

# Against the Labor Party (Militant Reformism) in the U. S. A.

(Continued from December, 1929, issue)

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## AMERICAN REFORMISM

The reader may think that I am trying to "shoot a dead dog" with all these polemics against Pepper. His heritage of adventurist theories, however, still weigh heavy upon our Party. Only recently Comrade Weisbord wanted to shape our strike policy in the South on the basis of not offending the petty-bourgeoisie; hence we must not tire of polemics against Pepper's reformist theories.

Pepper's followers were led astray in the U. S. A. by the fact that reformism in the U. S. does not appear in European clothes. We have no mass social-democratic party, etc., etc., hence, according to them, the task of the Communists is to make the workers first become social-democrats, and then to fight for them, win them back again to the Communist point of view, etc. Of course, if development in the U. S. A. would be the same as in Europe at the time of the development of the social-democratic parties (free competition instead of monopoly capitalism) then the same or very similar process like in Britain would likely be repeated. As it is, very similar tendencies as in *modern* Europe manifest themselves in the U. S. A., particularly since the war, although they appear in somewhat different clothes. Pepper would want to fit the political content of European class relationships of thirty years ago to modern American monopoly capitalism; such things can only be done in Hans von Schaffhausen's stories, not in real life.

The different clothes in which American reformism manifests itself are closely interwoven with U. S. economic development. Before the war imperialism in the U. S. manifested itself in "domestic" form, that is, the Monroe doctrine. The "exceptional" development of the U. S. before the war was based on its domesticity, that is, a semi-continental nation having its natural resources developed by millions of skilled immigrants, providing what one may call a self-expanding market, which was inherent in the very development by this incoming millions of its rich resources. There was no surplus population in the European sense as same was continually absorbed by the Free Land. The class struggle under such circumstances expressed itself not in the desire to abolish the

system, but in the struggle to improve the existing system and a better distribution (better from the point of view of each group) of the tremendous resources.

Under such circumstances the ruling group was always in a position to make concessions if hard enough pressed. The worker had as his ideal not the advancement of his interests as a class; he did not come to the working class after being appropriated by capital like in Europe, or was born a worker and condemned to remain one. No, in the U. S. the worker considered himself when in industry as being temporarily out of luck. *His being a worker was considered by him only as a transitory stage till he got into business for himself.* He had a petty-bourgeois ideal, hence he followed the petty-bourgeois movements politically. He was not against the capitalist system; on the contrary, he strove to emancipate himself by becoming a capitalist himself. Under such circumstances when he was engaged in class struggles which was mostly on the economic end he considered this as only a *transient* necessity, something he had to do in order to get a square deal out of the boss. The worker under such circumstances had no class struggle ideal. This accounts for the appearance and disappearance of the big movements and organizations amongst the American working class and the lack of enduring connection between socialist groups and the masses.

The most ideal conditions existed for the most vigorous development of capitalism. There was very often acute labor shortage, and it paid the bourgeoisie to allow the development of a wide labor aristocracy, concentrating its exploitation continually upon newly arriving foreign workers and the Negroes whom the leaders of the labor aristocracy in the interests of themselves systematically betrayed and disorganized.

Reformism, under such circumstances, manifested itself mainly in the pressure and counter-pressure of various bourgeois and petty-bourgeois groups and the labor aristocracy within the old capitalist parties, and between the antagonistic capitalist groups dominating each of these parties, and reflected the contradictions of capitalist growth, sometimes assuming violent manifestations.

The bourgeoisie was obliged to make many economic and political concessions to the workers, which in reality could, however, be really enjoyed only by the labor aristocracy, but which created considerable illusion amongst the masses as a whole, thus the opposition of the petty-bourgeoisie and labor aristocracy supported by the masses of the most exploited manifested itself (particularly through the "progressive" movements and also the democratic party) in a type of reformism not interwoven with socialist class

struggle ideals and therefore *crude and openly avowed, bluntly denying the class struggle.*

As soon as the petty-bourgeois ideal of the masses of workers of "going into business" became impracticable, that is the development of trusts made the going into business in the cities very difficult and the best land for farming was grabbed off, more militant types of mass movements began to manifest themselves. Many of the workers began to realize that they will *remain workers* the rest of their lives and instead of petty-bourgeois individualistic ideals of going into business, a feeling of solidarity manifested itself and the socialist movement began to assume a mass character. However, the mass of workers had yet to be disillusioned, they had as yet to be convinced by experience that their stay in industry is more than temporary. The old illusions still had powerful sway. Many of the foreign born workers particularly stuck to the petty-bourgeois ideal, aiming to save up their dollars and then go back home to Europe and there go into business.

Thus the "exceptional" type of American capitalist development, exceptionally favorable to the bourgeoisie, produced an "exceptional" type of reformism, a reformism in the image of the American bourgeoisie. The labor aristocracy organized into the American Federation of Labor, being within the confines of capitalist ideology became the driving force for labor reforms at the same time vehemently disclaiming any contamination with socialism, or class struggle ideals. Already before the world war, this exceptional domestic position of U. S. capitalism was coming to an end, but the war contracts for the allies staved off an economic crisis in 1915 and helped to conceal the significance of this turning point in the economic development of the U. S. A. from domesticity to dependence upon the international market. The entry of the U. S. into the war in 1917 extended the war boom. Monopolization during this period grew at a pace it would have taken perhaps several decades of ordinary growth. This also had its effect of enhancing the class solidarity of the workers, and destroying their petty-bourgeois ideal, instead of the petty-bourgeois scab motto of "me first and the devil take the hindmost." For the first time in the history of the U. S. A. solidarity to the extent that four million workers were on strike in the course of one year and this in the basic industries, steel, railways, mines, packing houses, etc., etc. On the other hand we had important sections of the petty-bourgeois being organized into fascist organizations like the Ku Klux Klan, American Legion, etc. Laws being pressed against any form of militant unionism (anti-syndicalist laws), sentences of 10-25 years being handed out to militant agitators and union or-

ganizers for ordinary activity. The Communist Party suppressed, etc. We had a semi-dictatorship regime, in which as far as the masses of workers were concerned their bourgeois rights as established by law did not exist.

Thus we see that the revolutionary situation in Europe had its basic repercussions in the U. S. A. It was not an immediate revolutionary situation as in Europe, but considering particularly the *general strikes of Seattle and Winnipeg* and the *armed march of the miners* in West Virginia in the background of the entire picture—it was the most powerful revolutionary manifestation in the history of the American working class. Basically this period marked, in spite of the “exceptional” position of American capitalism in Versailles, the end of American domesticity and hence of American “exceptionalism.”

American capitalism emerged the strongest out of the world war, and hence was able to quickly stabilize itself. It had the necessary reserve strength to go over to rationalization on a huge scale and thus maintain its advantage and aggressiveness. This stabilization in turn helped to maintain the still powerful petty-bourgeois reformist illusions of the masses and prevented the development of a mass Communist Party in the U. S. A. These petty-bourgeois illusions had their powerful effect even on our Party, and Pepper theorized these illusions into a system. It is necessary to extricate the revolutionary reality of American development from the reformist fantasies of Pepper, in order that the Party can follow a consistent revolutionary line.

#### WHEN ONE CANNOT SEE THE FOREST BECAUSE OF THE TREES

Pepper and Lovestone see the advantage American capitalism has over the others because of its superior resources which, unlike that of other nations were not tied up or exhausted by the war, and, on the contrary, made even more mobile by huge capital accumulation. Hence their conception and theory of “exceptionalism” in theory and practice prescribed for our Party and practiced for six years. They are impressed by the high wage as compared with Europe, and hence they class the American workers as a whole as the labor aristocracy within the proletariat of the world, and the labor aristocracy of the U. S. A. as the labor aristocracy within the labor aristocracy and mind you for six years Pepper was trying (and with considerable success) to orientate our Party upon this very Labor aristocracy within the labor aristocracy upon the special theory that the skilled organized workers are more advanced than the masses of unorganized, semi-skilled and unskilled.

Comrade Varga once said that the reason the American bour-

geoisie pays this high wage rate is because a fat horse can work harder than a lean one. Of course the high wage is also a result of struggle and is not a voluntary wisdom of the American bourgeoisie, but what Pepper fails to see, and maybe Varga too, is that this fat horse *has now to work even harder and is fed even less than before.*

Pepper does not believe that the wage rate in the U. S. A. is falling for the working class as a whole not only from the point of view of intensity of labor, but in the pay rate received per worker as such. Yet it is a fact. The decisive factor for us is not the fact that the American bourgeoisie has exceptional resources to fight its rivals in the world market, but *what do the workers get out of it,* and what effect has this upon them. Monopoly capitalism in the present stage as manifested in the U.S.A., not only strives to maintain high prices, but also to lower the wage rate relatively and absolutely. The American worker cares not a farthing that his wage rate is still higher than in Europe. He is affected by the fact that in comparison to what he got before, *he has to work harder and get less.*

Before the war the frequent scarcity of labor helped to maintain the high wage rate. Agriculture still absorbed the surplus on the labor market. There still was some chance to "go into business." Now all these "opportunities" for the workers are non-existent. They are on the contrary now thrown out by the hundreds of thousands from industry and agriculture. There is between 3-4 million permanently unemployed. A lot the worker cares for the "exceptional" advantage of the American bourgeoisie to steal a march on the other capitalist powers on the question of rationalization (speed-up). What they do see is that their "exceptional" position is being quite rapidly liquidated, and the ones that feel this most acutely is not the organized labor aristocracy, but the 25 million unorganized semi-skilled and unskilled workers. Pepper and Lovestone see the advantage of the American bourgeoisie, but do not see that at the same time this very advantage now drives it out of its domesticity and to the sick capitalist world. They see American imperialism as an all-conquering knight immune to the decay of capitalist stabilization, but do not see and underestimate the prime factor, the revolutionizing effect, this "exceptional" imperialism produces upon the masses, workers, poor farmers and even sections of the urban petty-bourgeoisie.

One who out of habit has a social democratic turn of mind will say: Very well, please tell me how this Europeanization of the American working class manifests itself in actual life? He will say: the masses still follow the capitalist parties. There is no mass

Communist Party, there is not even a mass social-democratic party of the labor party type, etc., etc.

It is true that the American workers are politically very backward. This backwardness arises out of the period of "domesticity" of American capitalism, out of the period of its "exceptional" development, and the illusions of the past hang on more or less because the U. S. as the real victor in the world war is as yet relatively speaking the most vigorous and active part of decadent capitalism. But basically the economic foundations upon which this political backwardness was based is changing and has already changed and hence this political backwardness is already breaking and is bound to break up.

This political backwardness is a great asset to the American bourgeoisie, it is like a good credit account bequeathed from the past, but one can already see the time of its presentation for payment by the working class and the bourgeoisie is preparing for that event, the day of payment is not fixed, so much the worse for the bourgeoisie provided we see our way clearly and prepare the working class for this test.

The question is where is it ordained that the American working class must pass through social-democratic reformism (even if it is the pre-war militant variety). Where is it written that the *skilled* workers in the U. S. must play or are going to play the revolutionary role of their kind in Europe 30 years ago? There is no concrete economic foundation to warrant such an assumption. Important sections of the skilled workers, particularly the most modern variety upon which the American Federation of Labor is orientating itself now (organizers of the detail of production and speed-up). They will play and are playing a reactionary role in post-war imperialism and particularly so in the third period. This is one of the big reasons why European social-democracy is being Americanized.

#### PARLIAMENTARISM VERSUS STRIKE STRUGGLES

ONE with a Social Democratic turn of mind is apt to even in the third period look upon votes in parliamentary elections as the chief criterion of the radicalization of the working class. This is one of the main reason why Pepper and Lovestone after the last presidential elections wrote articles of panicky pessimism as a proof per excellence of the lack of radicalization of the American workers, and in their "analysis of the elections" set a new high mark in their orientation to the right, trumpeting in all tunes their views about the great strength of the American bourgeoisie.

Such points of view is particularly fatal in the U.S.A. as there are millions of workers, Negroes and foreign born (and even natives white and black disfranchised through residential qualifications mainly hitting the poorer classes) disfranchised and most of these are precisely the most exploited working in the basic industries. Furthermore, the corruption in American elections is such that a revolutionary party receiving the votes of hundreds of thousands, is more likely than in these times to be told that it only received a few thousand.

The political backwardness of the American workers plus these factors, produce the phenomena that even in prosperity years since the war we have 300,000 workers on strike yearly, while in stormy years the strike wave went up as high as 4 million and yet our Party and even the reformist socialist party (the latter draws also upon the petty-bourgeois elements) received only 50,000, and 200,000 votes respectively. There are certain peculiarities about American bourgeois parliamentarism arising out of the economic development, that is the high trustification and concentration of all real power into the hands of big capital, which made parliament an easily corrupted talking shop, the decadence of American parliamentary institutions was strongly evident already long before the war and is now like in the rest of the capitalist countries particularly accentuated, the masses reacted to this in the sense that their reliance upon getting economic improvement is not upon parliament, but upon direct struggle with the capitalists. Their interest in elections was rather to prevent state interference, and to maintain their right to organize and strike and get whatever other minor advantages, which with the favorable economic development of American capitalism they thought they could get through *friends* in the old capitalist parties. The decadence and corruption of American parliamentarism accounts for the fact that amongst radical workers there always was a strong anti-parliamentary tendency. However, as long as capitalism was in a position to make concessions on the economic field these tendencies did not strongly affect the masses and particularly during presidential elections which created the illusion of getting a hold of the real powers, *the executive power*, there was and still is real mass interest.

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The present stage is characterized, however, by direct interference of the State in strike struggles by the passing of anti-labor laws, by the further concentration of power in the executive machinery, and by the direct arbitrary exercise of might and its utilization even beyond the bourgeois laws against the workers. Hence there is the possibility of rousing the masses to working class poli-

tical action. The lessons of this can of course be taught to the workers through agitation arising from participation in the elections. But in the real sense, due to the very character of present ossified parliamentarism, it can even more effectively be done thru street demonstrations and political strikes arising out of the economic conflicts. Parliamentarism of the competitive period of capitalism in the Social Democratic sense as embodied in the Labor Party theory, even with the best intentions has not the same revolutionary sense today, particularly in the U.S.A., unless it is connected as a mere subsidiary factor to the direct clashes against the State power arising out of the economic struggle leading to higher forms of struggle for the seizure of power by the proletariat. Strike struggles in the third period, where capitalist stabilization maintains the equilibrium of a tight rope dancer have, as the Tenth Plenum points out, a higher political significance than in all other preceding periods. Strike struggles are now a higher form of struggle and politically backward masses learn from these direct clashes with the state, which at present means also with the reformists and social fascists, more quickly and more thoroughly than from the new parliamentary marionette show, provided we know how to politicalize these strikes and thus help the masses to understand in a revolutionary sense the lessons derived therefrom.

It is assumed by the Labor party theoreticians Pepper-Lovestone, etc., that the American working class had no experience with reformism, that it must pass through this stage of reformism on its way to Communism like in Europe, a purely mechanical conception. To say that the American workers had no experience with reformism is of course, not correct. They had a good dose of petty-bourgeois reformism; they did not become Social Democrats as a result of it, because it was the American variety devoid of class struggle philosophy. Far from this being deplored it can be turned into an asset for us now, if we know how, because this type of reformism is quite crude and now returns directly into reaction while the class solidarity (due to the changed objective situation) is now for the American workers a practical economic necessity. One must indeed have a Social Democratic turn of mind, to now insist on fine distinctions between the difference of bourgeois reformism and the fine spun social-democratic variety at a time when the later variety is turning into social fascism and on the basis of that prescribe for the American workers as shortcut to Communism via the reformist path. This kind of theory also presupposes that the American workers learn nothing from international experience from the advent to imperialist practice of the Labor Party Social Democracy, and their so-called "left" critics, etc. Decadent cap-



italism, decomposes the classic bourgeois parliamentary institutions and concentrates all power into the executive machinery. Anyone with but slight knowledge of the U. S. A. knows that this is going on at a fast tempo, and we can well make certain profitable comparisons with the experience of the Russian workers, who learned their political lesson through huge strike waves and street demonstrations against an autocratic regime. In the U. S. A. we can make a greater use of parliamentary elections, of course, than in Russia, but the peculiarity under conditions of monopoly capitalism like the U. S. is precisely that the bastilles of finance capital will be shaken through revolutionary repercussions, having their base in huge economic struggles and the thunder of this heavy artillery will find its echo in parliamentary elections. Any other conception of participation in parliamentarism leads inevitably to reformism when applied to a highly developed imperialist country like the U. S. A.

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Class relationships as between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie are expressed in their clearest form in the U. S. on the economic battlefield and not in parliament, and this will be much more so in the immediate future. *This is the acid test as to whether the workers need a reformist bridge or not.* When we look about we see that when it comes to this it is a question of sink or swim with the bourgeoisie or the proletariat. The trade union bureaucracy and the "socialists" including their "lefts" Thomas, Muste and Co., would not even think of such a thing as organizing the masses of unorganized in the basic trustified industry because such a thing is a real revolutionary deed and in the third period it takes a Communist to do what to them seems like running one's head against a stone wall. No, these gentlemen, whether bourgeois reformists like the trade union bureaucrats or social-democratic reformists do not only not undertake such revolutionary tasks, they are in this case to be found on the capitalist side. The same as in Europe when there is a strike. Thus the masses learn who is for and who is against them, and this is the reason why our Party has been leading almost all the strikes of importance in the last 3 years, and where we were not, the strikers in their own fashion used many of our methods. And who will say that those masses who must go through the crucible of mass strikes under the monopoly of capitalism, which, as we already had occasion to see, means in the U. S. A. semi-civil war conditions, will fear to cast a piece of paper in the form of a vote for our candidates? And assuming the strikes are lost here and there, and the workers intimidated as individuals and therefore do not cast their votes for us. *Votes or no*

*votes, they will follow us again when the growth of proletarian solidarity makes a new advance possible.* Those that count our influence by votes know very little indeed about the U. S. A. with its most numerous proletariat in the world, living in compact industrial centers and working in huge plants. When the situation is ripe, as has been shown by past experience, little effort mobilizes these unorganized masses by the hundreds of thousands, and for that task in spite of all our shortcomings we are better prepared than ever before.

In spite of appearances to the contrary the realities of the class struggle in the U. S. A. show basically the same tendencies, in some respects even in a higher form, (less social-democratic parliamentary illusions and more direct struggle) as in other capitalist countries.

The young unorganized American proletariat will learn the political meaning of the class struggle and the class character of the capitalist state chiefly through strike struggles, while in other capitalist states the exposure of the class character of the state was to a far greater extent the result of parliamentary activity and election campaigns. Only Communists will or can lead strikes at present without betraying the masses. Anyone that really realizes this and does not have his brains befogged by social-democratic conceptions and illusions will see the futility, the utopianism of the entire labor party theory, insofar as it is advocated as a reformist bridge, in a period of fierce class struggles.

#### THE CONCEPTION OF A NON-REFORMIST LABOR PARTY

But there are comrades who on the basis of the decision of the VI Congress for a *Labor Party from below* advocate a non-reformist labor party. Thus at the Cleveland left-wing trade union conference, August 1, which was under the leadership of our Party, a resolution was passed which, amongst other things, contains the following: "That the activities of this conference (organization of the unorganized, etc.) must help lay the basis for a broad mass Party, a labor party which, unlike the British Labor Party, will not be a tool of imperialism and will bring together all workers on a basis of united front from below."

It further states that this party must be against the left Social Democrats Muste, Thomas, and against the progressives, etc. The program must be: to fight for the 7-hour day, for social insurance and "*for the ending of capitalist exploitation.*" (My emphasis.)

Further on this resolution, after explaining that this Labor Party from below is to lead the workers to sharper class struggles under the guidance of a revolutionary proletarian party, presumably the Communist Party, the resolution ends up by saying this should be

done in such a way "*that no reformist weakening of our struggle can result therefrom, nor any reformist elements sneak into its ranks*" (My emphasis).

This kind of conception is no accident, it is a product of experience that has taught us that in these fierce days all reformists whether they call themselves "left" or what not, in face of monopoly capital and its state, fight on the side of capital and betray the masses. These "gentlemen" are to be found in the capitalist vanguard against the Communists. They serve the purpose of quelling revolutionary upheavals, hence reformist labor parties of Pepper-Lovestone type. Such a situation, would, if it was possible to assemble them, quickly divide into Communists on one side, and waverers and traitors on the other. Under present circumstances such a party would not be an advance along the path of revolution, but a chain on the legs of the proletariat forged by the Communists themselves. This is a task for "left" social democrats, for traitors, not for us. On the other hand, the conception of a "pure" Labor Party—one *without reformists*, is a negation of the whole labor party theory in fact while still sticking to it in principle. This conception of a Labor Party can only be applied to a Communist Party, but the purpose it serves is to hide the identity of the Communist Party, to hide its revolutionary role, to becloak its independent leading role. Through it the Communists themselves create an ideological wall between themselves and their sympathizers, who instead of being drawn to the Party, hesitate between this proposal of a left labor party and the Communist Party. This conception is essentially a remnant of our labor aristocracy orientation. Many of the skilled workers follow us for our honesty and militancy in fighting for their demands, but prefer to come to us only under the camouflage of progressive committees, Labor Party, etc. We reflect their ideology when we hide our Party under the reformist cloak. The semi-skilled and unskilled will and are coming to us without any camouflage, and our own half-heartedness as expressed in this theory only serves to hamper this process and works into the hands of the left Social Democrats, impeding the development of a mass Communist Party.

The Labor Party advocates evidently do not understand the significance of the fact that in spite of our labor aristocracy orientation followed by us for the last six years, the Party's influence amongst the semi-skilled and unskilled is unmeasurably greater than amongst the skilled. If this was not so, how could we with such ease get a hold of sporadic strikes in most parts of the country during the last 3 years, *and did so as a Communist Party*. Of course, we cannot expect the mass of strikers to join the Com-

munist Party, but now with our *new union* policy, the formation of an independent revolutionary trade union center, *we can organize far more effectively the masses of workers into these economic organizations* and politicize them directly through our influence in mass struggles. Hence the argument that through the Labor Party policy we have an approach to the masses at large can no longer be used as an apology for the Labor Party theory. There has been altogether too much of a tendency in our Party to retreat before the slander and ostracism of the bourgeois press against the Communists, so much so that our united front policy became *a policy of hiding the Party, of hiding Communists and Communism*. The Party cannot perform its role in the third period with such an ideology. Furthermore, those members who think that by calling a Communist Party a Labor Party like the Cleveland resolution in fact does, the hampering influence of bourgeois ostracism can be avoided are very much mistaken, for any organization that carries out a militant policy which in the present period means Communist policy, is immediately "ostracised" as Bolshevik, as Communist, as Reds, etc., and those that can thus be intimidated, religiously stay away from it, if they can help it. We had already enough experience in this respect.

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But the greatest danger arising out of this half-way between the Communist Party theory, is that in spite of all good intentions, it provides in fact a half-hearted tendency in the struggle against opportunism as a whole. This is inevitable; for instance, how could the Party effectively struggle against social-reformism, which was running high during MacDonald's visit to the U. S. A. when, as the Cleveland resolution has it, we advocated *a good Labor Party against MacDonald's bad one*. Does not this remind one of the left Social Democrats Muste-Thomas slogans of the A. F. of L. policies being alright in the main, but misapplied and badly carried out by bad leaders. It is but natural that the Party with such conceptions could not and did not utilize MacDonald's visit for an effective campaign against social-reformism. This half-heartedness in policy in the third period inevitably leads those that stick to it to opportunism. One of the main reasons why our Party does not have a membership somewhere in proportion to its influence, is that up till recently it wavered between an orientation upon the skilled and unskilled, that is up to a year and a half ago it was in fact orientating upon the skilled. The Party itself has a social composition of manly skilled workers, one can easily imagine how from this petty-bourgeoisified swamp the Party got all kinds of opportunist diseases. Finally the Party orientated itself more and

more clearly upon the left sections of the skilled going over to the semi-skilled and unskilled. The Cleveland labor party resolution expresses the half-hearted attitude of the left skilled stuffed with a Communist prayer.

Let the Party become predominantly the *Strike Party of the Unorganized* without any half-heartedness, and it will grow stronger and healthier in ideology, influence and numbers, and with this as a social base under the leadership of the Comintern, it will become the leader of all exploited. Let its political line be concentration on politicizing the strike struggles of the masses carrying these exposures of the class character of the capitalist state into parliamentary election. *Anti-election tendencies* that may arise in this connection can be far more easily overcome than this opportunist parliamentary social-democratic tendency embodied in the labor party theory. The labor party theory, a product of the American "exceptionalism" theory of Pepper-Lovestone in any form has no revolutionary role to perform, any more than the Social Democrats right or left have in Europe or America, and must be completely liquidated as an obstacle to the Party's progress.

The Cleveland resolution is a distortion of the "Labor Party from below"—slogan of the VI Congress, Labor Party from *below* means more or less temporary united front election committees arising as a result of the struggle itself and led by the Communists and not the *top* formation of a national labor party organization as embodied in the Cleveland resolution.

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There are those who state that a Labor Party is inevitable; therefore, why not anticipate it by forming one ourselves and thus paralyzing its possibility to mislead the workers! Of course far be it from me to deny the possibility of the capitalists when confronted with a mass movement led by us, counterposing to it, farmer labor parties, labor parties, etc. Just as even now they use the A. F. of L. in an attempt to paralyze strike movements led by us. Undoubtedly, such parties will have their influence in confusing the workers, and will serve like in Europe, as a fig-leaf to reaction. The American bourgeoisie under strong pressure may accommodate itself to use in this respect European experience, but such parties whether we like it or not, will inevitably attract wavering elements, since it is inevitable that politically backward workers who go with us in strikes because of economic necessity, do not so readily shed their petty-bourgeois ideology acquired through decades. We cannot divert and confuse our Party in order to create a special church to save these backward souls, which when attracted by the success-

ful and grandiose clamor, usually accompanying the formation of such a Party under such circumstances are more likely than not to leave us any way. Let us draw some lessons from our experiences with similar ventures with the Federated Farmer-Labor Party, etc., etc.

Nor will there be the situation for playing affiliation politics, for such a petty-bourgeois labor party will rise in the very teeth of the struggle against Communism, and it will do so at a time of sharper and higher forms of class differentiation than what was the case in 1923. On the other hand, the tempo of the world revolution and its effect upon the huge American proletariat may be such that we may have a fascist dictatorship in the U. S. A. without any preliminary fig-leaves in the form of labor parties. Just as the highest forms of class struggle are manifestly possible now, although we have no mass social-democratic parties, nor mass unions representative of the whole industrial system as in Europe. There is the danger of Schematicism in any theory that prescribes the same outward forms to the manifestation of class contradictions, arising from the peculiarities of American development. The sooner the Party comes forward in its independent leading role and discards the absurd and utopian theories of hide and seek, of reformist and non-reformist Labor Parties, the more effectively will it be able to overcome "fig-leaf" parties that may be formed and win over the majority of the working class. *Let us unfurl proudly amongst the masses the revolutionary banner of Communism.*

