

# Before the Conventions of Our Enemies

## The Socialist Party and Trade Unionism

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IN THE MATERIAL submitted to the coming national convention of the Socialist Party in Milwaukee the agenda committee, composed of Hillquit, Oneal and Lauder, outlines a long statement on trade union policy. This is a characteristic combination of demagoguery and subservience to the A. F. of L. bureaucracy. The so-called left wing also submits its program in the form of a resolution, which is a fit companion of the official statement of policy.

The proposals of Hillquit et al are, in substance an appeal to the A. F. of L. leadership for recognition as the party of the trade unions. The main difficulty is that the A. F. of L. bureaucrats do not see the need for the Socialist Party as their official party. The central problem, as the report sees it, is "the lack of satisfactory understanding between the trade unions and the Socialist Party," that is, between the Green-Woll leadership and the S. P. In the whole document there is not a single word of criticism of the A. F. of L. misleaders, not one denunciation of their shameful betrayal of the unemployed, of their wage-cutting policy, of their gangsterism and graft, of their support of American imperialism's war preparations. Doubtless Green and Co. will be duly appreciative of this pledge of support by the S. P. They will correctly understand it as a proposal for a united front against the revolutionary unions of the T. U. U. L. and the growing minorities in the A. F. of L.

### Demagoguery.

Of course, the committee demands the six-hour day and five-day week, and it has the cheek to add "without reduction in pay." The cynicism and demagoguery of this "demand" is exemplified by the fact that in every country the Socialist trade unions are busily accepting wage cuts, forcing them through, in fact, while at the same time lengthening the hours and speeding up the workers. The experience in the needle trades here shows what an utter fake is the proposal for no reduction in wages. The fact is that the Socialists, no less than the capitalists, accept as

a matter of course that wages have to come down in the crisis and they base their wage policy upon that conception. Their proposal for the six-hour day, five-day week is only Hoover's stagger plan in overalls.

At a time when the tyrannical suppression of democracy in the trade unions and the unspeakable gangster rule fairly cries out, the Socialist Party passes over the whole situation with a glib sentence that Socialists should work for democracy "wherever undemocratic practices may exist." Inasmuch as its own unions are the most gangster-ridden in New York and the most devoid of rank and file control, this whole question is a touchy one for the S. P. People who live in glass houses are not given to throwing stones.

The question of industrial unionism is handled with typical hypocrisy. The committee's proposal favors "consolidation and amalgamation of unions wherever practical." This is almost as what the A. F. of L. said 20 years ago at its Rochester convention when Gompers, a militant enemy of industrial unionism, wrote the resolution. Every labor faker in the A. F. of L. will subscribe to the S. P. conception of industrial unionism. Just how much the Socialist Party fights for industrial unionism is indicated by its stubborn and long resistance against every attempt to amalgamate its needle trades craft unions. Here, evidently, the question is not a "practical" one.

The committee's proposal reiterates the traditional S. P. hypocrisy that the Party does not seek to dominate the trade unions. And this in the face of its complete control of the A. F. of L. needle trades unions. These organizations, like their similars in Europe, do not take a single step unless it is first OK'ed by the leadership of the S. P. They, like Socialist unions in general are only mass auxiliaries of this reactionary party.

There is not a word in the proposed trade union program of the official leaders of the Socialist Party that Green and Woll will object to, nothing that they would not vote for.

Indeed, in past conventions of the A. F. of L. they have already accepted these platitudes and evasions. The S. P. trade union program is not one of opposition to the A. F. of L. bureaucrats but of unity with them. It provides a united front basis for their common struggle against the Communists and militant masses of workers.

As for the trade union policy of the "lefts" or "militants," submitted in the form of an amendment to the committee's proposals, it is vague and absurd. For many months these "lefts," the Muste wing of the S. P., have been talking "radical" on the trade union question in the S. P. And now when they come forward with their definite proposition it sums up, after a few mild whereases of criticism of the A. F. of L. leadership, as follows: that there be called a conference of all organizations and individuals who favor their kind of labor unionism and that there be set up an American section of the Amsterdam International, which shall proceed directly to organize the unorganized. This smacks of dual unionism, but the whole project is couched so ambiguously that we are not let into the secret of just what is meant by it exactly. In any event it will give the "left" social fascists something radical to talk about, and that is all they need. Experience, as well as their proposals to the S. P. convention, shows clearly that their policy is the same as that of Hillquit and Green, and their differences with them are only a matter of words.

The proposals of both the right and "left" wings of the Socialist Party show that this organization has no program of militant struggle for the workers. The whole thing is just a presentation of the A. F. of L. line of class collaboration, dressed up here and there with radical terminology to adapt it to the growing radicalization of the workers. From the S. P. the workers can expect only treachery and betrayal. Only in the T. U. U. L. unions and revolutionary minorities in the A. F. of L. unions is there a policy to be found of militant leadership corresponding to the pressing needs of the workers.