

LABOR ACTION

Independent Socialist Weekly

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In Sorrow, Not Anger

Realistic note by a pro-Stevenson columnist:

"If the principals in both political camps have their way, no more will be heard about the Nixon or the Stevenson funds. . . . In neither instance has the whole story been told.

"Gov. Stevenson in listing the uses made of the political fund first disclosed failed to include such expenses as the cost of a trip to New York to speak at the Herald Tribune Forum and the cost of Christmas parties given for children in Springfield. One of his aides says that this would amount to about \$2,500 at most.

"The second fund appears to have been wholly political in nature.

"Illinois, however sincere and hardworking Stevenson may have been in his intentions of reform, is no different from any other state. Political contributions are made by those who want to do business with the state. This runs from big business—highway contractors and liquor distillers and wholesalers—to small firms that hope to sell an order of mops or cleaning fluid to state institutions." (Marquis Childs, column in N. Y. Post, Oct. 1.)

That Nixon also did not tell the "whole story" about his fund has been revealed in newspaper stories disclosing that he used the government franking (free postage) privilege to poll voters in California in a purely political stunt—this in spite of a categorical denial in his tearjerking TV soap opera that he had ever done any such thing.

'STALINOIDS FOR STEVENSON' The I. F. Stone-Paul Sweezy Trend and Its Variety of 'Lesser Evil'

By PHILIP COBEN

There is a development taking place in the course of this presidential election campaign which is of special interest, even if not perhaps of major political moment. This is the tendency of a number of thorough Stalinoids to swing toward support of Stevenson.

If this were the accompaniment of any kind of new break with their ideology, it would still be worth notice but not in the same way. But what is interesting is that this pro-Stevenson trend among some Stalinist fellow travelers seems to be taking place within the framework of their pro-Stalinism. How does this jibe with the fact that the Stalinist party itself is supporting the Progressive Party candidates, Hallinan and Bass?

The leading public examples of this trend, so far, are I. F. Stone and the Paul Sweezy-Leo Huberman group around their magazine *The Monthly Review*. But we know that this is not all; we know of others less prominent. It is also clear that both feel that behind them is a swell of sentiment among others of their type. Stone, for example, has referred to substantial defections among the followers of the American Labor Party, the Stalinist front party in New York.

We must note, of course, that both I. F. Stone and Sweezy-Huber, man, although they have been pretty faithful adherents of the Stalinist line in foreign policy and whitewashers of Russian imperialism, are not "party-liners"—that is, they are not only not CP members but have been publicly critical of the CP on matters that do not touch the bases of the Stalinist ideology. In their own way, they have been trying to be independent thinkers—that is, independent Stalinists.

DEBATE IN N. Y. COMPASS

The trend has been given publicity in the N. Y. *Daily Compass*, which ran a three-day (September 30-October 2) debate in its pages between Stone and Vito Marcantonio; and by *The Monthly Review*, whose current issue features an article entitled "How Shall We Vote?" The latter article is by an unsigned contributor and is presented as initiating a discussion, and it also does not definitely decide in favor of Stevenson. Its train of thought, however, is clear; and the editors of the independent Stalinist magazine state that they are in the same quandary as the anonymous soul-searcher.

The theme of both discussions can be given in two words: they are about the idea of the "lesser evil." Under the conditions of this discussion which we note below, there are few other places in which the idea of supporting the "lesser evil" is presented as nakedly.

This is so because Stone (for example) concedes next-to-every-

thing about Stevenson and the Democrats that one might argue. Here is part of his characterization of the candidate for whom he urges support. The rather long quote ought to give the full impact.

STONE INDICTS HIS CANDIDATE

"Both parties talk peace, but espouse policies which lead toward war. . . .

"The Democratic Party is the party of the Truman Doctrine, the Atlantic Pact and the arms race. It has maintained prosperity by rearmament. It has fought the red-scare attacks upon it by initiating a replica of the Alien and Sedition Law period and (in quieter but no less extensive form) of the 'deportation delirium' which followed the First World War. Its campaign of 'total diplomacy,' launched to shut off the Tydings-McMahon demand for talks with Moscow before embarking on development of the H-bomb, has sought to make the word negotiation subversive and to read the word peace out of polite and patriotic discourse.

"The combination of an arms race with no-negotiation, added to some of Acheson's more lightheaded [sic] phrases about turning back the 500-year expansion of Muscovy has pointed inevitably toward a show-down which must mean war. This would be to reach 'liberation' transferring to Eisenhower's declared policy, one of the main counts against the general in Stone's eyes by a slightly different route. . . .

"This is not the sum total of our despair. An almost autonomous military-diplomatic bureaucracy operates behind the facade; . . . influences more pervasive and dangerous than Acheson's run his own department. . . . Beyond this, giving it substance, is an economy which fears to throw away the crutch of war.

"Over and above all is an atmosphere such as is not to be found elsewhere in the West, an atmosphere so thick with paranoid nonsense that even a man as intelligent as Adlai Stevenson can write, as he did in *Foreign Affairs* last April, of Lenin's 'warfare against the Russian people'. . . it is fully as bad as my opponent [Marcantonio] says it is.

"I do not believe there is a statesman in Western Europe who would think of taking so simplistic and feeble a view of the Russian revolution, nor a comparable scholarly journal which would print such intellectual rubbish if it were submitted to it. . . ."

It is necessary to read the above dossier on Stevenson to see that we did not exaggerate in noting that Stone (as spokesman for his tendency) is proposing support of Stevenson within the framework of the same ideology that he has been plugging right along. Nowhere in his articles does he make the slightest criticism of the camp of Stalinist imperialism.

As far as Stevenson is concerned he admits all, in other words. What on earth then remains, after all that, to justify support of the Democrat?

BARE BONES

Nothing whatsoever, except the "lesser evil" idea, pared down to its very barest bones, as if in a made-to-order textbook case: Stevenson is all that he describes, but Eisenhower would be still worse. There never was an argument so clearly based on the difference between death by slow poison versus death by clubbing; or between strikebreaking by guile, promises and demoralization versus strikebreaking by the National Guard.

Let us follow Stone's thinking for a stretch. His first article in the series was a waste of space: it was a long historical analogy with the 1860 election when, he argues, Lincoln was not clearly anti-slavery but still was the lesser evil, and, as it turned out, did finally lead the nation against the slaveholding South.

This was a waste of space because it is breaking down an open (Turn to last page)

LONDON LETTER: The British Labor Party Conference

Bevan Gains; Next Step Is Harder

By DAVID ALEXANDER

LONDON, Oct. 1—The Bevanites have attacked on a narrow front, but their attack has been resoundingly successful.

Of the seven members of the Labor Party's Executive who are elected by local branches of the party, six are now supporters of Bevan. The Bevanites put up only six candidates for the seven seats, and all six were elected. Of these four were on the outgoing Executive, and all four increased their votes. Out of a possible maximum of 1,135,000 votes (weighted votes of delegates to the Morecambe conference of the party), Bevan personally was elected by 965,000 votes.

Of considerable importance was the rejection of Herbert Morrison and Hugh Dalton, both of whom are considered right-wing, and

their replacement by Harold Wilson (who resigned from the Labor cabinet with Bevan) and Richard Crossman.

Let us consider what these elections do and do not mean.

SEVEN OUT OF 27

While the Bevanites won six out of the seven allocated on the Executive to the local constituency branches of the party, the whole Executive consists of 27 members. The increase from four to six, therefore, is not as significant as might be thought, in terms of power on the Executive. On the other hand, the election shows that the mood of the Labor Party members themselves—as distinct from those whose connection with the party is through their union block affiliation—is with Bevan's opinion that the country's problems can be solved only by a more rapid movement toward socialism.

The constituency Labor Parties forced the Executive to accept a

recommendation that it should draw up a further list of industries to be nationalized. On the other hand, they rejected one resolution to confiscate any denationalized industry if they came back to power, and another to try to eject the Conservatives by industrial means.

BLOCK VOTE

It is by now well-known that the representatives of the trade unions at the Labor Party conferences have a "block vote," that is, they have a mandate to vote on behalf of the whole trade union, using its membership as the number of votes cast. Those last two resolutions mentioned were rejected by use of the unions' block votes; for example, the one on confiscation of denationalized transport was defeated by 2,286,000 votes to 1,652,000.

We can thus see in the Labor Party a schism between the relatively left-wing local branches and the right-wing trade-union

leaderships. Sir Will Lawther, of the National Union of Mine Workers, says he fears that, by influencing the Executive, the left wing will force upon the unions (represented by 12 members on the Executive) policies with which they disagree. They will soon—in his words—"be telling the unions how to run themselves."

TEARS FOR MORRISON

It is of considerable interest that the two Labor dailies, the trade-union *Daily Herald* and the *Daily Mirror*, have both not only tried to minimize Bevan's success but have spent a great deal of space dramatizing the behavior of Morrison. Thus: this "Old Guard" Labor leader had been active for 30 years; this rejection was a bitter personal blow; after it, he made a long cautionary speech, and very bravely accepted the party's decision. "Let me assure you," he said, "that I will con-

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'Stalinoids for Stevenson'

(Continued from page 1)

door for Stone to prove that there are such things as lesser evils, leaving aside the relevance of the situation in 1860 to today. At no point (although he jibes at it) does Stone show any knowledge of what the Marxist argument against his type of lesser-evilmism is.

THE REAL ARGUMENT

This degree of ignorance is made explicit in Sweezy's "high level" theoretical magazine, where the anonymous contributor actually writes: "The traditional Marxist argument against this kind of policy, this frank embracing of the lesser evil, is that once you begin playing the parliamentary game you inevitably lose your identity as a genuine socialist."

The man simply knows nothing. The "traditional Marxist argument" against this kind of lesser-evil policy is to show—after a concrete political analysis such as Stone himself summarized—that support by the working class of a given "lesser evil" has the effect of disarming the struggle against the very "greater evil" which is so feared, and therefore of greasing the road to the "greater evil."

This is exactly why it is so irrelevant for such ideologists to prove that "there is a difference" between two evils. There almost always is. The point is not to obscure the difference which exists, and which must often be taken into account for other purposes, but to measure the consequences of sacrificing the independent struggle of the class in order to ensure the victory of the lesser evil.

HOW IT WORKS

This was the point in the classic test of the lesser-evil policy of Germany, when the Social-Democrats supported the (non-fascist) militarist Hindenburg against the fascist Hitler, only in order to be handed Hitler by the same Hindenburg. Essentially, the policy which this represented was the reason why Hitler was able to come to power, at the last, on the backs of a working class already demoralized by its own leading parties, both Social-Democratic and Stalinist.

The operation of this pattern need not be looked for only in the lessons of history. It is working in this very election. As LABOR ACTION has documented, the labor movement's loyal support to the Fair Deal, and its refusal to take an independent road, has been precisely the reason why the Democrats have been able to shift their center of gravity to the right, in order to woo the Dixiecrats. There is much more to be said about all this, but at any rate the essential approach to the problem ought to be clear.

THE BROKEN FORK

For Stone, who has so cogently indicated his own man Stevenson, it is enough if it can be shown that "there is a difference"—even though he himself at the very same time virtually writes that the lesser evil is the road to the greater evil "by a slightly different route."

One difference in the route is that one tries to disorient and do-

mesticate the working-class opposition before the greater evil is upon us; whereas the "greater evil," brashly pushed regardless, would excite struggle. Thus Wilson was able to lead the people into war in 1917, as Pied Piper, all the more easily because of his pacifist coloration, both demagogic and sincere.

Few could be satisfied with as little "difference" as Stone. He goes out of his way to stress this. He compares the difference he sees to just "some crack or cranny" in a wall to provide "a point at which some lever, if only a broken fork" can be applied.

NOTE OF DESPAIR

The note he strikes is frankly one of despair. It is in his very last words: "Any chance in a crisis is worth taking. Let us not pass this one by. It may be our last for a long time." He means: our last broken fork.

We leave aside his polemical jabs at Marcantonio. The latter is an easy mark and not of interest to us in this discussion; he merely puts the needle on the record of the CP line—a line which enables him to speak many truths about Stevenson, but which requires him to be the lawyer for the imperialist camp which is on the other side of the Iron Curtain.

Stone's argument is about broken forks: Truman resisted intervention in Formosa—in January 1950; Truman fired MacArthur; the Democrats are against spreading the Korean war, while MacArthur is for it. Agitating for certain ideas and deciding how to vote are "two political functions" which must not be "confused." Stevenson is talking more rightish than he really is in order to get votes [the evidence

is for just the reverse]. The Democrats have a left wing, the GOP doesn't. "In an American election campaign it is not so much what the candidates say as what they symbolize which counts." A vote for Hallinan will be a vote for Eisenhower, reaction and war, because it will help defeat Stevenson. . . .

THE REAL REASON

It would be worth while, perhaps, to discuss some of these broken forks, were it not for the fact that none of them is the decisive reason why Stone is for Stevenson.

It is perfectly clear that the decisive reason for Stone—and this goes for the Stalinoid trend under discussion generally—is that Stevenson has stated that he is for (or at least willing to consider) NEGOTIATIONS WITH RUSSIA, whereas they believe that Eisenhower, or the men who will run him, will exclude such negotiations with Russia.

This is the broken fork, and not anything else. Stone refers most often to Stevenson's declaration at Hamtramck. (He does not refer to Eisenhower's equally explicit declaration of willingness to engage in negotiations, mainly because of the general's "liberation" policy.)

The same thing is true of the Sweezy contributor, who states that the "touchstone" of all current politics is: "will our action defer or spur war? . . . there may be times at the level of national politics when it is of foremost importance to buy time." Since this writer understands nothing about the "lesser evil" policy which he discusses, he never even adds that the big question about

buying time is "At what cost?"

It is at this point that we can ascertain that the difference between the attitude of the Stones in this election and their attitude in 1948, when they were willing to throw votes to Wallace which might have elected the Republicans, is only an apparent one. Strangely enough, the attitude of the Wallaceites in 1948 was also one based on the lesser-evil policy!—and the fact casts some light on the switch they make now.

TAFT IN 1948

We can make this point all the more confidently since we wrote precisely that in 1948 in discussing the Wallace candidacy (in the *New Internationalist* for January of that year). Wallace himself, coached by his Stalinoid brain trust, made the point then:

" . . . if the only choice were between a Truman advocating compulsory military training and military aid to reactionary regimes and a Taft strong against compulsory military training and shipment of arms abroad, I would vote for Taft." (Italics in original.)

Why was Taft, the arch-reactionary, the least warmongering of the candidates running in January for the nomination of the major parties? Wallace's answer boiled down to a series of points on Taft's presumed isolationism, the fact that "Compared with the 'American Century' adventurers, Taft is a troglodyte of prehistoric vintage."

The Stalinists threw Wallace's hat into the ring because from the point of view of their pro-Russian foreign policy, and not from the point of view of liberalism, the Republican candidate would either

be preferable or at least a me-tooer.

It is not primarily the considerations of the liberals which today push Stone, Sweezy & Co. toward Stevenson. These are thrown in for good measure, and never had a more hollow ring than in their mouths. They are grasping at the straw that Stevenson would be more willing to consider appeasement of Stalinist imperialism.

But since it is a straw—or rather, a broken fork—it is not necessary to be puzzled about why the CP itself is under no such illusions about the right-wing Fair Dealer at the head of the Democratic ticket.

HYBRID TYPE

The maturation of Stone and Sweezy is that of the Stalinoid fraternity; their political methodology remains that of the soft-headed liberals. In this way they illustrate their political physiognomy, their hybrid combination of some of the least appetizing features of both tendencies.

It is this which makes them independent Stalinists and Stalinoid liberals, as distinct from the blown-in-glass varieties of either tendency. Their "anti-war" line is not that of a third camp against both imperialisms, but of naive faith in the Russian tyrants combined with liberal illusions about capitalist imperialism.

The one thing they have no faith in is the ability of the people to fight both oppressive systems of exploitation. They offer a straddle, and are uneasy because their legs are getting pulled further and further apart.

In this uncomfortable position, the idea of the "lesser evil" represents the strain on their thigh muscles.

Stevenson and the 'Little Boss'

What is Governor Stevenson's relation with the Little Boss of Chicago, Jake Arvey? No one has much of an answer, but a long-time Chicago newspaperman, David Anderson, has a couple of footnotes on it in the current issue of the *Progressive* (which is supporting Stevenson, incidentally).

Anderson first goes through the career of the head of the biggest one-man-led city machine in the country. Arvey has had a lot of experience with using personally honest "fronts" for his political machinations. For instance, he started as one himself! And after 18 years of wardheeling in various echelons of the Nash-Kelly machine in Chicago, he rose as Kelly's successor on the back of another. This was in 1946 when he convinced the then boss that the smell was getting too powerful and that he had better step down. Kelly did and—

"It was time for a 'front,' and Arvey came up with one—a white-haired collar-ad, a benign-looking man who had been a fixture on all the safe civic committees in town. He was Martin H. Kennelly. He won easily, mainly on a platform of ending the housing shortage. (Chicago still has its housing shortage, one of the worst in the country, as well as Kennelly, known as the do-nothing mayor.)"

ARVEY PRODUCTION

In 1948 the Democratic Party was in bad shape. Says Anderson: "The same old party wheelhorses just wouldn't do this time, and Arvey knew it." He discovered Stevenson, then a career man in the State Department, and so it was that Stevenson ran for governor. (It was also in 1948 that Arvey pulled the blooper of boosting Eisenhower to replace Truman on the Democratic ticket, but he wasn't alone in that one.)

When Arvey's state candidates won that year, a GI (who knew Arvey when he was goldbricking in the army) wired him: "Congratulations on another Arvey Production."

This year Arvey was the foremost, or among the foremost, in booming it up for a draft of Stevenson. "Whatever may have been his less noble motives—the hunger for a winner, the craving for the power and prestige that would come with the nomination of 'his' governor (Arvey may be post-master-general if Stevenson wins)—Arvey and his phrase-makers shrewdly pitched the Stevenson candidacy to higher levels."

NO TABLE-POUNding

As governor, Stevenson insisted that the Little Boss had never put pressure on him for anything. "Arvey's business in Springfield was mostly concerned with whipping the boys in the legislature into line for measures the governor and the party wanted. The boss seems to have just as telling a way with the rural legislators from downstate as with the representatives and senators from the city."

No table-pounding by Arvey, says Anderson. "Such pressures as there were were muffled and difficult to detect. . . . If he has on occasions planned moves that might displease the righteous, Arvey has preferred not to share these confidences with Stevenson."

INDIRECT APPROACH

According to Anderson, the cynical newspapermen of Chicago are of two minds as to the relation between the Boss and the Governor. Some assume that Arvey does do the bossing. As for the others—

"Arvey, they say, just can't interfere with a man of Stevenson's stature and is smart enough not to try. Instead of trying to exert pressure on the governor, Arvey has shrewdly applied the heat to the party faithful who surround the governor in the various state jobs."

"If he has felt this indirect pressure, Stevenson hasn't complained. Indeed, on several occasions he has given Arvey high marks on his handling of patron-

age problems and his manner of relating practical politics to the problems of government."

Arvey hasn't given up his practice of using "fronts" in political life, but since "Stevenson is too big," he has to play the old game in a new way. That's Anderson's last word.

It is a salutary reminder that personal corruption is not the only form of boss politics. Actually, the main fact about the relation between Stevenson and the Boss is entirely public, requires no inside gossip to verify, and is also the most compromising, whether or not Stevenson is too big to let Arvey pound the table.

BLIND SPOT

This is the fact that Stevenson, whose political activity permitted Arvey to consolidate his bossdom, has never exercised his well-known moral principles and scruples with relation to the shady political apparatus that lifted him to office and which operates under cover of his administration in the state capital. It is to be wondered what Stevenson's admirers would think of a "liberal" New York mayor who showed a similar moral blind spot with regard to Tammany.

In relation to the Facts, compare the disingenuous statement made by Walter Reuther, writing for the UAW's magazine *Ammunition*: "The charge of machine and boss control is utter nonsense in the face of Governor Stevenson's record in Illinois, for he has been in constant opposition to political bosses and political corruption, and he did more to clean up Illinois politics than anyone in public office."

Stevenson did, of course, clean out the state legacy left by the previous Republican Governor Green and his corrupt administration. But after all, the test of a man's "constant opposition to political bosses" is what he does about the bosses in his own party. On this the record is quite clear, even if (as Anderson indicates) it is probable that Stevenson himself is not subject to machine control.

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