
Role of the Workers Party.

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“A spectre is haunting Europe — the spectre of Communism,” wrote Marx three-quarters of a century ago. If these words were true then, they are a thousand more times true today.

In the minds of the rulers of capitalist Europe the fear of communism and the Communist International is ever present. In practically every European country the Communists are persecuted, imprisoned, and even murdered. In the United States the whole power of the national government was directed against the Communists at the beginning of 1920 and since then these persecutions have been continued in an effort to destroy the Communist movement. Even Samuel Gompers, President of the American Federation of Labor, is obliged to enter upon a campaign in an effort to destroy the growing influence of the Communists in the United States.

What is the goal of the Communist Party? Wherein does it differ from other labor political parties? What is the role of a communist party — in this country the Workers Party — in the struggle for the emancipation of the workers?

From 1889 until 1914, two groups lived side by side in the parties of the Second International. One of these groups believed and acted upon the belief that the abolition of capitalism and the emancipation of workers was to be achieved through a slow process of legislation. Today there would be workmen’s compensation, tomorrow the eight-hour day. Another day and some industry would be nationalized, and thus, through social legislation and encroachment upon the capitalist control of industry the capitalist system would

finally be legislated out of existence. The other held to the Marxian view that the climax of the class struggle between contending economic classes was a transfer of political power from one class to another class, and that the first step in the abolition of the capitalist society must be the achieving of political power by the working class. Once the workers achieved political power, that is, the gov-



ernmental power, then the process of abolishing capitalism and establishing socialism would begin.

These two groups were able to remain in the same organization until a crisis came which required that theory be put in action. When that crisis came there was an inevitable sundering and the Socialist movement the world over split into the right wing and left wing. This crisis came with the beginning of the war in 1914.

The reformist right wing leaders in the Socialist movement the world over betrayed the workers and supported the capitalist governments in the imperialist war. The left wing endeavored to rally the workers for the struggle against imperialist war and to turn this war into a struggle against the capitalist system. This division which the war precipitated was sharpened during the process of the war. When the workers of the various countries became disillusioned through their sufferings and the sacrifices asked of them in the interests of capitalism, both upon the battlefields and in the industries at home, when their wrath began to flame against the capitalist order which was sacrificing them upon the battlefields by the millions and causing them untold suffering and hunger at home, the right wing reformist socialists refused to lead them into action against their exploiters. The left wing in every country assumed the leadership of the mass struggles of the workers and in these struggles they found that they were no longer arrayed only against the capitalist governments, but that shoulder to shoulder with the capitalists stood their former "comrades."

The bitter experiences of the German revolution, the murder of Liebknecht and Luxemburg by the agents of the capitalists supported by the leaders of the Second international, the betrayal by Kerensky in Russia, the surrender of the right wing socialist to the capitalist government in various other European countries, opened between Socialists and Communists a gulf which cannot be bridged.

Since the end of the war the divergence of

the two groups has continued and become even deeper. The right wing socialists continue to act upon the theory that the social revolution is a matter of reforming the capitalist order through the legislative establishments of the capitalist state. They are acting upon the supposition that capitalism can reestablish itself and return to the day prior to 1914. Their policy is therefore that of compromise and betrayal. Everywhere in Europe the Right Wing Socialists are the chief bulwark of the existing governments, having turned their attack against the revolutionary workers who are fighting under the leadership of the Communists.

The Communists, on the other hand, accept as their guiding policy that the world imperialist war was the beginning of the decay and disintegration of the capitalist system. Although the capitalist statesmen and financiers have striven mightily since 1918 to find a solution of the financial and economic problems brought upon them by the war, the process of disintegration still goes on. At times there are slight improvements only to be followed by worse conditions. Financially and economically Europe draws nearer and nearer to the brink.

The Communists point out to the working class that the capitalist system has outlived its day, that it cannot be reformed or reconstructed, that the misery and suffering which are the lot of the workers can only be ended by the workers establishing their rule and proceeding with the work of rebuilding the economic system on a Communist basis.

The Communists are under no illusion that this can be done over night. The struggle against the capitalist system may still last for decades and even after the workers achieve power will go on for years. The communists do not attempt to deceive the working class by teaching them that the social revolution is a pink tea affair to be achieved in the legislative halls of the capitalist government. The lesson of the one country in which the workers have attained power — Soviet Russia — shows

that after the workers' government is established an iron dictatorship must rule as the instrument through which the struggle against the exploiters is carried further. The Communists recognize the historic truth that no privileged class has ever given up its special position, its power to live in luxury through the exploitation of the oppressed class, without a bitter struggle in which it has resorted to every means within its power to retain its privileged position.

Everything points to the fact that the struggle against capitalism in Europe and America will not differ from the class struggles of the past and that the workers in the fight to emancipate themselves must be ready for such a struggle.

In the United States the Communists today are advocating as their chief immediate proposals the amalgamation of the trade unions into industrial unions and the formation of a Labor Party. While the Communists in the United States are the leaders in the struggle to bring about amalgamation and the formation of a Labor Party, this does not mean that when this goal is reached the task of the Communists is at an end.

For the communists, the amalgamation of the trade unions into industrial unions and the formation of a Labor Party to fight the political battles of the working masses of this country are but the first steps toward the ultimate goal of the workers' government and the Communist Society.

When these means of struggle are achieved there will still remain for the Communists the task of bringing to the masses of the workers of this country the realization that the struggle against capitalism must be a struggle to abolish the whole capitalist order. It must teach them that problem which the working class faces under the capitalist system cannot be solved through ameliorative

measures won in the legislative bodies of the capitalist government, or through victories won in the fight on the industrial field for better wages and working conditions. The Communists will still have the task of educating the working masses to the necessity of their establishing the rule of the workers in place of the rule of the capitalists. They will still have before them the work of bringing to the masses of workers and farmers the understanding that the existing capitalist government has been so formed and rests upon such a constitutional basis that it is an instrument for the service of the capitalists, that it cannot be the form of government through which the workers may rule, but must be supplanted by a government growing out of the experiences and struggles of the workers, that is, a Soviet government. The Communists will still have before them the task of educating the working masses of this country to the need of their establishing the Soviet government and with it the rule of the workers — the Dictatorship of the Proletariat — which will use the governmental power in the interest of the workers as openly as it is now used in the interests of the capitalists.

It is because, after the first steps toward class action in the United States in the form of the organization of a labor party and the amalgamation of the trade unions, there will still remain great tasks, that there must be a Communist Party — a separate, distinct organization which will have in its ranks the best educated, disciplined and most militant workers, such as the Workers Party of America.

The role of the party is to be the battalion at the front leading the working class hosts — industrial workers and farmers — forward against the enemy in spite of all persecutions, in spite of the efforts of the capitalists to destroy it, until the victory of the workers is won.

Edited by Mitch Abidor.

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