Belgian youth. With Crux these are steps in an international orientation. But from the youth section to the adult it is only a step in this process. and so it has come to pass.

In the passages on Austria and Spain Crux speaks of "our new orientation" in connection with the entry into the Second International. It is obviously impossible to use the words "French turn" to describe this international orientation. Another name is needed. Crux himself supplies it - the new orientation. And thereby gives testimony in behalf of our contention that from the first the so-called "French turn" was in reality only the first step in an international orientation.

Crux Sows Confusion

The use of the words "new orientation" to denote the policy of liquidating the sections of the ICL into the Second International, by Crux, has confused many comrades. Before Crux used them in this connection the "new orientation" meant and was understood to mean the new orientation of the International Communist League - adopted after Hitler's victory in Germany - for the Fourth International and independent parties outside of the Second and Third Internationals, as distinct from its old orientation for the reform and regeneration of the Third International through its activity as factions of the parties of the Third International.

The liquidation of the French Communist League into the Second International was, according to its proponents and defenders, a tactical means of realizing this orientation in France. The extension of this liquidationist process to other countries proceeds, according to its defenders, on the same general promise. It is therefore, according to them, no more than a question of the organizational road to the Fourth International. However, the entry into the Second International is more than a mere organizational question. It involves, as we shall see, political and theoretical considerations advanced by Crux and others, which contradict some fundamentals of Marxism. It is therefore a new political line. But Crux initiated and developed this new political line under cover of a new, tactical, organizational line. The use of the words "new orientation", to describe both the political (for the Fourth International) and organizational lines, facilitated the introduction of the new political line without clearly and openly stating it for what it is. So that, strange as it may seem, there are some, even at this late date, who obstinately deny the existence of a new international orientation.

At any rate, it is a convenient term which accurately applies to the policy of the ICL in extending the "French turn" on an international scale. And that is how we use it and what we mean when we speak of the new orientation of the ICL.

We have spent so much time on this point because it is necessary to establish the fact that it was the leadership of the ICL itself which took the initiative soon after the French Communist League was liquidated, in applying the same "tactic" to other countries. A number of comrades, who defended the entry in France, did so in the sincere belief that it was an experimental tactic in France and would not be repeated in other countries. They were deceived. Some comrades think that there was and is no intention on the part of the ICL leadership to extend the "French turn" into a new orientation. Like

comrade Weber, they argue that those who apply the "turn" outside of France do it on their own responsibility because they do not understand the "French turn" and that, consequently (!), it is not an international orientation. That is false. The ICL leadership itself has taken the initiative and those who are applying the orientation are given clearly to understand that it is the line of the ICL.

The ICL leadership may be opposed to its extension in this or that country, or to the form of its application or the manner in which it was done, as in Belgium. But that does not prove Weber's point. On the contrary it proves the opposite.

It is true that a correct line may be applied incorrectly. But that is not what is involved here any more than it was involved when Stalin thundered against dizziness from success. The Russian Opposition argued then that it was not at all a question of overdoing a good thing but the logical development of a line through its application in practice. The "French turn" is being applied in practice internationally.

That is a fact. But there is another aspect to our problem. The "French turners", of whom we speak, do not argue that the application of the "French turn" to other countries does not prove that the line is incorrect, but that there is no international line! As we have shown, on the basis of the ICL leadership itself, this is false. To argue as these comrades

do serves a bad purpose. It enables the ICL leadership to avoid responsibility for the disastrous results of the new orientation which it initiated and developed. It serves a bad purpose to introduce into our movement the distinctly Stalinist idea: that the line is correct, but its application poor.

In our struggle against the Stalin-Bukharin theory of the possibility of building socialism in one country, and in Russia at that, we strove to demonstrate (1) its falseness on theoretical grounds; (2) its ruinous consequences in Russia; and (3) its treacherous and fatal consequences on the international working class and the international working class movement. All were vital, we said, but the third was decisive for the USSR and the world movement. The final accounting has not been rendered, but with the help of events, all of them, unfortunately, disastrous for the working class, the Bolshevik-Leninists proved their case against Stalinism and the Third International.

Now we are engaged in the attempt to build the Fourth International to carry to victory and completion the great work begun by the Russian Bolsheviks in the revolution of 1917 and the creation of the Third International. Already, when we have practically just set about this gigantic labor, a disintegrating and liquidatory tendency has appeared in the movement for the Fourth International in the shape of the "French turn" and its development on an international scale. And, although we would prefer a happier form of proof, like the former Left Opposition, we are forced to demonstrate through its almost exclusively negative features, the fact that this new orientation exists and that its consequences are ruinous for our movement.

To those who obstinately close their eyes to the international character of the orientation and consequently to its significance, we say: the Marxist methodology you use in the struggle against Stalinism you must apply to this problem; you must proceed from Marxist premises, that is to say, premises of internationalism. You cannot limit your evaluation of the entry in France to the results in the French labor movement. Even if you think you can discern there certain successes you cannot exclude from your balance sheet the price you paid for those "successes" on the scale of the international movement. You can strike a real balance only when you consider the thing in its totality. The indubitable advances of Soviet industry and technique in the years of Stalin's reign are only a part of the balance sheet of that reign. To be sure, these have been achieved on the backs of the workers. But the degeneration of the CI, the defeats of the class the world over - these are the heavy price paid on the basis of the Stalinist policy.

A Marxist must apply internationalist criteria to the question of the "French turn" too. The plea that the entry "in itself", in France, was correct and is paying dividends, and that others who do not understand it are applying it incorrectly elsewhere is the specious reasoning of people who want to wish away unpleasant facts. We have shown that this is not true. But even if there were some truth in this idea it would not obviate the necessity of examining the "turn" in its international aspects and including those results in a balance sheet. For these are not confined to the ICL.

Let us consider first the results of the new orientation on the labor movement outside of the ICL itself. Just as the "French turn" disorients the tendencies moving to the left in the French labor movement, so the new orientation disorients centrist currents on an international scale. Let us consider two cases in point.

To be con't.

Browder, the reformist, speaks On Armed Insurrection.

"Let me briefly repudiate some of the most serious charges made against us. Some say we "advocate violence", that we are conspirators and terrorists, that we are against democracy. That is not true. It is far from correct as if those charges were made against Washington and Lincoln. We know too well how the toilers suffer from reactionary violence. When, however, we say that we are not pacifists, not non-resisters, we are in the best traditions of Americanism. Since when have Americans been pacifists? We support and fight for democratic rights of the masses. We would subscribe to such a declaration against violence which would not be a pacifist repudiation of America's birth as an independent nation or of the great Lincoln."

May 30 Speech, Morrison Hotel-Chicago.

THE SOCIALIST PARTY MOVES TO THE RIGHT.

The Socialist Party as a caricature of the European Socialist Parties, has just concluded its nineteenth convention in Cleveland with 200 delegates present, representing approximately 14,500 members. The developments in the Socialist party of the U. S. have trailed behind the developments in Europe. As the outcome of the seizure of power by Hitler and his hordes, several important Socialist parties in Europe moved to the left. Following this the Socialist Party of the U.S. adopted the Detroit Declaration of Principles in 1934 and thereby gave new hope to Cannon and Shachtman, who stated at the Plenum of June, 1935 of the Workers Party that it was theoretically possible to reform the Socialist Party. This was merely the continuation of the line laid down by Trotsky in the New Orientation of the International Communist League. Leon Trotsky presented a new evaluation of the Socialist Parties, while our tendency stated that this development to the left in the Socialist parties was a conjunctural one, and in no way fundamentally altered the position and role of Social Democracy.

Since then important Socialist Parties of Europe have followed the footsteps of the Socialist Parties in the smaller countries and have moved to the right. In Belgium, France and Spain they have become the main force in these bourgeois democratic countries to save capitalism from communism and fascism. In reality they are paving the way for Fascism, as they did in Germany and Austria. Again on the heels of this development in Europe the Socialist Party convention in Cleveland moved far to the right.

Old Guard on the Offensive.

In comparing the 1936 struggle to the 1919 struggle, the outstanding political factor, which the majority has ignored in the fight between the Old Guard and the Militants, is the "little difference" that in 1919 the left wing took the offensive: it fought on program and principles. In 1936 the Old Guard took the offensive and fought on program and principles, while the Militants retreated and capitulated on program and moved far to the right.

"We Want Our Right Wing"

The Militant-Old Guard dispute resulted in the New York section of the Old Guard bolting the party and laying the basis for a new Social Democratic Federation. However, the belly-crawling and shameful action of the Militants and the silence of the so-called "Marxists" in the party have laid the basis for unity to be restored even further to the right of the Cleveland position. Thomas answered the Old Guard threat of split by stating at the convention that, "We want our right wing". "We want the right wing in the party." "We are for an all inclusive party." "I don't want to see them go." Zam goes this one better, when in the Feb. 8, Socialist Call, he says, "If real unity is ever to be achieved, it can only be on the basis of the mutual toleration of majority and minority."

Marxists understand that the ABC of unity depends upon programmatic agreement, and not "mutual toleration" - this concept will never achieve "REAL unity", that is, revolutionary unity. The different groups of Trotskyites who have liquidated their organizations and capitulated to the Socialist Party, also believe in "mutual toleration". In the whole period in which they have officially been members of the Socialist Party, not to speak of the faction they were infiltrating into the party long before their entry, not a single ONE of them has raised his voice to drive the social-patriots out of the party. Some of the social-patriots are in the ranks of the MILITANTS. Only the members of the Socialist Party who were collaborating with the Revolutionary Workers League raised this demand. For this action comrade Abe Krueger was expelled from the Militant caucus immediately after the Philadelphia meeting of the N. E. C.

The Militant Draft Program

The most important factor of the convention, although not the most exciting was the position adopted on programmatic and tactical questions. The Detroit Declaration had been the subject of a heated discussion in the party. In November, 1935, the Militants issued a Draft Program for the Socialist Party, -to the left of the Detroit Declaration, which is not saying much for it, considering its weak points. Besides a series of omissions on important issues of the day, the Draft Program has important errors of commission.

The program advocates a Farmer-Labor Party, has a class collaboration trade union line; advocates the reform of the Second International; advocates Organic Unity; presents a centrist position on War; reveals an inability to understand the question of Soviets; and, above all, has a revisionist position on the basic question of the road to power. On this question the draft says, "The working class, indeed, should prefer to come into power peacefully, and democratically, but that is an alternative which at the best is unlikely." In America, such a majority (parliamentary majority -H.A.O.) is a possible development in the event that a mass Labor Party is formed and has a rapid growth. These possibilities must be utilized to the fullest degree because of the obvious advantages of the legal right to control the governmental apparatus. This legal right will mean nothing, however, if the workers do not exercise their formal power, and build up, long before they take office, their extra-parliamentary machinery of defense against the inevitable counter-revolution." This means the workers will take POWER PEACEFULLY through the ballot and the present system of parliament, and the armed clash will come afterwards when counter-revolution will try to drive the workers out. This is the classic formula of revisionism.

The programmatic offensive of the right wingers, particularly its Old Guard section, were so powerful that the Militants did not even present their Draft Program to the convention for consideration. They had already passed far to the right of this draft. In this way the Militants and "Marxists" hoped to avoid the discussion of programmatic and tactical questions. But under the pressure of the Right Wing the convention was forced to deal with these questions. The issues were buried by the leaders wherever possible,

but the pressure of the Old Guard and the sphinx-like silence of the Trotskyites, Lovestoneites and Stalinists, to say nothing of the other "Marxists", threw the issues openly on the table. There the pounding of the right and the "living death" of the left, after much juggling, sleight-of-hand and pussy-footing, enabled the rights to score one gain after the other on programmatic questions.

The Socialist Call announces that the convention-"accepted a CLARIFIED draft of the Declaration of Principles." Marxists have argued that many formulations of the draft needed recasting to the LEFT, but now that the Militant majority convention without a word from the "left" recasted the draft to the RIGHT, it is now "clarified"!

The clarified draft and the election program enables us to see clearly the reformist line adopted at Cleveland. On a number of important tactical questions such as trade union and unemployed work, they adopted a position of class collaboration. On the political arena they are working for the Farmer-Labor Party, for a whole series of reformist bills presented by liberal bourgeois candidates: they advocate the nationalization of industry, banks, etc., under capitalism and the amending of the US Constitution. The New York Times editorial of May 28 says, "In no other way could they peacefully and lawfully proceed to socialize and nationalize all production and business. But the process of amending is necessarily slow. The Socialists could not hope to elect a majority, not to say two thirds of both houses of Congress until after a long succession of electoral victories. Even then would follow the necessity of persuading three fourths of the states. All this leaves the outlook disappointing and dreary for those who go into this year's Presidential campaign under a banner emblazoned 'Socialism in our time'." The New York Times knows more about the Socialist Party and the Militant Program than the "left wingers" who have entered this party of "revolution".

On the question of war the convention improved upon the analysis of imperialism in the Detroit Declaration but made no change to the left in the reformist conclusions for action of the Detroit Declaration. In analysis-centrist; conclusions-reformist; consequently reformist as a whole. Moreover, even were this section better than it is, it would still not mark a step to the left in view of the decision of the convention condemning the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism in the face of which all "left resolutions are so much hypocritical cover for reformism.

The text of the election program does not speak of the need of overthrowing capitalism. To place this phrase in a resolution of the convention that is buried the day the conventions adjourns and to leave it out of the text of the election platform is to campaign on a reformist program.

The resolution on armed insurrection, introduced by the Cannon-Shachtman darling, Gus Tyler, is a decisive step to the right and formally closes the door to membership of all who advocate the Marxian position on this vital question.

But the resolution on armed insurrection contains a double dose of poison, or rather it is a double barreled shotgun against the working class. Besides its reformist position on armed insurrection it says the following, "The Socialist Party, therefore, firmly believes in the strengthening and maintenance of existing democratic institutions through which the Socialist will of the masses may be cultivated and expressed."

The axis of this formulation is not revolutionary Marxism, which includes the fight for democratic rights, but is the axis of bourgeois democracy vs fascism -- it is the theoretical formula of a dozen brands of reformism including Stalinism. Any and every defender of bourgeois democracy against the PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION can agree fully with the formula on "strengthening and maintenance of democratic institutions" and "opposition to armed insurrection."

Again the editorial of the New York Times comes to the rescue of the Socialist Party. In the May 26th issue it says, "The Socialist Party has consistently disavowed plans or threats to overthrow the Government by force". The Zams, Goldmans, Cannons and Mustes are going to "reform" this "leftward" moving party.

The minority resolution against the Farmer-Labor Party which obtained 44 Old Guard votes and two others is hailed as a victory by the Cannon forces. It is no accident that the Old Guard could vote for this resolution. It is not a revolutionary Marxian position against the Farmer-Labor Party. Theoretically it is worse than the former position of the Workers Party. The line of the resolution, which the Old Guard hailed, is the counterposing of the Socialist Party to the Farmer-Labor Party, rather than counterposing a revolutionary party against the S.P., Farmer-Labor Party, or any other party. All non-revolutionary parties are agents of the bosses and seek to tie the workers to capitalism.

Many important issues were not even considered at the convention. For example, the Colonial question in its important principle theoretical aspects was ignored. Under the pressure of the Old Guard an ammendment was adopted giving the local autonomist state rights vs. centralization. This is not a step toward revolutionary consolidation, rather it is another step toward disintegration and bourgeois democracy.

Reformism Won at Cleveland.

Right Wingers who were not at the convention had more influence than leaders of the Militants on the convention floor. Maurer from Reading sent a letter to the convention attacking the Militants and called for the scrapping of the Detroit Declaration. The convention "clarified" the "disputed" issues, by adopting the proposals of the Old Guard. Of course the Old Guard, aggressive and constantly on the offensive, are not easily satisfied. They informed the convention it was not enough and are out to fight for their complete position. The New Leader of May 23rd had an editorial on the "Issues Confronting the Socialist Convention." They presented in this article a nine point program of their policy.

The two outstanding political points mentioned are, "against the theory and practice of the dictatorship", and "for democracy in theory and practice"; and, "we are against advocacy of violence

and armed insurrection by party members inside and outside the party!" On both of these major issues the Militants adopted the New Leader line presented to the convention.

Waldman and Hoan addressed the Amalgamated Convention while in Cleveland. Politically there was no difference between their line and the line of the convention. They both stressed the same political points. But when you compare the political line presented by Waldman and the political line of the election program on which Thomas is running, you will have to split hairs to find a difference.

Factions at the Convention.

The convention was graced with about a dozen groups and groupings. The outstanding factions were: the Old Guard, the Hoan-McLevy Municipal Socialists, the Thomas right-centrists, the Zam-Quitlow forces, the Lovestoneites, the Stalinists, and the three groupings of the Trotskyites: the Cannon-Muste-Goldman forces. The Hoan, Thomas, Hoopes bloc that was consummated behind the scene threw the convention into Hoan's lap.

The convention was dominated by a Reformist-Right-centrist bloc of Hoan and Thomas. The Hoan group held the balance of power and were decisive in shifting the programmatic base to the right, carrying with them the muddleheaded Militants.

Waldman for the Old Guard refused to yield an inch, took the offensive, denied a bloc with La Guardia and accused Hoan of a bloc with LaFollette. He denied friendship with Roosevelt and quoted the New Leader of April 19, 1933, where Thomas called the New Deal revolutionary, and gave "a tribute to the astute leadership of the President." The Old Guard controls the states of Conn., Mass., Mont., New Hampshire, Maryland, half of Pennsylvania, Vermont and Washington, with a powerful bloc in New York and other states.

Hoan was amply paid for his excellent work on program and for keeping the split down to the New York section, and at the same time gaining a political victory for the right wing which will enable regroupments to the right. Hoan obtained the Vice-President nomination for Nelson of Wisconsin. This representative of the farmers is to make up for the inability of the socialists to launch a Farmer-Labor Party this year.

The tail of the Militant caucus consists of the Trotskyites, the Lovestoneites, the Stalinists and other "Unity Groups". The Cannon-Muste-Goldman Trotskyite groups played a miserable role. They were completely passive and silent and did not raise their voice to present minority positions on important questions. The Trotskyites are rapidly sinking into this quagmire of reformism and opportunism.

But Thomas is well paid. If it were not for Trotsky's cable for entry and the Workers Party entry into the Socialist Party of the U.S. the Cleveland convention would have witnessed a split to the left on principle grounds instead of a shift to the right.

Let the Trotskyites say that they did not have a chance to present their position on the floor. Why not a statement to the convention by your faction? Why not a split when the convention adopted a REFORMIST position on the decisive question of the day?

The Cannon-Muste-Goldman Trotskyites have adopted the revisionist position on the following points since the New Turn of the ICL: They have presented a revisionist and new evaluation of Social-Democracy. They have a centrist position on Organic Unity. Throughout the world these groups have capitulated to the Socialist parties, and have liquidated the independent Marxian organization. They have a centrist position on war and on the Peoples Front.

The group in the United States has a false position on American Imperialism. They are silent on the Negro question. They are carrying on a tailendist policy to the Farmer-Labor Party and on several occasions have voted for it. They trail behind the Lewis Trade Union faction in the A.F. of L. They have a class collaboration unemployed position.

They exist peacefully side by side in the Socialist Party with Social Patriots. (Documentary evidence and detail proof will be furnished to all on these points for the asking. Time and again we have asked the Cannon forces to debate us publicly on these questions)

The false policy of the RPPA left it as a nonentity at the convention. Hensen said he would introduce the Militant Draft if no one else would, but the convention closed without a word on this "famous" document and he left the convention 2 days before it adjourned.

The Zams and the Goldmans joined the band wagon when Thomas was elected as their 1936 candidate. Goldman through Erber presented a minority election program. No one spoke for this program and although printed copies were on hand, none were presented to the delegates. It was just a faker's face-saver for Goldman.

The undercover Lovestoneite and Stalinist caucus played their usual miserable role. The editorial of the May 29 issue of the Daily Worker said, "The positive achievements of this convention are considerable. It overwhelmingly defeated the reactionary "Old Guard" group, who have tried to convert the Socialist Party into a tail of the New Deal kite and an agency for Hearst Red Baiting and anti-Soviet propaganda. The convention adopted a platform which, despite shortcomings and confusion on a number of questions, marks a forward step." A convention that makes a Right Step is called positive and forward by the Stalinists. This must be Earl Browder's editorial. This is understandable when the Stalinists can address a letter to the Socialist convention asking them to "explore" the possibilities of a joint Socialist-Communist presidential campaign, and in the same letter they say, "We are convinced that such consultation and the resulting agreement for joint struggle will result in strengthening of the Socialist Party as well as the Communist Party." (my emphasis H.O.)

The Militants were on the run politically from the moment the convention opened. The Militant confidential memorandum passed out only to the top clearly revealed in advance their sell-out and their reformist policy. On the decisive issues confronting the convention the memorandum in part said, "I do not believe that the suggested revisions would be seriously opposed by either side. They are decided IMPROVEMENTS over the existing Declaration of Principles from the OLD GUARD POINT OF VIEW in the following respects."

(My emphasis- Editor)

"1.-Reference to mass action is left out."

"2.-Reference to bogus democracy is left out."

"3.-The proposed revisions pledge the Socialists to try to get the Unions to use a general strike against the attempt at a Fascist coup and against a threat of declaration of war." This is, in the first place a false evaluation of the use of the general strike, sewing illusions as to how to stop war, and second, "if correct from the Socialist standpoint" it would be false to leave such a weapon in the hands of trade unions. The political organization and not the Trade Unions must take the lead in the struggle against fascism and war.

"4.-The advocacy of armed insurrection as a method of bringing about Socialism in the United States shall be declared contrary to the Principles of the Socialist party, and grounds for expulsion or suspension. There is no reason for making such a provision retroactive, however." This CLARIFIES Gus Tyler's ammendment on armed insurrection and leaves no doubt that the "lefts" who join the Socialist Party are capitulating to Reformism.

On the Communist-Socialist United Front activity the Militant memorandum says, "The Militant strategy, in other words, actually prevented any Stalinist from speaking at either parade or Polo Grounds demonstration, while the Old Guard strategy allowed a genuine (!) Communist, although not a Stalinite, to speak to their people."

The Cleveland Convention was a battle ground of three large factions: The Old Guard, the Hoan-McLevy Municipal Socialists and the Thomas group. The other groups trailed along behind Thomas. The bloc of Thomas and Hoan was the decisive factor in enabling the convention to adopt the reformist program.

Only the Revolutionary Workers League ^{carried} on independent activity. Only the Revolutionary Workers League in its own name presented a position of class struggle and revolutionary Marxism at the Cleveland convention.

"We desire a peaceful change brought about by constitutional means. In this country We want no dictatorship, We want no revolution. There are ample constitutional ways of bringing about the change in a peaceful and legal manner".

Norman Thomas-N.Y. Times 6/6/36.

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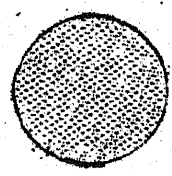
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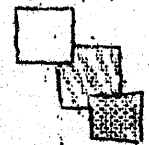
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