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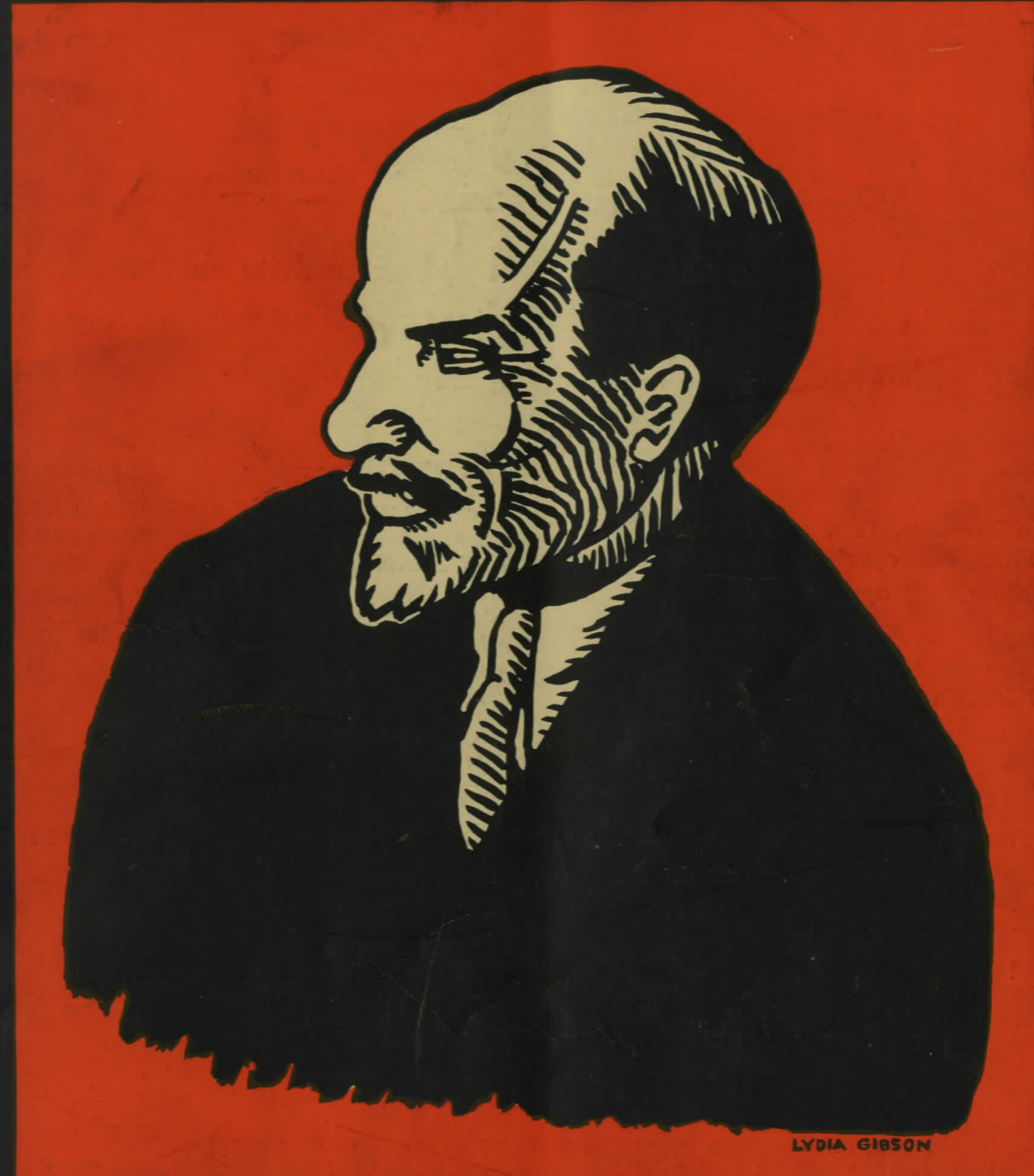
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WORKERS MONTHLY



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LENIN AND A GROUP OF COMRADES

Lenin is seen above with a group of delegates to the IXth Congress of the Russian Communist Party (1920). Among the comrades are: Lower row, left to right: Semashko (Commissar of Public Health); Schmidt (Commissar of Labor); Zorin (the famous propagandist). Middle row, in the center, Lenin; to the left, Kalinin; to the right, Kalinin. Top row, above Stalin, Tomski; above Lenin, Joffe (the Soviet diplomat); above Kalinin, Riazanov (the famous Marxian scholar).

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FEBRUARY, 1926

No. 4.

A Letter to the American Workingmen

By N. Lenin

We are reprinting below the famous Letter to American Workingmen, the first direct word to come to the American proletariat from the great leader of the world proletarian revolution, N. Lenin. It is now over seven years since it first reached this country and was made public to the American workingclass. Its political vitality is so great, the profound significance of its lessons so powerful and so enduring, that now, after seven years of struggle and two years without our great leader, there can still be no more appropriate message to the American workingclass from Vladimir Lenin than these words.

—Editor, Workers Monthly.

Moscow, August 20, 1918.

COMRADES: A Russian Bolshevik who participated in the revolution of 1905 and for many years afterward lived in your country has offered to transmit this letter to you. I have grasped this opportunity joyfully, for the revolutionary proletariat of America—in so far as it is the enemy of American imperialism—is destined to perform an important task at this time...

Had the Anglo-French and American bourgeoisie accepted the Soviet invitation to participate in peace negotiations at Brest-Litovsk, instead of leaving Russia to the mercy of brutal Germany, a just peace without annexations and indemnities, a peace based upon complete equality could have been forced upon Germany, and millions of lives might have been saved. Because they hoped to re-establish the Eastern front by once more drawing us into the whirlpool of warfare, they refused to attend peace negotiations and gave Germany a free hand to cram its shameful terms down the throat of the Russian people. It lay in the power of the Allied countries to make the Brest-Litovsk negotiations the forerunner of a general peace. It well becomes them to throw the blame for the Russo-German peace upon our shoulders!...

The workers of the whole world, in whatever country they may live, rejoice with us and sympathize with us, applaud us for having burst the iron ring of imperialistic agreements and treaties, for having dreaded no sacrifice, however great, to free ourselves, for having established ourselves as a socialist republic, even so rent asunder and plundered by German imperialists, for having raised the

banner of peace, the banner of Socialism over the world. What wonder that we are hated by the capitalist class the world over! But this hatred of imperialism and the sympathy of the class-conscious workers of all countries give us assurance of the righteousness of our cause.

He is no Socialist who cannot understand that one cannot and must not hesitate to bring even that greatest of sacrifices, the sacrifice of territory, that one must be ready to accept even military defeat at the hands of imperialism, in the interests of victory over the bourgeoisie, in the interests of a transfer of power to the working class. For the sake of "their" cause, that is for the conquest of world-power, the imperialists of England and Germany have not hesitated to ruin a whole row of nations, from Belgium to Serbia to Palestine to Mesopotamia. Shall we then hesitate to act in the name of the liberation of the workers of the world from the yoke of capitalism, in the name of a general honorable peace; shall we wait until we can find a way that entails no sacrifice; shall we be afraid to begin the fight until an easy victory is assured; shall we place the integrity and safety of this "fatherland" created by the bourgeoisie over the interests of the international socialist revolution?...

The great Russian revolutionist, Tchernychewski, once said: Political activity is not as smooth as the pavement of the Newski Prospect. He is no revolutionist who would have the revolution of the proletariat only under the "condition" that it proceed smoothly and in an orderly manner, that the proletarians of all countries immediately go into action, that guarantees against defeat be given beforehand, that the revolution go forward along the broad, free, straight path to victory, that there shall not be here and there the heaviest sacrifices, that we shall not have to lie in wait in besieged fortresses, shall not have to climb up along the narrowest paths, the most impassable, winding, dangerous mountain roads. He is no revolutionist, he has not yet freed himself from the pedantry of bourgeois intellectualism, he will fall back, again and again, into the camp of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie.

They are little more than imitators of the bourgeoisie, these gentlemen who delight in holding up to us the "chaos" of the revolution, the "destruction" of industry, the unemployment, the lack

of food. Can there be anything more hypocritical than such accusations from people who greeted and supported the imperialistic war and made common cause with Kerensky when he continued the war? Is not this imperialistic war the cause of all our misfortune? The revolution that was born by the war must necessarily go on through the terrible difficulties and sufferings that war created, through this heritage of destruction and reactionary mass murder. To accuse us of "destruction" of industries and "terror" is hypocrisy or clumsy pedantry, and shows an incapability of understanding the most elemental fundamentals of the raging dynamic force of the class struggle called revolution.

In words our accusers "recognize" this kind of class struggle, in deeds they revert again and again to the middle-class utopia of "class-harmony" and the mutual "interdependence" of classes upon one another. In reality the class struggle in revolutionary times has always inevitably taken on the form of civil war, and civil war is unthinkable without terror and limitations of the form of democracy in the interests of the war. One must be a sickly sentimentalist not to be able to see, to understand and appreciate this necessity. Only the Chekov type of the lifeless "Man in the Box" can denounce the revolution for this reason instead of throwing himself into the fight with the whole vehemence and decision of his soul at a moment when history demands that the highest



LENIN AND STALIN.

problems of humanity be solved by struggle and war.

The best representatives of the American proletariat—those representatives who have repeatedly given expression of their full solidarity with us, the Bolsheviki—are the expression of this revolutionary tradition in the life of the American people. This tradition originated in the war of liberation against the English in the Eighteenth and the civil war in the Nineteenth Century. Industry and commerce in 1870 were in a much worse position than in 1860. But where can you find an American so pedantic, so absolutely idiotic as to deny the revolutionary and progressive significance of the American

civil war of 1860-1865?

The representatives of the bourgeoisie understand very well that the overthrow of slavery was well worth the three years of civil war, the depth of destruction, devastation and terror that were its accompaniment. But these same gentlemen and the reform socialists who have allowed themselves to be cowed by the bourgeoisie and tremble at the thought of a revolution, cannot, nay, will not, see the necessity and righteousness of a civil war in Russia, though it is facing a far greater task, the work of abolishing capitalist wage-slavery and overthrowing the rule of the bourgeoisie.

The American working-class will not follow the lead of its bourgeoisie. It will go with us against the bourgeoisie. The whole history of

the American people gives me this confidence, this conviction.

We are accused of having brought devastation upon Russia. Who is it that makes these accusations? The train-bearers of the bourgeoisie, of that same bourgeoisie that almost completely destroyed the culture of Europe, that has dragged the whole continent back to barbarism, that has brought hunger and destruction to the world. This bourgeoisie now demands that we find a different basis for our revolution than that of destruction, that we shall not build it up upon the ruins of war, with human beings degraded and brutalized by years of warfare. O, how human, how just is this bourgeoisie!

Its servants charge us with the use of terroristic methods. . . . Have the English forgotten their 1649, the French their 1793? Terror was just and justified when it was employed by the bourgeoisie for its own purposes against feudal domination. But terror becomes criminal when workingmen and poverty stricken peasants dare to use it against the bourgeoisie. Terror was just and justified when it was used to put one exploiting minority in the place of another. But terror becomes horrible and criminal when it is used to abolish all exploiting minorities, when it is employed in the cause of the actual majority, in the cause of the proletariat and the semi-proletariat, of the working-class and the poor peasantry.

The bourgeoisie of international imperialism has succeeded in slaughtering 10 millions, in crippling 20 millions in its war. Should our war, the war of the oppressed and the exploited, against oppressors and exploiters cost a half or a whole million victims in all countries, the bourgeoisie would still maintain that the victims of the world war died a righteous death, that those of the civil war were sacrificed for a criminal cause.

But the proletariat, even now, in the midst of the horrors of war, is learning the great truth that all revolutions teach, the truth that has been handed down to us by our best teachers, the founders of modern Socialism. From them we have learned that a successful revolution is inconceivable unless it breaks the resistance of the exploiting class. When the workers and the laboring peasants took hold of the powers of state, it became our duty to quell the resistance of the exploiting class. We are proud that we have done it, that we are doing it. We only regret that we did not do it at the beginning, with sufficient firmness and decision.

We realize that the mad resistance of the bourgeoisie against the socialist revolution in all countries is unavoidable. We know too, that with the development of this revolution, this resistance will grow. But the proletariat will break down this resistance and in the course of its struggle against the bourgeoisie the proletariat will finally become ripe for victory and power.

Let the corrupt bourgeois press trumpet every mistake that is made by our revolution out into the world. We are not afraid of our mistakes. The beginning of the revolution has not sanctified hu-

manity. It is not to be expected that the working class which has been exploited and forcibly held down by the clutches of want, of ignorance and degradation for centuries should conduct its revolution without mistakes. The dead body of bourgeois society cannot simply be put into a coffin and buried. It rots in our midst, poisons the air we breathe, pollutes our lives, clings to the new, the fresh, the living with a thousand threads and tendrils of old customs, of death and decay.

But for every hundred of our mistakes that are heralded into the world by the bourgeoisie and its sycophants, there are ten thousand great deeds of heroism, greater and more heroic because they seem so simple and unpretentious, because they take place in the every-day life of the factory districts or in secluded villages, because they are the deeds of people who are not in the habit of proclaiming their every success to the world, who have no opportunity to do so.

But even if the contrary were true—I know, of course, that this is not so—but even if we had committed 10,000 mistakes to every 100 wise and righteous deeds, yes, even then our revolution would be great and invincible. And it will go down in the history of the world as triumphant. For the first time in the history of the world not the minority, not alone the rich and the educated, but the real masses, the huge majority of the working-class itself, are building up a new world, are deciding the most difficult questions of social organization out of their own experience.

Every mistake that is made in this work, in this honestly conscientious co-operation of ten million plain workingmen and peasants in the re-creation of their entire lives—every such mistake is worth thousands and millions of "faultless" successes of the exploiting minority in outwitting and taking advantage of the laboring masses. For only through these mistakes can the workers and peasants learn to organize their new existence, to get along without the capitalist class. Only thus will they be able to blaze their way through thousands of hindrances to victorious socialism.

Mistakes are being made by our peasants who, at one stroke, in the night from October 25 to October 26 (Russian calendar), 1917, did away with all private ownership of land, and are now struggling, from month to month, under the greatest difficulties, to correct their own mistakes, trying to solve in practice the most difficult problems of organizing a new social state, fighting against profiteers to secure the possession of the land for the worker instead of for the speculator, to carry on agricultural production under a system of communist farming on a large scale.

Mistakes are being made by our workmen in their revolutionary activity, who, in a few short months, have placed practically all of the larger factories and works under state ownership, and are now learning, from day to day, under the greatest difficulties, to conduct the management of entire industries, to reorganize industries already organ-

ized, to overcome the deadly resistance of laziness and middle-class reaction and egotism. Stone upon stone they are building the foundation for a new social community, the self-discipline of labor, the new rule of the labor organizations of the working-class over their members.

Mistakes are being made in their revolutionary activity by the Soviets which were first created in 1905 by the gigantic upheaval of the masses. The Workmen's and Peasants' Soviets are a new type of state, a new highest form of democracy, a particular form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, a mode of conducting the business of the state without the bourgeoisie and against the bourgeoisie. For the first time democracy is placed at the service of the masses, of the workers, and ceases to be democracy for the rich, as it is, in the last analysis, in all capitalist, yes, in all democratic republics. For the first time the masses of the people, in a nation of many hundred millions, are fulfilling the task of realizing the dictatorship of the proletariat and the semi-proletariat, without which socialism is not to be thought of.

Let incurable pedants, crammed full of bourgeois democratic and parliamentary prejudices, shake their heads gravely over our Soviets, let them deplore the fact that we have no direct elections. These people have forgotten nothing, have learned nothing in the great upheaval of 1914-1918. The combination of the dictatorship of the proletariat with the new democracy of the proletariat, of civil war with the widest application of the masses to political problems, such a combination cannot be achieved in a day, cannot be forced into the battered modes of formal parliamentary democratism. In the Soviet Republic there arises before us a new world, the world of Socialism. Such a world cannot be materialized as if by magic, complete in every detail, as Minerva sprang from Jupiter's head.

While the old bourgeois democratic constitutions, for instance, proclaimed formal equality and the right of free assemblage, the constitution of the Soviet Republic repudiates the hypocrisy of a formal equality of all human beings. When the bourgeois republicans overturned feudal thrones, they did not recognize the rules of formal equality of monarchists. Since we here are concerned with the task of overthrowing the bourgeoisie, only fools or traitors will insist on the formal equality of the bourgeoisie. The right of free assemblage is not worth an iota to the workman and to the peasant when all better meeting places are in the hands of the bourgeoisie. Our Soviets have taken over all usable buildings in the cities and towns out of the hands of the rich and have placed them at the disposal of the workmen and peasants for meeting and organization purposes. That is how our right of assemblage looks—for the workers. That is the meaning and content of our Soviet, of our socialist constitution.

And for this reason we are all firmly convinced that the Soviet Republic, whatever misfortune may still lie in store for it, is unconquerable.

It is unconquerable because every blow that comes from the powers of madly raging imperialism, every new attack by the international bourgeoisie will bring new, and hitherto unaffected strata of workingmen and peasants into the fight, will educate them at the cost of the greatest sacrifice, making them hard as steel, awakening a new heroism in the masses.

We know that it may take a long time before help can come from you, comrades, American workmen, for the development of the revolution in the different countries proceeds along various paths, with varying rapidity (how should it be otherwise!). We know full well that the outbreak of the European proletarian revolution may take many weeks to come, quickly as it is ripening in these days. We are counting on the inevitability of the international revolution. But that does not mean that we count upon its coming at some definite, nearby date. We have experienced two great revolutions in our own country, that of 1905 and that of 1917, and we know that revolutions can come neither at a word of command nor according to prearranged plans. We know that circumstances alone have pushed us, the proletariat of Russia, forward, that we have reached this new stage in the social life of the world not because of our superiority but because of the peculiarly reactionary character of Russia. But until the outbreak of the international revolution, revolutions in individual countries may still meet with a number of serious setbacks and overthrows.

And yet we are certain that we are invincible, for humanity will not emerge from this imperialistic massacre broken in spirit, it will triumph. Ours was the first country to break the chains of imperialistic warfare. We broke them with the greatest sacrifice, but they are broken. We stand outside of imperialistic duties and considerations, we have raised the banner of the fight for the complete overthrow of imperialism for the world.

We are in a beleaguered fortress, so long as no other international socialist revolution comes to our assistance with its armies. But these armies exist, they are stronger than ours, they grow, they strive, they become more invincible the longer imperialism with its brutalities continues. Workingmen the world over are breaking with their betrayers, with their Gompers and their Scheidemanns. Inevitably labor is approaching communistic Bolshevik tactics, is preparing for the proletarian revolution that alone is capable of preserving culture and humanity from destruction. We are invincible. The proletarian revolution is invincible.

The Program of American Capitalism

By C. E. Ruthenberg

IN fulfilling his annual duty of reporting to Congress on the state of the union, President Coolidge outlined a program of the rulers of the United States—the capitalist class. This program presents in bold outline the measures which the capitalists consider necessary to strengthen and develop the existing system of exploitation and to weaken and fetter the class enemy of capitalism—the working class.

Role of American Capital in Partial Stabilization of Capitalism.

The role which the American capitalists have played in the partial stabilization of European capitalism makes this program of great importance. European capitalism was, after the war, in the position of a man sinking into quicksand and engulfed up to his armpits. It was going down into oblivion. Help came from American capitalism. By this help European capitalism has been pulled up out of the quicksands which threatened its destruction and is held there by American capitalism. Its feet, however, are still held fast. The danger of its sinking again is still there. The task which American capitalism has set for itself is the attempt to free capitalism entirely from the destructive forces let loose by the war. The policy is to renew and revive international capitalism, the United States itself in the center, playing a dominating and directing role and reaping the enormous profits out of its achievement.

In order to fulfill this role, it must create the most favorable conditions for itself at home. It must be certain that it can mobilize the full political power of the United States government in support of its plans internationally. It must be in a position to exert pressure against those forces which create conflicts within the capitalist system. The program outlined by the American capitalists, with President Coolidge acting as their mouthpiece, is a program which will create the conditions for the achievement of this goal.

Strengthening American Capitalism Financially.

The program of the capitalists as outlined by President Coolidge opens with a defiant declaration in support of the existing industrial system. "The wealth of our country is not public wealth but private wealth," declares the President in the name of the capitalist class, "It does not belong to the government, it belongs to the people."

Of course it does not belong to "the people." It belongs to the capitalist class. It belongs to individual persons who, to a large extent, are the capitalists.

The maintenance of this system of private ownership of the wealth of the country is the central theme of the president's message.

"Liberty Under Capitalism."

Oddly enough, mixed with this defense of the capitalist system there is injected the statement that there can be no liberty under the capitalist system. The president argues against the right of the government to take wealth except for public purposes and in this argument declares, "The power over the purse is the power over liberty."

If the power over the purse is the power over liberty, then certainly the great organizations for wealth production which control the purse of the people of this country thru their control over their opportunity to earn a living and over what they shall receive for their work, also control the liberty of this eighty per cent of the nation. This obvious application of the president's statement, however, does not trouble him. What he is concerned with is the taxes levied upon the capitalist class of this country.

Taxation Policy of American Capitalism.

American capitalism can only take advantage of its opportunity to become the dominant capitalist power of the world if it has surplus capital with which to bolster up the waning capitalist system in Europe and to gain control of raw materials in undeveloped countries of the world. Under the existing tax law, which levies 40 per cent surtaxes upon the big incomes and the profits of the great corporations of this country, the accumulation of new capital has been interfered with by the government taking the profits which should have become new capital. In cutting these taxes in half, as provided for in the capitalist program and in the act about to become a law, American capitalism provides the means for securing additional new capital for the development of its imperialist domination.

The proposals of the president's program for the quick liquidation of the national debt resulting from the world war is in line with the same policy. The twenty billions which are now tied up in government bonds paid off thru levying taxes thus meaning a lower standard of life for the workers and farmers of the country are to become available as capital for new investments and thus further American financial domination of the world.

The efforts to negotiate agreements for payment of debts to the United States resulting from the war, are part of the program for the extension of the influence of American capitalism. So long as huge unsecured debts are owing to the United States without any agreement as to payment, the

situation in relation to further American investment in the countries owing these debts are not favorable. The funding of the debts and a definite agreement as to payment also gives a new club to the American capitalists over the governments involved. Hence, the continuous efforts to secure agreement for the payment of the debts as outlined by President Coolidge in his message.

Government Support.

With the program providing for the extension of American financial domination of the world, there is presented the program creating the means of defending the investments of the American bankers. The imperialist world is threatened by the many contradictions in the interests of the various capitalist countries out of which may, at any moment, come an explosion which will seriously affect the investments of the American capitalists. The pressure of the American government alone is not sufficient to prevent such explosions. Hence, the desire of the dominant American capitalists to create an international machinery thru which control can be exercised over the dangerous spots and the explosion prevented.

The League of Nations and the World Court.

The League of Nations and the World Court constitute such machinery. At the time of the organization of the League of Nations, the great American banking houses, which are engaged in the international loan business, favored the entry of the United States into the League of Nations. Since their defeat in the 1920 elections on this issue, they have continued persistent work to bring the United States government into the League of Nations. The creation of the World Court, an appendage of the League of Nations, has created a favorable opportunity for them to make a move forward without having to face directly the adverse vote against the League of Nations in the 1920 elections.

The advocacy of the entry of the United States into the World Court in the president's message makes evident that the great international banking houses have become the dominant power of American capitalism, and that the interests of this group are the foremost concern of the Coolidge administration.

The American Military Establishment.

While working for the participation of the United States in these institutions for international domination of capitalism, the capitalists do not overlook the needs, other than financial, to insure the position of the American capitalists. The president declares in his message that the military establishment of the country is of a greater strength than ever before in time of peace. This establishment, the president says, is an instrument "to promote good will and support stability among all peoples."

The last words of this quotation are significant

of the purpose of American capitalism. The aim is "to support stability among all peoples." That is the condition of profitable investment. If it cannot secure stability thru the World Court and the League of Nations, then it will promote this condition thru the greatest army and navy that the United States has maintained in peace times at any period of its history.

The Program Against Labor.

At the same time that American capitalism strengthens itself for the role which it is essaying, of becoming the savior of world capitalism, its program includes the necessary measures for action against the workers whose struggles may seriously disturb the success of its international program.

Attack on the Foreign-Born Workers.

The proposal to register, finger-print and photograph the foreign-born workers, heretofore presented in proposed statutes introduced by congressmen independently, is now put forward officially by the secretary of labor and is given tentative endorsement by the president himself in his program.

When it is realized that the foreign-born workers are largely in the basic industries, it will be readily understood that there is something more behind this proposal than merely the control of immigration. Registered, finger-printed and photographed workers are likely to be meek and submissive workers.

With the fear of deportation constantly hanging over their heads, the workers in the basic industries will have to be careful how militant they become in the struggles to improve their condition. To register, finger-print and photograph eight million foreign-born workers will create a weapon with which to hold in submission the entire American working class. For the enslaved foreign-born workers can then be used to drive down the standard of living of the entire working class.

Attack on the Right to Strike.

With this attack upon the foreign-born workers come proposals in the capitalists program for weakening the fighting powers of all the workers in the basic industries, those of coal and transportation.

The president's capitalist program asks for power to limit the right to strike of the workers in the mining and transportation industries. What Mussolini has enforced against the workers of Italy the American capitalists wish to enforce against the workers of this country, government action to deprive the workers of the right to strike, or if they do strike, to compel them to strike against the government and thus open the way for the use of the whole governmental power against them in their struggles.

The program of the American capitalists to achieve this end is not yet as open as Mussolini's,

but it is to be found behind the fine-sounding phrases of the president's message to congress.

The Farmer.

For the farmer, the capitalist program contains one proposal—that is, that he shall continue to submit to the unbearable conditions which have existed in the agricultural field for some years back. The president's message indicates that the capitalists are aware of the danger for them which exists in the agricultural situation of this country, but are unwilling to make any sacrifices to meet it. "Agriculture is a very complex industry," boasts the president in the message, but all that the president has to offer to solve the complex problems of this industry are fair words.

The fundamental problems of agriculture, that is the backwardness, mechanically and technically, of the agricultural production as compared with the highly developed machine production in other fields does not come within the scope of the capitalists' program for the United States. Nor does the program even go so far as willingness to make some sacrifices in the exploitation of the farmer thru the banks, railroads, grain elevators, and implement production corporations.

The capitalist program for the farmer is to continue to take from him for the benefit of the capitalists all that he will give up without actually revolting.

This analysis of the capitalist program as presented by President Coolidge shows how completely



LOCARNO.

the American government is the agency for the capitalist class of the United States. It is the best evidence that government under the capitalist system exists in order to exert the state power in support of the ruling economic class and that "government for the people" is an illusion fostered by American capitalism to hide the real rule of the capitalists.

What the president has presented to congress is a program for the strengthening of the American capitalist class in the struggle against other national groups of capitalists and also for the strengthening of the American capitalist class in the struggle against the workers and farmers whom this class exploits.

The Song of the Daily Bread

Translated from the German of Bruno Schönlänk
by A. Ainsworth.

This is the song of daily bread,
Those who bake—scarcely fed,
Those who weave—without dress,
Those who build—homeless.

This is the song of a past generation,
For rulers, land—a servile nation:
The hewers of coal—without hearth,
The makers of wealth—without worth.

This is the song of hellish fame,
For the rich, bread—for the poor, shame.
For the poor, night and bitter stress,
For wealth, light and gluttoness mess.

This is the song when the fury breaks,
When past disgrace leaves now no aches.
This is the song when none is spared,
For action! Starvelings! be prepared!

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Lenin, the American Workingclass and Its Party

By Bertram D. Wolfe and Jack Stachel

LENINISM, the theory and practice of the dictatorship of the proletariat, basing itself on the principles of Marxism, has developed under the conditions of world imperialism and the proletarian revolution—in the period of dying capitalism. It is today directing millions of workers in every country of the world thru the Communist International, leader of the world proletariat—a world party with sections in the different countries directing on an international scale the struggles of the oppressed of the entire world for the overthrow of the capitalist system. This brings the American working class face to face with the question: Are the formulations of Leninism valid for America whose path of development seems so different from that of the European powers and which seems to be exempt from the destructive forces that are clearly at work in other parts of the world.

Is Leninism Valid for America?

For example, Lenin has classified the present as the period of decadent dying capitalism. Does this hold true only for war-wrecked bankrupt Europe and the revolting colonial peoples, or does it apply to prosperous imperial "unshaken" American capitalism as well?

Again Lenin has declared that "imperialism is the beginning of the socialist revolution" (**Imperialism, the Final Stage of Capitalism**). He analyzes the present epoch as the epoch of the proletarian revolution. Does this apply to America? Is America part of that world which has entered into the epoch of the proletarian revolution or has it not been drawn into that main stream of development which is leading toward the overthrow of capitalism?

Lenin has pointed out that governments are dictatorships and has described the state "as an instrument of exploitation of the oppressed class" (**State and Revolution**). Can this formulation be applied to a democratic republic where universal suffrage obtains, where there is no hereditary rank or office, where all citizens are equal before the law?

Or yet again—Leninism emphasizes the necessity of the violent destruction of the bourgeois state machinery as a prerequisite for a transition to socialism. Yet, has not Marx himself said that in England and America a peaceful revolution was possible? And when Marx discusses the significance of the Paris Commune and writes that the proletariat cannot take over the ready-made "bureaucratic military machine and use it for its own purpose as it was before, but must destroy it," he specifically adds that that is necessary for "any

genuine popular revolution ON THE CONTINENT" (Marx's letter to Kugelmann, 1871—emphasis ours). If Marx has excluded America from this formulation, is Leninism at fault in including it, or has the Leninist analysis of the bourgeois state and the revolutionary destruction of it no applicability to America? Was not De Leon right when he declared that in the United States a peaceful revolution is possible because it is "the only country in the world whose constitution provides for its own amendment"?

The Period of World Imperialism and Proletarian Revolution.

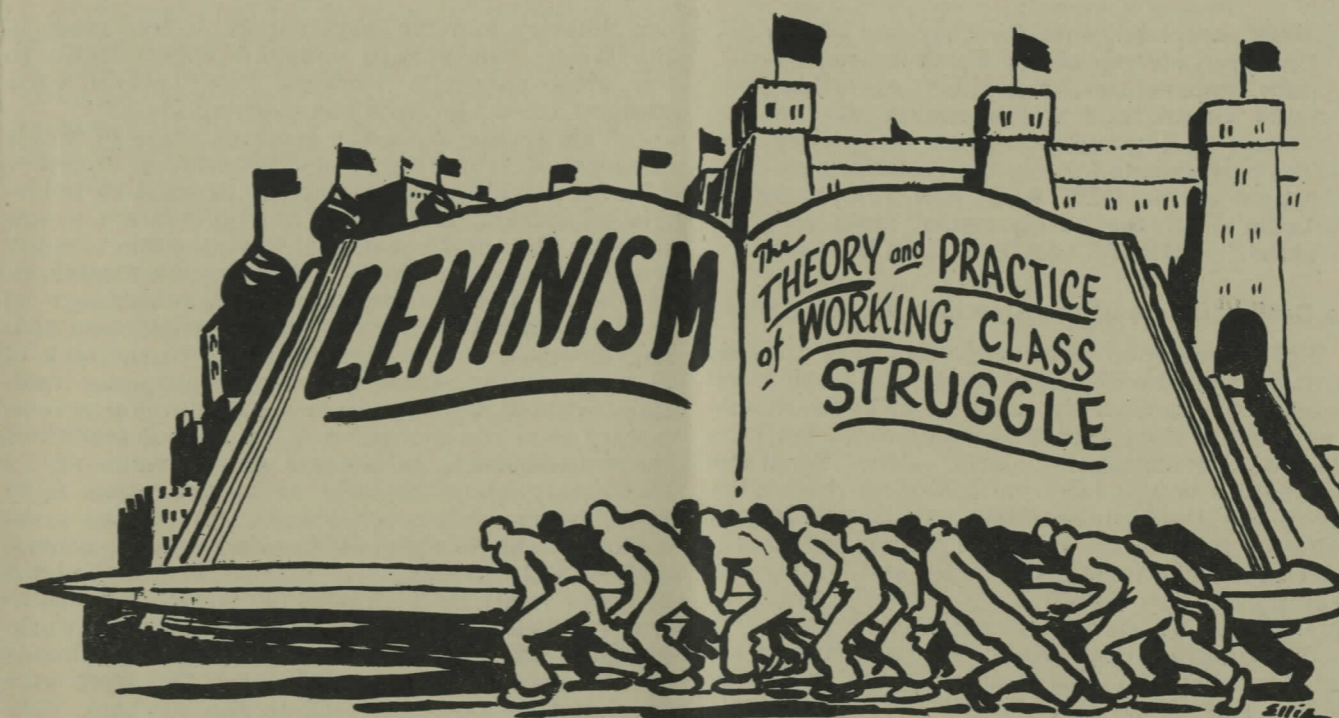
Imperialism with its dominance of monopoly and finance capital, with its small rival financial oligarchies dominating the entire globe, has only shifted competition from the domestic field between individual capitalists into the international field between vast combines involving whole series of countries. Thus imperialism, far from solving any of the contradictions of capitalism, only sharpens and intensifies them, causing acute contradiction and conflict on three fronts.

In the home country, on the internal front of the class-war, the big trusts intensify exploitation by their wage cutting, speed-up policies, suppression of labor organizations, utilization of the government, its courts, police and army, as a strike-breaking apparatus. All this, of course, develops the class-consciousness and will to struggle of the workers and lead to the adoption of revolutionary methods of fighting.

On the colonial front, the conversion of capitalism into a world system of financial enslavement of the overwhelming majority of the population of the earth by a handful of "civilized states," changes the individual national economic unities into "the links of a unified chain of world economy" and at the same time splits the population of the earth into two camps, driving the overwhelming majority of the colonial and semi-colonial peoples to fight for liberation from the imperialist yoke.

On the inter-capitalist front of imperialist antagonism and war, the already completed division of colonies and "spheres of influence," the uneven development of the different capitalist countries leading to a struggle for the redivision of the earth according to the changing balance of forces—all this speeds the accumulation of new antagonisms bringing with it new imperialist wars and a further weakening of capitalism.*

* To these fronts should be added a fourth, the front between the Soviet Union and the capitalist world.



"Theory Also Becomes a Force Once It Seizes Hold of the Masses!"

America—A Link in the Imperialist Chain.

America is today an imperialist power—a link in that "unified chain of world economy" of imperialism. Its twenty billions of loans and investments abroad, its dominance in production for the world market, make it absolutely dependent upon what happens in the rest of the world. A boycott of American goods on the part of the rest of the American continents would throw over a million workers out of employment. A repudiation of the debts owing to the United States by the rest of the world would wreck our financial system. A revolution in England would shatter the American economic and political structure beyond repair. A successful nationalist revolutionary unification of China in alliance with the Soviet union (an eventuality not at all improbable) would not only destroy our markets and investments in Asia but would imperil them in Europe as well. In the unified chain of world economy the breaking of any link is the breaking of the entire chain.

Where Does the Revolution Begin?

Where does the revolution begin? Should it begin first in America because it is the most highly developed capitalist country with the most numerous working class and with highly developed technical prerequisites of a socialist society?

No—is the answer of Leninist analysis. The chain breaks first at its weakest link and a chain is "no stronger than its weakest link."

Thus America, tho its strongest link, is a part

of the world chain of decadent dying capitalism and is not exempt from the laws of its decline.

Can the United States Escape Violent Revolution?

As to the United States being a democratic republic, Engels long ago pointed out that:

"In a democratic Republic wealth uses its power indirectly but so much more securely, first by means of direct bribery of officials as in America; second, by means of an alliance between the Government and the Stock exchange as in France and America." (**Origin of the Family**). And Marx declares in the "**Critique of the Gotha Program**" that it is precisely in "this ultimate political form of bourgeois society is the class struggle to be fought to its ultimate conclusion."

It was not therefore the fact that the United States was a democratic republic or England a constitutional monarchy that caused Marx to admit the possibility of a peaceful revolution in those countries when writing in 1871. It was the absence of the "bureaucratic-military machine" at that period in these two countries. And when the opportunists of all lands seized upon the words of Marx to disprove the necessity for a violent revolution "at least in some lands," Lenin answered:

"Now, in the year 1917, in the epoch of the first great imperialist war, this limitation of Marx disappears, and England and America, the greatest and last representatives of Anglosaxon 'freedom'—in the sense of the lack of militarism and bureaucracy

—fell completely into the dirty and bloody European swamp of the bureaucratic military apparatuses, to which everything must submit and which chokes all life. Today, in England as well as in America, 'the prerequisite for any true popular revolution' is the DESTRUCTION (emphasis Lenin's) of the 'ready made' state machine." (STATE AND REVOLUTION).

The Backwardness of the American Working Class.

For a revolution to be successful, it is not only necessary that the objective conditions be ripe, but the subjective factors also must be at hand—namely, a working class that is revolutionary, led by a conscious revolutionary party. The American working-class is still far from following the leadership of the Communist Party. It is still largely resting its faith in the capitalist system and in the leadership of the capitalist parties, and is only just beginning to form itself as a separate class, as expressed, by the movement for a labor party.

The question thus arises: why is it that in the most developed capitalist country of the world, the working class is so backward in comparison with the less developed capitalist countries of Europe?

Secondly, can we speak of revolution in America, when the working class is so undeveloped and sections of it are even counter-revolutionary, and may we expect a radicalisation of the American workers in the near future?

Causes of American Backwardness.

The class consciousness of a working class depends not merely upon the technical and organizational development of capitalism and the standard of living of the workers, but also upon its traditions and the historical conditions under which it has developed.

As a whole, the standard of living of the American workers today is still higher than that of the workers of any other country in the world. But this does not mean that the American working class will have to be reduced to the standard of living of other countries before it will become as revolutionary as the proletariat elsewhere. Any attempt to reduce a standard of living, from whatever level, meets with resistance. Levels are not absolute but relative within a given country and it is in terms of its own level that a working class judges "high" or "low." Yet capitalism must attempt to lower the level of the American working class and is so attempting now, and the struggle to maintain that standard of living becomes a revolutionary struggle against capitalism itself.

The Historical Development of the American Working Class.

The American working class crystalized very slowly and very late because of the lack of class fixity until recently, due, in the first place, to the rapid expansion and natural advantages of Ameri-

can industry and the large supply of free lands in the West. These gave constant opportunities to the most energetic workers (the natural class leaders) to escape from the working class.

This escape from the working class of whole sections of it during every generation, together with the stream of immigration attracted by industrial expansion, made each new generation a new working class in the sense of having come recently from Europe with a new language, new traditions, a new standard of living, and no inheritance of working-class traditions from the generation that had preceded it in America. Thus, to the lack of class fixity was added a lack of continuous traditions without which no class can develop revolutionary class consciousness. Without such traditions the consciousness of a class must remain on an elementary plane because each generation must make its class discoveries anew. With the great strikes of the 70's and 80's culminating in general strikes and the fantastic growth of the Knights of Labor relatively high level of class consciousness was reached which, however, the American working class did not maintain. Yet there was already greater class fixity for the lands of the West were by that time largely closed to the workers. The failure to maintain these gains was due to a new rapid expansion of American industry, not horizontally (to unoccupied lands), but vertically, thru trustification and then to the entrance of America on its imperialist career.

The industrialization and trustification of American capitalism drew in enormous masses of unskilled workers recruited from ever fresh waves of European immigration (not, as before, skilled mechanics from Northern Europe, but unskilled landworkers and peasants from Southern and Eastern Europe with a lower standard of living and a lower and less proletarian standard of culture). Thus it became necessary for expanding industry to grant concessions to the skilled workers in America in order the better to exploit the vastly larger masses of the unskilled. To this may be traced the rapid triumph of the A. F. of L. over the Knights of Labor and the creation of the basis for the development of pure and simple, aristocratic craft trade-unionism and for the divisions into the skilled and unskilled, the organized and unorganized.

This new stratification and these fresh streams of immigration robbed the American working class of its organized leadership and largely wiped out the populism, American utopianism, and German socialism and anarchism that had developed up to that time, reducing the socialist movement to a mere sect and rendering impossible, for the time being, the further development along lines hitherto manifested toward a broad working class party. This was accentuated by the unmarxian character of the German socialists in America and their sectarianism, so sharply criticized by Marx and Engels, which prevented them from utilizing the trade unions for the building of a broader working class party.

The trade union movement, in the other hand, with the socialists on the outside, was unable to develop by itself beyond pure trade unionism and could not therefore develop a socialist ideology or even effect an effective separation of the working class from the capitalist political parties.

Lenin on Trade Union Ideology.

"The history of all countries attest to the fact that, left to their own forces, the working class can only attain to trade union consciousness, to the conviction that is necessary to unite in unions, wage the struggle against the bosses, obtain from the government such or such labor reforms, etc.

"As to the socialist doctrine, it arose from philosophic, historic, and economic theories elaborated by certain educated representatives of the possessing classes, the intellectuals. In their social situation the founders of contemporary scientific socialism, Marx and Engels, were bourgeois intellectuals." ("WHAT IS TO BE DONE?"—Lenin).

Lenin, in the work cited above as in other writings, analyzes the defects of the trade union ideology both in the "pure" form as it exists in the unions themselves, and in its injurious effects when it is carried over into the party.

Trade unionist ideology is:

(1) The underestimation of the role of consciousness and of theory in the proletarian movement.

"The majority of the 'economists' (Russian representatives of trade union ideology in the workingclass party—B. D. W. and J. S.), with perfect sincerity disapprove, and by the very essence of economism, can not help but disapprove of all theoretical discussion, all factional differences, all big political questions (cf. the charges of "high politics" in the American Party) . . . the trade unionist (is of the) opinion that our business is the labor movement and all the rest is doctrinaire invention, and 'overestimation of ideology.'"

Similarly Lenin speaks of "An extremely curious trait of our economism: the fear of publicity (in political discussions)." (Both quotations from "What is to be done?"—Lenin).

(2) Eclecticism.

". . . Not the replacement of one theory by another but liberty in regard to all theoretic systems, eclecticism and the absence of principles." (Ibid).

(3) Spontaneity.

"The theory of bowing before spontaneity sets itself up quite decisively

against the revolutionary character of the labor movement. It is opposed to the movement's being directed against the foundations of capitalism, and is in favor of its following the line exclusively of demands that are 'acceptable' and 'capable of attainment' under capitalism. It is quite completely in favor of the 'line of least resistance.' The theory of spontaneity is the ideology of trade-unionism." (Stalin: "Lenin and Leninism").

The theory of spontaneity denies to the party its role; it is against the party's "interfering" too much in the spontaneous developments of the labor movement and thereby leads to the party's becoming a mere tail hanging on to the rear of the labor movement and dragging on behind it. (Khvostism—tailism). "This theory is the logical basis for all opportunism." (Lenin and Leninism—emphasis Stalin's).

(4) Incapacity for self criticism.

In this connection Lenin points out that "revolutionary experience and ability in organizing are things which are acquired provided that one wishes them, provided that one is conscious of his faults—a knowledge that, in revolutionary matters is equivalent to a half-correction of errors.

"But the half-evil becomes a true evil when that consciousness commences to obscure itself . . . when people and even social-democratic organs, (this was written in 1902 when Lenin was a member of the social-democratic party) appear ready to elevate their faults into good qualities and try even TO JUSTIFY THEORETICALLY THEIR SERVILE SUBMISSION TO SPONTANEITY." (Emphasis ours—J. S. and B. D. W.).

Thus we see that trade-unionist ideology when it enters into the party in the form of an unconscious submission to spontaneity, passes over from complete lack of theory (simple trade unionism) to the construction of a false theory by way of attributing to objective conditions the errors committed thru submission to spontaneity. By this theoretical construction the error itself is elevated to the dignity of a theory and thus becomes a conscious submission to spontaneity. (E. g. "The masses do not want a labor party" and "The isolation of the T. U. E. L. is entirely due to objective conditions").

(5) Underestimation of the relations with other classes.

Trade union ideology in the party manifests itself by "an enthusiasm for the narrowest possible forms of activity" ("realism," "anti-adventurism"). In its effort to correct the old dangerous sectarianism which separated the socialists from the unions, it falls into a new sectarianism of exclusive action in the unions and separation from the unorganized and from all other classes.

This Lenin attacks very sharply in the work cited above and warns that a true political socialist (communist) consciousness cannot be developed so long as the vanguard of the working class limits its activity entirely to activity **within** the unions. He goes further and points out that it is not sufficient to limit our activities to the unions and the shops, nor even exclusively to the working class. Only then can a communist consciousness be developed and a proletarian revolution be prepared when the vanguard of the proletariat concerns itself with all social classes and leads the working class to concern itself with all classes. The party must react to every manifestation of oppression and injustice, wherever it may be produced and whatever class or social stratum may suffer from it. The party must know how to utilize every such instance for the advantage of the proletariat and for the extension of the influence of the party and the class it represents. This attitude is summed up in Lenin's famous dictum: "The social-democrat (communist) ought not have as his ideal the trade-union secretary, but the 'tribune of the people.'" ("What is to be done?").

Thus in America, trade-union ideology manifested itself in our party in a certain opposition to work among the farmers, among the Negroes, and among the housewives, in the underestimation of the youth work, in indifference to anti-imperialist work, in opposition in principle to the LaFollette manoeuvre, in indifference to such phenomena as the Scopes case, Teapot Dome, prohibition, the wholesale departure of the bankrupt farmers from the land, etc. In the Young Workers League we find a similar phenomenon in a certain reluctance to work among the students. This was originally a healthy reaction against the student domination and the unproletarian composition of the old Yipsel movement. But it has now become harmful and must be rooted out.

To the comrades who are afraid that his multiple activity in all strata of the population will destroy the proletarian character of our movement and our work, Leninism replies not with sectarianism and the limitation of our activities, but with more clarity in principle, a higher theoretical level, a more ruthless struggle against all deviations from the strict line of Marxism-Leninism a firmer discipline, a more active "interference" of the party in all of the work of its members, the organization of the entire party into fractions in all organizations in which we work and the control of these fractions by the central authority of the party.

Indeed, from a certain standpoint Leninism can be characterized as a theory of the allies of the proletarian revolution, that is to say, the strategy of gaining allies, accumulating reserves, taking from capitalism and imperialism such reserves as it may have, and neutralizing such sections of the population as cannot be wholly won as allies. A movement which does not concern itself with the problem of alliances proves thereby that it does not take seriously and has not put on the order of

the day revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

New Tendencies in the American Working Class Movement.

American capital has abandoned its former isolation and is now definitely imperialist. For the working class this means new allies and the stimulation of the development of internationalism. Already this is manifesting itself in highly developed forms such as the proposal among different sections of the organized labor movement to send a trade-union delegation to Russia and in a deep love for the Soviet union among the masses of the unorganized workers.

Imperialism is developing in America an unparalleled gigantic, centralized military-bureaucratic machine controlling every department of life. The big monopolies that have grown up and are still expanding with "every day a merger day" control this government and use it alike for foreign politics and home oppression. Their labor-hating policies lead to the use of the government as strikebreaker and this is naturally politicalizing ever-larger sections of the workers and winning for the working class new allies among other sections of the population oppressed by the same combines and their government-machine.

The anti-union policies of such powerful combinations of capital can no longer be fought by the old methods or by the old limited craft organizations. This new situation develops new forms of unionism on the one hand (amalgamation, industrial unionism, mass unions of the hitherto unorganized) and on the other, it leads to complete surrender of a fighting policy and to class collaboration.

The Crystallization of the American Working Class.

This contradictory development is manifested also in the changes in composition and in the development of stratification on the one hand and homogeneity on the other in the working class. The "filling-up" of the free lands of the West and the change of direction of further expansion thru the export of capital replacing reinvestment at home and even import make a supply of fresh immigrants unnecessary. There is an adequate reserve army at home. This restriction of immigration is a factor working toward greater fixity and homogeneity of the working class and the closing of the Western lands helps in the same direction. The dispossessing of the farmer on an ever larger scale reinforces the working class with native elements already hostile to the rule of finance capital. The industrialization of the South further adds American elements (the Negro) to the working class.

Again, the large-scale nature of modern capitalist enterprise makes impossible the dream of escaping from the working class and thus makes possible the development of greater class consciousness.

All these factors make for a greater homogeneity and permanence in the working class. They furnish the prerequisites for the development of a definite cumulative and continuous working class tradition in America.

The mechanization of industry further develops this tendency by the breaking down of craft skill. This is counteracted in part by the granting of concessions to certain upper sections of the working class in great industries to prevent the organization of the large masses of the unskilled. It is further counteracted by the possibility of the world's richest imperialism to bribe strategic sections of the working class out of its imperialist super-profits.

Thus we find conflicting tendencies, some leading to broader forms of struggle and others to a complete abandonment of the struggle (class collaboration); some leading to greater homogeneity and solidarity, others to still further stratification as a result of which we may expect finally a split in the bureaucracy and the aristocracy of labor itself, some joining with the militant proletariat and assuming leadership there and the rest becoming the shameless and open parasitic allies of capital and the frank betrayers of the working class.

What is Our Task?

In such a situation our task is clear. The conscious revolutionary vanguard must more successfully penetrate the unions in larger numbers and, better organized thru communist fractions, we must rally around us a broader left bloc on the basis of a broad class program and throw all its influence on the side of that tendency which makes for class struggle, for consciousness, for the politicalization of the trades' union movement and for the organization of the unorganized workers,—thereby transforming the unions into real mass economic organizations for militant struggle and for the schooling of the working class in communism.

Towards a Leninist Party.

In the light of Leninist analysis it becomes apparent that the elementary and fundamental task of the party is to accelerate the class formation of the American working class. To this primary task all our activities must be directed, for it is the first step in the development of the proletarian revolution in the United States, otherwise all social struggles will remain within the framework of capitalism. The working class must break with the capitalist political parties and form a party of its own, a party having as its foundation the broad and relatively permanent base of the trade unions. This does not mean, however, that we must wait until we have won all or even the majority of the trade unions to the labor party (idea of the "all-inclusive labor party"); it will be time to give organizational form to our efforts in that direction when at least a half-million organized workers are prepared to support the labor party.

Our work in the trade unions must be extended,

intensified and politicalized—carried out more systematically and in a more organized and more communist fashion.

A new factor in the revolutionization and development of the proletarian consciousness of the working class today and one we are prone to neglect, is the existence, and continued socialist growth of the Soviet Union. The party must hold this constantly as a symbol to the American working class of the concrete achievements and meaning of Leninism.

Multiform Activity.

From what was said above about the necessity of the proletariat's concerning itself with the life and problems of all classes, it follows that we must develop a **multiform** activity, we must at all times analyze the entire political and economic situation in the country and not merely that part of it which is the "immediate concern" of the proletariat.

The Leninization of the Party.

Not only must the proletariat develop a continuous tradition but the party itself must have a tradition of its own—a Leninist tradition. For the development of our party to the point where it can carry on these gigantic tasks in a complicated situation without losing itself and without falling into those deviations to the right or to the left that are most prone to occur in a period of partial stabilization, especially in that country where the stabilization is at its highest level (the strongest link in the chain of capitalist world economy), we must establish theoretical clarity in our ranks, fight bitterly not only deviations themselves but the demagoguery that seeks to prevent their correction. We must root out that trade union ideology that Lenin called the source of all opportunism; we must raise the whole theoretical level of our party and of our class and set ourselves consciously and systematically to the study of Marxism and Leninism and the application of their methods to American problems and to our daily activities.

The Leninist Worker.

The party must develop a continuous leadership of professional revolutionaries giving their full time to the movement. "The organization of revolutionaries (Communist Party) must before all and principally consist of those who make revolutionary activity their profession." (Lenin: "What is to be done?") These are the "vanguard of the vanguard." Whether they are intellectuals or workers does not matter. "In the face of these general characteristics of the members of such an organization all differences between workers and intellectuals must completely disappear (emphasis Lenin's) not to speak of the differences of trade and occupation." (Ibid).

Lenin points out that it is easier for an intellectual to develop the full consciousness and knowledge necessary to become a revolutionary leader

than for a worker to do so and that every care should be taken and every effort made to develop leaders "not out of the average, rank-and-file worker, but out of the superior worker" capable of developing such capacities.

"In order to prepare himself completely for his task, the revolutionary worker ought also to become a professional revolutionist. . . . Every talented working class agitator ought not to be working eleven hours in the shop. We ought to arrange things so that he can live at the cost of the party . . . if not he will not acquire great experience, will not widen his horizon. . . . And we commit an error in not stimulating the workers enough to go thru their revolutionary apprenticeship. Rather do we drag them back only too often with stupid speeches

Lenin and the February Revolution

By Robert Minor

NOTHING could be more absurd than the idea that the revolutionary proletariat is "not interested" in bourgeois revolutions. The revolutionary proletariat, and above all the revolutionary party of the proletariat, is interested in all the events of history and especially in all revolutions. The bourgeoisie has been in its own time the supremely revolutionary class, and many revolutions have been the results of its work.

But history, unlike the well advertised Heinz pickle factory, is not a perveyor of "pure" products. Not only does every stabilized capitalist society carry over from the past many remainders of feudal society, but the bourgeois revolutions, especially the later bourgeois revolutions, have been "impure" with at least the strong germs of proletarian revolution. Even the American Civil War served as a mid-wife to a certain militant phase of the American labor movement.

The proletariat cannot understand its own revolution without understanding the bourgeois revolutions.

Especially clearly is this understood in regard to the Russian bourgeois revolution of February, 1917, in the very body of which was present also the proletarian revolution which was to burst into mature form eight months later, shattering, with the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the bourgeois dream of a new, great capitalist imperialism freed of medieval restrictions.

Russian Capitalism After 1905.

Capitalism developed late in Russia. As it existed in the years between about 1905 and 1917,

on that which is 'accessible' to the laboring masses, to the 'average rank and file' . . ."

We have spoken of the backwardness of the American working class and of the low theoretical level of our party. These genuine "American" characteristics the party must strive to eliminate. But certainly we can find partial consolation in the knowledge that there exists another "American" characteristic in which the development of the Leninist worker in this country will find great support.

"The union of the Russian revolutionary spirit with American practicality—that is the essence of Leninism in Party work.

"Only this union will give us the completed type of the Leninist worker and the technique of Leninism at work." (Stalin: Lenin and Leninism).

it was a system of compromise with czarism. In the 1905 revolution the Russian bourgeoisie had pushed ahead only to the point where it became evident that its new-born enemy, the working class, was already strong enough to be more threatening than its old enemy, czarist feudalism. Confronted with the danger of the proletarian revolution developing within and following upon the heels of its "own" revolution, the capitalist class of Russia had, during the revolution of 1905, quickly made its peace with czarism and aided in crushing the proletariat.

The Russian imperial czarist-bourgeois monstrosity, after 1905, entered into a career of imperialist intrigue which entangled it in contradictions much sharper than the contradictions within other imperialist systems. Holding something like half a hundred conquered nationalities within its borders under ruthless Cossack rule, czarist-capitalist Russia entered into the Franco-British combination against Germany, and dipped deep into intrigues in the Balkans, supporting Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia against the Turks in 1912. Feudal czarism and Russian capitalism found a common basis in seeking the conquest of Constantinople, and thereby made inevitable a clash with German imperialism whose line of advance toward the East also passed through Constantinople.

Russian Capitalism and the War.

August, 1914, found the Russian imperial monstrosity plunging into the world war in partnership with its allies, Britain and France.

The world war was a strain in which one or

another link of the capitalist chain had to break. That the chain broke at its weakest link was surprising to those who have not learned the lessons of Marxian analysis.

The war had proceeded only six months when the inadequacy of czarist Russia to conduct the struggle began to be apparent. The inadequacy of Russia's factory system to keep 12,000,000 soldiers supplied with the modern equipment of war was shown by many things, as, for instance, the sending of hundreds of thousands of soldiers to the front unarmed, where they were expected to drill with sticks of wood until enough of the armed soldiers were killed off to enable them to arm themselves with the dead comrades' weapons. The bureaucratic government and military machinery was notoriously corrupt—with army officers peddling the plans of battle in advance to the German staff. Defeat piled upon defeat. Morale sank to the lowest ebb.

The first series of defeats of the army caused the Russian bourgeoisie to make frantic efforts to patch up the deficiencies. The millionaire industrialist Ryabushinsky spoke for his class in raising the slogan "Every workshop, every factory must be used to break the enemy's force!" Rapidly the mobilization of all class elements to win the war was attempted. It could not be successfully accomplished. On the one hand the landlord-bureaucracy was not of the stuff that was needed. The central government did not have the direct representative relation to the capitalist system necessary for its function as the head of a modern capitalist-imperialist war. Autocratic power in the hands of a weak-witted czar, with his court the scene, not of the quickly executed commands of captains of industry (as was, for instance, the American white house), nor a place for the automatic rubber-stamping by a nominal monarch of the plans of an astute bourgeoisie (as was the "royal" institution of Great Britain). In the palace of the czar, where supreme authority was placed, the influence of a hysterical woman of the lowest degeneracy—her imperial majesty, the tsarina—could outweigh the shrewdest advice of an industrial king; the influence of a crazy priest turned into dust the slogans for the mobilization of industry for the production of rifles and munitions.

The Russian Proletariat and Its Party.

The lack of a long-established control of society by the capitalist class meant the lack of that social machinery for the control of the labor movement by the bourgeoisie, relatively speaking. Not that the Russian bourgeoisie did not have its agents among the working class. Plekhanov and other ex-Marxian leaders, representing the corruption of Marxian theory and practice, did their best to hold the working class under the control of the bourgeoisie. But the corruption of the working class by the bourgeoisie did not have the deep social roots such as it has in this country as the result of



Lenin, Leader of the Workers, Peasants and Oppressed Colonial Peoples!

long decades of bourgeois rule, of the stamping of a whole society with bourgeois ideology, and of a "labor aristocracy" of the highest skilled workers firmly implanted as the first rank of the labor movement and enjoying a relatively high standard of living. The jealously guarded rule of the landlords and nobles had given the capitalist class an opportunity to establish this condition only to a comparatively slight degree.

On the contrary, Russia had a very small, but at the same time ideologically the most highly developed revolutionary working class. The Russian workers had been disillusioned and hardened by the experience of 1905. Russia was but poorly developed industrially—it is true—but much of the existing industry was concentrated in enormous establishments under the stimulation of foreign capital. This concentration of large groups of industrial workers tended to balance against the fact of general lack of modern capitalist development throughout Russia as a whole.

Russia had been presented by history with the conditions for the building of the best revolutionary working class party in the world, and under the leadership of Lenin such a party—the Bolshevik Party—had been hammered together in twenty years of struggle against czarism and opportunism.

And this revolutionary party of the workers, this Bolshevik Party, was firmly implanted in the

form of shop nuclei in every important workshop, in every factory and mine.

The Role of 1905 in the February Revolution.

The "miraculously" quick success of the bourgeois February revolution in Russia was, in its turn, made possible only by the preceding revolution of twelve years before—in 1905—and the counter-revolution of 1907 which followed it. But not only that. The 1905 revolution and its aftermath had also served as the "dress rehearsal" which made possible the quick and successful development of the proletarian revolution as well. Lenin wrote:

"This first revolution (1905), and its succeeding counter-revolutionary period during 1907-1914, fully revealed the nature of the tsarist monarchy and brought it to the verge of ruin, exposing all its infamy and vileness, and the cynicism and corruption of the tsarist circles dominated by the infamous Rasputin; it exposed all the bestiality of the Romanoff family—that band of assassins which bathed Russia in the blood of Jews, the workers, the revolutionaries—those 'first among peers,' who owned millions of acres of land and would stoop to any brutality, to any crime, ready to ruin or crush any section of the population, however numerous, in order to preserve the 'sacred property rights' of themselves and of their class.

"Without the Revolution of 1905-1907, without the counter-revolution of 1907-1914, it would have been impossible to secure so clear a self-definition of all classes of the Russian people and of all the nationalities in Russia, or so clear an alignment of these classes in relation to each other and to the tsarism, as transpired during the eight days of the March, 1917, Revolution.

The Political Crisis and the Discontent of the Masses.

With the unsuccessful conduct of the war and the breakdown of the economic system supporting the war, the tsar's ministries arose and fell in regular succession, none able for any length of time to ride the storm.

In the factories of Petrograd (which had "patriotically" changed its name from the German form of St. Petersburg and was yet to change it again) and in those of Moscow and other cities, the thermometer of discontent rose every day, and in the "bread lines" awaiting turns to get miserable doles of bread on war-tickets the revolutionary spirit rapidly solidified. Toward the end of 1916 this took the form of wide-spread agitation for a political general strike.

Suddenly the voice of the working class rang above the bedlam. A strike at the Putilov munition factory (near Petrograd) set the bourgeoisie to

shaking in its boots. Troops suppressed the strike with the most ruthless brutality, setting the working class of Petrograd into flaming rage. Frantically the bourgeois representatives tried to head off the storm, and while hysterically condemn the strike, tried to set up a machinery of "arbitration" with which to soften the blows of the workers and deceive them into docility. This and all other attempts were turned to dust in the hands of the feudal bureaucracy.

The Struggle Against the War.

The storm raged on. Desertions from army mounted into the hundreds of thousands. Bolshevik party nuclei in the regiments were repeating the slogans of "Peace, Land and Liberty" to the peasant soldiers.

The Bolsheviks had never slackened their fight against the war. When practically all of the official socialist parties of the world openly deserted socialism at the beginning of the war, the party of Lenin held firm. The war found Lenin living near the Russian border in Galicia, whence he was compelled to go to Switzerland. His struggle there for the cause of international socialism—for revolutionary Marxian Socialism—is a book in itself. It cannot be written here; we can only say that the leadership of the Russian Bolshevik Party (which was called the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party joined with the Central Committee, distinguishing it from the Menshevik section which held to the same Party name) held aloft the banner of proletarian revolution and prepared as best it could for the coming revolution.

Lenin wrote:

"Nor can it any longer be doubted that the war is an imperialistic war on both sides; only the capitalists and their adherents, the social-patriotic 'Socialists' who support the war and their government and abandon Socialism, can deny or suppress this fact. Both the German and the Anglo-French bourgeoisie are waging war for the conquest of foreign territory, for the suppression of small nations, for the financial supremacy of the world, for the division and re-distribution of colonies. It is a war to save the tottering capitalist regime, by deceiving the workers in the various countries and causing dissension among them.

Russian Tsarist-Capitalism Collapses.

The opening of the Duma in February, 1916, found imperialist Russia on the verge of disintegration. The bourgeoisie pulled together a "progressive bloc" of its supporters in the attempt to bring capitalist order into the feudal chaos. But the bourgeois leader, Shidlovsky, expressed the failure with the cry: "The forces of the nation, bereft of unity, aim and guidance, have been spent in vain, and the great national effort has weakened

under the dissolving influence of discontent and indifference."

The Intrigues of Franco-British Capital.

The dismay of the Russian big bourgeoisie was heightened when in the bedlam of the tsar's court it became apparent that the monarchy was on the verge of closing a separate peace of Russia with Germany. This would mean a colossal disaster for the bourgeois ambitions in imperialism. British and French diplomats helped and even directed a plan for a "coup d'etat" for the overthrow of the tsar.

It was not intended that the monarchy should be done away with—but that Nicholas II should be removed through a "palace revolution" (such as had happened more than once before in Russian history), and that another tsar, under the influence of Franco-British finance capital, should be put in his place.

The Masses Rise Against Tsarism.

While the British Ambassador, Buchanan, was plotting with the representatives of Russian capital, the workers and the city population generally proceeded on their own line.

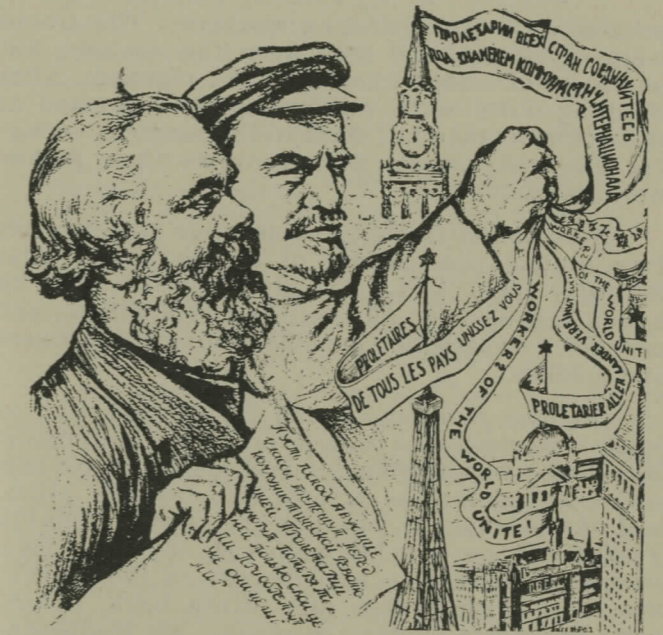
Lenin described it:

"A fortunate coincidence of favorable conditions in 1917 enabled different social forces opposing tsarism to co-operate in one general action for power. These forces are:

"1—Anglo-French financial capital, that rules and exploits the whole world through investments and Imperialism. In 1905 it was opposed to the revolution, and helped tsarism crush the revolution by means of the big loan of 1906 (largely engineered by French capital against the despairing protest of the revolutionary democracy). But now Anglo-French finance took an active part in the revolution by organizing the coup d'etat of the Guchkovs and Milyukovs, the bourgeois interests and the leading military groups for the overthrow of the tsar. From the standpoint of world-politics, the Provisional Government of Milyukov-Guchkov is simply the clerk of the banking firm England, France & Co., and a means of prolonging the imperialistic war.

"2—The defeats in the war waged by the government of the tsar. These resulted in clearing out the old guard in control of the army and created a new and young bourgeois group of officers.

"3—The Russian bourgeoisie in its different groups. The bourgeoisie organized itself rapidly between 1905 and 1917, and has united with the nobility in the struggle against the corrupt government



Lenin, Leader of the World Revolution.

of the tsar with the intention of enriching itself by exploiting Armenia, Constantinople and Galicia.

"4—The further power, which combined with the bourgeois, imperialistic forces, and the most important of all, was a strong proletarian movement, the organized and revolutionary workers. The proletariat made the Revolution by demanding peace, bread and liberty. It had nothing in common with the imperialistic government, and it secured the support of the majority of the army, consisting of workers and peasants.

"Without the three years, 1905-1907, of tremendous class conflicts and revolutionary energy of the Russian proletariat, this second revolution could not possibly have had the rapid progress indicated in the fact that its first phase, the overthrow of tsarism, is accomplished in a few days. The Revolution of 1905 ploughed the ground deeply and wiped out the prejudices of centuries; it awakened to political life and struggle millions of workers and tens of millions of peasants. . . ."

The Soldiers Join the Workers in Revolt.

On the 8th of March, 1917, workers began to riot on the streets of Petrograd in protest against the bread shortage. On the next day the streets became torrents of marching, singing, shouting workers. On the 10th of March, a Saturday, the police began shooting workers on the street. Sunday morning found the city still more densely

packed with demonstrating workers. The troops were called out, and fired upon the workers, but one body of troops, the Pavlovsky regiment, after shooting down some workers at the command of their officers, marched back to the barracks declaring that they would not fire upon their fellow-workers again.

The Bolshevik Party nuclei were working like fury among the soldiers of the garrison. That Saturday night was a big night for the party of Lenin, and also for all the many sympathetic and partially sympathetic elements among the workers and soldiers.

Monday morning, March 12, dawned with at least two regiments won over to the revolution. The Volhynsky regiment marched out of its barracks, bound for the arsenal in Liteynaya Ulitza, and on the way was joined by the Litovsky Guards. Tsarist officers quickly gathered as many loyal troops as possible to bar the way to the arsenal, but these were beaten and driven back, several more regiments joining the revolt. By Wednesday night, after three days of fighting and skirmishing and feverish agitation in barracks and on street corners—Petrograd was in the hands of the rebellious troops and workers.

The tsar's police during this time were alternately fighting and running to cover. Toward the last those of them who had not disappeared were hunted out of their sniping nests on the roofs of houses and disposed of by the workers and soldiers.

The Tsar Abdicates.

On the next Thursday, March 15, 1917, the bewildered semi-idiot, Tsar Nicholas II, autocrat of all the Russians, tremblingly put his signature to the paper of abdication of the throne.

Lenin's Analysis of the Situation.

Lenin's writings from Switzerland at this first moment of the revolution were gall and wormwood to the bourgeois political servants, the Mensheviks, who, like their bourgeois masters, saw in these great events only a bourgeois revolution leading to a capitalist republic. Lenin raised again more forcefully than ever the slogans against the imperialist war—for the very purpose of continuing which the bourgeoisie and their Anglo-French friends had helped the overthrow of the tsar. Lenin wrote from Switzerland:

"The workers and soldiers of Petrograd, as well as of the rest of Russia, self-sacrificingly set themselves to the task of fighting against the imperialistic slaughter. Anglo-French finance, in the interest of continuing and sharpening the slaughter, engaged in court intrigues, planned conspiracies, encouraged and gave hopes to the Guchkovs, and Milyukovs, and proceeded to erect an entirely new government, which

even obtained power after the proletariat had delivered the first blows against tsarism. Nor is this government a fortuitous assemblage of persons.

"The persons in this new government are the representatives of a new class that has risen to political power, in Russia, the class of the bourgeoisie and capitalistic landowners. This class has already and for a long time been ruling our country economically; in the Revolution of 1905-1907, in the counter-revolutionary period of 1907-1914, and then, with extraordinary rapidity, in the period of the war, this new class organized itself politically, swiftly taking into its hands local administrations, popular education, conventions of every type, the Duma, the war industry committees, etc. This bourgeois class was already practically in power in 1917; therefore the first blows against tsarism were sufficient to destroy it, and to clear the ground for the bourgeoisie. The imperialistic war, requiring an incredible exertion of strength, imparted to backward Russia a tremendous acceleration. At a single stroke, at least it seemed like 'a single stroke,' we caught up with Italy, England, France almost; we secured a 'coalition,' a 'national' government (which means a government to carry on the imperialistic slaughter and deceive the people),—in short, a 'parliamentary' government.

"The government of Guchkov-Milyukov, the government of the junkers and the capitalists, can give neither bread nor peace nor liberty to the people. It constitutes a government for the continuation of the war of conquest, which openly declares that it will respect the international treaties of the tsar. These treaties have as their purpose: robbery. This government can at most postpone the crisis, but it can not free the country from hunger; it has no power to give freedom, no matter what has been promised, because it is connected with the interests of feudal land property and of capital.

". . . The whole course of events in the March Revolution shows clearly that the English and French embassies, with their agents and 'connections,' who had long made tremendous efforts to prevent a 'separate' agreement and a separate peace between Nicholas II and Wilhelm II, had at last determined to dethrone Nicholas and provide a successor for him.

"The rapid success of the revolution, and, at first glance, its 'radical' success, was produced by the unusual historical conjuncture, in a strikingly 'favorable'

manner, of absolutely opposed movements, absolutely different class interests, and absolutely hostile political and social tendencies. The Anglo-French imperialists were behind Milyukov, Guchkov & Co. in their seizure of power in the interests of prolonging an imperialistic war, with the objects of waging the war more savagely and obstinately, accompanied by the slaughter of new millions of Russian workers and peasants, that the class of Guchkov might have Constantinople, the French might have Syria, the English Mesopotamia, etc. That was one element in the situation, which united with another and opposite element,—the profound proletarian and popular mass movement, consisting of all the poorest classes of the cities and the provinces, revolutionary in character and demanding bread, peace and real freedom . . ."

The Proletarian Revolution on the Order of the Day!

To the astonishment of the "Marxian" supporters of the bourgeoisie, Lenin immediately raised the question of the proletarian revolution:

"The first revolution arising out of the general imperialistic war has broken out. And this first revolution will certainly not be the last.

"The first phase of this first revolution, namely, the Russian Revolution of March, 1917, has been completed. Nor will this first phase be the last phase of our Revolution."

To the pleas of the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries that "this is a bourgeois revolution" and that therefore the proletariat must not and cannot proceed toward the taking of power into its own hands, Lenin replied:

"Our revolution is a bourgeois revolution, therefore the workers should support the bourgeoisie,—this is the cry of the worthless politicians in the camp of the 'Socialist' compromisers and opportunists.

"Our revolution is a bourgeois revolution,' say we Marxists, 'therefore the Socialist workers should open the eyes of the people to the deceptive practices of the bourgeois politician, should teach the people not to believe in words, but to depend wholly on their own strength, on their own organization, on their own unity, and on their own military equipment.' . . ."

"But this is a transition period. We are emerging the first period of the Revolution into the second, from the revolt against tsarism into the revolt against the bourgeoisie, against the imperialistic war. In this transition the 'order of the day' is: 'Workers, you have displayed marvels of

proletarian heroism in the civil war against tsarism; you must now display marvels of proletarian organization and international action in order to secure your victory in the second stage of the revolution.' . . ."

"Through Kerensky," said Lenin, "the imperialistic bourgeoisie addresses the workers as follows: 'We give you the republic, the eight-hour day (which actually exists in Petrograd), we promise you this and that liberty, but only because we want you to help us take away the booty from German Imperialism and turn it over to English and French Imperialism.'"

On March 18th the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party issued a Manifesto containing the following demands: "Democratic republic; eight-hour day; confiscation of the landed estates of the nobility in favor of the peasants; confiscation of stocks of grain; immediate preparations for peace negotiations,—not through the government of Guchkov and Milyukov, but through the Council of Workers and Soldiers. This council according to the Manifesto, constitutes the actual revolutionary government. . . ."

Lenin saw through the maze of illusions and pseudo-Marxian cant. He declared:

"Alongside of the Guchkov-Milyukov government, representing the imperialistic bourgeoisie, there is developing a new, unofficial, as yet undeveloped and comparatively weak government, representing the interests of the proletariat and of the entire poorer elements of the city and country population. This is the government of the Soviets, the Councils of Workers and Soldiers' Delegates. . . ."

The Soviets, in the hands of the "socialist" agents of the bourgeoisie, issued official screams of protest against this bold declaration of the revolutionary role of the Soviets. The newspapers of April 16, 1917, carried the following official declaration of the Petrograd Soviet:

"Whereas, we have received from comrades information concerning the spreading of subversive propaganda, proceeding under the cover of the flag of the Revolution, and sometimes even under the flag of the Social-Democracy, and concerning particularly the propaganda of the so-called Leninites; and,

"Whereas, we consider this propaganda to be just as harmful as any counter-revolutionary propaganda from the Right; and,

"Whereas, we recognize the impossibility of taking any repressive measures against propaganda as long as it remains within the bounds of propaganda, therefore,

"We, the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Soldiers' Delegates, declare that it is absolutely necessary to take every possible step to oppose this propaganda with our own propaganda and agitation. We should aim at making our organization so strong that it will be able at any moment to oppose with our own activity every counter-revolutionary activity, no matter from what quarter it may proceed. We declare emphatically that the Executive Committee should, to combat this subversive agitation, undertake an agitation of its own, not only in the press but also in the military units."

But Lenin was inexorable. He boldly reiterated:

"Our propaganda is: all the power of government must pass to the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', Peasants', etc., Delegates, alone, as these Soviets are the representatives of the great majority of the people. To attain this end we must spread

'understanding' of the situation, so that the majority of the people may realize the necessity of this transfer of power to the Soviets. . . ."

Lenin Arrives in Russia!

On the famous "sealed train" through Germany, Lenin arrived in Petrograd on the night of April 16, 1917, when the revolution was but a month old. On the following day before a meeting of the Bolshevik Party in Petrograd he made a report in which he outlined his views—the outline which became the basis of that classic of proletarian scientific literature—"The State and Revolution."

With an eye cleared for sharp vision by the science of Marxism, Lenin was able to see the phenomenon of "dual power" which meant that the proletarian revolution was also in the womb of Russia, and that the revolutionary science in the hands of the workers' revolutionary party could deliver it.

It is necessary to understand bourgeois revolutions.

Lenin and the Youth

By Will Herberg

"Upon the youth organization falls the gigantic task of struggling for revolutionary internationalism, for true socialism and against the dominant opportunism that has gone over to the side of the bourgeoisie."—Lenin.

"Lenin never concerned himself specially with the youth movement. Yet naturally he could not, either in his writings or in his political calculations, neglect so important a factor in politics as the organization of the revolutionary youth." (Kamenev).

This, in itself, is remarkable. How was it that a revolutionary of the genius of Lenin "never concerned himself specially with the youth movement?" How was it—and this question covers the first—that in Russia there were no special organizations of the revolutionary youth until the days of 1917, that only in the stress of revolution was a Young Communist League born?

The Russian Revolutionary Movement and the Youth.

Does this phenomenon point to the insignificant role the youth played in the proletarian movement in Russia? Not in the least! The most superficial knowledge of the Russian social-democratic movement (especially of the Bolsheviks) is enough to show us that the broad rank and file and to an

almost equal extent the leading circles were largely composed of young proletarians—of young workers from the shops and factories. This comparative youthfulness contrasted strongly with the "wise old" heads of European social-democracy.

The Role of the Youth in the Party.

It is not, therefore, the utter lack of significance of the proletarian youth that the absence of a youth organization signifies but—the exact opposite. The best elements of the revolutionary proletarian youth were in the party, bearing the brunt of the bitter struggle against Czarism and the bourgeoisie.

Why did the proletarian youth find such free entry and such eager welcome among the Russian social-democrats as compared to the extreme coolness of the European social-democracy. Can we not trace it for one thing to the obvious fact that the voteless and "parliamentarily" valueless youth were of no apparent use to the "respectable" European social-democracies that were already beginning to fall into the swamp of reformism and parliamentarism while to the revolutionary Russian social-democracy devoid of democratic illusions and pursuing the hard road of bitter and uncompromising class struggle the proletarian youth represented the best source of revolutionary troops?

The Russian Party and the Battles of the Youth.

Not only, however, were the best elements of the proletarian youth in the party but the party carried on, in a manner of speaking, the struggle for the youth. The problems facing the proletarian youth—militarism, extreme economic exploitation and social oppression, etc.—are problems that demand a revolutionary answer, that call for the waging the revolutionary class struggle. Mere dicker-ing for petty reforms in parliament or a policy calculated to catch petty bourgeois votes will not do. The proletarian youth demands more and therefore the opportunist social-democracy of Europe had nothing to say. The problems facing the youth—which are among the most basic problems of the proletariat—were not their problems and so they had no answer to give except meaningless phrases bestowed with the most patronizing condescension. The strivings of the proletarian youth could find no outlet in the recognized social-democratic movement and therefore sought other channels separate from and opposed to the party. The history of the origin of the European youth organizations—from clubs primarily based on anti-militarist activity and on the struggle against apprenticeship and economic oppression,—testifies to this.

How different was the situation in Russia! There the Bolsheviks offered a revolutionary solution to the problems of the youth and defended their interests with the greatest tenacity. Who fought the economic struggles of the workers better than the Bolsheviks? Who carried on a more systematic, a more extensive, a more effective anti-militarist work than the Bolsheviks? Who, finally, carried on a more bitter and revolutionary political struggle against Czarism and the bourgeoisie than Lenin and his followers? Is it not natural then that the advanced proletarian youth, full of the spirit and fire of revolution, flocked to the banner of the party in Russia and thereby completely neglect the task necessary under any circumstances of creating an organizationally independent movement of the proletarian youth?

These are some of the reasons why "before the war the proletarian youth movement in Russia was fused with the general movement in that it had neither its own problems or its own organization." But, as we have noted, this did not mean that the revolutionary youth was neglected. In fact the problem of the youth loomed large and absorbed a great deal of the attention of the leaders of social-democracy.

The Role of the Student Youth.

The problem proved to be somewhat complicated in that in the early period it was not the proletarian youth that rose to prominence but the student youth. "The role of the . . . students towards the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century was a very apparent sign of the backwardness of the country, its primitive social rela-

tions, and the relative weakness of the class struggle. In such a situation the students played excellently the role of the vanguard in the struggle against Czarism, the role of light cavalry incessantly tormenting the common enemy, and finally the role of a reserve from which the political parties just beginning to arise could draw their "special troops" (propagandists, journalists, etc.)." (Kamenev).

Lenin and the Student Youth.

Lenin knew well how to estimate the role of the student youth under the given circumstances and how to maneuver in relation to them. It was Lenin who, at the second Congress of the Russian Social-democratic Labor Party (1903), drafted the resolution "On the Student Youth" which was adopted by the Congress—not however without important excisions (indicated below by brackets).

"The Second Party Congress of the R. S. D. L. P. greets the revival of revolutionary independence among the student youth, proposes to all Party organizations to support in every way the strivings of this youth, and calls upon all groups and circles of students, first to place in the foreground the development of a complete, logical socialist world-conception among its members, to acquaint them with Marxism on the one hand and with Russian Populism and West European opportunism on the other. . . .; secondly [to beware of the false friends of the youth who divert them from serious revolutionary education thru empty revolutionary-idealistic phrases and philistine laments over the harmfulness and uselessness of a sharp polemic between the revolutionary and opposition tendencies, since these false friends in practise spread only lack of principle and a light-minded attitude towards revolutionary work; thirdly] to attempt; . . .to connect them up with the social-democratic organizations. . . so as to be able to prevent big mistakes from the very beginning."

The Decline of the Student Youth.

The revolutionary days of the student youth were, however, fast disappearing. The rapid advance of the social struggle, the developing radicalization of the broad masses of the workers, and the sharpening of the political struggle that began more and more frequently to manifest itself in the form of open class war, began to shift the center of gravity away from the student youth and as a consequence produced a considerable change in the outlook of the student youth itself. "Of one flesh and blood with the Russian intelligentsia the students of those days experienced together with them the ebb and flow of political sentiment and together with them passed from general 'enthusiasm' for the proletariat to rest in the grave of intellectual unreason, of sweet 'love' for the 'people,' and of anti-proletarian 'socialist-revolutionism.'" The intellectual youth began to recede from the political stage and, in the period following 1905, disappeared

altogether. With the political death of the intellectual youth began the political life of the proletarian youth.

"The revolutionary student with whom Lenin had dealt in the first stages of the revolutionary movement represented to him an offspring of a foreign class, a temporary ally it is true, but whose time was up. The proletarian youth—this was the real MAKER OF HISTORY, a fellow-worker in the 'real history of mankind.'" (Kamenev).

Lenin and the Proletarian Youth.

Lenin's attitude to the proletarian youth as a factor in the revolutionary movement is worthy of the closest study of every revolutionist, young and old. It was to the proletarian youth that Lenin looked to take up the struggle against the deep corruption of Marxism and the open degeneration of the European social-democracy thru the poison of opportunism. It was to the youth that Lenin looked to smash the rotten social reformism and raise aloft the banner of revolutionary Marxism.

The Role of the Proletarian Youth as the Fighters for the Line of Marxism.

Lenin did not place such an estimation on the proletarian youth out of sentiment or for love of the youth. This was the precise opposite of Lenin's procedure. For Lenin had analyzed and exposed the sources of the growing opportunist plague in the working class movement and had seen that the youth was largely untouched by it. Opportunism and social reformism he discovered as the by-product of imperialism—as the reflex in the working class movement of the corruption of sections of the working class—the "aristocracy of labor"—thru a small share of the super-profits of imperialist finance-capital. But the unskilled proletarian youth forms no part of the aristocracy of labor, the youth is least of all affected by imperialist corruption. Reformism, therefore, cannot in the very nature of things find lodgement in the proletarian youth. Nor must we forget in this connection that the voteless youth is not so easy a prey to the parliamentary illusions as the adult workers.

Secondly, it is the youth that in every country of the world forms the most bitterly exploited, the most oppressed section of the toiling masses. It is the youth, too, it must not be forgotten in the third place, that bears the brunt of capitalist militarism, that is the first and most severe sufferer in the imperialist maneuvers of modern finance-capital. Nor must, finally, the psychologic peculiarities of the youth be lost from sight. The rousing spirit and flaming enthusiasm of youth as yet uncrushed by the brutalities of capitalism more than once drew Lenin's sincere admiration.

Lenin saw all this and based his calculations thereon. Upon the proletarian youth he looked as one of the main factors in the struggle for the line of orthodox Marxism against the reformists. "Upon



LENIN SPEAKS!

the socialist youth organizations," Lenin wrote in 1916, "falls the gigantic and grateful, but therefore difficult task of struggling for revolutionary internationalism, for true socialism, and against the dominant opportunism that has gone over to the side of the imperialist bourgeoisie." (Der Sozialdemokrat, No. 2, Dec. 2, 1926).

Lenin and the Mistakes of the Youth.

Of course, the passionate struggle of the proletarian youth for the line of true Marxism did not prevent its youth and inexperience from leading it into many errors, some quite serious. The attitude of Lenin to these errors—Lenin, the orthodox Marxist, Lenin the "dogmatist," Lenin, the uncompromising theoretician—speaks volumes. Did Lenin, who went to what many considered almost "impossible extremes" in attacking the slightest deviation from the strict line of Marxism—did Lenin have any bitterness or even "strictness" for the gross errors of the youth? Let us see! Here he is criticizing some of the more serious errors in the first few issues of the "Jugend-Internationale" the organ of the Socialist Youth International that had refused

to follow the social-democrats into the swamps of opportunism and into the arms of the general staff. These errors were in many cases quite serious, amounting in fact to a wrong appreciation of the role of militarism and war under imperialism and a false understanding of the Marxian theory of the State. And yet Lenin wrote:

"Naturally there is still no theoretical clarity or firmness in this organ of the youth... But we must look upon this insufficient theoretical clarity in quite a different light than we would look upon the theoretical mish-mash in the minds and the lack of revolutionary consistency and thoroughness in the hearts of the Okists (adherents to the Menshevik Organization Committee, therefore, Mensheviks.—WH), 'socialist-revolutionaries,' Tolstoyans, anarchists, European Kautskyites (centrists), and others... Adult persons who have misled and betrayed the proletariat and still raise the claim to lead and teach others... these must be combated unconditionally and unmercifully. It is another matter entirely with the organizations of youth, who openly declare that they are still learning, that their chief task is to draw in socialist party workers. Such people we must help in every way, deal most patiently with their errors, and correct them gradually, primarily thru CONVICTION and not thru an attack on them." (Der Sozialdemokrat, as above).

It would be impossible to add a syllable to these golden words. They should be studied and restudied by every revolutionary, young and old.

Lenin and the Organizational Independence of the Youth.

From the standpoint of the youth as a force against opportunism and from the very nature of the youth movement itself, Lenin insisted very strongly upon the absolute organizational independence of the youth—something that distinguished him from even the best "friends" of the youth. It is only now that we are beginning to realize the significance of his words.

"Not infrequently does it happen that the representatives of the adults and grownups do not understand properly how to approach the youth, who are necessarily compelled to approach socialism along a different road and not in the same form or in the same position as their fathers. Therefore we must take an unconditional stand for the ORGANIZATIONAL INDEPENDENCE of the youth leagues. This we must do, not simply because the opportunists fear this independence, but from the nature of the thing itself. Without complete independence, the youth WILL NOT BE IN A POSITION either to become good socialists or to prepare themselves to carry socialism forward. (Emphasis Lenin's).

"Complete independence of the youth organizations—but also complete freedom of comradely criticism." (Der Sozialdemokrat, as above.)

The War Justifies Lenin's Judgement of the Youth and Its Role.

How correctly Lenin had judged the youth and its role in capitalist society and in the working class movement the outbreak of the war showed. At international and national congresses the European social-democracy had passed resolutions without number in which the coming war was clearly predicted and which voiced the "unalterable opposition" of socialism to war. But the "determination" of the social-democratic leaders against war was equalled and surpassed by the determination of their opposition to carrying on even the most elementary anti-militaristic work. Lenin called attention to this characteristic fact more than once. Radical phrases hurt nobody—in fact they effected the substitution of words for deeds. But action even of the modest kind means another step forward in undermining capitalist society—and to this the social reformists objected with all their being.

The Collapse of Social-democracy.

The war, when it finally came, lifted the curtain and exposed the whole structure of social-democracy as a whited sepulchre housing a rotting carcass. The official machinery of the social-democratic party and of the trade unions was hastily incorporated as a part of the general staff and used to whip the workers into line to support the war and to recruit its armies. "The Fatherland is in danger!" was the cry. "The enemy represents a danger to socialism and humanity. He must be crushed in the name of socialism! Workingmen of our country! Unite with your bosses and the government against the enemy and for the Fatherland! Class peace!" How clearly this reflected the 'corruption of the labor aristocracy whose interests as an aristocracy demanded the continuance of the imperialist super-profits and ever-greater extension of imperialism itself. Thus, social reformism led straight to social chauvinism and social patriotism.

The centrists, with Kautsky at their head, had, as usual, more "respectable" phrases but it all came to the same thing. "The war is very bad, it is true. But what can we do? The workers are all for the war and besides, the International exists only in peace times—it is no instrument of war. Besides, the war itself is not wholly imperialist, there are some other elements in it. . . . At any rate, as socialists, we must recognize that true internationalism means the right of every socialist to defend his own Fatherland! Of course, we must try to end the war . . . it is so bad and inhuman; but after all, what can we do?" Thus, centrism led straight to a condonation of the war, and to impotent, hypocritical social pacifism!

These "unforeseen" events that had been foreseen and heralded abroad by Lenin for over a decade had their roots, of course, in the imperialist corruption of the labor aristocracy whose political representative the social-democracy was. The divisions

in the workingclass movement, brought out in such crass form by the war, were simply its inherent tendencies to which Lenin had called attention more than once.

The Youth Remains True to the Proletariat.

Naturally, as was to be expected, the youth, largely untouched by the imperialist corruption, did not fall a prey to social patriotism. It was the Socialist Youth International that, in a vague and unclear way it is true, kept alive the spirit of true international socialism when "even" Kautsky had declared that internationalism simply meant the right of each socialist to defend his Fatherland. It was in the organs of the youth (especially in the Jugend-Internationale) that the first forms of anti-militarist agitation and the first analyses of the problems and tasks of the socialdemocracy during the war appeared. It was the youth that held forth some hope for after the war, some hope for rallying the forces of labor internationally, now so demoralized and scattered thru the treachery of the social-democrats.

Lenin Turns to the Youth During the War.

It was to the youth, therefore, that Lenin turned in the dark years of the war. In Switzerland, where he resided for a time, he was in closest contact with the circles of the "Freie Jugend" who were conducting, under his guidance, a struggle against the treachery of the social-democrats. As Lenin said in his farewell speech to the Swiss workers (April, 1917):

"We remember the brave youthful vanguard grouped around the Freie Jugend who struggle with revolutionary fervor against all the crimes which weaken and incapacitate for struggle the Swiss workers no less than any of the European social-democratic parties."

Thruout this trying period Lenin was in constant touch with the Executive of the Socialist Youth International and was in personal contact with Münzenberg in particular. In this way he gave his personal guidance and help in the organization of the Young Communist International.

Lenin was especially concerned with removing the errors and unclarity that marked the first efforts of the youth in their new role as leaders in the struggle for true international socialism. We have already seen how careful Lenin was not to antagonize the youth and yet how insistent in the matter of accuracy and clarity. His criticism touched mostly the question of militarism and war, the theory of the state, and the proper conception of the tendencies within the socialist and labor movement the world over.

"Once again: these mistakes must be refuted and explained," Lenin says, "at the same time that we try with all our powers to achieve contact with and approach to the youth organizations and help them in every way and by every means. But we must approach them with UNDERSTANDING."

The Russian Revolution and the Organization of the Russian League.

Finally in 1917, the chain of imperialism snapped at its weakest link—Russia. The imperialist war began to develop into civil war, the masses arose, the Czar was overthrown, and the process of the proletarian revolution began to unfold itself before the eyes of the astonished world. The profound and far-reaching upheaval within the toiling masses and extending to their most backward strata produced a deep ferment in every sort of proletarian organization. Labor unions sprang up like mushrooms; political parties increased their membership over and over again; and now circles of the revolutionary youth began to spring up on every side as expressions of the social strivings of the proletarian and student youth in the stirring days of revolution.

To this spontaneous, elemental movement Lenin gave his fullest support and direction. The question of the national unity and consolidation of these youth circles naturally arose very soon and reflected itself in the parallel question of the party's relations to such a national youth organization. Now again, under such widely different circumstances, Lenin waged the battle for the organizational independence of the youth. There were found tendencies in the Russian Party which demanded that the youth movement be confined simply to one department of the party, very much like Negro or women's work. This view Lenin, of course, held to be incorrect and the Young Communist League of Russia was organized as an independent organization under the political supervision of the R. C. P.

Lenin and the Russian Youth League.

To this newly formed organization of the proletarian youth Lenin gave the greatest thought and attention. He pointed out very clearly that the role and functions of the organization of the Communist youth under the proletarian dictatorship were only partially the same as those of the Young Communist Leagues of the lands still under the domination of imperialism. Like the Y. C. L.'s of the capitalist world, the Y. C. L. of Russia must throw all its powers into the struggle against all influences of capitalism, internal and external. But this class struggle is very evidently conducted on a very different plane and under very different forms in the Soviet Union than in Germany or America. Moreover, upon the Russian Communist Youth there falls a task which only the future holds forth for the proletariat of the rest of the world—to become the active agents in the work of socialist construction, economic, social and cultural. The Russian youth league must study these peculiar conditions under the proletarian dictatorship, Lenin pointed out, and adapt its work and activity to the tasks dictated by the situation. In a splendid address to III All-Russian Congress of the Russian Communist League of Youth (October, 1920), a

speech that every young proletarian especially should read and study with care, Lenin analyzed carefully what these conditions and the corresponding tasks were. Unfortunately, we cannot here examine this matter in any detail—the reader should by all means read the entire speech published in the pamphlet: "Lenin and the Youth"—but we cannot refrain from making some quotations almost equally applicable to the youth movement of the entire world.

"I must say that it appears to me that the first and, so to speak, the most natural answer to such a question ("What must the youth do to really deserve the name of Communist youth"—W. H.) is that the youth organization and in general the entire youth that wants to make the transition to Communism must learn communism.

"But this answer 'to learn communism' is somewhat too general. What must we do to learn communism? . . . A whole series of dangers threatens us. . . if we conceive of this task of learning communism in a false or in a one-sided way.

"Naturally the thought first comes to us that learning communism is equivalent to the mastery of the sum of knowledge contained in the communist texts, pamphlets, and works. But this sort of definition of learning communism is too primitive and unsatisfactory. . . . WITHOUT WORK, WITHOUT STRUGGLE, THE KNOWLEDGE DRAWN FROM COMMUNIST WRITINGS IS WORTHLESS!"

Lenin and the Youth.

Nowhere was the greatness of Lenin more evident, nowhere was his marvellous understanding of the inner nature of the historical movement of the exploited masses for emancipation more apparent, than in his profound appreciation of the role and tasks of the proletarian youth under capitalism and after the seizure of power. For, as Zinoviev has carefully pointed out, the attitude towards the youth is no thing in and for itself; it is part and parcel of one's entire orientation towards the movement of the workingclass and towards the tendencies within it. Others—Liebknecht, for example—have espoused the cause of the revolutionary youth with consuming passion and energy. But it was Lenin, and others only thru Lenin, who saw clearly and laid bare the socio-economic situation of the proletarian youth under imperialism, their position in relation to the class alignments that are the product of imperialism, and their profound revolutionary potentialities in this period of capitalist development. To Lenin, basically, the youth movement owes its consciousness and understanding of its own role and destiny. In Leninism it sees its beacon and guide in the complex maze it must traverse within capitalism to the proletarian dictatorship and thence to the establishment of Communism—the Communist Society!

The Left Wing at Two Conventions

I. The I. L. G. W. U. Convention

By William F. Dunne

TWO conventions, those of the International Ladies' Garment Workers and the Fur Workers, the first held in Philadelphia, the second in Boston, in the closing months of 1925, showed the left wing in these unions supported by a majority of the membership.

At both these conventions the left wing wrestled with the question of taking control of the union—a question which finds a place on the order of business of the left wing as an immediate practical problem for the first time in the history of left wing struggles since it has appeared as a definite section of the American labor movement with a program of its own opposed at all points to the class peace and class surrender policy of the A. F. of L. bureaucracy.

The Advanced Position of the Needle Trade Unions.

It is not surprising that the problem of whether

to take power and the methods by which it was to be secured, should arise first for the left wing in the needle trades. The needle trades unions are the most advanced section of the American labor movement from the standpoint of political understanding. To prove this contention it is only necessary to cite the fact that even the needle trades bureaucracy mouths glibly the phrases of the social revolution, that in words it acknowledges the class struggle, that at all needle trades conventions the flag-waving 100 per cent Americanism which is the hallmark of the rest of the labor movement, is entirely absent. The rank and file, the most active elements with a large mass following at least, have had anarchist and socialist training. There are of course exceptions to the above but it is idle to compare the needle trades membership with even the most advanced sections of other A. F. of L. unions such as the International Association of Machinists. Such a comparison only serves to disclose that the difference between the needle trades and other unions is the difference between the American and European labor movements.

The Great Importance of the I. L. G. W. U. Convention.

Of the two conventions that of the I. L. G. W. U. was by far the most important for several reasons:

1. Size of the Union.

First, because of the size of the union—it is exceeded in this respect, according to A. F. of L. figures for 1924, only by the United Mine Workers of America, the unions of Carpenters, Painters, Street Railwaymen, Railway Carmen and Electrical Workers. It paid per capita to the A. F. of L. in that year for 91,000 members. The figures for the Electrical Workers and Railway Carmen are padded for convention purposes so that the I. L. G. W. U. even with the decrease in membership caused by the Sigman policy, is actually one of the five largest unions in the A. F. of L.

The Fur Workers have approximately 10,000 members.

2. Strength of the Left Wing.

Second, because of the numerical strength of the left wing and its defeat of the Sigman machine in the pre-convention struggle in New York—the largest center of the ladies' garment industry. In

the convention the left cast 110 votes representing two-thirds of the membership against 154 for the machine.

3. Character of the I. L. G. W. U. Bureaucracy.

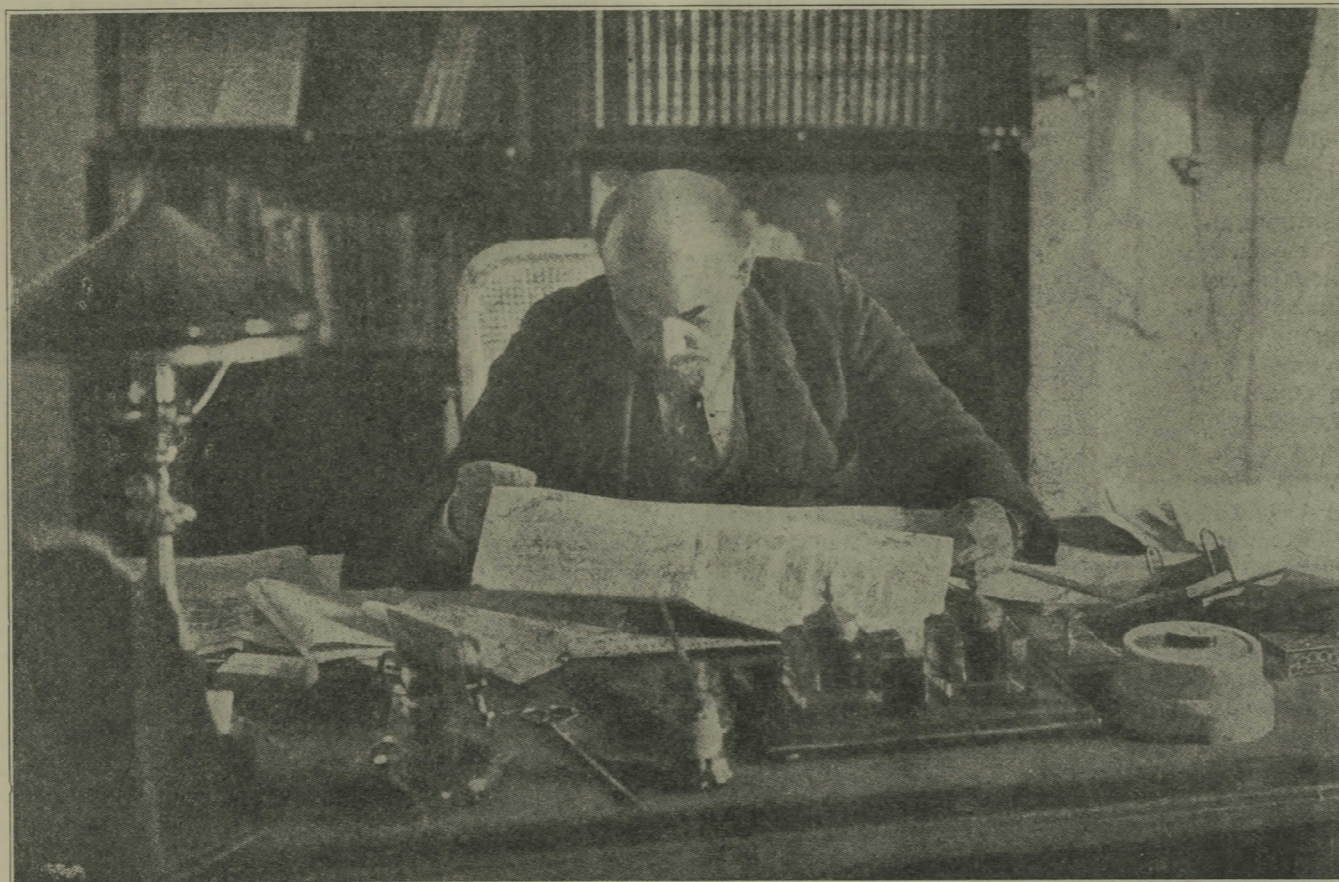
Third, because of the social-democratic character of the I. L. G. W. U. bureaucracy, its previous training in the class struggle school enabling it to fight and maneuver far more skilfully against the left wing than the cruder bureaucrats of the other A. F. of L. unions.

Sigman's Maneuvers in the Gitlow Case.

As an instance of this let us take the action of the Sigman bureaucracy in the case of Benjamin Gitlow.

On the first day of the convention a machine delegate moved that a protest against the imprisonment of Gitlow be sent to the authorities. The motion was carried unanimously. Then the "impartial chairman" of the governor's commission for regulating wages and working conditions in the ladies' garment industry in New York proceeded to Albany, where he conferred with Governor Smith. By long distance telephone he informed President Sigman that Gitlow's pardon had been obtained.

Sigman, who hates Gitlow and the Communist



LENIN AT WORK.

Party to which Gitlow belongs with an undying hatred, made the announcement of Gitlow's release to the convention.

Loud cheers from the left wing delegates.

Still louder cheers from the right wing delegates.

A motion to invite Gitlow to address the convention was passed unanimously. Gitlow spoke. A right wing delegate moved that his speech be made part of the minutes. This was passed without a dissenting vote.

The why of the above is as follows:

The demand for the release of Gitlow was a good left wing issue. The left wing was going to demand endorsement of his release from the convention. Gitlow is a needle trades worker and known to every needle trades worker as a fearless fighter. A Hutcheson, a Berry or a John L. Lewis could have, because of the lower level of class consciousness among their union membership, and would have, because it is their method, fought against Gitlow's release to the bitter end.

Gitlow's release was expected during the holidays so the Sigman machine very cleverly maneuvered to appear as the deus ex machina and thereby increase its prestige as against that of the left wing. Incidentally, the governor's "impartial" commission would profit also.

Actually, it was the mass pressure of the membership behind the left wing that forced Gitlow's release.

The Sigman machine made no fight on such issues as a labor party, amalgamation or recognition of Soviet Russia, altho true to its socialist training it dragged in the issue of "political prisoners" in Russia. It agreed to resolutions denouncing the Ku Klux Klan and the Fascisti. It accepted a resolution providing for a trade union delegation to the Soviet Union with the provision that a member of the executive board should accompany it. It agreed formally to abandon the expulsion policy which precipitated the crisis in the union following the Boston convention.

In other words the I. L. G. W. U. bureaucracy made concessions to the left wing which the left wings in other unions can visualise only in dreams of the distant future.

4. Size of the Communist Fraction.

Fourth, the I. L. G. W. U. convention is important because of the size of the Communist convention fraction. The strength or weakness of the left wing in Philadelphia was the strength or weakness of the Communist fraction and therefore a test of the correctness of understanding of the policy and tactics of our party in this field.

The Strategy of the Sigman Machine.

The Sigman machine disclosed a carefully worked out two-sided strategy:

First, by concessions, liberal gestures and "unity" maneuvers, accompanied by a vituperative denunciation of the Communist Party, with the purpose of convicting it and its members as disrupters

of the union, to split the broad left wing from the Communists and demoralize it.

Second, failing in this, to provoke a split for which the left wing, and particularly the Communists, could be blamed.

The Strategy of the Left Wing.

The obvious strategy for the left wing in this situation was to expose the Sigman machine as the advocate of cooperation with the bosses, as the disorganizers of the union and show the convention and the membership at large that the left wing stood for unity on the basis of the class struggle, that by this program alone could the class interests of the membership be protected.

The Strategy of the Communists.

The Communist strategy was:

To firmly consolidate the left wing on the basis of their left wing program, to turn the convention discussion into an ideological campaign to convince the progressives and win them for that program.

The Deviations of the Left Wing and the Communist Fraction from Their Line of Strategy.

In actual practice both the left wing and the Communist fraction departed considerably from their strategic line and the net results of the convention are therefore less for the left wing than might have been obtained.

For this the Communist fraction must take the responsibility.

Its convention actions were a weird mixture of leftism and opportunism—leftism in that it followed an objectively splitting policy until the last day of the convention, opportunism in that this splitting policy was based on the naive belief that the Sigman machine was sincere enough in its unity maneuvers to make substantial concessions to the left wing in order to avoid a split in the union.

This complete misunderstanding of the role of the bureaucracy in the present period, that of disrupters of the unions and agents of the capitalists in the union, is responsible also for a desire, and even attempts, which manifested themselves from time to time during the convention to share control of the union with sections of the Sigman machine.

Not only was the objectively splitting policy and tactics based on lingering remains of confidence in the Sigmanites as "honest trade unionists." It had the additional and extremely dangerous defect of being based on a wrong estimation of the relationship of forces in the needle trades industry, to say nothing about its not taking into account at all the relationship of forces in the whole American labor movement.

Our party in its work in the trade unions does not "make a fetish of unity" but it has a right to insist that when an objectively secessionist policy is followed by a Communist fraction in a needle trades union affiliated with the A. F. of L. that some consideration be given to the fact that in the powerful Amalgamated Clothing Workers union the left wing is almost non-existent.

Our party also had to take into consideration the fact that the left wing in the I. L. G. W. U. had been built up largely as a result of the struggle against the expulsion policy of the machine and that what jurists call "a reasonable doubt" exists as to whether workers who fought for the right of militants to stay in the union would follow them out with the same loyalty into a secessionist movement.

There is in addition the one decisive fact that a left wing which appears in this period of the development of the American labor movement as the advocate of unity of the American labor movement and of the world trade union movement, and whose whole prestige is based on this fact, cannot carry out a secessionist policy in this stage of the struggle without bringing disaster on itself and on the entire left wing.

Neither can it afford, in the absence of a center group in the convention, to enter into election compromises with the bureaucrats.

Both of these dangers confronted the left wing in the I. L. G. W. U. convention. That these tendencies were overcome, that the left wing did not deal itself a blow from which it would not easily recover, is a tribute to its working class character, consciousness and militancy.

From the first day of the convention it was evident that the question of control of the union, partial or complete, was uppermost in the minds of the left wing—including the Communist fraction. Controlling New York, the largest center of the union, the left wing resented the manipulation which gave the machine a convention majority to which it was not entitled. Without any clear and open formulation of its purpose, the left wing really intended to club the machine into giving substantial concessions or else to secede. It did not at first see that the Sigman machine was ready and willing to provoke a split if the left wing could be made to carry the blame for it.

Sharp challenges amounting to ultimatums to the Sigmanites were made by left wing speakers right at the beginning of the convention. No objection could be made to these evidences of militancy had they been accompanied by clear explanations of the position of the left as the defenders and unifiers of the organization. But this was not done. In addition to this the early fight of the left was on the question of credentials and other organizational matters, dragged out for days, laying the left wing open to the charge of obstructing the work of the convention.

Then came the decision of the left wing to stay away from the official banquet—where Green or Lewis was to speak—not to extend the fight against the machine at the banquet itself but to hold an affair of its own. The excuse given by left wing leaders for this action was that they could not explain to the rank and file their reasons for attending the official banquet—proof in itself that the rank and file had not been sufficiently informed as to objectives and methods.

Communist observers at the convention interpreted this action correctly as the second open sign of an objectively splitting policy. They were correct and in a very short time their judgement was confirmed by the refusal of the left wing to serve on the convention committees. The reason given for this was that the appointments of left wingers had been handled by the machine so as to keep the most able off the most important committees—such as those on the report of the general executive board, organization, and appeals.

Subsequently the left wing formally agreed to appear before the committees but to the best of my knowledge this policy was not carried out. If it was it was in a very half-hearted manner.

The refusal to serve on the convention committees had been announced with the belief that the machine would yield to pressure and revise the committee appointments.

The Provocation Policy of the Machine.

Not only did it not do this but it began a policy of deliberate provocation obviously intended to enrage the left wing still further and provoke a further tendency towards secession. Continual insulting speeches by Sigman were used to increase the tension.

Only during the first part of the debate on the report of the general executive board which had been divided into three parts—industrial conditions and future policy, the New York situation and the morale of the organization—did this policy of provocation relax.

The reason for this was that the machine hoped to administer a moral and political defeat to the left wing by showing a superior knowledge of the industry and the history of the union. Much to the surprise of the bureaucracy and, I think, to some extent of the left wing itself, the left wing showed at least an equal knowledge of the special conditions of the industry and by its superior understanding of capitalist development in the United States, coupled with its fight for a program based on the class struggle, was able to defeat the machine in the debate on this question.

Needing a smashing victory over the left wing on the first part of the officers report in order to break even on the whole report—for it could make no plausible defense of its policies in the debate on the New York situation and on the morale of the union—the Sigmanites became desperate and abandoned all unity maneuvers. They renewed the provocation by such methods as the provocateur speech of Yanofsky—discredited and deposed editor of Justice, the union's official organ—by threats to use police to clear the hall of the rank and file members attending the convention and culminating in the driving from the convention hall of delegates and visitors by a squad of bluecoats.

When the bureaucracy believed that the left wing could stand no more, it brazenly refused to abide by the provisions of the "peace agreement"

concluded after the struggle in New York with the rank and file committee of action and which stipulated among other things that certain important questions be submitted to referendum and that the representation to joint boards be on a proportional basis.

The Walkout of the Left Wing.

The left wing delegation promptly left the convention without even making a statement.

The threatened split became an actual fact.

But the left wing leaders stubbornly insisted that they had no intention of seceding and no amount of argument seemed to convince them that one does not need to deliberately plan a split to have a policy which produces one.

In spite of the protestations of the left wing it is my belief that the leaders had no intention of returning to the convention unless the Sigman machine made certain concessions. If they did not intend to secede they have the difficult task of explaining why they staked everything on the possibility of the machine making concessions and prepared no way for a retreat with their forces intact.

As a matter of fact the machine did make some minor organizational concessions and the left wing returned to the convention. The concessions made seem to have confirmed some of the left wing in the belief that its dangerous maneuver, which for a few hours threatened the whole left wing in the American labor movement with disaster, was a very brilliant performance. The exact opposite is the case.

The Dangers of the Walkout Maneuver.

In the first place the walkout was based on the idea that the Sigmanites, in spite of their deliberate provocation of a split, would yield rather than see the union divided.

In the second place, had not concessions been made which allowed the left wing to save its face, the left would either have had to actually secede, having led the membership to this point, or to have gone back into the convention defeated and demoralized.

The fact that the machine yielded cannot be taken as evidence of the correctness of the left wing's action or the manner in which it was carried out. The truth is that the Sigman machine had been carried away by its hatred of the left wing and the Communists and had blindly chosen an issue on which to provoke a split for which it could not rally all of its own forces. Hence it made concessions. The effect of these concessions upon the future attitude of the left wing in the convention brings to mind the warning against Greeks bearing gifts.

The machine agreed to proportional representation for the New York joint board and to submit certain questions to referendum—"not earlier than six months and not later than one year from the adjournment of the convention."

The Left Wing Sways to the Other Extreme.

From a split position the day before, the left wing now swayed to the other extreme as a result of this new evidence of the desire for "unity" on the part of the bureaucracy. So overcome was it with what might be termed the "peace on earth, good will to men" feeling that it made no fight for proportional representation for joint boards in garment centers outside of New York—a failure which under slightly different circumstances might have created serious dissension in the left wing—allowed First Vice-President Ninfo to be elected without nominating a candidate against him, and in nominating its own candidates for other offices failed to take the opportunity to state that the left wing supported these candidates because they in turn stood on the left wing platform.

So much for the mistakes of the left wing—mistakes for which I repeat, the Communist fraction must stand responsible. This is obvious when we know that out of 110 left wing delegates 52 were Communists.

The Causes of the Mistakes of the Left Wing.

These mistakes were due to the inflated importance attached to the issue of union control and to a certain provincialism which fails to see the left wing struggle as a whole, over-estimating the importance of the needle trades in the American labor movement, and finally to a lack of ideological preparation for the masses of left wing followers.

The Essential Strength and Vitality of the Left Wing.

Such mistakes are not fatal if corrected and the fact that the left wing went thru three weeks of arduous convention struggle without losing a single delegate, that in New York the workers showed their intense interest in the convention and support of the left wing by huge mass meetings, that in Philadelphia, a thousand needle workers met, listened to and endorsed the left wing program during the convention, proves that the left wing is essentially sound with vitality enough to overcome any wrong tendencies.

The Problems facing the Left Wing in the I. L. G. W. U.

The left wing in the needle trades faces tremendous problems. It is now officially responsible for the interests of the union in the city of New York. It has the unscrupulous tactics and bitter enmity of the Sigman machine, the A. F. of L. bureaucracy, the bosses and the Hillman machine of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers to contend with.

The Sigman machine left the New York organization penniless and hundreds of thousands of dollars in debt.

A general strike will probably be necessary in the entire New York ladies' garment industry this spring. A half-million dollars are needed for this alone.

There is but one way of meeting and solving these difficulties. It is by firmly consolidating the forces now following the left wing and at the same time drawing more masses into their ranks by winning the thousands of Italian workers who are still deceived by Ninfo and Antonini, and who form now the chief strength of the Sigman machine.

In addition to this, the closest relations must be established and maintained between the I. L. G. W. U. left wing and the left wings in the Fur Workers and the Amalgamated. In the Amalgamated the left wing must be stimulated and broadened by systematic exposure of the Hillman machine and an energetic struggle against its class surrender policy. Relentless war on the bureaucrats is the only way to victory over the bosses.

The strength of the left wing lies not in offices but in the masses. With the loyal support of thousands of conscious workers, with the economic struggle fought militantly and efficiently, the question of power in the union solves itself.

The splendid left wing of serried thousands in the I. L. G. W. U., steeled now in a two-year struggle, is the most hopeful sign on the horizon of the American labor movement today.

II. The Furriers' Convention

By William Weinstone

THE ousting of the bureaucratic socialist Kaufman machine took place at the seventh International Fur Workers' Convention, held in Boston, November 10th to 19th inclusive. This convention, regularly scheduled for May, 1926, was called as a special convention because the International officials, who dominated the union, could no longer continue in office. The revolt of the rank and file against the policy of terror and gangsterism which had ruled the organization for the past four years, and which was intensified after the reactionary convention held in Chicago in 1924, brought the Kaufman machine to its knees.

The New York Joint Board, representing 80 per cent of the membership of the entire International, had been won by the Left Wing and this victory broke the backbone of the Kaufman machine.

The administration refused to recognize the New York Joint Board but it was powerless in face of the tight grip of the Left Wing over the New York membership. The convention was ostensibly held in order to settle the issue of the New York Joint Board and the International, but in reality it was to decide the fate of the Kaufman machine, which already considered itself defeated before it entered the convention.

The Attacks of the Kaufman Machine on the Left Wing.

The Kaufman machine had formerly controlled New York, but when the Left Wing was organized in 1922, the growing discontent of the rank and file with the Kaufman administration caused the latter to resort to a policy of gangsterism and suppression in order

to root out the Left Wing. The administration went so far as to attempt a murderous assault upon B. Gold, present manager of the New York Joint Board, in December 1923, in order to paralyze the Left Wing. It suspended M. Suroff, a vice-president of the organization, Fanny Warshawsky, and other leading Left Wingers and used the entire underworld in order to break up the meetings of the Left Wing. At the last convention, it established complete autocracy in the organization, ruled out the T. U. E. L. and empowered the G. E. B. to suspend or expel any member "who attempts or takes part in a protest meeting or unauthorized meeting against the union, or anyone who will slander or libel the union or the officialdom."

The Work of the Left Wing in New York.

In July, 1925, through a united front of the Left Wing with a former section of the Kaufman machine which had agreed to a policy of cleaning out gangsterism in the organization, the New York Joint Board was won against the Kaufman opposition. With the Left Wing dominating the united front, gangsterism was cleaned out, the paralysis in the local organization overcome, the grievances of the workers adjusted, and a campaign for the organization of the workers resulted in 1,500 Greek workers (that had formerly been an obstacle to the progress of the union) being organized.

With the opening of the convention, the influence of the New York organization was dominant and the Kaufman machine demoralized and weakened in the other locals in the country.

Relation of Forces at the Convention.

The relation of forces at the convention was as follows: The Kaufman machine controlled 34 votes, representing about 2,000 members, chiefly of the out-of-town locals; the opposition to the bureaucrats numbered 41 delegates, divided between 26 Left Wingers and 15 controlled by the Sorkin group, which made up the united front in the New York organization.

The Attacks on the New York Joint Board.

The Left Wing opened up the convention by striking a militant note with the demand for the removal of scabbing taxicabs from in front of the American House, in which the convention was held. The machine hesitated, maneuvered to get rid of the issue, but was finally compelled to submit upon ultimatum from the Left Wing that they would not remain in the convention. The first fight arose over the proposal of the credentials committee, appointed by the G. E. B., to unseat B. Gold, who was the manager and delegate from the New York Joint Board. The machine raised objection because the New York Joint Board was not recognized by the International. Realizing the opposition forces against it and that it was outnumbered, the machine attempted to postpone the seating of Gold until after the whole case against the Joint Board was heard. In this way they wished to prejudice the convention against Gold and put the Left Wing under a disadvantage. But the opposition correctly argued

that the Joint Board had been properly recognized by the acceptance of tens of thousands of dollars in dues by the International office.

The machine, which had built up a Chinese wall of constitutional provisions during 13 years of existence, proceeded to the employment of every device, even to the walking out of the hall, when it realized it was defeated. The opposition was firm and Gold was seated, even against the votes of the Kaufman machine.

The Struggle Over the "Supplementary Report."

The chief fight, which lasted three days, was devoted to the issue between the New York Joint Board and the International. The latter had cleverly drawn up its general report into two parts, one devoted to its activities outside New York, and the other a 32-page document, dealing with the New York situation, known as the "supplementary report." In this it adopted a policy which was later used by Sigman at the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union convention, of separating the Left Wing fight from the general issues of the union, so as to give the impression that the Left Wing fight was one of political issues and outside interference, and unconnected with the policy of class collaboration and the ruinous economic policy of the administration.

The machine at first maneuvered to prevent the fight and it brought pressure on the Sorkin group, proposing to them a compromise which would declare the fight at an end and clear the administration. The Sorkin group was at first ready to yield to these proposals, which came directly and indirectly from the administration, but it was dragged into the fight by the ultimatum of the Left Wing, who used the club of the New York membership over them to get them to join in the discussion. Gold of the Left Wing and Shachtman of the united front Sorkin group were the chief spokesmen for the opposition. In a speech lasting two hours, Gold related the story of the corruption and terrorization and the foul practices of the Kaufman machine, until the machine was stripped naked of every vestige of decency and of any pretense to its rights of leadership in the organization.

The Betrayal of the Right Wing Sorkinites.

The Kaufman machine, realizing that it was defeated, again resorted to a maneuver of compromise proposals under the cover of "peace" in the organization withdrawing its resolution of condemnation of the New York Joint Board, and in this move it was successful through the betrayal of the right wing elements of the Sorkin group, led by Sorkin, Woll and Winnick. The latter entered into a deal with the Kaufman machine to accept the compromise in exchange for support by Kaufman to office in the organization, and for the defeat of the Left Wing in the elections to the G. E. B. Sorkin himself did not participate in the battle. He kept ominously silent. He had been involved in a sordid deal in the 1920 strike, with which the report cleverly began, in which he surrendered the strike to the bosses. The less he therefore said about the matter, the better.

Following the betrayal, the Left Wing rallied their forces and through pressure brought to bear upon the Left Wing of the Sorkin group, the fight was reopened the following day in an attempt to reconsider the question and to get a record of clear-cut condemnation of the activities of the International machine.

The Kaufman machine, sensing the situation, offered a further concession in the form of an interpretation of the compromise proposal adopted the day before, which promised not to reopen the fight in any way, and which offered support to the New York organization in the coming fight with the bosses.

The Left Wing Triumphs.

This the Left Wing rejected, and in spite of all constitutional and parliamentary maneuvers, the machine was compelled to yield to the Left Wing, to a resolution which held the International office responsible for the violation of democratic principles of the organization, and for suspensions in the course of the fight. In spite of the weak formulation of the resolution, it was nevertheless a victory over the Kaufman machine.

The Issue of the General Report.

In the fight on the general report of activities, the lefts did not measure up to the level of the fight which they had made on the supplementary report. They exposed the class collaboration policy of the machine which had gone as far as the use of injunctions against the bosses in Boston, against long-term agreements with lower standards and poorer wages in South Norwalk, against the wastefulness of the machine, its lack of any policy of organizing the unorganized and the pitiful results brought about in this field at an exorbitantly high payroll, but the Left Wing did not bring up the full strength of the opposition in this fight. Sorkin and his right wing of the united front were too ready to submit to the demagoguery and flimflam of class collaboration arguments made by Kaufman in his reply, and the latter was able to "get away with it" on this issue.

Labor Party and Russian Recognition.

The Kaufman machine recognized that because of the instructions given by the New York membership to the delegation from their locals, the Kaufman machine could not win on the clear cut Left Wing issues, such as, for a Labor Party, recognition of the Soviet Union and amalgamation. They therefore, adopted tactics of uniting with the Sorkin group members on issues which they could call Communist. The resolution for a Labor Party, for the recognition of the Soviet Union, against class collaboration, for a delegation to Russia, for amalgamation, were all unanimously carried, the Kaufman machine making no opposition. However, on other issues, such as release of political prisoners in Russia, the endorsement of the Freiheit, tional Left Wing in order to destroy the hold of the Kaufman machine on the out-of-town locals, which are now the centers of Kaufman strength. Within the G. E. B., the Left Wing must continue its policy of opposition, sharply drawing the line between its own policies and the practices of the Sorkin group. It must do everything to raise the ideological level of

as well as the endorsement of Communist institutions, the combined vote of the Kaufman machine and enough of the Sorkin group, were able to defeat the Left Wing.

Elections to the G. E. B.

In the elections to the G. E. B., the deal which had been consummated by the Sorkin group with the Kaufman machine, came to the surface. The Sorkin group, whose ideology fundamentally does not differ from that of the Kaufman machine, had from the very beginning attempted to reach an agreement with the Kaufman machine, which was that Kaufman should retire in favor of Weiniss, the present secretary and a common slate which the Sorkin group put up. Not being successful in this, they agreed to accept the support of the Kaufman machine for their candidates against those of the Left Wing. They, however, had agreed to the slate proposed by the Left Wing which was for Shachtman (the Left Wing of the Sorkin group) for president, Skolnick, a Left Winger, for secretary, B. Gold as first vice-president and several of the Sorkin group and other Left Wingers for the remaining posts. But the Sorkin group betrayed this agreement. They put up Woll, a Sorkinite, for secretary against Skolnick and Winnick, another of the same type, against Gold for vice-president. With the votes of the Kaufman machine, they secured the domination of the new G. E. B. A. Gross of New York, and Englander of Canada, were the two lefts elected to the G. E. B.

Lesson of the Convention—the United Front.

In spite of this betrayal of the Sorkin group, the convention represents a marked advance for the Left Wing. The betrayal of the Sorkin group prevented the Left Wing from gathering more of the fruits of its activities. The Left Wing forced the Kaufman machine out of office. It won upon the issues of class collaboration, a Labor Party, amalgamation and Russian recognition. It made a fine fight on the issues in the union in the debate on the supplementary report.

The convention, however, holds a lesson for the Left Wing on the issue of how to make a united front, which if it had been properly conducted would have still further strengthened the Left Wing and brought it more organizational gains. The Left Wing failed to realize that it would inevitably be betrayed by the right wing of the Sorkin group at the convention. The united front which had been made between the Left Wing and the Sorkin group upon the issue of clearing out gangsterism had outlived its usefulness in the New York organization. The Sorkin group itself began to realize this when it secured 12 out of the 30 delegates to the convention. Sorkin and his group were discredited before the New York membership and sooner or later the Left Wing would be forced to clear them out of the organization.

In the election of delegates to the convention, the Left Wing had its opportunity. Its prestige among the membership was high, due to its victories for the rank and file in the short period in office. The Left Wing, however, turned their united front into a marriage with the Sorkin group. They failed to realize that the united front has for its object to strengthen

the Left Wing at the expense of the leaders of the other group. The 12 delegates of the Sorkin group, by no means represented corresponding strength among the members, on the contrary, the membership meetings which were held after the convention showed that Sorkin and the right wingers represented an infinitesimal section of the membership, the resolutions demanding their removal from office because of this betrayal in the New York organization, were unanimously carried.

It was the task of the Left Wing in the elections to have cleared away such unreliable elements as Sorkin, Woll and Winnick, so that they could successfully continue their fight for the organization. The Sorkin group, however, utilized the fight correctly for themselves, to further their position and to entrench themselves with the support of Kaufman in the International office. It used the united front for its advantage at the expense of the Left Wing. This lesson must be learned. The united front made on the issue of gangsterism was correct, but the united front required a policy of differentiation from the Sorkin group, a policy of criticism when necessary in order that the Left Wing may not carry the responsibility for this group.

This was not always carried out by the Left Wing in the New York organization. The Left Wing, which is one of the most vigorous in the needle trades, has shown real heroism in the fight against the Kaufman machine and gangsterism; nevertheless, at the convention, it failed to introduce a resolution for shop committees, one of the vital demands of the Left Wing. It was not sufficiently prepared for its fight upon the general issues of the trade. Its failure to introduce the resolution for shop committees can be attributed in fact to its nervousness and hesitation in the face of the unreliability of the Sorkin group, which sought an opportunity to bolt the united front and find a pretext for lining up with the Kaufman elements.

The Tasks of the Left Wing.

The future will see the growth and consolidation of the Left Wing within the Furriers' Union, provided the lessons of the united front with the Sorkin group are learned. The Left Wing must make clear that Shachtman can secure support as president only on condition that he breaks with the Sorkin group, carries through vigorously the fight for amalgamation of the unions, fights against class collaboration, continues the war against Kaufman, who while defeated, has not yet been wiped out of the organization.

The Left Wing, which has the overwhelming backing of the membership in the New York organization, must be broadened out and made into a national Left Wing and draw more leading elements into the leadership of the organization.

With the adoption of a militant fighting policy in the administration of the New York locals, the reconstruction of its machinery for greater response to the needs of the rank and file, the victories already achieved in the Furriers' Union will grow in volume and Kaufmanism and Sorkinism will soon be completely wiped out in the organization.

The Great Negro Migration

By Jay Lovestone

AS a result of the world war, the class divisions and the relation of class forces in the United States changed deeply.

A most striking phenomenon of this character is the mass migration of the Negroes, mainly from the cotton plantations of the South to the industrial centers of the northern and eastern states. John Pepper characterizes these migrations strikingly as "unarmed Spartacus uprisings" against the slavery and the oppression of the capitalist oligarchy in the Southern states. This phenomenon is of tremendous economic, political and social significance for the whole American working class.

Co-incident with such dynamic forces influencing the class relations in the United States, is the increasing world supremacy of American imperialism.

America has become the center of the economic and cultural emancipation of the Negro. Here this movement forms and crystallizes itself. Therefore it is especially important for the success of the efforts of the Comintern and the Red International of Labor Unions striving to mobilize the millions of Negro masses of Africa, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Colombia, Nicaragua, and the satrapies of American imperialism such as Porto Rico, Haiti and Santa Domingo, against the world bourgeoisie, that the movement of the Negroes in the United States should develop in a revolutionary direction.

Extent of the Negro Migration.

According to the last census (January, 1920) there were in the United States 10,463,131 Negroes of whom eight millions were then still in the Southern states. The recent migration of the Negroes from the South took place during two main periods. The first was 1916-1917 when, because of the entrance of America into the world war, a strong demand for skilled labor power arose and whole Negro colonies and Negro villages migrated to the northern industrial centers. This migration totaled approximately four hundred thousand. The second period, 1922-23 coincided with the peak of American industry that followed after the economic crisis of 1920-21, and is to be traced back to the great demand for unskilled labor in the Northern districts.

According to the findings of the United States Agricultural Department, the period since 1916 has seen an annual migration of 200,000 Negroes from the Southern states, as against ten to twelve thousand annually for the period before 1916. In the four years from 1916 to 1920 between 400,000 and 730,000 Negroes left for the North. In the period

from 1916 to 1924 the figures reached one million. The influence of this upon the concentration of population is obvious from the following figures: In 1910 the Southern states included 80.68% of the Negro population of America, while in 1920 only 76.99%. In four of these eleven states, the decrease of the general population from 1910 to 1920 was primarily due to the migration of the Negroes.

In 1923, 32,000 or 13% of the colored agricultural workers left Georgia for the North. In the same year, there migrated from Alabama 10,000, from Arkansas, 15,000, and from South Carolina, 22,700 Negroes.

On the other hand, the Negro population of the Northern industrial city, Detroit, the greatest automobile center, increased in the period of 1910 to 1920 from 57,000 to about 90,000 and of Chicago, from 109,000 in 1919 to 200,000 in 1924. The strength of this migration from the South is evidenced by the fact that records show that in one day 3,000 Negroes passed thru a railroad station in Philadelphia. And this was not unusual. The mass of the emigrants consisted of agricultural workers and small tenants.

Because of the lack of labor power, many cotton and fruit plantations had to change to cattle breeding and dairying. According to the investigation of the Bankers Association of Georgia, there were, in 1923, in this state, no less than 46,674 deserted farms and 55,524 unplowed plots of land. Furthermore, on account of the migrations there was a loss of national wealth to the state amounting to \$27,000,000.

The bourgeoisie and the big landowners in the southern states naturally at first resorted to strong measures against the mass exodus of their slaves. Thus in Georgia, for example, a law was passed according to which the "hiring of workers for other states, thru private persons or organizations is to be considered as a crime." The plantation owners in Tennessee forced their government to put all those Negroes in custody who registered themselves in unemployment bureaus. In South Carolina and Virginia, all agents who were to obtain workers for other states had to pay a special license fee of \$2,500 on the pain of suffering greater fine or imprisonment.

Causes of Migration.

The most important causes for the migration of Negroes from the South are the following:

1. The oppressive conditions of life and work of the Negro population, consisting mostly of tenants and agricultural workers.

2. The boll weevil plague in the cotton plantations.

3. The general agrarian crisis which forced the tenants in the South, as well as in the northern states, to look for work in the cities.

4. The deepgoing dissatisfaction among the Negroes in the South, especially after the world war.

5. The intense development of industry in the northern states, as a consequence of the world war, coupled with the immigration ban, as a result of which the demand for unskilled labor power grew tremendously.

1. Living and Working Conditions of the Southern Negroes.

Most of the labor power in cotton production in the South has been Negro. In the period from 1880-1920, the percentage of plantation owners in the cotton belt sank from 62% to 49.8%. Seventy to ninety per cent of the cultivated land in the cotton districts of Georgia, South Carolina and Mississippi are rented by Negro tenants. In Mississippi 60% of all cotton farms are worked by Negroes, of whom 85% are tenants.

The tenants have not the slightest prospect of ever acquiring the possession of the land on which they work—a prospect that is still in the realms of possibility for the white farmer in the northeastern states, altho even here such prospects are now under ever growing difficulties. For the Negroes, the



SHARE-CROPPERS

LYDIA GIBSON.

status of tenant is unchangeable. Leading a miserable existence, the Negro tenant is in the rarest cases able to provide his children with an elementary education. Thus, in 1923 in the state of Georgia, the appropriations for the schools for Negroes who at that time composed 45% of the population reached the total of \$15,000 as opposed to the appropriation of \$735,000 for the whites. We must add to this the usurious credit system which still more diminishes the scanty earnings of the tenant. The prices of the commodities bought by Negro tenants on credit are on the average seventy percent higher but in Texas it is 81% and in Arkansas 90%.

As a rule, the Negro tenant has a claim to only a half of the product of the labor of his relatives or others whose help he can obtain. Of this, the owners are legally empowered to deduct for supposed allowances and services by the land barons for means of life, clothing, medical help, etc. Many landowners are at the same time also merchants. Since written agreements are entirely unusual, the Negro is thus further uniformly swindled in the most shameless way.

The Negro masses are exploited so intensely that they are often more miserable than under chattel slavery. The status of the Negroes, their working conditions, and their sufferings, are illustrated in the following quotation from a report of the National Association of Manufacturers, of October 7, 1920: "The bad economic exploitation in these cases indicates a slavery many times worse than the former real slavery. Thousands of Negroes who have been working all their lives uninterruptedly are not able to show the value of ten dollars, and are not able to buy the most necessary clothing at the close of the season. They live in the most wretched condition... and are lucky to get hold of a worn out pair of boots or some old clothing..."

Judge S. O. Bratton who was able to obtain in Little Rock, Arkansas, an accurate picture of the relations between the whites and the blacks, writes as follows: "The conditions today are worse than before the American Civil War... The system of exploitation is carried to such a point that most Negroes can hardly keep themselves alive upon their earnings. The plantation owners maintain so-called 'commission businesses' in which the prices of commodities are fixed at the order of the plantation inspectors. The Negroes are prevented in every possible way from keeping an account of the wares taken by them."

Another big source of misery is to be found in the "lynch law" and the terror of the Ku Klux Klan. In the January 1924 issue of the North American Review we have an illuminating report of Howard Snyder who spent many years in the plantation districts of Mississippi. Mr. Snyder says: "... If we add the cruel lynch law which is respons-

ible for the murder of many Negroes burned alive, of whom we never hear in our great newspapers, and if we keep in mind that the Negroes working on the plantations are helpless and defenseless beings who are thrown into panic at the very mention of the Ku Klux Klan, then we will be able to understand the other causes of the mass migration. Nowhere in the world is there among the civilized peoples a human being so cruelly persecuted as the Negro in the South. Almost every day we read that some Negro was baited to death with dogs or whipped to death, or burned alive amidst the howls of huge crowds. How they could ever cherish the hope in the South that these people would suffer all this without protest when twenty dollars, the price of a railway ticket, can be sufficient to free them from this hell, passes my understanding."

2. The Boll Weevil Plague and the Agricultural Crisis.

The boll weevil plague which recently visited the cotton plantations, has been a tremendous factor in changing the South. According to the approximate evaluation, the damages wrought by this pest in the years 1917-22 amounted from \$1,600,000,000 to \$1,900,000,000. As a consequence of this, cotton-cultivated land grew markedly smaller. Thus many black workers and tenants were forced to go to the North.

3. The World War and the Negro.

This wretched system existed prior to the world war. The Negroes were dissatisfied even before the world war. Yet it was the world war with its consequent fundamental economic changes and the Negro migration as a result of the rapid industrialization in the North and East that gave special impetus and created favorable opportunities for a wave of intense dissatisfaction among the Negro tenants and agricultural workers.

We must not underestimate the deep going change in the ideology of the Negro masses called forth by the world war. Whole generations were, so to speak, tied down like slaves to the soil. To them, their village was the world. And now, suddenly, hundreds of thousands of them (376,710) were drawn into military service. Over 200,000 were sent across and returned with new concepts, with new hopes, with a new belief in their people. Their political and social sphere of ideas broadened. Their former hesitancy and lack of decision was now leaving them. The Negroes were stirred en masse and set out to carry thru their aspirations, left their miserable shacks and went to look for better working and living conditions.

Simultaneously, the immigration of European workers into America was practically ended by the world war. In the post-war period, strict legal measures were taken for the same end. In this way, one of the best sources of the stream of unskilled labor was dried up. Thru the world war, however, the development of American industry



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made mighty steps forward and with this the demand for labor power rose. The industrial reserve army had to be filled up and the bourgeoisie of the North turned to the Southern states. In the Negro masses they saw a fitting reservoir to supply their gigantic factories of the northern and eastern states.

To illustrate how the capitalists looked upon the Negro problem in this phase of development, we have the following quotations of Blanton Fortson in a recent number of the Forum: "Disregarding his low stage of development, the undesirable immigrant is characterized by all those traits which are foreign to the Negro. He is permeated with Bolshevism. He understands neither the American language nor the American employers, contracts marriage with American women, multiplies very fast, so that finally, if the door is not closed to the stream of people of his kind, the real native workers will be suppressed by them."

"In normal times, there always exists in the industrial centers a demand for unskilled labor. Where can the North find this? To import unskilled workers from eastern and southern Europe means to increase the number of inferior people in America (To this apologist of capitalism, the 'people permeated with Bolshevism' are inferior. J. L.) If, however, we make use of the Negroes for this purpose, then we will simply redistribute the people of a lower race already existing in the United States and not increase them; in fact, diminish them."

A more open declaration as to how the ruling class in America fills up its industrial reserve army with the help of the South and in this way lowers wages could hardly be found.

The Negroes who are tenants or agricultural laborers naturally seek to escape from their oppressive condition in the South. Better wage and working conditions in the North, somewhat more favorable educational facilities, and the illusory hopes of finally escaping from their difficulties are the motives of the Negroes in their migration. This phenomenon is one of the most significant in history. Today a Negro quarter can be found in nearly every one of the smallest towns of the northern states.

The Results of the Migration of the Negroes

1. The Improvement of the Standard of Living.

No one can question the fact that thru this migration of the Negroes the standard of living of the colored workers and peasants has been considerably raised. In comparison with the conditions confronting them in the southern states, before 1914 the colored workers today certainly have more opportunities to dispose of their only possession, labor power. Moreover, the mass exodus from the South has forced the ruling classes in the cotton fields to ameliorate the cruel treatment of their agricultural workers and in many cases even to raise their wages. The strong demand for colored workers has raised their price.

2. The Strengthening of Race Consciousness.

A further result of the mass migration of the Negroes is the development of a stronger race consciousness. Since hundreds of thousands of colored people have freed themselves from the yoke of slavery in the South, their pride and their confidence in the race have grown. The Negroes have begun to organize themselves. They are now taking up the struggle against their oppression in a more organized fashion. This is one of the real meanings of the still organizationally weak American Negro Labor Congress.

It is, therefore, no accident that in the recent years lynching has been on a decrease. For example, in 1892, there were 155 Negroes murdered in the United States; three decades later, 1922, only 61; and in 1923, only 28, while in 1924 there were only 16. This is partly to be traced to the changed attitude of the capitalists. But primarily it is to be attributed to the fact that of late Negroes have been offering more effective resistance to their oppressors.

In October, 1919, for example, the colored tenants in Phillips county, Arkansas, rose up against their oppressive exploiters. It went as far as a bloody battle in which five whites and seventeen Negroes were killed. Also in Charlestown, West Virginia, Tulsa, Oklahoma, we had similar revolts. Furthermore, the Negro uprisings in the Northern centers, Chicago, Omaha and Duluth, were in a certain sense also the evidence of a strengthened race consciousness.

3. Concentration of the Negro Proletariat.

The migration of the Negro proletariat to the industrial cities of the North hastened its concentration. As evidence, we can point to the growing number of colored people living in the cities. In the last 20 years this rate of increase among the colored workers has grown much faster than among the whites. Whereas the white urban population was 43.3 per cent of the total population of the United States in 1900, 48.1 per cent in 1910 and 53.3 per cent in 1920, the following relations obtained for the colored population: 1900—22.6 per cent, 1910—27.3 per cent, 1920—34.2 per cent. In 1920 more than 50 per cent of the Negro population in 27 states was found in the cities. With the white population only fourteen states showed fifty per cent or more living in the cities.

This tendency also prevails in the South, despite of the mass migration of the Negroes. For example, in the state of Mississippi the total number of Negroes fell by 75,000 from 1910 to 1920, the colored urban population increased by 3.4 per cent. Above all, the social composition of the Negroes has changed extraordinarily. Before the migration, the overwhelming majority was employed on the cotton plantations, today the greater proportion work for the industrial concerns. In the North, the Negroes had formerly been engaged as domestic help. Now, however, they are dominantly employed in heavy industry.

The Significance of the Migration.

In the South there is to be found approximately one quarter of the total population of the United States. Therefore, this migration is of tremendous economic, political and social significance for the entire country.

1. The Industrialization of the South.

Up to now the operation and organization of the cotton plantations were on an extremely primitive level. It was largely because of the migration of the black workers that the bourgeoisie were forced to reorganize their cotton culture and use machinery on a larger scale. Besides, the capitalists were forced to pay more attention to the natural resources of the southern states. This also hastened the industrialization of this section of the country.

2. The Negro as a Political Factor.

The mass migration of the Negroes to the North has increased their importance as a political factor. It is clear that their votes are of great importance in the elections of the northern industrial states. In the South the Negroes are very often deprived of their suffrage upon this or that pretext. In the North such disfranchisement is not so open or prevalent. From 1910 to 1920 the number of Negroes with votes (from 21 years up) increased in New York from 95,177 to 142,580; in New Jersey from 58,467 to 75,671; in Ohio from 72,871 to 126,940; in Indiana from 39,037 to 53,935 and in Illinois from 74,225 to 128,450. The

Republican as well as the Democratic Party made the greatest attempts to win these voters for themselves in the northern industrial centers.

3. The Negro Question—a National Problem.

Thru the migration of the Negroes to the North the Negro problem did not lose any of its significance for the United States as a whole. On the contrary, it gained importance inasmuch as it became a question of national significance. In practically every industrial center the question of the segregation of the Negroes, their segregation in separate quarters of the city, stood on the order as an acute problem in some form or other. Thus, in the last report of the American Ass'n for the Advancement of the Colored People, it said, "In 1924, the most significant question was the creation of separate schools, of separate city quarters for the colored population of the United States."

The broad masses of the Negroes migrating to the North have to a great extent recognized that the illusions which caused them to look upon the Northern states as a paradise were painfully unfounded. The apparent social and political equality of the Negro with the rest of the population of the North had only the slightest pretense to existence in fact so long as the Negroes constituted only a small minority.

The more the Negro problem takes on a national character the more important a role does the South begin to play in the economic and political life of the United States. To the working masses the Negro problem appears on first consideration as a class and racial question. But we should not forget that the basis of the class principle and not the racial principle, must serve as our point of judgement in this instance. In short, the mass migration has not solved the Negro problem in the United States. On the contrary, the great Negro migration has placed this problem before us with greater clarity.

We point to the plans to isolate the Negro population in the northern states, to the Negro revolts, as well as to the expulsion of the Negroes from the industrial city of Johnstown, Pa., in 1923.

Negro Migrations and the American Proletariat.

1. Racial Prejudice.

Considered from the economic standpoint the Negro problem is a part of the general problem of the unskilled worker in the United States. Except for those working on the cotton plantations in the South, a large number of Negroes work in the steel industry, in the coal mines, in the packing houses, in tobacco and cigar factories. The unionization of the Negroes is made extraordinarily difficult by the artificially nourished hatred of the white worker for his colored fellow-worker. The bourgeoisie is very eager to stimulate racial prejudice.

2. The Trade Union Bureaucracy and the Organization of the Negro.

The trade union bureaucracy has been con-

sistently refusing to accept the Negro into the trade unions. We can cite the attitude and practices of the railroad workers, locomotive engineers and firemen, the boilermakers and other trade unions.

The American Federation of Labor has concerned itself with the organization of the Negroes only on paper. It is true that there was established in 1920 a special commission for this purpose. But it did nothing. At the congress of the A. F. of L. in 1923 the Executive Council reported that it was impossible to prevail upon the railroad workers and the boilermakers to change their statutes and accept Negroes into their organization. This, however, was only a gesture, since in fact nothing was undertaken to exercise any pressure upon these unions. Because of the efforts of the American Negro Labor Congress, it is said that the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor has put on four organizers ostensibly for special work among the Negroes.

The harmfulness of these tactics of the trade union bureaucracy is shown with special clarity in the following occurrence in the steel industry, in which at present, many Negroes are employed. From this it is clearly seen how the bosses play the reactionary leaders against the Negro workers in order to prejudice these workers against all the activities of the trade unions in the steel industry. The Negro organ, "The Crisis," made public in November, 1923, a circular distributed by the Indiana Foundry Company of Muncie among the colored workers who at that time were brought in as strike-breakers. We quote from this circular which had very serious consequences for the strikers:

"Our factory works on the open shop principle. Most of our puddlers, who are colored, have just been trained by us. The union is not in agreement with this and wants to force us to submit to its will. In our city there are four factories in which only members of the union may work and three which are open to all workers. Our factory is the only one in which the Negroes can rise to be skilled workers. Now the union demands that all colored workers who are employed as puddlers should be replaced by whites and that these must submit to the union's statutes."

The trade union bureaucrats therefore make it possible for the capitalists to split the proletarian ranks and in the above case were responsible for the capitalists being able to beat the white as well as the black workers.

3. The Possibility of Organizing the Negro.

Unquestionably, the racial prejudice of the workers makes it much harder to organize the Negro proletariat. It must further be added that the Negroes on the cotton plantations of the South were working and living under an almost patriarchal system in relation to their masters. This naturally still tends to influence their minds.

Yet the Negroes have many times demon-

strated their organizability. In 1913 the well-known petty-bourgeois Negro leader, Booker T. Washington, attempted to determine to what extent it was possible to organize the Negro. Out of the 51 questionnaires he sent out for this purpose, only 2 were received with the answer that it was impossible to make the Negroes good members of a labor organization. Moreover, there are already in the United States several mixed unions that include in their ranks white as well as Negro workers. Outside of that, there are 400 independent trade unions of Negroes. Then, there are hundreds of thousands of Negroes who are members of mass organizations of colored workers.

4. Necessity for Unity Between Negro and White Workers.

The rapidly advancing concentration of the Negro proletariat, the increasing political significance of the Negro workers, the efforts of the bourgeoisie to stimulate the racial antagonism between the Negro and the white workers, and finally the growing racial consciousness of the Negro—all of these demand that the workers of the United States and their organizations should not allow racial prejudice to dominate in the least but should adhere only to the class principle. If the white workers follow any other tactics and permit their exploiters

to split the proletariat thru racial hatred and prejudice then they will deliver themselves body and soul to their deadly enemies.

5. What Must the American Workers Do?

A solution of the Negro problem in the United States is offered only in the program of the Workers (Communist) Party. The American proletariat must at every opportunity support the Negro in his struggle against the exploiters and oppressors of all the workers—white and black. The American Negro Labor Congress is a step in the right direction for the development of a movement to unify all workers regardless of color against the bourgeoisie.

The American working class must fight for the social, political and economic equality of the Negro.

The representatives of the working class must do everything to remove the obstacles which many trade unions place in the way of the acceptance of the Negroes becoming members. Where this is not possible at the present moment, it is not out of order to form temporarily organizations of Negroes, the chief task of which must be, under all circumstances, to demand unification of the American proletariat regardless of race or nationality against the exploiters, against the bourgeoisie as a whole.

The History of the Russian Communist Party

By Gregory Zinoviev

The Formula: "1847 or 1849?"

In 1906 there arose in the party the question: what now? Is the revolution finished? From out of the resulting controversies was formulated the question: Are we living through an 1847 or a 1849? Or, to phrase this in a different way: have we now an 1847, that is, the eve of the revolution of 1848, or an 1849, that is the period after the half victory and half defeat of the revolution of 1848? As you know, in a number of countries the revolution of 1848 came in the following manner; it came to birth prematurely, and ended with a compromise, by which the fruits of conquest were reaped by the bourgeoisie. Thus in party circles the question was put: what are we living through in the year 1906:—that which Germany and a large part of Europe went through in 1847, or what they experienced in 1849? In other words: is the year 1906 only the harbinger of new struggles, or is the great struggle already behind us, and are we now going down-hill, that is, are we now living through an 1849, and must the revolution be looked upon as already ended? On this basis, and in relation to this formula, an exceedingly hot discussion went on be-

tween the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks.

The Bolsheviks maintained the standpoint that we were living through a 1847, that the revolution had not yet come to a close, that its self-imposed objective tasks were still unfulfilled, and that sooner or later the revolutionary waves would once again begin to rise. The peasantry, we said, has not gained the division of the land, the demands of the workers remain unsatisfied; these two classes compose the overwhelming majority of the population. In this respect then, the tasks set by the revolution have not been discharged; perhaps Stolypin and the czar may strangle the revolutionary struggle for a while, but only for a while, and then new battles will be inevitable. That which we lived through in 1905, was only the outpost skirmish, only a dress rehearsal, only an 1847, while the real battles are still before us.

The Mensheviks of course maintained a different viewpoint. They stated it in the following terms: "We have now entered upon the road taken by Prussia after its misfortune of 1848, when the result was half favorable to the revolution, and half to the kaiser. The czar remains, we shall have a constitutional monarchy, and now we must adapt ourselves to the real-

ities of the situation." Hence followed the slogan of the Mensheviks, to legalize the party at any price, or, as we then ironically expressed it—to slink into legality. And this Menshevik standpoint was comprehensible. If, as they believed, the revolution was at an end, there would be no further struggle, Russia had entered a peaceful era, and would develop according to the Prussian pattern, then it clearly followed that it was necessary for the party to emerge from its underground existence, legalize itself, narrow its program, adapt itself to legal work, and discover a method of living at peace with the monarchy and the bourgeois parties.

The Unity of the Bolsheviks with the Mensheviks.

These then were the two platforms—the Bolshevik and the Menshevik—in the early part of 1906. The Bolshevik and the Menshevik leaders were compelled to seek unity following the revolutionary struggle of the end of 1905, under pressure from the masses. This constitutes an exceedingly interesting episode in the history of our party. In fact the masses have more than once forced the Bolsheviks to seek reconciliation with the Mensheviks. And this is not strange. Still in 1917 one could hear it said: "Why split? If the Bolsheviks join with the Mensheviks and even the Social Revolutionaries, then we shall surely overcome the bourgeoisie and czarism." This was the belief of the broad worker-mass, who had no experience in political struggle, including even party members. In all events, in 1905 there commenced a strong movement in favor of unity. In a number of places united committees of Bolsheviks and Mensheviks were formed, which created common committees on a parity basis, and carried on the struggle together. The consequence was that the Central Committee had to enter into a like federative relation with the Menshevik Organization Committee. Later, under pressure from the masses, was called the unity congress of the party which was held in 1906 in Stockholm. The most important differences of opinion between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks at this congress consisted in the fact that the former maintained that we were living through an 1847, while the latter believed it to be an 1849. In other words, the Bolsheviks declared: we have been defeated in the first revolutionary skirmishes, but the future holds another revolution, the aims of which were not fulfilled in 1905. The Mensheviks declared, on the contrary: you are Utopians and dreamers, you are unwilling to face the sad fact that this is no 1847, but an 1849. We have been completely beaten, and the Russian revolution irrevocably destroyed. Russia will turn into the path of constitutional monarchy, and under the banner of this campaign the party must follow the path trodden by European social democracy.

The Triumph of the Menshevik Tendency.

The Mensheviks captured the victory at the Stockholm congress. This was evidence of the fact that throughout the land, under the influence of defeat, the revolutionary sentiment of the worker masses was on

the wane, and that the same thing was true as well in party circles—which were passing through the inevitable reaction following upon the failure of the December uprising, and the arrest of the members of the Petersburg Soviet. It was only thanks to these circumstances that at the Stockholm Congress, the Mensheviks succeeded in obtaining a majority—although a negligible one—of the party, and in dictating its tactical line. When the question of armed insurrection was placed upon the order of the day, they introduced a resolution opposing it, disguised, of course, in more or less diplomatic form. Following this they put through the Maslov-Plekhanov agrarian program, which was also directed against revolution, and proposed that the land come under the municipal organs—the land committees—which in actual fact meant the wealthy peasants. Finally they passed a resolution for participation in the elections to the First Duma, and the building up of a social democratic unit within this body.

The Tactics of the Bolsheviks.

There was nothing left for the Bolsheviks but formally to submit, since they were in the minority, and the workers were demanding unity. But in actual fact the unity congress had in no way united the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, and we left Stockholm in reality two fractions. Several of our comrades, whom we used to speak of as "hostages," were taken into the Central Committee. At the Congress itself the Bolsheviks created their own inner, and, from the party standpoint, illegal Central Committee. This period in the history of our party, when we were in the minority both in the Central Committee and in the Petersburg Committee, and had to carry on our special activities secretly, was a difficult and painful one for us. The situation was as though two parties were active within one frame.

As literary documents of this time, in which the struggle of the Bolsheviks with the Mensheviks is mirrored with great distinctness, must before all be mentioned the pamphlet "A Report to the Petersburg Workers on the Stockholm Congress" written by Comrade Lenin who attended the congress as delegate from the Petersburg workers,—and also the book, "The Conquest of the Cadets and the Tasks of the Workers' Party."

Further Controversy Over "1847 or 1849?"

After the Stockholm Congress, which was followed by a long year of decline of the revolution and of Menshevik control, the dispute over "1847 or 1849," or as to which had been correct, the Bolsheviks or the Mensheviks, still continued unabated. The Mensheviks declared to us, frequently and triumphantly: you see, how mistaken you were; you thought that the revolution was not ended, and that a new conflict was imminent; but see, how much time has already passed since then. The next revolution did indeed make its appearance only in 1917, that is, after ten years. But

does it follow from this that the Bolsheviks were wrong? No. The Bolsheviks had set no exact date, although they did believe, it must be admitted, that matters would progress very much more rapidly, nor did they foresee that a whole decade would pass by until the triumph of the working class. But, as you know, in the matter of setting a time all have erred, even Marx, who more than once predicted that the world revolution was near. It is quite understandable, that every sincere revolutionist inclines toward fixing the date rather earlier than later. At any rate, our prognosis was in general correct: the revolution was not at an end, its fundamental demands had not been objectively fulfilled, the proletariat and the peasantry had not been satisfied, a new struggle was inevitable, and for us there could be no question of following a Prussian path, but only a Russian, which would lead us to a great social overturn. These predictions of ours were proved to be correct. All this became clear—and fairly soon, too.

The Stockholm Congress fell at the same time as the amazing victory of the Cadets—the party of the liberal bourgeoisie—in the elections for the first Duma. They gained a large number of seats in the Duma, and, together with these, political leadership in the first Russian parliament, getting in the celebrated Moronzev as chairman. The Cadet party occupied the leading position in the Duma, and its leaders, Nabokov and others, were the principal parliamentary orators. In the final analysis, the First Duma represented a great victory for the Russian bourgeois-liberal party, which called itself the Constitutional-Democratic Party. (C. D.—whence the name “Cadets”). The latter constituted a very serious political factor, confronting the workers’ party with the problem of what attitude to adopt toward it.

The Responsible (Cadet) Ministry.

The Menshevik Central Committee, which was at that time directing the party, was in transports of delight over the victory of the Cadets. It believed that a new era had opened in Russia and that the victory of the Constitutional-Democratic Party which subscribed to its own views, would help the country to a peaceful solution of the agrarian and many other basic problems. And in this connection the Mensheviks advanced the slogan: a Cadet, or—as it was expressed at the time—responsible ministry, i. e., a ministry which should be responsible not to the czar, but to the Duma. This, in general, is the classical formula of all bourgeois parliaments. In reality, however, the ministry that is meant to be responsible to the parliament, is, in actual fact, responsible to a handful of bankers. Hardly had Menshevist social-democracy put forward the above slogan, than its supporters began a frenzied agitation in the workers’ quarters for the support of the idea of the “responsible ministry.” As you can see, the behaviour of the Mensheviks was logical and ran true to form. Here too, they sought a suitable formula for the support of their beloved bourgeoisie.



LENIN POINTS THE WAY!

But at this point matters began to go awry: this slogan of theirs spelt ruin for the Mensheviks, and aided us in winning a majority in Petersburg. I remember that the Viborg district, where there were many factories, was hundred per cent Menshevik. To us, erring Bolsheviks, the workers of that section would scarcely listen. But as soon as the slogan was brought forward,—for a responsible Cadet ministry—and it became plain as the palm of your hand that the Menshevik tactics were leading to support of the bourgeois ministry, the picture began to change. From this moment on the Mensheviks began to lose one factory after another in the Viborg section. Next the Petersburg City Conference also took its stand against the Menshevik slogan. This conference was held in Finland, which was at that time comparatively free. I remember how, on a Saturday, under fire of the glances of a whole band of spies in the Finland Station we took our seats in the train for Terioki. The conference lasted all Sunday, and at times it almost came to blows between the Mensheviks and Bolsheviks. Finally despite the pressure exercised by the Menshevik Central Committee, we succeeded for a time in gaining the majority first in Petersburg, and then in a whole series of other cities. This was already half a victory on the all-Russian general staff, since Petersburg was the political center of the country. The Menshevik Central Committee was powerless in the face of the Bolshevik Petersburg Committee, and the bourgeois



The “Economic Foundations.” Two Ch’s That Are Stable! Two F’s That Are Toppling!

press was fond of making the joke that the little Bol-

shevik (majority) Petersburg Committee had beaten the big Menshevik (minority) Central Committee.

The Dissolution of the First Duma.

In view of the fact that the Cadets held political leadership in it, the First Duma had to pay tribute to the revolutionary, and especially to the peasant movement, which was continually broadening out, and was compelled to place the land question on the order of the day, albeit in a sufficiently hesitant fashion. On this ground a conflict between the Duma and the czarist government arose. The First Duma was dissolved. The Cadet party in the heat of the moment hastened to Finland, to an illegal conference of its own, and there issued the famous Viborg Manifesto, which at the time was dubbed the “Viborg Cake.” This document called to the population to refuse to pay their taxes, and was in reality only a repetition of that gesture which the moderate liberals indulged in during the revolution of 1848, when they shook their fists—in secret—at the monarchy. They did not really mean to seriously support the revolutionary struggle, and knew beforehand that none would pay any attention to their call not to pay taxes. The czarist monarchy of course did not take “the Viborg Cake” seriously, and condemned its bakers to only three months in prison,—a trifling enough sentence.

The dissolution of the First Duma was only a little falling out of czarism with the liberal bourgeoisie. It was speedily forgotten and in the Second Duma a nice neighborly relation existed between the two sides, a part of the liberal bourgeois openly singing the praises of Stolypin.

Reviews

A Revolutionary Epic

A REVIEW BY JOSEPH FREEMAN.

CHAINS: By Henri Barbusse. Translated from the French by Stephen Haden Guest. Two volumes. 589 pp. New York: International Publishers, \$4.

A THOUSAND YEARS passed before Europe began to mould an art based on the concepts of Christianity. When those concepts had sunk into the blood and bones of the western world so that people no longer thought them, but felt them deep in their unconscious, the madonna, the holy infant, and the saints became universal subjects for painters and poets.

It is only seventy-five years since Marx discovered the law which has revolutionized the modern world. A comparatively small section of humanity has been, for this brief period, familiar with the concept of the class-struggle. A new fundamental concept shapes ideas and action first, imagination only afterward. Thus thousands of economic and historical books,

pamphlets, articles, and speeches have sprung directly out of Marx’s concept; the life of one-sixth of the globe is directed under its guiding light; but the arts have only recently begun to grope toward its expression in aesthetic form.

Henri Barbusse—turned inside out and recreated by the war, finding intellectual salvation within Communist ranks, and dedicating his gifted pen to the workers’ cause—has just attempted to write an epic around the class struggle. That is the central, hence the greatest theme of our time. The Communist Manifesto will be, in a way, for many new writers what the Bible was for so many writers of a dead day. Milton and a thousand others sang of “man’s first disobedience and the fruit”; Barbusse and a thousand with him and after him will sing of the oppression of the many by the few, the curse of slavery, the glory of revolt.

These platitudes are invoked in recognition of the greatness of Barbusse’s attempt in *Chains*. He has tried “to attack directly the whole tremendous drama

of Man deployed across the centuries; to stir the silence of history, its complexity and obscurity, its jungles of ciphers and of names whose meaning has been lost."

In a magnificent introduction the author tells us how history appears to him. He believes that differences between the crises and institutions which mark the evolution of entities are nearly always either merely apparent, or superficial; the resemblance always profound. The common denominator is "a few against all." He is shocked by the power which the language of men has over them, "the ascendancy of formulae." He inveighs against timidity, ignorance, hypocrisy, above all against the oppression of the masses; he sings clearly and beautifully in praise of those workers who have "united reality and thought, bound action to dream." He appeals to the "intellectuals," no longer his fellows, not to be the last to see how rational and moral, how magnificent and good is this total reformation now roughly mapped out by the Communists.

This passion and these ideas are the common heritage of all revolutionary workers. Barbusse, being a worker whose job it is to give literary form to feelings and ideas and to suffuse them with imagination, undertakes to build an epic around them. It is so great a theme that he finds the old forms inadequate. He has the courage to break through the requirements of the conventional novel, and to attempt something which partakes at once of the "novel, the drama, poetry, and even the immense perspective of the cinema, and the ever-present temptation of the fresco."

Has this great plan been carried out successfully, or is it (as the hero of *Chains* asks himself about his own writings) "far greater than the actual accomplishment lying there visibly and clumsily spoiled?" One may ask that question as an engineer, approving a rough verbal description of a dam, might ask, on seeing the completed work, whether it functions, whether the water will flow.

The author of *Chains* resorts to an old device to tell his story. He presents Clement Trachel, a young modern poet who suffers from hallucinations which he calls "racial or ancestral memory." It is a device used by Jack London, Rudyard Kipling, Edwin Arnold. The scheme of *Chains* also resembles, in certain of its aspects, the pattern of Flaubert's *Temptations of St. Anthony*. Any device is good if it is convincing. If the reader is gradually disarmed, and the ground carefully prepared, it is possible to create the temporary illusion that fairies exist, that the wild asses of the devil roam the streets of London, that men have actually visited the moon. The illusion must be created with a deft touch. The fancy will appear to be a fact only if we may, half-consciously, continue to realize that it is, after all, only a fancy; that we are not going through an intellectual conversion, but are merely playing a game through whose symbols we may catch a glimpse of some essential truth.

Unfortunately the violent dogmatic style of *Chains* wrecks the illusion from the beginning. The

author quotes quasi-scientific evidence in support of ancestral memory. At once the reader's critical faculties, far from being lulled, are sharply aroused; he weighs evidence for and against the theory of racial memory, or immediately resists the pretention. If this is to be not merely a game, but is to be taken as science, the reader treads cautiously. Science is a realm where it is possible to assume but not to pretend. The spell is broken; the reader continually feels that he is not really watching the unfolding of man's destiny, but merely the destiny of one man; that he is watching a series of nightmares in the mind of a young poet.

That, of course, is a story in itself; but it is not the story we were promised. In these nightmares the poet thinks he relives the history of mankind. Time and space are suspended, and Clement Trachel carries on a double existence, one in the present of reality, the other in the past of his imagination. While climbing a staircase, taking a walk, talking to his sweetheart, he may be caught in a trance, and transported back to another age, when he was living another life. In this hectic alteration between present and past, he passes, in chronological order, from stage to stage of mankind's development.

But this development is not a development at all! It is merely a repetition.

In all stages, the story is essentially the same. The few rule; the many suffer. Now Trachel is a primitive man in flight with wife and child before an ice-deluge; now a slave at the dawn of Sumerian civilization; later a mason on the Egyptian pyramids; a galley-slave on a Carthaginian vessel; a Jewish peasant during the early persecutions of the Christians; a twelfth-century monk burned at the stake for his scientific experiments; a feudal lord burning and hanging his serfs and ravishing their daughters; a revolutionary in 1789 who betrays the revolution.

In every age, in every land there is blood, torture, slavery. The story becomes an unending indictment of class-rule and of man's brutality to man. Terror is the keynote of *Chains*. There is no relief. Men never laugh or play; they never have the illusion that god's in his heaven and all's right with the world. Life has no up and down, only down. And this story of unrelieved horror is told in a style that is maintained at the highest tension throughout. All is fortissimo. The most trivial event is related with the same intensity as the most enormous. Love (to use Trotsky's phrase) is described as if it were the migration of nations. There is no climax anywhere, because all is climax.

So shaken is the author with volcanic feeling, that almost no incident is related objectively. In fact, there are very few incidents. Things do not happen; they are merely talked about. The reader sees the world's history unroll, but obscured by many screens. Events are heard second, third or even fourth hand, almost never directly. What happens or happened is heard from Trachel, who heard it from someone else. Often no events are discussed, but long parliamentary debates take place between exponents of

conflicting philosophies. A Chaldean priest delivers an oration on the virtues of his civilization; an Egyptian priest replies with an equally long oration; the author as chairman casts the deciding vote. The decision is highly controversial; one is moved to agreement or disagreement—and there art ends and discussion begins.

All the great religions are debated in this way. Why not read Kautsky on Christianity, then? Or Freud's Totem and Taboo? Or Frazier's Golden Bough? If one wishes to write an outline of history, why the young poet and the hallucinations and the interminable debates and philippics? The reader is not stirred deeply, at all; he asks, critically, is this analysis of religion correct? Is this a dialectic view of history? He wants to shout to the author: Wait, wait, dear comrade! Don't rush to make metaphysical generalizations so dogmatically! You are telling us a story; why do you take advantage of our attention to put over the highly doubtful creed that "the subjective is real and the objective its obverse"?

How history is chopped up to fit the head of the Parisian poet, Clement Trachel! All life, time, space, the density of nations and religions, philosophies and arts, are squeezed to the measure of that one pigeon-hole. Like Swinburne's *Hertha*, Trachel is both subject and object, persecutor and persecuted, tyrant and slave. In the end, after all the speeches, comes one great speech for our own times. After the reign of the beast, the "first man"—the worker who flings his NO into the teeth of the ruling classes:

"All that you say is nothing," he cries, "nothing at all. It is all lies to put people to sleep. Your religion is hell, your republic for profiteers, your patriotism stamping on the people, and your newspapers in their millions of bales, dirty linen . . . Your progress is nothing, nothing."

That chapter is an iron shout, curse and blessing in one; derision for the dying bourgeoisie, veneration for the rising proletariat; scorn for the "middle way," praise for "red logic, red truth."

Yet we are told that the "new man" is after all, only a reincarnation of other figures of other times, only the Helot, the Father, the slave, the caryatid—as Trachel himself is a reincarnation.

How hopeless! At one stroke goes toppling the whole life-giving concept of evolution, the law that that which is can never be precisely that which was. Instead of the dialectic world we know, we are presented a world in which "the more things change the more they are the same." The "eternal verities" pose in new masks; the "everlasting" realities behind the ephemeral appearances. Isn't that a false picture?

Chains is full of such contradictions; an immense mob of events, thoughts, words, with no central executive concept to create order out of chaos. Yet much can be forgotten for the sake of the last of the count-

less speeches. To the author's impassioned cry: "For wisdom's, for pity's sake, revolt!" We can only answer, "We will!"

For all its weaknesses the book comes like an electric charge among so much of the feeble personal literature that readers in this country have been getting. It has been well translated from the rich and varied French into a lucid English by Stephen Haden Guest, and made available to live-minded people by the International Publishers Co. Class conscious workers will be stimulated by it, even when they will not always agree with it.


THE INFORMER by Liam O'Flaherty. Alfred A. Knopf, New York.

A very silly book indeed. It pictures the Irish Communist Party as a group of thugs and whores, ruled tyrannically by a muddled adventurer.

The story concerns itself with the bewilderment and dread felt by a communist in the interval between his betrayal of his pal to the police and his execution next day as an informer. He spent most of the interval in a whore-house, drunk.

This trash has received generous praise from the bourgeois critics. It deserves such praise.

—George Meyler.



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