

The Present Situation in America

By Ian Lepin

THE minds of people in America seem to have become numbed by the persistent assertion that this country is something exclusive, in a class by itself, that it differs fundamentally from European countries, and especially from Russia. This belief has been also current in wide circles of radical socialists and those who considered themselves "liberals".

Accordingly, the maxims of the labor movement of western Europe and the great lessons of the Russian Revolution were thought to be of no practical value here in America.

The Radicals referred to, no doubt, have shown fine spirit and enthusiasm about the Bolsheviki. But there it ended. Bolshevism was good at a distance, in "barbaric" Russia, but altogether out of place in the United States.

Among the most outspoken of these radicals, John Reed, fresh from Russia, postponed the American Revolution in the "Revolutionary Age" for five years. More balanced men, like Scott Nearing, proved scientifically that fifty years, at least, will elapse before the proletarian uprising will ever sweep the country.

However, the last seven or eight months have damaged this notion, if not discarded it because the class struggle has assumed very clearly defined outlines and looms high above the whirlwind of passing events. And so, delusions about American exclusiveness are in a process of being completely undermined.

Take, for instance, the three most dangerous myths dealing with American exclusiveness: (1) One united people, (2) free democratic institutions, and (3) higher education.

Are we a unified people? The artificial unity created by the war has vanished with remarkable swiftness during the brief period

of less than a year and has made the United States from coast to coast a "no man's land," ravished by the bitter war of two irreconcilably hostile camps: the Producers and the Parasites.

The foolhardy attempt to solve class war problems by means of a conference called by the president and composed of big capitalists, reactionary labor leaders and certain de-classed men failed miserably. The conference, as we know, broke up without succeeding to harmonize the opposing interests of the exploiters and exploited. The conference went into oblivion like one of the many insignificant curiosities of the new period of class struggle in America. It had no deep meaning. The capitalists did not take it seriously. They know fully well that their dictatorship is being upheld by more tangible means than parleys with reactionary labor leaders.

The present situation means only an intensified application of outrages against workers. Such an intensification that they might seem quite new. The mask has been dropped. The constitution has been thrown altogether into the waste basket by the capitalist and substituted it with a brutality that harmonizes with the "law and order" of exploitation. So we now have deportations, political prisons, raids, annihilation of press and assemblage, and abolition of ordinary civil liberties.

It is a sad tale indeed. Especially at the present when a cloud of reaction of the blackest kind is hovering low over America, besmirching everything. The capitalists are conjuring the dark forces, their press is shouting blood and murder. They dream of nothing but the practice of violence.

Our educators are, generally speaking, an army of gentlemen capitalistically trained, brutalized and paid to keep up the supreme rule of capital, to defend bourgeois dictatorship against the rising proletarian revolution, for genuine freedom and justice. Isn't this the education that has been so much boasted about and heralded through the world as something exclusively American?

These are the outstanding features of American exclusiveness. But if we compare conditions of old Russia we may be startled at the similarity. The exclusiveness there was as great as here in America. All the Russian toilers were excluded as completely as their American fellow workers from the joys of life.

As long as the causes for revolution are at hand and the despotism of the ruling class increases—the awakening and rallying of the workers will proceed. The results thus far are tremendously encouraging. Ten months ago we had Seattle, Butte, Lawrence, and lately the steel workers' and miners' strikes. Their interests lie in the overthrow of capitalism, the annihilation of the dictatorship of the finance-capital. Only thus can the problem of obtaining security and better life be solved. There is no other way.

The innovations of the "era of reconstruction" do not lighten the workers' burden. Wages are adjusted downward, the cost of living upward, and unemployment increases. Will these questions be solved by deportation or filling of jails with political prisoners?

The capitalists can not give better life to the workers, even if they desired to do so. They cannot end exploitation unless they ruin themselves. So it is up to you workers to do the job.

The Italian Election

playing the political game these many years for nothing.

I asked a prominent Roman editor about the "Socialist danger."

"It is perhaps the best thing that could have happened," he said. "Socialists out of parliament are dangerous. But Socialists in parliament soon become—"

"Become what?" I asked.

"They soon become tame," he answered.

And "L'Epoca" prints at the top of its first page a sentence from one Luigi Luzzatti:—

"Where a Revolution might be able to break out violently, parliament can canalize it."

Which means that these people believe that the proletariat's parliamentary activities are anti-revolutionary activities. These papers are consequently offering the new government to the Socialists, if they will be tame and co-operate with the bourgeois parties. The offer must, of course, be refused, for the Socialist party, and each and every deputy representing it, is pledged against any sort of collaboration with the other groups.

Now, this is satisfactory so far as it goes. But human nature is ambitious. Among the 160 odd Socialist deputies there will be many who itch for office, even as Briand in France itched for office a decade or more ago. And it may be too hard to refuse, when office can

be had for the asking. There will be the old cry of "immediate benefits for the working class," and the more popular of the moderate deputies may feel themselves safe in forming a separate group and intriguing for ministerial responsibility. It is easy to reply that they will be expelled from the party, as they doubtless will. But what if they were able to carry their own local constituencies with them? It would mean a new moderate Socialist party and another split in the Italian proletarian movement.

It would be foolish to deny that the thoughtful Socialists are worried over this situation. The warnings of Bordiga at the Bologna conference are already being demonstrated with an eloquence greater than his own.

This, however, is in the future. The immediate actions of the party group in parliament will be of a character sufficiently embarrassing to the middle-classes. It will demand the formal recognition of the workers' councils, now being formed in the industrial centres, with direct representation in parliament. And it will demand public control over the finances of newspapers, and an inquiry, in conjunction with the parliaments of other nations, into the financing of newspapers during the last war.

Italy, if not a revolutionary country, will be at least an uneasy one in the months that are to come.

The World Revolution Conquers

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determination for revolt. Soon, when the Red Army quells Denikin, it will turn in the direction of Germany and as the rumbling of the approaching Red Army will reach the Spartacans, they will rise and conquer the power. Then the doom of capitalism will be sealed.... THEN THE RED DAWN OF RUSSIA WILL SPREAD ITS RADIANCE OVER THE HORIZON OF EVERY LAND.... THE BLACK SHADOWS, THE HIDEOUS NIGHTS OF SLAVERY WILL VANISH.... THE NEW DAY OF COMMUNIST FREEDOM WILL REJUVENATE THE EARTH AND BLESS THE HUMAN RACE WITH HAPPINESS AND THE JOYS OF LIFE!

Long Live Soviet Russia!

Long Live the World Revolution!

TCHAIKOVSKY, the "head of the North Russian Government" is on the way to America. How long shall we have to wait for Kolchak and Denikin?

AFTER ALL ours is "the home of the free" for all counter revolutionaries. We hope that Paderevski, who lost his job in Warsaw, will soon be here. We'll be delighted to hear him play "The Funeral March of the Counter Revolution."