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# “Left” Proposals at the Socialist Party Convention

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In the year 1928 the Socialist Party at its national convention [New York: April 13-17, 1928] declared to officially substitute Ford for Marx, and took the class struggle clauses out of its constitution. Hoover heralded a new day — a day with a “chicken in every pot and two automobiles in every garage.” Hillquit, Lee, Thomas & Co. decided that the class struggle had become out of style side by side of the chicken pot and the two auto garage.

Of course it did not all really happen so suddenly. The class struggle which was burdening the Socialist Party all these years in the constitution did not really stop the Socialist Party and its leaders from singing praises to “organized capitalism” and fighting against the interests of the toiling masses. The Socialist Party which was always dominated by an opportunist leadership stopped being a working class party with the split that followed the war and the Russian Revolution with the crystallization of the Communist Party in the USA after the split in September 1919, when in this country all the revolutionary elements in the old Socialist Party organized a section of the Communist International, the International of Lenin. But until 1928 the Socialist Party leadership could not summon enough courage to openly declare that it was the third party of capitalism. That it had abandoned the path of the class struggle and the abolition of the capitalist system for a new faith, a faith in the permanency of capitalism, the “new,” the “organized capitalism” of Ford and Hoover.

In the year 1928 and the early part of 1929 the Socialist Party openly gave up Marx, whom they had vulgarized and betrayed for years, and adopted Hooverism and Fordism.

## **Crisis Exposes Socialists.**

But history played a trick on the Socialist Party. Just at the moment when they had openly proclaimed their new faith, the faith which they had worshipped for a long time without getting full due, the capitalist system became engulfed in what turned out to be the most severe crisis in the history of capitalism. Marx says somewhere that the capitalist system just behaves like that. That before a crisis it appears to the naked eye to be more strong and robust than ever. And now we can see that the severity of the crisis, the deepest economic crisis in the history of capitalism which set in with the world war and the Russian Revolution, gave to the naked eye the appearance of capitalism being more healthy, more robust than ever in its history. It is thus that all the economists, publicists, professors, and all sorts of apologists of capitalism from the Hoovers to the Hillquits and Thomases got fooled. For they could only view events with the “naked eye.”

But already in 1927 the leader of the Communist International, Comrade Stalin, speaking before the 15th Russian Party Congress [December 2-19, 1927], predicted that the events that were later clear to the “naked eye” were on

the way. The Communist International and its leader, Comrade Stalin, could foresee these events because it does not view events with the "naked eye" but is armed with the powerful "searchlight" of Marxism-Leninism. And all those who do not follow in the path of Marxism-Leninism, all those who deviated from the path of Marxism-Leninism, could not but be exposed as fools by the development of events. Inside the Communist Party there were the Cannons and the Lovestones who had become infected with the propaganda of Hooverism, the robustness of capitalism, and thus exposed themselves as foreign elements of the Party of the proletariat and were expelled.

Only Marxism-Leninism is capable of analyzing these contradictions, only the proletariat has the will to change the system of private property and exploitation. The Socialist Party not being a party of the working class, the Socialist Party is not based on the teachings of Marx and Lenin, therefore could not but find itself on the question of the crisis, as on all other questions, in the camp of the bourgeoisie.

### **Socialist Theory of "Temporary" Crisis.**

The Socialist Party found it very difficult to admit this error — as did the Socialists the world over. They tried hard to hold on to their theory of "organized capitalism" which had torn to naught, as Algernon Lee proclaimed, the teachings of Marx which were applicable "to an earlier period." Together with the Hoovers and Mellons, the Butlers and the Chases, the Hillquits and Thomases spoke about the "temporary" character of the present crisis. The predicted with Hoover that soon it will be over. And Jay Lovestone also saw the crisis just a result of some bad handling of things in Wall Street, but that capitalism was basically sound and still "on the upgrade."

But again things did not happen as the Socialists wanted. The crisis grew worse, and it

is still growing worse. The attacks on the masses increased and are still increasing. The Communist Party and the revolutionary trade movement place itself at the head of the growing struggles of the masses. March 6th, 1930, when over a million of unemployed demonstrated under the leadership of the Communist Party, showed to the capitalists the danger. It showed that the Socialist Party, in order to fulfill its tasks as the main social support of the capitalists, must change its "line" in order to be able to block the growth of the revolutionary movement in order to be able to do its share in trying to save the capitalist system. Finer division of labor between the open parties of capitalism and the Socialist Party, the third party of capitalism, became necessary.

### **"Left" Socialists are Old Betrayers.**

This explains the new songs in the Socialist Party. But they are being sung by the same treacherous chorus — and with the same aims to drug the working class into passivity. A new "group" has been formed in the Socialist Party known as the "Militants." These "Militants" are ministers and intellectuals, middle class elements that in 1928 and 1929 led in the praise of organized capitalism and "class peace." It is they who were the apostles of the B and O Plans, of labor banking, of harmony between capital and labor. It is they who formed the bridge and worked for the conversion of the Socialist Party into an open liberal party. And it is these gentlemen who are now the spearhead in the Socialist Party for a "new deal," for a change of "line." It is because these gentlemen are more conscious in the role of stopping the growth of the Communist movement and because they are not tied by their immediate interests to the AFL bureaucracy as are the Hillquits, Waldmans, Pankens, and Karlins, that they can best carry out the "division of labor" given to them by the capitalist class.

### Deeper Crisis, More "Left" Phrases.

These gentlemen, the "Militants," have come forward with a program of their own for the coming Socialist Party convention. There will appear in the *Daily Worker* a number of articles dealing with the "Left" proposals of the "Militants" on such questions as trade union policy, Soviet Union, war, etc. In a subsequent article I shall deal with their proposals about "unity." Here I wish to merely deal with the attitude towards the class struggle. And on this fundamental question there is agreement in the Socialist Party. In the DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES of the Socialist Party we find that the Socialist Party in the name of Hillquit, O Neal, and Laidler states that **"the socialist movement grows out of the revolutionary class struggle."** And further, **"the more capitalism develops the more does it demonstrate its unfitness to serve general human interests."**

What happened to the writings of 1928 and 1929 that the class struggle theory has proven false in the face of a new capitalism that brings greater and greater benefits to all, including the toiling masses? Of course, one should not ask such embarrassing questions of the Hillquits and Thomases. But it is exactly this question that the workers must ask. It is exactly that taking out and "putting in" the class struggle that unmasks the role of the Socialists as the main social support of the capitalists. It is the attitude to the class struggle that unmasks the Socialists as the agents of the bosses in the ranks of the working class, whom they are not trying to mislead in order to help the capitalists to carry through their program of hunger, terror, and imperialist war.

### Socialists Fear "Ruin of Civilization (Capitalism) and "Rise of Some New Form of Class Rule" (Dictatorship of Proletariat).

And if any worker has any doubts about the role of the Socialist Party, the same DECLARA-

TION OF PRINCIPLES furnishes proof beyond doubt as to the aims of the Socialist Party and its betrayal of every struggle of the workers. Says the declaration: **"...nor does it (the SP) think of its present task as being the negative one of destroying capitalism... Such a cataclysm might result in the ruin of civilization (read: capitalism, —J.S.) or in the rise of some new form of class rule."**

So now we have it. The Socialist Party is to put the class struggle back in its DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES. And what for? In order to fight against capitalism? In order to destroy the capitalist system? In order to realize the rule of the proletariat? Oh, no. They have just told us that they do not conceive their duty to be a "negative" one of destroying capitalism. They have just told us that this would result in the "ruin of civilization." And what is this civilization? It is good old capitalism. The Socialists certainly do not want to ruin civilization (capitalism) — or it may result in some "new form of class rule." And what may this class rule be?

We have just been told that the "socialist movement grows out of the revolutionary class struggle" and that there are two classes. Then what class rule are the Socialists afraid of? Is it perhaps the rule of capitalists? But even the Socialists will not be so stupid as to tell us that now we have the rule of the working class. They will readily admit that now we have the rule of the capitalists. Then what rule can there be otherwise than the present class? Of course the proletariat. They are afraid of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. They are trying to destroy the Dictatorship of the Proletariat which already rules over one-sixth of the globe. They are trying to save the rule of the capitalists, the Dictatorship of the Capitalist Class. And it is for this reason that the Socialist Party, fearing either the "ruin of civilization (capitalism)" or "some new form of class rule (Dictatorship of the Proletariat)," which of course means the same thing, are trying hard to save capitalism. And once

on this job they are, of course, ready to more than give a helping hand to the ruling class to get out of the present crisis, so that the Socialist Party shall be able **“to devote its efforts above all to the duty of preparing within capitalist society the conditions necessary for building of the Cooperative Commonwealth.”**

This requires that the burdens of the crisis shall be placed upon the shoulders of the masses. That the masses shall starve and not fight for unemployment insurance. That the masses shall accept and not fight wage cuts. That the masses shall be ready to die in new imperialist war in order to save capitalism. That the masses shall be ready to fight against the Soviet Union. But the reader may ask, “Are not the Socialists proclaiming that they are for unemployment insurance, against wage cuts, against war, etc.?” Of course they do.

### **Words Versus Deeds.**

But Lenin has already taught us that “he who believes in words is an idiot.” The words of

the Socialists are but to catch the inexperienced masses and mislead them. To cover up their foul deeds with radical phrases. Their Declaration of Principles makes things more than clear. Put the class struggle back again to fool the masses and then do everything possible to stop the possibility of “ruin of civilization” or “some new form of class rule.”

The Communist Party is the only Party of the working class. It is the only Party that stands on the basis of the class struggle of the exploited against the exploiters. Yes, the Socialist Party believes in the class struggle. But it represents and fights for the CAPITALIST CLASS. The working class under the leadership of the Communist Party will carry on a struggle in defense of the interests of the workers and make it more and more difficult for the capitalists to overcome the crisis at the expense of the workers.

*Edited by Tim Davenport.*

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