

PROLETARIAN BULLETIN

J U N E . 1933.

COMRADES:

We have just received a donation of \$10 to the Bulletin Fund from Local Flint, making this issue possible. We omitted from last issue the reports on the various Funds, but the reports here now bring the details of these funds up-to-date.

Locals are urged to make greater efforts in relation to National Office Funds. Our work has been greatly handicapped lately owing to insufficient receipts.

The income on Proletarian News has barely permitted its publication, in fact it has slipped behind a little on the last three issues.

Now, with the fine weather and street meetings going it should be possible to considerably increase circulation. Let us redouble our efforts Comrades.

PENNY-A-DAY FUND.

	Total received to April 13th		\$26.95
April	18th	Local Los Angeles	1.00
"	26th	" Chicago	1.78
May	1st	" Detroit	2.00
"	4th	" Grand Rapids	.60
"	"	" San Francisco	1.73
"	10th	" Chicago	.60
"	15th	" San Francisco	1.02
"	"	" Jackson	.85
"	"	" Detroit	1.00
"	17th	" Rochester	5.00
"	19th	" Boston	1.00
"	22nd	" Chicago	1.17
"	23rd	" Los Angeles	.85
"	26th	" Detroit	2.00
June	6th	" Chicago	1.62
		<u>Total Received</u>	<u>\$49.17</u>

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JUNE 1933.

(SECOND SECTION)

On Article Of Comrade Wass
(by G.M.O'Brien, Local Los Angeles)

In order to give vent to his feelings Comrade Wass, in the April Bulletin, grossly exaggerates the shortcomings of the P.P. and the C.I. This indicates that there is another cause for his dissatisfaction and somewhat panicky outlook. The make-up of his article suggests that he has just entered the process of co-ordinating the knowledge acquired in the revolutionary movement. My personal experience causes me at this time to think that much depends on influence from association and a careful re-reading of Lenin's explanation of the fundamentals of Marxism.

If the few instances he cites are all that is wrong with the C.I. and the P.P., then they are both better than I think they are. He complains about too much "abstract", and yet his article is evidence that in this respect he is very guilty. His rather covert remarks about "self-styled theoreticians" *** "who insist" *** "on directing the movement of active Comrades ----" That is very similar to what the Proudhonists, the Blanguists, Bakuninists and the Weitlingists said about Marx, and also similar to what the enemies of Bolshevism said about Lenin.

The weakness of our Party is that those who have theoretical ability have to do so much of the "concrete" work of the Party that they have not sufficient time for theoretical study. The list of what Comrade Wass says we "must have in our program" is one evidence of how much "active comrades" need theoretical "directing."

- (1) History of Capitalism in U.S.A., since 1776.
- (2) Brief review of the cause of all previous panics and prosperous periods.
- (3) Explain difference between periods of free competition with open large frontier and imperialism with international trusts that divide the world's territory.
- (4) The difference between crisis in free competition and those in the period of imperialism.
- (5) Deal with the various opposition parties, their splits and their respective programs, utopian and reformer schemes, contrasted with revolutionary Marxism.
- (6) Clear view of craft and industrial unions and how not to be caught in the cross-fire during strikes.
- (7) A guide for future movements that are bound to arise.
- (8) How to work in unemployed organizations.
- (9) How to organize party nuclei and rally advanced non-party elements, etc.

- (10) How to prevent self-styled theoreticians from insisting on directing the movement of active comrades.
- (11) To remedy the obvious contradiction in our party position to the C.I.
- (12) Adopt a more critical position toward the C.I.
- (13) To cease to remain in the position of reverent idolizers and religious worshipers of the C.I., and with revolutionary courage stay with Marxian path, etc.

These thirteen points when fully elaborated would certainly make an imposing volume. It would certainly be an excellent means of advertising our small party. If we could get the money to print it and if we could find workers, especially among the unemployed, with money enough to buy it.

No (1) itself would make a large volume, but there is great need for it. Here I would quote what Lenin said at the April, 1917 Bolshevik Conference, with delegates representing 70,000 members:

"...it would be desirable to create a scientific organ and develop literature dealing with this subject, but for this we have neither the men nor the means---"

2 and 4 would make a much needed booklet. There is nothing like that in existence as far as I know. 3 is very important. It would make a lengthy thesis or small pamphlet. 5 would make a good sized pamphlet. It is also necessary. 6, 7, 8 and 9 should each be in the form of a thesis and should be written by the Detroit Comrades. The program should be a summary of our position on all important issues.

Engels, somewhere, taunts the metaphysicians about their horror of contradictions. In this respect Comrade Wass should re-read what Dietzgen has to say. Wass says; "It is a well known fact by this time, that the entire C.I., after its Fourth Congress, has swamped itself in profusion of reforms, that would put the Second International to shame..." This is an irresponsible statement. The great majority of the members of the C.I. and its theoreticians are in the U S S R. Even "the entire" 2nd International, before and during the war, had the Bolsheviks and smaller groups in most every country, including the Proletarian University group that became the P.P.

To whom is it "a well known fact?" Does he mean Trotsky and those who are influenced by his writings? It certainly is not "a well known fact" to me and I have read most of the C.I. and Trotsky literature during that period. It is safe to say that there are millions of workers, many of whom are better informed than Comrade Wass or myself on this subject, who do not consider it "a well known fact." Wass complains about too much "abstract" but merely mentions only three concretes, for this very large abstract. (1) "Chinese fiasco" (2) "Mexican order for proletarian insurrection" (3) German losses of Communist votes."

He assumes that the members of the P.P are well informed on these three concretes. I do not know enough about the affair in China to take Trotsky's statement that it was a "fiasco"

3 Is Comrade Wass so well informed on this subject that he is warranted in making the abstraction "fiasco"? If so how come that he has not informed the members of the P.P., and the readers of its official organ, on this highly complicated question? I know nothing about (2).

As for 3 "it is a well known fact" that some workers will vote for one party at this election and for another at the next. It is possible that some of those who voted for the P.P. in Michigan at the last election might not vote for the P.P. in the next election. Then there is such a thing as ballots being destroyed or not counted. Does Comrade Wass know that the Fascists did not do that thing with the Communist vote ?

Since its inception the P.P. has endorsed the theory and policy of the C.I. Comrade Wass sees "an obvious contradiction" because we point to the "worthlessness of its American section". According to that anti-dialectic method of reasoning, to condemn a part is to condemn the whole.

The "revolutionary courage" of Comrade Wass is expressed by his sneers "reverent idolizers"--"religious worshipers" against those members of our party who adhere to the party policy regarding the J.I. The same metaphysical method could be used regarding his loyalty to Marxism.

Further Criticism Of Bergstrom's Article
In the March Bulletin.
(by C.M.O'Brien, Local Los Angeles)

My criticism of Comrade Bergstrom's article in the March Bulletin omitted his quotation from Lenin's speech at the April 1917 Conference, because it was some years since I had read that material. Since then I have reread the large pamphlet containing Lenin's thesis and speeches at that Conference and I find that Bergstrom used that quotation in a way that completely distorts what Lenin meant.

On page 22 Lenin says: "The Soviets of Workers and Soldiers Deputies, spreading the network of their organization over all of Russia, are at this time the central force of the revolution;---" On page 24 he says: "What then are the tasks of the revolutionary proletariat? ... "What we shall discuss are concrete steps and measures. Some of these are ripe and some are not ripe."

On page 25 Lenin says: "The first thing the Soviets must accomplish is the nationalization of the land", then he goes on and includes the banks and the big ~~#####~~ "syndicates."

On page 28 we find what Comrade Bergstrom quoted: "If we suffer defeat, we shall have partial success. We shall have reforms. Reforms are an auxiliary means in the class struggle."

Surely Comrade Bergstrom must have noticed that two lines above where he started to quote, Lenin said: "We must not degenerate into reformism."

Why didn't Bergstrom quote that statement? Was it because

it does not fit in with his opportunist tendencies? Less than three pages from where Bergstrom quotes, Lenin says: "All the measures just indicated, as well as others of the same nature, could and should be not merely discussed and prepared so that they might be carried out on a national scale in case the proletariat gained power, but, wherever opportunity presents itself, should be carried into life immediately by local revolutionary organs of people's power."

On the same page Lenin says: "When all such measures are carried out, Russia will stand with one foot in Socialism." And, on page 41, "This is all that we can promise and must do now." Again, on page 45, "If you will wait until the law is written, and do not in the meantime take revolutionary action, you will have neither the law nor the land." On page 46, "You propose that the peasants enter into agreements with the landlords. We say that the land should be taken right now."

Surely it is apparent that the reforms Lenin advocated were, like those of Marx and Engels in the Communist Manifesto, to be after the workers took power, or "by local revolutionary organs of people's power," in defiance of the capitalist "government."

Nowhere, from the beginning to the end of this document does Lenin recommend that the capitalist government be asked for a solitary reform. Under other circumstances even such reforms might be "auxiliary means in the class struggle."

Lenin accused the social-chauvinists of trying to "turn Marx into a hackneyed liberal." Comrade Bergstrom is trying to turn Lenin into a hacknaded reformer. It is worthy of note that Comrade Bergstrom's article began with a lofty apparent revolutionary attitude, and concluded by recommending reform "teeth."

If the social storm arising from the present crisis already causes a bright young student like Comrade Bergstrom to so glaringly misunderstand Lenin's intent, then what is to become of such members in our party when the storm really breaks?

Anyhow, it is evident that Comrade Bergstrom is not yet competent to recommend "teeth" for our Party program.

 Criticism of Comrade Larson's Article
 In the February Bulletin.

(by C.M.O'Brien, Local Los Angeles)

Comrade Larson's article in the February Bulletin reminds us that we "happily ejected sometime ago a number of erratic theoreticians who" thought that the falling rate of profit was the cause of panics. However, that is not why they were ejected. They were ejected because they violated party discipline.

Comrade Larson continues: "And there were others who, giving no evidence of having investigated the complex formations of modern economic life, or the background of it, declared that the

crisis was merely due to overproduction; that panics come and go in their cycles-- and let the Party's position on the depression stand with little more than such a wholly inadequate statement."

I agree that the Party's position on the crisis, as outlined at its Convention a year ago last June, was inadequate. But not wholly inadequate. There were two main causes for this. An inadequate theoretical level of our leaders, and the disruptive policy of the "erratic theoreticians" mentioned by Comrade Larson. However the shortcomings of our Party on the crisis in general are not erratic statements, and if I mistake not, also theories, such as I think are to be found in Larson's article.

It is unfortunately true that the wording of our program implies the narrow view mentioned by Comrade Larson. But on our special theses on Objective Conditions (which Larson must be familiar with) the difference between this crisis and former panics is emphasized. Also, that capitalism has definitely entered its period of decline. Comrade Larson, who has joined us since that time, says: "The depression is due, not to industrial overproduction, but to basic overproductivity, which is an entirely different matter."

I am aware that there is a difference between commodities produced and the means of production. But that they are in this respect so ~~#####~~ "entirely different" I am not so sure. I wish he had referred us to where we could find authoritative evidence. Comrade Larson admits that there is overproduction of raw materials but he contends that the warehouses stand practically empty of finished manufactured articles. The latest figures I have seen shows that the stock of manufactured is slightly less than in 1929 and that there has been an increase in the supply of raw materials, but the total in October 1932 was about the same as in October 1929

Comrade Larson says: "To declare, for example, as so many elements in the general labor movement have done, that the depression has merely redivisioned, but not seriously reduced, the income of the bourgeoisie, is to be guilty of extreme absurdity." Well, The Journal of Commerce published "Interests and Dividends for 1929, amounting to \$7,854,000,000, for 1930 \$8,572,000,000, for 1931 \$8,200,000,000 and for the first 10 months of 1932 \$6,050,000,000.

I cannot vouch for the accuracy of these figures. But it should be remembered that there is probably twenty millions of workers still on the job, using the most efficient means of production, speeding to the limit, receiving wages that are little more than half of what they received before the crisis.

Comrade Larson gives figures to show that from 1866 to the latter part of the 90's there was an increase in the nominal and the real wages. "Then both the price index and the nominal wage began to flutter, but on the whole went up equally until 1914." I am not much on figures, but I am sure that the figures he quotes and the conclusions he draws do not fit the facts.

If real and nominal wages were increasing, how are we to account for hundreds of thousands of unorganized workers spontaneously going on strike in 1877, their motto being "It is better to starve idle than working". Then, from the latter part of the 80's

until about 1903, the conditions were so bad, most of the time, unemployment so great, Coxie's Army marching on Washington, that there grew up in the labor movement a philosophy of despair. It was then that the theory arose of a "return to industrial feudalism." Even Karl Kautsky, one of the greatest Marxian theoreticians of that time, admitted later that he thought capitalism was at an end and the workers unprepared to take power.

The American-Spanish, British-Boer and the Russian-Japanese wars, and the gold rush to the Klondyke, gave capitalism a new lease on life. Then there was the panic of 1907-1908. Then from the latter part of 1912 until the war of 1914, the conditions were so bad that a wave of textile, coal, metal and other strikes swept the country. The government became alarmed and appointed the Industrial Relations Commission to investigate. Their report showed that the cost of living was considerably more than the average wage.

New Methods To Meet Changed Conditions
(by Al. Renner, Local Detroit)

The Pre-Convention discussion in the Party Bulletin has clearly shown the great need for meeting the issue that is so extremely current, that is, the development of our Party to meet the objective conditions of the day. In the entire discussion, both in the Party Bulletin and in the Locals, I have not heard expressed any feeling to the contrary. Our general statement, whereas correct, should be more specifically developed in detail, thus providing a guide not only to the rank and file, but also to the members upon whose shoulders falls the interpretation of the Party position. The great need is for the development of professional revolutionaries, specialists in a particular field, and this work must be the task of our next Convention.

Comrade O'Brien has referred to the object of increasing the number of members to the Executive Committee from seven to fifteen. He has also stated that it did not produce the desired result, and has recommended the reduction again to seven. With this I heartily agree, and would suggest the following procedure for the next Convention:

(1) That a committee of seven constitute the N.E.C., of which the National Secretary would be a member.

2. That only Comrades who can give the major portion of their time accept as members of the N.E.C.

3. That they be in a position to meet at least every second month, and be so located as to make such meetings possible without travelling several thousand miles. The question may arise that this would not provide representation for the Pacific Coast and possibly for New York City. However, in this important work, Comrades in the districts that would add strength to the N.E.C, should be brought in close proximity to the National Office.

4. That their work be divided in the following manner; One member of the N.E.C. be assigned the study and specialization on the farm question. It will be his duty to prepare a thesis dealing with the farm question, to be endorsed by the N.E.C., and he then

to be in charge of all work dealing with the farm question concerning the Party. Also, that he appoint a Comrade in each district, to work under his supervision, who shall be an ex-officio member of any committee in said district dealing with the question of work among the farmers. Also, that the district members and the N.E.C members be footloose, that they may go wherever important developments among the farmers are taking place.

5. That the same plan be followed regarding other work to which each member of the N.E.C. will be assigned, such as Unemployed Councils, United Front Issues, International Affairs, Education Research, Work, Finance and Party Press.

6. It shall be the duty of the N.E.C members and the District Organizers to adjust any irregularities which may arise in any local pertaining to the department of which they are in charge.

With this plan developed, we will have an active organization able cope with any emergency that may arise, and in this manner effect the necessary stimuli to the development of a mass Party.

 Communist International
 (by Mary Wright, Local Boston)

The Proletarian Party should discuss very seriously the question of the Third International, taking into consideration all the events of the past few years.

The position taken at the last Convention, and expressed in the Platform, is that the C.I. is the best international working-class organization, but that its American section is worthless. To say that the C.I. is the best International does not necessarily mean that we accept everything it does without criticism. The very fact of our opposition to the C.P. of A. is in itself very severe criticism of the C.I. And, in addition, many of the policies for which we criticize the Communist Party are the directions of the Communist International.

For example, the C.I. and the C.P. are in perfect harmony on the negro question; the C.I. has repeatedly instructed the C.P. to continue its policy of dual unionism, and on the question of the united front we find the C.P. of A. acting exactly as directed by the C.I. The C.I. has repeatedly urged a united front below. Even in its May 1st manifesto that is what it urged. In other words, the continued attempt to control or smash all united fronts is not peculiar to the American movement, but is rather part of the instructions of the International. We should take cognizance of these facts, and criticize the C.I. in exactly the same way that we criticize the C.P. of A. To do otherwise is to either convert the C.I. into a Vatican, above criticism, or else to stoop to petty political tricks in an effort, a vain effort in all probability, to win recognition from the C.I.

A real Communist does not worship, he attempts to understand. He does not condemn one organization while uncritically praising another which is the same. If the C.P. of A. is rotten, then the C.I. is no more sound, for the errors which we find in the C.P. of A. are carried out under the guidance of the C.I..