

## Parties and Issues

THE fundamental issue of the 1936 elections, according to the Communist viewpoint, is the choice between progress or reaction, democracy or fascism. We Communists place ourselves unequivocally on the side of progress and democracy, against reaction and fascism. We see the entire population being stirred by this issue, beginning to realign itself accordingly. The old party system is meaningless; we are repeating today the experience of 80 years ago, when new problems and issues gave birth to a new system of political parties.

It is the desire of the Communists to contribute to this realignment, to find our own proper place in it, to help the mass of the population to find their proper place.

The two poles of this re-crystallization of our political life are, on the reactionary side, the forces gathered around Landon and Knox—Hearst, the Liberty League, the Jeffersonian Democrats, Wall Street, all the forces of organized wealth and monopoly; on the progressive side, all the mass organizations of the people, which are moving in the direction of a new party, a Farmer-Labor Party.

Roosevelt and the Democratic Party do not represent either of these sides in the basic realignment. Roosevelt tries to take the middle-of-the-road course, tries to satisfy both sides of an irreconcilable struggle, and therefore satisfies neither. In the Solid South, traditional base of the Democratic Party, the ruling class still votes Democratic but already prays Republican. In the border states, the wealthy best families march openly into the Landon camp bearing the banner of Jefferson. Senator Glass announces that his own election on the Democratic ticket will be a victory for the Republican Party. The Democratic Party is a house divided, two souls struggling for

possession of one body, a political Hamlet moving inexorably to its tragic end.

The camp of progress, of the people's mass organizations, of the Farmer-Labor Party, is still not fully formed, has not completely won its political independence, and is supporting the re-election of Roosevelt while refusing to endorse the Democratic Party. In a growing number of states, it is politically independent; in others it is on the verge of emerging as an independent force. We Communists support fully the building of this independent political force of the people, this Farmer-Labor Party movement, even while we disagree with its present reliance on Roosevelt. Especially do we agree with its determination to defeat Landon and Knox as the representatives of Wall Street, reaction, fascism and war.

Great efforts are being made to confuse the issues, and especially to bring forward Landon as a "progressive" and "man of the people." It is certainly true that Landon is no Mussolini or Hitler; he was chosen for that reason, to be the answer to the inevitable charge of fascism against such a collection of du Ponts, Hearsts, Liberty Leaguers as sponsor his candidacy. A perfect choice, from this point of view, the most negative and colorless candidacy ever seen in American politics in the memory of living men, a blank sheet for each voter to write in his own desires—at least the many former and contradictory writings have been covered with whitewash. Where the world expected to see a spearhead, it was presented with a figurehead.

That the Republican campaign should represent the extreme of unprincipledness flows from the essential character of reaction moving towards fascism. While raging against President Roosevelt's miserly social security program, the Republicans are effectively wooing the Townsend movement, sometimes using Lemke for the role of John Alden to its Miles Standish, sometimes courting directly, as in Colorado, where the Republican State Convention, with the participation of the Honorable John D. M. Hamilton, endorsed officially the Townsend Plan.

The Republican Party, directed by the fascist-minded men

of Wall Street, is ready to promise all things to all men, anything to get votes, anything to get power in their hands.

But the main strategy of the reactionary camp is the same as that of the fascists of Europe, to raise the Red scare, the bogey of socialism, of Marxism, the red flag, Moscow, "orders from Stalin," the menace of "Jewish Bolshevism." This is the song of Hitler, of Mussolini, of Hearst and the Liberty League, of the dominant forces supporting Landon. They say the choice is between capitalism and socialism, that they are the only exponents of capitalism, that all others, including Roosevelt and his administration, stand for socialism. They make the same accusations against Roosevelt that they made against President Azana of Spain to justify the present fascist uprising against the government only recently elected by an overwhelming majority. The open advocates of the overthrow of democratic republican government by force and violence are, in the first place, the Hearst newspapers supporting Landon. All this propaganda is based on lies. In fact, Roosevelt stands for capitalism, not socialism; the Communists advocate socialism but say this is not the issue in 1936, but rather the issue is democracy or fascism. The Communists are not supporting Roosevelt, but put forward their own candidates. The Communist Party of the United States makes its own decisions and does not receive orders from Moscow.

The nonsense of Jewish dominance in the New Deal, or in the Communist movement, is, of course, pap for morons; the Jews, like every racial or national group, are divided among different classes and political groupings in the usual proportions.

It is unfortunate that the Socialist Party has seen fit to carry on a campaign which, conceived in the rare atmosphere of pure abstraction, fits exactly into the practical schemes of the Landon camp when it is brought to earth. Accurate judgment of this fact was expressed by Mark Sullivan, Republican columnist, when he warmly recommended all Republican writers to "follow" my friend Norman Thomas' writings as very useful in their task of drumming up votes for Landon. How this course is wrecking the Socialist Party is shown in the straw

votes indicating a majority of the Socialist voters of 1932 now voting for Landon or Roosevelt.

The Communist Party is campaigning, first of all, with the aim to help bring all progressive people and their organizations into a People's Front against Wall Street, against reaction, fascism and war, in a new political alignment—the Farmer-Labor Party. Despite the fact that the progressives in their great majority have decided to rely upon Roosevelt nationally this year—a decision which we think was a mistake—yet inevitably they are moving in the direction of a Farmer-Labor Party on a local, state and national scale. We Communists are supporting, we are a part of, this Farmer-Labor Party movement, reserving our independent role in the Presidential elections. Our election platform proposes, not socialism—which can only come through revolution—but a progressive platform of aims to be fought for under the present capitalist system by such a Farmer-Labor Party with our support and participation, expressing the general slogan of “Democracy or fascism, progress or reaction.”

A brief summary of the eight planks of the Communist platform will illustrate this. Plank one is the demand for jobs and a living wage for all. When private enterprise fails in providing this, then the government must step in to fill the breach. Plank two provides for social security through unemployment insurance and old-age pensions from 60 years up, at rates equal to former earnings but not less than \$15 per week. Plank three demands educational opportunities, vocational training, and part-time work for the youth from 16 to 25, guaranteed by the government. Plank four establishes the obligation of the government to guarantee the farmers in possession of the land, with an adequate income, through moratorium on debts which threaten dispossession, governmental refinancing of mortgages at nominal interest, provision of land for the landless tenants and sharecroppers, and prompt and adequate relief for the drought-stricken. Plank five, dealing with public finance, condemns inflation and all methods of financing at the expense of the suffering millions, such as sales

taxes, and demands that public finance shall be raised from the accumulated wealth and surplus income of the country, through a sharply-graduated income tax beginning at \$5,000 per year, repeal of tax-exemption now effective on \$35,000,-000,000 of government securities, and taxation of corporate surpluses, gifts and inheritances; with tax exemption to be granted to operating farmers, small home owners and small property-owners generally. Plank six demands the protection of civil liberties, and extension of popular control of government; supporting a Constitutional amendment to finally curb all attempts of the Supreme Court to usurp legislative powers, it demands the immediate re-assertion by Congress of its Constitutional prerogatives in relation to the judiciary. Plan seven proposes the strict enforcement of the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments to the Constitution, providing complete equality for the Negro people; in this respect the Communists are the only party in America standing squarely on the basis of the Constitution. Plank eight, dealing with war and peace, demands that we keep America out of war by helping keep war out of the world; it calls for an American peace policy, based on prohibition of sale or delivery of goods, or granting of loans, to nations conducting a foreign war contrary to the Kellogg Peace Pact; on the basis of which America can cooperate with the peace forces of the world to restrain the war-makers, and eliminate the enormous expenditures for war preparations, diverting these funds to social expenditures.

Because we are advocates of a future socialist system, which as yet is supported only by a small minority of the population, we Communists declare that it is the duty of adherents of socialism to join hands with all progressives not ready for socialism, on the basis of such a platform of democratic and progressive measures, which will guarantee our country from the horrors of fascism and war, and make the future social transformation less difficult and painful.

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