
The American Labor Alliance.

An Editorial — August 1921.

by Otto Branstetter

Unsigned Editorial, attributed to National Secretary Branstetter, published in
The Socialist World (Chicago), v. 2, no. 7 (Sept. 1921), pp. 2-3.

With the organization of the American Labor Alliance there has apparently been another “Socialist” party created, to still further confuse and divide the workers.

There is, however, nothing new about this American Labor Alliance but its name. It is simply an alias of the United Communist Party, camouflaged in an attempt to secure the support of the workers under false pretenses.

The Communists have utterly failed to make good in America. Their pet theories are all exploded and their plans for the immediate overthrow of the capitalist system through “revolutionary mass action” have been abandoned. The organization of the American Labor Alliance is an admission not only of their failure but of the correctness of the Socialist Party’s policies and tactics.

The split in the Socialist Party in this country was a reflex of European conditions and would not have occurred had the members been thorough socialists and understood the economic basis of social movements. The most interesting phenomenon of the controversy was the fact that those members who least understood economic and social conditions in the United States and whose program was absolutely unrelated to any actual fact or condition existing in this country, were the loudest in their claims to scientific reasoning.

They arrogantly assumed to themselves all revolutionary wisdom and were the self-appointed and infallible interpreters and executors of Marx

and Engels. They assumed to be Neo-Marxists, Neo-Socialists, and Neo-Revolutionists when in reality they were merely Neo-Nuts.

In Boston, one of them expected to “be dead on the barricades inside of six months.” In New York one of them dropped a college course in law because it required two years more to complete it and by that time “the revolution will be here and my training as a lawyer would be useless.”

In Chicago one of them was opposed to calling the conference to organize the American Freedom Foundation or any similar steps for the release of political prisoners, because the revolution was “imminent” and the immediate need was a national conference “to organize the revolution.” Another one was opposed to the party buying a headquarters because, as he revolutionaryly explained, “in less than a year you can take your pick of any building in Chicago.”

And from all over the country came protests against any steps for the release of political prisoners except [via] the scientific, revolutionary method of “revolutionary mass action.”

It was these visionaries who repudiated political action, denounced all legislative reforms, and opposed all attempts at securing the release of political prisoners.

It was these visionaries who organized the Communist and the Communist Labor Parties and, later, the United Communist Party. The latter was an avowedly secret, illegal organization which was to take the place of the Socialist Party

and organize the workers for the revolution which was just around the corner.

They denounced the Socialist Party and vilified its leaders for refusing to accept their wild-eyed theories and impractical, visionary plans. And to prove their own revolutionary character they joined with the Department of Justice and the American Legion in attacking the Socialist Party and attempting to destroy it.

We may as well be perfectly frank and confess that in this attempt they made more progress than in any other. They have not destroyed capitalism, they have not brought about the revolution, they have not succeeded in uniting or organizing the working class. They have done nothing, and have made no progress towards doing anything which they denounced the Socialist Party for not doing.

Their only accomplishment up to the present time is the weakening of the Socialist Party and the radical labor movement of America. But much as they may desire to do so they can not lay claim to even this discreditable success; they must divide the dishonor with the Chambers of Commerce, the American Legion, the Department of Justice, and all the other agencies of American capitalism which have been working to the same end.

In all else the Communists in America have

failed. The American worker is not ready for the revolution. He is not interested in joining secret, illegal organizations. He is interested in immediate demands, in political action, in open and above board advocacy of what he considers to be to his interest.

The organization of the American Labor Alliance by the Communists is a confession of these facts. It is an admission that their theories and their methods were wrong. Developments have again justified the position and methods of the Socialist Party.

As to the newly formed organization, it will deceive no one. A number, if not the majority, of the members of its Executive Committee are also members of the Executive Committee of the United Communist Party. They are one and the same thing. The Alliance is the "legal" part of the illegal Communist Party.

There is little chance that the communists will accomplish more under their new alias than they did under their own name. The conservative worker will have nothing to do with them because he thinks they are revolutionary. The intelligent radical will leave them alone because he knows them for what they are, impractical phrasemongers whose methods are destructive of the labor movement and whose results are fundamentally reactionary.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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