

The Communist

National Organ, Communist Party

LOUIS C. FRAINA, Editor
I. E. FERGUSON, Associate Editor

Published Weekly, and owned and controlled,
by the Communist Party of America.

C. E. RUTHENBERG, Executive Secretary
LOUIS C. FRAINA, International Secretary

5 cents a copy, \$1.00 six months, \$2.00 a year.
Bundles, 10 or more, 3½c a copy.

Address all communications
1219 Blue Island Ave., Chicago, Ill.

Break the Blockade!

It is now confirmed that the Peace Conference has demanded of the reactionary government of Germany action in co-operation with the Allies for tightening the blockade of Soviet Russia.

This confirmation comes at the moment of the assault upon Riga by the German troops of Von der Goltz. The Peace Conference mildly condemns this attack, as it mildly condemns the Rumanian occupation of Budapest while rejoicing at the destruction of the Hungarian Soviet Republic by this occupation.

The Allies have been wavering between destroying Germany completely as a potential imperialistic rival, and using Germany against Soviet Russia and the general European revolution. The armistice with Germany while providing for the withdrawal of all German troops from most of the conquered territory provided for the retention of a German army in the Baltic provinces. This army the Allies proposed to use against the Bolsheviks. The new German government, dominated by the traitor Socialists, the imperialistic bourgeoisie and the Junkers, allowed the concentration in the Baltic provinces of counter-revolutionary troops. The Junkers manoeuvred to secure control of Von der Goltz's army, and succeeded. The Baltic provinces were cleared of the Bolsheviks and democratic, semi-Socialistic national governments established. But the landowners of the Baltic provinces, the German barons, were alarmed; using the bogey of Bolshevism they organized the West Russian Government, the only purpose of which is to restore the power of the German barons in the Baltic provinces and crush the mildly radical governments. The Junkers of Germany immediately saw their opportunity: if the Junkers could secure power again in the Baltic it might promote the complete restoration of the power of the Junkers in Germany. Hence the alliance between the Baltic German barons and Von der Goltz.

The Allies are undecided: the offensive of Von der Goltz would weaken the Bolsheviks, but simultaneously it would strengthen German power in the Baltic and facilitate German imperialistic penetration of Russia. The policy of the Allies directly makes for the restoration of autocracy in Russia and Germany.

This danger is all the more acute since the Allies' proposal to Germany for tightening the blockade of Soviet Russia. This blockade, the most infamous act of modern times, is starving millions of men,

women and children in Russia, is preventing the resumption of normal industrial relations in Europe, is strengthening international reaction.

The German Government is, on the whole, in the control of the very reactionary forces that the Allies waged war against: the imperialistic bourgeoisie, the Junkers and the War Socialists. This German government seeks the opportunity of restoring the imperialistic power of Germany. The Allies are now uniting with this reactionary government against Communist Russia, precisely as Bismarck and the French bourgeoisie united against the Paris Commune in 1871. International Capitalism unites against Communism, against the proletarian conquest of power.

The blockade of Soviet Russia unifies the forces of international oppression. The blockade not only starves the women and children of Russia; it strengthens the counter-revolution in Russia, it strengthens reaction in Germany, Austria and Hungary, it is a vital phase of the policy of the governments of France, England, Italy and the United States in preventing the proletariat from conquering power. The blockade of Communist Russia is a danger thrust at the heart of the Russian workers and at the heart of the workers of the world.

Workers, men and women: You must act! Break the blockade of Soviet Russia by means of mass strikes!

Magnificent!

OCCASIONALLY man rises to the heights of epic magnificence. One of these occasions was at the Industrial Conference when Samuel Gompers, ill and weak, in trembling hoarse tones, "eloquently repudiated the insinuation that the American workers were embracing Bolshevism." Gompers recalled that three weeks before Wilson declared war a conference of 136 labor leaders had pledged to back the government to the limit; that labor loyally kept its pledge during the war; that labor had never used the war for its own advantage; that union labor was willing to co-operate with capital; and that the organized workers, far from contemplating revolution, loved their government and were the most patriotic and loyal in the world: "Gompers shook with emotion and his voice quavered as he violently defended the loyalty and patriotism of organized labor." The gentleman making the insinuation apologized.

It was magnificent! An aged, ill man defying calumny and compelling an apology, heroically securing a victory for labor in spite of terrible odds.

But what Gompers actually said was this:

"You can depend upon organized labor; we as its leaders are loyal to Capitalism. We are always ready to mobilize the workers as cannon-fodder in your wars. We shall prevent the workers from becoming radical, from initiating revolutionary measures. You and I are part of the governing system of things; and we shall defend our privileged status. You must cease your attacks upon the labor leaders: Your interest and theirs are identical."

Gompers condemned labor to industrial slavery, oppression and wars. It was magnificent—for Capitalism.

The Joy of Life

IN a recent interview, N. Bukharin, a dominant personality in the Soviet Republic and the Communist Party of Russia, discusses the problem of prohibition. Bukharin declares that prohibition is rigidly enforced in Russia, a severe penalty being imposed for violation of the Soviet regulations; that a drunk man in Moscow or Petrograd is a rarity.

But, proceeds Bukharin, these restrictions are temporary, made necessary by the civil war; after this necessity is over, the restrictions will be modified "and fine wines introduced for the use of the workers." The Communist, declares Bukharin, is not an ascetic, but a firm believer in life and the joy of life,—a Pagan rather than a Puritan.

In this, there is another contrast between the sincere, human philosophy of the Communist, and the deadening hypocrisy of bourgeois "civilization".

Capitalism develops two extremes—compulsory self-denial for the workers and corrupting self-indulgence for the bourgeois. Each extreme is vicious, demoralizing, a denial of life and the joy of life.

The bourgeois possesses an animal conception of life. Power—debauchery—brutality—that is the unholy bourgeois trinity. A social system based upon oppressor and oppressed, upon master and slave, can never develop a human conception of life. Luxury is considered joy, excesses self-expression. Through it all there runs the black thread of hypocrisy: does any one really believe that prohibition prohibits for the rich? . . .

The other philosophy—for the oppressed, the workers—is a slave philosophy of work. The masses live to work, and not work to live. The burden of excessive toil imposes a burden upon the human spirit—there is no real self-expression for the masses of the people. Self-denial is the ideal that religions and class morality impose upon the workers. Self-denial—itsself a denial of life and the urge of life! Work—a means to an end made an end in itself!

Self-denial and self-indulgence each pervert the human spirit. The urge to life becomes under Capitalism the urge to the meretricious things of life; self-expression becomes either a perversion of life or mechanical routine; liberty of the individual becomes a mockery among the workers and an incitement to degeneracy among the bourgeois.

Life is stultified, joy perverted, and culture vitiated by the fetters imposed upon individual self-expression.

Capitalism, moreover, perverts life by making it a struggle for material well-being. In a class society, the struggle of man over nature becomes a means of aggrandizing the masters, and not a means of realizing life for the people. Communism, by ending class divisions and by mobilizing all the industrial resources for the use of life, ends the miserable struggle for existence, makes work a secondary consideration. Life and the joy of life become supreme—self-expression becomes the means to a finer culture, individual liberty the inspiration for a self-imposed discipline.

There have been moments in the history of the world when the potential

Continued on page three