

Communist International

NEXT CONGRESS OF THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL

The Executive Committee of the Communist International has decided to convene the 3rd Congress of the Third Communist International on the 1st of June 1921.

The Executive Committee of the Communist International adopted the following provisional agenda:

DRAFT OF AGENDA FOR THE THIRD CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

1. Report of the Executive of the Communist International.
2. The economic world-crisis and the new tasks of the Communist International.
3. Tactics of the Communist International during the Revolution.
4. Transition-period (special requirements, special actions and final struggle of the Revolution).
5. Fight against the Amsterdam yellow Trade Union Federation.
6. The Red Trade Union International and the Communist International.
7. Construction of the Communist Parties, the methods of their work.
8. Construction of the Communist International and its relation to the affiliated parties.
9. The Eastern question.
10. The Italian Socialist Party and the Communist International. (Appeal of the Italian Socialist Party against the resolution of the Executive Committee).
11. The Communist Labor Party of Germany and the Communist International. (Appeal of the United Communist Party of Germany against the resolution of the Executive Committee of the Communist International).
12. The Women's Movement.
13. The Young Communist Movement.
14. Election of the Executive Committee of the Communist International. Headquarters of the E. C.
15. Other business.

G. ZINOVIEV.

1) The Executive affirms its resolution in the Italian question and continues to support the Communist Party of Italy.

2) The Executive protests most determinedly against the support given by one of the presidents of the United Communist Party, Com. Levi, to the centrist fraction Serratti in Livorno and after Livorno. The Executive is firmly convinced that the overwhelming majority of the German sister-party on the Italian question is on the side of the Italian Communists and of the Executive and not on the side of Com. Levi.

3) The Executive declares its agreement with the resolution of the Central Committee of the United Communist Party of February 1st and begs the Central Committee not to recognize any explanations of this resolution which could mean support of the Centrist Serrati fraction and create difficulties to the Italian Communists.

This resolution was unanimously adopted by the Executive Committee of the Communist International after an exact examination of the situation. The representatives of the United Communist Party of Germany voted for the points 1 and 3 and against point 2.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL.

Manager's Column

Americans are hungry readers; they consume more printed paper than other people consume sugar or fat. Their appetite seems to be growing too; statistics show a per capita consumption of news print paper of 7.5 pounds in 1899, grown to *thirty-three* pounds in 1918. We are literally swallowing our forests—in the shape of printed dope—and if this pace continues, we shall have to resort again to stone and clay to carry our tales.

Imagine thirty-three pounds of newsprint for every man, woman and child in the United States. What a volume of misinformation, of lies, of poison from which you cannot escape. It assails you from the sporting page, from every flaunting advertisement, from school books, from the very food you eat. And as a light red thread through it all runs the Socialist press; sometimes so faintly pink that you can hardly perceive it; at other times a glaring red streak, like a burst of sunrays at dawn.

There are thirty-eight million working men and women in this country and to them The Workers' Council ought to bring new light and hope. One of these thirty-eight millions to whom farming in Georgia is "especially gloomy" is yet "very anxious to know something about this 3rd International and Socialism in general. Can't take no stock on those subjects from what the capitalistic press say." Or as a comrade from Utica writes, "I find that it (The Workers' Council) is very interesting, leaning toward an able construction of purpose, and to me it is instructive and desirable."

And the gist of this story is just how to bring The Workers' Council to those who are "anxious to know" and to whom it is desirable and instructive. The answer is in your hands, Comrade. Send us your subscription, get your friend to subscribe; get up a list of names and addresses of your fellow-workers and mail it to us. Perhaps you can sell some copies of The Workers' Council in your spare time. Send for a bundle, at special rates. Talk about the magazine, recommend it to your friends, tell the Editors what you think of it. Be up and doing!

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The Treason of the Triple Alliance

A New Policy Toward the Peasants

Nikolai Lenin's Great Speech

TEN CENTS A COPY

TWO DOLLARS FIFTY CENTS A YEAR

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Editorials

THE NEW FIRST OF MAY

Holidays, in common with many other institutions and customs, change their significance as times go on. When the First Paris Congress of the Second International established the First of May as an international workingmen's holiday thirty-two years ago, the chief purpose of that day was a general agitation for the eight-hour day. From year to year new slogans appeared upon the posters and banners of the parades and demonstrations of the workers; there was no dearth of phrases about disarmament and general appeals to international brotherhood and kindred demands in which great masses of workers, the class-conscious along with those who lacked class-consciousness, could join. And as even the more advanced units of the world labor movement became imbued with the tame spirit of reformism and bourgeois pacifism and liberalism, it seemed significant that this working-class holiday was established on the 100th anniversary of the French Revolution of 1789, in which the working people, led on by the catchwords of liberty, equality, fraternity, fought the bourgeois battle, gave their lives so that new masters might have the freedom to oppress them.

There has been going on in recent years within the working masses a tremendous ferment. Disillusioned by a gigantic mass-murder, in which the workers of the world have sacrificed for a bourgeois cause on the most enormous scale in their

history, made to suffer the most intense misery as a result of the aftermath of the war, inspired on the other hand by the spectacle of at least one section of the world's toilers that has succeeded in throwing off its chains and is already at work forging the new society of free workers, ever larger groups of workers in every land are learning to grasp the idea and purpose of working-class emancipation. And during these years the May-Day slogans have become genuine workers' slogans with the solid ring of earnest revolutionary purpose in them. To wrest from the hands of the exploiters and profiteers the factories and the fields and place them in the hands of those to whom they rightfully belong by the sweat they have bestowed on them; to free themselves from the oppression and violence of the paid defenders of private greed and the mass-murderers and hangmen of the working class and establish a workers' state which shall create the new communistic society in which there shall be neither oppressors nor oppressed—this is the revolutionary purpose that is inspiring great masses of the workers of all nations today, and that has given the First of May a new significance. The rulers of bank and parliament no longer look down indulgently upon parading workers seeking petty reforms and uttering mild pacifistic hopes; they are anxiously bringing up defences and setting guards, for fear that the rallying-day of the revolutionary workers may bring the fate which they know must sooner or later overtake them.

THE TREASON OF THE TRIPLE-ALLIANCE

For a moment the leaders of the Triple-Alliance seemed ready to oppose the capitalist onslaught with the power and solidarity of labor. But only for a moment. Thomas and Henderson, for a few days, were forced to play a most difficult role, the role of spokesmen of militant labor. For once it appeared that the compromising and vacillating and hesitant leadership of the Triple-Alliance would give way to action. The brazen attempt of the mine owners to bring down the wages of the British workers to the 1914 scale constituted a challenge which organized labor immediately accepted. With the cost of living still more than 100 per cent above the 1914 scale, the capitalist class made no efforts to conceal its intention to deprive labor of all its war-time gains.

The staggering wage reductions which the mine owners were bent upon enforcing would have reduced the mine industry to a sweated trade. In addition, passage of the Decontrol bill, which the government was pressing, provided that government control and the subsidy of the mines would cease on March 31st instead of August 31st. This meant

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the abolition of all national agreements. In view of this situation, the miners demanded that a National Wages Board should be set up for the regulation of wages and profits; that the industry should be treated as a whole, the pooling of profits to continue, and that a national minimum wage should be fixed. The owners, however, favored district settlements; abolition of the pool; fixing the standard wage at the 1914 level, and a minimum profit of 2s per ton.

Negotiations between the owners and the miners failed to accomplish any results. By a vote of 723,000 to 231,000 the miners, on March 25th, declared in favor of a strike, and the strike actually began on March 31st, even the pumpmen being called out in spite of the consequent flooding of the mines. The government declared a national emergency existed and issued a call for the mobilization of the troops. The Triple-Alliance was equally quick to act and it immediately agreed to support the miners in their struggle.

That the Triple-Alliance would actually carry out its threat of a general strike seemed unbelievable. Its recent history was a combination of brave words and inaction. Again and again in the past few years the possibility of a direct challenge of the ruling class by British Labor seemed imminent. The only result in every case was another congress or conference and lengthy resolutions ending with the dispatch of a deputation to the Prime Minister. The creation of the Council of Action (or, as others named it, of Inaction) last August, aroused the enthusiasm and hopes of labor everywhere. British labor demanded the cessation of all aid to Poland in its war against Russia and threatened a general strike to enforce its demands. But pretty soon this enthusiasm waned as in the past. It was a glorious gesture but it did not greatly interfere with Curzon's and Churchill's and Lloyd George's plans.

This time, however, it appeared that the Triple-Alliance was ready for action. After the failure of the government to mediate successfully between the miners and the owners and the refusal of the miners to man the pumps unless they were first guaranteed a national pool and a wage board, the Triple-Alliance determined upon April 12th as the date for the beginning of a general strike, a strike which would involve several million workers. It is true that poor old Thomas announced the strike decision with tears in his eyes and that the Triple-Alliance declared that they were not embarking on a revolution; that it was to be a strictly industrial struggle.

Tuesday the 12th came but the Triple-Alliance, true to form, postponed the strike pending a conference between the miners and the government. The miners, however, again refused the terms of the government and the owners, although willing to take a reduction in wages, the reduction to be established by a sliding scale based on the cost of living. The Triple-Alliance then set Friday, April 15th, as the new strike date. The General Workers' Federation, with a membership of one and a half million, decided to throw in its lot with the

miners, railway and transport workers. The electrical workers and railway clerks and other unions were quick to determine their solidarity with the Triple-Alliance. Labor at last was organizing to meet the ruling class in open warfare. The possibilities of the struggle resulting in a decisive class struggle between capital and labor were clearly recognized. Hence the many and frantic efforts on the part of Lloyd George to secure some sort of temporary settlement without granting any of the miners' demands; some postponement, or at least the submitting of the question to a "solemn referendum." But labor was standing by its guns. Its ranks were united.

As if in answer to the statement of the Prime Minister that the Executive of the Federation were not in favor of the strike but that their hands were forced by the "thoughtless blind clamoring of those below" a joint manifesto signed by executives of the Parliamentary Labor Party, Triple-Alliance leaders and executives of the Trade Union Congress was issued to the nation which read:

"This conference is convinced of the justice of the claims put forward by the miners and pledges support of the miners, railway men and transport workers. It appeals to all sections of the labor movement and to every citizen who cares for the well-being of the community to stand solidly against this attack on the position of the workers. The conference condemns the action of the government throughout, more particularly the military preparations made during the last week, as being calculated to provoke public feeling and create disorder."

Could it be possible that Thomas had failed the government and the employers? Thomas who had succeeded in delaying, compromising strikes so often in the past? Or was Lloyd George right in feeling that the leaders were anxious to suppress this movement of the masses?

Shortly before midnight, in the closing hours of Thursday, April 14th, Frank Hodges, the young secretary of the Miners' Federation, laid the basis for the treason to the Triple-Alliance. At a conference with a number of members of Parliament he declared that the miners would discuss wages with the owners and the government at once if the question of a national wages board and a national profits pool were separated from wages and considered later. This was a complete reversal of the position taken by the miners in conference after conference with the Prime Minister and the mine owners. This offer was made without authority (it appeared later) and was repudiated by the executives of the Miners' Federation.

The Railway and Transport Workers' executives grasped at this straw. The opportunity they looked for was at hand. They urged the miners to go into conference on the basis of the terms which Hodges had advanced. The miners, however, rejected their advice. They refused to retreat, and betray the one million workers they represented. Thomas and Gosling now hastened to write to Lloyd George that the strike had been cancelled—that they had decided to desert the Miners' Federation. The treason of the Triple-Alliance was complete, and in

recognition of their services they received the congratulations of the Prime Minister.

The miners are determined to continue their strike in spite of their desertion. If their ranks hold firm, they will win the strike in the end, for many industries are already closing up throughout the country. But whether they win or lose, the Triple-Alliance will not survive this final treason of their leaders. Whatever happens, the Triple-Alliance is doomed.

The old-line reactionary leaders must go. They have shown once too often that their loyalty goes out to the master class. The correctness of the position of the Third International in demanding the exclusion of those leaders who have proven their unfitness to enter the ranks of the Communist International because of their open treason or because of their unreliability at a crisis, could not have been demonstrated more forcibly. Cast out the traitors in the ranks of labor! They are the most dangerous enemies of the working class.

THE GREAT VIRTUE OF FRANKNESS

Whatever complaints may be brought against the Harding administration in years to come, that anybody will be able to accuse it of surrounding itself with a cloak of moral righteousness seems the least probable. The honorable gentlemen who, since the 4th of March, have been holding sway in Washington are refreshingly frank, and if in these sad and dreary times we can find nothing else to rejoice at, surely we should turn somersaults of joy to think that the days of unctuous Wilsonian rhetoric belong definitely to the past.

Harding's message to Congress and the first diplomatic notes of Secretary Hughes reassured us on this score. The President evidently doesn't believe in superfluous verbiage. Everybody knows what he thinks and what he is about. So why attempt philosophical dissertations or learned ethical essays? True, he is not, like his predecessor, so generously endowed with the gift of language, but the real reason for his abstinence is that he is wise enough not to consider the mass of the people as more stupid than himself. Hence he declares very simply and openly, without any superfluous idealistic camouflage, that the United States will conclude only such a peace with Germany as shall assure the essential and desired advantages to Uncle Sam. There will not be any separate peace, even though it was as good as promised to the German voters by Viereck & Co., who marshalled them into the Harding camp. The Versailles peace of coercion and violence will serve as a peace basis for America as well as for the rest of the conquering nations, even though, in their election campaign, the Republicans had—for the purpose of catching votes—gone out of their way to create the impression that a Republican administration would never pledge itself to such a thing. In short, as far as peace is concerned, it now appears that the present administration is bringing out the same old Wilsonian mare, only without the trappings of the great "peacemaker" himself.

As for the League of Nations, however, the United States shall have nothing to do with it. As it happens, in this case an election promise is actually being fulfilled. Only with the dissolution of the League can America be sure of occupying a position in accordance with her ideals. For the League is not an "instrument of peace," on the contrary, its purpose is oppression and the continuance of wars. Therefore, what the White House desires is an "Association of Powers." At this point the President withholds the real reason, which, however, is not hard to find. For if the League should continue to exist it would be particularly difficult to gather in again all the nice gifts with which the great Allied Powers—England, France, Italy and Japan—presented one another. Harding and his advisers want an "Association of Powers" instead of a "League of Nations," because the League through its various executive and other committees undertook a division of the spoils of war without consulting the United States. A redistribution of these "mandates," spheres of influence, colonies, territorial adjustments, and whatever other terms there may be to characterize the plunder and booty of imperialistic war, can be enforced only by means of an entirely new organization of forces. Hence the demand for the unceremonious burial of the League and its resurrection under another name and with aims and purposes very similar in character to those of the old concern, only nearer to "our" heart's desire.

But the Hughes notes are even franker if anything than the congressional message of the President. In these notes the Allies are told in the most candid and good-natured manner in the world that America as one of the conquerors expects her full share of the booty. A very significant fact about this diplomatic correspondence with the Allies is that it coincides with the visit of Monsieur Viviani, sent to the United States by France ostensibly for the purpose of laying at the feet of Mr. Harding and "ourselves" assurances of his country's unlimited admiration and respect. With this ostensible mission fulfilled, it is most probable that the courteous gentlemen soon got down to more tangible things, thus laying the foundations for a common understanding, which found expression in the note to Great Britain, France, Italy, and Japan. Just what is implied in this understanding can naturally be no more than a subject of conjecture in this age of "open covenants openly arrived at." Nevertheless we may not be beside the mark in assuming that France received assurances of a free hand in Germany, and that in return France agreed to a redistribution of the mandates, etc., in which the United States should be treated with due friendly regard.

No other construction can be placed upon the Hughes note directed ostensibly against Japan, or against the transference to the Mikado of the mandate over the erstwhile German colony of Yap. It means simply that the United States Government now serves notice on the governments of the Entente that it cannot and will not by any means be content with the situation as it stands today. This Government is letting them know that it means to

make good the idealistic bungling of the former administration, that it will sooner stand by Germany and thus deprive both France and Great Britain of the most valuable part of their booty, than allow itself even at this late date to be denied its place at the imperialistic swill-barrel. And France, who has but a single aim, a single real longing, namely to squeeze Germany against the wall until she howls, readily assented, since it appeared that the cost of the redistribution was to be borne by Japan. But Japan is naturally not nearly so eager to be sacrificed. And so she informs Washington that she regrets both deeply and sincerely that she is not in a position to comply with the wishes of America, since the Supreme Council—and not Japan—had made the division, so that it was not in her power to concede to Uncle Sam's desires. But that's another story.

Our point is just this: The United States are no longer in the business of bringing democracy or any other idealistic goods to Europe. America is going in for "sterner stuff," she is going to deal now in colonies, mandates, territories, spheres of influence, and other "negotiable papers." In other words, the Wilsonian period of hypocrisy and make-believe is at an end. Under the Harding administration business will be business, with a capital B, and we intend to be as frank and as brutal about it as will be necessary in order to make the entire world get the meaning of that.

America will have them all know that she intends henceforth to make an open show of her imperialistic predatory lusts, without shame, without false modesty. The big stick is to stand in a glass case no longer. The fleet, the army, our territory must be expanded. "Our" future, like that of Germany some time ago, lies upon the seas—out on the Pacific, and as for Japan—she knows just what to make of it.

But America's working class—does not. The more's the pity.

PEONAGE

The John S. Williams case in Atlanta is a dramatic example of the beastly practices of peonage that have prevailed in the South for many generations. By peonage is meant the system of landlords and capitalists employing debtors as laborers through keeping them in practical servitude until they have worked out their debts. An example or two may make this clear.

In the fall of 1916, a negro farmer in Early County, Georgia, wished to go to "New Jersey." He figured that, according to his accounts, he owed his landlord something less than \$200 for provisions, clothing, etc., sold him on credit during the year. The boll weevil had that year destroyed his cotton crop, although he had some corn to help make up for the cotton loss, a horse (which had cost him some \$200), and some household effects. He desired that his landlord purchase these things from him after having given the half of his crop for rent. He thought the sale of his crop, horse, household goods, etc., after paying his debt of some

\$200, would net him at least \$250 to \$300. Instead, to his utter surprise, his landlord informed him, (after learning that he wished to go north), that his debt was not \$200, but \$700. He offered to take his horse, etc., as a \$300 payment towards the total debt and then threatened to prosecute the negro should he attempt to leave without paying the balance of \$400. Thus the landlords prey upon the ignorance and helplessness of the negro tenants.

A white lumber mill laborer in central South Carolina in 1914, after quite a long period of unemployment, wished to move from one county to another where he could get a job at from 30 to 35 cents per hour (\$20 to \$23 per week). In order to do so without being prosecuted and jailed, he first had to get the company for which he could work to "buy" his debt at the general store (commissary) of the company for which he had been working previously; and in addition he had to get the new concern to advance him sufficient money to pay it the charge for moving him to its plant. Having no funds, he was compelled to secure provisions, etc., at the commissary of the new concern on credit. All in all he started off with the new concern deeply in debt and under agreement to work it off. The debt was collected through the method of deducting the amount from his pay each week. The laborer could neither read nor write, could not keep accounts, and while conscious of being charged some 25 per cent more for the food and clothes, etc. he bought on credit as well as being charged at least 15 per cent additional on the amount of his debt, he was helpless and forced to accept the conditions of the company. This practice is the common experience of cotton mill hands, household servants, lumber jacks, and, in fact, of all common laborers. Sometimes it is practised openly and illegally as in the case of Williams, but usually it is done under the cloak of the law which the propertied classes have thrust upon the ignorant and non-voting tenants and laborers.

The practice of peonage is not, as some newspaper accounts would have us think, unusual and exceptional. It is quite a general custom, known to the business men, bankers, lawyers, doctors, preachers, editors, teachers, etc., of the South. It is practised by the white property owners against the propertyless whites as well as against the propertyless blacks. What is scarcely ever known or recognized is that there are many negro landlords and capitalists in the South practising peonage against members of their own race, and in many instances against members of the white race as well.

The practice of peonage is not purely nor even fundamentally racial. It is primarily economic. The existence of the white and black races, living side by side, in the South merely furnishes the opportunity for the propertied classes (both black and white) to cover over the real issue, confuse the minds of the white and black workers, and create dissension as far as possible, to their self-destruction; and meanwhile they, the landlords and capitalists, enrich themselves from the labor of both races.

The power to practice peonage and enslave the

masses rests upon the private ownership of social wealth, such as land, manufacturing enterprises, transportation facilities, distributing mediums, etc. Through the private ownership of these social necessities the property-owning classes, backed with all the powers of the state—the courts, the police, the militia—and of extra-legal organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan, ruthlessly, violently and forcibly confiscate the wealth produced by the workers and beat them into silent submission.

Peonage is deeply rooted in and grows out of the present feudo-capitalistic economic system of the South. The white and black propertied classes of the South have devised ways and means of co-operating in defending themselves against any who organize or question their right to exploit the masses. The white and black workers, too, must recognize that the race question is raised by their masters but to blind and confuse their class interests and to prevent the development of class organizations. They, too, must develop means of co-operating if they wish to free themselves from the yoke of peonage. They must strive now to solidify their ranks into truly class-conscious revolutionary political and economic organizations to enable them to change from Capitalism to Communism. Inspired with the visions of economic emancipation, they must determine not to let any obstacle stand in the way of the accomplishment of this change. White and black workers of the South, unite! Put an end to Slavery!

THE LUSK BILLS

The Fathers of the Constitution, in the words of the historian, Woodrow Wilson, set out to establish a government which would safeguard the interests of the property owners. Hamilton, Madison and John Adams quite frankly declared that to be their purpose when they carried on the propaganda for the adoption of the constitution.

The increasing unrest among the workers and the increasing dissatisfaction with the mere formal political equality still existing (with occasional ousting of Socialist Congressmen and Assemblymen as reminders of what may happen) has resulted in the passage of many measures which more and more serve to tear the veil from the bourgeois dictatorship which has always existed in America. Among such measures recently passed are the Criminal Syndicalist laws, the Criminal Anarchy laws, the Sedition Acts, etc. The courts, the representatives of Capitalism—in the words of Justice Van Sicken—have stepped boldly into the breach to solidify the capitalist battlefront. With a few vigorous strokes they have deprived labor of the use of some of its most important weapons, namely the right to picket, the right to boycott and in effect, the right to strike.

The capitalist class is not overlooking any chances, however. It is not going to let labor get out of hand, if it can help it. Not satisfied merely with binding the fighting power of labor with the iron chains of injunctions, it, at the same time, at-

tempts to keep the minds of the workers in a capitalist straightjacket. It is a great help to the stability of the capitalist rule, if workers can be gotten to think like capitalists. The system of compulsory education, prevailing in practically every state of the United States, guarantees that the American children will be thoroughly drilled in Americanism—that is, that the capitalist system is the best of all possible systems.

Unfortunately there are many who do not pass through the public schools, namely, foreigners and children of working-class parents who cannot keep them in schools. Some of them have developed the habit of going to the workers' schools, such as the Ferrer School, the Rand School and the schools maintained by many of the Unions in the city. The representatives of the capitalist class at Albany last year took steps to put a stop to this. One bill was introduced which provided for the expulsion from the school system of any teacher who would express any thoughts not strictly in accordance with the wishes of the ruling class. Another was aimed at the radical workers' schools. All private schools were required to secure a licence from the State Commissioner of Education who was given authority to revoke the licence of any school which in any way taught doctrines considered dangerous. In spite of the opposition manifested by labor and various liberal groups, the bills passed through the Legislature but were vetoed at the last moment by the Governor.

This year another onslaught is being made on working-class education. Similar bills have been passed by the Legislature, aimed, this time, ostensibly, at schools which teach the overthrow of government "by force and violence or by other unlawful means." The real purpose of the bills is to give the hirelings of the employing class the means of effectively preventing any attempt on the part of the workers at an understanding of their condition, from succeeding. The notion seems to prevail that ideas can be chained up, that a barricade can be erected against their spread, and that if enough laws are passed against the teaching and propagating of Socialism, Capitalism will be safe forever.

The indications are that Governor Miller will sign the Lusk Bills and that they will become law. The one result they are bound to produce is to quicken the process of disillusionment which American workers are at present experiencing. They can but hasten on what they attempt to prevent, namely the destruction of the Capitalist System.

The Labor Order of the Red Banner.

In order to distinguish before the whole Republic those groups of toilers and single citizens, who have manifested self-sacrifice, initiative, diligence and organization in solving the problems of economic life, the VIII Congress of the Soviets decided to establish the Labor Order of the Red Banner with its mark of distinction.

The All-Russian Central Executive Committee will work out the form of the Order and its mark, and define the conditions under which this order is to be granted.

Resolution of the VIII Congress of the Soviets.

A New Policy Toward the Peasants

By NIKOLAI LENIN*

The question of substituting taxation for assessments is a political one since it deals with the relation of the peasants to the working class. The relation between these two principal classes can be expressed either through strife or co-operation and the road which will be chosen will decide the fate of the revolution. It is necessary, therefore, for us carefully to analyze this problem and revise our present position. I must emphasize that the condition of the peasants has become critical especially because of the war, demobilization, and failure of crops, which are influencing them in favor of the bourgeoisie as against the workers.

A social revolution in a country where the largest portion of the population is made up of peasants can be carried out through a series of measures which would not be necessary in highly developed capitalist countries where hired industrial and agricultural labor represents the majority of the population. The situation in Russia is different. In Russia we have a minority of industrial workers and a large majority of small land-holders. In order that the social revolution be successful in such a country it must be supported by a similar revolution in one or several advanced countries, a condition which has not as yet materialized. The alternative is co-operation between the workers who control the powers of the state and the majority of the peasant population. This coalition then must be perfected in the broadest manner. The agitation for it must be carried above board. Political trickery has no place here and should be strongly condemned. Classes cannot be fooled. We have contributed a great deal during the past three years towards the political education of the masses. The lessons of the revolution and our experience have taught us to state the problem squarely, that the interests of the classes are different, and the demand of the small land-holder are not the same as those of the workers.

We are confident that the Socialist revolution in Russia can be saved only through a coalition with the peasantry, since the other countries have not as yet entered the period of revolution. At meetings, in the press, and at every other opportunity we should speak the truth on this matter. We should not hide the fact that the peasants are not satisfied with the prevailing conditions and do not propose to continue to live under the present arrangement in the future. They have expressed themselves categorically on this question, and as statesmen we must agree to analyze and attempt to solve the problem. We must say to the peasants, do you want to go back, do you want to restore private property, and free commercial intercourse and thereby come under the rule of the landlord and capitalist? Lessons from history, preceding revolutions and elementary principles of economics will

* Address delivered at the Congress of the Russian Communist Party, March 15, 1921.

substantiate this inevitable result. If we analyze the matter and ask ourselves whether it is to the advantage of the peasants to part with the workers and allow themselves and the country to return to the domination of the landlords and capitalists, we will find that, notwithstanding the differences in the economic interests of the two classes, the peasants will favor us.

The antagonism among the various land-holding groups has almost disappeared, the land has been divided and the resources have been equalized. The village harbors the two extremes of the former agricultural community no longer—namely the exploiting and the landless peasants. Can this class of peasants be satisfied? If anyone among the Communists believed that the economic basis of the small land-holders would be changed in three years, he was a dreamer, and there were quite a few among us who did. How could such a country begin a social revolution without dreamers? Practice demonstrated, however, the important role experiments can play in the collective management of agriculture. These experiments have produced negative results because people having the best of intentions but without knowledge of management have gone into the villages to establish communes. It is no wonder that they have failed. Generations must pass before the psychology and the habits of the small landholders can be changed. Only the material basis, the use of tractors and other agricultural machinery on a large scale, and electrification can influence them considerably. By generations we do not mean centuries, but to obtain tractors, machines, and to electrify a great country, we must speak in terms of tens of years.

The question is how to accomplish this. We must try to satisfy the demands of the peasants which have not, as yet, been satisfied. The peasants are rightly dissatisfied, and will not be satisfied. We must declare that such a state of affairs cannot continue. How can the peasant be satisfied? When we know his needs, we know the answer. Agricultural economics teaches us that the primary needs of this class are: Freedom of exchange, and the ability to obtain goods and products. What good is freedom of exchange when there is nothing to exchange? Freedom of exchange leads to capitalism. It consists of an exchange of goods. Those who have learned the ABC of Marxism know that it leads to the division of classes.

Can the Communist Party agree to the freedom of exchange? Would this not seem contradictory? To this we must answer that the practical solution of this problem is not an easy one. I can foresee and I know from discussions with Comrades that the project of substituting assessments with taxation carries with it the permission for local trade. A detailed description of the spheres in which this exchange will operate will be worked out when we get to legislate about it. Our party, as the government party, should only adopt the principle and

point out the main features of this departure. What will be adopted at the Congress will become the law of the Republic. The question must be settled and the peasants must be notified immediately. Our entire apparatus must be employed to carry it through into life. We must first take it up theoretically and find out whether we can re-establish to some extent freedom of trading, capitalist enterprise for the small landholders, and at the same time not undermine the very roots of proletarian rule.

We could obtain a certain amount of goods and, keeping it under the control of the proletarian state, we could get it into the market. This would add to our political strength and economic power. Trade would revitalize our agriculture, the development of which has been arrested by the war, and which in turn has brought about economic demoralization. The opportunity to trade will have a stimulating influence, and we must resort to it. If this trading will give the country in exchange for its goods a certain minimum of foodstuffs to meet the needs of the cities and factories, then the governmental power of the workers remains and is even strengthened. The peasants want to know whether the workers who control the shops and factories can establish trade with them. It must be realized, furthermore, that an agricultural country with limited transportation facilities, and peculiar agrarian conditions requires a certain measure of freedom to trade within the sphere of local agriculture and local industry.

Errors have been committed in this field and it would be a great crime not to admit them or not to understand them. We did not enforce the various measures or did not know how to enforce them. There have been, of course, extenuating circumstances. We were forced to do nothing else but to carry on war and to neglect the economic life of the land. It is a miracle that the country was able to go through it all. This miracle did not come from heaven, but from the very economic interests of the workers and the peasants who jointly rose to the defense of the country and have together withstood the attacks of the capitalists and landlords. The fact, however, remains and we cannot overlook it that we have gone farther than was necessary, both from the theoretical and practical points of view. We can allow local trade to a great extent and instead of interfering, it would rather strengthen the political power of the proletariat. The way it will be accomplished will depend upon experience. It is my function to prove to you that it is possible theoretically. The workers controlling the powers of the state and having certain resources can place them on the market and satisfy the needs of the peasants, through the medium of local exchange.

The Co-operatives

A few words must be said about the local economic exchange. Before going into the matter I must touch on the subject of co-operatives. We need the co-operatives for local exchange. Our program maintains that the co-operatives which were left over from the capitalist order can serve as dis-

tributing centers, and we must preserve this apparatus. Have we utilized the co-operatives? Not sufficiently. This was due to a mistaken policy and the war.

The co-operatives have developed elements among the people who because of their economic superiority were leaning toward the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionists. This is a chemical law and nothing can be done about it. (Laughter.)

The Mensheviks and Social Revolutionists are consciously or unconsciously interested in the restoration of capitalism and are helping the Yude-nitches. This is also a law. We had to wage war upon them and defend ourselves. Can we, however, remain as we are at present? To bind our hands would be a mistake. I therefore offer the following resolution concerning co-operatives:

"In view of the fact that the resolution of the Ninth Congress of the Russian Communist Party regarding the co-operatives is based on the principle of assessments which is now being substituted by a tax in kind, the Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party declares the former resolutions null and void and instructs the Central Committee to carry through the party and the Soviets decisions which would lead to the improvement and development of the co-operatives in accordance with the program of the Russian Communist Party and adaptable to the change from the assessments to the system of taxations in kind."

The result of the Ninth Congress bound our hands. It put the co-operatives under the control of the Commissariat of Food Supplies. The Commissariat of Provisions is a good institution, but to place the co-operatives under its control and bind our hands is to commit a political error. We must instruct the Central Committee to work out ways and means of perfecting a change in this relation. We are at the commencement of a series of transitory measures. One thing is certain, the resolution of the Ninth Congress presupposed that our movement would follow the straight line. As a matter of fact, it zigzagged. In changing the resolution we declare that our program must emphasize the importance of the co-operative organizations.

When shall we introduce the new system? Not before the crops are brought in, i. e., after several months. Will the system be uniform everywhere? By no means. To measure Central Russia, Ukraine and Siberia with the same yardstick would be folly. I propose that this plan concerning free exchange be adopted by the Congress and put forth as its decision. The Central Committee will then send out a letter which will contain the following suggestions: Do not be hasty about the new plan; work for the benefit of the peasants without injuring the interest of the workers. Investigate and test the various plans through actual experience, sending us the results. We will then create a special commission or commissions which will go over the collected material and make the necessary deductions. If we want to be sure about the undertaking, we must check up and verify our data before we work out the final plan.

We know at the present time where we can expect to obtain commodities. Our economic position

in the sphere of international relations has been greatly improved. The type of economic relations which we are conducting with the various governments will enable us to establish freedom of exchange for the peasants. I know that there are people who smile at such proposals. There is in Moscow a galaxy of bureaucratic intellectuals who are trying to create "public opinion." They are amused at this "transformation" of Communism. They picture it as a man with crutches under his arms and his face covered with bandages. I heard these jokes but they are the jokes of either bureaucrats or fools.

Russia has come out of the war like a man who has been almost beaten to death. They were beating her for seven years. To think that we can manage without crutches means not to realize the situation. Since the revolution in the other countries has not yet arrived, we would have to spend tens of years on our rehabilitation. We can afford rather to spend millions or even billions of our vast natural resources to enlist the aid of advanced capitalism. We shall be repaid fully for this.

How must we feel after seven years of war, when more advanced countries than ours are feeling as yet the effect of only four years of it. We need an economic breathing spell. I may announce that several hundreds of thousands of poods (pood = 40 lbs.) of various necessities have already been purchased and are reaching us from Lithuania, Finland and Latvia. We received today information that a contract has been signed in London for delivery of 18 million poods of coal which we shall use for the textile industries and Petrograd. When we receive the goods for the peasants, it will be a breach of the program, but we must have the breathing spell.

I must touch upon individual exchange. When we speak of freedom of exchange we mean individual exchange. We must not ignore the fact that the exploiting peasants would be favored, and they will multiply now where their growth was arrested before. We must fight them, however, not with punitive legislation but with national unity and national measures. If the nation gets machines it will be strengthened, and if in addition to machines electrification is perfected, then hundreds of thousands of peasant exploiters will be annihilated. Until we can get that, we must secure goods. Everybody will be able to give something in return. One will give bread, the other vegetables, the third his labor. We must either satisfy the peasantry or the rule of the proletariat will have to suffer due to prevailing conditions. We must speak about it openly and speak fearlessly.

If the Congress adopts the underlying principle of the proposal the Central All-Russian Executive Committee of Soviets will take it up at its first session. The Council of Commissars and the Soviet of Labor and Defense will enforce the decisions and will formulate practical instructions. It is important that this project should be understood everywhere and undivided co-operation afforded us.

Why are we substituting taxation for the assessment? The assessment provided that the peasant had to yield his extra foodstuffs into the govern-

ment monopoly. We couldn't do otherwise because of our extreme poverty. Government monopoly is the best from the Socialist viewpoint. As a transitional measure, the system of taxation and freedom of exchange can be, however, adopted in an agricultural country. This exchange will act as a stimulus to the peasant. The owner will look out for his interest, since the tax which will be determined in advance will not absorb all of his extra supplies. The main thing is to provide a stimulus for the peasant. We must build our national economy in relation to the economics of the village which we couldn't change in the past three years. We were faced with certain needs. The assessment was increased last year. The tax should be lower. If the crop should fail we cannot obtain the extra foodstuffs as there will be none. We would have to take them from the mouths of the peasants. Under the proposed system, if the crops should fail us, everybody will suffer a little and the nation will be saved. This is our propaganda task among the peasants. The more or less enlightened peasant understands that we represent the working class with whom the toiling peasants can co-operate, and that any return to the old system would mean a return to the Czarist regime. This is shown by the Kronstadt experience. They don't want the White Guard, and they cannot have any other government but ours. This situation is the best agitation for us. We have now an opportunity to get together with the peasants, and we must handle the matter with tact. The machinery of the Commissar of Provisions is excellent, but it must be governed by the political situation. We cannot use this splendid apparatus if we fail in our attempt to bring the peasants closer to us. Before the day is over, we should let the world know through the radio that the Congress of the government party has decided to institute the tax system and provide a stimulus to the peasants in the cultivation of the soil, improvement of his holdings and that, in accepting this policy, the Congress aims to improve and to strengthen the relations between the workers and the peasants.

Every class of oppressor requires two social functions to defend his domination—the function of a hangman and that of a priest. The hangman must crush the protests and the revolts of the oppressed; the priest must picture to them perspectives of their misery being alleviated and their sacrifices lessened, while leaving class domination intact. Thus are the oppressed reconciled to this domination and led away from taking revolutionary action. Their revolutionary frame of mind is impaired and their revolutionary resoluteness shaken. Kautsky has turned Marxism into a most loathsome and stupid counter-revolutionary theory, and into the dirty sermonising of a priest.

N. Lenin.

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For the creation of a new organization time is needed as well as courage to cast aside the old one that is rotten and has outlived its usefulness.

N. Lenin.

TOWARDS CLARITY*

A Plea for the Proletarian Party

By JOHN KERACHER

Almost two years have passed since the big split in the Socialist Party that brought into existence other parties claiming to be worthy of the support of the laboring masses. In looking over this period one has no difficulty of observing the numerous mistakes that have been made, but we would be blind indeed if we did not at the same time note wonderful progress in the development of revolutionary understanding.

To say that the split took place too soon, that it would have been better had it come two years later is to state an obvious truth. Also it is easy enough to blame those, who through revolutionary fervor, forced the issue within the Socialist Party before the rank and file was ready. But history is not made according to a perfect, preconceived plan. Especially is this true of working-class movements. The workers learn through mistakes. The forward-moving vanguard may stumble and fall, but stunned at first, they rise again and, profiting from their experiences, move forward steadier and firmer.

With the signing of the Armistice in November, 1918, when the Proletarian Revolution in Russia was fully a year old, there began a movement within the Socialist Party which in the course of time developed into the "Left Wing" of late lamented memory.

The Left Wing, in spite of its mistakes, was a movement in the right direction, a decided advance over the chauvinism of the Socialist Party's official position. The objective was to "capture the Socialist Party for Revolutionary Socialism." It was not long, however, until it became quite apparent (to those within our ranks who had done any serious thinking and study of Marxism) that those who were to do the capturing did not themselves understand Revolutionary Socialism. The weapons with which they hoped to capture the Socialist Party were little more than "revolutionary wind." The only element within the Left Wing—yet not properly of it—that offered any criticism of the windy policy, haste and confusion, that was developing at an overwhelming speed, was the "Michigan Movement."

In the "Proletarian" (May, 1919) Dennis E. Batt said: "As one looks over the different Manifestos which have recently been issued, the thought arises that there is a danger that the Left-Wing tendency now developing may swing to the other side of the arc and become as reactionary in one direction as the fight is in the other. Space does not permit a detailed analysis of the various manifestos, yet a general tendency may be noted. *All seem to be predicated upon the idea that 'the revolution is just around the corner.'* They seem to lose sight of the fact that the capitalist system as it exists in this

country shows no sign of collapse in the immediate future; at least there seems to be no evidence of weakness. It may be a case where the wish is father to the thought. There is a tendency in some of these manifestos to lose sight of the political factor and lean towards the anarchist position. We must not forget that the first thing which the workers must do is to raise the Proletariat to the position of the ruling class. We must gain control of the political state. With a few exceptions the manifestos which have come to our attention have either ignored or slighted this factor."

It will be remembered that in those days a regular epidemic of "Mass Action" broke out, a form of "left sickness" that the movement has more or less recovered from.

The "Michigan Group" opposed this substituting of slogans for revolutionary principles and the careless use of such catchy revolutionary-sounding phrases as "Mass Action."

In the period between the expulsion of the Left-Wing elements and the organizing of the Communist Parties great enthusiasm prevailed, and a deal of controversy over tactics. Many of us in our partisan stand failed to learn from other groups. In spite of the fantastic "Mass Action" program of the Left Wing there was much to be learned from it. On the other hand, the "Mass-actionists" could have learned a deal from those who insisted upon participation in parliamentary elections, it might have kept them out of the impossible position they are now in with regard to this important tactic.

The literature that has come from Russia has done more to clarify these tactical questions than anything that has been written in this country. Especially is this true of Lenin's works, "The State and Revolution," "The Proletarian Revolution," and "Leftism, the Infantile Sickness of Communism." The "Infantile Sickness" might have been written with the American Movement in mind, so well does it fit the mistakes made by the Left Wing.

But where are those who were formerly the Left Wing? Have they profited by their mistakes? Are they willing to correct the present mistakes?

Many who once played a leading part are no longer with the movement; others have left the country; some are in prison. The bulk of the membership that moved to the left is not affiliated with any party now. Of those that remain, the majority, including practically all the foreign-language groups, are "underground." In the open, the Proletarian Party, composed at this time of English-speaking branches only, takes its stand upon the conditions laid down by the Third International with a manifesto and program which is a complete endorsement of these principles. The manifesto is quite long and covers all essential tactics. The platform is brief and reads as follows: "The Prole-

* This article is an expression of the writer's opinion. The Editorial Board, of course, does not assume any responsibility for its viewpoint or conclusions.

tarian Party has for its immediate aim the dictatorship of the Proletariat, with all political power in the hands of the working class; for its ultimate aim the communist society, based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means of wealth production."

This party is in a position to live up to the parliamentary requirements of the Third International; it has recently added several new locals and has a future, even if unity is not effected between the Communist elements. Of the Communist Parties it is difficult to speak, for various reasons. It is difficult to tell how they stand in membership, but it appears that the "Communist Party," although numerically the largest, is almost entirely made up of Russians and Lithuanians, and has practically no English-speaking members.

The "United" Communist Party, although smaller, apparently has a minority section of English-speaking members. These two parties which, during the Palmer raids in January, 1920, organized "underground" (in many cases the membership came out of prison with their structure of organization already formed) followed their natural bent and repudiated parliamentary action entirely by adopting a platform of insurrection.

Since the issuing by the Third International of the twenty-one conditions for party affiliation, these parties have changed their policy somewhat. Especially is this true of the United Communist Party, whose latest program is a great improvement over their former "left-sickness." They may now be considered to be more or less convalescent, although still quite outside of the requirements of the Communist International.

On the important matter of participation in parliamentary elections, their program entirely begs the question. Still the advance towards a sound tactical position is marked.

The old contempt for those who favored study classes for party members has disappeared and they are really trying to understand and teach Marxism. The implication, however, still clings

that it is their intention to remain an underground party for years to come. This is not only an obvious mistake but a violation of the conditions laid down by the Communist International.

That parliamentarism is not "historically outlived" for the American masses is plainly to be seen by the result of the last Presidential election when about twenty-five million votes were cast. The gauge of maturity, universal suffrage, that Engels speaks of, as reaching the boiling point, as far as the workers of this country are concerned, is nearer to freezing point. This important feature in the struggle here is so lightly brushed aside by those parties that it shows plainly that they have not fully recovered from their "left-sickness."

Open contact with the working masses, propagating the principles of Communism and the name of the party in their midst, is the way to win the support of the working class and turn it against the capitalist system.

Now a few words in conclusion about the Socialist Party and also those who have no party affiliation at this time. Within the ranks of the Socialist Party there has developed a rank-and-file demand for unqualified endorsement of the Third International. Under pressure of this demand some of the old leaders may try to profit by leading a new "Left Wing" to victory (?). We may witness another attempt to "capture" the Socialist Party for "revolutionary" Socialism. Marx tells us in his "Eighteenth Brumaire" that history repeats itself, "once as tragedy and again as farce." The first attempt was tragic enough, are we now going to witness the farce?

Those who are now outside of party ranks, or those who are ready to change, would do well to combine their efforts in the building of a sound Communist movement in harmony with the present developments in this country. The Proletarian Party has shown the way. There is no need for more organizations as it will only result in making the unity of the truly revolutionary elements more difficult.

Significance of the Order of the Red Flag

Speech by the Commissar for Military and Naval Affairs, Comrade Trotsky

Comrades:

The All-Russian Central Executive Committee—the highest power in Soviet Russia—has created several months ago a special emblem of distinction for the bravest and most self-sacrificing fighters in the Red Army—the Order of the Red Flag. One may wonder what difference there is between this Order and those of the old Czar or any bourgeois army.

No, comrades, the apparent similarity is only in the name. The meaning of it is quite different. Decorations in bourgeois armies serve for the representatives of the possessing classes as means for further gains, for more and higher distinctions, and for advancement in social status.

Our decoration, on the other hand, does not offer any special privileges or bounties. We erect monuments to our fallen fighters. We write odes about the bravest. For there is a desire in the human heart to pay homage with love and devotion to those in

our midst who, with their bravery, heroism and energy, have served more than others the common cause of the proletarian revolution.

And why shall we not distinguish these heroic soldiers who, with self-abnegation, are bravely shedding their blood for the proletarian cause?

The Order of the Red Flag does not mean that a given soldier is isolated among the others. No! There is inscribed on the Order: "Workers of All Countries, Unite!" This inscription serves as a constant reminder that our cause depends not on individual soldiers, nor even on the whole army, but upon the entire working class, and not only the Russian, but the workers of the world. This order serves also as an appeal to the conscience of all. Look at the most distinguished and do likewise. Let there be among us competition only in heroism, bravery and self-sacrifice in the struggle for the cause of the International Working Class.

Democracy Re-Analyzed

By SAMUEL D. SCHMALHAUSEN

The French revolution set men's hearts on fire with a passion for political emancipation—emancipation from the tyranny of the absolute state. The industrial revolution was only in its infancy. Men were possessed of an almost fanatic faith in the possibilities of progress, based upon the *individual* right to do as they pleased, unhampered by state control. The prejudiced and restrictive state was the real enemy, the stepmother of favoritism and monopoly. To love freedom was equivalent to hating the state. The French revolution fulfilled what might be called a negative function. It modified the complexion of the political state.

The American revolution, though grounded like the French in economic causes, was also a political emancipation, release from the yoke of absolutism, freedom for the *individual* to do as he pleased, unfettered by state interference. The meddling state was the real enemy. The French and American revolutions were successful protests against political sovereignty run mad. The American revolution, too, fulfilled a negative function. It shifted the seat of political authority. It modified the complexion of the political state.

The industrial revolution developed too slowly and unevenly to afford any stimulating hope of the creation of a new type of sovereignty that would ultimately come to rival the purely political control. The landlords and the newly-awakened business class had already gained the ascendancy in affairs industrial so that the mixed mass of underlings who were driven into wage-serfdom were scarcely equipped to do anything drastic about it. Their hopes turned inevitably to the political means as the method most likely to yield success. Not prepared to wage war successfully by frontal attack they did the next best thing and strove to ameliorate their hard status by flank movements. The war of the classes was fought out on the political field, the strategic objective being the control of the new state.

The control of the new state by the landlords and the rich business men afforded the capitalists those very opportunities to do as they pleased (unmolested by feudal restrictions), which they had revolted to achieve. By making the state their own, they attained to a freedom of action undreamed of theretofore. Though assisted in their revolutions by the stragglings proletariat, they speedily availed themselves of the great success to thwart the aspirations of their humble fellows.

The workingmen saw no hopeful way out of their limited life except by imitating the tactics of their new masters. They sought political prestige. They learned to play the game of politics. For more than one hundred years the unprivileged groups spent their vast energies struggling up-hill for political enfranchisement. One may judge the nature and consequences of this roundabout and wasteful approach to progress by the fact that the working

classes of the whole world have become utterly disillusioned as to the value of the political means.

Political parties, representing the major business interests, have squandered the energies of the toilers in futile and oftentimes deceitful contests for the distraction and amusement of the too-simple-minded common folk. The whole vast creaking system of so-called representative government has been a mountainous obstacle in the way of proletarian progress. Only now, after more than a century of intense political activity, has the very simple and elementary right to the vote been granted to working-class men and women. If an ingenious contriver of ingenious mechanisms had deliberately set out to invent a system of "checks and balances," whereby every popular impulse in behalf of social progress was doomed to impotence, he would have contrived precisely the parliamentary system of circuitous representation.

What more fruitful consequences would have ensued had the French and American revolutions been guided along more direct economic lines (rather than along political), no man can know. So much, however, it is permitted us to assert with some degree of assurance. It has taken the world of labor one hundred and fifty years of fearfully expensive effort at political emancipation finally to realize the large futility of that method. Only latterly has this same world of labor awakened to the portentous fact that mass action, direct tactics, industrial conflict, are the only profoundly fruitful means of achieving self-direction and self-government (in an industrialized universe). Suppose that this insight into the deeper nature of social progress had guided the tactics of labor since the days of the revolutions? Can any one doubt how beneficent such tactics would have been?

However, men were doomed to self-delusion. In England, the long, dumbly inspiring tradition of political freedom (since the days of the Magna Charta) was so deeply impressed upon the hopes of common men that they simply knew not how to pierce the seven veils of illusion. On the surface, freedom looked like a political accomplishment. Thus we find that the Chartist movement, though inevitably bound up with economic implications, was objectively a political protest. The false and alluring psychology of the (political) "equality of all men before the law" hypnotized common men into believing that the possession of the right to vote would somehow or other become the open sesame to illimitable progress. Pathetic fallacy! Why, only as recently as the Great War, and primarily as a consequence of unimaginable sacrifice on the part of the working classes, was the elementary and comparatively insignificant right to vote granted to the whole adult population in England (England, the famous exemplar of liberty!).

So far as America was concerned, the worship of political freedom is more natural and easy to ex-

plain. In a land that was so fresh and virginal, sparsely populated, a new center of self-confident pioneers, an apparently new experiment in democracy—what more natural than an almost religious faith in a governmentalism founded upon an equality among able and self-reliant men? The land was man's for the asking. The most immediate problems of stress and strain related to sovereignty. Constitutionalism, aping the English system, was the chief concern of lawyers and landlords and successful little business men. In fact, the so-called representative system is the inevitable political counterpart of an industrial situation in which labor has not yet become self-conscious and purposeful, and in which the owners of ability and of property very naturally seek to provide perpetual safeguards in law and morals for their prerogatives and specialized rights. America was pre-destined to be the classic land of so-called representative government, precisely because wide economic opportunities, coupled with pioneer self-righteousness and a very useful mythology of individual liberty, existed in the America of the revolution.

It is a sufficiently ironic commentary on the limited nature of this representative paradise that even at this overmature day, the dear little ballot, so recently won by ten million women toilers, cannot be exercised to any fruitful purpose by the millions of male toilers whose political emancipation did not by any means begin with the American revolution! The political method has worked an infinite mischief among the working classes because (if for no other reason) they were hoodwinked into believing that self-interest is not the only effective basis of social progress. The penalty they have paid for their age-old misguidance may be studied to some purpose in the bitter disillusionment that marks the common toiler's present-day thinking.

The creative power of Bolshevism lies in its awakening of the toiling masses to a realization of the essential impotence of so-called representative government, and, on the other hand, of the marvelous potency of government by direct participation. Bolshevism, whatever its excesses in an unparalleled crisis, is the spiritual fountainhead of true democracy. For in our mechanized society, true democracy, so far as the welfare of the common run of men is concerned, consists in industrial self-government. The political means becomes a subsidiary aid to progress. The industrial means is central and all-important.

The lamentations of those critics who still linger under the sway of eighteenth century "representative government" are sometimes pathetic, often sincere, usually illogical, always feeble. It is a commonplace of history that in the struggle of groups for the possession of the state, the group that rose to power found it absolutely essential to self-preservation to impose limitations of thought and action upon the mass of those who were not direct participants in the privileged functions of the state. This is not an ideal to be proud of; it is simply an iron fact characteristic of the historic process. It looks, then, like a species of unpardonable ignor-

ance or hypocrisy for any critic to mock at a new experiment in democracy because it imposes limitations upon the unlike-minded. No state has ever been utterly free. The state, by historic definition, is a method of achieving advantages for a special group under its sovereignty. It marks a sufficiently encouraging progress to find a state which depends for its vitality and preservation upon the self-interest and direct participation of the largest and most useful group in society—the Proletariat.

Every type of state in history has been the property of a limited group. The capitalistic state is the property of The Exploiters. The socialistic state will be the property of The Exploited. So-called representative government has been a social failure because by its indirect methods it has managed to keep the exploited from representation. Direct government will bring genuine representation to the exploited, but as insurance against failure it will have to exclude from direct participation those groups within the nation whose historic practice it has been to keep the common run from self-government. This is a necessary tactic in political evolution. Just as the capitalistic state has created a hundred severe limitations upon the thought and action of the proletariat (exclusion of undesirables, control of immigration, banning of anarchists and physical weaklings, exclusion of women from the vote, the artificial determination of age twenty-one as the proper voting age, passage of acts of censorship and espionage, the complete extirpation of constitutional guarantees of freedom during wartime, etc.) so an emerging proletariat, striving to create a new philosophy and a new society, must impose certain limitations upon the freedom of thought and action of the "undesirables."

Let us not be soft-headed theorists. So far as is humanly possible, let us be tolerant and just (to a fault). However, it remains bitterly true that the transformation of political or industrial sovereignty entails drastic measures of social control which cannot meet the finest tests of theoretic idealism. When we are mindful of the partial and restrictive nature of *every* historic state, we can afford to be kindly disposed toward a new experiment in democracy that promises an increased measure of real freedom for the vast mass of toiling human beings. No state under feudalism or capitalism ever achieved more than a precarious reign of happiness for a tiny minority of the whole people. The industrial state springs from the needs and aspirations of the working classes. Their state is an immeasurable improvement upon the political state of the capitalists.

Opportunism means the surrender of the basic interests of the masses for the *temporary* interests of a small minority of workers, or in other words, it means the union of a portion of the workers with the bourgeoisie in opposition to the mass of the proletariat.

N. Lenin.

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Socialist jingoism is opportunism which has become so mature that the existence of this continued bourgeois abcess within the Socialist parties has become impossible.

N. Lenin.

The Storm Center of the Comm. International

By JOHN KIM

Much discussion has been aroused by the twenty-one points put forth by Moscow as the necessary conditions for admission to the Third International.

Subsequent events have fully proven from the standpoint of the Third International the necessity for these points.

A further reason for the twenty-one points is found in the breakdown of the Second International which turned traitor to its own principles in a moment of supreme crisis. To preclude any repetition of such a shameful breakdown of the leadership of the working class movement, it is necessary to enforce certain tests upon those organizations which presume to lead organized or unorganized masses of the workers in their struggle for complete emancipation from capitalist exploitation.

The world war with the economic misery and civil war engendered by it in almost every capitalist country has created entirely new forms of the class struggle: it has done away with the illusion of achieving any substantial and lasting betterment of the lot of the mass of the people through social reform. The war has swept away all so-called parliamentary and legal guaranties of civil liberties as far as the exploited masses are concerned. The war has further sharpened the capitalist rivalry and class conflicts within and without every capitalist state.

Let us examine briefly the conditions of admission to the Communist International point by point.

1. The first condition requires that the party press shall be a militant organ and should comply not only with the letter but with the spirit of the Third International. The dictatorship of the proletariat should not be reduced simply to a hackneyed formula, but it should be made plain in such a manner that its necessity should become apparent to every man and woman of the communist movement.

This point further stipulates that all party publications be subject to the control of the presidium of the party, irrespective of whether the party is legal or leads an underground life.

Certainly there can be no objection to this requirement, which is obvious to any political party. Unity of action can result only after unity of thought is accomplished. And unity of thought and conviction can be achieved only through a control of the party press by the responsible party organization.

2. This point requires that every organization desiring to join the Communist International remove all reformists and compromisers from the responsible posts in the labor movement (party organizations, editors, labor unions, parliamentary factions, cooperatives, municipalities, etc.) and replace them by communists, even though the latter be inexperienced.

As pointed out by Comrade Geyer of the German Communist Party, this requirement is somewhat ambiguous. The Communist Party is powerless to remove or to replace officials elected by labor unions, cooperatives or municipalities. All they can do is to instruct their members in those various organizations

to see to it that reliable party members are nominated and, if possible, elected to the responsible positions. Such elections as a rule can be successful only when the Communists take active part in these respective organizations so that the membership will appreciate their services and elect them. The influence of the Communists within these various organizations will be in proportion to their skill and devotion to the cause of the working class as espoused by these organizations. Obviously no dictation or compulsion by the party will achieve that. However, the authority of the Communist Party over its members working within these various organizations must be upheld.

3. This point requires that the Communists give up their confidence in bourgeois laws and legal guaranties and proceed at once with the creation of underground party apparatus which at the decisive moment should in every way possible assist the revolution.

The endless martial laws and other exceptional laws prevalent in all capitalist states long since the war has actually ceased shows that the so-called constitutional guaranties are a mere scrap of paper. Even the right to strike has been made unlawful in various capitalist states where it is expressly recognized by the constitution. Extra-legal and illegal detective agencies and various white-guard societies had been formed to make an onslaught on the leaders and even the rank and file of the Communist movement, forcing it to create underground party machinery. This should not be understood, however, as a prohibition against the use of legal organizations and lawful means to the limit. Quite to the contrary, Communists are expected to use to the fullest extend all the constitutional and legal possibilities offered by the capitalist states.

It is perfectly natural to expect that the Communist Party will lead a more or less underground existence in a country with a weak revolutionary movement. It may become open by sheer force of its weight. It will break through the underground as it gathers momentum. Its great size and its influence with the large masses of workers will prevent the ruling class from prosecuting it or from killing off its recognized leaders.

4. This point insists on systematic propaganda and agitation in the military organizations of the capitalist states.

Non-compliance with this requirement is considered treason to the revolutionary cause and incompatible with affiliation with the Third International. In view of the fact that the bourgeois states have created armed white guards of various denominations, such as Knights of Columbus, American Legion, the German Orgech (armed Junkers), the above requirement seems fully justified. The capitalists believe in nothing but force and violence no matter how much they prate against the application of these means. It is the intention of the Communist movement to frustrate all attempts of the bourgeoisie to make force and violence the only means for bringing about a change in the

The Commune: Half a Century of Struggle: 1871-1921

III

Had it not been for the Commune, the Republic would have fallen a prey to the big land-owners. But in its dying struggle the Commune saved the day for the Republic.

The struggle of the Commune split the First International. The Commune called forth a new epoch of proletarian struggle. Its example has awakened and strengthened in the toiling masses the determination to participate in the good things of life and the attainments of civilization, to assert the power of the masses and to make use of democracy for the purpose of elevating the position of the working class in society. There appeared the parliamentary period of the labor movement, essentially different in its methods of fighting from the stress of the Jacobine uprising, of the Blanquism that inspired the French workers to the revolts of the thirties, the social republic of 1848, and the establishment of the Commune. And there was in all the world no body of labor that was so completely inspired by the spirit of the Commune, that so joyfully avowed itself in accord with that spirit, and that suffered so much for its faith as the working-class of Germany. Bismarck's decision to strike a blow at the workers of Germany through the Socialist Laws dates back to the moment when Bebel speaking in the Reichstag declared the revolt of the Commune to be a preliminary skirmish of the International and shouted in the ears of the Junkers and the bourgeoisie the battle-cry of the workers of France. And as Blanquism and Proudhonism receded to make way for scientific communism according to the teachings of Marx and Engels, it was the German workers that set the example in the parliamentary struggle of labor and took the lead in the Second International.

And now another epoch has passed. In the World War the parliamentary period has been forever submerged. The reformistic activity of the leaders, which was its chief characteristic, was replaced by the revolutionary action of the masses. Socialism, which hitherto had lived in the programs and the will of parties, which were striving to weld the masses into a single class but were finally forced, despite their power to educate and to organize, to succumb to the parliamentary apparatus which threatened to destroy this movement—revolutionary socialism became an international force.

But it is no longer the German workers who are leading this new epoch of the Third International, it is Russia's courageous, victorious, self-sacrificing men and women of the great, battle-scarred proletariat. They are still engaged in the raging struggle imposed upon them by the forces of international capitalism, screaming for revenge. Russia is still surrounded by these vultures, who cannot yet comprehend that their domination is forever at an end. But they will be forced to reconcile themselves to the idea that the dictatorship of the proletariat as practised by the workers educated

methods of production. Hence, the necessity for communist agitation among the armed forces of the bourgeois state. It will be recalled in this connection that England required the Soviet Government to abstain from agitation against the British government. However, there is no obligation on the British communists to abstain from agitation against their own oppressors.

5. This point requires systematic and regular propaganda among the rural population in order to gain the sympathies and support of at least part of the rural workers and of the poor farmers.

The necessity of this requirement is obvious. The endless meanderings of the Non-Partisan Leaguers in the United States show the absolute necessity of clear-cut communist propaganda. The crisis experienced by the agricultural population makes it highly receptive to such propaganda.

6. This paragraph demands the renunciation of social patriotism and of social pacifism, disbelief in international arbitration and disarmament, also disbelief in the so-called League of Nations and full realization of the necessity of the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism as the only way to save mankind from new imperialist wars.

No comment seems necessary to this point.

7. This point requires a complete and absolute rupture with reformism; likewise the expulsion of certain individuals from the various national parties.

While it is clear that reformism should be done away with, it is not so easy to carry out the expulsion of individuals. It is easily understood that the affiliated parties may demand also from Moscow that certain members be elected to the Executive Committee and that certain others should not. Obviously, such a procedure against individuals leads to personalities which may prove detrimental to the cause of communism. It seems to us that the Third International should stand by its principles and be content with the enforcement of those principles by the affiliated parties. It is much wiser to make the non-compliance with certain principles the cause for chastisement of a national party rather than the non-expulsion of a certain individual. We venture to say that the fulfilment of the previous requirements will eventually eliminate the offensive individuals. At any rate this elimination should be left to the national parties themselves. Otherwise, the list of non-desirables may become too long to be enforced.

8. This point requires that the colonial and imperialist policies of the bourgeois states be denounced and the truly fraternal attitude towards the working population of colonies and oppressed nationalities be instilled into the workers of the great capitalist states.

This requirement is obvious. Its application should frustrate the so-called mandates and land-grabs of the imperialistic League of Nations.

9. This point demands a systematic and consistent communist propaganda among the labor unions, cooperatives and other labor organizations, such as workmen's councils, food supply committees, etc. The communist units working among these organizations are to be subordinate to the Communist Party as a whole.

No comment necessary.

(To be continued)

in the school of Bolshevism, will never permit the bourgeoisie to return to power. Capitalism is reeling to its very foundations and is daily suffering new blows, new decisive defeats. The Soviet institution forms the great thought of the Community, namely, the idea of organizing society according to economic units and to make of these units, by means of a democracy directed against the bourgeoisie, by means of the dictatorship of the working class, by means of proletarian democracy, a true united commonwealth, a member of a great world-wide economic community.

The Entente no longer has the power to shatter Soviet Russia. The World War ended with the demolition of one of the belligerent states, of one of the financial powers and with the military and economic exhaustion of the other. The world solstice is approaching. Whether it comes today or tomorrow or the day after makes no difference—it cannot be long distant. And in all lands there appears among the foremost fighting ranks of the working class the flaming motto which was first written on the banners of the proletariat in the great French Revolution, which was engraved with steel upon the pages of the history of old Europe, which constituted the golden rule of the Paris Commune and which in time will re-echo even in the ranks of the working class of America, those words in which are contained today as they were a hundred years ago the longing and the hope and the iron will of the working class, the meaning and the spirit of the new epoch: War against palace and peace to the huts, death to want, and to idleness!

The historic essence of dictatorship is dominion—stark, coercive dominion; without infringing the rights and interests of minorities, it is as impossible as the quadrature of the circle. The historic justification of the dictatorship of the proletariat lies in this, that the dictatorship is exercised in the interests of the enormous majority of the population, and that it is no more than a means of transition, for it aims at suspending itself, at rendering itself impossible, at realising the ideal of democracy—a free people, in a free land, living by free labor. Clara Zetkin.

The period of imperialism means the division of the world between the "great" privileged nations which oppress all the others. Undoubtedly, certain crumbs from the plunder, arising out of these privileges and this oppression, fall to the lot of certain sections of the lower middle class, aristocracy, bureaucracy, and a privileged minority of the working class. This last section, which constitutes an infinitesimal section of the laboring class, has a leaning towards "Struvisism", for it justifies their union with the national bourgeoisie as opposed to the oppressed masses of all nations. N. Lenin.

We are requested to insert an appeal for funds on behalf of the thirty-six deportees with their families now retained at Ellis Island in a most pitiful condition. They are absolutely destitute and the National Defense Committee is collecting money to care for them. Please send contributions to Dr. George M. Dunaif, Treasurer, 339 Stone Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y.

Manager's Column

We greet May day, the Worker's holiday. The poor men, the landless and the propertyless all over the world, realize on this day the approach of universal brotherhood, of international solidarity. In Soviet Russia, May first is celebrated in every public square, in every village. For there the workers and peasants own the country and their holiday is the nation's holiday.

In the United States the workers do not own the country, nor the tools they work with, nor the jobs that should provide for their livelihood. They do not because they do not realize their power. And their leaders too fail to realize the vast power of these thirty-eight million workingmen and workingwomen, when united and consolidated to one purpose—the achievement of their economic freedom. The leaders dicker and beg from the powers that be, instead of consolidating the armies behind them.

This consolidation of the working class is the spirit of May first. The Workers' Council hopes, in its limited way, to help in that great task, to point the way that leads to freedom. Comrades everywhere see in the Workers' Council a needed message,—one comrade writes: "Congratulations on your very excellent magazine. It's just what we need—plain talk, with no compromises—or else no talk at all." Or this from another: "I am enclosing money order for \$2.50 for a subscription to your magazine. I endorse your first number and wish you success in your undertaking. I am for a world worth while." Or again: "Send me some copies right away. Will see what I can do about selling them."

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