

FIFTY YEARS OF FAILURE BASIS OF BOB'S DREAM

Wisconsin Senator Not Against Capitalism

(Introductory Article.)

By JAY LOVESTONE.

After nearly fifty years of failure, Senator Robert Marion LaFollette has decided to attempt 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 for one grand offensive, a final rush, as it were, against the master of "Special Privilege."

What Is LaFollette After?

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

But of the three candidates LaFollette is the one who asserts his progressivism with the greatest force and goes out of his way to lay claim to the undivided political support of the working and farming masses in the coming campaign. It is our task to see whether Senator LaFollette's claim to the confidence and trust of the city and rural workers and the expropriated farmers is warranted by the record of his achievements in his political career of nearly fifty years.

Turning the Searchlight on LaFollette.

We will scrutinize his record from the time he became District Attorney

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After 50 Years of Failure

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of Dane County, Wisconsin, in 1880; thru his term in the House of Representatives, 1885-1891; and his entry into the United State Senate in 1905 to date.

We brand the widely touted progressivism of Senator LaFollette as more noise than substance. We will prove that such fraudulent progressivism does not hold out any hope to the workers and exploited farmers.

We will marshal conclusive evidence to show that LaFollette's opposition to "Special Privilege" not only has not hurt or shocked the profits of the biggest interests but that it has even helped them. More than that, We will call upon LaFollette to tell us how proud he is of this beneficial effect of his policies on big business. The facts indicate that in the last fifteen years most of LaFollette's progressive planks have been either enacted into law by or incorporated into the programs of the republican and democratic parties.

As to LaFollette's warm friendship for the workingmen and poor farmers, we will let the Wisconsin Senator's actual record of positive achievements speak for itself. The repeated bitter protests by the organized workers against the peculiar anti-labor slant of the Wisconsin courts will be recounted from official documents. Besides, we will look into the pages of the close dealings between LaFollette and such labor haters as McKinley and Penrose and the unflinching support tendered by "Battling Bob" to such enemies of the workingman as Senator Walsh of Montana who was just denounced by the Montana State Federation of Labor.

We will call the roll of LaFollette's leading "angels."

Mr. LaFollette will be called to the witness stand to tell us by word of his own mouth and by the record of his own activities how he voted for fifty-five out of the sixty war measures while the American workers and farmers were being slaughtered on the battlefields of France and Belgium.

Nor will we overlook the proud war record and the strong National Guard of LaFollette's own peace-loving Wisconsin.

In turning the searchlight on LaFollette's opposition to militarism and imperialism we will narrate the story of the Senator's support of McKinley's annexation of the Philippines, the insatiable interest of the foremost "progressive" leader in having the country he prepared at all times for wars of "defense," and the non-resistant attitude of the progressive group in the Senate and House towards the last one hundred and fifty million dollar Butler naval grab.

The class which Mr. LaFollette really serves, the strength of the open shop movement, the weakness of the trade union movement, the poor child labor, industrial accidents and wage records of Wisconsin will be offered as the shining examples of the helpfulness of LaFolletism to the working masses.

And proof that LaFollette's program is useless, out-of-date, and inadequate will be the final evidence submitted by us to show that the Wisconsin Senator is not deserving of the political support of the working class and the dispossessed farmers.

His "Progressivism."

Let us examine the outstanding arguments that are most often advanced to show that LaFollette is a genuine progressive worthy of support by and political leadership of the working and farming masses. Briefly stated these are:

1. Senator LaFollette is opposed to "special privilege" and has fought it all his life. In a campaign pamphlet entitled "Where LaFollette Stands on Fifty Living Issues," we are told to look at the state made famous by LaFollette, Wisconsin, as the "Model Commonwealth." The adherents of LaFollette propose to extend this "Wisconsin Idea," the regulation of big business and its restoration to honesty, thruout the country.

2. LaFollette insists he is a tried and true friend of the workers and poor farmers as against the employing class.

3. The LaFollette boosters are continually asserting that their candidate was anti-war and steadfastly opposed the last imperialist world conflict.

4. Considerable stress is laid on LaFollette's attitude towards and record

of opposition to militarism and imperialism.

5. The supporters of LaFollette always point with pride to Wisconsin, where the Senator is the undisputed political boss, as a shining example of the genuine progressivism and helpfulness of his policies to the workers and poor farmers.

6. Finally, the program of LaFollette is said to afford the working and farming masses the best way out of their numerous political and economic hardships.

In our next article we will consider LaFollette's regulation program and his special war on "Special Privilege." But before going into a specific analysis of the above contention of the worshippers of the Wisconsin senator it would be well for us to consider briefly the material conditions, the social milieu giving rise to LaFolletteism.

A World Phenomenon.

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

This tendency was stimulated by political and economic class considerations of the capitalists. The feat 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 MacDonald and Philip Snowden. In France the militarist Pioneers gave way to the so-called Socialist ministry of Herriot. In Spain the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera and the notorious "Butcher" Weyler is on its last legs. Even in Italy, the cradle of Fascism, Mussolini'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—did a good deal towards developing the political consciousness of our workers and hastened 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 democracy. The Communist International has well characterized the present political era of capitalism as democratic pacifist.

It is at 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 past, present, and future of the small-sized and medium-sized capitalist property owners to seek the political support not only of all honest business men, of all disgruntled, well-to-do farm owners and highly skilled aristocratic laborers, but also of great sections of the working class and the exploited farming masses. Mr. LaFollette, the spokesman of the lesser which have been smarting under the whip of highly developed, monopolized, trustified industry, is now seeking to lead and control the slowly crystallizing class resentment of the working and poor farming masses against the biggest exploiters thru a loose political alliance of the discontented working class and poor farmers with the middle class.