

MARXIST EDUCATIONAL BULLETIN

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A MARXIST ANALYSIS OF THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN

(Introductory note: This is the first of a series of educational bulletins, whose purpose it will be to present a Marxist analysis of the issues facing the working class today. This bulletin will be divided into 2 sections: 1) a general consideration of Farmer-Laborism 2) the specific problem of the coming municipal campaign. Appended is a bibliography for more detailed consideration of the subject.

I-Farmer-Laborism--- The revolutionary Marxist viewpoint towards a labor party is determined by the following consideration: does it play the progressive role of organizing the workers into an organization independent of the class enemy, with an independent working class program, with its own independent working class representatives and candidates. In the pre-imperialist era of rising, expanding capitalism, when the bourgeoisie was in a position to yield concessions to the workers, the Labor Party, as for instance in Britain, was able to serve this function to an extent, by organizing large masses of workers independently in the parliamentary struggle for their immediate demands. However, in this era of declining, contracting and decaying capitalism of imperialism, when the contradictions of capitalist society are most acute--the workers are faced with such problems as war, fascism, permanent unemployment, problems which can only be solved by an attack on the very foundations of society, by its revolutionary overthrow. Moreover the bourgeoisie cannot afford to grant further concessions to the workers, but must on the contrary withdraw those previously granted in order to safeguard its decreasing profits; so that even in the struggle for immediate demands, the workers must turn away from parliamentarism to direct mass action. In the present period, then, when the tasks facing the workers force them inevitably toward a revolutionary orientation, without which these tasks cannot be solved, it becomes a matter of life and death for the capitalist class to keep these leftward moving workers securely bound to it. In achieving this end the ruling class, as in all crucial situations, revives the invaluable aid of its servitors, the trade union bureaucracy, the "labor lieutenants of the capitalist class". The chief method used for this purpose is --the labor party. Thus we see that the labor party serves the function, not of separating the workers from the class enemy, but of channelizing their leftward development into harmless, reformist, and non-class directions. In the light of these considerations, Socialists cannot agitate for the initiation or formation of a labor or farmer-labor party, for this would mean to aid in the duping the workers, to sow false illusions among them. Revolutionary Socialists consider it their duty rather to explain to the workers the true nature of reformism, the true character of a labor party in the present epoch, and to agitate directly for a revolutionary party as the only party able to affect the political separation of the working class and to fulfill its ultimate and immediate interests.

But let us turn from abstract theory to concrete examples of modern labor parties, and we will find that they have come through for the capitalist class in every crucial situation. The British labor party won the workers for the support of the imperialist war, broke the 1926 general strike and now support the colonial suppression and armament program of the British imperialists. The Minnesota FLP sent in the National Guard in an attempt to break the Minnesota truck drivers strike in 1934. The New York American Labor Party was formed for the express purpose of garnering in the workers votes for capitalist candidates. Nor is it purely accidental that all these labor parties have served the bourgeoisie so faithfully, for it was for this very purpose that they were formed, because in the present era of imperialism a party which attempts to achieve its ends within the framework of capitalist property relations and the capitalist state cannot and never will do otherwise. Therefore we say to those who condemn these as bad labor parties, and call for a "good, militant, class, mass labor party of struggle", that they are harboring idle, futile dreams, divorced from all reality.

Where a Labor or Farmer-Labor Party is already in existence, the attitude of Marxists toward it is determined by concrete conditions of the specific situation; by the attitude of the workers toward it, the nature of its class support, the state of the revolutionary party itself at the given time and place, etc. Tactics employed in relation to them may consist of outright affiliation, critical support, or direct rivalry both in the parliamentary and other forms of activity. The third tactic is the only policy consistent with revolutionary Socialist integrity in the New York City municipal election campaign, where the ALP has endorsed the prodigy of Wall Street, the unprincipled capitalist demagogue--F. H. LaGuardia.

II. THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN: LaGuardia was put into office by that section of the NY capitalist class that objected to the extravagant graft of Tammany Hall, because it raised real estate taxes, made city bonds insecure and generally cut into their profits. They needed some one who would run their affairs more efficiently, cut down their expenses, shift the burden further on to the backs of the workers, and

and at the same time win their support and allegiance. La Guardia was the ideal candidate for this job. He was nominated by the infamous "Committee of 1000", a bankers organization supported by the Republican Party, the economic royalists of yesteryear. His first campaign manager was W. H. Chadbourne, one of the largest investors in South American Corporations. La Guardia was supported by Winthrop Aldrich, president of Chase National Bank--the city's largest creditor. And finally, the re-actionary press, The Sun, The Herald Tribune, et al.

LA GUARDIA'S RECORD:

- (1) Sales Tax, the most vicious form of taxing the poor.
- (2) Kill the investigation of negro living standards after the Harlem riot.
- (3) Broke the 1934-taxi strike. (4) Broke the ship-yard strike two months ago.
- (5) Helped break the meat strike two weeks ago. (6) Cut wages of municipal employees and vetoed the 30-hour week bill. (7) His police broke up the Columbus Day anti-fascist demonstration in 1935. (8) La Guardia spoke at the Italian Fascist Rally this October 12th. (9) His Transit Commission refuses to recognize the Union on the Independent Subway. (10) Cut the school budget.

AND MAHONEY:

Succeeds in fooling nobody. He too is a capitalist politician, representing the alliance between corrupt Tammany and the Roosevelt-Farley machine. His purpose is to get jobs for the boys. But because this is so obvious to everyone, because he cannot hide behind the skirts of a "Labor Party" he is not half as dangerous as La Guardia.

WHOM SHALL LABOR SUPPORT?

THE COMMUNIST PARTY: answers this by openly supporting the candidate of Rockefeller, Guggenheim and Aldrich. It has become the tail of the liberal-trade-union bureaucratic kite. Has it forgotten that La Guardia is a cog in the Roosevelt War-Machine and that in case of war this American Legion patriot will be among the first to attempt to corral labor for war support? Of course not!! For the C.P. itself has become an important link in this machine and performs the self-same purpose. Two years ago the C.P. called La Guardia a tool of Wall St., a Fascist. Today he represents "progress" against "reaction". This about-face is consistent with their Peoples Front line and, by it, the C.P. has joined the lists of the class-enemy and the betrayers of the working-class.

THE NORMAN THOMAS SOCIALIST PARTY: opposed both Capitalist candidates in the last Presidential election. But they too, have about-faced. They are "opposed" to La Guardia, but obligingly withdraw their own candidate. They denounce class-collaboration in theory; but in practice they join the same Peoples Frontists band.

THE ONLY INDEPENDENT LABOR CANDIDATE: is JAMES P. CANNON, of the Socialist Party (Left Wing). To revolutionary socialists this campaign presents an unusual opportunity to present their program and unmask the betrayers, as well as to test the number of adherents to the revolutionary program. The Revolutionary Socialists point the only way out--the road of independent working class action, for a WORKERS PROGRAM.

A WRITE-IN VOTE FOR JAMES P. CANNON IS A VOTE FOR SOCIAL-

ISM AND FOR INDEPENDENT WORKING-CLASS ACTION!!

