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Ukraine Deception

Last month the national office of the SLP received the first of several e-mails that cast doubt on the legitimacy of the "Socialist Labor Party of Ukraine." Since then the national office has confirmed to its own satisfaction, and to that of the party's National Executive Committee, that the so-called SLPU was part of an elaborate hoax. That hoax was perpetrated on several organizations in Western Europe and the United States by the Ukrainian affiliate of a British group that calls itself "Committee for a Workers International." The CWI, which identifies itself with Trotskyism, reportedly denied any knowledge of the swindle and declared it was as shocked and repulsed by the conduct of its Ukrainian associates as the organizations that were bilked.

Although much of the evidence that has surfaced since July is largely circumstantial and primarily of a literary quality, it is substantial.

It appears that at least nine or 10 groups in the United States and Western Europe were duped by these unprincipled money-grubbers. Money is what they were after, and the SLP did send \$450.00 to help what we believed to be a fledgling SLP of Ukraine buy a used computer. From what we can tell, however, that was a mere pittance compared to what these Ukrainian Trotskyists managed to wring out of certain other organizations.

One of the European groups that fell victim to the Ukrainian schemers was the Socialist Party of Great Britain. A statement issued through the SPGB's official journal, *Socialist Standard*, summed up the scheme as follows:

"Members of this group would contact groups in the West by e-mail feigning agreement with their political position; if the groups from the West sent a delegation to the Ukraine to check, the Trotskyists concerned would assemble a dozen or so of their supporters, all of whom had been coached in the views of the group concerned. Thus, our delegates who went to Kiev in November 2001 met a group of individuals who expressed socialist views and had no reason to doubt their sincerity. Any money sent went into the coffers of the Trotskyist group. At least 10 groups seem to have been taken in by this scam including, besides ourselves, the SLP of America, the Socialist Studies group [of SPGB dissidents], and various rival Trotskyist outfits...."

The ploy was reprehensible for many reasons, not the least being that the Ukrainian affiliate of the CWI trafficked on the sympathy that sincere and dedicated Socialists everywhere have for the Ukrainian working class. As Robert Burns of the SLP's National Executive Committee explained his own feelings in the matter:

"It was very disappointing to hear of the deception of the 'Ukrainian SLP'...."

"When I read of our engagement with a Ukrainian group that seemed to be supportive of the SLP, I was very pleased, especially since the Ukrainian people had suffered so much under Stalinist Communist Party control. Between 4 and 6 million Ukrainians were supposed to have been starved to death in the late 1920s and early 1930s by the Russians. And then thousands of Ukrainians were killed by the Nazis during World War II. So I was greatly encouraged by our engagement and support of the SLPU...."

While the SLP condemns this unconscionable deception by the Ukrainian Trotskyists, and while it will do everything possible to defend itself against similar schemes in the future, it refuses to allow its optimism, its faith in the working class, or its commitment to the principles of socialist internationalism to be dampened by the experience.

[Since this was written, the SPGB has received a message from Ukraine claiming that the "World Socialist Party of Ukraine," the SPGB equivalent of the "SLPU," also was deceived by agents provocateur inside its own ranks, and that the WSPU is a legitimate organization sincerely interested in maintaining fraternal ties with the SPGB and its "World Socialist Movement." The message is posted to the SPGB's open discussion list on the Internet. It is replete with phrases and statements similar—and in some instances identical—to phrases and statements in e-mail messages the SLP received in the past.

[Readers of *The People* who also receive the *New Unionist* may have noticed such similarities in statements from the "SLPU" and the so-called New Union Party of Ukraine. When we called these similarities to the attention of our supposed friends in Kiev we were told that the leader of the "NUP" was a computer hacker who managed to reroute and doctor messages meant for the SLP before sending them to the NUP in Minnesota. However, our suspicions were aroused when certain minor variations, such as small differences in the spelling of given names, crept into some of the later messages received. Apparently the deceivers had so many baited lines out in search of pelf that they began to confuse themselves on which group should receive what message and over what signature.

[The latest message to the SPGB weaves a more intricate tale than was foisted on the SLP, but the pattern is the same and some of the language is familiar. That message has caused some SPGB members to suggest a reevaluation of the statement printed in the *Socialist Standard*, but our experience tells us that it is only another ruse. While we believe there are sincere and honest Socialists in Ukraine, and while we still are optimistic enough to hope that they will eventually discover and be attracted to the SLP and its Socialist Industrial Union program, we will take every precaution to ensure that our optimism does not get the better of our judgment the next time they are put to the test.]

A De Leon Editorial

The 'Dual Union' Ruse

The International Association of Machinists raised the cry of "dual unionism" during its recent battle with the American Mechanics Fraternal Association at United Airlines. The AMFA is no prize, but the "dual union" ruse is only meant to distract and disarm workers who are discontent with labor fakers.



'Dual' and 'Rival' Unions

(Daily People, Jan. 17, 1911)

Proceeding from the principle that testimony against one's own interest is the most reliable of testimonies, we accept as correct the Chicago, Jan. 12, despatch concerning the Garment Workers strike in that city, published on the 13th of this month by the *Vorwaerts*, the New York Yiddish organ of the Socialist Party and the AFL.

The despatch sets forth that the strikers, having rejected one proposition by the employers and having under consideration, at a large meeting at Hodcarriers' Hall, a second proposition in which the employers yielded the point of reinstating all the participants in the strike, "Comrade William Haywood took the floor. He delivered a long and sharp speech attacking the American Federation of Labor, and speaking for a new Tailors' Union, to be built upon a purely industrial plan, not upon the plan of the American Federation of Labor. Before he spoke, the people were inclined to a settlement. But under the influence caused by Haywood's speech the strikers displayed a sentiment against their own agreement, and a dissatisfaction, even a sort of rebellion against their leaders."

This is prime anti-SP and anti-AFL testimony. Inversely, it is Socialist Labor Party testimony. The facts alleged in the report shatter the AFL-SP false and "Stop thief!" cry against "dual unions!" as treason to the working class.

The outcry of "dual unions!" raised against any and every new union in a trade in which the AFL has previously set up its tent, is a cry that implies a number of falsehoods, all deadly to the labor movement. The cry implies that the AFL organizes the shops. The AFL only disorganized them. Whatever shop the AFL enters, it there dislocates the proletariat by means of contracts and other devices that disable them from presenting a united front to the employer, and compel them to scab upon one another. If the AFL can at all be said to organize, it organizes for the masters, not for the workers.

The cry implies that the AFL either has organized the trade, or is desirous, and endeavors to do so. The AFL deliberately disorganizes the trade. By means of high initiations and kindred schemes the AFL keeps the bulk of the members of a trade outside of its unions, turning them into caricatures of trusts. Whatever trade the AFL invades it ruptures the corresponding proletariat.

The cry implies that the AFL is a virile, live organization, and proof of the implication is advanced by its numbers. The AFL is a "coffin" or "insurance" association. The main thread that holds its large constituents together is the insurance they have paid in, which not to forfeit the AFL emasculates its membership with mottoes concerning the "brotherhood of capital and labor."

The cry implies that the AFL is a labor organization. The affiliation of its leading officers, in their official capacity, with the Civic Federation of capitalist magnates, and more recently its admission to its national conventions of

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what is socialism?

Socialism is the collective ownership by all the people of the factories, mills, mines, railroads, land and all other instruments of production. Socialism means production to satisfy human needs, not, as under capitalism, for sale and profit. Socialism means direct control and management of the industries and social services by the workers through a democratic government based on their nationwide economic organization.

Under socialism, all authority will originate from the workers, integrally united in Socialist Industrial Unions. In each workplace, the rank and file will elect whatever committees or representatives are needed to facilitate production. Within each shop or office division of a plant, the rank and file will participate directly in formulating and implementing all plans necessary for efficient operations.

Besides electing all necessary shop officers, the workers will also elect representatives to a local and national council of their industry or service—and to a central congress representing all the industries and services. This all-industrial congress will plan and coordinate production in all areas of the economy. All persons elected to any post in the socialist government, from the lowest to the highest level, will be directly accountable to the rank and file. They will be subject to removal at any time that a majority of those who elected them decide it is necessary.

Such a system would make possible the fullest democracy and freedom. It would be a society based on the most primary freedom—economic freedom.

For individuals, socialism means an end to economic insecurity and exploitation. It means workers cease to be commodities bought and sold on the labor market and forced to work as appendages to tools owned by someone else. It means a chance to develop all individual capacities and potentials within a free community of free individuals.

Socialism does not mean government or state ownership. It does not mean a state bureaucracy as in the former Soviet Union or China, with the working class oppressed by a new bureaucratic class. It does not mean a closed party-run system without democratic rights. It does not mean "nationalization," or "labor-management boards," or state capitalism of any kind. It means a complete end to all capitalist social relations.

To win the struggle for socialist freedom requires enormous efforts of organizational and educational work. It requires building a political party of socialism to contest the power of the capitalist class on the political field and to educate the majority of workers about the need for socialism. It requires building Socialist Industrial Union organizations to unite all workers in a classconscious industrial force and to prepare them to take, hold and operate the tools of production.

You are needed in the ranks of Socialists fighting for a better world. Find out more about the program and work of the Socialist Labor Party and join us to help make the promise of socialism a reality.