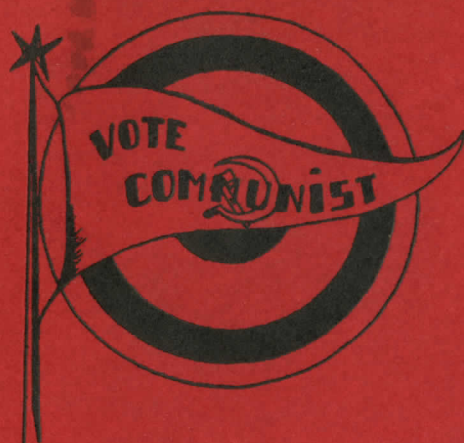


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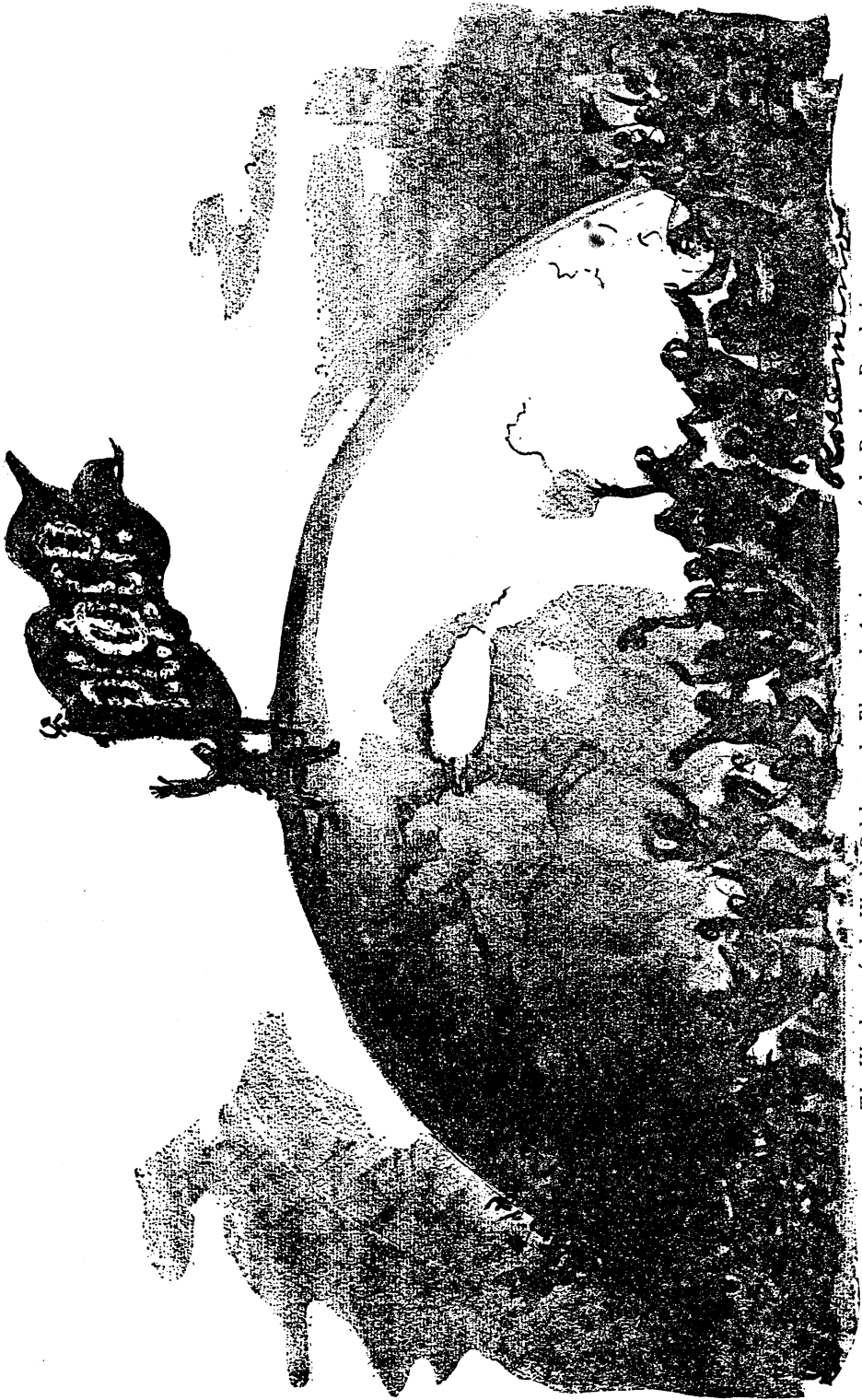
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The Workers of the World Celebrate the Eleventh Anniversary of the Russian Revolution

The Sixth World Congress of the Communist International

By JAY LOVESTONE

(NOTE: We print herewith a practically complete verbatim report of the speech delivered by Comrade Lovestone at the membership meeting held in New York City on October 2, 1928.—*Editor*).

For American Communists in particular and our working class in general, the deliberations and decisions of the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International assume tremendous importance. The role of American imperialism, the role of the American trade-union bureaucracy, the role of our Party—these are factors of rising importance internationally. That's why the workers of the world, the peasants of the most undeveloped sections, the bourgeoisie of the highest industrialized European countries are all vitally interested in the development of class relations and in the outcome of class conflicts in America. Consequently, the development of a first-line mass Bolshevik party in the United States would be an event of primary import in the present international situation. Herein lies the importance of the last Congress of the Communist International for us today.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SIXTH CONGRESS

At the outset we will sketch very briefly the historical significance of the Sixth World Congress. This Congress came at an historically decisive moment—a moment of the gathering of new revolutionary forces for decisive struggle. The Congress marks a dividing line between two periods of post-war capitalism. A characterization of the period we have left behind us indicates that we have passed out of the days during which the imperialist powers were not in open armed clash with each other. Secondly, we have not had open military intervention by the imperialist powers against the Soviet Union in this time. Thirdly, in this period we had only partial struggles between workers and capitalists in imperialist countries. Fourthly, this period which we have left behind was also marked by the first wave of colonial revolutions.

On the other hand, what are the outstanding characteristics of the period which we have just entered—a most important period in the world's history. Let us merely enumerate the eight main features of this period:

(1) A sharpening of the bitter antagonisms amongst the imperialist powers.

(2) Impending war between the two mightiest imperialist giants—the United States and Great Britain.

(3) The ever-growing acuteness of tension in the struggle between capitalist powers and the Soviet Union.

(4) The completion of war preparations against the Soviet Union.

(5) We are now in the throes of maturing decisive class battles. Cable dispatches in this morning's press declare that there are already beginnings of a wave of important strikes in such industrial countries of continental Europe as France and Germany.

(6) There is a noticeable and rapid fusion of socialist reformism with the capitalist state and increasingly open collaboration between socialist reformism and fascism in all its forms.

(7) We are now in the period of decisive clashes between socialist reformism and communism for the leadership of the majority of the working class. This is so in all countries of high capitalist development with the exception of the United States where we have peculiar specific conditions in which the labor movement as a whole is very weak and, especially, politically backward. The overwhelming majority of our working class still follows the parties which are openly the political expression of the big bourgeoisie. Though Socialist Party ideology in America is still a sufficiently poisonous force, making it necessary for the communists to combat it persistently and energetically, yet the American social democracy is of much less importance politically than the European socialist parties. Insofar as influence over broad masses of the basic proletariat is concerned, our Party far exceeds the strength of the Socialist Party. In America we are fighting the Republican and Democratic Parties for the majority of the working class.

(8) Finally, we have a deepening of antagonisms and conflicts between the colonial masses and imperialism. Herein we have the maturing of a new and still mightier wave of colonial revolutions.

Under such conditions what is the task of the party of the international revolutionary proletariat? To ask the question is to answer it. Our task was to prepare the Comintern for decisive historical events, to mobilize millions of workers and colonial peoples for sharp struggles.

The Congress took many steps to realize this task of mobilizing the masses for revolutionary struggle, not only in the imperialist countries but in the colonial countries as well. But tonight I will enumerate only four major points taken up by us.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE CONGRESS

(1) The Congress has worked out a program for the Comintern. This is a program of fighting for the proletarian dictatorship on an international scale.

(2) The Congress emphasized the imminence of imperialist wars and revolutionary battles. On the basis of this emphasis our tactical tasks were outlined. The teachings of Comrade Lenin on war were concretized for each section as an integral part of the tactics of the whole international party.

(3) There was prepared a broad program of action for the national revolutionary movements in the colonies, primarily in the light of the lessons of the Chinese Revolution. We mapped out the fundamental tactical course to be taken during the imminent revolutionary wave in India. Remember, comrades, that the question of revolution in India is not a problem of pamphleteering. It is a tangible question of imminency. It is a major problem confronting not only the British imperialists fighting for their lives but facing the entire world proletariat who will find in a victorious revolution in India a most powerful ally.

(4) The Congress set down the line governing the problems of the different sections. Never before did a world Congress delve so thoroughly into such section questions as the Polish, the Czech, the French and the American. Adequate deliberation and thorough examination marked the consideration of these section problems by the Congress.

SOME FEATURES OF THE CONGRESS

Allow me to say a few words regarding the character of the Congress, especially because while we were meeting in Moscow, the American Socialist Party had its delegates participating in the Congress of the Second International at Brussels. The Sixth Congress had more of a world scope, an international character, than any previous congress of the Comintern. This is true organizationally as well as politically. No previous congress had such full representation from Asia, Africa and Latin America. A number of countries never before represented in our gatherings actively participated at the Sixth Congress. In all, fifty-eight sections were represented by five hundred and fifty delegates.

Then, the adoption of a general program at the Congress showed the workers of the world that the aims of communism in the Soviet Union and the aims of communism in the most advanced industrial countries, let us say, like the United States and Germany, as well as our aims in such economically underdeveloped and so-called backward countries as Syria, Indonesia, etc., are identical internationally.

The international character of our Congress brought the real basis of our whole movement into bold relief in striking contrast to the nature of the Second International Congress in Brussels. The Brussels Congress lasted about five days. It consisted of a lot of business men or their business agents working in a so-called "business-like" fashion solely in the interests of the bourgeoisie. Our deliberations, the sessions of the Congress of the Comintern, took longer, were much smoother in a principle sense, were more thorough and were given over solely to a consideration of the defense and advancement of the interests of the working class. At Brussels there was a collection of national reformist parties grouped on the same principles as the imperialist fatherlands from which they hailed. The only signs of life at the Brussels Congress, the fights in its sessions, were mere reflexes and replicas of the struggles among the imperialist masters of the different countries. The only semblance of unity manifested there was in readiness to pledge one hundred per cent loyalty to the League of Nations, especially for mobilizing all its energies for an attack against the Soviet Union. Thus the internationalism of the Brussels Congress was the internationalism of its masters, the world imperialists. The Brussels Congress took a very sharp stand against the oppressed peoples of the colonies and semi-colonies. The Hillquits, the Bauers, the McDonalds, the Blums, defended with all their might and main the monopoly of American and European imperialism to plunder millions of colonial peoples. Thus *the* unity characterizing the Brussels Congress was its readiness to declare holy war against the Soviet Union and the Communist International.

I take up so much of your time in characterizing the Congress of the Second International because the relations of the communist parties to the various socialist parties, the national sections of the Second International, have assumed a new character. We will examine this soon.

THE PROGRAM OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

We emphasize that we are entering a period of decisive class battles. The character of the present moment only lends further strength to the Comintern Program being a landmark in the history of the international labor movement. This is the first international Program of Communism adopted since the issuance of the Communist Manifesto. The Program of the Comintern continues the glorious traditions of the Communist Manifesto. We also point out the inevitable doom of capitalism and emphasize to the proletariat that the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of a proletarian dictatorship are prerequisites to socialism.

But in certain respects the Program of the Comintern is a big forward step even over the Communist Manifesto. The latter was in reality, at the outset, a program of a handful of revolutionary workers in the period of the bourgeois revolution. Yes, it was a grand scientific prophecy of the doom of capitalism. But our Program of today is a program for an international communist party fighting in the period of social revolution. It is a program of a revolutionary army, one of whose detachments is already engaged in the building of socialism. Our Program is a weapon of class war.

FIVE FEATURES OF THE PROGRAM

(1) Our Program is scientific. Its method of analysis is the dialectical method of Marxism-Leninism. Its method is the very antithesis of the method of the reformists. If you want to see a classical example of the vulgarization of Marxism, then examine the October issue of "Current History," in which Mr. Hillquit, who has been chosen by the New York Times as an authority on Marxism, still has the gall to pretend to defend the teachings of Marx against the onslaught of such Wall Street philosophers as Carver, and Lombard Street apologists as Lasky.

Thus our Program correctly characterizes the social democracy of today:

"In the domain of theory the social democracy has fully and entirely gone back on the teachings of Marxism, passing through the stage of religionism to avowed liberal-bourgeois reformism and avowed imperialism. . . . The theory of the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, it has swapped for the base coin of 'healthy' capitalism which becomes peacefully transformed into socialism; instead of revolution it has taken up evolution; instead of destroying the bourgeois state, it takes active part in building this state; instead of the doctrine of the proletarian dictatorship, it maintains the theory of coalition with the bourgeoisie; instead of dialectical materialism, it stands for the idealistic philosophy and flirting with the religious trash of the bourgeoisie."

(2) The Program is based upon an analysis of world economy as an integral whole. Imperialism, the last stage of capitalism, is revealed through an analysis of world capitalism. But while analyzing the world economy as a whole and putting forward the general goal of the Comintern our Program recognizes varieties in its very uniformity,—differences of stages and forms of the world social revolution. The program is based upon the Leninist doctrine of the uneven degree of political and economic development under imperialism. Therefore, it establishes the three types of countries in revolutionary development.

Let us take the first type of highly developed capitalistic coun-

tries—United States and Great Britain. Here the direct transition to the proletarian dictatorship is possible and necessary. Secondly, we have the countries of medium level of capitalist development. Here we face an intermingling of bourgeois democratic and socialist tasks in the course of the social revolution. Thirdly, come the chief colonial countries, China, India, etc. Though there exists here a certain development of industrialization, in the main, it is still insufficient for the purpose of independent socialist construction. The transition to the proletarian dictatorship is possible here after passing through a series of preparatory stages and only as a result of the growth of the bourgeois democratic revolution into a social revolution. These countries getting “direct support from the countries of the proletarian dictatorship” will skip “the phase of the further development of capitalism as the predominant system.”

(3) The Program clearly establishes that the international social revolution is made up of various processes differing in time, nature, etc. For example, we have purely proletarian revolutions. Then, we may have bourgeois democratic types growing into proletarian revolutions. There are national liberation wars. There are colonial revolutions, etc. Therefore the Program does not tackle the problems of each section as a section but considers the fundamental problems of the world revolution as a whole.

For sharp contrast, let us again look at the social democrats. The Second International does not dare to have its own program. It is torn by the same national antagonisms as is its master, national imperialism. Yes, the Second International dares not come out openly with the one international “idea” it has—to save the capitalist order from the proletarian revolution. That is precisely why, when the Second International considers concrete tasks it degenerates into quarrels. Each socialist party considers its fatherland the savior of civilization, progress and democracy. No doubt in the next world war the American Socialist Party will call upon the workers to defend the country on the ground that America has given to the world the lofty conception and ideal of mass production, efficiency, the “hope for the removal of poverty,” stock ownership, “peace in industry,” the abolition of strikes, and similar aspirations of the biggest bankers and manufacturers.

(4) Our Program bases the task of the proletarian dictatorship upon eleven years of experience in the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. Against the regime of capitalist exploitation and oppression, with its mad scramble for armaments and colonial plunder, with its corrupt bourgeois democracy which is only the dictatorship of the owning class with its regime of national, sex and other inequalities, we pit our international fatherland, the Soviet Union,

where the working class already has in its own hands the basic means of production, a genuine democracy, a real national and sex equality, a planned building of socialism, a living demonstration to the oppressed masses that it is possible and necessary to build socialism even in one country. We pit against the reformist doctrine of peaceful evolution and class collaboration the Marxian-Leninist doctrine of proletarian dictatorship as the transition stage between capitalism and socialism.

However, we base our conclusions not only on the experiences of the October Revolution and the civil war in Russia, but on struggles and experiences of the working class elsewhere. Thus we come to the conclusion that not only is the proletarian nationalization of the means of production impossible under capitalism but that even after the capture of power by the working class the exploiters will not desist in their attempts to regain by armed force the factories, or fail to attempt to sabotage socialist construction. That is why the Program correctly declares: "Without crushing the resistance of the exploiters it will be impossible to create the postulates for socialist construction."

The experiences of socialist construction in the Soviet Union have already made it possible for the Program to work out clearly ways and means of building socialism during the proletarian dictatorship. The Program admits the probability of the need of "war communism" policies because of probable intervention and protracted revolutionary wars. But the Program states categorically that the policy of war communism cannot be considered as the "normal" economic policy of the proletarian dictatorship; rather is the NEP to be considered such policy because it guarantees the firm alliance of the proletariat with the basic, overwhelming majority of the peasantry during the process of fundamental social readjustment.

(5) Finally, the Program also goes into a thorough discussion of the tactics of war communism. The lack of decisiveness in its agrarian tactics, the failure to strengthen the Red Army and undermine the foreign White armies, the errors regarding the confiscation of the land owners' estates and their distribution among the peasantry are examined in the analysis of the Hungarian revolution and its outcome. We are presented with a minute examination of the strategy and tactics of the proletarian state. The need for exposing the role of the social democracy as an agent of imperialism is emphasized. The communist parties are thus equipped for struggle against reformism.

The basis of the roots of reformism is thus made clear. During the period of imperialism it thrives upon crumbs thrown by the bourgeoisie from their colonial super-profits. A striking example

of this is England during the last decades of the 19th and the first decade of the 20th century. Then reformism can flourish because some capitalists may momentarily occupy an advantageous, dominating position in the world market and thus be able to corrupt the upper layer of the working class. Example, the United States. It is through this basic analysis that the Program outlining the tactical tasks of the various communist parties in the imperialist countries and colonies emphasizes the danger of right and left deviations.

FIGHT AGAINST WAR DANGER

The main tactical tasks of the Comintern today are deeply tied up with war danger. But before examining these problems we will examine the analysis of the objective conditions as made by the World Congress.

The "Theses on the International Situation and the Tasks of the Comintern" establish the fact that between the climax of the world war and the present moment we have had three periods. Let me briefly characterize them.

(1) The first period is that of the acute crisis of capitalism caused by the world war. Here we had great revolutionary struggles. Here we had the Soviet victory. We had also the defeats in Hungary, Italy, Germany. The victory in Russia in 1917 and the defeat in Germany in 1923 are the boundary posts of this period. 1921 marks the high point and the receding point in this period. Its essential features are the instability of capitalism and an immediate revolutionary situation on the whole front.

(2) The second period is 1924-27. This begins with the defeat of the German revolution in 1923 and with the general decline of the revolutionary wave. World capitalism makes energetic efforts to restore its trade connections, credits and currency. It succeeds in stabilizing some more of its endangered sectors—Poland and Germany. The capitalist offensive is in full force. The workers retreat still further. Sporadic fights between the workers and exploiters characterize these days. These fights are caused primarily by the capitalist offensive. Witness the British and German strikes. But this period is also the period of the consolidation of the communist parties, the overcoming of the ultra-left crisis, the full restoration of contact of our parties with the masses, the restoration of economy in the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, the growth of relations between the working class of the Soviet Union and the world proletariat, and the beginning of the wave of mass revolutions in the colonies.

(3) The third period begins in 1928. Let us state at the outset that capitalism has in many ways managed to surpass its pre-war level of production. It has succeeded in restoring relations and

considerably reconstructing economy in a number of countries. But precisely herein lies its chief contradiction—the contradiction between the possibilities of production and the capacity for marketing the commodities produced. The theses on the International Situation thus sum this up very well:

“From the very fact of stabilization, from the fact that production increases and trade grows apace, from the fact that technical progress and the production capacities are increasing while the world market and spheres of influence of the different imperialist groups are still remaining more or less stabilized—from this very fact arises a new profound and most acute crisis of world capitalism which is fraught with wars and which menaces the very existence of all stabilization whatsoever.”

The crux of these contradictions is to be found in the antagonism between the still-rising American capitalism and the already declining, the decaying capitalism of Great Britain. Canada, Latin-America, Europe, rubber, oil—what more evidence do we want? The wider the gap between the forces of production (mass production) and its marketing possibilities (mass underconsumption) in the United States, the more aggressive will American imperialism become. This is the why and wherefore of the fiasco at Geneva. This is the reason for the feverish attempt of British imperialism to reestablish its entente with France, not only in the Balkans, on the Rhine, but throughout the world. This is the reason of the short-lived Naval Accord between France and England. When Kellogg went to sign the fake “peace pact” he visited Dublin but not London. The American note against the Anglo-French Naval Accord is the sharpest note the United States Government has sent any other imperialist power since the Lusitania note. Clearly we are in a new cycle of imperialist wars.

Another feature of the present, the third period, besides the imperialist war menace, is the imperialist war against the colonies. Look at the work of Japan in China, America in Nicaragua and China. Remember that the sharper the basic antagonisms of imperialism become, the larger will be the growth of the revolutionary consciousness of the colonial masses and the more arrogant international imperialism will become. But these imperialist wars inevitably accelerate the awakening of the colonial masses. Thus the colonial movements and revolutions are a vital feature of the third period.

But an even more dominant characteristic of this period lies in the danger of an imperialist war against the Soviet Union. Comrades, do not forget that the existence of the Soviet Union most effectively hinders the capitalist offensive, lends strength to the colonies, makes very risky for the imperialists themselves the out-

break of war and ensures the growth of socialist economy as a source of world-wide inspiration for the workers. Today the imperialist preparation for war against the Soviet Union is the axis of the entire international situation. It is this that accounts for British imperialism supporting Roumania through loans. This is the basis of the development of a Germany hostile in its relations with the Soviet Union.

Consequently, the war danger constitutes the very crux of the new period. Comrade Bucharin was absolutely correct when he said we cannot fight the social democrats on any front today without fighting them as organic agents of the imperialist war preparations. The fight against the war danger is the very center of the entire activity of the Comintern. Notice the emphasis on this task in the thesis on the International Situation adopted by the Congress:

“The struggle against the menace of imperialist wars among the capitalist powers and of an imperialist war against the USSR should be waged systematically and day by day. This struggle is unthinkable without the decisive exposure of pacifism which represents under the present conditions the most essential weapon in the hands of the imperialists for the preparation of wars and for the concealment of such preparations, and finally this struggle is unthinkable without exposing the social democracy which helps imperialism, conceals the preparations for new wars under the banner of pacifism. . . . Constant elucidation of the ‘results’ of the first world war, of its secret preparation—military and diplomatic: the struggle against pacifism in every shape and the advocacy of communist slogans—above all the slogan of the defeat of ‘one’s own’ imperialist fatherland and the transformation of imperialist war into civil war; the activity amongst the soldiers and sailors, the creation of illegal nuclei, the activity among the peasants—such should be the basic tasks of the communist parties in this respect.”

THE PROBLEMS OF CAPITALIST CONTRADICTIONS

The key to the present situation is to be found in the external contradictions. These, of course, are intertwined with the inner contradictions which grow out of the outer contradictions. The furious competition abroad causes a tightening of the screws at home. The capitalist government apparatus everywhere gives more and more open support to the trusts and cartels. Furthermore, such support is also given the big bourgeoisie by means of fascist methods and the utilization of the social democracy and trade union bureaucrats. For the workers, rationalization of industry spells devastating speed-up, longer hours, “shorter” wages, denial of the right to strike, compulsory arbitration. Let us not forget the proposed anti-strike law which already has the approval of the American Bar Association and Messrs. Woll and Green. We all know of the

denial of the right of our party to participate in the election campaign. Look at what happened in Nebraska where our party was kept off the ballot. Look at Oklahoma.

The bourgeoisie are rapidly dropping their mask of democracy. They are functioning ever more openly as a dictatorship. American journals of high finance are frankly putting the question: Does America need a Mussolini? Would Hoover make a good dictator?

What has been the effect of this development on the communist parties? In the second period the communist parties went downward for a while. In the third period the effect is the very opposite. Recall the splendid results achieved by our parties in the election campaigns in Germany, France and Poland. Keep in mind the importance of the Red Front Fighters in Germany and the great movement our party has conducted there against the armored cruiser. A crisis is developing in the German Social Democracy. Even in America, though the process of radicalization is slower, our party is, at a quickened pace, winning influence and leadership.

We emphasize that the increased preparations for the coming struggles mean an intensified fight by us against the socialists. The more the imperialist aspirations rise, the quicker the social democrats will come to the bourgeoisie. The more acute the imperialist rivalries become, the more acute will the class antagonisms become at home and therefore the more friendly and intimate will the relations between the capitalists and Socialist Party be. How else do you explain the acres of publicity given to the decrepit Socialist Party in the New York Times by the Associated Press, by the entire bourgeois press, through various schemes?

The social democrats under the mask of pacifism are simply the advance agents of the imperialists in the colonies. Who has forgotten the role of McDonald in the Simon Commission? Who can forget the shameful attitude of the American Socialist Party on Nicaragua? No one can overlook the dastardly role of the American Socialist Party, as just emphasized in Hillquit's article in the October issue of "Current History," in which he defends the League of Nations and attacks the Soviet Union. The Socialist Party is everywhere working overtime to attune the masses, to develop the masses for war against the Soviet Union. The socialist parties everywhere participate actively in the organization and agitation of the war preparations against the Soviet Union. The social democracy has become fused with the capitalist state. It has been discarding all barriers between itself and fascism. The Hungarian, Bulgarian, Italian and American social democracies are working hand in glove with fascist organizations. The greetings of Albert Thomas to the Italian fascists are still vivid in our memories. Herein lies the reason for the energetic efforts of the

socialist parties to split the labor movement, to expel the communists from the trade unions.

PROBLEMS OF THE UNITED FRONT AND THE RIGHT DANGER

It is obvious that under such conditions our tactics of the united front must be changed in certain respects. Only the united front from below remains and it would be ridiculous today to propose a united front to the Socialist Party leadership which is becoming more fascist and serves as a dynamic force for splitting the labor movement. Our tactics today are to wage a relentless fight against the social democratic leadership and an energetic effort to win the social democratic workers.

It is clear that the more imperialist antagonisms become acute, the more the radicalization of the masses, the greater the likelihood of certain sections of the Socialist Party trying to cover their nefarious purposes with left phrases. These phrase mongers, the "Theses on the International Situation and the Tasks of the Communist International" correctly brand as "the most dangerous vehicle of bourgeois policy within the working class, as the most dangerous adversaries of communism and the proletarian dictatorship." That is why the Congress condemned so sharply the waverings of all right-wing groups within the communist parties regarding these reformists. That is why there was laid down a policy for a clear show-down fight against such wavering. This determined effort of the Congress expressed itself organizationally, as well as ideologically, in the decisions regarding the various sections.

For instance, in the French party the opposition to the slogan of "class against class" laid down by the Ninth Plenum for the election campaign was roundly condemned. Even the Polbureau was reorganized. The line of the Ninth Plenum was emphatically confirmed.

Likewise in the British party the decisions of the Ninth Plenum were confirmed, particularly in the change of the tactical course toward the Labor Party which has now become practically a social-democratic party.

In Germany, the right danger expressed itself in the slogans advocating "control of production," in the refusal of certain trade-union workers to speak against the reformists' strike strategy, in the demand (the policy of the conciliationists) to draw a line between the right and left social democrats.

The right errors committed in our own Party were sharply criticized. But these we will discuss at length, in accordance with the provisions laid down by the Central Committee, on another occasion. In the Czech party the menace of the right danger is shown very clearly. The crisis in this party very clearly illustrates

the completeness with which the right errors have come to a head. Because of its history the Czech Party was more susceptible to right errors than any other party during the second period. The party conducted huge mass activities. It polled nearly a million votes in the election campaign. But when it was necessary to sharpen the fight, to direct it away from "peaceful roads," as for instance in the struggle against the Social Insurance Act, the government agrarian demonstrations, the fight against the political terror, the Party and the Red Unions were too passive.

Of course, we never will give up our united-front policy from below with the social-democratic workers. But it is against the social-democratic leadership, particularly in the trade unions, that we must intensify our fight everywhere. The Congress thus emphasized the need of energetic activity in the existing trade unions and of building a powerful revolutionary opposition to fight the reformists for the leadership of the working class. At this time it is especially important to build new militant unions to fight for the interests of the workers.

The stabilization period, the period of "petty every-day work in the trade unions," etc., the period in which we struggled against the ultra-left, inevitably engendered in our midst certain right-wing moods, especially among elements connected with the co-operatives, with the parliamentary work, with the trade unions. Some comrades confused the correct and necessary every-day work with slogans of peaceful co-operation with the reformists and the trade-union bureaucracy. Likewise the correct policy of utilizing the legal possibilities has in some instances been misinterpreted as a policy of seeking legality at all costs. Such opportunist deviations are highly dangerous, particularly in a period of imminent wars and revolutionary struggles. That is why every right manifestation was hit over the head by the Sixth Congress. *The right danger is the chief danger today and every party must fight it as such.*

COLONIAL QUESTION

This question assumed considerable importance at the Congress. Contrast this with the role of the colonial question played at the Congress of the imperialist brokers, the Brussels Congress.

At the Second Congress Lenin gave the fundamental strategical line for our colonial policies. Since then there were considerable changes. We have amassed a tremendous fund of experiences. Let us merely enumerate the four outstanding colonial developments since the Fourth Congress.

First, the proletariat has entered upon the scene of the class struggle in the colonies. In a number of colonial countries it is the fundamental revolutionary force leading great strata of the peas-

antry in revolutionary struggle. Secondly, we have had a number of colonial insurrections. The agrarian struggles in India, the insurrection in Indonesia, the national wars in Nicaragua, Morocco, Syria. Thirdly, the great Chinese revolution. Fourthly, the Latin-American problem has matured. The national revolutionary movement has begun in the semi-colonial countries of Latin America.

The work of the Congress on the colonial question was very fruitful. The report of Comrade Kuusinen showed a real study of the tactical problems and gave a concrete analysis in all cases. Our experience to date led us to consider such questions as that of non-capitalist mode of development in the colonies, the democratic dictatorship by the proletariat and peasantry, the attitude toward the bourgeoisie, etc. The whole examination of the colonial developments bore out the correctness of Lenin's prediction of the unfolding of colonial revolutions.

In China we have today a temporary triumph of a bloc of imperialist, feudal elements, and native bourgeoisie. The present Chinese situation was properly characterized as "*The period of the preparation of the mass forces for a new rise of the revolution.*" In India we find a revival of national revolutionary movements with great possibilities.

Two tendencies are visible in China and India. The bourgeoisie consider it their historical task to create a bourgeois state by means of reform and compromise with the British imperialists and feudal elements. At the same time they are glad to exploit the workers and peasants as cannon fodder for their purposes. The second tendency is that of the revolutionary fight against the native bourgeoisie, imperialism, and against the feudal survivals. In the most important colonials like China and India we cannot defeat the imperialists without defeating the native bourgeoisie. Here the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry to wipe out the monopolies and the privileges and to accomplish the agrarian revolution comes to the forefront. Thus we will be establishing an alliance with the proletariat of the advanced countries—the basis for non-capitalist development of colonial countries. This is our basic strategical slogan.

THE QUESTION OF DECOLONIZATION

The Congress clearly analyzed the growth of imperialism in the colonies. Some comrades here criticize the assertion that India and other colonial countries constitute a sort of "agrarian adjunct," a "world village." These comrades declare that industrialization is going on apace in India. The logic of their assertions led them to the conclusion that these colonies are becoming decolonized,—on the road towards being no longer colonies.

Any one who accepts this theory of decolonization literally gives up the fundamental thesis of Lenin concerning the probability of non-capitalist development in the colonies. No one denies that there is some industrial development going on in the colonies. But let no one confuse industrial development with industrialization as a basis for independence. The industrialization of a country is the producing of the means of production (machinery, etc.). However, imperialism allows the colonies only the development of small manufacturing industries. For instance, such industries as are engaged in the conversion of agricultural products. Imperialism deliberately hinders the production of means of production in the colonies. More than that, imperialism hinders industrial development in the colonies by its support of feudal survivals and the imposing of heavy tax burdens.

The only road to the independence, to the decolonization of the colonies lies in a revolution of the workers and peasants for the establishment of the democratic dictatorship.

THE ROLE OF THE BOURGEOISIE IN THE COLONIES

Here we have the second big problem in our colonial tactics. This is chiefly important for the coming Indian revolution. In India there is going on a sharp struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie for hegemony in the national revolutionary movement. We must keep in mind certain differences between the Indian and Chinese situations. In India the bourgeoisie as a class is more consolidated, more mature, economically and politically. It is true that the proletariat is more numerous in India. But it is still under the influence of bourgeois nationalism. Already the most influential sections of the Indian bourgeoisie are in full swing in this compromise. Another section of this bourgeoisie, the Swarajists, is looking for the first opportune moment for making a complete compromise with British imperialism, at the expense of the toiling masses. The Indian bourgeoisie has already betrayed the agrarian revolution. They are bound to play a counter-revolutionary role. Our first task here is to build a powerful communist party and trade unions. Then only can we succeed in our struggle against imperialism and feudal remnants. Comrade Stalin once well said that in order to succeed in smashing the imperialist-feudal-bourgeois bloc it is necessary "to concentrate our fire against the compromising national bourgeoisie, expose its treachery and emancipate the toiling masses from its influence."

THE NEGRO QUESTION

For the American Party the Negro question assumes ever-growing importance. The especially intense exploitation and heavy oppression to which the millions of Negroes in America are subject

make it imperative for the party to devote its best energies and its maximum resources towards becoming the recognized leader and champion of the interests of Negroes as an oppressed people. Our objective, of course, here is to have the Negro proletariat assume the hegemony in the entire Negro national movement. We will on a subsequent occasion discuss the details of this question, particularly the decision of the Congress supplementing our Negro Program for complete social and political equality with the slogan of self-determination for the Negroes in the United States.

THE SITUATION IN THE CPSU AND THE USSR

The Congress also examined the activities of the proletariat and its party in the Soviet Union. Fundamental lines of further socialist construction were outlined. The results of long struggle between Leninism and Trotskyism were placed sharply and clearly before the Congress. *The Congress registered unanimous satisfaction in the victory over the social-democratic deviations of Trotskyism which is today a counter-revolutionary force.* The Congress welcomed the overcoming of certain economic difficulties by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. It recognized the achievements and successes in building socialism. The progress of socialist reconstruction of agriculture and the strengthening of the socialist edifice in the villages through the establishment of Soviet estates and collective production were noted. The systematic realization by the CPSU of Lenin's line of relying upon the poor peasants, forming an alliance with the middle peasantry and fighting the kulaks was recognized.

The CPSU also corrected a tendency noted here and there in the state administration of the Soviet Union, in the trade unions and even in the party toward bureaucracy and petrification. The development of self-criticism was obvious. Likewise the development of new activities, new energies of the working class were noted. The Congress unanimously, enthusiastically pledged itself to support the Soviet Union to the limit in the event of war or attack against it.

THE SITUATION IN THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

After the above analysis of the objective conditions and clarification of our tasks it was necessary for the Congress to lay down a clear line of relations within the Comintern—between the various sections and the Executive Committee of the Communist International, between the various organs in the different sections, within the sections themselves. I am now discussing only the general, fundamental lines, prerequisite for the membership in every section of the Comintern. The American question as a whole, both

in regard to its tactics, tasks, and in regard to its inner relations we will discuss some other time in accordance with the decision of the Central Executive Committee. In order to make clear and to cast out all doubts as to what the emphatic line of the Comintern regarding the inner relations in the International is, we herewith quote in full this section of the "Thesis on the International Situation and Tasks of the Communist Parties:"

"The Congress instructs the ECCI to employ all measures necessary to preserve the unity of the Communist International and its Sections. Only on the basis of good team work and on the condition that differences are removed primarily by methods of internal party democracy, will it be possible to overcome the enormous difficulties of the present time and fulfil the great tasks of the immediate future. This not only does not exclude, but on the contrary presupposes the general tightening up of iron, internal discipline, the absolute subordination of the minority to the majority, the absolute subordination of the minor organizations as well as all other party organizations (parliamentary fractions, fractions in the trade union, the press, etc.) to the leading Party centres and of all sections of the Comintern to the Executive Committee of the Comintern. The tightening up of proletarian discipline in the parties, the consolidation of the parties, the elimination of factional strife, etc., are an absolute condition for the victorious proletarian struggle against all the forces imperialism is mobilizing."

The Sixth Congress of the Communist International has taught us much, has given us much. It should prove, as it surely will prove, a source of inspiration to every party member. It should make us better communists, more courageous, more conscientious fighters for the cause of the international proletarian revolution in America. Under the leadership of the Communist International we will win, on the American front, the fight against world imperialism. To this our party is pledged. To this every member must give his all.



The Workers (Communist) Party in the South

By WM. Z. FOSTER

The Workers (Communist) Party has made a beginning at active work in the south. This is a fact of major importance in the development of the class struggle in the United States. For this reason, among others, the present election campaign marks an epoch in the history of our Party.

The work in the south has been begun by the sending of several organizers into the field, by touring of election speakers, by the issuance of special literature, by the placing of the Party on the ballot in a number of southern states, etc.

It was my part, in this work, to address election meetings in Louisville, Birmingham, New Orleans, Atlanta, Norfolk and Richmond. The meetings in Louisville, Birmingham and New Orleans were the first communist open mass meetings ever held in the respective states of Kentucky, Alabama and Louisiana. It is fitting that with the rapid industrialization of the south and with the developing struggle of the Negroes throughout the country, the Workers (Communist) Party, the party of the working class and the champion of the oppressed Negro race, should begin its operations in the south. These activities must be greatly increased in the future.

Manifestly, the south presents many difficult problems of a major character. These must be thoroughly analyzed, programs outlined for them, and the Party organized to solve them. To these ends it is highly important that the various organizers, speakers, and active comrades, participating in the southern work, carefully compile and present their experiences to the Party. The present article is a contribution in this sense.

A RIPE OPPORTUNITY FOR OUR PARTY

The industrialization of the south has been widely discussed in our press. There is no need for me to pile up, afresh, statistics to demonstrate this movement. But one is amazed in travelling through the south to see the extent of this new industrialization. Especially manifest is it in Alabama, Georgia and the Carolinas. In dozens of towns along the way one can see new factories of many kinds, either freshly built or now in course of construction. The various towns are plastered with invitations to capitalists to establish industries locally, offering them tax exemption, low-paid and satis-

fied labor, cheap power, etc. The respective Chambers of Commerce are carrying on nationwide campaigns of publicity along these lines. At the same time, there is widespread unemployment in the various cities of the south.

The rapid industrialization of the south increasingly develops a rich field for general class activity by our Party. Wages are very low, hours long, and working conditions bad in all the southern industries, new and old. In the great Alabama coal and steel industries, wages run as low as 15 cents per hour for unskilled workers, with 25 cents per hour top rate, with the cost of living almost as high as in northern industrial centers. The 10 to 12 hour day prevails. Similar conditions exist in the textile, lumber, railroad and other industries throughout the south. The farm workers and tenant farmers, submerged in poverty, live in a semi-feudal state.

The new proletariat in the south is being developed under conditions of hardship and poverty. It is one of the basic tasks of our Party to organize this increasingly important section of the working class and to lead it in the big struggles it is bound soon to carry on against the employers and the state. Trade unionism is weaker in the south than in any other section of the country. The great armies of workers in the coal, textile, steel, lumber and agricultural industries are completely unorganized. Only the skilled upper layers of railroad workers have unions. Even the building and printing trades workers have hardly more than a skeleton organization. Unions will be built in the southern industries and the workers' standards raised only by a militant fight against the existing terrorism, industrial and political.

It is idle to expect the ultra-reactionary southern trade-union bureaucracy to lead such a fight, or that the old unions can be used as our chief organizational basis, although we must also work in these unions. To organize the unorganized masses and lead them in struggle is the task of the left wing, led by our Party and the T. U. E. L. and its organizational program must be founded upon the establishment of new industrial unions in the basic industries. The Party and the T. U. E. L. must at once orientate themselves in this direction.

The role of the left wing as the organizer and leader of the working class of the south, is further emphasized by the increasing importance of the Negro workers in southern industry which stresses our need to organize them. Our Party is the only force that can organize and lead the Negro masses in real struggle. The Republican and Democratic Parties are manifestly the enemies of the Negroes. The trade-union bureaucracy, accepting the whole Jim Crow system of the exploiters, persecutes and oppresses the Negroes by barring them from the unions, discriminating against them in

industry, and supporting their political disfranchisement and social ostracism. In Atlanta, for example, a typical situation exists. Negroes are not even allowed to come into the Labor Temple. And how little the Negroes can look to the Socialist Party for leadership is exemplified by the fact that Norman Thomas in his election tour through the south, never even mentioned the Negro question. This is in line with the general S. P. program regarding the Negroes. Only our Party speaks and fights for the Negroes and the situation in the south develops increasingly favorably for it to establish a mass following among the Negroes.

THE FIGHT AGAINST JIM-CROWISM

The situation in the south, in addition to offering constantly more favorable opportunities for our Party to come forward as the leader of the working class, also progressively facilitates its activities as the organizer and defender of the Negro race. The bitter injustice of the Jim Crow caste system is forced upon one at every turn in the south. This outrageous thing, ranging from studied insults to the Negro race, rank discrimination in industry, political disfranchisement and social ostracism, to lynching and other forms of open terrorism, confronts one on all sides: special railroad cars for Negroes, "colored" restaurants, waiting-rooms, libraries, schools, living districts, elevators in office buildings, etc.

The hypocritical Christians do not even allow Negroes to attend the same churches with them. In one southern park a sign says: "Dogs and Negroes not admitted." In Atlanta, regarding Grant Park, a beautiful park given to the city years ago with the provision that Negroes should be entitled to patronize it as well as whites, an agitation is now on foot to close the park altogether, seeing that it is impossible, under the terms of the gift, to legally exclude Negroes. Every effort is made throughout the south to set aside the Negroes as a super-exploited class of "untouchables."

Negro life, liberty and property have no safeguards. The killing of a Negro by a white man is a minor affair. The whole Jim Crow system is enforced at the point of the gun. Negro criminals receive sentences twice as long as whites for the same crimes. Civil suits are decided as a matter of principle in favor of whites. And all this flagrant terror and injustice is perpetuated under the false, chauvinistic slogan of "white supremacy."

It is the historic task of our Party to lead the fight against this organized persecution of the Negroes. This is a revolutionary struggle. It must be carried on under the slogans of "full social, political and industrial equality for Negroes," and "the right of self-determination for the Negroes." This is necessary not only for the liberation struggle of the Negroes, but for the general revolutionary struggle of the whole working class.

The fight around the race issues will be a hard and bitter one, especially in the south. The reactionary advocates of "white supremacy" will meet the assault of our Party on their caste system with armed force as well as legal terrorism. They will seek to crush our organization with violence. Of this we may be sure when our party gets its work well under way but our Party will be equal to the situation. Overground or underground in the south, it will successfully carry on its activities.

HOOVER AND SMITH IN THE SOUTH

Two basic factors now tend to facilitate our work of organizing and leading the Negroes in the south. One is the large role played by Negroes in the developing industries, which gives us a proletarian base for our Negro work in general. The other is the invasion of the "solid south" by the Republican Party, which is forcing this organization to expose its hypocritical pretenses of being the party of the Negroes. Let me speak of the latter factor.

Throughout the south one confronts widespread indications of Republican activities and sentiment. The Republican Party is making a most energetic attempt to split the solid south. Hoover buttons and automobile plates are in evidence on all sides. The Republicans will poll a large vote throughout the south, especially in Alabama, Tennessee, Kentucky, Georgia, Virginia and the Carolinas, if they do not actually carry some or all of these states.

The industrialization of the south inevitably thrusts to the fore the chief party of big capital, the Republican Party. This party is driving to establish itself in the south by mobilizing behind it the "Protestant," dry, "American" vote. Its main instrument is the Ku Klux Klan, which, if organizationally weak, has a powerful ideological following. The Klan goes forward with a tremendous "whispering" campaign against Smith to unite all the Protestant bigotry in the south against him. This is being engineered by the republican leaders despite their public, hypocritical deprecation of such methods. The trade-union leaders, mostly Klansmen, are overwhelmingly with Hoover.

Already deep inroads have been made into the democratic organization. Splits, engineered by the republicans, have taken place in many southern states. In Virginia, "Hoover Democrats" have launched the Independent Democratic Party. In Mississippi, Democratic bolters have formed the Anti-Smith Democratic Party. Similar developments are taking place all through the south. Heflin is one of the leading spokesmen of this Anti-Smith movement which is entrenching the Republican Party in the south. On a train

going through North Carolina, a party of democratic leaders, headed by Josephus Daniels, on their way to welcome Smith, occupied the same car with me and were excitedly planning how to stop all these untoward developments by "missionary work" in the districts.

To check the advance of the Republican Party, the democrats violently denounce that organization as the party of the Negroes and raise the slogan of "Vote for the Democratic Party and white supremacy." The secretary of the Democratic Party of Alabama recently declared that if the republicans break the solid south, federal troops will be used at the next election to enforce the Negro's right to vote.

Meanwhile every device of terror and duplicity is used to disfranchise the Negroes. Governor Long of Louisiana recently struck the democratic keynote in this respect when he said: "Any registrar who puts Negroes on his rolls without their coming up to the strictest requirements (which are impossible—W. Z. F.), will be removed from office and I am the man who will put them out." Violent propaganda is made on all sides that the race question is not one that can be settled by ballots but by bullets and cold steel.

But all this vigorous race prejudice propaganda fails to stop the Republican Party's progress. This is largely because that party is aggressively demonstrating that it also stands for "white supremacy." It is giving widespread assurance, by discarding its southern Negro leaders and in various other ways, that its advent to power will not disturb the Jim Crow system. It is convincing the dominant class that a vote for the Republican Party is also a vote for white supremacy and suppression of the Negro race. Thus it is compelled to throw aside its hypocritical mask as the party of the Negroes, which it has worn so unctiously for seventy years and to come out openly like the Democratic Party as a Jim Crow party.

The Workers (Communist) Party must be quick to turn to its advantage this unmasking of the Republican Party. Ever since the Civil War, the overwhelming mass of Negroes have naively supported the Republican Party as their party. But large numbers of them will be disillusioned by that party's exposure as an open supporter of Jim Crowism. We must seek to educate the Negroes generally to the true role of the Republican Party, especially in the light of the present situation, and to unite them in and around the Workers (Communist) Party as the only party that represents the interests of and fights for the Negro race.

NEED OF A PARTY PROGRAM FOR THE SOUTH

The Workers (Communist) Party must give active and immediate attention to the development of a special program of work in the south. The Party must establish a southern district; it must

get organizers in the field; it must carry through an aggressive campaign to recruit the Party membership and to establish in all the southern centers branches of our Party, the Y. W. C. L., and the auxiliary organizations. The weakness of the Party's activities generally in Negro work must be drastically overcome.

Together with this organizational program must be developed a political program for work in the south. We must have concrete demands for the Negroes, and for the workers as a whole based on the actual situation. We must outline definite campaigns to organize unions in the various industries. The decisive factor in all our work in the south is our policy on the Negro question. We must realize from the outset that it is the basic task of our Party to lead a militant struggle for and with the Negroes. All our activities there, all our successes and failures will turn around this central fact.

In the south we must be vigilantly on our guard to combat all tendencies in our Party to "soft-pedal" the Negro question, and to compromise with Jim Crowism. This has not been done sufficiently. We must fight resolutely against white chauvinism, because it is exactly in the south, where the fire of race prejudice is the hottest and the revolutionary initiative of the Negro most repressed, that the danger of chauvinism is the greatest in our Party and in the ranks of the workers generally. We must liquidate all such tendencies as the ignoring of the Negro question in our public speeches, failure to draw Negroes into open propaganda meetings or proposals to form separate white and Negro branches, etc. Those workers who are not willing to join a common branch with the Negroes and participate with them in Party activities are not yet ready for membership in the Workers (Communist) Party.

Especially must our Party combat and liquidate the idea of building our Party in the south primarily of whites on the theory that "if you get the white workers, you've got the Negroes." This erroneous theory is simply a crystallization of white chauvinism under a mask of left phrases. It denies the revolutionary role of the Negro. It leads to the acceptance of Jim Crowism and implies the abandonment of all struggle for and with the Negroes. It is the working theory of the socialists and the A. F. of L. fakers. It has nothing in common with a communist program. Our Party must reject and eradicate it completely. The central task of our Party in the south is to unite the Negroes directly and to lead them in the struggle. Only in this way can our Party fulfill its historic task.

The coming Party convention must give special attention to the general question of our work in the south.

Against the Theory of “Decolonization”

By JOHN PEPPER

(NOTE: This article is based on Comrade Pepper's speech made at the Sixth World Congress of the Comintern in the course of the discussion on the colonial question. The second part of this speech, which deals with the problems of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in the colonies, will be printed in the next issue of *The Communist*.—Editor).

Comrade Kuusinen's theses are based upon a discussion of two fundamental problems: first, *the colonial policy of imperialism*; and, second, questions of the *bourgeois-democratic revolution* as a preparatory step to the socialist revolution in the colonies. The arguments, which have here been directed against the basis of the theses, are wrong. In my opinion, the basis of the theses in both problems is quite right, and there is no need to revise the theses in this respect. Of course, a sentence here and there might be changed. For many questions—for example, for the question of the peasantry and the city petit-bourgeoisie—differentiating formulations should be given. Attacks directed against the main line of the theses should most certainly be rejected.

Let us first consider the *colonial policy of imperialism*. Here, of course, *India* plays the leading role, since many of our future problems are now concentrated there. Comrade Bennett's speech, which attacked the main lines of the theses on India, was rather unfortunate, for it leads to entirely false, incorrect deductions.

Bennett put the question: *Is there industrialization in India or not? Does this industrialization signify a certain decolonization?* Comrade Bennett even maintained that Comrade Bukharin is an exponent of “decolonization.” He is mistaken in this, however. Comrade Bukharin has never taken a stand for this theory. I recall quite clearly what he said in the Political Secretariat at the time this question was under discussion. His statement may also be found in the minutes. He said only the following: “The report of the Indian comrades on the questions of industrialization and decolonization of India should be carefully investigated.” It cannot be maintained, however, that if one desires to investigate a problem, this in itself signifies the acceptance of a “theory.”

WHAT IS INDUSTRIALIZATION?

Comrade Bennett said that if he had to choose between the two theories, he would be for the theory of decolonization rather than for the contention that India is a "village continent." *But can the question really be formulated as simply as it was by Bennett, i. e., that industrialization is equivalent to decolonization?* In my opinion, industrialization and decolonization should not be confused one with the other. Comrade Bennett simplifies the task entirely too much. One should, first of all, investigate the following:

1. Is there industrialization in India?
2. What is the character of this industrialization, and to what extent has it developed?
3. Is it an industrialization capable of making the country really independent?
4. What role does the British bourgeoisie play in this process of industrialization?
5. What is the relation between industrialization and capitalist development in India and the non-capitalist section of the country?

Comrade Bennett has not discussed any of these questions at all; he has reduced the whole problem to the question of industrialization *in general*. He has not grasped the fundamental questions at all. The fundamental questions are:

Is industrialization in India characterized by heavy industry—the manufacture of the means of production, machines, etc.—or only by *light industry*, such as the textile industry, which depends on direct consumption? One must investigate furthermore as to who has captured the "*commanding heights*" in Indian economy. Only if all these problems are investigated, it is possible to come to a correct conclusion regarding the question of "decolonization."

The first question upon which I will touch and which is rather decisive is *the question of the role and extent of heavy industry and of capitalism in general in Indian economy*. It must be conceded that capitalism has as yet touched only the outer surface of the vast domain of India, which Comrade Kuusinen rightly called a "village-continent." The great bulk of the population still lives in many respects under *pre-capitalist* conditions; this is indeed one of the most important characteristics of the general situation in India. *The majority of the population in India suffers today from the disintegrating consequences of capitalism, which presses forward more and more, and at the same time from the backwardness of the country, of those elements which are still pre-capitalist.* This must be grasped. If it is not, one has likewise not grasped Lenin's theses at the Second Congress, which characterized India as a pre-capitalist country in many ways. Of course, it might be said that since 1920,

since the theses of the Second Congress, a major change has taken place in the situation in India. If this view is held, however, one should frankly declare it. It was Comrade Bennett's duty to explain that Lenin's theses, which characterized India as still a pre-capitalist country, are no longer correct today, that India is no longer a colony, or, at least, that the principal process of development in India is the process of decolonization. Comrade Kuusinen is entirely correct in characterizing India as a giant *village-continent*. Reality shows that industry, as it exists in India, is limited to small sections, and that the overwhelming majority of the population lives under agrarian conditions which are even yet in many respects pre-capitalist.

Comrade Bennett declared—and that was really his trump card—that Kuusinen is wrong, that India is not an agricultural appendage of the British Empire, for if one investigates India's export trade, one finds that India does not export much raw material to England. In my opinion, this formulation of the question by Comrade Bennett falls rather flat. The question is not how much raw material India exports to England; *the only correct formulation of the question is one which analyzes the general relation of India not only to the British Empire but to all imperialist countries.* The correct Leninist formulation can only be one which analyzes *the role and function of India in the world imperialistic system.* If this is done, however, it is seen that the main function of India in the world imperialist system is the provisioning of the metropolises with agricultural products and raw material. Industry in India—the development of her natural resources, the extension of her railway system, etc.—serves the purpose of making her capable of fulfilling her function as an agricultural appendage of imperialism. Imperialism robs India of her raw material, and wishes to export its goods to India. Capitalism may also make further great advances in India; it may, for example, transform the agricultural economy into a capitalist one. However, this will not change the basic function of India in the world imperialist system; i. e., that it constitutes an agricultural appendage of imperialism.

LIGHT INDUSTRY AND INDEPENDENCE

Let us take *the question of industrialization in a narrow sense.* India possesses no heavy industry or almost no heavy industry; almost no metallurgy. The two or three large metal works which India does have are known to everyone—even those who have studied the country only superficially—by name. Indian industry, to the extent that it exists, is light industry. Its main purpose is the manufacture of textile goods. One should distinguish between industrialization and industrialization. It is now necessary to analyze

the question as to *what role light industry can play in the development of a country*. Two questions are to be taken into consideration here:

1. *Can the existence of light industry transform a country from an agrarian into an industrial country?*
2. *Can the existence of light industry make a country independent of the imperialist powers?*

It is my opinion that both questions must be answered with a decisive "No!"

I shall now cite a few passages from Lenin and Stalin to show how they judged this question. Lenin said the following in regard to Soviet Russia:

"Without the recovery of heavy industry, without its rehabilitation, we cannot build up any industry, and without it we are completely lost as an independent country."

The following citation from Comrade Stalin likewise has reference to Soviet Russia:

"What is an agrarian country? An agrarian country is a country that exports agricultural products and imports means of production, that does not itself produce any, or hardly any, of these means of production (machines, etc.). If we remain at a standstill at this stage of development—where we do not manufacture the means of production from our own resources, but have to import them from abroad—then we cannot be secure against the transformation of our country into an appendage of the capitalist system."

Soviet Russia, as is well known, is much more industrialized than India. The proletariat in Soviet Russia possesses a much greater specific gravity than the working class in India. Soviet Russia has, comparatively speaking, much more heavy industry than India. Soviet Russia is the land of the dictatorship of the proletariat, where the working class is already in power, where the political rule of imperialism has been overthrown. Nevertheless Lenin and Stalin have established that:

(1) The existence of light industry is not sufficient to transform an agrarian country into an industrial country; (2) only the development of heavy industry, of metallurgy, only the manufacture of the means of production can transform a country into an industrial country; (3) without heavy industry a country cannot maintain itself economically as an independent country; (4) with-

out heavy industry, without the manufacture of the means of production a country necessarily becomes a mere appendage of the capitalist, imperialist system.

Moreover, the above Leninist points of view cannot be simply dismissed from consideration, if one is to investigate the question as to what extent the industrialization of India, as it is at present, is capable of bringing about the "decolonization" of the country.

One of the most important arguments which Comrade Bennett put forward to prove the industrialization of India was the large amount of *capital exported from Great Britain* to India. It undoubtedly is a fact that England has exported a great deal of capital to India. But it is also a fact that not less than 90 per cent. of the English capital which went to India was sunk in government loans and only 10 per cent was directly expended for economic purposes. Of course, a part of the government loans were also expended for economic ends, but in the main they were used to cover war and administration expenses. Also the other 10 per cent was only in small part invested in industry; it went very often for agriculture or for the extraction of raw materials. Comrade Magyar reported, for instance, in the Indian Commission, that not less than 500 million rupees of English capital are invested in tea plantations. Nobody will argue that tea plantations constitute heavy industry.

On the other hand, it would, of course, be ridiculous to maintain that there is no industry in India. British capital naturally plays a great role in the industrialization of India. But nevertheless it should not be overlooked that Indian industry, as it is today, is first of all, light industry. Moreover these facts cannot be disputed: that in India today there is still almost no heavy industry; that India, being able to supply only between 4 and 8 per cent of her iron requirements, must import the balance. The industrial development of India has not yet reached the stage of the manufacture of the means of production. Four per cent of the amount necessary to cover her iron requirements is still very little. And it is even less, when one takes into consideration that the total iron consumption in India is very low compared with capitalist countries. *Moreover it should not be overlooked that, on the one hand, in large sections of Indian economy pre-capitalist conditions prevail in many respects, while, on the other hand, British capitalism is in complete possession of all the "commanding heights" of Indian economic life.* The question cannot be stated so "super-simply" as it was by Comrade Bennett. It is clear that Indian capitalism cannot develop quickly and vigorously, because it is hemmed in from above and below. From above it is hemmed in by the world system of imperialism; from below by the pre-capitalist elements in Indian economy. It must be understood that both these elements still continue today to hamper the development of an independent Indian capitalism.

The relativity of industrial development in India is also overlooked. That certain processes of industrialization are doubtless present in India nobody has denied. But if this development is compared with the development of large industry, with the building up of heavy industry, with the creation of powerful international trusts in the imperialist countries, it is clear that India cannot keep pace with the development of the imperialist countries. The historical stage of our present epoch, characterized by Lenin as one of division of countries into backward and highly-developed capitalist countries, is not changed by the fact that certain industrialization processes are taking place in the colonies, that capitalism is making advances there. The development of India must be taken in connection with the development of the giant world trusts in the imperialist countries. Only in this way can it be understood that, *in spite of certain industrialization processes, India nevertheless has remained an appendage of the world imperialist system* and must so remain until the Revolution in India or in Great Britain changes this situation.

THE REAL ROLE OF BRITISH IMPERIALISM

Comrade Bennett understands the role of British imperialism in India very one-sidedly, very undialectically. *He sees only that British capital is industrializing India, while he overlooks the fact that the same British capital hampers by all the means in its power the industrialization of India.* The whole economic and political system of British imperialism is a unified plot against the independent development of the economic life of India. I shall cite here only a few facts from recent times. British rule in India regulates the whole *system of customs* in India against Indian industry. British rule has rejected the raising of duties on iron and, inversely, has initiated preference duties for British iron products. It reduced the duties on coal which the Indian industrialists demanded. The whole *financial policy* of British imperialism in India is based upon the frustration of financial and industrial independence. The artificial rise in the exchange rate of the rupee brought with it heavy deflation and likewise a severe crisis in Indian industry as a whole. It is also not an accident *that the export of capital from England to India has been greatly diminishing of late.* Great Britain is even trying to do everything in order to induce Indian capitalists to export capital abroad, for instance, to Brazil, so that it will not be invested in Indian industry itself. These hard facts cannot be argued away by various incorrect theories. It was Comrade Bennett's duty to discuss these facts, to take a stand on these facts, to accept them or to deny their existence. He did not do this; instead he formulated theories on "decolonization."

Comrade Bennett has cited Comrade Varga here to the effect that there are four causes for the rapid development of industry in India. The first is the war. The second cause is the desire of the British to bribe the Indian bourgeoisie. The third cause is that England is not able to supply the Indian market with goods. I shall not at all dispute the correctness of these causes, as given by Comrade Varga, as applied to the *past*. But why has Comrade Bennett brought them forward now as applied to the *present*?

Comrade Bennett, we certainly concede that the first imperialist world-war is already over. This "cause" can, therefore, no longer be a factor. The second "cause" also has very little weight. As is well-known, the Indian bourgeoisie can be bought very cheaply, can be bribed by concessions of very little value. This, then, is also no argument for an extensive industrialization. As to the third "cause," it is really ridiculous today to talk about England not being able to supply the Indian market with goods. England, now suffering from the greatest over-production in her history, not able to supply the Indian market! Nobody in Manchester will believe that, Comrade Bennett.

WHY A REVOLUTIONARY SITUATION IN INDIA?

Comrade Bennett's whole argument suffers from the fact that it is most undialectical. *He believes that the revolutionary development in India is a consequence of the fact that Indian capitalism is becoming very strong, that the industrial development of India is striding forward with seven-league boots.* That is incorrect.

Why is a revolutionary situation developing in India? Just because Indian capitalism, which is not great nor strong and has not yet a firm grasp on the country, comes in conflict with the pre-capitalist conditions, with the backwardness of the country, on the one hand, and with imperialism, on the other. This conflict, these contradictions—these, and not the absolute strength of capitalism, form the basis of the revolutionary movement in India. This conflict and the process of disintegration, not the rapid development of capitalism, form the basis of the revolutionary situation. It should be observed, moreover, that, on the one hand, capitalism, which has already reached a certain stage of development in India, has created a proletariat which can lead the Revolution, but that, on the other hand, independent industrial and economic development in general is hampered by the pre-capitalist elements and by imperialism. If one one-sidedly, undialectically, sees only the existence of industrialization and the rapid development of capitalism; if one wishes to see only the historical role of the proletariat; *if one simply ignores India's colonial state; if one characterizes the process of "decolonization" as the main process—then one*

comes rather dangerously near to the standpoint of the Second International. It is indeed well known that the Second International maintains that the "normal" development of India and of the other colonies is a capitalist development, that they are becoming gradually decolonized and are developing a proletariat, and that this proletariat, in the far distant future, will make the proletarian revolution against the native bourgeoisie.

A RIGHT POSITION WITH ULTRA-LEFT COQUETTRY

The position taken by the Second International is equivalent to dropping the struggle against imperialism in the colonies. And in this connection appears Comrade Bennett's second error, which consists in an incorrect estimation of the disposition of classes in India. His argument proceeds from the assumption that there are only two camps in India—one the camp of the imperialists, the other that of the workers and peasants. It is not as simple as all that. There are still three camps, for it cannot yet be said that the Indian bourgeoisie has entirely and definitely gone over to the camp of imperialism. The Indian bourgeoisie has betrayed the national revolution innumerable times, will likewise betray it in the future, and will even eventually betray it definitely. But today three camps are still to be discerned in India. It is clear that English imperialism continues to be the principal enemy; and, of course, it is also clear that the final victory over English imperialism is possible only by means of the defeat of the Indian bourgeoisie. If one says, however, that the Indian bourgeoisie is already today the principal enemy, this would mean that one underestimates the significance of British imperialism; and this is quite dangerous. Comrade Bennett coquettishly remarked that he would not feel concerned if he should be dubbed an ultra-left on the ground of his arguments on decolonization and his estimation of the disposition of classes in India. Comrade Bennett, however, has no cause to fear. We know Comrade Bennett, and nobody would call him an ultra-left. The interpretation which he has put forward is by no means an ultra-left one. A few minor insignificant ultra-left gestures are indeed present, but the basis of his interpretation and of his criticism against the theses of Comrade Kuusinen is a quite well-developed right deviation.

On the Threshold of the Twelfth Year

By MOISSAYE J. OLGIN

This is the beginning of the twelfth year of the Bolshevik Revolution; it is the eighth year of reconstruction after the end of the civil war. Where does the Soviet Union stand at present? What has it accomplished by way of socialist construction?

Let us cast a glance at the milestones of the road traversed. The November Revolution was two revolutions in one: Seizure of power by the workers; seizure of land by the peasants. The workers were led by hatred of capitalism; the peasants were led by hatred of the semi-feudal landlords. The workers were ready to work for a unified society free from exploiters; the peasants cherished the idea of work for themselves, for the welfare of their own households. The workers were the leaders of the revolution; the peasants were their followers and allies.

Military Communism

Due to the backwardness of economic life in Russia, to the absence of technical knowledge among the revolutionary workers, and to the conscious plan of gradual transition from private ownership to socialized ownership and management, once the state machinery of capitalism had been crushed and a proletarian state organization (the Soviets) created, the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic was in no hurry to take over all the productive forces. Power was seized on November 7th; the decree on nationalization of the land was issued on November 8th, but only on July 11th, eight months after the overthrow, were large factories and railroads declared nationalized (the actual nationalization was not accomplished till a few months later); only on December 4, 1918, was internal trade declared nationalized; and as to the nationalization of small-scale industry, it was decreed full thirteen months after the November revolution (December 12th).

It is not necessary to dwell here on the question as to how the process of transition from capitalism to socialism would have been accomplished in the absence of civil war and intervention. The fact, however, is historically established that the complete nationalization of all branches of economic life by the end of 1918 and

the beginning of 1919 (introduction of "Military Communism") was in a large measure due to the pressure of military needs arising out of the necessity to mobilize every resource for the defense of the revolution.

There followed the fierce heroic years of 1918-1921, characterized by the catastrophic collapse of the industrial system on the one hand, by a communism of distribution and consumption, mainly for military purposes, on the other. The factories, railroads, banks, etc., were nationalized, but owing to the absence of imports and, consequently, of the most essential implements and materials usually purchased abroad (total imports in 1913, 936,600,000 *poods*; total imports in 1920, 5,200,000 *poods*); owing to the cutting off of the Soviet Republic from the Donetz coal, the Ural iron, the Baku oil, the Turkestan cotton, the Ukrainian sugar, the Siberian and South-Eastern wheat; and owing to the depletion of the population in consequence of the world and revolutionary wars, it was not possible to improve production and transportation or even to keep them on the 1917 level, which had been far below the pre-war standards.

Soviet Russia had military communism, but the food and the energy of the population were rapidly decreasing (in 1921-22 a man's working power was 30 per cent that of 1913-14), the losses in life were steadily mounting, and the illicit flow of foodstuffs from the rural districts had become one of the chief sources of maintenance for the city population.

Military communism saved the Revolution. It also changed the relative positions of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in the realm of economic activities. At the beginning of that period, the bourgeoisie stood at the helm of economic leadership, at its end the proletariat had learned in the rough how to handle economic problems. In 1918 the bourgeoisie was still organized, whereas the proletariat, although victorious, was only beginning its consolidation; in 1921 the proletariat was organized, steeled in battles and trained in leadership, whereas the bourgeoisie was beaten and disheartened (in early 1918, the membership of the Russian Communist Party was 115,000 and of the trade unions about 1,800,000; whereas in early 1921 it was 585,600 and about 6,000,000 respectively). In 1918, the importance of straining all forces to increase production, the necessity of combating the bourgeoisie on the economic front, was only theoretically clear to the workers; in 1921 even a backward worker had grasped the idea that there could be no proletarian power without planned and organized industrial activities under the leadership of the proletarian state and the Communist Party.

N. E. P.

The proletariat had grown by 1921 in experience, in discipline, in consciousness of responsibilities, in readiness for concerted action. Yet when it paused after the hectic years of terrific effort on the battle fronts, it saw its economic apparatus almost totally broken down: factories at a standstill, equipment destroyed or stolen, railroads dilapidated, mines flooded, houses burned down, ships rotted. Whereas in 1913 the output of large-scale industry was 5.6 billions of rubles, it was in 1920 only 1 billion, or 18 per cent of the pre-war output. In 1916 two-thirds of the fuel used in Russia was coal, while in 1920 coal formed only one-third of the full total; whereas the use of *wood* had risen from 14 to 50 per cent! If in 1913 there were only 17 per cent of "sick" locomotives (in need of repairs), in 1920 the percentage had risen to 57. While in 1913 the average monthly wage of a Russian worker was 22 rubles, in 1920 it amounted (in kind) to only 8.3 pre-war rubles. In 1914 the population, though suffering from Czarist rule, counted only 83,000 typhus cases: in 1919 and 1920 the number of typhus patients reached the stupendous figure of 5,219,000 (not counting typhoid fever, malaria, smallpox, cholera, etc.).

Nor was this the only difficulty that confronted the victorious workers. The village had been an ally during the civil war. It had helped crush the capitalist attacks because the capitalists were allied with the feudal landlords. It had fought gallantly hand in hand with the workers because the latter helped it defend the land against the landlords. It had given away its foodstuffs to the Bolsheviks almost without compensation (what compensation could the city offer by way of manufactured goods when the industries were near zero!) because it knew that the Bolsheviks were giving away the bulk of the foodstuffs to the Red Army that was driving off the landlords. They had been willing to co-operate—grudgingly, complainingly, sometimes offering resistance, but in the main following the workers—as long as there was imminent danger. Now, however, they were making it unmistakably clear that they wished a *new kind of alliance* whereby they would get the price of their agricultural products in manufactured goods and other articles of consumption. They were willing enough to recognize the workers' rule; they surely preferred it to the rule of capital; yet they demanded *economic advantages* in addition to the land whose possession, they knew, had been assured.

Thus the building up of the industrial system was dictated both by the interests themselves and by the necessity of placing the alli-

ance with the peasants on the basis of economic co-operation. The latter required a free market, an exchange of commodities. The farmer required utilization of the remnants of the bourgeoisie for filling the gaps in the economic system that temporarily could not be filled by the proletarian state agencies. Thus the New Economic Policy came into being.

A broken-down industrial system; a depleted agriculture (total production in 1920 *one-half* of the 1913 production); a weakened population; a disgruntled peasantry, and a vast unwieldy country with a great variety of nationalities, cultures, and levels of development—this is what confronted the proletariat when it made its historic shift from the military to the economic front. Added to it were the hopes of the Russian and the world bourgeoisie of growing ascendancy through the medium of the N. E. P. Added were also the cries of the enemies and false friends that the N. E. P. meant abandoning socialism and surrendering to the bourgeoisie.

The New Industrial Revolution

Seven years have passed since the inauguration of the N. E. P., and here are some of the results:

Figures of the industrial output (eloquent figures, to be sure).

Table I—Industrial Output in Percentages
(Output of 1913 is 100)*

Years	1913	1920	1921-22	1922-23	1923-24
Output	100	18	25	35	46
	1925-26	1926-27	1927-28	1928-29	
	90	99	121.2	145.6	

TABLE 2. OUTPUT OF LARGE-SCALE INDUSTRY
(In Millions of Pre-War Rubles)

Years	1913	1920	1926-7	1927-8	1928-9
Total Output	5,620	1,001	5,175	6,378	7,654

The output of large scale industry increased, in the year just ended, 23.3 per cent. The increase for the beginning economic year is planned to be somewhat over 20 per cent. The output of 1928-29 will be over 40 per cent. above the pre-war output. One who had witnessed the dreary economic landscape of 1920 or early 1921—those horribly silent plants; the torn-down roofs, rust-eaten machines, grass-grown factory yards; those sputtering asthmatic locomotives heated by wet wood; those cold stations and the temporary structures which replaced the destroyed railway bridges;

*Economic year begins October 1. Figures for 1928-9 are taken from the plan of the State Planning Commission.

the dark city streets with here and there a desolate electric lamp; with the dead frozen trolley cars and non-working sewage systems, must look upon this growth of economic forces as well-nigh miraculous. In six to seven years proletarian dictatorship not only reconstructed the pre-war industries but forged far ahead. An increase of 23.3 per cent. in one year; an increase of 20 per cent. in another; a planned increase of 12 per cent. in the coming five years. *This is a new industrial revolution.* It is changing the whole aspect of Soviet life. It is quickly advancing backward Russia to the first ranks of industrial countries.

Passing from the industry as a whole to its various branches we find a many-sided healthy development everywhere. During 1927-28 the output of *coal* increased 12.4 per cent., with a 9 per cent. increase in the productivity of work and with mechanical methods of coal-digging applied to over one-fifth of the total production. The output of *crude oil* increased 12.8 per cent., that of *peat*, 11.6 per cent. The *heavy industries*, particularly the production of *iron and steel* which lagged behind up to the last few years, are rapidly increasing. The output of *cast iron* has increased in 1927-28 10.8 per cent., the output of *steel*, 15.5 per cent. The production of *machinery for transportation* increased 29 per cent., that of *railway cars*, over 50 per cent., that of *agricultural machinery*, 34 per cent. (twice the pre-war production). Altogether the metal industry increased its production 23.5 per cent. over 1926-27 and 21.5 per cent. over the pre-war level. The *electrotechnical industries* have increased 32.5 per cent. The output of *building materials* has grown correspondingly (*cement* production gained 18.3 per cent.).

The *textile* industry has also grown considerably, (*with the seven-hour day introduced in many factories*). The production of *ready-made clothes* has grown in the last year 93 per cent., the manufacturing of *shoes* has increased 56 per cent.

Technical progress marks this rapid industrial growth. Labor-saving machinery has been introduced in many branches of work; economy in raw materials and other elements of production is the order of the day; efficiency is on the increase. As a result, the cost of production, compared with the preceding year, decreased all the way from 1.1 per cent. in the oil industry to 10.8 per cent. in the chief branches of the chemical industry and 15.5 per cent. in the rubber industry.

Capital investments during the last two years (for the construction of new plants and the purchase of new machinery, for repairs of the old plants and machinery, for reconstruction of production units) amounted to 1.879 *chervony rubles*. During 1927-28 alone the new capital invested in industry amounted to *over one billion*

rubles. For the year 1928-29 the new investments are computed at 2,110 millions.

An intensive life is throbbing through the length and breadth of the Soviet Union. Huge blast furnaces, steel plants, electric stations, chemical works, warehouses, terminals, railroads, bridges, are under construction. Large masses of goods are moving from city to city, from city to country and vice versa. Immense power plants are being completed. A new great railroad, from Turkestan to Siberia, is under construction. More and more capital is invested in *the production of means of production* (machinery, tools, chemicals, railroads, etc.) which form the foundation for reproducing economic life on an ever larger scale.

THE PERSPECTIVE

What does all this signify for the working class and for socialism? What is the relation of the workers to the peasants? What is their relation to the city bourgeoisie? What is the outlook?

1. The relative position of the workers as bearers of the socialist plan has been immensely strengthened compared with the other classes. The private manufacturer and trader is rapidly sinking into insignificance. Only from 12 to 15 of the total industrial output is produced in privately owned establishments (usually of a small size); only about 10 per cent. of the total trade is carried on by private businessmen. With the spread of state enterprises, with the growth of the co-operatives as distributing agencies, the private manufacturer and merchant become *unnecessary*, and since the bulk of the economic apparatus is in the hands of the state, it can and does use economic pressure to uproot the businessmen and to give over their functions to agencies working not for private gain. The fear of some overpessimistic critics lest the Nepman devour the socialist sector of the Soviet industry has thus been proven unfounded. The bugaboo of the Nepman may still be used by enemies without and within to "show" the absence of socialism in the U. S. S. R. What they actually show is either lack of understanding or a malicious intent to discredit what they cannot destroy.

"Who will beat whom?" asked Lenin when the N. E. P. was being introduced. History has given the answer. The proletariat has beaten the Nepman. The socialist sector in industry and commerce has beaten the private. Together with the *monopoly of foreign trade* and the *monopoly of banking*, together with the *fiscal power* and the *price-fixing power* in the hands of the workers, this places the proletariat in an impregnable situation as holding all the strategic points and all the key positions in the economic field.

2. The position of the workers has also tremendously improved in relation to the peasants. In 1920 the peasants were economically

stronger than the workers. The workers could not live without the peasants. The peasants managed to live without the workers. The productive forces of the workers were nearly all destroyed. The fundamental means of peasant production—the land—remained perfectly intact. The production of the city had fallen to a miserable fraction of the pre-war output. Agricultural production had fallen only about one-half. The enemies of the Revolution pointed their fingers at this situation saying with glee that it meant making a proletarian revolution without the proletariat (the number of industrial workers had fallen to a fraction of their pre-war number.)

This situation has changed. The relation is reversed. *Industry is growing more rapidly than agriculture.* The number of workers in industry is on the increase. The percentage of the agricultural population in relation to the total is on the decrease. Agricultural output in 1928-29 is computed to increase 6.4 per cent. Industrial output is to increase 20 per cent. Between 1924-25 and 1927-28 the gross production of the socialized economic sector grew from 29.9 to 39.8 per cent. of the total; during the same time the private sector (including all agriculture) decreased from 70.1 to 60.2 per cent. In trade, the figures were an increase from 72.6 to 84.5 per cent. and a decrease from 27.4 to 15.5 per cent. respectively. In five years the relative position of industry and agriculture, of the proletariat and the peasantry, will have changed still more in favor of the former.

COLLECTIVISM IN THE VILLAGES

3. This improved position of the proletariat is by no means a disadvantage for the peasants. Therein lies the foundation for the alliance of the peasants with the workers. The Soviet city does not exploit the village. On the contrary, the city utilizes its economic life for the village. There was a time when the city lived on the village, giving very little in return, outside of the blood of the workers who fought in the front ranks to secure the revolutionary conquests of both themselves and the peasants. In the last few years the slogan has been more and better goods for the village at lower prices. Notwithstanding the urgent necessity of saving capital to increase the plant, notwithstanding the propaganda of the opposition within the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in favor of squeezing out of the peasants a maximum price for manufactured goods, the policy has been to cheapen production and to reduce prices. No great advances could be made in this direction, yet the prices have actually been lowered in the face of a "goods famine." At the same time prices for agricultural goods have been advanced. Thus the "scissors," the gap between the prices for agricultural and manufactured goods, becomes narrower: it is to drop from 1.37 in

1927-28 to 1.28 in 1928-29, while the quality of the goods improves.

The village has gained from the Revolution, and is gaining from the N. E. P. Agriculture has recuperated. It has not made big strides equal to those of industry. However, it has exceeded the pre-war level, and it will increase in the coming five years 30-40 per cent. according to the plan, with the difference that before the war the *landlord* owned a large share of the agricultural production while at present all the output belongs to the peasants. It is true that the process of providing the country with grain for export did not proceed smoothly at the beginning of the economic year 1927-28, and that extraordinary measures were required to mobilize the grain, particularly that of the richer peasants who held about 20 per cent. of the reserves. But this was a difficulty accompanying economic progress. With the growth of industry, it became more advantageous for the peasants to cultivate industrial plants rather than grain. Thus the area under flax, cotton, sugar beets, and the number of peasants breeding cattle on their land, increased in relation to the planting of cereals. On the other hand, the number of peasants leaving their homes for seasonal work in the cities (building trades, road construction, etc.), increased during 1927-28, which left less labor in agriculture. All this, however, signifies a *betterment in the situation of the peasant*. The increased flow of goods from the city to the village, and the increase in agricultural output, will continue to improve the situation of the peasant.

4. Holding the key positions in the economic life, and possessing all political power to carry out plans, the workers, under the leadership of the Communist Party, have created a situation where *they can proceed to build socialism also in the village*. It is true that only 2.5 per cent. of the total land area in the Soviet Union is at present cultivated on a collective basis. (Soviet farms and peasant co-operatives for common planting). It is true that large strands of the peasantry have not yet grasped the advantages of collective agricultural production. However, the peasants have retained their friendly relations to the workers in spite of temporary difficulties, and *the workers have at their disposal vastly more means for remodelling the peasant's life*.

The proletarian dictatorship is applying its economic power to the village along the following main lines:

- a. *Land distribution*, whereby the poorer peasants, holding small allotments or no land at all, are being provided with land from the state land reserves. This sometimes requires *moving* the peasants from one region to another.

b. Introduction of *agricultural machinery* and tractors into the village, which on the one hand improves the method of production, on the other forces the peasants to resort to co-operation.

c. *Irrigation* and other large scale *land improvements*, increasing the available supply of land and the size of the crops.

d. *Electrification*, which supplies the village with cheap power and of necessity induces it to introduce better methods of cultivation.

f. Demand for *industrial plants* which almost automatically drives the producers to look for better methods of agriculture..

f. Aid to *industries*, directly connected with agriculture and using agricultural products for their primary material, like seed oil presses, flour mills.

g. Introduction of improved *seeds* and improved *cattle*.

h. *Contracts* with peasant communities concerning deliveries of large volumes of agricultural goods for the city industries, thus compelling the peasants to search for better methods of cultivation.

i. *Credits* granted individual peasants and peasant co-operatives.

Adding the *political* power lodged in the local Soviets where, under pressure from the workers, the influence of the *richer* peasants, *kulaks*, has been rendered insignificant, and the *cultural aid* given the village in the form of agricultural schools, general education, model farms, agriculture instructors, etc., we obtain a system of powerful means by which the workers can compel the peasants to abandon their individualist methods of cultivation and pass to *collective cultivation*.

The latter is dictated by sheer economic necessity. The peasant must increase his output. He must have the equivalent wherein to obtain manufactured goods whose stream is steadily growing. The productivity of the land in the Soviet Union is still *one-fourth* of that of Germany, while the quality of the land is by no means inferior. The productivity of the land must increase. This requires new methods of cultivation, *which is impossible on small parcels of land*. Thus agricultural progress dictates the *transition to collective production*, for which the peasants are being prepared both through the above measures and through the rapid spread of co-operatives (hitherto almost exclusively confined to selling and buying).

5. The workers orientate themselves on the *poor and middle* peasants, helping them to combat the rich peasant both economically and politically. That powerful influence which large-scale industry is exercising over the countryside, and which in capitalistic countries makes the village a hinterland for the industrial system while in the Soviet Union it is used to increase the material well-being of the peasants and to raise their economic standards, is entirely directed toward the middle-sized and poor farms. As a result, the reverse of what is observable in capitalist countries is taking place in the

U. S. S. R. While in the former the middle groups of the farmers are being "washed out" through a process of proletarianization and pauperization (mortgages, foreclosures, transition to tenancy, etc.), in the latter the middle groups are on the increase. Socialist industry moulds the village after a new pattern. The next step is *collectivization of agricultural production* which will eliminate the rich peasant (by economic or extra-economic pressure).

Every village or factory of agricultural products is a complement to the city factories of manufactured goods. This is the plan of the workers. They have now immeasurably more power to achieve this end than they had two or three years ago. *This power is bound to grow.*

6. With industry growing, with workers' actual wages 34 per cent. above the pre-war wages, with culture spreading among the masses, with the *youth* of both workers and peasants trained in the spirit of collective work for a common goal, with efficiency in management and administration making rapid progress among the workers and peasants, particularly the former, with the Red Army as a training school for efficient collective work in city and village, with the general rise of the economic and cultural standards, with the ever easier overcoming of internal difficulties as a consequence of the increasing reserves in energy, knowledge, experience and material means; with the unity of the C. P. S. U. assured after the double defeat of the opposition in the battle of principles at the 15th Congress of the Party a year ago, and in the practice of the past year which proved the groundlessness of the opposition's lamentation; with the numbers and the unity and the self-assurance of the workers and the agility and vigilance growing—the spread of socialism from the socialist sector of national economy to the private sector, to the remnants of private manufacturing and trading, which is not at all important, and to private and individual agriculture, which is all-important, *is only a matter of time.*

The road is clear. The Soviet economic engine, with haltings and clatter, at times with an excessive expenditure of energy, at times impeded by inner friction, often shaken by the roughness of the road is unceasingly moving forward, toward socialism.

Socialist construction is proceeding on an accelerated scale.

It depends upon us, upon the labor movement of the capitalist countries, to see to it that this construction is not interrupted by an attack from without.

Eugene Victor Debs

By Alexander Trachtenberg

(NOTE: The following article was written especially as an introduction to a selection of speeches and writings of Eugene V. Debs just issued by International Publishers, 381 Fourth Avenue, New York, as Volume IX in their series VOICES OF REVOLT. We print the article on Debs on the occasion of the second anniversary of his death which occurred October 20, 1926.—*Editor*).

BORN of poor Alsatian parents in Terre Haute, Ind., on November 5th, 1855, Debs went to work in a railroad shop at the age of fourteen and at sixteen he was firing a freight engine on the railroad. He joined the Brotherhood of Firemen and Enginemen, becoming within a few years the editor of its official journal and secretary of the organization. During his term as leading official of his union, Debs helped to organize several other railroad unions, among them the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen, the Railway Carmen, the Switchmen, and the Railroad Telegraphers. Having been instrumental, in 1893, in organizing the American Railway Union—a union comprising the different crafts employed on the railways—Debs resigned his post as secretary of the Firemen's organization to become the leader of this industrial union of railway workers. Before a year passed, the new organization became involved in a struggle with the Great Northern Railroad, terminating successfully for the union. The same year the A. R. U. joined in a sympathetic strike in defense of the Pullman Company workers who struck against a wage cut. The struggle was a bitter one with the Federal troops helping the paralyzed railroads to break the strike. The strike was lost and Debs was sent to jail for six months for continuing the struggle in spite of the sweeping injunction which the courts issued against him and other strike leaders.

It was during his imprisonment in the Woodstock jail that he saw a gleam of the political implications of the A. R. U. struggle and defeat. Debs was then not new to politics. In 1878, the year in which he became editor of the Firemen's Journal, he was offered a congressional nomination by the Democrats of Terre Haute which under the prevailing array of political forces meant an election. Debs declined the nomination, being then greatly concerned with the building of the union. In 1885, he was elected to the state legislature of Indiana in which he served one term.

When he came out of Woodstock in 1895, he was shaken from his capitalist party moorings, but not sufficiently, for the next year he followed Bryan, who gathered around him the petit-bourgeois

reform elements, including the Populists. The lessons of the A. R. U. strike, however, were being crystallized, and in 1897 he addressed a political letter to the members of the A. R. U. in which he declared that "the issue is socialism versus capitalism." That it was the Pullman strike and Woodstock that led Debs to socialism we read in his own account which he gave to the court when he was tried for his leadership in the strike: "I was baptized in socialism in the roar of conflict."

With his followers in the A. R. U., which in the meantime greatly declined, and representatives of different socialistic groups in the middle west, Debs organized in 1897 the Social Democracy of America, which took up as its main task the organization of socialist colonies—a Utopian scheme which had met with failure in America fifty years before. With Victor Berger, Debs organized a split at a convention of the Social Democracy in 1898 and formed the Social Democratic Party of America, which was to be built on the pattern of the European socialist political parties.

This party later united its forces with a split-off faction of the Socialist Labor Party in 1900 and formed the Socialist Party. Debs was the first presidential nominee of the united party and polled about 100,000 votes. He was also a candidate in the three successive presidential elections, receiving 402,000, 420,000, and 897,000 votes respectively. He declined to be a candidate in 1916. That year the S. P. vote dropped to 585,000. In 1920, while in prison, he was again a candidate and received 920,000 votes.

Besides participating in the national elections as standard bearer of the party, Debs traveled extensively throughout the country on agitation tours for the party and subscription drives for the various publications with which he was connected, such as the *Appeal to Reason*, the *Rip Saw*, etc. He also contributed to the *International Socialist Review* which was a left-wing organ in the Socialist Party. Debs was always in demand as a speaker at demonstrations, strikes, free speech fights, defense cases, and similar struggles.

Debs' writings and reported speeches are mostly fugitive. Besides an early collection of his utterances and the sentimental vaporings of a would-be Boswell, there is a collection of his war speeches issued by the National Committee of the Socialist Party, in which his attitude on war is deleted from his speeches to the jury and to the court during his Cleveland trial. The excuse given by the S. P. for the elimination was that the Supreme Court was reviewing the case. However, an edition has been published containing material dated 1925, and not only are references to his war stand deleted but also his remarks concerning the Bolsheviks and the Russian Revolution.

In the following pages the editor attempted to give a critical estimate of Debs' place in the American revolutionary movement.

It is based on personal observation of his activities during a period of twenty years. The attitude of Debs on the trade unions and the Socialist Party, as well as his stand on the War and the Russian Revolution, were the only questions which could be taken up in this already too long introduction. The writer believes, however, that the true character of Debs is mirrored in his utterances reproduced in the volume and his position on the several questions discussed in the introduction. His brother, Theodore, graciously aided the editor in supplying him with material which he had in his possession.

Debs and the Trade Unions

Debs was a revolutionary trade unionist. His whole experience in the labor movement had taught him that only a trade union based on a class program can cope with the offensive of the employers and serve the workers properly in their everyday struggles. His revolutionary conception of the role of the trade unions, as well as his experience in craft unions, led him to adopt the idea of industrial unionism. These two motivating forces caused him to sponsor the formation of the I. W. W. in 1905.

As a socialist Debs did not believe in the neutrality policy of the S. P. Unlike the "pure and simple" trade unionist he knew that there could be no absolute separation between the political and economic phases of the labor movement. In 1912, when the Socialist Party was at the height of its strength in membership and influence, he wrote: "The S. P. cannot be neutral on the union question. It is compelled to declare itself by the logic of evolution, and as a revolutionary party it cannot commit itself to the principles of reactionary trade unionism." Debs stood for the permeation of the existing unions by the socialists, advocating the policy of "boring from within." As a matter of fact, this tactic was enunciated at the very inception of the Socialist Party as against the policy of deserting the existing unions and leaving them to the reactionary leaders. Debs never failed to emphasize the need of the organization of the unorganized,—another policy which is stressed to-day only by the communists and the left wing. Neither did Debs recoil from the idea of organizing the unorganized into *new unions* in view of the failure of the official labor movement to pay attention to the hosts of workers left outside the labor organizations. He wrote in 1912: "*I would encourage industrial independent organization, especially among the millions who have not been organized at all, and I would also encourage the 'boring from within' for all that can be accomplished by the industrial unionists in the craft unions.*" (Italics mine—A. T.) Even in 1910, in a letter to Tom Mann, he wrote: "We must bore from within and without."

Debs hated class collaboration with all his being and he fre-

quently used his invectives against Gompers, who more than any one else personified this policy. Gompers' connections with the Civic Federation always came in for scathing criticism from Debs. "For the very reason Gompers was glorified by Wall Street, Bill Haywood is despised by Wall Street," he thus compared the two outstanding figures who represented the opposite poles in the labor movement. Although many prominent socialists were active in the leadership of various unions, the A. F. of L. was always considered by Debs as the bulwark of reaction and its affiliation with the Civic Federation was for Debs a sufficient indication of its hopeless class-collaborationist policy. He knew well that when a labor organization collaborates with an employers' organization it is the latter that will exert the influence, secure the benefit of such collaboration, and completely demoralize and annul the very purposes for which the union was organized. Although fully recognizing the reactionary character of the A. F. of L. and never failing to attack its leaders for their class-collaborationist policies, Debs, however, failed organizationally to challenge Gompers' leadership and call upon his party to solidify the large numbers of organized workers who followed the party into an organized opposition within the A. F. of L. on the platform of the class struggle vs. class-collaboration. He wrote in 1911: "The A. F. of L., as an organization, with its Civic Federation to determine its attitude and control its course, is deadly hostile to the S. P. and to any and every revolutionary movement of the working class. *To kowtow to this organization and to join hands with its leaders to secure political favor can only result in compromising our principles and bringing disaster to the party.*" (Italics mine—A. T.) How prophetic these words sound to-day when we observe the support which the S. P. leaders now extend to the Greens, the Wolls, the Lewises and the Sigmans in their fight against the militant rank and file in the labor unions. The S. P. has indeed brought disaster upon itself through its policy of making common cause with the reactionary leadership of the A. F. of L. and through them with all the enemies of labor.

The Gompers' policy of "No politics in the unions" always amused Debs who knew that Gompers himself was a Democratic politician and that his lieutenants were working in elections for either the Republican or the Democratic Party in consideration for favors or jobs. The policy of the A. F. of L. to petition Congress or otherwise depend upon government bodies was repulsive to Debs. "Can they not see that we have a capitalist class Congress and capitalist class legislatures and that it is the very height of folly and depth of humiliation for a committee of the working class to beg the representatives of the capitalist class to legislate in the interest of the working class?"

From the very beginning of his acceptance of socialism as his guiding philosophy, Debs understood that the only *real* labor union is the *class union*. He never failed to drive home this lesson. The old union—by which he meant the union which Gompers helped to develop through class-collaboration and which was founded on the policy of a “fair day’s work for a fair day’s wage,”—he considered as entirely opposed to the interests of the workers. He maintained that this union is “organized on the basis of identity of interests between the capitalists and the wage workers, and spends its time and devotes its energies to harmonizing these two classes; and it is a vain and hopeless task. When this interest can be even temporarily harmonized it is always in the interest of the capitalist class and at the expense of the working class.”

Debs became a convinced industrial unionist as a result of his experience with the unions on the railroads. This is why he helped to form the American Railway Union as an industrial union of the workers employed on the railroad. He witnessed the resultant jurisdictional disputes which were sapping the vitality of the labor unions from the inside, and he saw how the employers were better able to defeat the workers because of their division along craft lines. The reactionary character of the craft union, according to Debs, lay also in the fact that its persistence was atavistic, as it was not keeping in touch with the development of industry.

Debs understood the nature of the class struggle and he always saw the array of class forces in every fight the workers waged. This can be observed in all his utterances. He also knew the power and the role of the state in class conflicts. He experienced it many times on himself during the struggles in which he was engaged. He saw the A. R. U. strike broken by military force and when he later described it he wrote that “in the gleam of every bayonet and the flash of every rifle the class struggle was revealed.”

Debs and the Socialist Party

On many occasions Debs was in open conflict with the S. P. leadership. Although considered as such, Debs really was never the political leader of the party. He represented perhaps the greatest peculiarity in the American socialist movement. Considered by the rank and file as the personification of the fighting spirit of socialism and looked upon by the outside world as the outstanding personality in the American socialist movement, Debs never wrote a platform for the party, never sat on its executive committee, except for the last two or three years of his life, when he was brought in more for window dressing, never was sent as a delegate to a national or international convention, never was permitted to participate in the councils of the party to formulate policies and work

out tactics. The leadership of the S. P. studiously avoided bringing Debs into the organization. He was kept on the platform where his eloquence was capitalized, or he was allowed to write in fugitive and privately owned socialist journals rather than in the official organs of the party.

The S. P. leadership feared Debs' revolutionary attitude on the burning questions which agitated the membership of the party. They knew his uncompromising stand on many questions and they preferred not to have any quarrels with him. He spoke his mind from time to time, but being organizationally removed from the membership he could not exercise the influence over them which otherwise would have been his. Debs should never have permitted himself to be placed in such a position by the S. P. leaders. His place was among the proletarian members, guarding the party against the reformist leaders and guiding the membership in his own spirit of militancy. He should have been the political leader of the party instead of letting that leadership fall into the hands of lawyers and ministers.

During the years 1910-12 the S. P. grew in membership, reaching the highest number in its history (over 120,000). Debs saw the entrance of elements into the party who were joining it not as a revolutionary socialist party but as a third capitalist party. While in other countries there were liberal parties which petit-bourgeois elements, disillusioned with conservative parties, could join, America had two equally reactionary parties from which these elements sought to escape. The S. P. was the only available political home for all those who favored reforms which the two main parties opposed. Advocates of woman's suffrage, direct election of senators, abolition of child labor, protective labor legislation, etc., joined the Socialist Party through which they hoped to promote these reforms, not bothering about the ultimate aims which were written into the program of the party. In this manner the proletarian and revolutionary sections in the party were permeated by altogether alien elements.

With his revolutionary instinct Debs felt the danger lurking for the Socialist Party in the admission of such elements. These were the years of "trust-busting" campaigns, of muck-raking and the offering of all sorts of panaceas against the encroachments of corporate wealth. The petit-bourgeoisie was beginning to feel the solidification of American capital and it was looking to reforms to help it out of the difficulty. These elements were finding their way into the Socialist Party, and the well known among them, particularly the writers and journalists, were immediately acclaimed as leaders. Charles Edward Russell, Allan Benson, and their like became overnight spokesmen of the party. They were elected to executive committees and designated as standard bearers of the party.

Writing in 1911 under the title "Danger Ahead," Debs warned the party against the degeneration which was sure to set in as a result of the admixture of elements entirely foreign to its program and its aims. He wrote: "It (the S. P.) may become permeated and corrupted with the spirit of bourgeois reform to an extent that will practically destroy its virility and efficiency as a revolutionary organization. . . . The working-class character and the revolutionary character of the S. P. are of first importance. *All the votes of the people would do us no good if we cease to be a revolutionary party.*" (Italics mine.—A. T.)

Debs crossed swords with the S. P. leaders when they advocated the A. F. of L. policy of excluding immigrants. In a letter to a delegate to the 1910 convention, which adopted a resolution dealing with immigration, he wrote: "I have just read the majority report of the committee on immigration. It is utterly un-socialistic, reactionary and in truth outrageous, and I hope you will oppose it with all your power. The idea that certain races are to be excluded because of tactical expediency would be entirely consistent in a bourgeois convention of self-seekers, but should have no place in a proletarian gathering under the auspices of an international movement that is calling on the oppressed and exploited workers of all the world to unite for their emancipation."

To Debs such a stand meant forsaking the principle of international solidarity and he called upon the members "to stand squarely on our revolutionary working-class principles and make our fight openly and uncompromisingly against all our enemies, adopting no cowardly tactics and holding out no false hopes."

When the Left Wing split from the S. P., Debs was in prison. Only partial information could reach him regarding the controversy in the party which preceded this split. While Debs was bound by many ties to the Socialist Party, he did not fully agree with its leadership. During the 1919 convention the remaining Left Wing elements succeeded under pressure of the split to force a resolution nominating Debs for president for the 1920 elections. The leaders did not wish to have Debs, who was then in prison, nominated as a candidate. They feared that the size of the vote might be affected and did not want to flaunt before the country a presidential candidate who was in prison. When he was finally nominated in 1920 and a committee consisting of Steadman, Oneal and others was sent to visit him in prison to notify him officially of the nomination, he surprised it with a devastating criticism of the party.

Regarding the platform adopted at the convention which nominated him, he said: "I wish I might say that it had my unqualified approval," modifying it by saying that platforms are not so important, as "we can breathe the breath of revolution into any platform." He emphasized, however, that socialist platforms are not

made to catch votes" and that "*we are in politics not to get votes but to develop power to emancipate the working class.*" (Italics mine.—A. T.) It was also significant that on that occasion he expressed regret "that the convention did not see its way clear to affiliate with the Third International without qualification." Debs, therefore, allied himself with the third of the delegates of the 1920 Convention which favored the acceptance of the twenty-one points of admission and was opposed to Hillquit's proposal for affiliation with reservations. To the S. P. leaders who were present he addressed himself point blank with the following rebuke: "*There is a tendency in the party to become a party of politicians, instead of a party of the workers.*" (Italics mine.—A. T.)

Removed by his incarceration from the outside world, Debs, perhaps, could not see sufficiently that this was no longer a tendency, but a fact. The process of degeneration, beginning with the struggle against the Left Wing, was fast being completed and Debs, having recognized that the S. P. was becoming "a party of politicians instead of a party of workers," should have definitely broken with the politicians and joined with the revolutionary workers who left or were leaving the S. P. in large numbers. Although in prison, Debs should have put himself at the head of the militant elements who were deserting the reformist party and were being organized under the leadership of the Third International, instead of allowing the importunities of his friends to reserve final judgment until he was released. Debs knew enough about the party to realize that it no longer was the party as he visioned it in 1908, a "class-conscious, revolutionary socialist party which is pledged to abolish the capitalist system, class rule and wage slavery, a party which does not compromise or fuse, but, preserving inviolate the principles which quickened it into life and now give it vitality and force, moves forward with dauntless determination to the goal of economic freedom."

Unlike Lenin on an international scale, Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg in Germany, and Ruthenberg in this country, who not only criticized the reformist leaders but fought them and organized against them, Debs remained only the critic. When he was released from prison he allowed the same leaders whom he held responsible for ruining the party, to use him as a shield to cover their alliances with the trade-union bureaucracy and capitalist politicians. Beginning under his "chairmanship," the leaders have completed the transformation of the Socialist Party into a party of liberal reform, even going as far as deleting the clause dealing with the class struggle from their membership application blank.

Debs wrote in 1905 on the place of the class struggle in the program of the labor movement, not to speak of a socialist party: "We insist that there is a class struggle; that the working class must

recognize it; that they must organize economically and politically upon the basis of that struggle; and that when they do so organize they will then have the power to free themselves and put an end to that struggle forever."

The S. P. has forsaken the class struggle and its leaders advocate class peace. Debs saw this degeneration coming and it was therefore his historic mistake of not breaking with the moribund organization and joining the party of the class struggle—the Communist Party.

Debs on War

Debs was an uncompromising opponent of capitalist wars and as such he was imprisoned during the war. Although he knew the economic causes of wars, he did not fully comprehend the nature of modern imperialism. Unlike C. E. Ruthenberg, who understood the role of American imperialism and was among the first to be imprisoned during the war, Debs was guided in his anti-war stand mainly by his loyalty to the principle of international solidarity of socialism. He denounced the European socialists who turned social patriots, and with the socialists who voted war credits in mind he wrote: "If I were in Congress I would be shot before I would vote a dollar for such a war." Although probably not acquainted with Lenin's writings, he expressed in a crude way the tactics of fighting the imperialist war and the capitalists of various countries with working-class action. "When capitalists declare war, it is then for us to declare war on them, paralyze industry by the strike and fight every battle for the overthrow of the ruling class."

Some of Debs' utterances betray pacifist notions and repugnance to violence. "When I think of a cold, glittering, steel bayonet being plunged into the white, quivering flesh of a human being, I recoil with horror," he declared in his Canton speech. We find sufficient proof, however, that Debs was not opposed to war *in general*, but to *capitalist* wars.

In 1915, when America began to prepare for war, Debs wrote an article for an anti-preparedness issue of the *Appeal to Reason* in which he derided those who would enlist in the army. There were many expressions in that article which did not harmonize with his known convictions. He was, however, accused of harboring pacifist illusions. In a reply in another issue of the paper Debs came back with a declaration of his position which should cause his self-appointed successor, Norman Thomas, to renounce his memory forever after. "*No, I am not opposed to all war, nor am I opposed to fighting under all circumstances, and any declaration to the contrary would disqualify me as a revolutionist,*" (Italics mine.—A. T.) was his statement dictated by his revolutionary instinct.

Debs reiterated that he was "only opposed to ruling-class war," and that he refused "to obey any command to fight for the ruling class, but will not wait to be commanded to fight for the working class."

Debs felt that, since the question was raised, he must answer it categorically and completely. He wrote further: "*I am opposed to every war but one; I am for that war with heart and soul and that is the world-wide war of the social revolution. In that war I am prepared to fight in any way the ruling class may make it necessary, even to barricades.*" He concluded: "There is where I stand and where I believe the Socialist Party stands, or ought to stand on the question of war." With the support of the League of Nations, which the S. P. once declared was the capitalist Black International, the World Court and other imperialist instruments among their articles of faith, is it any wonder that the S. P. leaders are forsaking Debs' memory as they ignored his opinions when he lived?

Debs took the St. Louis anti-War resolution of 1917 seriously. At the Ohio state convention of the party held at Canton he gave expression to what he had said before America's entrance into the imperialist war. Ruthenberg, the leader of the party in Ohio, was already in prison and Debs took the cause of his imprisonment as the text for his address to the convention. The Government convicted Debs and tried to make an example of his conviction and imprisonment, just as the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti was to serve as a warning to the militant workers in the present period. Due to nation-wide agitation, Debs was later offered his freedom, but he would not leave prison except on his own terms. On December 25, 1921, after almost three years of incarceration in one of America's bastiles, the 68-year-old revolutionist walked out of the prison doors in broken health, which he never regained till his death five years later.

Debs and the Russian Revolution

The Russian Revolution found in Debs an immediate and sympathetic response. It must be noted, however, that although he considered it "the greatest in point of historic significance and far-reaching influence in the annals of the race," he did not grasp the full meaning of the November Revolution to the world revolutionary movement of the workers. Debs sensed the difference between the compromising Mensheviks who supported Kerensky and the indomitable Bolsheviks who forged ahead toward the proletarian revolution. In addressing himself to the Russian Bolsheviks in 1918 on the first anniversary of the November Revolution he wrote: "The achieved glory of your revolutionary triumph is that you have preserved inviolate the fundamental principles of international socialism and refused to compromise. It will be to your everlast-

ing honor that you would rather have seen the Revolution perish and the Soviet with it than to prostitute either one by betraying the workers to alleged progressive reforms, which would mean to them an extension of their servitude under a fresh aggregation of exploiters and parasites." When the name Bolshevik was spoken with derision among his party friends, Debs declared publicly: "I am a Bolshevik from the crown of my head to the tips of my toes." To the jury he defiantly declared: "I have been accused of expressing sympathy with the Bolsheviks of Russia. I plead guilty to the charge."

Debs was not clear on proletarian dictatorship as he was not clear on several fundamental problems, especially on the state as taught by Marx and Lenin. He spoke about the "unfortunate phrase" and stated that "dictatorship is autocracy," but he immediately explained that "there is no autocracy in the rule of the masses." The experienced revolutionist in him, even if only by instinct, led him also to the conclusion that "during the transition period the revolution must protect itself." To those of the socialist leaders who were "for" the Russian Revolution, but "did not like certain features of it," Debs openly declared in speaking to the S. P. committee which came to Atlanta Penitentiary to notify him of his nomination for the presidency in 1920: "I heartily support the Russian Revolution without reservations."

Debs the Orator

The fact that Debs was the most eloquent speaker the American labor movement has produced contributed a great deal to his being kept on the platform. American history abounds with names of great orators who flourished in the legislative halls and the pulpits. Daniel Webster and Wendell Phillips are probably the most illustrious representatives of these types of American oratory. Debs was much impressed with the published orations which he read, and in his youth trained himself in the art of public speaking.

There was not that intellectual force that was behind Lassalle's oratory, nor did he become the public tribune as Jaures. Debs on the platform was more the evangelist. He appealed to his audience rather than reasoned with it. He always tried to convert and his speaking pose always betrayed his deep earnestness. His figures of speech were apt and poetic. He often grew lyrical and his rhythmic body responded to the rhythm of his utterances. He kept his audience in raptures and he often appeared to those near him as though he were in a religious ecstasy.

His writings were of the same pattern as his speeches. He probably dictated most of his published articles. They read like impassioned orations. They particularly suited a paper like the

Appeal to Reason, which was perhaps the best agitational medium the American labor movement ever produced.

With his eloquent voice and trenchant pen, Debs stirred the imagination of large sections of the American working class. His appearance in a struggle was sure to result in the revival of militancy, for he knew how to describe to the workers their life under capitalism and to inspire them with hope for ultimate victory.

Debs—A Fearless Revolutionist

In the two outstanding events in Debs' life in which his class integrity was tested,—the A. R. U. strike and the World War,—he revealed himself a fearless revolutionist. "I would rather be a thousand times a free soul in jail than a sycophant or coward on the streets," Debs prefaced his famous anti-war speech at Canton. Knowing that there were Government agents who were gathering "evidence" against him, many in his audience felt that Debs was walking right into the jaws of the Department of Justice. He probably read on their faces their concern over his freedom. "Do not worry over the charge of treason to your masters, but be concerned about the treason that involves yourself," he importuned them.

Not only during the war but in times of "peace," Debs urged revolutionary action upon the workers. When the miners in Rockefeller-owned Colorado were being beaten into submission by the hired assassins of the state and the coal companies, when the holocaust at Ludlow was demanding working-class action, Debs appealed for a defense fund for the Miners' Union, not to hire lawyers to argue in the courts about the "inalienable rights" of workers to strike, but to "provide each member with the latest high-power rifle, the same as used by the corporation gunmen, and 500 rounds of cartridges. In addition to this, every district should purchase and equip and man enough Gatling and machine guns to match the equipment of Rockefeller's private army of assassins."

Throughout the trial for treason for his Canton speech which began September 9, 1918, Debs conducted himself as a revolutionist. He refused to allow witnesses for the defense and himself spoke to the jury rather than permit his lawyers to use tricks known to the legal profession to mitigate his status before capitalist law. Debs pleaded guilty to the charges made against him by the Government and used the court as a tribune to speak to the workers of the country. He refused to recant or to take back anything he said. In his speech to the jury he repeated in substance what he had said at Canton and, in fact, made it stronger. The anti-War resolution of the St. Louis Convention, which was fast becoming a mere scrap of paper, was revived. Flesh and blood was put on its

skeleton when Debs spoke for two hours to the jury on that memorable September 12.

The jury having found Debs guilty "as charged," he was brought for sentence on September 14. Availing himself of the customary right to speak before sentence is imposed, Debs prefaced his remarks to the court as follows: "Years ago I recognized my kinship with all living beings, and I made up my mind that I was not one bit better than the meanest of the earth. I said then, I say now, that while there is a lower class, I am in it; while there is a criminal element, I am of it; while there is a soul in prison, I am not free." He took his conviction of ten years' imprisonment as a revolutionist. When the U. S. Supreme Court, including the so-called liberal Justices, Holmes and Brandeis, unanimously affirmed the conviction, he declared: "The decision is perfectly consistent with the character of the Supreme Court as a ruling-class tribunal."

On April 19, 1919, though the war was over, Debs, at the age of 65 and in delicate health, entered Moundville (W. Va.) prison to serve his sentence. (The Federal prisons were still overcrowded, housing many political prisoners. Later Debs was removed to the Federal penitentiary at Atlanta.) To the workers of America, whose minds and hearts were turned to him, Debs declared: "I enter the prison doors a flaming revolutionist,—my head erect, my spirit untamed and my soul unconquerable."

Debs began his career in the ranks of the labor movement. He reached a high position in his union and led several historic battles. When he came to the socialist movement he was a national figure with a prison term and a record of heroic labor struggles behind him.

We already had occasion to refer to the policy which the S. P. leadership employed to exploit Debs to recruit members, to gather subscriptions for various publications, and especially to obtain votes in national elections. In keeping with the party's "neutrality" policy with regard to the trade unions, Debs, though he was opposed to this policy, was nevertheless won away from the field of labor struggles to the narrow parliamentary and agitational fields of activity. The result was that Debs who could organize labor unions and, through his great eloquence and inspiring appeal, move large masses into action, became a platform speaker and a presidential candidate. If it were not for the fact that Debs would frequently rebel against the position in which he was placed by the S. P. and on his own initiative throw himself into struggles which would flare up from time to time, thereby keeping his militant spirit alive, we might have witnessed the transformation of a mountain eagle into a bird of paradise.

The ideological level of the S. P. was rather low. Almost no original Marxist literature was produced and whatever educational work was done among the members was in the main superficial. There was no grounding in revolutionary theory and, in building a party mainly for election purposes, there was little opportunity for revolutionary experience. The milieu in which Debs worked was not conducive to the development of his native abilities and talents as a mass leader and organizer. Nor was there an opportunity for Debs to train for real political leadership. The S. P. received from Debs more than it gave him. He lived and drew sustenance from his earlier attainments.

This condition helps to explain the absence of clarity and theoretical precision on various questions. His main shortcoming was that he was not always able to pass judgment upon a new situation engendered in a new period of struggle. That he was always attuned to the manifestations of the class struggle, that he was a militant, and glorified revolutionary action, the material culled from his speeches and writings will bear witness. Even though in disagreement with persons or organizations in the labor movement, his voice and pen were always placed at the disposal of all who were engaged in struggles. Thus we see him rushing to aid the I. W. W., joining the Friends of Soviet Russia and the International Labor Defense, though these organizations were on the S. P. blacklist because they were led by communists. Forgotten and unsung by the official labor movement or the S. P., the martyrdom of the Molly Maguires, and the Chicago anarchists were to him golden pages in the history of the American labor movement, and the Sacco-Vanzetti campaign was always close to his heart.

Jeffersonian democrats, anarcho-liberals and pacifists of all hues, who passed for socialists and were connected with the socialist press, used Debs for copy, particularly during the war and during his confinement in prison. They went out of their way to advertise Debs as the "great humanist," the "great libertarian," taking advantage of his good nature and friendliness to everybody. These appellations could not be meant for Debs who wrote that "*the most heroic word in all languages is Revolution,*" and who always wanted to be known as an unalloyed revolutionist.

Debs was a revolutionist and, with all his shortcomings, he generally eschewed any other but the revolutionary path. As such he is remembered by the present generation of American revolutionists, who will keep his memory green so that it may be passed on to future generations. Eugene Victor Debs, better known to all those who worked with him as Gene Debs, belongs to the revolutionary traditions of the American working class.

SELF-STUDY CORNER

Leninism and War

PART IV. THE DEFENCE OF THE SOVIET UNION AND THE QUESTION OF REVOLUTIONARY WAR

A. THE NECESSITY OF PROLETARIAN WARS IN THE FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM

Lenin writes: "The inequality of economic and political development is an undeniable law of capitalism. Hence it follows that a victory of socialism in some or even in one country at first is possible. The victorious proletariat of this country would, after it has expropriated the capitalists and organized its socialist production, proceed against the rest of the capitalist world, and, if necessary, wage war against the exploiting class and their states. . . . *"A free union of nations under socialism is impossible without one or more long-drawn-out stubborn struggle between the socialist republic and the other states."* (On the slogan of the United States of Europe, August 23rd, 1915.)

The following consequences arise therefrom:

1. We communists do not fight against war "generally." We fight against *imperialist and counter-revolutionary war*, but support and *lead* revolutionary wars of the proletariat (national revolutionary wars of suppressed nations).

2. During imperialist wars we are *against the defense of the fatherland*; but during the revolutionary war of the proletarian state, we are *for* defense of the fatherland. Lenin says: "Since October 25th we have become defenders of the fatherland." (Speech at the VII Party Conference of the Russian Communist Party, 27. III. 1918.)

3. In an imperialist war between two bourgeois states we declare, regardless of who began, that the argument of "a war of defense" is a deception. In the war of an imperialist state against the Soviet Union, however, the latter wages a *just war of defense* regardless of which side fired the first shot. (The same holds good for the war of an imperialist state against a suppressed race.)

4. Neither are we against armies and the military "generally." On the contrary, we are in favor of the working-class obtaining military knowledge, but for their own aims and not those of the

bourgeoisie. Whilst we carry on a determined fight against bourgeois armies and bourgeois military, we are in favor of a proletarian militia and organization of self-protection, and of the proletarian Red Army.

B. THE RED ARMY

The Red Army is not a "Russian Army"; neither is it merely an army of the Soviet Union, but since this is the fatherland of the workers of all countries, it is an *army of the international proletariat*. Every revolutionary worker must know the main facts about the development and essence of the Red Army. We state them here briefly:

1. The Red Army, like the rest of the state apparatus of the proletarian dictatorship was founded after the complete *destruction* of the old imperialist army (the bourgeois state apparatus) as a completely new proletarian army. The early stages were those of the "Red Guards."

2. The Red Army of the U. S. S. R. is a standing army on the basis of general military service for the workers. It was founded on the basis of the teachings of Engels and Lenin, that during the time of the dictatorship of the proletariat when the state and classes *still* exist, a strictly disciplined *standing* army is also necessary for the defense of the proletarian dictatorship against imperialist states. Only in the process of the class upheaval will the Red Army be transformed into a socialist people's militia. (Under a complete communist society there will naturally be no militia.)

3. The first steps in this direction were already made by the introduction of the *territorial system* with quite a short period of training annually for workers called to the colors.

In the regular standing army the service is two years and in the cavalry three years. The soldier resides in the barracks. In the territorial army the period of military service is five years, but the soldier remains at home at his work and is called up merely for short periods of training in his military district for a total period of eight months in all. The divisions of the territorial army (squad, company, battalion, regiment, etc.) are in accordance with the territorial district (factory, urban district or village, town, etc.). The only permanent sections of the territorial army are the commanders and the training corps.

4. The Red Army of the U. S. S. R. is a *class army of the proletariat*. All bourgeois and elements that exploit the labor of others are excluded from it. They are only called up for the labor corps to undergo training without arms. The Red Army is sworn in under the Red Flag; its task is the defense of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the support of the international proletariat against the bourgeoisie. But this does not mean that it

consists only of proletarians. The overwhelming majority is composed of the small peasantry. In the staff command, the proletarian percentage is much higher, and communists are in the *majority* (54 per cent of all commanders, *i. e.*, officers, are communists). Amongst the highest commanders, communists are in an overwhelming majority (example: those graduating from the Military Academy which is training the highest commanders of the Red Army were last year, according to social origin, 24 per cent workers, 37 per cent peasants, 39 per cent employees, 93 per cent communists and 97 per cent participators in the Civil War). Just as the Soviet State generally, so, too, the Red Army is based on the *alliance* of the proletariat with the toiling peasantry; the hegemony of the *proletariat over the peasantry*.

5. The Red Army of the U. S. S. R. is a strictly disciplined army. The election of officers by soldiers and soldiers' committees, which participate in the commands of superiors, decide whether a command should be carried out, etc., *naturally does not exist*. These measures were only demands of the Bolsheviki as long as it was a question of smashing up and revolutionizing the Czarist army. In the new proletarian army such measures were absurd and counter-revolutionary. This strict discipline of the Red Army is not reactionary, based on the suppression of proletarian soldiers by bourgeois officers. On the contrary, it is revolutionary, based on the conscious submission of workers to the necessities of the militarist organization of their class and of the peasants under the military leadership of the proletariat.

6. In view of the fact that the Red Army is based on a conscious revolutionary discipline, political work which makes it clear to the soldiers what they are fighting for, and trains them to be class-conscious, plays a *decisive role* in the Red Army. In this it differs from bourgeois armies where soldiers are absolutely cut off from politics, *i. e.*, from all revolutionary politics, are not permitted to read papers except extremely reactionary ones, and are excluded from the franchise. (In the Red Army, of course, election to the Soviets exists.) Every regiment has in addition to its commander an assistant who is especially told off for political work. In cases when the commander is not able to take over the leadership a regimental commissar exists to conduct the entire political work. Every company has a political leader who carries on the necessary political training (one to two hours daily).

7. The Red Army, just like socialist industry, has also availed itself of the services of bourgeois specialists. From these the proletariat and communists learn the art of war. Without them the formation of the Red Army would have been *impossible*. The former bourgeois officers and military specialists who serve as teachers and instructors in the Red Army are under the strictest communist

control—insofar as they occupy commanding positions under political commissars, etc. Generally speaking, they are loyal to the Red Army and sabotage and treachery are now of very rare occurrence. The training of a new proletarian-peasant staff of commanders renders them more and more superfluous.

8. Every company has a party nucleus. It is formed in the regimental nucleus group which elects the Bureau. Such nuclei carry on considerable political work in the army, carry out Party control, act as a connecting link with the working class outside the army and maintain it as an absolutely reliable weapon for the proletarian state. Without the work of communists in the army, the victory of the Civil War would have been impossible.

C. MILITARIZING THE PROLETARIAT AND THE TOILING PEASANTRY

The imminent danger of war has set the Soviet State to the task of preparing the rear of the Red Army, the workers and peasant masses, for defense. (The Red Army when compared with the population is much smaller than the armies of bourgeois states). On this account the slogan “the militarization of the proletariat and toiling peasantry” was issued. In capitalist states we fight against militarization because it is militarization for the bourgeoisie. In the Soviet Union, however, communists are at the head of militarization because that is a *red* militarization, a militarization against imperialism, *for socialism*. This *red* militarization is not based on the same compulsion as imperialist militarization in bourgeois states. Still, the broad masses of workers and peasants participate in it.

We wish to summarize here the existing institutions and new measures which work on the lines of this red militarization.

1. *Military Training of the Youth*, which Frederick Engels once demanded for the democratic revolution against absolutism, has become a fact in the Soviet Union, for the army of the proletarian peasant youth in the struggle for socialism. In the secondary schools and universities military studies are pursued. Before the proper period of service in the Red Army (in the standing army of the territorial army) there is a *two year period of general compulsory service*. During this time young peasants and workers meet for short terms of military training. All these measures constitute a part of the *arming of the proletariat*, the basis of the Soviet Power.

2. *The Voluntary Air Defense Society* (Air and Chemical Defense) which comprises millions of workers and peasants in the ranks of its membership, is intended to acquaint the masses with all the theoretical and practical questions of defense. This society runs study circles, practical circles for the use of arms, organizes practice in the open country, etc.

3. *Trade unions* and especially the party have in their time during the most difficult periods of the civil war ensured victory by mobilizing their membership. Also, today, trade unions run mili-

tary courses for their members and it is the duty of every communist to gain military knowledge.

4. *The Defense Week*, July 10th to 17th, 1927, served as a preparation of the broad masses for the task of defense. The main issue was the establishment of the closest contact between the working population and the Red Army. Workers and peasants visited barracks, summer camps and training centres repeatedly. The whole scheme was most successful and demonstrated the determination of the proletariat and the toiling peasantry to defend the Soviet Power.

D. THE ROLE OF THE RUSSIAN OPPOSITION

Why do the workers and toiling peasants of the Soviet Union gladly undertake military burdens; why will they fight for the Soviet Power? Because this is the *Dictatorship of the Proletariat* which is building up socialism.

Why does the international proletariat support the U.S.S.R. and why will communists of all countries in case of war issue the slogan "Victory of the U.S.S.R.?" Because this is the dictatorship of the proletariat which is building up socialism; the support of the international proletariat.

This fact is of decisive importance in the defense of the U.S.S.R. Therefore, all bourgeois and social-democratic papers endeavor to represent the Soviet Union as a *bourgeois state*, as degenerate etc., in order to instil the thought in workers that it is not worth while to fight for this Soviet State.

The Opposition in the C.P.S.U. does the same. This is proved by the following theories which are advanced by the Opposition:

1. *Economic Defeatism*: It is impossible to build up socialism in the Soviet Union.

2. *The Accusation of Kulak Deviation*: The C.P.S.U. in view of the impossibility of the construction of socialism, has deviated, from the proletarian line and is carrying on a policy in favor of the kulaks.

3. *The Theory of Thermidor*: The Kulak policy of the party in the Soviet State is leading to a pronounced reactionary change throughout the party like the Thermidor in the great French Revolution.

4. *The War of the U.S.S.R.* cannot under present conditions be revolutionary, but rather imperialist. (Trotsky at the May Plenum of the E. C. C. I. and the August Plenum of the C.P.S.U.).

5. "*The Party Regime Is the Greatest Danger*;" therefore, a struggle against the Party is absolutely essential, and only after the overthrow of its C.C. the struggle against the imperialist enemy. (Trotsky's Clemenceau letter).

In this we have the consequent road to military *defeatism*, which

in an imperialist state is *revolutionary*, but in a socialist state *counter-revolution*.

The actions of the Opposition confirm the fact that their real objective is counter-revolutionary:

(a) Their fractional activity in the C.P.S.U. which went to the extent of trying to create a second party.

(b) Their fractional work in the Comintern in which they worked together with right and ultra-left expelled renegades like Souvarine, Maslow, etc.

As a matter of fact, the slogans of the Opposition today have become the *watchwords of the social-democrats*.

Therefore, the struggle against the Opposition and their ultra-left deviation constitutes a very important task within the limits of the struggle against war and in defense of the U.S.S.R.

LITERATURE ON THE ABOVE

May Theses of the E.C.C.I., Paragraphs 30, 31.

Report Theses and Discussion on War Danger, Sixth Congress. Congress.

Lenin: On the Slogan of Disarmament.

Articles under Standing Head "From the Soviet Union" in the *Imprecorr*.

Material on the Opposition from *Imprecorr* (especially Bukharin's report at the August Plenum of the C.C., C.P.S.U.).

Reports of Varga and Manuilsky at the Sixth World Congress.

The Trotsky Opposition: Its Significance to the American Workers. By Bertram D. Wolfe.

QUESTIONS ON LESSON V.

1. Why are proletarian wars against bourgeois states necessary during the world revolution?

2. Why during such a war, does the proletarian state always wage a just war of defense?

3. Why is it not possible immediately to form a socialist militia? Why is a conscript standing Red Army obligatory?

4. What constitutes the proletarian character of the Red Army?

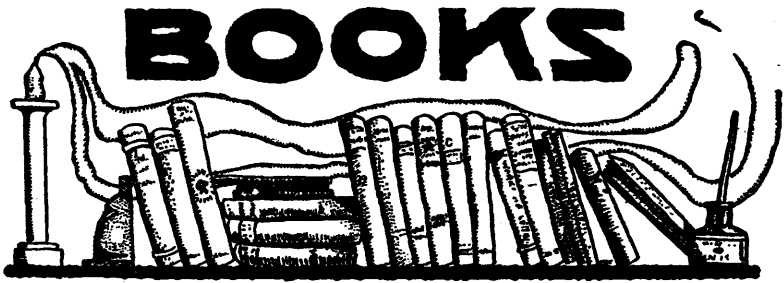
5. Why does the Red Army require strict discipline? On what is this based?

6. What role do former bourgeois officers play in the Red Army and how are they controlled?

7. Why is the army militarization of the proletariat necessary in the U.S.S.R.? What is the difference in our attitude towards "militarization" in America and in the Soviet Union?

8. Wherein consists the semi-defeatist role of the Russian Opposition? What is "conditional defense"?

(Next Month: The Workers Party and the War Danger).



“HISTORY OF MODERN PHILOSOPHY” by HORATIO W. DRESSER.
Thos. Y. Crowell Co., New York. 486 pp. \$3.00.

One of the lowest products of the intellectual cretinism of university life is the so-called historian of philosophy. Lacking a system of that of his own, hopelessly eclectic, dazed by the muddle of many systems and many-syllabled words, seeing no development in the history of ideas, he potters around the boneyard of dead thoughts. He cannot even put bones together in such fashion as to recreate a skeleton of some once living philosophy as a good paleontologist can put together fossil bones to form the skeleton of an extinct monster. A genuine history of philosophy requires a genuine “philosophy of history”—requires an understanding of historical materialism and the ability to apply its scientific methods to the history of human thought.

The present work is like all the orthodox university texts on the history of philosophy. It is not a history and has no philosophy. It does not for a moment occur to the author to give the historical background of a given system of thought. He does not even think to raise the question why one epoch is materialistic and another idealistic. In a dry-as-dust form he gives the personal biography of each philosopher in the manner of a “Who’s Who” but never a picture of the age in which he lived and the stuff from which he formed his thoughts. There is no development, only succession in time. No cause and effect, only description and poor description at that. For the author there is no “positive outcome of philosophy” and to the reader no positive outcome from reading the book. In all these respects this Doctor of Philosophy’s text book is probably worse than the average university text book on the same subject—but that’s pretty bad.

Lest some one of the readers of *The Communist* be tempted by the title to spend the time or the three dollars that the book would cost, I give a brief quotation that serves to show the author’s “viewpoint” as expressed near the end of the book in giving the “historical position” of pragmatism:

“In the end,” he writes, “the pragmatic and dialectic methods are not far apart. The progress of that is not by direct lines but by zigzags, as one doctrine leads to its antithesis in an ensuing criticism, out of which emerges fresh effort. Certain antitheses have persisted from ancient times, notably the contrasts between Being and Becoming, the One and the Many. Thus the antithetical relation of Eclecticism and Heracliticism continues in the polemic between absolutism and temporalism of recent decades. But history also discloses an effort to articulate the greater truths which have survived controversy in terms of the Idea (Plato). The greatness of philosophy is chiefly due to the thinkers who have most nearly succeeded in propounding a system. Its dialectic is largely due to those who, like Zeno, Bradley, have raised penetrating objections. The problem for subsequent history is to assimilate the constructive principles by making allowances for the accidental, purely provincial or temperamental.”

So many good words gone wrong!

B. D. W.

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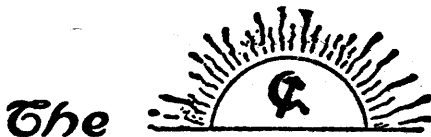
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