

Why Does LaFollette Not Split?

By JOHN PEPPER

The so-called "radical" group in Congress made a fight against the ruling majority. For two days they blocked the election of the Speaker of the House of Representatives. They demanded a greater representation of the "radicals" in the various committees of Congress. But they dropped their fight and allowed quoted, reactionary rules of Congress to be discussed on the open floor.

The whole country looked on with great interest and great expectation. The so-called "radical" group had announced months back that it would fight as never before. For nine months there was no session of Congress. For nine months these "radicals" talked of a fight with vociferous bragging, like managers of boxing heroes before some championship match. For nine months the "radicals" promised they would fight, and then they fought for two days.

The compromise of the radicals is a betrayal, not only of their promises, but only of their program, but also of the masses who elected them. The radical Republicans and Democrats made the election fight everywhere against the reigning administration, against the capitalist machines which control the two old parties. They are in duty bound to fight, and they are in a position to make the fight under favorable circumstances. Never has the situation been as favorable as today. The conservative New York Times had to admit before the opening of the present Sixty-eighth Congress:

The dissatisfaction of the masses is becoming ever greater and more clamorous. Only bold measures can clear the situation.

The dissatisfaction and ruined farmers, and the workers struggling with the increasing cost of living, the open shop drive, and injunctions, elected these so-called radical and progressive Congressmen. And these masses have the right to demand that these "radical" politicians shall keep their promise and fight against big business, represented in the Republican and Democratic parties.

The chaos of the coal industry can be relieved only through nationalization of the mines. Congress must devise measures without delay to support the unemployed workers. The Chinese Wall of protective tariff must be immediately torn down in order that the prices of industrial products may be lowered, to make it at all possible for the exploited farmers to do farming, and to decrease the high cost of living. The fake measures of the Secretary of Agriculture Wallace, and the leader of the farm bloc Senator Capper, cannot help the farmer in any way. The only real help for the mortgaged farmers is a moratorium of at least five years for all their debts. The only help for the tenant farmers who are living today in the same condition as the peasants of Czarist Russia before the revolution, is the abolition of the tenant system, and the realization of the program: the land shall belong to its users.

The most elementary duty of the "radical" Congressmen is to put these measures into effect immediately.

But the La Follette group has avoided the struggle. They had nine months in which to arouse the whole country with their propaganda and agitation, and in this way, through the power of the masses, to force Congress to adopt radical measures. But they failed to do so.

It was they who during these nine months to make every effort to force the reactionary administration to grant a special session of Congress to discuss the most pressing demands of the masses and farmers. They neglected that.

And above all, the most outstanding duty of these "radical" groups was to split from the reactionary Republican and Democratic parties and to constitute themselves as a Third Party. As long as the "radical" Congressmen remain members of the Republican and Democratic parties, their fight will always remain a sham fight. La Follette says he is in opposition to big business; but he is a member of the party of big business, the Republican Party. La Follette says that Coolidge is a dangerous reactionary, yet he sleeps in the same party bed with Coolidge, and we see no signs of his really seeking a divorce.

The hesitation and vacillation of the La Follette group is the greatest danger for the cause of the farmers and workers. By not making the split with the Republican Party, La Follette supports—whether he wishes or not—the owners of the Republican Party, the international bankers and trusts. The hesitation of La Follette is the greatest obstacle today against the crystallization of a Third Party. The cowardice of the La Follette group makes possible the growing agitation for Ford, makes it possible for the labor-enemy, Hiram Johnson, to appear as a progressive candidate, makes it possible for the counter-revolutionary Gompers clique to mislead the workers into supporting McAdoo.

In the name of the exploited farmers and workers we demand that the La Follette group shall really fight and make the split. They have the balance of power, and we demand that they use the power.

"In all the history of the United States there has never assembled a Congress such as the one which will meet . . . it will be a Congress of minorities, a Congress in which the Republicans will have a paper majority only, a Congress in which the regular Republicans and the old-line Democrats will be just about tied, so far as membership is concerned, a Congress in which a well-organized, ably led group, calling themselves Progressives, will hold the balance of power in both Houses."

The New York Times tells the truth: The so-called radicals and progressives hold the balance of power in both Houses of Congress. They have the power and it is their duty to utilize this power.

A mighty class-struggle is raging throughout the United States. Big capital is expropriating millions of farmers and driving them off their land. The working class is going, for the most part unorganized, towards an industrial crisis and serious unemployment. The imperialism of the international bankers and trusts wants to lead the United States once more into new world entanglements, into new world-wars. The army and navy preparedness is going forward apace. The taxes of the poor farmers are growing to an unbearable degree. The cost of living of the workers is on the increase. The criminal tariff renders the monopoly of the trusts on industrial products the greatest menace against the life of the whole nation.

Underneath a seemingly prosperous exterior, the situation in the United States is extremely serious.

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Attend These Meetings

Chicago, Thursday, Dec. 13, 8 p. m., Max Bedacht will speak under the auspices of the German Sick and Death Benefit Society on the "Great American Fortunes and Disappearance of the Middle Class." 634 Willow St.

Chicago, Friday, Dec. 14, 8 p. m., Robert Minor, "A Political Party of the Workers—the Need of the Hour", Smith's Hall, corner Madison and Hamilton (3800 W. Madison).

Chicago, Sunday, Jan. 20, 8 p. m., Max Bedacht and Robert Minor, International Liebknecht Day. Prudential Hall, North Halsted St.

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