

GREETINGS TO THE HUNGARIAN WORKERS

By N. LENIN

Comrades:

The tidings which we are receiving from the Hungarian Soviet workers fill us with joy and enthusiasm.

The Soviet power in Hungary is in existence for only a little over two months, and it seems that the Hungarian proletariat has already surpassed us in organization. This is comprehensible because the general cultural standard of the population is higher in Hungary (the percentage of the industrial proletariat to the whole population is also higher than in Russia—three millions in Budapest to eight millions of the whole population in present Hungary) and, finally, the transition to the Soviet order, to the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, was, in Hungary, far easier and more peaceful.

This last circumstance is especially important. The majority of the Socialist leaders in Europe of the social-chauvinist and Kautskian schools are so sunk in the mud of philistine superstition, pure and simple, brought on by tens of years of comparatively "peaceful" capitalism, and of bourgeois parliamentarism that they cannot conceive of Soviet power and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

The proletariat cannot accomplish its world-historical liberating mission without removing these leaders from its path—without pushing them completely aside. These leaders did believe, entirely or in part, the bourgeois lies about the Soviet power in Russia, and could not differentiate between the nature of the new, proletarian democracy, the democracy of the workers, the Socialist democracy, incarnate in the Soviet power, and bourgeois democracy before which they servilely bend the knee, deeming it "pure democracy" or "democracy" in the abstract.

These blind ones, stuffed up with bourgeois superstitions, cannot conceive of the universal historical turn from bourgeois democracy to proletarian democracy, from bourgeois dictatorship to proletarian dictatorship. They confused one or another of the peculiarities of the Russian Soviet power, of Russian history and its development with Soviet power in its international aspect.

The Hungarian proletarian revolution helps even the blind to recover their sight. The form of the transition to the Dictatorship of the Proletariat in Hungary is far from being the same as in Russia; namely, the voluntary resignation of the bourgeois government, the momentary restoration of the unity of the working class, the unity of Socialism on a Communist program. The essential point of Soviet power appears now ever so much clearer: No other authority is possible now anywhere in the world—except Soviet power supported by the working masses with the proletariat at their head—except the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

This dictatorship presupposes the application of force, pitilessly, severe, swift and resolute to suppress the resistance of the exploiters, the capitalists and landlords and their henchmen. He who does not understand this is not a revolutionist and should be removed from the post of leader and counsellor of the proletariat.

But violence alone is not the essence of proletarian dictatorship, nor is it mainly violence. Its main function consists in the organization and discipline of the proletariat, the vanguard of the working masses, its only vanguard and leader. Its aim is to create Socialism, to destroy the division of society into classes, to make workers of all the members of society, to remove all possibility of the exploitation of man by man. This aim cannot be accomplished at once, it requires a pretty long transition period between capitalism and Socialism—and for that reason the re-organization of production is a difficult task; for that reason time is required for fundamental changes in all branches of life; for that reason the tremendous force of habit to petty-bourgeois and bourgeois management can only be overcome by a long stubborn struggle. That is why Marx always talked about the whole period of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat as a period of transition from capitalism to Socialism.

During this transition period resistance to the revolution develops not only from the capitalists but also from their numerous retainers and sycophants among the bourgeois intellectuals who resist consciously and from a numerous mass of workers too much stuffed with petty-bourgeois habits and traditions (including the peasants) who, very often, resist unconsciously. Fluctuations in these spheres are unavoidable. It draws the peasant as a toiler, to Socialism, and he prefers the dictatorship of the workers to the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. The peasant who is a seller of bread, sides with the bourgeoisie, with freedom to trade, which means—back to the "traditional," "ancient" good old capitalism.

It is necessary to have dictatorship of the proletariat, the dominance of one class, the power of its organization and discipline, its centralized power, based upon the conquest of culture, of science, of the technique of capitalism, of the proletarian "nearness" to the psychology of every worker, its authority over the disintegrated, less developed, less-versed in politics, toiler in the village or in small industry—it requires all this in order that the proletariat should be able to lead the peasantry and all the petty-bourgeois elements in general. At this point we have all sorts of phrase-mongering about "democracy" in general, about "unity," or about "unity of the working class," about "democracy," about "equality" of all those who toil, and so on—all the phrase-mongering to which the philistine social-chauvinists and Kautskians are inclined—but phrase-mongering will not help.

This babbling only serves to throw dust into the eyes, dulls the consciousness, fortifies the old stupidities, inertia and routine of capitalism, parliamentarism and bourgeois democracy.

The destruction of classes is a matter of long, difficult and tenacious class struggle which—after the overthrow of the power of capital, after the destruction of the bourgeois state, after the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat does not disappear (as the thinkers of the old Socialism and the old social-democracy believe), but only changes its forms, becoming in many respects more obdurate.

Only by waging the class struggle against the bourgeoisie, against the inertia, the routine and indecisiveness of the petty-bourgeoisie—can the proletariat defend its power, strengthen its organizing influence, achieve the "neutralization" of those elements who are afraid to break with the bourgeoisie and are following hesitatingly, the comradeship discipline of the new discipline, the iron bond with the proletariat, their concentration around the proletariat,—that new discipline, the new foundation of the social bond in place of the chattel discipline of the middle ages, in place of the discipline of hunger, the discipline of the "free" wage-slavery of capitalism.

Political Parties in Great Britain

REPORT TO THE AMSTERDAM SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL

Political assimilation is proceeding in Britain with a rapidity most remarkable in view of the vast amount of machinery through which energy can be dissipated and crises forestalled. Social patriotism reached its climax during 1916. It had swamped almost every section of society. Even a large proportion of those who had been professedly pacifist and anti-war were in fact social patriots. The class war was forgotten by the working class except by a few to whom we shall refer later.

The political thought of the country was reflected by the following parties:

Tories or Conservatives—Tory Party, Liberalism—Liberal Party, Labor—Labor Party (Trade Unions, Fabians, I. L. P., B. S. P., Co-Operative Societies).

Labor—outside the Labor Party: Socialist Labor Party, South Wales Socialists, Workers Soc. Federation, Socialist Party G. B., Anarchist groups, Guild Socialist groups.

The two parties, Tory and Liberal, reflect respectively the Landed, Financial and manufacturing interests. Labor and Socialist Parties reflect proletarian interest, both agrarian and industrial.

The Labor Party is yet young, the 1906 elections having marked its definite advent into British politics and indicated the proletarian drift away from the Tory and Liberal parties, the latter having prided itself for many years for its capacity to express the interests of the workers as well as the capitalists. It is a peculiar conglomeration of persons and interests and parties which has led to much confusion in estimating its capacity to express proletarian interests.

Its primary action was to gather together all the elements which could lay claim to be focussing the workers interests in order to express them in united form. Its organization was loose of necessity and its platform equally indefinite. Hence in actual experience it is dominated by the heaviest forces within it, the trade unions. Most of the important trade unions are affiliated and put forward candidates at elections under the Labor Party auspices. It has thus in spite of what may be termed the more radical elements within it, become the political reflex of trade unionism. The intense development of the last few years has compelled it to shape a policy and program which now overshadow all the minor political party elements such as the I. L. P. and B. S. P.

Its program is essentially a reformist program, aiming at state control under capitalism, the development of the political democracy of capitalism, and the industrial democracy of joint control by workers and capitalists. It supports the League of Nations and is affiliated with the Second International. It gives lip service to the abolition of capitalism, whilst the capitalists look to its deeds to save them from their disaster. In its early days the I. L. P. leaders such as Keir Hardie, Mac Donald and Snowden dominated the party. As it grew in strength trade union leaders such as Henderson, Clynes, Thomas take their place. These are social patriots of the deepest dye.

The party's original looseness, nominally retained actually steadily disappears and leaves the Socialist elements to function as protesting voices.

It has not become a party with machinery equal to the traditional party machinery of Liberalism and as it is enforced by the middle class elements of the old Liberal Party the voice of revolt within it but serves to stimulate and strengthen the hands of reactionaries who lead the party. The movement of the middle class elements referred to and the adjustment of the Labor Party machinery to accept them are indicative of the reaction upon the petty bourgeoisie and labor driving them from the coalition of the principal parties which was formed for the conduct of the war.

In that coalition all Liberalism was lost by the centralizing and oligarchical control demanded by the war. After the climax of nationalism of social patriotism had been reached in 1916, labor began to assert itself, and as the class conflict became more manifest in the internal affairs of the nation the Labor Party was compelled to move away from the coalition. It moved not with a clear class-conscious purpose, but under pressure with all the petty bourgeois thoughts of traditional trade unionism. Hence, Liberalism having been completely overwhelmed by the war, the Labor Party appears to be the only refuge of the lower middle class. The cessation of hostilities with the Central Powers and

In order to abolish classes—a period of the dictatorship of one class is necessary, precisely one of the oppressed classes which is able not only to overthrow the exploiters, not only to pitilessly suppress their resistance, but also—to free themselves mentally from all the bourgeois-democratic ideology, from all the phrase-mongering about liberty and equality in the abstract. (In fact, as Marx has shown, this phrase-mongering designates the "liberty and equality" of the owners of commodities, not the "liberty and equality" of the capitalist and worker.)

What is more, only that class of the oppressed classes is able to destroy classes by its dictatorship which is trained, united, hardened by tens of years of strike and political struggles with the urban, industrial and big-capitalistic culture, which has the resoluteness and ability to defend, preserve and develop further all its conquests, popularize them with all the people, all the workers, only that class which will be able to withstand all the hardships, reverses, pitfalls, placed by history on the shoulders of those who break forever with the past and bravely clear that class, which is most full of a new future; only tempt for all the petty-bourgeois and philistine—those qualities which flourish among the petty-bourgeois clerks and "intellectuals,"—only that labor and can impress respect for its ability to work upon every toiler, upon every honest man. Comrades, Hungarian workers, you gave the world a better example than Soviet Russia in Socialists on a platform of real proletarian dictatorship. Ahead of you is the severest task of all—to defend it in a terrific war against the Allies.

Be firm! If wavering will appear among the Socialists who have previously joined with you in the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, or, among the petty-bourgeoisie—suppress these wavering ones pitilessly. To be shot—is the fate of the coward in war.

You are leading the only legitimate, just, real, revolutionary war,—the war of the oppressed against the oppressors, the war of the workers against the exploiters, a war for the victory of Socialism. All over the world, everyone that is honest in the working class, is on your side. Every month brings the universal proletarian revolution nearer.

Be firm! The victory will be yours!

the demand of economic readjustments, is driving the big interests to care for a further continuation of the coalition and the petty and free trade interests for the revival of liberalism.

The shadow of the revolution has been thrown across their paths and all of them are calling for salvation.

Meanwhile the same intensification of the class struggle has had its effects upon other parties. The I. L. P., the largest of Socialist parties, was largely pacifist in sentiment. Its lack of clarity in the realm of economics led it to social patriotism in practice. Traditionally reformist in character its leaders are strenuously endeavouring to lead it in the direction of the Labor Party, while the increasing intensity of the class conflict and the lessons of the revolution in Europe are driving the rank and file towards the Third International. In this there is great danger of an organized body accepting new principles whilst their leaders think in terms of the old.

The B. S. P., much less of an organization, the lineal descendant of the S. D. F., has also undergone a variety of changes even though it clings to the Labor Party. The first effects of the war was to create a split between the social patriots, Hyndman and Co., and the anti-war elements.

Its next important change occurs subsequent to the Russian revolution. Up to this time it had carried with it the traditions of parliamentarism from the S. D. F. and opposed industrial unionism. Its opposition to the latter being not so much because it possessed an alternative theory of organization, as opposition to the idea of building organizations external to the trade unions. Its national conference of 1918 showed a greater sympathy to industrial unionism, whilst the national conference move towards the Third International led to the resignation of two of its leaders and it stands much clearer towards a revolutionary policy both in personnel and tactics than at any time in its history. Its membership is estimated to be about 6000.

Turning to the parties external to the L. P. the most important is undoubtedly the S. L. P.

Formed in 1903 it has steadily and persistently focussed the class struggle, revolutionary parliamentarism and industrial unionism, following on the lines of De Leon of America. It has never been large in membership but its influence has been felt in every Socialist party in the country. It has its own press from which has emanated much good work. Vigorous and uncompromising, a pioneer of revolutionary educational classes, its lecturers and literature have penetrated I. L. P. and B. S. P. alike. It had least to adjust when actual revolution compelled all parties to review their policy and practice. Even prior to the great event of 1917 a movement had made itself manifest within the party for a new orientation of the party's policy suitable to the conditions of Britain. It ran candidates in the 1918 elections on a Soviet program. It is affiliated to the Third International. Its membership will be about 600 and its principal center is Glasgow.

The Workers Socialist Federation is of recent growth out of the Women's Suffrage movement. It is now definitely anti-parliamentarian, proclaims the proletarian dictatorship and the Soviets as the only means of achieving the triumph of the working class. It is also affiliated to the Third International. Its activities are principally in London.

The South Wales Socialist Society is a small party akin to the W. S. F. and accepts the same principles and policy.

The Socialist Party of Great Britain is an insignificant group noted for their anti-industrial policy and being the only true interpreters of Marx. There are a number of anarchist groups doing much active propaganda work in sympathy with the Russian Revolution although their numbers are not large.

The Guild Socialist Groups are also doing much propaganda for industrial unionism, whilst their theories, particularly in relation to the State, are receiving much sympathetic attention in the I. L. P. Each of the organizations enumerated with the exception of the S. W. S. S. have their own paper. The I. L. P.—"The Labor Leader," the B. S. P.—"The Call," the S. L. P.—"The Socialist," the Workers Socialist Federation—"The Workers Dreadnought," the S. P. of Gr. B.—"The Socialist Standard," the Guild Socialist—"The Guildsman."

Since the beginning of 1919 there have been efforts to fuse a number of these parties together into a Communist Party.

In February of March the I. L. P., B. S. P. and S. L. P. met in conference to discuss unity. On this occasion the S. L. P. alone stood on the basis of the Third International. The Conference proved abortive, the B. S. P. delegation agreeing with the S. L. P. who saw no reason to depart from the policy they had pursued for thirty years.

Later the S. L. P., B. S. P., W. S. F. and S. W. S. S. have met in conference several times and have arrived at an agreement to the Third International, dictatorship of the proletariat, the Soviets. But disagree on parliamentarism and affiliation to the Labor Party.

The W. S. F. and S. W. S. S. are against parliamentarism and affiliation to the L. P. The S. L. P. is for revolutionary parliamentarism but against the L. P. The B. S. P. is in agreement with the S. L. P. on parliamentarism but for affiliation to the L. P.

A recommendation from a recent unity conference to the effect that there should be a Communist Party formed on the basis of things agreed upon and the points of difference on the L. P. be submitted to a ballot three months after the party has been formed, has resulted in the S. L. P. refusing to accept the proposition of a vote on affiliation to the L. P. even after the three months referred to the B. S. P. result is not yet declared though it is anticipated the party will vote in favor.

Without the S. L. P. agree to fusion the W. S. F. and S. W. S. S. will certainly not join the B. S. P. The B. S. P. apparently will now have to choose between unity and affiliation to the L. P.

The intensification of the conflict and the extended propaganda following the Russian Revolution has had its effect on the I. L. P. in spite of its official declaration at the Scottish Conference of January 1920 declared in favor of the Third International. It is doubtful whether this will be ratified by the annual conference of the party. It may be that a move will be made away from the Second International and encouragement given to the Longuet policy.

Summing up the position therefore we find the class demonstration line becoming more clearly defined in politics as in industry even though clothed in social patriotism; the British Labor Party becoming overwhelmed by the trade-unions and its machinery the Socialist parties into the background, while the Socialist parties move steadily towards the revolutionary left. This movement with and really reflecting the same tendencies in industry

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