

By JOHN GATES, Editor of The Worker

Question of the day

QUESTION: *How can you talk about a future for independent labor political action when CIO-PAC and other such outfits lost ground in the November elections?*

ANSWER: The failure of CIO Political Action Committee and the AFL Political Education League to rally the united support of all workers was not a defeat for independent labor political action but for dependent labor action.

The overwhelming bulk of labor's top officialdom did not pursue a policy independent of the reactionary war program of the two parties of monopoly, but followed behind the Truman Administration and the Democratic Party.

Consequently those who are saying that labor went too far in this election and antagonized people because of that are barking up



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the wrong tree. Labor didn't go too far, but not far enough. It had no real policy of its own, but only aped the major policies of its enemies, the big trusts and corporations.

Some understanding of this is beginning to leak through in labor circles. The United Mine Workers Journal, which incidentally did very little prior to the election towards developing a correct labor political policy, now says that the Republicans won because "issues related to the Korean war and the whole uncertain and troubled outlook on foreign affairs with its looming threat of another world war influenced many voters to cast ballots of non-confidence in the Truman Administration.

"The Democratic-Truman defeat is a reflection upon the party kite-tail part played by the majority of American active political labor leaders in following and sponsoring—without protest—the Administration policies. . . .," the Journal said.

Incidentally two of the only four counties which Taft failed to carry in Ohio were mining counties. Those reactionaries who gloat over the split in labor's vote and who recall the fact that on several occasions the miners did not vote the way Lewis wanted them to shouldn't get too happy.

The miners have supported Lewis on both trade union and political matters whenever they felt it

was in their interests, as when Lewis supported FDR in 1936. But they refused to go along with Lewis when he opposed Roosevelt in 1940 and 1944. Labor leaders cannot deliver the vote when the workers do not agree with their policies.

Undoubtedly some right-wing labor leaders, concerned over their declining political influence, may conclude that the time has come for a new party, independent tickets, etc. But unless such conclusions are based on the need for a new labor policy, for a genuine break with the pro-war and pro-fascist capitalist parties, they will continue to lead labor down a blind alley.

Labor must quit acting like a dog chasing his tail—running around in circles and never getting anywhere. Real independent political action based on the fight for peace is the only path in the interests of the labor movement. Nor must labor be conscious only of its own exclusive interests but also of the need to weld a coalition with the working farmers, the Negro people, white collar and professional groups, and small businessmen around a common anti-monopoly program.

(Editor's Note: This column is a weekly feature. Readers are urged to send questions to John Gates, 35 E. 12th St., New York City.)