



The
LAFOLLETTE
= ILLUSION =

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By "
JAY
LOVESTONE

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The **La Follette Illusion**

As Revealed
In an Analysis of the Political Role of
Senator Robert M. LaFollette

By

JAY LOVESTONE

Author of

"The Government-Strikebreaker," "American Imperialism,"
"Blood and Steel," "What's What About Coolidge."



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Preface

MILLIONS of workers and poor farmers are today being urged to accept the guidance and put faith in the program of a movement aiming to restore "the good old days."

At such a time it becomes a matter of cardinal political import to scrutinize the activities and examine the principles of this movement. It is my purpose to analyze the record of Senator Robert M. LaFollette's forty years of politics with a view towards estimating historically the accomplishments, potentialities and promises of the movement which he leads and symbolizes.

Time is always required to discover the political effects, the effects on the politico-economic class relationships, of any broad movement. Sometimes a great deal of time is required. In the case of the "Wisconsin Idea," which LaFollette and his followers are now asking the workingmen and increasing army of expropriated farmers to help extend throughout the country, we fortunately have had much time.

In examining the significance of the present middle class "liberation" movement, the writer has been guided by two principles. First, what are the facts; second, and of equal importance: what conclusions do these facts weave as to the LaFollette group being worthy of the trust and leadership of the workers and dispossessed farmers?

Governed by these two principles, I make it my objective to put the official record, the pertinent, authoritative estimates above and to the exclusion of opinion and conjecture.

In conclusion, I want to express my indebtedness to my friend and comrade, Bert Miller, whose diligent and accurate research assistance has made possible this publication.

JAY LOVESTONE.

September 1, (Labor Day) 1924,
Chicago, Illinois.

Chapter I

WHAT DOES LAFOLLETTE WANT?

SENATOR ROBERT MARION LAFOLLETTE is now trying to get together into a loose political alliance all the "honest" business men, the normally well-to-do farmers, the highly skilled laborers, and great sections of the working class and the dispossessed farming masses.

After more than forty years of failures to curb the growth of trustified industry, the Wisconsin senator has decided to launch one grand offensive, a final rush, as it were, against the monster of "Special Privilege."

What is LaFollette driving at? What does he want? Is he deserving of the leadership, of the confidence and the trust of the working and poor farming masses of the country? Is his program worthy of support by the exploited workers and the dispossessed farmers?

Coolidge, the reactionary Republican candidate, does not hide his intents and purposes. "Cautious Cal" is out to strengthen and perpetuate the capitalist system of the exploitation of the workers and the poorest farmers.

Davis, the Democratic standard bearer, proclaims his allegiance to the present economic order with equal devotion and as intense fervor.

LaFollette, at the head of the third party movement, does not demand or seek the abolition of the capitalist system of production and exchange.

Mr. LaFollette, the champion of the little capitalists, differs with Coolidge and Davis, the spokesmen of the biggest employing class interests, primarily as to the best method of perpetuating the wage system. Coolidge and Davis would maintain the present class system by concentrating ever more the political and economic power in the hands of the strongest financial and industrial overlords. LaFollette, on the other hand, would maintain the capitalist system by diffusing the same political and economic power amongst the various social layers of the property-owning class.

But of these three presidential candidates, LaFollette is the one who forcefully asserts that he is a progressive. He alone, of the three, goes out of the way to lay claim to the undivided political support of the working and farming masses.

It is our task to see whether Senator LaFollette is entitled to the confidence of the city and rural workers and to the trust of the expropriated farmers on the basis of his record, on the basis of his achievements in a political career of more than four decades.

But before analyzing the contentions of the Wisconsin senator and his followers, it would be well for us to consider briefly the historical conditions, the material and social milieu giving rise to the LaFollette movement.

A World Phenomenon

At the close of the World War the employing class governments of the leading countries tended more and more to take on an openly reactionary and dictatorial character.

This tendency was stimulated by political and economic class considerations of the capitalists. The fear of Soviet Russia; the terror struck in the hearts of the exploiters by the rapid rise of the Communist movement; the necessity to restore production and exchange at the earliest moment in order to save a tottering economic system; the need for crushing the most elementary demands of the working masses embittered by the severe depression which came after the Versailles Treaty—all of these forces lent impetus to the trend toward ruthless, open dictatorships.

But soon there was a vigorous reaction to this development. In Great Britain the reactionary Baldwin and Curzon rule gave way to the Labor cabinet of Ramsay McDonald and Philip Snowden. In France the militarist Poincare gave way to the co-called Socialist ministry of Herriot. In Spain the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera and the notorious "Butcher" Weyer is on its last legs. Even in Italy, the cradle of Fascism, Mussolin's power is waning.

Historical Background

In the United States there was also developing a sharp swing from the black days of Palmer and Daugherty. The seven million majority of Harding was turned into a minority in less than three years. The strong resistance of the workers to the terrific open shop drive launched by the employers in the crisis of 1920-22—the gigantic national textile, mining and railway strikes—led a good deal towards developing the political consciousness of our workers and hastening the change. Then, the acute agricultural depression of the last five years was a powerful force towards breaking up political and class alignments. For the first time in the history of American politics the organized Farmer-Labor movement showed tangible signs and increasing evidence of assuming a national, organized character.

In a word, the United States, like the other leading capitalist countries, veered from the openly dictatorial, frankly violent governmental administrations to cabinets whose capitalist suppressive character was masked, to policies whose phrases had a peaceful tone, to foreign relations which had the veneer of liberalism and the hollow ring of abstract, pure-plus democracy. The Communist International has well characterized the present political era of capitalism as democratic-pacifist.

It is in such a period, at such a turn in the historical development of the United States, that Senator Robert Marion LaFollette of Wisconsin appears as the personification of the glories of the past, the aspirations of the present, and the dreams of the future of the small-sized and medium-sized capitalist property owners. He is thus seeking the political support not only of all "honest" business men, of all disgruntled, well-to-do farm owners and highly skilled laborers, but also of great sections of the working class and the exploited farming masses.

Mr. LaFollette, the spokesman of the lesser developed owning interests

which have been smarting under the whip of highly developed, monopolized, trustified industry, is now attempting to lead and control the slowly crystallizing class resentment of the working and poor farming masses against the biggest exploiters through a loose political alliance of the discontented working class and poor farmers with the middle class.

Chapter II

THE "WISCONSIN IDEA"—REGULATING PROFITS

LA FOLLETTE talks ten times as radical as he actually votes. How many truly radical measures has he ever introduced or even supported on the floor of the Senate? In fact, LaFollette's radicalism has been evident more in opposition than in support. . . . Unless you class the Railroad Valuation Act—one of the best legislative things that has ever happened to the railroads—or the Seamen's Act as radical, his name is identified nationally with scarcely a single law that truly goes to extreme.

"And most of the legislation he promoted in Wisconsin is no longer classed as radical."

This is the way LaFollette was sized up several months ago by Aaron Hardy Ulm, the correspondent of the reactionary Barron's Financial Weekly, by one who has been working intimately with the Wisconsin Senator in many of his advocacies.

LaFollette a Safety Valve

We are further told by the well-known Richard Barry in Hearst's International of August, 1922, that the reactionary Senator Moses of New Hampshire, now high in the councils of Coolidge, said to him of LaFollette:

"I disagree with his later policies, but I am frank to say it would be a grave error for Wisconsin herself to defeat LaFollette. . . ."

Barry then goes on to say that a New York supporter, after hearing what Moses said, added: "He is our safety valve. Where else is a commanding figure, who, while scrupulous about law and order, yet points the hopeful way to political revolution?"

The Washington observer, William Hard, who has had a chance to see LaFollette in action for many years thus characterized the Wisconsin Senator as he was departing for Europe last year:

"LaFollette, it is noted, has introduced no bills for vast governmental corporations for the buying and selling of farm products. . . . He has seen many such bills introduced by radical senators and by progressive senators and even (as in the case of Senator Gooding) by conservative senators. He himself has given his name to none of them."

At the last national convention of the Republican party held in Cleveland, on June 10th, Congressman Henry Allen Cooper, leader of the Wisconsin delegation, pointed out that those who have been branding the LaFollette program radical had better keep in mind the fact that of the thirty-one planks offered by his state since 1908, no less than twenty-six have been enacted into law. Eleven of the thirteen proposed planks by

LaFollette in 1908 are now law. Fifteen of the eighteen proposals submitted by LaFollette in 1912 have since been written into the federal statutes. Among these may be mentioned the enlargement of the powers of the Interstate Commerce Commission, the physical valuation of railroads, direct election of senators and regulation of telephones and telegraphs.

Business Interests Safe

And in accepting the presidential nomination at Cleveland, LaFollette further declared: "I am a candidate upon the basis of my public record, as a member of the House of Representatives, as Governor of Wisconsin, and as a member of the United States Senate. I shall stand upon that record exactly as it is written, and shall give my support only to such progressive principles and policies as are in harmony with it."

On this basis only we will take apart the warp and woof of the fabric of LaFollette's record.

All the Wisconsin Senator wants today, or ever has wanted, is to make business safe and stable by removing its "evils." Preparing for his 1912 campaign to win the Republican presidential nomination, LaFollette said in his Weekly of December 2, 1911:

"The Wisconsin Plan is not to harass but to foster legitimate business. Legitimate business suffers quite as much as does the public from the depredations of the financial pirates who have so boldly domineered the seas of industry in this country for a dozen years and more. Wisconsin has outlawed the Captain Kidds of business; but she has laid the hands of protection and encouragement upon the honest investor."

In a special statement issued by Senator LaFollette on January 10, 1924, relative to his railroad bill to amend the interstate commerce laws, we find the following illuminating evidence of the Wisconsin Senator's strong belief in the continuation of the present system of the private ownership of capital whereby the working class is exploited:

"The amendments which I offer are based upon the principle that the private owners of the railroads are entitled to be reimbursed for the actual cost of the services they performed and to be paid a fair return upon the money which they have prudently invested in property now devoted to public service. Just compensations for services, reimbursement of expenses and a fair interest on capital employed, should be paid those who devote work on property to public service, but no more."

Stands for Private Ownership

Here we have it. LaFollette insists that society should pay tribute to the owners of the railroads for their mere ownership which he calls "devoting work on property to public service." This is precisely what the most ardent defender of the railway and other big business interests want.

LaFollette and the most reactionary capitalists are agreed that capital should be privately owned. Both agree that this ownership entitles the owners to an income which, of course, is produced by those who work, by those who invest labor-power in production, by the working class. Their

difference is only over what constitutes a "just, legitimate" amount that the capitalist owners should take from the products of the workers.

Proud of Big Profits for Wisconsin Capitalists

In his 1912 campaign bible, entitled "Progressive Wisconsin," we find that LaFollette, then, as now, aspiring for the presidency as a progressive, was boasting over the beneficial effects his program has had on the biggest employing class interests in Wisconsin. We quote:

"There has not been a railroad company important or minor, in the state that has not had an increase of profits, both gross and net, and this increase has been greater than that which the mere natural growth of the state would account for. . . .

"What has been the effect of this regulation on the business of the public utilities?

"Many of them are now transacting unprecedented volumes of business, all of them are enjoying increased earnings. The securities of those companies have increased in substantial value and investments in them, particularly by small investors and by the smaller banks, has gone to the point where it betrays a healthy confidence."

This is the "Wisconsin Idea" applied. This is the program that Mr. LaFollette holds out to the workers and farmers today as the source of their hope, as the road to their freedom from the railroad capitalists, the shipping magnates, the capitalist owners of public utilities—the exploiting class. This is Wisconsin, the "Model Commonwealth," that LaFollette would have the workers and dispossessed farmers extend throughout the country.

Chapter III

THE "WISCONSIN IDEA"—INSURING PROFITS

THE facts of LaFollette's career weave the conclusion that he has done more talking but less acting against the cursed trusts than some of his reactionary colleagues with whom he has been working in the Republican party for more than forty years.

Bosses Approve "Progressive" Schemes

Under these circumstances it is not surprising to find Theodore Roosevelt, writing on "Wisconsin—Safety of Prosperity," in LaFollette's Weekly of June 3, 1911, declare:

"They made it evident not merely by words, but by deeds that they would not for one moment sanction any pandering to class hatred or any unjust assault on property rights. A big railway official, before I entered the state, had casually mentioned to me that if he had a just cause there is no tribunal in the country before which he would rather present his case than the Wisconsin railway commission."

Let us for a change listen to the Honorable Daniel Hoan, the socialist mayor of Milwaukee, who has just jumped on the LaFollette band wagon. In Hoan's pamphlet, entitled, "The Failure of Regulation," and once offi-

cially circulated by the socialist party of America, we find an array of typical, glowing tributes paid by big business interests to LaFollette's "progressive" program. We cite two such cases offered by Hoan:

In response to a request for a Thanksgiving Day statement, John L. Beggs, then general manager of the Milwaukee traction trust, and "concededly the shrewdest financier and dividend maker which the utility corporations have supplied in Wisconsin in recent years," said in the Milwaukee Morning Press of November 24, 1907:

"I am thankful that the Traction affairs in the city of Milwaukee have gotten into the hands of the Railroad Commission of Wisconsin, an efficient body of men free from local prejudice, and capable of judging what is right.

"It is the best thing that ever happened to the Milwaukee Electric Railway and Light Company. It will insure to the Company fair treatment, and to Milwaukee the best service we can give at a fair rate."

Then Mayor Hoan tells us that Mr. H. Draher, manager of the bond department of the Marshall and ILLSLEY Bank of Milwaukee, lauded the LaFollette regulation laws in an address before the Wisconsin State Telephone Association on February 21, 1912. According to the Socialist mayor, Mr. Draher declared that the regulation laws made it easier for corporations to get franchise, gave long indefinite franchise permits, eliminated cut-throat competition, and "guaranteed to the investor a return of the money invested by compelling the cities to pay the full value of privately owned plants, whether they wanted to or not, in the event the cities proposed to go into the business."

The approval with which the LaFollette program has met at the hands of some of the biggest capitalist interests in Wisconsin is also indicated in the following interview given Richard Barry, by an ex-official of the Northwestern Life Insurance Company of Milwaukee in Hearst's International for August 1922:

"Some of us who fought LaFollette in the early days became his beneficiaries after his insurance and railroad acts got to working."

Employers Reward "Regulators"

Recently the country was stirred over the fact that William G. McAdoo utilized his prestige as an ex-cabinet officer in obtaining employment at the hands of big corporations, like the Doheny Oil interests and the Republic Iron and Steel Company. It is no secret that this profitable employment lost McAdoo the Democratic nomination and perhaps the presidency.

But in Wisconsin there have been many such cases of ex-railroad commission, or ex-public utility commission officers being employed by the very corporations they were regulating as soon as their terms of office expired. We will call upon so friendly a witness to Mr. LaFollette as Victor Berger to tell us of a few of the outstanding instances where the LaFollette regulators were rewarded with handsome jobs by the supposedly victimized corporations.

Quoting from the Milwaukee Leader of August 6th, we learn:

"J. P. Cadby, Madison, secretary of the 'regulated' Wisconsin Electric

& Gas Association, was formerly an employee of the Wisconsin Railroad commission.

"Edward Strait, a rate expert with the H. H. Byllesby company, was formerly with the Wisconsin Railroad commission.

"Public utility corporations also have taken two of the four men who have been secretaries of the Wisconsin Railroad commission during its existence."

"A former railroad commissioner, Carl D. Jackson, bitterly remembered by Milwaukee citizens, 'served the state' from 1916 to 1922. He is now a public utility attorney in New York—general attorney of the National Electric Light Association and also for the National Gas Association, composed of 'regulated' privately owned public utilities." The latter was appointed by Governor Blaine whom LaFollette is today supporting for re-election.

In the same list Mr. Berger names a dozen other cases where the LaFollette "regulators" were royally rewarded, in the McAdoo fashion, by the very trusts and public utilities which they were regulating.

More Smoke Than Fire

LaFollette's state record shows that he has almost limited himself to talking rather than fighting against the monopolists. There has been more smoke than fire in LaFollette's war on the trusts.

Again turning to Mayor Hoan of Milwaukee, we are enlightened as to how LaFollette handled the big corporations with silk gloves while he was governor. In Hoan's "Failure of Regulation" we read: "Not only were trusts not prosecuted in Wisconsin while Senator LaFollette was governor, but they have not been prosecuted before or since, in spite of the fact that there was then and is now a statute (Section 1791-j) which provides in substance that any corporation organized under the laws of Wisconsin which shall enter into any combination or agreement to prevent competition or to control prices, shall in an action to be instituted by the attorney-general of the state, have its charter revoked.

"The above statute has been on the the statute books since 1897. Since that time we have had Democratic, Republican, Progressive, Tory, and lastly, Bull Moosely inclined governors.

"Notwithstanding this splendid variety, no trusts have been prosecuted in this state. All of this proves that if smashing the trusts is part of the 'Wisconsin idea' up to the present the idea has not materialized any tangible results."

Regulation No Weapon

LaFollette is and has been trying to fly in the face of industrial development. The fact of the matter is that, economically, great industrial units are both desirable and inevitable. Instead of demanding that these highly organized industries be socialized and controlled by the working class, LaFollette has been seeking to return to the old system of competitive, small industrial units.

If attempted prosecution of trusts is to be considered a criterion of friendship to workers and poor farmers, then Coolidge and his anti-labor crew have at least as much right to be deemed friends of the working

masses as the Wisconsin Senator. Since the Harding-Coolidge administration came into office it has brought no less than sixty-one anti-trust suits. The contractors and manufacturers in the building trades, the sugar, lumber, pottery, and harvesting machinery corporations have been amongst the targets of the reactionary Republican administration.

Of course, nothing dangerous or harmful has happened to these groups of powerful exploiters.

Chapter IV

LAFOLLETTE'S "ANGELS"

EVERY successful capitalist politician has his "angels," his multi-millionaire supporters.

McKinley had his Mark Hanna, of iron and coal fame. Roosevelt was lavishly supported by G. W. Perkins, of the Steel and Harvester Trusts. Wilson had his Cyrus H. McCormick and David B. Jones of the Harvester and Zinc Trusts. Coolidge has his Dwight W. Morrow, of the House of Morgan.

LaFollette is no exception to this golden rule of employing class politics. Since his advent into practical politics, the Wisconsin senator has been supported by a heaven full of "angels"—bankers, sugar kings, manufacturers, oil attorneys, wealthy merchants and multi-millionaires ranging from the notorious lumber baron, Stephenson, in the early day, to the international financier, Vanderlip, today.

Multi-millionaires LaFollette's "Angels"

When Senator LaFollette made his debut in public life, a millionaire lumber magnate, Stephenson, was his leading "angel." Altogether, Mr. Stephenson furnished about five hundred thousand dollars toward putting LaFollette in the front row at the national political theatre in Washington. In return for this generous and "angelic" support, the trust-busting LaFollette later did his bit toward putting this multi-millionaire in the United States Senate. While Isaac Stephenson was getting LaFollette's support in 1907, he played in the lumber industry the role that Harriman used to play in the railroad world. It will also be recalled that the ring of Stephenson's money was heard throughout the investigation of the notorious Lorimer scandal in the Senate.

One of the chief supporters of the Wisconsin Senator today is Mr. W. T. Rawleigh, President of the W. T. Rawleigh Company of Freeport, Illinois, with a capital and resources of more than thirteen million dollars. Mr. Rawleigh employs a thousand workers and has factories also at Memphis and Winnipeg. Besides being the president of the largest proprietary product concern in the world, Mr. Rawleigh owns an interest in the Capital Times published at Madison, Wisconsin.

In declaring his allegiance to LaFollette, Mr. Rawleigh laid down an election policy which affords much food for thought and still more cause for action. He declared: "What the business men of the United States

want now, more than anything else, is a free, open, and competitive market in which to buy their raw materials and supplies, and the opportunity to buy, sell, and compete on an equal basis in the greatest producing and consuming market in the world."

In climbing up the rungs of the ladder leading to the heaven of LaFollette's angels, we find a certain Richard W. Wolfe, formerly president of the Cook County Real Estate Board, and an old-time Democrat. Why Mr. Wolfe backs LaFollette is told in this fashion: "As a conservative business man, and tax-paying citizen, I am in favor of Robert M. LaFollette for president. He is not a radical, in the correct sense of the term. He is rather a cautious, prudent, and conservative statesman."

It was not until Wheeler had received a telegram from Frank A. Vanderlip, former president of the National City Bank, and a director of shipping, railroad, realty, rubber corporations, and employers associations, that he agreed to accept the vice-presidential nomination. Mr. Wheeler's comment on the Vanderlip telegram is rather enlightening. LaFollette's running-mate then said: "Well, it seems that I have been drafted for service. I'll agree.

An examination of the personnel of the "LaFollette for president" Committee reveals an illuminating list of wealthy god-builders. We find: W. T. Rawleigh, the millionaire manufacturer, as chairman; Dante M. Pierce, the rich publisher of Pierce's Farm Weeklies, vice-chairman; Julius Kespohl, a well-to-do merchant; James H. McGill, an Indiana manufacturer; and R. F. Koenig, treasurer, a director of the Second National Bank of Freeport, Illinois.

In Montana, James H. Baldwin, an attorney for several independent oil corporations, and law partner of Wheeler, is to be the manager of the LaFollette campaign.

Rudolph Spreckles the sugar king, and California banker, is another LaFollette "angel."

Finally, Herman L. Ekern, who is now Wisconsin attorney-general, by the grace of "Battling Bob," will direct the money-raising and financial affairs of the entire LaFollette campaign. This is the same Mr. Ekern who was for many years an insurance lobbyist.

Still Tied to Old Parties

Senator LaFollette still has one foot—and it is a very firm foot at that—in the two biggest capitalist parties.

Thanking Gompers for his endorsement of the "progressive" ticket, LaFollette rejoiced that "after deliberate judgment the American Federation of Labor has adhered to its traditional non partisan policy."

When Wheeler was contemplating his acceptance of the vice-presidential nomination, he declared: "I have not quit the Democratic party. I will spend most of the summer campaigning in Montana for Senator Walsh and the Democratic state ticket." Wheeler will also wage a lively campaign to secure the re-election of United States Senator David I. Walsh of Massachusetts, another Democrat.

Mr. LaFollette is likewise coquetting with William Thompson and Governor Small's boodle outfit in Illinois and scores of other regular Re-

publicans and Democrats throughout the country. This is the same William Hale Thompson who, as a delegate to the last Republican convention, voted to nominate the millionaire chewing-gum manufacturer, William Wrigley, Junior, as the Republican standard-bearer.

Perhaps the best proof that LaFollette has not yet cut his umbilical cord of the Wall Street-owned Democratic and Republican parties is to be found in the fact that he is planning to endorse in wholesale Democratic and Republican congressional and senatorial candidates. One hundred and sixty-two congressional seats are to be filled in twelve states. LaFollette forces have announced that they will run their own candidates in, at most, only sixty-eight constituencies now represented by Republican and Democratic party office holders. In other words, in the majority of these congressional districts, LaFollette will call on the workers and farmers to continue voting for Republicans and Democrats.

Little Regard for Labor

In endorsing and supporting political candidates LaFollette has seldom paid much attention to the opinion of the workers.

In Berger's Millwaukee Leader of October 22nd, 1920, we find a letter by H. G. Hannahan, Socialist Party candidate for Congress in the ninth Wisconsin district. This letter tells how LaFollette put up Thompson to run for the United States Senate in opposition to Frank J. Weber, a Labor leader. It goes on to say: "And here comes Bob LaFollette and his would-be progressives and would-be union men and puts up Mr. Thompson. . . That's dirty politics on the part of the progressives. . ."

Today, LaFollette and Wheeler are whole-hearted supporters of United States Senator Thomas J. Walsh who has just been denounced by the annual convention of the Montana State Federation of Labor for his anti-labor record.

Of the eleven chosen to serve as his joint executive campaign committee, only two spokesmen of the labor movement, at best, official labor leaders, William H. Johnstone, of the International Association of Machinists, and D. B. Robertson, of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen, have been picked by LaFollette. This is the maximum extent to which the Wisconsin Senator is ready to recognize the workers whose millions of votes he is now seeking.

Chapter V

PURE-PLUS POLITICS

THE LaFollette forces are now making another one of those perennial "final" efforts to elect only good, honest, progressives to public office.

But the story of the LaFollette regime in Wisconsin affords abundant proof of the fact that the fundamental cause for corruption in government lies in the private ownership of the means of production and exchange socially used. The honesty of the individual men at the helm of the administration is only a secondary force in the governmental corrup-

tion taking root in this very economic relationship which the so-called progressive forces are seeking to perpetuate.

Bribery Handled with Silk Gloves

When LaFollette was making his entry into practical national politics, he was offered a bribe ranging from five to fifteen hundred dollars by United States Senator Philetus Sawyer of Wisconsin. A certain Charles T. Pfeister, who held many positions of trust and confidence in moneyed and manufacturing corporations, was charged with bribery, fraudulent granting of franchises, and other crimes against the public. Pfeister had Senator Sawyer try to bribe LaFollette to "fix things" up with the judge who was to try his case, Judge Siebecker, LaFollette's brother-in-law.

Of course, LaFollette refused the bribe and openly declared that Sawyer had attempted to buy him. But that is where this case of rank corruption ended. Sawyer was never prosecuted. LaFollette never did anything to secure a criminal indictment against Sawyer. And Pfeister, member of the firm of Pfeister-Vogel and Company, which has for years been promoting a blacklist against organized labor while it was at the same time supporting the so-called "good government" league, also escaped harsh treatment. This bitter foe of the workmen was handled with silk gloves in the "Model Commonwealth." Recently Mr. Pfeister became associated with Judge Backus, a member of the LaFollette machine, in the board of directors of the Milwaukee Sentinel, a Hearst publication.

Not Free from Corruption

When LaFollette was governor of Wisconsin, he had the opportunity he is now seeking to banish graft and corruption from government. How successful LaFollette was as a purity crusader in his gubernatorial career and to what extent LaFollette would bring "clean" government to Washington if elected president, can best be seen from the conditions which prevailed in his state when he was governor.

If we examine the files of the Social-Democratic Herald, the predecessor of the LaFollette mouthpiece, the Milwaukee Leader of today, we find the following description of "clean" government under LaFollette's governorship:

"The so-called half-breeds, or the followers of Robert M. LaFollette, are by instinct, make-up, and past history as wicked a set of grafters as their stalwart brethren ever dared to be. As a matter of fact, there is a constant flux from the stalwarts to the half-breeds and vice-versa, according to how the jobs and the graft that was to be gotten, reached around—for the men who did not get any, immediately turned 'reformers.'

"Otto Seidel, one of the self-confessed grafters, ran on the half-breeds' ticket last fall. And all in all, there is not the least doubt in anybody's mind that the half-breeds are in no way or shape better than either the Stalwarts or Democrats. Only they happen to have the district attorney on their side." (August 12, 1905.)

And in the Milwaukee Sentinel of October 1, 1905, we are given the following insight into the reign of honest government in the model commonwealth: "The grand jury which has been in session since early in June, probing graft in city and county government, made its final report to Judge Brazee of the Municipal Court at ten o'clock last night and was discharged. Twenty-four indictments were returned with its final report.

"One of the sensations of the evening was the indictment against William Murphy. It will be remembered that several days ago Murphy (former alderman), wrote a letter to the grand jury saying he was ready to furnish it with some information. He was summoned, but as soon as the jury ascertained that he had evidence of bribery to furnish against two 'reformers' and LaFollette leaders, the jury excused him. He told his experience to the newspapers, and the jury, finding public sentiment aroused, thought best to let the former alderman testify, especially since for weeks the district attorney had been trying to get Murphy to testify on graft.

"Murphy went before the jury and said that one of the so-called 'reformers' had given him \$400.00 for his vote for the Wells tunnel grants. He also charged that another 'reformer' had given him, through his agent, \$50.00 for his vote for a sidetrack."

The orgy of corruption in LaFollette's Wisconsin commonwealth, is summed up in this fashion by the Social-Democratic Herald, of October 21, 1905.

"The bribery, stealing and open debauchery in Milwaukee was such that even the bribers could not stand it any longer. Public opinion compelled the district attorney about two and a half year ago to ask the criminal court for a grand jury. Since then several indictments have been returned. Over a hundred city and county officials have been indicted. They have been indicted for almost any crime that public officials could possibly commit."

Backs Capitalist Politicians

In essence, LaFollette's political machine is like the political machines of the corrupt and reactionary cliques dominated by the biggest capitalist interests. The Wisconsin senator has been a rather glib talker for many years against big whips, bosses, and misleaders utilizing their hold on the government either for service to big corporate interests or for their own ends. Looking into LaFollette's actual doings over a span of years in politics and power, we find that his machine has served to build gods and make bosses out of as many tools of the big exploiters as have the machines of the Democratic and Republican parties.

Thus the Milwaukee Leader of March 14, 1918, unfolds the following tale of "Battling Bob" placing himself squarely behind the worst type of employing class politicians and tools:

"So Senator Robert Marion LaFollette, according to the Free Press, places himself squarely back of the candidacy of James Thompson.

"That's an old story. 'Bob' placed himself squarely back of Isaac M.

Stephenson in his day. 'Bob' placed himself squarely back of Jim Davidson a little later. 'Bob' placed himself squarely back of Francis E. McGovern. 'Bob' placed himself also squarely back of Irvine Lenroot, and 'Bob' placed himself squarely back of Paul O. Husting as a 'fair-minded' Democrat.

"We could mention a dozen other prominent politicians in Wisconsin behind whom Robert M. LaFollette 'placed himself squarely.' With the exception of those who have died—all of these proteges of 'Bob' are great jingoes, reactionaries, and profiteer patriots today..."

Among the progressive saviors or honest men in capitalist government with whom LaFollette associated himself at one time or another, in his program, or whom the LaFollette machine supported, are the following men who blossomed out into supine servants and vigorous defenders of the blackest employing class interests: Albert J. Beveridge, of Indiana; Albert B. Cummins, of Iowa, author of the Esch-Cummins act; Hiram W. Johnson, of California; the fake Teapot Dome investigator, Senator Irvine L. Lenroot, of Wisconsin; Miles Poindexter, Washington; Gilford Pinchot, now governor of Pennsylvania; William Allen White, of Kansas, and Medill McCormick of International Harvester Trust fame.

Finally, at this very moment, the differences between the cogs in the wheels of the LaFollette machine and the active supporters of, and workers for, Coolidge in Wisconsin, are so thin and so vague, that Mr. Arthur Evans was led to the following view of the situation in the Chicago Tribune of August 15:

"Thus the Coolidge movement in Wisconsin is being directed largely by elements quite as closely identified with the progressive legislation that made the state famous ten and twenty years ago, as were the present LaFollette captains, and even closer."

Chapter VI

WHO OWNS "PROGRESSIVE" WISCONSIN

IN a survey of "Who is Who in Congress?" recently made by us, we found that the employing class has at least three hundred and twenty-three out of the four hundred and thirty-five congressmen who are either directly or indirectly associated with, or serving the ruling clique. In the Senate, the big interests have at least seventy-nine out of the ninety-six members on their side, either thru economic or social control.

Bosses Own Government

In the state of Wisconsin, where LaFollette is the big political boss, the situation is nearly the same as in Washington, where Coolidge is the chief executive. On the basis of an investigation made by the Wisconsin State Federation of Labor, as reported in its 1921 convention proceedings,

we find that there were at that date in the Wisconsin Senate, one auctioneer, four bankers, one cheesemaker, one contractor, one doctor, five farm owners, one insurance man, two real estate men, two retired capitalists, two publishers and journalists, one lumber man, four manufacturers, two merchants, one public service agent, two salesmen, eight lawyers, and only four mechanics.

At the same time there were represented in the assembly the following occupational divisions: one architect, four bankers, two clerks, three contractors, three corporation officials, one doctor, forty-four farm owners, one hotel keeper, two publishers, ten lawyers, one live stock buyer, four lumbermen, seven merchants, four real estate dealers, six retired capitalists, three salesmen, two insurance men, one fisherman, and only seven mechanics.

Thus we find that out of a total personnel of forty-two senators, there are only four members of the working class, and that out of a hundred and ten assembly men, there are only seven members of the working class.

The State Federation of Labor, which is extremely friendly to and a strong supporter of LaFollette, characterized this ownership of the state government by the employing class by saying that except for about nine Senators; "The rest were entirely out of harmony with labor program and should be classed as representing the interests of capital."

Regarding the Assembly, the State Federation of Labor declared: "Sixty-five members may be classed as ultra-reactionary and absolutely controlled by special interests."

Serves Middle Class

In the view of Mr. John Ballard as expressed in the Outlook for September 5, 1923, this employing class ownership of the senate and assembly in the state of Wisconsin is to be explained as follows: "Business of the kind that is represented by manufacturers' associations is in the main against LaFollette and his policies. but business in the person of the man with moderate capital is with 'Bob' both in little towns and big ones.

"To a lesser but steadily increasing extent the same middle class emancipation from old party ties has gone on in the other states over which the LaFollette influence has spread."

Workers' Enemies Given Jobs

The LaFollette machine has on many occasions appointed corporation lobbyists to important posts in the government where they could do most damage against the working men.

In his appointment of Eugene Wengert as district attorney of Milwaukee and George B. Skogme as assistant district attorney of the same city, Governor Blaine flatly disregarded the recommendations of the organized workers of the state.

Thus we find the Officers' Reports to The Wisconsin State Federation of Labor Convention, held at Wisconsin Rapids, July 15-18, 1924,

declare: "We regret to say that no recognition of labor has been given in the selection of lawyers to fill the important office of judge. In this regard labor was encouraged to entertain a hope, but was finally ignored."

Workers Disregarded by Legislature

In LaFollettania, as in the other states where the capitalist class is supreme, the legislature has little regard for the needs and demands of the working class. From the latest available Officers' Report to the Wisconsin Federation of Labor Convention held at Superior on July 17-20, 1923, we learn of the following frankly anti-labor attitude of the state assembly and senate:

"The legislature as a whole, could not be termed a real progressive body. The majority of the senate lived up to its reputation of conservatism and seemed to take delight in defeating progressive legislation."

Among the leading labor measures killed by this LaFollette legislature were bills providing for an eight hour day on public works, the eight-hour day on all state printing, the extension of the one day in seven rest law, an act requiring railroad car shops or other concerns manufacturing or repairing cars to provide buildings protecting employees from heat, rain, cold, snow and so forth, an employment compensation measure, an old age pension bill, a bill to abolish private detective agencies, and the State Federation of Labor measure aiming to limit the hours of work per day in mills, factories, and manufacturing establishments.

Courts Used Against Workers

The Wisconsin Supreme Court has been particularly hostile to the workers. Every annual report of the officers of the State Federation of Labor abounds in evidence of this hostility. We recall the instance where a boy, 6 years of age, Jerome Ptack, met his death thru the negligence of one Kuetemeyer. A jury rendered a verdict in favor of the father of the boy for \$3,500. The judge reduced the sum to \$1800. The Supreme Court acting on the appeal of the insurance company, further reduced the amount to \$1,000. The State Federation of Labor, commenting on this action of the judges against the jury, declared in its specially prepared pamphlet on the case entitled "The Wisconsin Supreme Court's Queer Slant on Life."

"The Wisconsin State Federation of Labor cannot dictate to the Supreme Court of Wisconsin what its constitution of law shall be, but it can protest against an illegal and inhumane principle being given the force of law; and it vigorously protests the invasion by the court of the constitutional right of trial by jury."

One of the main reasons given by the Supreme Court for reducing the amount rendered in the first verdict was the fact that the father had intended to send the boy to school. Consequently, the court reasoned, the father was not deprived of any income thru the death of his

son. In the eyes of these judges, it was a crime for the father to plan to send his son to school. Apparently workers must be penalized for attempting to secure an education.

Costly Litigation Hurts Workingmen

Protesting against the burden placed on the workers thru costly litigation in courts, the Wisconsin State Federation of Labor convention held on July 15 to 18 of this year, declared: "The whole matter has been in litigation for years, and we do not know how many more years these cases will be dragged. Compare these with the rapidity with which courts act in the issuance of injunctions in labor disputes."

The workers have suffered especially in compensation cases. We learn from a statement by R. G. Knutson, member of the State Industrial Commission, appearing in the report of the Wisconsin State Federation of Labor for 1922, that "In the eleven years in which the compensation act has been enforced, during which time over 100 appeals have been taken by workmen, there has not been a single case in which an injured workman ever got a cent thru an appeal."

Injunction Menace Serious

In the 1921 State Federation of Labor convention proceedings we find that great stress is laid on the extent to which the workers have been suffering in LaFollette's "model commonwealth". We quote in part a special anti-injunction resolution adopted by this convention:

"Whereas, four of our brothers, members of labor unions of Rhinelander, are confined in the county jails of Oneida and Langlade counties, having been sentenced to imprisonment on charges of contempt of court by Circuit Judge Reid, following the issuance of an injunction against the paper mill workers, and in behalf of the Rhinelander Paper Co.

"Resolved, by the Wisconsin Federation of Labor, in convention assembled, July 19, 1921, in the city of Manitowoc, that we extend hearty greetings to these brothers who have preferred prison bars to submission to autocratic impositions."

Finally, in 1922, the State Federation of Labor was compelled to pass a special resolution against the courts of Wisconsin along the following lines:

"Whereas, we are of the belief that some judges hold shares of stock and have financial interests in companies, firms, and corporations, and

"Whereas, by the holding of such shares of stock and having such financial interests they are very apt to be prejudiced in their judgments and decisions therefore be it

"Resolved, that it is the sense of this convention that such a condition is not consistent with justice, especially in cases arising out of strikes, such as injunctions and assault and battery cases."

Chapter VII

THE WORKERS IN WISCONSIN

IF working conditions are to be accepted as a sound criterion of genuine progressivism, then LaFollette's Wisconsin experiment is a sham and a delusion to the laboring masses.

Low Wages and Long Hours

According to the findings of the latest, 1919, census of manufactures, the average monthly cost of labor, or wage per month, in the manufacturing industries in the United States is \$96.50. Wisconsin falls well below this average wage for the country as a whole, with an average monthly wage of only \$91.69. Thus Wisconsin holds the unenviable twenty-ninth place in the ranks of the monthly wages paid the working men of the various states.

This low wage is significantly painful when one realizes that it is in no way due to a lack of industrial development. In Wisconsin 92.6 percent of the workers engaged in manufacturing industries are employed by corporations. Wisconsin ranks fourth in the United States in the proportion of workers employed in manufacturing industries owned by corporations, but ranks only twenty-ninth in the average monthly wage paid to these working men.

Since this investigation was made Wisconsin wages have declined sharply. For all industries, according to the April, 1924, United States Monthly Labor Review, the average weekly wage in the Badger state was \$26.87 in December, 1920. Today, according to the June Report of the Wisconsin State Industrial Commission, the average weekly wage for all workers is only \$23.93.

While the wages are low, the hours of labor are long in Wisconsin. For the United States as a whole the proportion of wage-workers in the manufacturing industries having forty-eight hours or less of labor per week is 48.6 percent. But in LaFollette's "Model Commonwealth," only 31.3 percent of the workers engaged in the manufacturing industries have a forty-eight hour week or the average eight-hour day. The tenth in the number of men engaged in the manufacturing industries of the country, Wisconsin ranks only thirty-ninth in the proportion of its workers in these industries laboring forty-eight hours a week or under.

Open Shop Movement Powerful

Wisconsin is one of the banner states of the open shop movement of the country. Let us consult the secret minutes of the regular quarterly meeting of the Milwaukee Employers' Council, held on June 8, 1921.

"The Milwaukee Employers' Council is at present composed of twenty-eight industrial groups, representing a total of six hundred and sixty-two plants and approximately sixty thousand employes on wages.

". . . All the principal industries are represented and we are organizing new groups every month. At present the council represents considerably more than half of Milwaukee's industrial strength.

"J. M. Bell, Secretary-Manager."

This report goes on to boast of playing an active part in the fight against the job printers for a forty-four hour week and in the strikes of the tailors and sheet metal workers.

Turning to the May, 1924, "Members' Supplement—Freedom in Employment" published by the Milwaukee Employers' Council, we further find that: "The printing industry is now overwhelmingly open shop in Milwaukee, and in due course we expect to see the allied photo-engraving and electrotyping industries follow suit. We shall not rest until this is accomplished."

This same bulletin then announces: "In Milwaukee we actually have a large proportion of open shop in building construction; perhaps sixty-five percent."

And its June, 1924, supplement proudly declares: "The Milwaukee Branch, National Metal Trades, Association, is apparently leading the country in its apprenticeship work. This kind of work is of the utmost importance to the open shop."

Smashing the Unions

The terrific drive these open shoppers have been waging against the workers was roundly denounced by the State Federation of Labor in its 1923 convention in a special resolution from which we produce in part:

"The railroad owners have set out to wreck the shop crafts unions by organizing scab unions of so-called company associations of employes, and are endeavoring to compel all shop crafts workers to join these scab unions, by threatening discharge and visiting other punishment upon the workers for failing to join these scab unions."

Private detective agencies also do a flourishing business in Wisconsin strike-breaking.

Testifying before the Milwaukee Fire and Police Commissioner on October 17, 1921, Walter G. Russel, the head of the scab-herding agency stated that his firm now employs twelve hundred detectives, and answering the question as to what line of work these agents do, said: "If you ask, do we do strike work, yes. Do we put men in factories to report information to the heads of firms? I would say yes. Do we have men in unions? Yes."

Allied with Open Shoppers

The progressive LaFollette government in Wisconsin covertly and overtly aids and abets anti-labor activities.

Describing the proceedings of the State Federation of Labor Convention, the Milwaukee Sentinel for July 22, 1922, said: "Administrative bodies were flayed for alleged failure to prosecute employers who, labor says, violate the provision compelling the advertisement of the fact that a strike is in progress when labor is imported to fill strikers' places."

And at its 1921 convention the State Federation of Labor was forced to protest against open shop construction in the erection of high schools. The special resolution against this policy of the government reads:

"The carpenters of the Fox River Valley District Council consisting of those cities from Fond du Lac to Green Bay, inclusive, have been on

strike since the first of May, fighting against the so-called 'Open Shop' which the contractors are endeavoring to impose upon them."

Trade Union Movement Weak

The Wisconsin trade union movement, tho on many occasions showing hopeful sign of militancy and genuine progressivism, is lamentably weak in numbers and strength to resist the aggression of the highly organized open shoppers of the state.

In the year 1919-1920, before the fierce open shop drive was launched, the Wisconsin State Federation of Labor had a total affiliated membership of only 51,645. Of these a maximum of 30,977 were employed in the manufacturing industries of the state. At this time, there were, according to the findings of the United States Census of Manufactures, 263,949 wage earners employed in the manufacturing industries of Wisconsin. Compare these figures with the fact that the Milwaukee Employers' Council alone represented sixty thousand or more than half of the industrial strength of the leading industrial city in the state.

Of course, even this strength of the trade unions was reduced by the vicious open shop drive of 1921, as can be seen from the following report on membership made to the 1922 convention of the State Federation of Labor:

"The affiliated unions show a decrease of but sixteen percent in membership at the close of the year, as compared with the same months of the previous year. . . .

"The fiscal year has closed with many unpleasant memories to the workers and their families due to unemployment and the desperate efforts of capital to annihilate their organizations. . . ."

This is the freedom enjoyed by the workers in LaFollette's "Model Commonwealth."

Chapter VIII

RURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN BADGER STATE

JUST as Wisconsin ranks very low in the wages paid its industrial workers, so it does in the wages paid its agricultural laborers.

Our analysis of the December, 1923, issue of Weather, Crops and Markets, published by the Department of Agriculture, reveals that there were at least fourteen states paying higher average monthly wages to their farm laborers in 1923 than Wisconsin did. This is the pay for rural laborers without board.

For the average monthly pay to farm laborers with board, our investigation shows that in 1923, in at least thirteen states, the workers received higher remuneration than they did in Wisconsin.

LaFollette Program Fails Farmers

And the farmers, whose special friend LaFollette says he is, have met with continued adversity in Wisconsin.

On Aug. 5, 1924, Edward Nordman, Wisconsin state commissioner, of markets, delivered an address before the State Retailers' Association,

in which he made the following significant remarks: "Agricultural land is rapidly passing out of the ownership of the dirt farmer and into the hands of the men who use it as a safe place to invest their money. This practice forces the independent farm owner to settle on poorer land or in out-of-the-way places."

Our analysis of the 1920 United States Census findings on agriculture discloses how the farming masses of Wisconsin are being driven to adversity at an even faster pace than the farmers of the country as a whole.

Farm Mortgages Increase

From 1910 to 1920 the proportion of farms free from mortgages in the United States as a whole declined from 65.6 per cent to 52.8 per cent. At the same time the Wisconsin farms free from mortgages declined from 48.3 per cent to 36.2 per cent in 1920.

But here is a matter of serious concern to the farmers in LaFollette's state. In the decade 1910 to 1920 the proportion of mortgaged farms in the country as a whole, rose from 33.2 per cent to 37.2 per cent. In the same period the proportion of mortgaged farms in Wisconsin rose from 51.1 per cent in 1910 to 59.9 per cent in 1920. Thus we see that the proportion of farms free from mortgages is much smaller in Wisconsin than in the country as a whole, and that the proportion of mortgaged farms is much greater in Wisconsin than it is in the country as a whole.

Further light on the increasing hardships of the Wisconsin farmers is shed by the findings of the 1920 census as to farm debts. For the United States as a whole, the proportion of debt to the value of the farm increased from 27.3 per cent in 1910 to 29.1 per cent in 1920. But in Wisconsin the ratio of debt to the value of the farm increased from 34.3 per cent in 1910 to 37.8 per cent in 1920. It is evident that the Wisconsin farmers are falling into debt more rapidly and are today in relatively greater debt than the farmers of the country as a whole.

Mortgage Debt Rises

The total amount of mortgage debt for Wisconsin farmers rose from about \$150,000,000 in 1910 to more than \$350,000,000 in 1920.

The farming masses of this great "model commonwealth" are also paying an exorbitant price for these difficult conditions in the form of oppressive taxes. From a tax study made in twenty-six states for the year 1919, by the Department of Agriculture, we find that the part of the net cash rent from the farms paid out in taxes by the Wisconsin farmers is higher than in twenty-four of the twenty-six states investigated. Only one state, Pennsylvania, shows a higher proportion of the net cash rent being devoured by taxes than does Wisconsin.

"Since that year taxes have generally increased, while rents have been reduced," says the Department of Agriculture in its summary of the investigation.

Social Conditions Unsatisfactory

For the last fiscal year industrial accidents showed a startling increase in the United States. The American Association for Labor

Legislation recently made an investigation of this tendency. Its findings, after hearing from one-half the compensation states, indicate that in 1923 the increase in industrial accidents in Wisconsin was 27.4 per cent. Wisconsin had a higher rate of industrial accident increase than eleven other states investigated. All in all, only nineteen states replied to the queries of the American Association for Labor Legislation.

From the summary of the provisional birth and mortality figures for 1923, recently issued by the Department of Commerce, we learn that Wisconsin has little to be proud of in this field. No less than twenty states show at least as good a record as, and eighteen of these show an even better record than Wisconsin for the last year in the death rates, in the proportion of deaths per one thousand of the population. Wisconsin is one of the twenty-five states in which death rates for 1923 were higher than for 1922.

Workers' Education Neglected

Wisconsin has always boasted of its great educational system. But the workers have enjoyed very little of the advantages afforded by La Follette's generosity in this respect. From the "Instruction in Wisconsin Schools; Report of the General Executive Board," 1920 convention of the State Federation of Labor, we learn that:

"For 7,200 university students the state of Wisconsin in 1919-1920 spent \$4,000,000. For more than 20,000 employed children between the ages of 14 and 17, the state spent one-eighth as much."

This extreme disproportion certainly does not betray a whole-hearted interest on the part of the LaFollette machine in the education of the workers.

Unsanitary Labor Conditions

Nor are the sanitary conditions of employment even up to the mark set for them by the various state laws. So conservative a paper as the Milwaukee Journal in its issue of December 1, 1920, tells us that: Wisconsin factories are not living up to the state sanitary safety code, according to a statement by Mr. George P. Hambrecht, chairman of the Wisconsin Industrial Commission, following complaints from Milwaukee workers that unsanitary conditions prevail in some workshops."

In the Wisconsin labor camps the conditions are even more deplorable, as has been shown in the investigation made by the Wisconsin Industrial Commission, "Labor Camps in Wisconsin."

Child Labor Record Poor

Wisconsin's child labor record is poor. Tho it is the tenth state in the number of men gainfully engaged in manufacturing industries, it is the fifth state in the total number of children under sixteen years of age employed in these industries. New York state which has the greatest number employed in manufacturing industries has only 6,288 children working in these industries, while Wisconsin has 6,906. Incidentally, the total number of gainfully employed in manufacturing industries in New York is more than four times the total number employed in these industries in Wisconsin.

From 1910 to 1920, according to the latest investigation prepared by the Department of Commerce, entitled "Children in Gainful Occupations" the number employed in the country as a whole (ten to fifteen years of age) decreased 46.7 per cent. At the same time the decrease in the total number of children ten to fifteen years of age, engaged in these gainful occupations in Wisconsin, was only 34.4 per cent.

In the East North Central group of states in which Wisconsin falls, the average decrease of children employed in gainful occupations was 42.8 per cent, or greater than it was in LaFollette's own state. In thirty-three states the rate of decrease of children gainfully employed in all occupations was greater in the last decade than it was in Wisconsin.

The percentage of the total children employed between the years of ten and seventeen is greater in Wisconsin than in twenty-seven other states.

Milwaukee, Wisconsin's industrial center, is among the cities having a hundred thousand or more inhabitants, and ten per cent more of their child population ten to fifteen years of age gainfully employed.

Obviously LaFollette's much over-estimated "Wisconsin plan" has proved a signal failure insofar as its effectiveness to remove the inherent evils of capitalism is concerned.

Chapter IX

LAFOLLETTE ACCEPTS THE IMPERIALIST WAR

BEFORE the United States entered the World War, the Wisconsin "progressive" wizard held the belief that it was not America's business to join the infernal fray. Once the war was declared, however, LaFollette accepted active American participation as a fact. He then lined up to support loyally the prosecution of the war and to hasten its victorious conclusion for the capitalist class in whose behalf it was fought.

LaFollette differed with other supporters of the imperialist conflict only as to method, but not as to the waging of the war itself. The Wisconsin senator's attitude toward the war was the same as his present attitude to exploitation of the working class by the employers. LaFollette is not opposed to the system of capitalist exploitation. He is opposed to some of its methods and differs from the Lodges, the Smoots, the Coolidges, and the Davises only as to methods of exploiting the workers.

Voted War Credits

Not only did LaFollette not fight against the war to make the world safe for plutocracy, but he even voted all war credits. And dollars, it must be remembered, are the sinews of all capitalist wars. Then, tho he opposed the armed ship bill before the United States joined the Allies, he did not speak on this measure, did not utter a word against it in the senate.

LaFollette Pledged Self for War to Utmost

When one thinks of the suffering of the Communists, the revolutionary workers, in every country for their opposition to the imperialist bloodfest, he is immediately convinced that LaFollette did everything but fight against the World War. There is an unbridgeable chasm between the war records of Robert M. LaFollette of the Republican Party of Wisconsin and Karl Liebknecht of the Communist Party of Germany.

Listening to State Senator Henry A. Huber's speech before the Wisconsin upper house on February 23, 1918, we hear him say in defense of LaFollette's war record: "War having been legally declared, LaFollette immediately accepted it as a fact. He set about to make effective war. He believed it to be wise to make war as effective as possible that it might be the sooner ended. . . ." This was exactly the reasoning of the capitalist super-patriots and the profiteers.

Didn't Interfere

And turning to an address delivered by LaFollette before the United States senate, as reported in the Congressional Record (Page 681) of April 14, 1917, we read: "I do not desire to hamper our own effort to speedily prepare to prosecute this deplorable war."

Ten days later LaFollette took occasion to tell the senate (See Cong. Rec. April 27, 1917; Page 1362): "First, all our naval and military resources should be concentrated on the solving of the submarine problem."

Pleading that the country arm itself to the teeth, the "progressive" leader who would now have us believe that he fought against the war, thus implored his colleagues in the senate (Cong. Rec. Oct. 6, 1917; Page 7,887): "It is said by many for whose opinions I have profound respect, and whose motives I know to be sincere, that 'we are in this war and must go thru to the end.' That is true.

"There is, and of course can be, no real difference of opinion concerning the duty of the citizen to discharge to the last limit whatever obligation the war lays upon him.

"Our young men are being taken by the hundreds of thousands for the purpose of waging this war. . . . Nothing must be left undone for their protection. They must have the best army, ammunition, and equipment that money can buy."

Here we have a song very much in sympathy with the chant sung to the working men by the Garys, the Schwabs, the Morgans, and the National Security and Defense Leagues.

LaFollettism Not Opposed to Imperialist Wars

Scrutinizing Senator LaFollette's voting record during the last imperialist war, one sees that the self-appointed progressive Messiah is no enemy of capitalist aggression when it is wrapped in such empty phrases as "war for defense" and "safety and security of the country."

In a speech he made at Port Washington on July 18, 1917, LaFollette plainly said: "I didn't believe in waging war to collect Mr. Morgan's

money for him." Yet, having no illusions about the character of the bloody struggle, LaFollette voted for 55 out of 60 war measures, prior and subsequent to this declaration.

The Wisconsin senator at no time proposed to take away from the imperialist diplomats and the financiers their powers to make war. At most LaFollette has sought to give the masses who fight the wars a voice along with the intriguing capitalist statesmen and the profit-hungry bosses. Thus we find him say in his *Political Philosophy* (p. 205): "Why not let those who must pay have something to say? Why not let the people themselves, on whom the burden of war falls, have a voice—some direct expression—along with finance and diplomacy, in determining whether there shall be war, or whether there shall not be war?"

Not Really Against Conscription

Likewise, LaFollette's opposition to the conscription bill before it became law was only to the method pursued by the employing class in murdering the sons of the workers and poor farmers and not to their right to call upon the working masses to fight their imperialist battles. In the Wisconsin state senate Hon. H. A. Huber, thus on February 23, 1918, defended and explained LaFollette's opposition to conscription on the basis of military efficiency:

"Had men been enlisted in an orderly manner as needed, they could have been equipped and supplied as called, and we would not now have a million men drawn away from essential industries awaiting transportation that cannot be fully provided for more than a year yet. LaFollette was right as events now amply show. Notwithstanding he opposed the conscription act, upon its passage LaFollette immediately counseled full compliance with the law."

Little Hostility to Capitalism

Nor was LaFollette dangerously hostile to the big employing interests in the revenue measures proposed by him to raise more than enough money with which to finance the war.

In his discussion of the income tax bill before the senate, he said: "The public must pay enough for the products to furnish a good round profit for the capital actually invested." (Cong. Rec. September 3, 1917; p. 6,530).

Not only did LaFollette differ merely as to the method of financing the imperialist war, but he advocated his own plan for adoption of which he argued on the ground that it would safeguard the spirit of war among the masses. Thus the Wisconsin senator made his plea for his plan as follows before his colleagues in Washington:

"I tell them one and all, that by their refusal to justly tax war profits and excessive incomes, they are destroying the war spirit among the hundred million people of this country, which is absolutely necessary if we are to acquit ourselves even creditably in this great war." (Cong. Rec. September 10, 1917; p. 6,861).

Tax Rich to Breed War Spirit

Finally, LaFollette demanded that the peace terms of the capitalist war be stated not because he might thus expose the true character of the conflict and throw a monkey wrench into the imperialist war machinery, but because he was convinced that such a statement by the ruling class of this country would tend to win the masses more firmly to the war campaign. We need but turn to the speech delivered by La Follette to the United States Senate on October 6, 1917, to see this truth:

"Such a course (a declaration of the purposes of the war) would also immeasurably, I believe, strengthen our military force in this country, because when the objects of this war are clearly stated and the people approve of these objects, they will give to the war a popular support it will never otherwise receive."

Such was and is the opposition of LaFollette to capitalist imperialism and war. And such is the support the workers and dispossessed farmers should give the Wisconsin senator in return on the basis of his war record.

Chapter X

LAFOLLETTE DOES HIS BIT

WHEN we look into LaFollette's voting record on the sundry war bills considered and enacted by Congress from this date to the conclusion of the war we find that he voted for fifty-five out of sixty such measures.

Our detailed examination of LaFollette's war record follows:

LaFollette's Pro-War Record

April 6

The Badger State Senator voted for the appropriation of \$163,841,000 for the general deficiency, one hundred million of which were immediately placed at the disposal of the president for any war purposes he might decide upon.

April 11

The Wisconsin senator supported a bill to appropriate \$147,363,928 for "sundry and civil expenses of the government."

Voted for an appropriation of \$1,344,896 for the military academy. Supported the 1918 army appropriation totalling \$273,046,322.

April 17

LaFollette votes "YEA" on "An act to authorize an issue of bonds to meet expenditures for the national security and defense, and for the purpose of assisting in the prosecution of the war, to extend credit to foreign governments and for other purposes." The total amount voted at this time was \$5,063,054,460. Three billions went to the Allied imperialists as loans.

April 20

Supports the measure to increase the midshipmen of the navy.

Votes for raising the age limit for officers of the naval reserve from 35 to 50 years.

Favors an act providing for the issuance of rifles and equipment to the home guards.

April 28

LaFollette votes "YEA" on an amendment to draft bill for volunteers to protect the border and on an amendment to call for 500,000 volunteers and draft any deficiency after ninety days.

April 30

Supported a resolution empowering President Wilson to take over the German and Austrian ships in American harbors.

May 9

Votes for the Administration's amendment to the Federal Reserve Act.

May 14

Tho voting against the Espionage act, LaFollette supported an amendment to the Espionage act, giving the president power to make rules preventing the disclosure of movements of vessels and other war activities, but providing that this should not be construed as preventing the criticism of the acts or policies of the government.

May 15

Votes for proposal to increase the enlisted strength of the navy, from eighty-seven to one hundred and fifty thousand, and the marine corps from 17,400 to 30,000.

Supports McCumber amendment to organize a board to devise ways and means of guarding against submarine attack.

May 16

Favors a resolution permitting the Red Cross to erect temporary buildings in Washington.

May 19

Supports a bill appropriating \$3,281,094,541 for war expenses. This was the largest single appropriation ever made up to that time by any government in the world. Of this sum, \$405,000,000 was for building a shipping fleet.

May 22

LaFollette supports an act to increase power of Interstate Commerce Commission in respect to car service. Favors an act appropriating \$45,150,000 to insure vessels and their cargoes.

Votes in favor of naval appropriations as provided for in H. R. 10,854. The bill was unanimously agreed to.

In order to secure better control of transportation during the war, LaFollette favored a bill to increase the personnel of the Interstate

Commerce Commission and also for an amendment to prevent the increase of railroad rates until approved by the Commission.

May 29

Votes in favor of an act to encourage retired officers to re-enter the army in the engineering corps.

June 2

Votes for the Food Survey Bill, carrying appropriations of \$11,336,000 for sundry purposes.

June 15

Votes for bill providing for condemning land for military purposes.

June 16

LaFollette favors bill giving president power to direct that war shipments should have priority over all other shipments.

June 18

Favors bill granting officers of the Public Health Service serving on coast guard vessels in time of war, or enlisted in the navy or army, the same pensions as army or navy officers.

June 21

LaFollette supports measure for National Security and Defense by stimulating agriculture and appropriating for same \$11,346,000.

June 26

LaFollette allows the senate to pass measures providing for the drafting of the state militia and the National Guard into the Federal service, without a roll call.

July 14

Supports the establishment of a permanent aviation station for military and naval forces in the harbor of San Diego.

July 21

Votes for the Food Control Bill, appropriating \$162,500,000.
Supports an appropriation of \$640,000,000 for aviation.

July 23

Favors a bill to relieve entrymen of desert land when they enter the naval or military service.

July 26

Asserting that money is more needed for war purposes, LaFollette votes against the River and Harbor Appropriation Bill, during the war.

Supports amendment giving president power to limit expenditures on rivers and harbors during war, to actual necessities. Amendment defeated.

August 22

LaFollette supports a bill to provide an air craft station for the navy at the cost of \$150,000.

September 11

Votes for an act to secure the secrecy of patents on war inventions during the conflict.

September 12

Favors the organization of an air craft board and a hundred thousand dollar appropriation for the same.

Supports an act called "The Trading with the Enemy Act" making it unlawful to carry on business with an alien enemy.

September 13

Supports an act providing for the appointment of twenty chaplains at large for the army.

September 15

Votes for the bill authorizing the second bond issue giving the secretary of the treasury, with the approval of the president, the power to borrow \$7,558,945,640 for war expenditures, and to issue other certificates of indebtedness, up to four billion dollars and war saving stamps up to two billion dollars.

Several amendments proposed by LaFollette to limit the rate of interest to four per cent, to issue bonds in sums of twenty dollars or multiples thereof, and to tax incomes derived from bonds, were defeated.

September 25

LaFollette supports the second big appropriation for the war, totaling \$5,356,666,016.

October 4

Supports bill permitting public land affidavits to be taken before military officers.

Votes for act providing insurance for military forces and for injured soldiers and dependents involving an appropriation of \$176,250,000.

October 5

Supports a measure providing for commissions in the army for medical and dental corps.

Votes to fix commutation price of the navy ration.

Votes to establish ratings for artisans in the army.

Supports an act empowering the president to use cavalry as artillery regiments.

Favors a bill permitting vessels of foreign registration engaged in coastwise shipping to be admitted to American registration.

Supports an act granting six months' pay as a gratuity to families of deceased officers and making same applicable to all retired officers re-entering active service.

Favors act extending morality and liquor sections of army draft law to the navy.

October 6

LaFollette supports a bill facilitating the purchase of land for the Ordnance Department.

From the close of August to about mid-September, 1917, Congress was busy with the war revenue measure.

During all this time LaFollette was feverishly at work in an effort to raise the maximum sum of money with which to wage the war on the basis of levying higher tax rates on war profits and big incomes rather than on the incomes of the middle and lower groups of capitalists. La Follette's proposals in this direction were of course, defeated by the spokesmen of the uppermost crust of the capitalist class. But none of LaFollette's amendments aimed at preventing the imperialists from getting war funds. He aimed only at transferring the burdens of war to the biggest capitalists from the lower group of exploiters.

Chapter XI

THE "MODEL COMMONWEALTH"—A PACEMAKER IN MILITARISM

WISCONSIN, the state which LaFollette always holds up as an example of what a government ought to be to and for the working and farming masses, is one of the leading militarist states in the Union.

On examining the annual reports of the Chief of the Militia Bureau we find that only two states in the Union, Indiana and Wisconsin, have doubled their National Guard strength between 1915 and 1922. In 1915 there were 3,291 in the Wisconsin National Guard. By 1922 the number rose to 6,900. Wisconsin is one of the four states that has gone even further than required by the National Defense Act.

More Armories

This campaign to maintain Wisconsin as a pacemaker in militarism is further shown in the quarterly report for the period ending December 31, 1923, made by State Engineer, John G. D. Mack. Here we learn that four new Wisconsin armories have just been completed and located at Abbotsford, Clintonville, Milwaukee and Hudson.

Describing the mushroom growth of militarism and its effects in LaFollette's political satrapy, Mr. William T. Evjue said editorially in the Capital Times, July 28, 1924:

"Up at Camp Douglas the annual fan-fare of Wisconsin's military display is in progress. Thousands of young men are marching. The bands are playing. The guns are booming. The reviewing stands beam as the boys go marching by. . . .

"Do you know, Mr. and Mrs. Citizen of Wisconsin, that Wisconsin is today the seventh state in the Union in militarism? Do you know that in spite of the big cut made in appropriations in the last legislature that there are only six states in the Union having a larger national guard than Wisconsin's?

"And this is a state that is overwhelmingly committed to peace! This in a state controlled by progressives who have made attacks on militarism one of the cardinal points in their platforms!"

But in the appropriation of funds for militarism, Wisconsin ranks even worse. The last available annual report of the Chief of the Militia Bureau reveals the fact that in the fiscal year ending June 30, 1922, only three states appropriated more money for their National Guards than Wisconsin did. For the fiscal year ending June 30, 1923, only four states, Michigan, New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania, spent more than Wisconsin for the National Guard.

Pacemaker in War Preparations

When Woodrow Wilson called upon the American workers and poor farmers to shed their blood in order to make the world safe for capitalist democracy, LaFollette's state, Wisconsin, rallied to the imperialist colors and wantonly sacrificed the lives and dollars of the working masses.

Let us listen to a glorification of Wisconsin's war efforts by John M. Nelson, now national director of LaFollette's presidential campaign, as he delivered it to Congress on behalf of the Wisconsin delegation, on July 15, 1918:

"The President, as Commander-in-Chief, has had our unanimous support on all war issues. When he asked for appropriations, we gave him all he asked; when he asked for authority to issue bonds, we gave it to him; when he asked for authority to control our food, fuel, railroads, telephones, telegraphs, mines and factories, we gave him the authority; indeed, we did not hold back as a delegation when he asked for power over our liberties and our lives. . . .

"Once war was declared, I accepted the majority decision for war. I recall only three votes out of about 120 since war was declared upon which I was not in full accord with the Administration. . . It has been stated that I voted against conscription. That is a base falsehood."

Support War Loans

And from the Milwaukee Journal of October 10, 1918, we learn of the strong support accorded the various war loans in the home of LaFollette, now seeking workingmen's votes as an anti-war candidate. We quote:

"Total bond sale is \$102,000,000.

"The forty-five counties in Wisconsin in the Chicago Reserve Bank District have bought \$102,000,000 worth of bonds compared with a quota of \$100,000,000. Since subscriptions are still being tabulated, the final total will be still higher. Twenty-seven Wisconsin counties are over 100 per cent, Kenosha leading with 142 per cent. Milwaukee is eighth, with 109 per cent of quota, according to the present tabulation."

The total amount of war bonds sold in the 71 counties of Wisconsin, according to Pixley in "Wisconsin in the World War," is about \$335,900,720.

Workers Used as Cannon Fodder

LaFollette's progressive, peace-loving state was as lavish with the workers' lives, as it was with their money in the last capitalist world war.

In the announcement by Governor Blaine, August 2, 1924, on the proposed Defense Day plans, we are told that the number Wisconsin sent to the front reached a grand total of 124,814. LaFollette's gubernatorial candidate then goes on to declare proudly:

"In no war during its history had Wisconsin failed to answer the call for national defense or within its own boundaries known industrial or military disorders, and the fact that on July 18, 1918, when American arms stemmed the tide in the second battle of the Marne, one out of every fifteen soldiers wearing the American uniform in France came from Wisconsin."

Workers Hate Wisconsin Militarism

The workers of Wisconsin have at no time had any illusions as to the extensive military preparations going on in the state. The following appearing in the Milwaukee Leader of May 12, 1921, shows the misgivings of the workers aroused by the record-breaking military appropriations voted in the state:

"The efforts to increase its personnel and give greater power to the National Guard are viewed in labor circles with mistrust and open declarations that it is not done with an eye to an outside foe, but to prepare to put down labor.

"Labor men claim that Fort Sheridan was located midway between Chicago and Milwaukee by the capitalistic interests that guide the military policies, so that regulars will be on hand to meet labor troubles."

The great service the Wisconsin National Guard is to the Badger state bosses can be seen from the fact that, under the usual pretense of riot and violence, several companies of troops were rushed to terrorize the workers into submission in the Cudahy strike of August, 1919.

In the strike of the meat cutters against the Cudahy Packing Company, one of the beef trust firms, Governor E. L. Philipp of Wisconsin rushed three companies of National Guardsmen from Camp Douglas, fully equipped and prepared to stay for an indefinite time, in order to "mediate the dispute" against the workers.

LaFollette Supports Wisconsin Militarism

Robert Marion LaFollette has been a consistent supporter of the military system in Wisconsin. In his message as governor he declared in 1905:

"The people of Wisconsin should recognize their importance and take just pride in maintaining the Guard. . . . The model of efficiency in the military service in this country is the United States Regular Army; and every effort should be made to bring the militia as near this standard as possible."

Then, in February, 1923, an effort was made, because of the strong labor opposition to the rapid strides in militarism that Wisconsin was making, to abolish the National Guard. Even Mrs. LaFollette lent support to this movement. Senator LaFollette then came upon the scene and led a vigorous opposition to this effort to abolish the Guard.

The bill to do away with the state militia, hated by the workingmen, had passed the assembly. Preparations were afoot to fight for its adoption by the state senate. But LaFollette, the self-styled anti-militarist, soon entered the lists against the Wisconsin workers, lined up with all the enemies of organized labor, joined with all the open shoppers and killed the move to disband the state militarist organization.

Chapter XII

LAFOLLETTE IN CONGRESS

IN his twenty-five years at Washington, Robert M. LaFollette has been the outstanding figure in the fight for but one measure which might be called a labor law in the strict sense of the term. Except for the fight led by him in behalf of the enactment of the Seamens' Law, Senator LaFollette has not been directly connected with any noteworthy labor legislation.

It is true he voted for the Woman Suffrage Amendment, the proposed Child Labor Amendment, the establishment of the Department of Labor, and the eight-hour day for government employes. It is true he was against the Ship Subsidy Bill, the Esch-Cummins Act, and the Fordney McCumber Tariff Bill. But these votes could scarcely be interpreted as signs of genuine progressivism, as evidence of unrelenting hostility to the employing class interests. Many Republicans and Democrats have voted for and against those measures precisely in the same way as LaFollette did. Yet, no one would on this account call these congressmen and senators progressives worthy of the support of the workers and farmers. Many of those who have voted for the Woman's Suffrage Amendment or the Howell-Barkley Bill for abolishing the Railroad Labor Board are today ardent advocates of the election of Coolidge or Davis.

Progressivism on Wane

If we analyze LaFollette's attitude towards such pressing questions in Congress as raising the revenue, the regulation of business and the tariff, we will find that the Wisconsin Senator has not been fundamentally antagonistic to the corporate interests of the country and has consciously expressed and fought for the needs of the middle and smaller capitalists as against the encroachments of the biggest capitalist groups. At no time has LaFollette spoken or worked for the laborers as a class against the employers exploiting them.

In such questions as the restriction of immigration, the giving of more power to our capitalist government to the control of the movements of workers, or in the matter of Japanese exclusion, LaFollette has not taken a commanding position to stay the hands of the exploiters in utilizing these occasions to divide and weaken the workers.

Not Against Big Capitalists

In debating the various revenue measures preparatory to America's entering the war, Senator LaFollette made it very plain in offering his amendments that he did not relish the idea of being a foe of the business interests of the land. Thus he declared that he was not in fundamental disagreement with them on the basic issues and further said: "It is in no spirit of partisanship that I criticize the revenue bill now before the senate but in the hope and belief that the majority is open to argument and will accept amendments to the measure calculated to improve it without en-

croaching upon any of the tenets, political or economic, of the majority party." (C. Rec. p. 4489, Feb., 28, 1917.)

In general, LaFollette represented the interests of the small business class and the small bankers on this all-important question of revenue raising. On August 18, 1917, for instance, LaFollette voted against a bill to put a tax of one cent on checks, drafts, etc. Senator Simmons, the Democratic tax expert, thus explained the opposition to the proposal: "It is stated correctly that there was a protest, I might say quite a general protest, on the part of the bankers against this tax, but this protest came chiefly and especially from the smaller banks."

Further strong interest in the welfare of the small manufacturer and manufacturing group on the part of LaFollette is displayed in the following comment on his amendment to the schedules on wool under consideration in the action on the tariff measure before the senate on June 10, 1909:

"The great manufacturers have their rights, which should be duly regarded. I would not disparage the men who are manufacturing under this wool schedule. . . .

"The position on the carded wool industry is such as to invite the earnest attention of congress. It is the last branch of the wool industry which is still accessible to the man with moderate capital. With the American Woolen Company in control of about sixty per cent of the output of American woolen cloth, and with the independent manufacturers of worsted cloth organizing into another combination, the carded wool industry, accords the only chance for the small manufacturer."

Similar solicitousness in behalf of the capitalist class was manifested by LaFollette when he voted on October 10, 1921, to provide for free tolls, free transit for American ships through the Panama Canal.

Was Reactionary in Congress

When LaFollette first entered Congress, and during his six years as a member of the House of Representatives, he was a "regular" in every sense of the word. LaFollette was a members of the House Ways and Means committee which framed the McKinley Tariff Bill in 1890. An examination of the rates on sixty articles in this law shows that on the whole they were practically identical with the rates on the same articles in the Fordney-McCumber Act of 1922. Addressing the House of Representatives on May 10, 1890, in behalf of the McKinley Bill, LaFollette said:

"Repeal the protective duties and you have stopped the looms, put out the fires, stunted as with the hand of death the busy industries of my state. . . . It is to preserve the markets of this country to our own producers that we have kept the duties like a breastwork, high enough to protect the man who is busy adding to the sum of its wealth from assault from any foreign source."

Then, in denouncing the Bryan proposal to establish a stable government in the Philippines and then withdraw, LaFollette entered into the following eulogy of American imperialism:

"The market which the Philippines will afford the U. S. while amounting to many millions annually, is unimportant in contemplation of the

value which will result from the Philippines as a point of distribution from which American products can command trade in the orient. From that point of vantage, with our harbors at Honolulu and Tutuila, in the Samoan groups, for coaling, watering, and repairing, we will be ready to conquer our rightful share of that great market now opening for the world's commerce. . . . Whatever ensues, under Republican reconstruction of our plain treaty rights we can legally and morally reserve unto ourselves perpetual commercial advantages of priceless value to our foreign trade from time to time."

Champions Capitalist Tariffs

Though LaFollette is today attacking the Fordney-McCumber Tariff Law as an iniquitous measure, he has for many years been a high tariff advocate. It is true, the Wisconsin Moses has of late been changing somewhat his attitude on the question of highest tariff. Yet, on the whole his practice does not indicate a change, even at so late a date as the consideration of the Emergency Tariff in February, 1921.

Working in close co-operation with Dingley and Payne, LaFollette as a member of the Ways and Means Committee in the Fifty-First Congress advocated a high tariff duty on tin plate in order to build up this industry. The American Tin Plate Company, capitalized at more than fifty million dollars, the Tin Plate Trust, a subsidiary of the United States Steel Corporation, is a monument to LaFollette's progressivism on the tariff.

Then, when the Payne Aldrich Tariff Bill was being considered, LaFollette put up an aggressive fight to secure an amendment "to enable the mills now manufacturing print paper in Wisconsin to so adjust themselves with respect to the manufacture of paper not requiring spruce wood, that they could manufacture it economically without changing the location of those plants."

LaFollette has always been a loyal defender of the zinc interests in his state. On June 16th, 1909, LaFollette made a special plea to the senate to lay a duty on zinc "based on the difference in the cost of production in this country and Mexico. . . . a protective duty measuring the difference between the cost of production in Mexico and in Wisconsin and in Joplin as well. . . ."

Votes for High Tariff

Several years later appearing before the committee conducting hearings on the Maintenance of a Lobby to Influence Legislation, LaFollette made an interesting confession explaining why he refused to vote on the higher tariff rates on zinc, and why he spoke for it. He said in part:

"I own an interest in some zinc bearing lands in Southwestern Wisconsin. I ought perhaps to say that when the tariff on zinc was under consideration, four years ago, I felt as one of the Senators representing the state of Wisconsin in which are located about three counties producing zinc and lead that it was my duty to present to the senate the arguments that it seemed to me should be made from their standpoint. While my interest in the matter was such that I wanted to be excused from voting on the amendment relating to this subject. I felt those I represented

were entitled to have the argument presented and so I made on the floor of the senate what might be called an argument to influence action upon the question." (Pages 190-191.)

Scrutinizing the various votes on the emergency tariff (H. R. 15275), we find that the Wisconsin Senator voted to change the tariff on wheat from thirty to forty cents, for two cents per pound on frozen meat, the Smoot amendment for tariff on sugar and molasses, a duty of eight cents per pound on butter and substitutes, and a tariff on condensed milk. LaFollette's votes indicate that he believes in a tariff to protect many of the business interests of the country.

Progressive Group Shoddy

Senator LaFollette is noted for his ability to filibuster. On several occasions, in the Senate, LaFollette has held up various measures by his ability to talk the proposals of his colleagues of the opposition to death.

Last June LaFollette had an opportunity to prevent the Coolidge machine from adjourning Congress without being forced to expose its unwillingness and incompetency to meet the needs and demands of the bankrupt farming masses. But LaFollette refused to exercise his filibustering skill, which, in this instance, would have struck a damaging blow at the reactionaries. Instead, he voted for the resolution of Senator Jones of Washington to adjourn, after making several vain efforts to secure a majority vote for his proposed stay in session a few weeks longer.

In consideration of the Tax Bill, before the last session of Congress LaFollette's progressives in the House led in this debate by the Wisconsin Congressman Frear, joined forces with the reactionary Republican clique to vote for the multi-millionaire Longworth's bill. In doing so, the progressives did not get a thing from the administration and sacrificed even the insignificant demands they themselves had made towards shifting the burden of taxation to the richest.

Perhaps the most disgraceful behavior of LaFollette's so-called insurgent group was shown in the disastrous sally it made in behalf of liberalizing the rules of procedure in the House of Representatives. These progressives were in a position, through their power to obstruct, to win recognition for their demands. But the progressive group refused to fight effectively. It surrendered to the reactionaries by agreeing to a postponement of constructive action for thirty days.

Progressivism Disappearing

Most of the legislation enacted in Wisconsin is no longer considered radical. As we have seen, twenty-six of the thirty-one planks that LaFollette has presented to the Republican convention, prior to the last one, are now law. Competent political observers, like William Hard, have declared that LaFollette is growing less radical with time.

In this light is it interesting, as well as instructive, to consider the following written by Richard Barry, in the Hearst's International for Aug. 1922: "When early in the present Congress, some insurgents declared they would depose Penrose, from his Finance Committee chairmanship, LaFollette refused to join them. Penrose sought out his colleague from

Wisconsin and expressed appreciation." Penrose, who is now dead, was one of the old guard reactionary senators from Pennsylvania.

Mr. Carter Field writing in the New York Tribune of January 18th, 1924, said, apropos of LaFollette's friendship with Penrose: "It was 'Bob' and 'Boies' when they met, and that was not all. When LaFollette came up for re-election it was Penrose who hurried up to the hated Wall Street and brought back money to help re-elect 'Bob' every time."

Finally we call upon the Searchlight on Congress, an organ friendly to LaFollette, to dispel any illusions that may have been spread among workingmen and poor farmers about the radicalism of the Wisconsin Senator. We quote from its issue of March 31st, 1924:

"There may be some who look with apprehension upon this strangely altered situation because of their fear that LaFollette may prove ultra radical. Let no one lose any sleep on that score. LaFollette is not ultra-radical. He is not even radical. On the contrary, he is decidedly conservative.

"His record proves that, when given authority, he slows up."

Chapter XIII

THE SOCIALIST PARTY AND LAFOLLETTE

FOR many years there was unrelenting hostility between the Socialist Party and the followers of Senator LaFollette. Despite the repeated flirtations of the Socialist Party bosses with the Wisconsin reform wizard, the membership time and again prevented a merger of their organization with the Badger state senator. In fact, there was a time when feeling ran so high against such improper political coquetting that a national referendum was held to decide on the expulsion of Berger from the Socialist Party on the charge of having been guilty of collusion with capitalist politicians.

It was this continued, strong opposition of the Socialist Party rank and file that forced the leaders to denounce LaFollette on many occasions. Time and again the Socialist membership drove the party officials to attack LaFollette's trust-busting program, the graft with which his machine was reeking, his anti-labor lieutenants, his opposition to the working class waging political struggles against the exploiters, and his general fraudulent progressivism.

In the light of the success finally achieved by the leaders of the Socialist Party in annihilating its last possible claim to be called a party of independent working class political action, a review of what the Socialist rank and file one actually compelled these same leaders to say of Robert M. LaFollette is very timely.

Charged with LaFollettism

Even twenty years ago Berger had his eye on the LaFollette bandwagon. In 1905 he was charged, on this score, with having an under-

standing with capitalist parties. It was only his control of the Wisconsin party machine that saved Berger's political neck and face.

Interesting information on the strong opposition of the general socialist membership to these Berger "understandings" is afforded by the following report of the Social Democratic Herald of June 10, 1905:

"The State Executive Board also points to the fact that the National Committee has not awaited the investigation of the State Executive Board of Wisconsin but has already removed Comrade Berger from the National Committee.

"The finding of the State Executive Board of Wisconsin (Berger committee) is as follows:

"That no collusion or understanding of any sort whatever exists, or at any time existed, between the Social Democratic Party of Milwaukee or Comrade Berger and any capitalistic party, candidate or candidates."

The removal of Berger by the National Committee was then submitted to a referendum, the Crestline Referendum. 4,215 voted for the expulsion of Victor Berger. 4,718 voted against his expulsion. Wisconsin, where Berger was in absolute control of the party machinery, cast 975 votes. National secretary Maily then charged that Wisconsin was not entitled to cast that many votes, as it was much behind in dues, and that this alone saved Berger from being thrown out by the membership for his having been in collusion with capitalist parties and politicians.

Then, as now, the dominant capitalist party in Wisconsin was the LaFollette republican crew.

Attack LaFollette Labor Record

Today LaFollette is in an alliance with the Socialist Party and is seeking the support of the workers on the basis of his record in Wisconsin and in Congress. It is this record that the Socialist bureaucracy has forced its membership to indorse. Let us call upon the Social Democratic Herald of July 1, 1905, to tell us what the Socialists once thought of the LaFollette regime in the Wisconsin Commonwealth. We read:

"The LaFollette legislature has had the worst record of killing labor bills of any of its predecessors."

Victor Berger further declared in the Milwaukee Free Press of September 13, 1906: "LaFollette is trying to do the same thing in the Republican party that Altgeld tried in the Democratic, and he will have less success, because the Democratic party had no principles except to get graft, while the Republican party has well-defined principles for capitalism and is proud of them."

As late as April 6, 1923, the Milwaukee Leader took occasion to attack the LaFollette machine because it saved the private detective agencies of Wisconsin. In its comment on the failure of the state senate to interfere with the private detective agencies breaking strikes, Berger's mouthpiece said:

"Senator Howard Teasdale, one of the LaFollette senators who swung over to the lobby for private detective agencies, opposed the bill (to regulate) because it would make it difficult for reformers to smell out vice."

LaFollette Class Enemy

Especially significant is the following comment on the Farmer-Labor Party campaign of 1920 made by the Socialist Party in its national campaign book of that year:

'Its (the Farmer-Labor Party's) selection of Christensen for President, a man unknown in the struggles of the workers, a man who was willing to withdraw in favor of LaFollette, shows the danger of deserting the Socialist Party for the Farmer-Labor Party. LaFollette, Christensen's choice, was unwilling to have the platform contain a protest in behalf of the Negro. LaFollette opposed any 'radical' platform. He wanted a 'liberal' platform that would not offend many conservative voters, one that would not suggest a 'class party.'

"If LaFollette and his views can be satisfactory to Christensen, the latter cannot be satisfactory to determined and enlightened working men and women. A class party of the workers is needed." (Page 74.)

It is on this record that LaFollette has won over the Socialist Party leadership. LaFollette has not dropped his vigorous opposition to a class party of the workers. The Wisconsin senator is as vociferous as ever in his denunciation of any and all who dare call his program radical. At the Cleveland Conference it was LaFollette's influence that prevented the gathering from taking an official attitude towards the Negro problem and the Ku Klux Klan.

In 1920 LaFollette failed in his effort to kill the Farmer-Labor Party. In 1920 the Farmer-Labor Party refused to permit LaFollette to dictate its principles. Four years after, last July, 1924, LaFollette succeeded in striking a mortal blow at the farmer-labor movement. The same socialist leaders who denounced these efforts of LaFollette in 1920 helped the same LaFollette to undermine the independent working class political movement in 1924. And this in spite of the fact that today, more than ever before, there is an urgent need for a class party of the workers!

Socialists Right-About Face

In the past the Socialists have not minced words in ripping up LaFollette's trust-busting program. On September 3, 1904, the Wisconsin Socialist state convention adopted a resolution which read: "As for Governor LaFollette, he is powerless against the trusts and capitalists, because, as a good Republican and lawyer, he cannot consistently oppose property rights of any kind. These rights are more sacred to all so-called reformers than the rights of man."

Daniel Hoan, now Socialist mayor of Milwaukee, has made it clear in his pamphlet "The Failure of Regulation" that: "Not only were trusts not prosecuted in Wisconsin while Senator LaFollette was governor, but they have not been prosecuted before or since in spite of the fact that there was then and is now a statute (section 1791-j) which provides in substance that any combination organized under the laws of Wisconsin, which shall enter into any combination or agreement to prevent competition or to control prices, shall, in an action instituted by the attorney-general of the state, have its charter revoked."

But Hoan has changed his mind, though LaFollette has not. Today, Hoan is asking the working men to vote for this program of LaFollette.

Spurned Progressivism

Before the Socialist Party committed suicide it, now and then, took occasion to expose the so-called progressivism of LaFollette and his followers. Commenting on LaFollette's support of one Thompson against the labor leader Frank J. Weber, running for the United States Senate, the Milwaukee Leader said on October 22, 1920:

"And here comes Bob LaFollette and his would-be progressives and would-be union men and puts up Mr. Thompson. . . That's dirty politics on the part of the progressives, who by the way are composed of town politicians and fake labor leaders who are looking to LaFollette to pick them up and give them a better office not for the best interests of the people, but to further their own ends and keep the progressive forces divided."

Summing up the net results of LaFollette's program in Wisconsin, Mayor Hoan declared in his "Failure of Regulation" (Page 54): "The results which followed the enactment of the law regulating public service corporations in Wisconsin have very much pleased the special interests. The chief reasons for this are the following: The largest consumers get the lowest rates. Public utility stocks and bonds enjoy a rise in value. The utility corporation is protected from competition. The owners are granted an indeterminate franchise. The investors are granted large dividends."

What more could the employers ask from the government?

Talks Against Progressives

Finally, Victor Berger addressing Congress on May 10, 1924, characterized the spurious progressives, at whose feet he is now worshiping, in the following stinging manner: "Our progressive politicians are also worse than useless, so long as they hang on to the coat tails of the old parties, because these progressives are simply assisting in the sham battle.

"No matter what beautiful phrases this or the other great progressive leader may use in order to get the votes of the 'plain people' the policy of both, and especially of the Republican party, is invariably dictated by Wall Street and high finance."

Yet, today, three months after this speech Berger has driven his party to become part and parcel of the LaFollette movement, of the LaFollette organization which is supporting many Republican and Democratic congressmen, senators and governors who are avowed enemies of the workers. In Wisconsin, for instance, LaFollette is backing Governor Blain who is scores of miles away from progressivism. In New York, for example, LaFollette is supporting the Republican Congressman Dickstein against the Socialist, Meyer London. In Montana, LaFollette and Wheeler are behind Senator Walsh whom the State Federation of Labor has denounced in its last convention as a bitter foe of the workers, and as the author of the state criminal syndicalist law.

What About Members?

What will the rank and file of the Socialist Party say to this complete right-about-face of their leaders? How will they look upon their party committing hari-kari as an independent political organization? Is there no way in which they can square accounts with their misleaders who have stabbed in the back the movement for independent working class political action?

Will they be satisfied to follow the leadership of and put their faith in LaFollette who has for years done everything in his power to thwart the attempts of the workers to organize themselves as a class to fight politically against their exploiters?

Merely to put these questions is to answer them for the class-conscious workers of the entire country.

Chapter XIV

THE LAFOLLETTE PROGRAM

THERE are two sacred parts to the ritual of the so-called "progressive" movement led by Senator Robert M. LaFollette.

First, we have an insistence on substituting for the highly concentrated industrial system of today a free, competitive capitalist order of yesterday. Then, being dominantly a movement in the interests of the middle and lower strata of the capital-owning class, it is opposed to rule by the working class or rule by the uppermost and highest developed, corporate exploiting groups.

In practice, however, the latter attitude tends more and more to translate itself into a policy of implacable hostility to the establishment of a workers' and farmers' republic. In the everyday political life of the country, this pillar of LaFolletteism is becoming an ever-more dangerous obstacle in the path of the workingmen and exploited farmers who are seeking to end the dictatorship of the capitalist class. This "non-partisan" doctrine is today a toxin sapping the very life-blood and energy of the working masses who are craving, still vaguely and unconsciously in the main, for an economic order in which there will be no exploited workers and employing class exploiters—big, medium, or small.

Let us, then, look into the political validity and economic soundness of these features of the LaFollette program.

An Impossible Fight

For more than three decades LaFollette has been massing his batteries against the "combined power of the private monopoly system over the political and economic life of the American people." During all these years the Wisconsin Senator has looked upon John Sherman, father of the still-born Sherman anti-trust act, as his god. Even in the July 4 letter accepting the presidential nomination by the Progressive Conference, LaFollette spoke of Sherman as "The clearest-visioned Re-

publican statesman of his time" and called the Sherman Law, enacted by a Republican Congress in 1890, "the most effective weapon that the ingenuity of man could devise against the power of monopoly."

This weapon has proved ingenious indeed! The trend of economic development in the United States has for some time proved and proves today that the economics on which the LaFollette movement bases its politics is hopelessly wrong. Concentration of industry and finance has been making strides in seven-league boots. No amount of indignant yopping could or can prevent this tendency. Assuming that all the witch-doctors' remedies against trusts proved successful, the very day on which free, capitalist competition would be restored, would be the same day on which this competition would start to dig its own grave and thru elimination and mergers would continually beget concentration of ownership and centralization of control—trustification.

Trusts Go Forward

Despite years of hunting the trusts with whips and torches, the giant corporations have steadily gained in strength. The march of the forces making for large-scale production has gone on apace. The thirty-three powerful Standard Oil subsidiaries whose oil wells and pipe lines overflow and undermine the country, are thirty-three living monuments to the inefficiency of anti-trust legislation and to the uselessness of judicial dissolution suits. The tobacco, steel, copper, coal, and other monopolies tell similar stories.

But it is the dull, dreary, and apparently uninspiring figures of American economic development that plumb the depths of the economic fallacy of trust-busting.

We find that, in the manufacturing industries, the proportion of establishments employing 501 and more workers increased from 28 per cent in 1909 to 39.6 per cent in 1919. At the same time the proportion of manufacturing establishments employing from one to fifty workers fell from 26 per cent in 1909 to 19.4 per cent in 1919.

In 1909, only 25.9 per cent of the manufacturing industries employing 75.6 per cent of the workers and accounting for 79 per cent of the total value of the commodities produced, were corporation-owned. By 1919 the proportion of corporation-owned manufacturing establishments rose to 31.5 per cent; the percentage of workers employed reached 86.5 per cent; and the value of the commodities produced by these workers mounted to 87.7 per cent of the total.

During this decade, 1909-1919, the proportion of individually-owned plants declined from 52.4 to 47.6 per cent; the percentage of the workers thus employed fell from 12.2 to 6.9 per cent; and the value of these products sank from 9.9 to 5.7 per cent of the total.

And Wisconsin, the citadel of LaFollette today ranks fifth in the proportion of its manufacturing industries which are corporation-owned. The Badger State has 92.6 per cent of its manufacturing plants owned by corporations.

Concentration Goes on Apace

From 1914 to 1919 the number of manufacturing concerns producing less than \$5,000 a year declined from 97,060 to 65,485. In this period the plants producing from \$20,000 to \$100,000 annually, rose from 56,814 to 77,911; plants turning out from \$100,000 to \$500,000 rose from 25,847 to 39,647; plants producing from \$500,000 to \$1,000,000 yearly mounted from 4,320 to 9,208; and factories producing more than one million dollars advanced from 3,819 to 10,414. Thus, the most concentrated industries show gains in strength ranging from 200 to 300 per cent.

Then, the number of wage workers employed by corporations producing a value of less than one million dollars fell from 4,560,241 to 3,923,662. On the other hand, the total employed in manufacturing industries increased in this period. At the same time the number of workers employed by manufacturing establishments producing one million dollars or more, rose from 2,476,006 to 5,172,712.

Finally, in 1914, less than half of the total value of manufactured products were turned out in plants producing more than one million dollars. By 1919, the proportion of the total value of manufactured commodities turned out in plants producing more than one million dollars annually was well over two-thirds.

Hurting Workers

Indeed, insofar as the effectiveness of the anti-trust laws matters, they have proved their mettle only against the organizations of the workers. Such bitter experiences have these anti-trust edicts proved to the workmen that, today, even the American Federation of Labor is for their repeal. It is significant that the Clayton Act, once called by Gompers the "Magna Charta" of Labor, has lost nearly all of its favor with its worshippers of yesterday.

But even if LaFollette's program were realizable, would it be desirable? The answer is decisively NO. It is not large-scale production, it is not highly centralized industry that is responsible for the sufferings and hardships of the great mass of our population. Small-scale competitive capitalist production, assuming that it could be perpetuated, is socially undesirable. It would deprive the masses of many of their gains achieved by them thru years of bitter struggle for higher standards of living.

Standing on Its Head

LaFollette's economic program is standing on its head. Marx would say that "It must be turned right side up again, if you would discover the rational kernel within the mystical shell." The trouble with the present system of production and exchange is not that it is highly developed. The basic trouble is that the highly concentrated, large-scale means of production and exchange, all socially used, are privately owned for private profits. The way to end these anti-social conditions giving rise to unemployment, long hours, degrading working conditions, and numerous other causes of suffering among the masses is to end the private ownership of capital.

But this is precisely what LaFollette is inveterately opposed to. La Follette is a determined defender of the private ownership of capital, of the means of the production and exchange, socially used. The socialization of the tursts, the socialization of the well-developed means of subsistence, is anathema to LaFollette, for it would mean the end of the private profit, the capitalist system.

Useless Immediate Objectives

Consequently, no one will swallow LaFollette's anti-trust proposals at a gulp. In the light of the story of our economic development aim Number 1 of the "progressive" platform striving for "The use of the power of the federal government to crush private monopoly, not to foster it" holds out no hope to the workers.

And so long as private owners, capitalists, are with us to coin the advantages of large-scale production primarily for the enhancement of their profits, point Number Four of LaFollette's program, "the repeal of excessive tariff duties, especially on trust-controlled necessities of life," becomes a meaningless phrase.

Point Seven, seeking "legislation to control the meat-packing industry," is simply another instance of flying in the face of facts. For years LaFollette has been after the packing interests. Yet, today, their hold on the government is as strong as ever. This is due to the fact that the ownership of so vital a necessity is permitted to rest in private hands. This is just what LaFollette refuses to disturb.

Misleading Politics

Turning our attention to the second, the political phase of LaFolletteism, we are not surprised to find the strongest opposition to working class action.

When the "progressive" platform says that "class gains are temporary," it is merely befogging the issue. History's verdict on this point is as much opposed to LaFolletteism as the science of economics is to his anti-trust program. The story of the American Revolutionary War, the outcome of the Civil War, the gigantic strikes waged by our workers, the demoralizing attacks and outrages perpetrated by the LaFollette group against the movement for the independent working class political action, and the very campaign LaFollette himself is now leading, all give the lie to this unfounded proposal.

The best way in which the greatest numbers of the members of any economic group can achieve the maximum politico-social advantages is thru co-ordinated disciplined political action on a broad scale against the opposing economic group. This, of course, is Class action. This is exactly what LaFollette is attempting to do in behalf of his own class of small manufacturers, petty businessmen, and mushroom bankers.

More Empty Gestures

Hence Point Eleven of LaFollette's program asking for the "Election of all federal judges without party designation for limited terms"

is an empty gesture. With the press, the means of production and exchange, the means of government, information, and misinformation all being in the hands of the exploiters; with the very running for office having been trained in capitalist class law and institutions, it is a travesty on the workers' intelligence to expect them to accept such noisy but worthless phraseology.

Last but not least, it is natural for so energetic a spokesman of the middle business interests as LaFollette to denounce any attempt that might be made by the workers as a class towards asserting their political power. Such action by the workers would take them out of the Wisconsin Senator's political camp and would in time bring them into a sharp clash with the exploiters of all dimensions and all intentions, as a class. Defeat, for all capitalists of all sizes is the much-dreaded outcome that LaFollette foresees in all moves towards independent working class political action. This explains LaFollette's undermining the St. Paul convention and his attack on the Communists.

Workers Do Organize

But no wholesale dabbling in the glorification of the non-partisan appeal by fraudulent progressives can change the course of economic development. Capitalist industry itself, and not evil men or bad spirits, gives rise to an increasingly sharpening class struggle. Capitalism itself tends to lay the firm foundation for the organization of the workers as a class, along political lines.

It is the very experiences of the workers in their struggles with all strata of the employing class that gives rise to and prepare the ground for the working class setting up its own governing, state apparatus. These conditions and such experiences determine the character of the new state machinery organically and best suited to guarantee the rule of the working class towards the end of building a social order free from the economic class divisions of exploiter and exploited—Communism.



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