

Independent Political Action Will Aid Labor's Economic Struggles

The minority resolution on the Farmer-Labor Party, submitted to the convention of the Maritime Federation, by Delegate Rathbone of the American Radio Telegraphists, was lost by 14 votes. It called on all affiliated unions and District Councils to assume leadership in organizing local trade union committees to sponsor the formation of local Farmer-Labor parties, and to work for the endorsement and sponsorship of local Farmer-Labor parties by other trade union locals and bodies.

The arguments at the Convention against support even for local Farmer-Labor parties were able to influence the Convention to defeat the minority resolution, and it therefore must be assumed that such arguments can and do influence large numbers of workers throughout the country. It is our intention, therefore, to deal with some of these anti-Labor Party arguments from issue to issue, so that workers can see the fallacy of such arguments.

Our first job, said Harry Lundberg of the Sailors' Union, in arguing against the Farmer-Labor Party, is to organize all the 36 million unorganized before we start organizing political parties. Organizing the Farmer-Labor Party will bring fascism more quickly, said Lundberg, because "as soon as the workers start monkeying with politics" they will lessen their vigilance on the economic field. Economic action, Lundberg's typical syndicalist argument ran, is the only effective force and takes the workers away from effective concentration on economic action. All you need, said Lundberg, is to take over the plants.

Those who make such arguments know that labor is by no means "free from politics" under the set-up. They know that such arguments leave the bosses' political parties a free field in putting through anti-labor laws, leave the courts uncurbed in their issuance of anti-labor injunctions, and nullifying of the slightest gains made in economic struggles; leave the capitalist politicians in office free to use police and troops against strikers.

The truth is that if the working class should continue to allow the old parties to go on controlling Congress, the legislatures, and the courts, then indeed is the workers' vigilance lessened on the economic field.

If labor's own men are in Congress, then laws protecting the gains made through economic struggle will be enacted. If Farmer-Labor judges sit on the benches, then no anti-union injunctions will be issued. If there are real representatives of labor serving as governors and mayors, then neither police nor national guardsmen will be sent against labor, but will be forced to protect labor on the picket line, and the organization of the 36,000,000 unorganized can go ahead so much faster.

That the Farmer-Labor Party would bring fascism quicker is an argument made all the more ridiculous by what has happened in France, where even the bourgeois press admits that the People's Front, of which the Farmer-Labor Party is the American form, has been the sole factor thus far halting the seizure of power by the fascists.

East Bay Strikers Versus Spooner and the Bosses

The workers in Oakland who have struck the California Cotton Mills, the L. A. Young Spring Company plant and the American Can Co. plant, are, despite their newness to strike struggle, displaying splendid solidarity, discipline and determination. In spite of surface appearances, the odds are in their favor.

Against them they have not only the bosses but also the police and a few reactionary labor officials in fairly high position. Police have attacked their picket lines, clubbed and jailed a number of them. The East Bay Chevrolet plant has threatened to order its seat springs from the Young Company's Eastern plant, the Young Company has threatened to close its Oakland plant completely. The strikers called their bluff.

Oakland City Manager Hassler drew up a letter to the Young strikers urging them to return to work under the old conditions pending negotiations, with the understanding that the minimum wage would be 50 cents an hour. Labor Council Sec. Spooner presented it to the strikers and they voted it down overwhelmingly.

They want abolition of piece-work and recognition of their union. They don't want any fancy arbitration maneuvers.

The California Cotton Mill strikers sent their committee to confer with Mr. Spooner. He declined to meet with it so long as the two Communists, Sonia Baltrum and Miles Humphries, were on it. Mr. Spooner insists on concentrating on his own pet peeve—the Red Scare—and to heck with the strikers' elected representatives.

This isn't the first time Mr. Spooner has refused to meet with a committee from a new East Bay union for any reason he had handy.

Meanwhile the strikers maintain splendid solidarity and certainly merit—and need—the support of the other East Bay unions.

A delegate at the last Central Labor Council meeting gave Spooner a proper answer. He said, concerning Spooner's red-baiting, "If the Communists are organizing the workers into the A. F. of L. unions this council is going to give them full support and backing."

Altogether, it would appear that these new unions have more than a good chance of winning.

Deportation of Ewerts From Brazil to Germany Means Their Deaths

The unwarranted arrest and brutal torture of Arthur Ewert and his wife by the Brazilian authorities is now to be climaxed by the callous delivery of these refugees from Nazi Germany into the hands of the fascist executioners.

Formerly a Reichstag deputy, Ewert sought asylum in Brazil together with his wife, Elsie, a well-known writer. In the reign of terror that followed the ill-fated November uprising the Ewerts were arrested and have been imprisoned in Rio de Janeiro ever since. According to affidavits in the possession of the Joint Committee for the Defense of the Brazilian People, Elsie Ewert testifies that she was taken to the cell of her husband, who was held powerless while guards tore his wife's clothes off and beat her with belts and rubber hoses, and twisted her breasts until she fainted. Both were beaten and burned with cigarettes and live electric wires, left without food for long periods, and were not permitted to sleep. Their lives were saved only because of the active work of a visiting American attorney.

Delegations in various cities have already visited the Brazilian Consulates to protest against the imprisonment, torture and scheduled deportation of the Ewerts; demanding their right to seek asylum in a country of their own choosing. Similar protests should be organized throughout California.

Frighten the Corner Where You Are



For the workers, "Pie in the sky when you die;" for the millionaires, strawberry short-cake all year long in the lap of Wall Street. That is the Liberty League philosophy these young people are portraying in one of the floats in New York's United

Youth Day parade on May 30. Capitalism may be heaven on earth for Hearst, duPont and Morgan, but it's a hell of an arrangement in the eyes of American youth.

Farmer-Labor Party Must Be Built on Basis of Broadest Unity

Speech of Earl Browder at First Session of Farmer-Labor Party Conference, Morrison Hotel, Chicago, May 30, 1936

Friends:

This Conference is a most promising beginning to get together the scattered forces of workers, farmers, and middle classes for independent political action. Never was this more needed. The latest Supreme Court decision invalidating the Guffey Act is a challenge that can be met only by an all-inclusive national Farmer-Labor Party drive to put its representatives into Congress. Revelations of the Black Legion in Detroit show how deep the fascist poison is being driven among the people. These trends have their source, their guiding spirit, their financial stimulus, in the Liberty League and Hearst. This was revealed by the LaFollette senatorial investigation into the denials of civil rights.

All the most reactionary forces are now gathering around the Republican Party, determined to fully impose their power on the country. It is impossible for us to believe that Roosevelt will halt this trend toward reaction and fascism in America; he is retreating before reaction and his own party, especially in the South, is itself too deeply reactionary. Only a Farmer-Labor Party can rally the progressive forces of the country, halt the trends toward fascism, and preserve American democratic liberties.

Pledge Communist Support

I speak for the Communists and their associates in pledging full and loyal support to this effort. We are but a small group here. But throughout the country we influence an important and growing movement, which brings to the Farmer-Labor Party energetic and steadfast support. We know that some persons have stayed away from this Conference, stating as their reason that their demand for our exclusion was not adopted. Some who are here may also be influenced by Hearst's anti-red campaign, and may be afraid of association with us. Permit me a few frank words on this question.

Since Al Smith and Hearst declared that even the New Deal stands for the red flag and revolution, it seemed that we Communists should have become almost respectable. The campaign against Roosevelt has as little justification in fact as the campaign against us; he is certainly not communistic. These are the slogans of reaction, designed to confuse, divide and defeat the working population. If we want victory against reaction, then we must not look for excuses to divide,

but rather for all possible ways to unite.

Communists and American Traditions

It is true we Communists are revolutionists. That is our right, guaranteed by the Declaration of Independence. In this we follow the hallowed American tradition, associated with such names as Washington, Jefferson, Tom Paine, and Lincoln. We differ from our forefathers in this respect, only in this—that we come 160 years later, and face a deeper crisis.

We help build the Farmer-Labor Party. We know it is not a revolutionary party. We do not propose to give it a program of revolution, now or later. We do not ask it to adopt communist principles. We ask only that it shall not adopt the Hearst anti-red campaign, which harms the broadest progressive movement more than it does the Communists, and that it allow the Communists to help build the party.

We know that America, while its people are not ready to fight for socialism, is fully ripe for a Farmer-Labor Party. Such a party will not bring socialism, but it will greatly lessen the pains of a later transition to socialism. That is why we can wholeheartedly and fully support the Farmer-Labor Party, even though its program should contain only immediate demands, without abandoning our Communist opinions. We do not want to push its program to the left.

Not Terrorists

Let me briefly repudiate some of the most serious charges made against us. Some say that we 'advocate violence,' that we are conspirators and terrorists, that we are against democracy. That is not true. It is as from correct as if those charges were made against Washington and Lincoln. We know too well how much the toilers suffer from reactionary violence. When, however, we say that we are not pacifists nor non-resisters, we are in the best tradition of Americanism. Since when have Americans been pacifists? We support and fight for the democratic rights of the masses. We want to see them used to the utmost, to gain everything possible by them. We would subscribe to such a declaration against violence which would not be a pacifist repudiation of America's birth as an independent nation or of the great Lincoln.

Don't Seek Control

It has been charged that we seek control of the Farmer-Labor Party. If true, that would be a great stupidity

on our part. Control is the last thing we need or seek. A mass-movement should have no such fears. We will for some time be a small minority, though a useful one. Even if we grow much stronger we will not want or seek control. We want only such influence in the Farmer-Labor Party councils that can be exerted through the democratic process of convincing arguments, with loyal and energetic work.

We want to join all others in building a broad popular movement, of workers, farmers, and middle classes, to protect and advance their own interests.

Can this Conference proceed with its work, with a few Communists in its midst, with confidence that it is on the correct path to success? Yes, it can, if it recalls the recent events in France and Spain, where the people's front, including the Communists, saved those countries from the Hitler system. It can, if it looks over the country and sees, in city after city, in the trade unions, among the unemployed, the youth, the students, the Negroes, among the local Farmer-Labor Parties—everywhere, the most successful movements are those which have full unity, which exclude only enemies, which rally all forces against the real enemy—Wall Street and its agents.

At the proper time I want to make some suggestions toward the program discussion. Now it is sufficient to urge this Conference to adopt the basis of a broad unity, and to fulfill the expectations of a great movement rising throughout America, by deciding to call an all-inclusive National Farmer-Labor Party Convention. Such a Convention can establish this year, in all respects except a presidential ticket, that National Farmer-Labor Party which we need so much. If we begin now, then by 1940 it can become one of the two first parties in the land.

Amendment to Give Power To Regulate Industry Urged

WASHINGTON, D. C.—A constitutional amendment to give Congress power to make laws and to regulate agriculture, commerce, industry and labor, was proposed by Senator Henry F. Ashurst of Arizona, chairman of the Senate judiciary committee.

The proposal is aimed at the Supreme Court, which has nullified all New Deal legislation containing any concessions to labor.

As the result of public protest, reception plans formulated by militaristic groups for the Nazi cruiser Emden were cancelled.

Political Horizons

By Harry Carlisle

People who are accustomed to draw exact lines in old party political affairs as a matter of convenience must be astonished at the various maneuvers in the Democratic and Republican camps in recent weeks, indicating that "black" and "white" often merges into a muddy grey and bearing out the Marxian analysis of the two party system as a capitalist political subversion of labor. This is particularly true when we remember the strategy of building a coalition (fusion) of Republican-Democratic forces used in places like New York during almost every election to defeat the growing strength of Communist and Socialist parties.

A recent front page editorial in the New York Herald-Tribune, a leading Republican organ, declares in favor of nominating a "Democrat of national reputation" for the vice presidency on the Republican ticket.

This is a typical piece of political strategy used to cut across old party lines and draw support from the opposition. The Herald-Tribune points out that the move will aid in "serving not only the Republican Party "but of the millions of Democrats who distrust the Roosevelt administration."

The same need for political sail-trimming explains the attempts made to give the Republican Party a "liberal" face by proposing to incorporate a compromise "States Rights" measure to curb the power of the Supreme Court on the question of social-economic legislation.

The coalition move is strongly backed by Hearst through his newspaper "front" Paul Block, who reprints one of his own editorials as an advertisement in the New York Times, praising the Herald-Tribune stand and calling for a "true Jeffersonian Democrat" to be nominated for the vice presidency on the Republican ticket.

Such a happening is by no means a foregone conclusion, but it indicates Hearst's tactics in seeking a new "in" after being defeated in the battle for control of the California delegation. At the same time it indicates the cool acceptance by capitalist politicians of the basic similarity in the two old parties.

On the other hand the Roosevelt camp, without well defined strategy as yet, is holding a finger in the wind. Roosevelt will undoubtedly pay special attention to California with its large block of convention votes. And a commentator points that it is possible that because of Governor Lehman's decision to withdraw (with the hand of the American Liberty League by no means invisible), Roosevelt may turn to Owen D. Young for support in the Empire state, bringing the influence of General Motors and other finance-capital groups into Roosevelt policy.

However it works out, the bankers stand to win. They have fingers in both pies. They will fight for a clean-cut reactionary program (necessarily disguised by popular planks) but will gladly accept the compromise victory of the Democrats. Owen D. Young is an astute representative of his class. Whether or not he plays a public role by running for office or actively supporting Roosevelt, he will play an important private role in determining policies during the next four years.

Republican demogogy is the order of the day, and Hearst with his powerful press is beginning to reflect this turn every locality. Note how he has seized upon the wide-spread opposition to one-man street cars and is attempting to capitalize upon it by sucking it into Republican channels. They will also possibly soft-pedal attacks on Roosevelt's compromise program, while applying pressure behind the scenes.

We must meet this astute maneuvering with full appreciation of its meaning, taking immediate hold of all vital issues in the lives of the people of California and incorporating them in our drive for a united front, anti-capitalist political program. To the extent that we succeed in arousing mass activity along these lines we will take the wind out of the sails of the Republican-American Liberty League sails, force Roosevelt to at least tacitly accept a partial progressive program, elect a strong bloc of progressives and Farmer-Labor Party representatives which will bring pressure on Roosevelt by militantly voicing the real needs of the people in Congress and in the Assembly chambers, and at the same time lay the basis for the National Farmer-Labor Party.

