

# SOCIALIST APPEAL

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## THE CLEVELAND CONVENTION

THERE can be no doubt about what was the outstanding achievement of the Cleveland Convention. From any point of view with which we approach the problems of the Socialist Party, it was, of course, the final and irrevocable break with the New York Old Guard. This was apparent even on the surface: more of the time of the Convention was spent on the mechanics of the split than on any other subject, indeed almost more than on every other subject. Our judgment of the Convention must, therefore, be based first of all on our judgment of the character and meaning of this split.

A Convention, however, is not an isolated or "special" event, standing apart from the day-to-day course of Party life. It is, rather, a culminating point of previous developments, and reflects these developments in its own nature, both their weakness and their strength. Thus the Cleveland Convention marked the climax of the two year struggle which has gone on since the Detroit Convention of 1934, the climax of the actual struggle which has gone on, not of the possibly more correct struggle which we might have wished or the more reactionary struggle which we might have feared.

This struggle has been expressed above all as a fight for organizational power between the Right Wing under the leadership of the New York Old Guard, on the one hand, and the general left wing under the leadership of the New York Militants, on the other. This organizational fight, in the form it has taken during these two years, was concluded at Cleveland by the organizational victory of the Militants, and the split of the Old Guard.

### Progressive Character of Split

Of the fact that this victory and this split are thoroughly progressive in character, again there can be no doubt. In themselves, apart from any other factor, they constitute a long step to the left. The matter can be put very simply: The Socialist Party with Waldman and Oneal out of it is by that very fact to the left of the Socialist Party with Waldman and Oneal in it. Contrary to the expectations of many, the Right Wing from outside New York did not leave the Convention with Waldman. That will no doubt come in due course. But in any case, the New York group was the head and the intelligence of the Right Wing. And with New York gone, the Right Wing is less than half a man. The Socialist Party has shaken from its back the incubus which was sucking its vigorous blood. The heaviest parasite, dragging the party back at every progressive step, has been removed. And, consequently, revolutionary socialists in the party can now breathe and move more freely. The balance of forces in the party has altered sharply in favor of the left.

The progressive implications of the split with the Old Guard were immediately evident at the Convention. At once the party began to face—even if in a confused and ambiguous manner—certain of the results of its step. The KIND of party was seen, almost automatically, to be different. The Labor resolution called for the coordination of the work of Socialists in the trade unions—an approach to revolutionary fractions in the unions, anathema to the theory and practice of the Old Guard. Tentative moves toward increased discipline and against "States' Rights" were present in the resolution on organization. And the Convention adopted a war resolution which is the most theoretically advanced statement ever accepted by the party.

### Political Nature of the Struggle

It must, however, be understood that the organizational struggle and the organizational conclusion, as is always the case—no matter how predominant they may have appeared during the past two years and at the Convention—in the last analysis only mirror a deeper political struggle. In the long run it is the political struggle—the battle over political ideas and principles—which is decisive. This political struggle has been that between classic Social-Democratic reformism, the Social-Democratic reformism of the 1914 betrayal to the War, of the executioners of the German revolution, of the capitulators to Hitler, represented intransigently by the New York Old Guard; between this and, lined up against it, a broad, amorphous leftward sentiment, united negatively in opposition to the Old Guard and in dissatisfaction of varying degrees of clarity with classic reformism, functioning under the leadership of the New York Militants. The anti-Old Guard forces have comprised an extraordinary diversity of tendencies, ranging from revolutionary Marxist to non-political activists who were convinced only that the Old Guard was a "do-nothing" outfit. These tendencies have held together simply because of the united opposition to Waldman-Oneal. But, taken as a whole, in spite of their formlessness, the anti-Old Guard forces were progressive: they represented a determination to learn from history, from the defeats in Germany, Spain and Austria, and to prepare for the crises ahead; they have been forces in movement, and the movement, however zigzag, has been away from reformism in the direction of a revolutionary position.

In between these two conflicting currents have stood the "practical politicians," Hoan and Hoopes and the majority of the Pennsylvania and Wisconsin organizations. These, little if any distinguished from the Old

Guard in political conviction, have been concerned primarily with securing an outcome which would be of most value to them in their local business.

The Militant leadership has then necessarily been faced with a double struggle—organizational and political. But it has given these two aspects a false relative evaluation, consistently placing the organizational ahead of the political, subordinating the latter to the former, and conducting the fight in that perspective. The organizational fight has been in many respects vigorous and skillful. In spite of the fact that the Old Guard is led by trained and experienced politicians, the Militant leadership outmaneuvered them. This has come to a head in recent months with the smashing victory in the New York Primaries and in the Convention itself. But the deficiency in the political struggle, apparent throughout the two years, was clear also at the Convention. The organizational victory over the Old Guard at Cleveland was not at the same time a decisive political victory over "Old Guardism." The organizational steps should properly have come as the culmination of the successful ideological and political conquest of Old Guard reformism. As things stand, however, the ideological and political conquest is for the most part yet to come.

A brief analysis of certain features of the Convention will make the distortion apparent.

### Victory Through Alliance

The organizational victory at Cleveland was won by an alliance of the Militants with Hoan and Hoopes. These latter, true to their long-time role, attempted organizational compromises even at the last moment, on the seating of the New York delegation—proposing first a 22-22 Militant-Old Guard seating, and then a 32-12. Entirely properly, both major contestants rejected the compromise. Wisconsin and Pennsylvania then, having given their all for conciliation, went along with the Militants in the final vote.

It is not necessary here to argue whether or not this organizational bloc was justified. Certainly the determination of the Militants to find a way to retain control of the national party machinery, and not to let it slip into the hands of the Old Guard, is understandable, and makes permissible a good deal of organizational maneuvering. Granted the character of the struggle during the past two years, this could have been accomplished only by the bloc which was constituted at the Convention. But this of course is what demonstrates the weakness of that struggle: it should not have been necessary to resort to such a bloc.

But, in any case, whether or not the bloc was justified or at least inevitable in the light of the previous struggle, what remains unquestionable is the fact that THE PRICE PAID BY THE MILITANTS FOR THE BLOC WAS TOO HIGH. This price was the watering down of political principles.

Some price must always be paid for a bloc, and this need not at all be incorrect. For example—again assuming the permissibility of the organizational bloc at Cleveland—the Militants were justified in making important organizational concessions in return for it (e.g., places on the N.E.C.), which they did do. Or, under these given and many other circumstances, it would be permissible to AVOID certain issues, not to bring forward EVERY political question at the given moment. This also was done by the Militants, in, for example, keeping the Bound Brook program out of the Convention. (There was an additional reason for this latter restraint in the fact that the Socialist Party membership in its present state of development is not yet prepared for the formal consideration of a rounded program.) Even such a maneuver as avoiding the issue on the United Front Re-

solution—though the circumstances were embarrassing, with Hooper and Hoan so obviously wielding the whip—by sending it to a Party referendum to be held later, is not necessarily to be condemned. All questions do not have to be settled at once.

It is not for the organizational concessions or for the venial sins of omission that the Militant leadership must be criticized. It is, rather, for the sins of commission: above all, on the question of the Platform.

### Concession on Platform

The importance of the Platform should by no means be underestimated. It is the public document around which the party conducts its election campaign, which sets the tone of party propaganda, and by which, in considerable measure, the party is publicly known for five most influential months.

The Platform first reported out to the Convention by the Militant-controlled Platform Committee was an out-and-out-reformist document in every line, to which the Old Guard would have objected only where Social-Democratic reformism was confused by typically American Populist phraseology. The revised Platform, adopted by the Convention, differed in no fundamental respect. It is merely made more confusing by certain revisions, deletions and additions which mingle occasional revolutionary sentences with Technocracy and New Dealism. The entire Right Wing found it easily possible to vote for this Platform.

This, then, was the culminating item in the price which the Militants paid for the organizational alliance with Hoan and Hoopes. In effect, they allowed Hoan and Hoopes to dictate the Platform. They sacrificed, in other words, political principle to maintain the tolerance of Wisconsin and Pennsylvania.

But such a price was, and is always, too high to pay. Political principles are not counters to bargain with. The attempt to do so means always the disorientation of the membership, a set-back to that clarification without which revolutionary politics are unthinkable; and, in the long run, does not solve even the organizational problems, since it bases organizational solutions upon an unstable and insecure foundation.

It is of the utmost significance that a considerable number of the rank-and-file delegates (especially from Arkansas, Minnesota, Illinois, Indiana, and California) sensed this distinction between what is and what is not permissible in organizational maneuvers. They raised no objection to the organizational concessions, nor to the avoidance of certain issues. But when the Platform was presented, they staged a near revolt that caused it to be hurriedly referred back to the Committee. Nevertheless, the Militant leadership did not learn from this healthy manifestation of revolutionary sentiment, and reported back the revised Platform in still reformist form. The objecting left-wingers then proceeded to move as amendments to the key sections of this Platform the corresponding sections of the Marxist Platform published in the last issue of *The Appeal*—the paragraph on the road to power receiving more than fifty votes. New York, however, stayed with the bloc, and joined with Hoan, Hoopes and the Right Wing to carry the Platform virtually as it stood in its revised form.

Substantially the same comment could be made on the equivocal re-formulations of certain parts of the Detroit Declaration. Fortunately, the issue did not arise on the War Resolution, and the Convention adopted a statement which, though it is not without certain faults and omissions, is a mighty step forward on this, the most decisive of all questions facing the working class. Indeed, the War Resolution serves to mark off the Socialist Party of the United States from all sections of the Third International as well as from every other affiliate of the Second

International. The exigencies of the Convention prevented its discussion at Cleveland, but there is no doubt that its clarification and amplification in the months to come can provide the basis for an uncompromising attack on all forms of social-patriotism and preparations for betrayal to the coming war.

### Lessons of Convention

The deficiencies of the Cleveland Convention are not at all fatal or beyond repair. Past experiences exist, for revolutionists, not as monuments to be worshipped or as losses to despair over, but for the sake of the lessons which they teach to aid in meeting the issues of the present and the future. Mistakes are deadly only when we are unwilling to correct them. And Cleveland is rich in lessons: That principles are not to be bargained with; that organizational questions must be subordinated to political and ideological questions. If the unprecedented possibilities now opened out to the party—by the now apparent bankruptcy of the New Deal, by the decay of

capitalism as a whole, by the degeneration of the Communist party, by the removal of the Old Guard, by the positive achievements of the Convention itself—if these possibilities are to be realized, the left wing must now make it its primary business to conduct an unremitting campaign of education and clarification on all the basic issues of revolutionary socialism. The party membership must be won to an understanding of and allegiance to the principles of revolutionary socialism. If the Socialist party is to advance, if it is to become in fact the leader of the American working class in the struggle for power and for socialism, this is the only path.

And this primary task of education and clarification does not at all conflict with the equally essential tasks of the building of the party and the conduct of an election campaign which will make socialist history. Rather are these bound up integrally together, if we understand what it means to build a revolutionary socialist party and to conduct a genuinely socialist campaign.

## FRANCE'S COALITION GOVERNMENT

THE Socialist party of France, "supported unconditionally" by the Communist party, has joined with the largest of the capitalist parties, the Radicals (all French bourgeois parties use resoundingly radical names as a heritage from the revolutions of 1789 and 1848; arch-reactionaries call themselves "Left Republicans") to form a coalition government. Whether Socialists should participate in coalition governments is an old question of principle, on which revolutionary Socialists have always differed fundamentally from reformists. This question was first fought out in France when the then-socialist, Millerand, entered the cabinet; as if to provide a perfect symbol of what such coalitions signified, Millerand's cabinet also included General Gallifet, who massacred the Communards. The international socialist congress of 1901, to which the revolutionary socialists appealed to take a stand against Millerand, adopted a compromise resolution drafted by Kautsky, which "in principle" disapproved of coalitions but refrained from instructing Millerand to resign. This ambiguous position was one of the first signs of the spirit of opportunism which was to lead the main body of European socialists to disaster in 1914.

Coalition governments showed their reactionary character in the critical post-war years, when Socialist participation in such governments in Germany, Austria and Belgium enabled the capitalist class to weather the crisis. In France, at every critical juncture, the Radical party has been able to secure a parliamentary bloc with the Socialists and, once the Socialists were no longer needed, to break with them and unite with the rightists.

The "Popular Front" government in Spain, established in February with the support of the Socialist and Communist parties, has failed to carry out any of its demagogic promises to the masses. Instead, it has used its Civil Guard to shoot down striking peasants and workers; has declared local general strikes illegal and in many cases has closed down workers' headquarters.

### Coalition Ties Blum's Hands

Is there any difference between other coalitions and that now headed by Leon Blum? None at all. That Socialists take the lead in the present government does not change its essential features as a coalition; for as Blum was at pains to point out on assuming office, his program is not a Socialist one but that of the Popular Front coalition. In other words, the Blum policy, like that of all

coalition governments, is limited to what is acceptable to the capitalist politicians participating in it: **a program for the preservation of capitalism.** On the heels of the elections Blum issued a series of statements declaring that the task of his government was to revive French economy; that he had no intention of destroying that capital which is the result of industry and economy (how Marx would have frothed at that!); tried to get Herriot and all the old-line Radicals into the government; and enabled the stock market to rally by his assurances that he would persevere government credit (i. e., make no "rash" expenditures on social services).

So Blum's policy is to revive French capitalist economy. But the results of the election signified something entirely different. The enormous Socialist-Communist vote in the elections signified that the workingclass and the lower middle class, driven leftward by the sickness of French capitalism, voted for those parties which ostensibly stand for a new order. The parties which have traditionally ruled "normal" French capitalist democracy, the Radicals and the smaller parties of the Center, lost heavily to the Left. And, equally significant, they also lost considerably to the reactionary parties of the Right. It is crystal-clear what this means: both sides of the barricades are convinced that France cannot go on in the traditional path of capitalist democracy. The reactionaries, who polled a vote only one million less than that of the Popular Front, are ready to throw their support to the armed Fascist legions of de la Rocque: **they know that the French political crisis will be settled in the streets and not in the Chamber of Deputies.**

But the Blums and the even-more hypocritical Cachins and Thorezes—who are prepared to sacrifice the French workingclass for the sake of the unstable Franco-Soviet pact—do not dream of calling the workers into the streets in an offensive against the Fascists and their capitalist masters. The sole program of the Socialist-Communist bureaucracy, against the Fascist menace resulting from the sickness of French capitalism, is to "revive French economy"—that is, to make well again the sick capitalism whose sickness made possible the Socialist-Communist vote—and thus retain the "normal" capitalist democracy.

### Decaying French Economy

Will Blum have better success in reviving French economy than the German Social-Democrats had when

during the Bruening regime in explaining Socialist toleration of the government, they proposed the same remedy? We know where that policy led the German workers! The sketchiest itemization of the factors of French economy will show that Blum cannot solve the French crisis.

During 1918-1933 France was largely relieved of German pressure in foreign markets by the shackles placed on Germany by the "peace" treaties, and in addition received reparations. Despite these advantages, France was drawn into the vortex of the world crisis and suffered as severely as other leading nations. Add to this the decisive changes since 1933: no reparations funds; enormous increase in military expenditures in response to Germany's re-arming; further loss of foreign markets as Germany embarks on a systematic dumping campaign. Add to all this the basic weakness of French economy, which is decidedly inferior to that of Germany in the key industries, and which counts among its chief industries the unstable tourist and luxury trades (how fervently the American press statements of the French Government Tourist Office sought to assure that the strikes were causing only slight inconvenience and would soon be over!). Equally desirous as Blum to revive French economy, industry has been cutting wages during the last three years in efforts to reach a level at which wheels could again turn at a profit; one has no doubt that the shrewd French entrepreneurs knew what dangerous political consequences might flow from this wage-cutting drive, but nobody has yet invented a better way under capitalism of selling goods at a profit than the way of cutting costs of production (the most flexible item being labor costs) until you can sell the goods more cheaply than anyone else and still make a profit. All this did not revive French economy. Now has come the great wave of strikes, ruining plans for cheaply-produced goods for the French export trade. Moreover, if Blum is to be retain any considerable mass support, he must make some gestures to alleviate unemployment: public works, more unemployment relief, etc., which means budgetary increases, which means further burden on industry, which means further costs of production, which means further difficulties for French exports. No Marxist will seriously argue that under peace conditions, Blum can revive French economy.

### Decisive Struggle Nearing

And as the crisis continues and deepens, the French capitalists will grow more and more desperate. Already, it is a known fact, the Fascist leagues receive support from important sections of French capital; this means that the decisive struggle between the workingclass and the fascists is about to take place. The recent strike victories of the French proletariat cannot in the present stage of decline of French capitalism, lead to lasting gains in wages and living conditions; but undoubtedly they will have the effect of exacerbating the desperation of French reaction and drive it forward to an onslaught on the workingclass. The French employers feels it absolutely imperative for the future of French economy to cut the wage bill and cost of social services; to do this requires smashing the trade unions, which is a task requiring Fascist armed bands. Moreover, all the chauvinistic declarations of the Socialist and Communist parties for protecting France from "foreign aggression" do not reassure the French capitalist of the ability of the official labor leaders to keep the workers in line during the coming war; the strike wave has shown him that the labor bureaucrats cannot be dependend on to curb the masses. Before the war, French capital will seek a little blood-letting to curb the masses. At the least, there

will be a period of armed terrorism to teach the workers who is master in the house of France.

How can reaction be defeated in France? Not, it must be emphasized over and over again, by mere electoral victories. It does not matter how many so-called anti-fascist or Socialist deputies sit in the Chamber. For the struggle will not take place in the Chamber. The struggle will take place in the factories and in the streets, and the weapons will be not ballots but knives and guns, airplanes and cannon. The Fascists will not pause to count heads but to break them.

Who will defend the French workers against the armed Fascists? The army and police? But the leading ranks of these armed forces are tied with a thousand ties to the capitalist masters of the Fascists, united with them by every bond of blood and marriage, common thought and interest! Blum will perhaps learn on his own body the Marxian dictum that the state is in essence nothing but armed bodies of men controlled by the capitalist owners of the means of production. Perhaps, as in Germany, the leading circles of the Socialist and Communist parties have their passports and funds, ready to flee? But the millions of workers cannot fly; they will have to remain at the mercy of the Fascists.

### Necessary Policies for Workers

The only defense against Fascism is the arming of the workers. No one can save the workers except themselves. Needless to say, the workers' militia will not receive its arms from the Socialist cabinet ministers, if for no other reason than that the capitalist ministers will object, and the Socialist ministers will pay any price for unity. A more fundamental reason is that the Blums simply cannot conceive of doing anything outside the bounds of legality set by the capitalist state. "This agitation is inadmissible. The People's Front must not be in a state of anarchy. "The People's Front stands for order." Thus spoke Roger Salengro, Socialist Minister of the Interior, about the strike struggles. Only in spite of and against the dictates of such an official leadership will the workers of France be armed against Fascism and take the offensive against reaction.

Simultaneously with the arming of the workers—who in many cases will get their first arms by wresting them from the Fascists in street struggles—must go WORKERS' CONTROL OF PRODUCTION. So long as the French capitalist remains master of his factory, he will remain master of France and with him his Fascist leagues. Democratically-elected committees of workers in every establishment can check the employer's assertions of his inability to pay higher wages by examining his books; can thus prevent subventions to the Fascist leagues and attempts to smuggle capital out of the country; can prevent closing of factories as a reprisal against the workers. Workers' control of production, this absolutely indispensable instrument for the struggle against Fascism, will scarcely be introduced with the aid of the Blums; that worthy, questioned, sadly admitted that sit-down occupation of the factories was most illegal, and only defended it as being better than fighting in the streets! The leadership of the Socialist-Communist parties, with their innumerable appeals to the strikers for calm and order and quick settlements, who sought to send the workers back on the basis of agreements negotiated on terms not agreed to by the strikers and which did not bind individual employers—three days after the attempted settlement the employers' spokesman at Geneva called the settlement "a redoubtable experiment" of the government, for which the employers could not take responsibility—these labor leaders will undoubtedly fight

tooth and nail against the introduction of workers' control of production. \*

### Hope in Revolutionary Marxists

Fortunately, there are firm proletarian forces in France, small though they still are, who readily take the road for an irreconcilable struggle against Fascism. They have already shown their mettle in the strike. "The Labor Federation officials are doing their utmost to help the government regain control of the situation, but their efforts seem always to be defeated by committees of the strikers that refuse to accept the contracts and get their fellow-workers to side with them," wrote the N. Y. Times on June 12, and two days later the same source stated that "continuation of the stay-in strike after a general settlement had been reached between the employers and the official delegates of the Labor Federation, with the government acting as arbitrator, has shown the strikers more under the influence of unofficial and subterranean agents than under the authority of their official leaders of the government." The government issued communiques referring to "foreign agitators"—a nice expression for Socialist leaders to describe the foreign-

born radicals in the Paris district! "Government spokesmen emphasized the 'foreign' aspect of strike agitation and mentioned followers of Leon Trotsky among the agitators," said a United Press dispatch of June 13.

The identity of the "subterranean" agents was given in a June 12 dispatch of the official French agency, Havas. They consisted of the Revolutionary Socialist Youth of Paris (J. S. R.), the Bolshevik-Leninists (Trotskyists), and the elements who joined them from the lower ranks of the Communist and Socialist parties.

It is in the spirit of irreconcilable struggle against capitalism as manifested by the revolutionary Marxists, and not in the light-minded conciliationism of Blum, and the Communists that the hope of France now lies.

B. M. F.

\* "Police seized the 'Labor Right,' newspaper of the French branch of Leon Trotsky's fourth Internationale. The paper declared it was trying 'to prepare workers committees to take power in factories and the streets' with the aim 'to install the Soviets in France.'"—United Press, June 15th. Leon Blum does not hesitate to use police against workers' organs!

## Farmer-Laborites Will Continue to Explore

THE attempt to harness the working class to a petty-bourgeois party in the same manner as has been successfully accomplished in Minnesota did not get very far at the Farmer-Labor party conference held in Chicago May 30-31. Approximately eighty "carefully selected" and "truly representative" individuals (these are the expressions used in the conference call) met for two days and the sum and substance of their decision was to continue exploring. The conference called to achieve "the unification of labor, farmer and progressive groups for the building of a national Farmer-Labor Party this year" simply went on record of "FAVORING" the formation of such a party without mentioning the year.

There were many indications that the representatives were not so "carefully selected." Outside of the representatives from the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Association there were exceedingly few people who could be said to represent anything. The Stalinists had a goodly number at the conference and since they are the most consistent advocates of a Farmer-Labor party they played quite a role. No person of any importance in the labor movement attended the conference and because of that the feeling prevailed that the gathering was a fiasco. When it is said that no person of importance attended the conference it is necessary to mention that Earl Browder was there with all his crown princes.

As usual quite a number of nuts and crack-pots insisted upon presenting their formulas for the salvation of the American people.

### Under the Shadow of Roosevelt

A playful destiny decreed that the conference be held in the Roosevelt Room of the Morrison Hotel. During the whole conference not a word was uttered which could in any way be interpreted as a hostile gesture to the chief New Dealer. Governor Olson's message (he himself was too ill to attend) assured the gathering that if it were not for Roosevelt the Democratic party would be as reactionary as the Republican party. Olson called upon "liberals of all shades of opinion to unite under the banner and program of a national Farmer-Labor party." And Olson did not exclude the Communists. It is not at all a far-fetched inference to say that in so far as the conference decided to support Congressional candidates on a Farmer-Labor party ticket, it was for the purpose

of furnishing Roosevelt greater support than he is getting from the members of his own party.

### Communists Retreat

For a short while it looked as if the C.P. would run away with the conference and capture itself. The big shots who were invited refused to attend partly because the Stalinists were also invited. This is really cruel and undeserving punishment. The labor leaders and politicians are afraid that the Communists are not sincere whereas unfortunately they are now in deadly earnest and will support any one who comes out for any kind of a third party. At any rate the non-Communist elements were of exceedingly mediocre stature and the committees were packed with Stalinists.

On the main committee Maurice Sugar of Detroit played the leading role. The fact that Sugar does not actually belong to the C.P. is of no importance. His report was obviously fathered by the "beloved leader" of the Stalinists. It declared for the formation of a national Farmer-Labor party in 1936 to engage in Congressional and local campaigns. It also provided for the calling of a national convention not later than Sept. 5th by a committee to be designated by the conference.

For a while it looked as if the C.P. proposal would be adopted. The responsible people at the conference, that is the Minnesota delegates, were hostile but could not formulate anything definite in opposition. Fortunately for them J. B. S. Hardman, editor of the official organ of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, put up stiff resistance and after a short adjournment brought in the recommendation which in essence left the conference where it started from. After going on record favoring the formation of a national Farmer-Labor party the conference requested the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Association to continue its efforts to launch a national party and in these efforts to consult an advisory committee designated by the conference.

On behalf of the Communists Browder accepted this innocuous proposal. His fear of alienating his party from the "masses," that is from Olson and the labor leaders, will drive him and his party to accept anything favored by the leading conservative proponents of a Farmer-Labor party.

This was shown not only through the submission of the Stalinists to the organizational proposals of the



Farmer-Laborites but also by the fact that the Communists accepted the conference platform without a syllable of protest. The platform is of course the very incarnation of reformism, and has nothing to do with socialism, not even with the mildest type of socialism. That is to be expected but it is also to be expected that a revolutionary party participating in such a conference would have a platform of its own and accept the conference platform only because it is outvoted. The real answer to that contention, however, is that no revolutionary party would participate in such a conference.

Not a murmur could be heard coming from the Stalinists in protest against that section of the platform which advocated "insuring the neutrality of the United States in any foreign war by prohibiting the sale and delivery of goods or the making of loans to nations engaged in any foreign war." This section necessarily would apply to a war where the Soviet Union would be involved. But a little more confusion is really of no moment. Anything and everything is justified in order not to arouse the antagonism of backward Farmer-Laborites.

"We do not propose to give it (the Farmer-Labor party) a program of revolution, now or later." And again: "we do not want to push its program to the left." So Browder assured the conference in what the Daily Worker calls a "brilliantly presented speech." A dangerous statement whichever way one considers it. If either NOW OR AT ANY TIME LATER "we" do not propose to give the Farmer-Labor party a program of revolution then it means either that "we" shall throw such a party overboard at the proper time in the future or "we" are not interested in the revolution. It can be taken for granted that the Stalinists do not intend to create a Farmer-Labor party for the purpose of knifing it in the back at some future time.

#### Socialists at the Conference

Highly instructive would it have been for those left wing Socialists who conceive it to be the duty of Socialists to initiate the formation of a Farmer-Labor party, had they been present at the conference and realized the ridiculousness of the position of the Socialists attending the conference. The party members at the conference were invited not because they were party members but because they were supposedly playing an important role in some mass organization. Their attitude was that they were actually representing the sentiments of the mem-

bers of the organization in which they were active. They could not logically therefore step beyond the wishes of their membership. This became clear when the suggestion was made that the party members bring in a resolution to have the conference go on record in favor of supporting Thomas for president. Everyone of the S.P. members refused to do that because their organizations did not send them to the conference for that purpose.

The very logic of the situation demanded that the Socialists conceal their socialism. And they did. When one assumes the task of representing backward or reformist elements for the purpose of building a reformist party then one is under the compelling necessity to forget about his socialism. Lesson number one should be that it is impermissible for a revolutionary Socialist to play a leading role in the organization of a reformist party. Revolutionary Socialists can play a leading role in a revolutionary Socialist party and they must be satisfied to see reformists lead a reformist party.

This does not mean that the Socialist party as such should not participate in any conference where national trade unions or even local trade unions are contemplating the organization of a Labor party. Under such circumstances the party as such acts as a unit and advances its own program and platform. Any other tactic places a revolutionary Socialist in an entirely inconsistent position. Unless the organization which a revolutionary Socialist represents authorizes him to advance the ideas of revolutionary Socialism he should not accept as a delegate to any kind of a Labor party conference.

The above is not said in criticism of the actions of the Socialist delegates who attended the Farmer-Labor party conference. They were not acting as Socialists in that conference; they were not sent there to act as such. Consequently they should not have attended the conference.

\* \* \*

No one is in a position to predict whether or not a Labor party will be organized in the immediate future. At any rate if and when a real Labor party will be organized, which the Socialist party will have to take seriously, it will not be by way of a conference which Minnesota Farmer-Laborites, Stalinists liberals and a variety of nuts will convoke. Meanwhile, the task of Socialists is and remains the determined building of a revolutionary Socialist party.

ALBERT GOLDMAN

## SOCIALISTS AND THE C.I.O.

SINCE the creation of the Committee for Industrial Organization, less than a year ago, the conflict in the A. F. of L. has developed with increasing swiftness. It has now assumed the character of an open, direct struggle that extends to every nook and corner of the movement. No other course seems possible than that of an open split, eventually leading to the formation of two rival federations.

During the fifty-five years of its history the A. F. of L. never before faced such a serious crisis. Even perspectives of a few years ago are completely altered. It is important therefore to understand these recent developments, to understand the issues that are involved, as well as to understand the role of the leading officials in both camps and their position in relation to the movement.

Formally the present cleavage began within the family of higher officials. By way of personality either side is primarily identified by the two main spokesmen: Wm. Green for the Executive Council and John L. Lewis for the C.I.O. In those higher circles the conflict still rages the most intensely. This is natural when we bear in mind the fact that the leadership, whether reactionary

or progressive, is the most articulate section of the movement. Besides, it is within the leading circles that questions of attitude and of policy to the various problems as they arise first knock at the door and demand a decision. And, while the leadership in the trade unions most often acts as a brake and moves forward slowly and under pressure only after the requirements of the movement and the moods of the masses have left them far behind, on the whole, this leadership reflects the development of the organization at each given stage. One should therefore not expect that the present cleavage represents a definite division along the lines of basic class ideology or social and political outlook: a division, of right and left. Actually this is not the case.

#### Both Leaderships Favor Capitalism

Both sections in this leadership unquestionably take the institutions that depend upon capitalist society for their existence for given once and for all. Both sections visualize the aims of the movement to be strictly confined within the framework of capitalism. Both sections champion the trade union rights of collective bargaining—

but on their once accepted class collaboration basis. At least so far there is no evidence to the contrary, except that the group led by Lewis is much more resolute. The outlook of this group is certainly also much more in accord with the practical requirements of the trade unions under progressively developing industrial technique. The differences between these two sections of officials therefore arise essentially out of these practical considerations. This is the starting point; yet it is fundamental for the future development of the movement.

For Wm. Green and his fellow craft union chiefs it is sufficient to say that they live still exclusively in the Gompers' tradition. Judging by their proclamations they are apparently intent upon the extension of the trade unions to embrace all workers. But their basic attitude on organization sets the narrow craft jurisdiction and craft privileges irreconcilably against any class aims. Under modern capitalist conditions this becomes a distinct barrier in the way of elementary questions of organizational advance. Needless to say that it facilitates the maintenance of backward prejudices and fortifies the reactionary position of the officialdom.

The leaders grouped around John L. Lewis are today far more responsive to the practical needs of the movement. They see as a vital prerequisite for its expansion the change from a craft form of organization to the industrial form and a shift of the center of gravity in the direction of the large monopoly, mass production industries. No doubt they see much clearer than does Green and Co. that in order actually to enforce the rights of collective bargaining it is necessary to have a powerful labor movement. Hence they have adopted the popular and effective slogans of Industrial Unionism and Organize the Mass Production Industries.

#### **Struggle Between New Forces and Old**

In its essence this conflict in the A. F. of L. revolves around new and progressive ideas versus antiquated and reactionary ideas concerning the practical problems of the unions. Translated into the terms of the living dynamics of the movement, it becomes a struggle between the new forces and the old. And this is what we witness today as these forces line-up and gird their loins for a battle that has in its initial stage already shaken the A. F. of L. to its very foundation.

Green and Co. are in command of the official A. F. of L. apparatus. They are in control of the Executive Council and most of the subordinate central bodies. All the most distinctly craft union chiefs, and for that matter, also the most distinctly reactionary bureaucrats, big and small, form one combination. The C.I.O., on the other hand, can no longer be identified exclusively by the officials of the ten affiliated unions. It is taking on the forms of a progressive movement.

In this movement are the new recruits to trade unionism from the big plants. Insofar as they are concerned, union organization has become, under modern capitalist conditions, if anything, even more essential. At the same time the union, from its inception, becomes more definitely identified with the protection of the broad class interests rather than the protection of the narrow interests of craft privileges. This fact alone will necessarily mean that the struggle for the establishment of a union and for its continued existence and function tends to become a much more uncompromising one. Class solidarity becomes more keen. When this is compared with the position of the exclusive craft unions it is understandable that a real differentiation takes place. However, it would be wrong to base the division between the two forces that are in conflict in the living movement purely and arbitrarily on these simple grounds of forms of organization.

#### **Craft Unions Shaken**

It is true that the Green bureaucracy is rooted primarily in, and draws its main support from, the old and

distinctly craft unions. But this does not necessarily mean that it can count upon all the members of the craft unions to remain its supporters in a reactionary struggle against the very justified aims of the C.I.O. A good many of these members are employed in the mass production industries. It is only natural that these members should tend to make common cause with the organization of new unions in these industries and thus weaken the position of the craft union chiefs in their conflict with the C.I.O. At the same time the more militant and more uncompromising character of the struggle for the establishment and for the function of the unions in this field will inevitably have its deep repercussion even in the older craft union ranks. Inexorably it will tend to push the whole trade union movement in a leftward direction and give greater momentum to the activities of the progressive forces. The prospects cannot very well be anything but an intensified struggle against capitalism as a whole.

This is essentially what the Green bureaucracy fears. As for Lewis and his fellow officials, it is probably true that they foresee the radicalizing influence growing out of this intensified struggle, but that they nevertheless expect to remain in control of the movement. Be that as it may, no doubt need remain that grandiose perspectives are opening up for the revolutionary socialists.

#### **Craft Union Bureaucrats Outmaneuvered**

The conflict in the A.F. of L. is bound to come to a head very rapidly. So far the strategy pursued by the C.I.O. has served to outmanoeuvre the craft union chiefs at every step. Not only have the slogans of industrial unionism and organization of the mass production industries penetrated deeply into the A.F. of L. and set powerful dynamic forces into motion, but the C.I.O. has gained steadily in direct adherence. Its latest effective stroke was to gain the adherence of the steel workers union for a campaign to organize the 500,000 steel workers under its leadership. Retaliation of a frantic character is planned. It is now openly intimated that the next A. F. of L. Executive Council meeting, to be held July 8, will witness a move to suspend the ten international unions affiliated with the C.I.O. This, as is indicated by intimations given, is to be a preliminary to an open split. However, to speculate at this time on what form this will take or to speculate on the exact date would be futile. What is decisive for our estimate is the fact that the split move comes from Green and Co. and that the struggle of the C.I.O. is in its essence a progressive one. The ensuing conflict is intensifying, the issues in the conflict sharpen day by day and develop rapidly beyond the bounds of any conciliation.

#### **Activity of Socialists**

Revolutionary socialists cannot remain silent or passive onlookers while the trade union movement is struggling with such fundamental problems. The Socialist Party cannot remain inactive or stand aside. It should not be expected to support the progressive movement, or to support its present leaders, uncritically. In the future less so than in the recent past. The main reason for this is the fact that as the progressive movement develops the distinct class issues will enter much more directly into the foreground and for their solution encounter new conflicts with the basically bourgeois ideology of these leaders.

The progressive movement is in need of socialist influence. The Socialist Party can and must assist it in its development towards political and class consciousness. The starting point must necessarily be full and complete support to its progressive aims. But if the objectives of this movement are to have real and historical significance for the American working class, they cannot and

should not remain limited to the questions of organization or forms of organization alone. In the further course of development it is necessary that these objectives become intimately linked-up with the historical mission of the working class: namely to free itself from the curse of exploitation and wage slavery.

Accepting this premise revolutionary Socialists will readily understand their duty. They will of necessity have to take the first steps first. Preparatory to any

conscious influence upon the movement, Socialists must themselves learn to function in the trade unions on the basis of a socialist policy and function as units bound together by agreement on principled ideas. These ideas will become a power only when they penetrate the mass movement. Therefore, from a recognition of the necessity to function in such a manner flows also the duty to take up the work of penetrating the movement in earnest.

A. S. A.

## Open Letter to Trotskyists Joining S. P.

To our new Trotskyist comrades:

I HAVE been chagrined by the left-handed character of the welcome so far extended by some of the old S.P. members to our new Trotskyist comrades. Although I am not a 30-year man, either chronologically, theoretically, or temperamentally, I have been active in the party for enough years, I believe, to speak as a more or less completely naturalized party member. And I must say that nothing which has happened during my time in the party has been so heartening as the entrance of the Trotskyists.

From the beginning of my interest in the socialist movement, I have felt a lack of a sense of direction, on a national scale, in our educational activities—of a feeling of intellectual suspense, of an impelling force driving members in a breathless effort to keep up with an intellectual procession. In fact there has been little that one could call an intellectual procession. True, there have been individuals tooting assorted horns and waving assorted banners; but they have seemed to be marching in all directions at once.

That the organization, under such circumstances, hasn't fallen entirely to pieces is evidence of the great value, the sturdiness of the foundation upon which it stands. The party has a tradition in the United States of inestimable importance. Its greatest leader, Debs, was, and its present outstanding leader, Thomas, is as characteristically a native son as one could ever find. Red baiters may froth at the mouth about our evil intentions and distort our principles as much as they are able to; but after they have done their worst, the conviction remains with a goodly section of the general public that we are a legitimate part of the American scene, that we belong.

This tradition of belonging isn't the party's only asset. The organization is really national in scope. Many of our connections are very tentative and uncertain, but they form, nevertheless, an extremely valuable basis for national growth.

To put these scattered elements together in a unified party with a sense of direction, with a feeling that we are driving toward a definite goal, requires Education and Leadership. From education springs leadership. Not from garret scholasticism, of course, but from the kind of education which is comprehensible to workers who have had little schooling.

Under the circumstances, the Trotskyists are a welcome addition to the organization. If there is any one point on which there is almost unanimous opinion among us outlanders it is that the Trotskyists are well-grounded Marxists who know their theory forward and backward; and we are expecting great things from them. When I say we, I speak not only for myself but also for the majority of the Militants whom I know.

### Detractors of Trotskyists

However, there is a general feeling of uneasiness abroad. We are told by doubters that the Trotskyists are sectarian and doctrinaire; that all they do is to sit

around and discuss theory; that they have a conception of organization which, if given free rein in the party, will make of the organization a sect of starry-eyed zealots—what Comrade Thomas has characterized as a little church of true believers.

Nobody can gainsay the fact that the S.P. is notoriously lax in discipline. But there are all sorts of considerations involved in party discipline. And I don't believe that the Trotskyists are indiscreet enough—as their detractors swear they are—to set out blindly in an effort to establish a discipline unfeasible and unsuitable in the S. P.

Changing an organization is more analogous to changing the shape of a plant; it requires judicious pruning and gentle pressure-into-position; and too drastic progress, even in the right direction, may be disastrous. A correct position is of little value if the organization is killed entirely in achieving it.

The renaissance in the S.P. begins with an organization which is admittedly sprawling and incoherent, but which possesses a public esteem to achieve which the Communist Party is performing all manner of strange antics. Browder is no less characteristically American than Debs and Thomas; but few outside of the C.P. are likely ever to believe in his sincerity—unless, indeed, he some day decided to be himself. The driving force behind the C.P.'s frantic efforts to naturalize itself upon the American scene is a requirement of vital importance to any organization which hopes to grow here. Our position in this respect is by no means perfect; but our progress up to now is of such great importance that it is not to be trifled with.

That is not to say either that we dare not be revolutionary, that we must be a populist, a reformist party to retain what public esteem we hold and to increase it. It only means that we must recognize that we are dealing with people and not with malleable iron.

It means that we must not make the mistake of setting out to establish a tight, iron-disciplined organization suitable only to a revolutionary situation when we are in, comparatively speaking, piping times of peace in which our biggest problem is to get people in for education rather than to get them out so as to clear the decks for a revolutionary coup. Getting rid of the dross in a crisis is easy; it's getting ore and fuel for the furnace which is difficult.

The above remarks are, I realize, a good bit school-masterish; but I hope you will accept them in the comradely spirit in which I write them. No doubt—being the able theoreticians that you are—you could write a better thesis on the possibilities of the S.P. than I have. But I assure you that I have done my brief best, poor and probably tactless as it is. Now for some specific suggestions, written with a desire to be helpful, not critical.

When I am told—as I am by a few earnest Militants as well as by the unquestioned Old Guardists—that they fear that the Trotskyists are entering the party only to recruit as many followers as possible with the idea of staging a bigger and better split, I am not disturbed. The



obvious intellectual stature of the Trotskyists, leaving out of consideration my personal acquaintance with a number of them whose loyalty I do not question, is guarantee against such a disastrous tactic. But the existence of that fear among people whom I am sure you respect calls for exceptional discretion on your part.

### Advice to Trotskyists

I am an admirer of Trotsky and am in substantial agreement with his views regarding the mistakes that have been and are being made by the C.P. in and out of the Soviet Union; but I believe that it is wise, in fact necessary, to avoid too much emphasis upon the controversy in the S.P. at present. Rabid hostility toward the C.P. is connected, by the Militants, with the Old Guard, and it would be a mistake to risk falling heir to the Old Guard position in the party by seeming to go in too much for heresy hunting.

The best refutation of Stalinist theory is correct socialist practice, the building of an organization which can really show the way.

The greatest service you can perform for the party at the present time is, as I have said, to help raise the

educational standard of the organization. But in that work finesse and discretion are required. Be aggressive but not too aggressive. Your sincerity has been questioned; and even if it hadn't been, the older S. P. members would be likely to look askance at you.

Such uncertainty is natural when a group with a definite line joins an older, larger group. For some time it probably will be wise not to raise theoretical questions of too technical a nature in branch meetings; such discussions are better carried on in classes which may be voluntarily attended by comrades who are interested.

Above all, do not be discouraged by the looseness of the organization, by the large proportion of quiescent dues-paying members. Think of the other side of the picture—of the stupendous job it would be to secure the connections and build the prestige of the S.P. for any new organization. The possibilities are unlimited; all that is required to accomplish great things is discretion, tact, intelligence, and application—not alone to Olympian theory but also to the garden variety of Jimmie Higgins work.

Fraternally yours,

—ROGER A. CARSON.

## The Cleveland Resolution on War

THE following is the text of the Resolution on War adopted by the Cleveland Convention, subject to stylistic revision, as the position of the party:

### PROPOSED RESOLUTION ON WAR

The two pillars of capitalist peace in the post war era, namely, the Five Power Naval Treaty and the League of Nations, are today in a state of complete collapse. The imperialist nature of the capitalist peace imposed by the victors upon the vanquished now gives rise to a new imperialist war for a redivision of the earth. Once more, the capitalist nationalist volcano blows off its paper cap of imperialist treaties.

The treaties, the non-aggression pacts, the League of Nations, the sanctions, and the capitalist system of "collective security" have not only failed to give a firm basis for peace but have in themselves become a source of friction and war.

The present international situation proves conclusively that war is inherent in capitalism.

The inherent forces of capitalism leading to war are the struggles of rival imperialisms for new markets, sources of raw material, and fields of exploitation.

In the struggle to maintain or extend the power of rival capitalist states, the world has already been divided into separate camps. The next war, regardless of how it begins, regardless of whether countries are fascist or democratic, small or large, will be one of imperialist interest on both sides.

The Socialist Party warns against mistaking the peace loving pose of any capitalist state for an honest interest in ending the imperialist struggle. Such poses are intended to strengthen the immediate imperialist interest of the capitalist states and to prepare for future imperialist wars as "wars to end war."

In the light of the experiences of the last war, where many working class movements were tricked into support of imperialist war under the guise of a holy crusade, the Socialist Party of the U.S.A. proclaims that no capitalist war can be a good war, that no capitalist device can be a basis for a policy of peace. Only when the workers take political power into their own hands in the great nations of the earth will the world have a sound basis for lasting peace.

### WAR AND FASCISM

Because Fascism represents a concentrated form of capitalist nationalism, the spread of Fascism tends to accelerate the immediate threat of war.

But just as Fascism intensifies the danger of war, so the coming of war hastens the coming of Fascism. Dictatorial rule, based upon chauvinist demagogy, are normal attendants of all capitalist wars, necessarily exaggerated in the present era of capitalist decay and Fascist reaction.

The twin danger of war and fascism must be fought simultaneously as the products of capitalist nationalism. Uncompromising struggle against all capitalist states, both before and after war is declared, is the only method of fighting imperialism and the threat of Fascism in our own country and throughout the world. The Socialist Party, therefore, repudiates support of an imperialist power against a present Fascist power as a means of overthrowing Fascism.

Sanctions, applied by one or more capitalist nations against another, are merely a new form of imperialist rivalries and cannot be supported by the workers. The support of capitalist sanctions in the Italo-Ethiopian struggle served to paralyze the independent fight of the workers against fascism and imperialism and played into the hands of imperialist rivalries.

The great capitalist powers are exploiting millions of toilers in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, thus exposing the hypocritical claims of some of these "democratic" countries that they are the friends of the small nations, that they wish to preserve the independence of the backward nations. The colonial people, in their struggle for freedom, have only the working class to depend upon as allies. The working class in the imperialist countries must in turn render every support to the colonial people so as to undermine the foundations of imperialism and facilitate the struggle against it. Refusing to compromise with imperialist schemes about the "re-distribution" of the colonies, the workers must fight vigorously for their complete independence.

### DEFENSE OF SOVIET UNION

The Soviet Union, where capitalism has been abolished, is really desirous of peace. The Soviet Union, surrounded by capitalist enemies, is in constant danger of imperialist attack, and all class conscious workers must

be prepared to defend the Soviet Union against imperialist attacks. Such defense, however, can only be a proletarian defense, independent of capitalist governments and their policies and independent of the diplomacy of the Soviet Union, and carried out with the means that organized labor has at its disposal. Should the American government, or any other capitalist government, for reasons of its own enter into an alliance with the Soviet Union, defense of the Soviet Union does not include support for capitalist allies of the Soviet Union in a war. The Soviet Union can best be defended by vigorously carrying on the class war in all countries.

The American government, while talking about peace, has greatly increased its armed forces, has adopted the largest military budget in peace-time history and the largest in the world, is busily engaged in cementing its war alliances (for example—naval treaty with England) and setting up its own sphere of diplomatic and military influence (proposal to organize a Pan-American League of Nations). The American Socialist Party recognizes that its main duty is to the victims of American imperialism at home and abroad, that our main fight is against American imperialism and all its policies, against militarism and against jingoism. As in 1917, American Socialists will refuse to support any war the capitalist government of America might undertake. Should war break out despite our efforts, we will continue to carry on the class struggle and the fight against war, and thru mass resistance to it, thru agitation for a general strike, will endeavor to convert the imperialist war into an organized mass struggle for the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a workers' and farmers' government. Should a war break out in any part of the world, regardless of the countries involved, Socialists will fight against American participation in that war in any form. Genuine neutrality, however, is impossible for this or any other country so long as it is ruled by the profit motive. Without creating the illusion that neutrality can be achieved under capitalism, the Socialist Party will fight for the following:

Liberation of all American colonies and possessions; withdrawal of American troops from all foreign territories; no interference in the affairs of other countries, particularly Mexico, Cuba and Central and South America, either by the government or private individuals; prohibition of the manufacture, transportation or sale of any war materials or munitions; prohibition of loans to other countries for war purposes; withdrawal of government support of guarantees on private loans to other countries for any purpose; cancellation of all war debts and indemnities; abolition of all military training for youth.

Only a Socialist government, however, supported by the broad masses of the workers, will be in a position to carry out such a program and therefore to insure peace. The struggle against war is therefore bound up with the struggle against capitalism and for Socialism. This struggle cannot be conducted unless there is a working class party, clear in policy, consistent and vigorous in action, which never compromises the class struggle, and through all trials leads the working class to the final goal.

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### Preparations for Betrayal

In coming issues, The Appeal will comment at length on various sections of this Resolution and the issues which it raises. It is necessary immediately, however, to publish in full so significant a statement on the most decisive question of our time.

The events of the past year have taught us that the new imperialist war is approaching with rapid and inevitable strides. The alternative of "war or peace," tragically,

does not confront the working class. The issue before us is: how shall the working class act in the face of the war? shall we succumb to the war, and support it, or fight against the war, to transform it from an inter-imperialist struggle into the war of the working class for liberation, for power, and for socialism?

Throughout the world, within the ranks of the working class, the preparations for betrayal to the coming war go forward with ever increasing intensity. The ideological ground is now being everywhere laid for the recruiting of the workers into the ranks of the imperialist armies and the defense of the imperialist states. The first task in the struggle against the war is the ruthless exposure of these preparations for betrayal, the unmasking of the hypocritical and deadly slogans under which they go forward.

The Cleveland Resolution goes far in its sharp break with the contemporary forms of social-patriotism, and its affirmation of the Marxist answer to the question of war. Basing itself on the theoretical foundation of the inseparable conjunction of war and capitalism, it draws therefrom the only possible conclusion—that the struggle against war is necessarily the struggle against capitalism, that the victory over war can only be the victory of the workers and the building of socialism. The Resolution is not content with general conclusions. It strips the mask off the major poses assumed by social-patriotism in the present crisis: support of the League of Nations and other capitalist "anti-war" devices; support of sanctions of capitalist nations; and, above all, approval of "good" capitalist wars—those fought by democratic capitalist states against fascist states, or those fought by capitalist states in alliance with the Soviet Union. The section on colonial struggles, though by no means complete, is a tremendous advance on previous formulations of the party.

### Weakness of Resolution

The chief weakness of the Resolution lies in what is left out; and these omissions unfortunately cannot be regarded as altogether an oversight. The Resolution, for example, should include explicitly a condemnation of "League of Nations sanctions" as well as "sanctions, applied by one or more capitalist nations against another." The two are indistinguishable, but there are those who try to draw a fictitious line between them, and to support the former while admitting the condemnation of the latter.

Much more important is the omission of any criticism of Pacifism. The struggle against imperialist war cannot be based on sentiment or idealistic feeling. Whatever may be our opinions of the personal integrity of many pacifists of various shades, the truth remains that in historical reality Pacifism is nothing else than a part of the preparation for war, that it serves to spread fatal illusions among the workers, to disorient the revolutionary struggle against war and in the majority of instances goes over into social-patriotic betrayal in the actual war crisis. Pacifism is particularly decisive for the Socialist party in this country, for in a number of forms it is widespread in our ranks. The failure to deal with it is a most serious lapse.

Equally incorrect is the failure of the Resolution to concretize its criticism of the various kinds of social-patriotism by specific attack on the major organizations and individuals who propagate them. Social-patriotism and confusion on the question of war do not exist in a vacuum; they are assiduously spread throughout the working class by actual organizations and actual individuals. To fight against them, we must fight against these organizations and individuals. If we are against sanctions and the support of "good" democratic nations against fascist nations, then we are against those who advocate

sanctions and support of "good" wars; against the Communist International and its sections and sympathetic organizations throughout the world, against the treacherous leadership of the Second International, now making ready for the repetition of its 1914 betrayal, just as we are against the Old Guard in this country because such policies are an integral part of its program.

It proved to be impossible at Cleveland to have the discussion of the Resolution on War which it so thoroughly

deserved. This discussion must take place during the coming months in the ranks of the party, and in its publications. The approach of war tends to divide the ranks of the working class into two sharply differentiated groups, obliterating gradually other divisions: those who are against the war and those who are for it. The Socialist party of the United States must make sure of the side to which it will belong.

F. B. J.

## FOR A UNITED NATION WIDE LEFT WING

**T**HOSE Militant Socialists who were active in the fight against the Old Guard because they had as their perspective building the Socialist Party into the revolutionary party that is needed to lead the American working class to victory knew long ago that a nationwide left wing, standing on a revolutionary program, was a primary need. Yet there have been only the most feeble and spasmodic efforts to organize a nation-wide left wing.

The first attempts at building such a national left-wing were made less than ten months ago at the "Call" conferences held at Bound Brook and Chicago, long after the Old Guard had already taken action to make the fight a national one. Since there were no efforts to make the fight against the Old Guard on a principled and national basis, there were no real issues around which local left wing caucuses could crystalize. Without strong local caucuses there could be no strong national movement. As a result the criterion of who was a Militant outside of New York was determined by their sympathy with New York Militants in their fight against the Old Guard. Thus instead of a left wing standing on a revolutionary program we had a vague anti-Old Guard movement. Instead of a left wing whose reason for existence was to build a revolutionary party with the defeat of the Old Guard as the first task, we had a movement who saw in the defeat of the Old Guard its only task, the panacea that would cure the ills of the party.

The results of the type of fight waged against the Old Guard and above all the failure to build a nationwide left wing were seen in what was passed off for a left-wing caucus in Cleveland. It seemed as though everybody who did not belong to the Forward Association was eligible for this caucus. This is slightly overstating it, since the New York delegation, coming from the place the fight was sharpest, did not include Dr. Sadoff and other of the traditional centrists in their Militant group of delegates. In a place like New York City, where people were continually being put to the test on where they stood on the inner-party fight, it had long ago been discovered that those who fight merely against the "bad influences of the Old Guard leadership upon party activity" could not be relied upon even for an uncompromising battle against the Old Guard. Yet delegates from all over the rest of the country, who because of the absence of a national left wing were not forced to say where they stood, known in their local sections as viewing the whole fight in the typical manner of the New York centrists, sat in the "left-wing" caucus (from the way it functioned the word caucus deserves quotations marks also) and helped in the final session to set up machinery, for the purpose of at last building a real left wing.

The type of caucus we were forced to call left-wing at Cleveland should have been a serious lesson for us, a lesson to be heeded as we now enter into a new phase of the fight to transform the Socialist Party into that revolutionary party needed to lead the American working-class to victory. The results of the convention as a whole,

analysed elsewhere in this issue, should have been added lessons. All these lessons teach the same thing, the need of a left wing that is organized on a nationwide basis, that stands on revolutionary principles, that strives constantly to raise the political level of the party membership, and that seeks to influence the immediate steps of the party in the direction of building a revolutionary organization. Unfortunately, however, the attitude of at least one prominent spokesman of the New York Militants gives one reason to believe that we have learned nothing from the failure to build a principled left wing.

In his report on the convention in the "Socialist Call" of June 6th, Jack Altman speaks of the confused and heterogeneous Militant caucus at Cleveland as follows:

"Finally came the left wing, better known as the Militants. Aided by the Socialist Call and the American Socialist Monthly, they came to the convention unified theoretically and therefore organized as a force."

Perhaps the "unified theoretically" was a printer's error that should have read "theoretically unified," for certainly it seems virtually impossible that anyone, even someone like Comrade Altman who was under a terrific strain at the convention with never ending caucuses, conferences, and steering committee meetings, should have mistaken the babel of theories in the Militant caucus for left-wing harmony or its crazy-quilt complexion for solid red. If we assume that Comrade Altman meant what his Call article said, then we can only accept it as a declaration of satisfaction with the amount of progress the Militants have made in the direction of theoretical clarity. And this completely harmonizes with the actions of the New York delegation which showed satisfaction with the leftward development of the Party and refused to support measures that would have pushed it to the left; in the case of the Whitten amendment to the platform it was precisely their votes which defeated it.

Even more disturbing than Comrade Altman's smugness and complacency regarding the present degree of leftward development of the Militants is his attempt to establish a further "unified" caucus by reading a section of the Militant caucus out by a flourish of the pen. His report divides the convention into four groups, the Old Guard, the Centrists, the Militants, and the "ultra-leftists." He describes the latter as follows:

". . . small and confused, unorganized and unable to attract . . . Their chief concern was theoretical clarity, but because of their own theoretical confusion, failed to make any impression on the convention."

Who these "ultra-leftists" were Comrade Altman does not say. What they wanted is also not given. What theories did the "ultra-leftists" offer in the Militant "Tower of Babel" that were so unique, nay, so outlandish, as to cause Altman to place them beyond the pale of the all-inclusive, the very all-inclusive Militant caucus with its Midwestern Sadoffs?

Was it perhaps the Labor Party question upon which those who stood to the left of Altman's viewpoint almost

received a majority in the caucus on a test vote? (No real vote was taken since the caucus decided not to bind anyone on this question.) Was it perhaps the amendment to the platform proposed by Richard Whitten which received the votes of the entire Illinois delegation and even several from New York among the 55 recorded for it? Was it perhaps the recording of oneself in opposition to the adopted platform which the majority of the California delegation did? One can only come to the conclusion that the Militants were not "unified theoretically" and that on a number of questions a considerable section of the caucus and the convention stood to the left of Comrade Altman.

Those of us who hold the perspective of fighting on until we have built a Party that can measure up to the task of leading the American working class to victory and who understand that for the next year or two the most urgent task of the left-wing is to raise the political level of the membership through revolutionary education, will oppose any attempt to establish a monolithic caucus through splitting with those who have disagreements with us.

Rather than splits we need greater efforts to build a national left wing. The programmatic basis for such a left-wing has already been laid in the Bound Brook Program. The left-wing has the task of bringing the conceptions of the Bound Brook Program into the everyday life of the Party and of educating the Party membership to understand the full implications of the program.

And it is precisely because the unity of the left-wing is needed for this educational work, that such ill-considered provocative statements as are contained in Comrade Altman's article in the Call are most regrettable. We must oppose all foolhardy attempts by impatient comrades who think a revolutionary left-wing can be built by writing a program and, a la RPC, having a handful of comrades affix their names to it. Such a move is both stupid and unnecessary. But we must oppose with equal vigor those who hold that they have a special monopoly on Militancy and seek to split the left wing by a stroke of the pen in declaring certain ideas they disagree with to be "ultra-leftist" and beyond the pale of the Militant caucus.

ERNEST ERBER

This is the first of series of three articles by Comrade Erber on the question of building a national left wing. The remaining two articles will deal with "The Role of the Left Wing" and "Immediate Steps in Building the Left Wing."

## Socialists in the California Agricultural Strike

SOCIALISTS should take note of the admirable role our Los Angeles local has played in the agricultural strikes in Southern California. These strikes were particularly significant because they signified the end of the quiescence of the agricultural workers, who are now on strike for the first time since the Cannery & Agricultural Workers Industrial Union collapsed in 1934 following the arrest and subsequent conviction of its leaders in the famous Sacramento criminal syndicalism case. California Socialists played a leading role in fighting the Sacramento case, and it was undoubtedly the national campaign of the National Sacramento Appeal Committee—while the I.L.D. remained passive—which secured the parole of Norman Mini, who is the first of the prisoners to be freed.

The striking union was not an A. F. of L. affiliate, but an independent federation of Japanese, Mexican, Filipino and American workers. Nevertheless, by an intelligent policy initiated by Socialists, the strike was supported by the Central Labor Council of Los Angeles as well as the I.L.G.W.U. and the A.C.W. of A. locals.

This is in sharp contrast to the isolation in which the C.P.—controlled union fought the strikes of 1933, an isolation solely due to the C.P. policies. Socialists have been on the strike committee and the picket lines, and played the leading role in providing defense, relief, publicity and mass support. The strike, when this is written, has resulted in over 190 written agreements with large growers, despite a systematic terror leading to over 100 arrests, a number shot and wounded, and scores beaten. This means that the union has secured a firm base; and probably also means a resurgence of organizing throughout California's ranches.

Symbolizing the place of Socialists in the agricultural workers' movement, Norman Thomas was named honorary chairman of the Sponsoring Committee for a statewide conference called June 6-7 at Stockton, endorsed by the California Federation of Labor, and attended by representatives of independent and A. F. of L. agricultural unions, called to take steps to set up a united union of farm workers. In a letter to the Sponsoring Committee, the Communist Party requested that, "in view of the role that Communists have played in the past few years in the organization of agricultural workers, the C.P. should be given a place on the Sponsoring Committee. The phrase, "in the past," describes the C.P. They have played no role whatever in the present strike struggles. As a consequence of Socialist leadership and initiative the best elements among the strikers are being recruited into the party.

STRIKER.

**ANNOUNCEMENT: In the next issue of the APPEAL there will be an article on the Labor party by GUS TYLER, the best defense for the idea of Socialists working on behalf of a Labor party as yet written. And there will be an effective answer to TYLER. Be sure to order the copy.**

## Socialist Appeal Goes Forward

Twelve pages this issue instead of eight; the price five cents instead of ten. Indications that the desire for left-wing clarity is growing.

There are not very many organs in the Socialist party, which discuss critically the events of the day and give a revolutionary interpretation to the problems confronting the party. As a matter of fact the American Socialist Monthly is the only magazine that makes such an attempt. But the Monthly is an official organ while the Appeal is an organ of a group of left-wingers, a group which is part of the Militants, a group which is constantly growing in numbers and influence.

We have secret ambitions: to come out every month; even twice a month. Too ambitious? Not at all! The left wing of the party is growing with the growth of the party. A critical monthly organ is essential; a semi-monthly is necessary. Not a mass paper like the CALL but a paper to train our members.

WILL YOU HELP US?

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