

Problems Of The Third International

(Ramsey MacDonald On The Third International)

By N. LENIN

(Continued)

Ramsey MacDonald with the amusing naiveté of a parlor Socialist who merely juggles with words entirely lacking an understanding of their import, not even conscious that preaching a thing requires its being carried out in deeds, says: The Berne Conference made a "concession to the public opinion of non-Socialist elements."

Exactly. We consider the whole Berne "INTERNATIONAL" yellow and treacherous because all its policies are a "concession" to the bourgeoisie. Ramsey MacDonald knows perfectly well that we have built the Third International and unconditionally severed with the Second, because we were convinced of its hopelessness, its incorrigibility, its playing the role of a lackey of imperialism, carrier of bourgeois influence, bourgeois lie, and bourgeois corruption into the working class movement. If Ramsey MacDonald, desiring to discuss the 3rd International avoids the real issues and just walks around and around the question, uses empty phrases and doesn't say what is necessary to be said, it is his fault and his crime. For the proletariat needs the truth, and there is nothing more damaging for its cause than a polished, respectable, mediocre lie.

The question of imperialism and its connection with opportunism in the working class movement, with the betrayal of the working class sauce by their leaders has been raised.

Marx and Engels during forty years from 1852 up to 1892 were constantly pointing out, that the working class of England, due to economic peculiarities of that country (colonies, monopoly on the world's market, etc.), has been acquiring bourgeois character (or—has been becoming bourgeois in character). Marx won to himself in the seventies of last century hatred of contemptible heroes of Berne International tendencies of that time, of opportunistic and reformists, for the reason, that he branded many of the leaders of English trade-unions as men sold out to the bourgeoisie or paid for services to its class rendered from within of labor movement.

During the Anglo-Boer war, the Anglo-Saxon press already put the question of imperialism quite clearly as a new (and the last) stage of Capitalism. If my memory does not fail me, no one else but Ramsey MacDonald resigned from the "Fabian Society."—this prototype of the Berne International, this cultivator of seed-plots, and example of opportunism characterized by Engels with generous, force brilliancy and truthfulness in his correspondence with Zorge: "Fabian Imperialism"—such was then the current expression in the English Socialist literature. If Ramsey MacDonald forgot about this, so much the worse for him.

"Fabian Imperialism" and "Social Imperialism"—this is the same thing: Socialism in words and Imperialism in deeds, the TRANSFORMATION OF OPPORTUNISM INTO IMPERIALISM. This phenomenon became now during the war 1914—1918 and afterwards, the WORLD EVENT. Inability to understand this is the greatest blindness of the Berne yellow "International" and its greatest crime. Opportunism or reformism must have inevitably grown into SOCIALIST IMPERIALISM placed in power a group of the richest, advanced nations, robbing the whole world and thereby allowed the bourgeoisie of these countries to bribe with its monopolistic surplus profit (Imperialism is monopolistic capitalism) THE HIGHER STRATA OF THE WORKING CLASS OF THESE COUNTRIES.

Those who fail to see the economic inevitability of this fact are absolute ignoramus or hypocrites, who deceive the workers by repeating the old commonplaces about capitalism and thereby hide the bitter truth of the desertion of a large faction in the Socialist movement on the side of the imperialist bourgeoisie.

From this fact, however, two conclusions resolve themselves.

Conclusion number one: The Berne International is in fact, by its actual historical and political role, regardless of the good intentions and innocent wishes of some or another of its members, AN ORGANIZATION OF AGENTS OF INTERNATIONAL IMPERIALISM, working WITHIN the working class movement, spreading in it bourgeois influence, bourgeois ideas, bourgeois lies and bourgeois corruption.

In the countries with democratic-parliamentary culture of long standing, the bourgeoisie has learned how to act perfectly not only by means of force but also through deceit, bribery, flattery, in the most approved methods. The "hunchions" of English "labor leaders" (i. e., lackeys of the bourgeoisie in the field of fooling the workers) did not become famous for nothing, and even in Engel's time he had already spoken of them. In the same category can be placed the war-time reception of the social-traitor Merrheim by Mr. Clemenceau, the cordial reception of leaders of the Berne "International" by the ministers of the Entente, and so forth and so on. "You shall teach them, and we will buy them,"—said one clever English capitalist woman to Mr. Social-patriot Hyndman, who described in his reminiscences, how this lady, more farsighted than all the leaders of the Berne "International" put together,—had estimated the "efforts" of socialist-intellectuals in teaching Socialist leaders from the working class.

During the war, when Vanderveldes, Brantings and this whole band of ruffians were arranging "international" conferences,—the French bourgeois papers were scoffing at them very cleverly: "These Vanderveldes are suffering from some kind of tie (spasm or convulsion). People thus afflicted cannot say two sentences without suffering a strange convulsion of the facial muscles—in like manner the Vanderveldes cannot come out politically without words like a parrot: internationalism, Socialism, workers' international solidarity, revolutionary of the proletariat, etc. Let them repeat any sacramental phrases they wish, provided only they help us to lead the workers by the nose, imperialist war and in enslaving the workers."

The French and English bourgeois can sometimes be very clever and know perfectly how to estimate the lackey role of the Berne "International."

Martov has written somewhere: you, "Bolsheviks," are denouncing the Berne International, but your own friend Lorient, participates in it.

This is the argument of a crook, because every one knows that Lorient fights for the Third International openly, honestly and heroically. When the workers in Moscow, in order to fool them with "police-socialism," a workingman, Babushkin, attended those meetings in order to fight the workers out of its "clutches" and to get the workers out of its "clutches," Babushkin whom I knew from 1904, when he was in my workers' propaganda circle in Petrograd,—one of

the best and most devoted of workingmen—"Iskrist," leaders of the revolutionary proletariat, "Iskrist,"** leaders of the revolutionary proletariat, and who was shot by Rennenkampf in Siberia in 1906,—was just as little a "Zubatov adherent" as Lorient is "Berne's adherent."

Conclusion number two: The Third, the Communist International has been organized just for the purpose of not allowing the "Socialists" to get away with such lip-service recognition of the revolution, examples of which Ramsey MacDonald gives in his article. The lip-service recognition of the revolution, in reality covering up the thoroughly opportunistic, reformist, nationalistic and petty bourgeois policies, was the direct progeny of the Second International, against which we are waging war to the death.

When they say: The Second International died, suffering shameful bankruptcy,—it must be understood properly. It means the bankruptcy and death of opportunism, reformism and petty-bourgeois Socialism. Because the Second International has its historical value, has accomplished some good work which a conscious worker cannot deny, namely: formation of mass co-operatives, trade, and political organizations of workers utilization or bourgeois parliamentarism as well as all institutions of bourgeois democracy in general, etc.

In order to really defeat opportunism, which brought the Second International to a shameful death, in order to help the approaching revolution, which even Ramsey MacDonald is compelled to recognize, it is necessary: First,—to conduct all the propaganda and agitation from the point of view of the revolution, in contra-distinction to reformism, systematically explaining to the masses this contra-distinction—both theoretically and practically,—at every step of the parliamentary, union and other kind of work. Not by any means to reject (excepting special cases of course), utilization of parliamentarism and all the other "liberties" of bourgeois democracy, not to reject reforms, but to consider them only as a by-product of the revolutionary, proletarian class struggle. Not a single party of the Berne "International" satisfies this requirement. Not a single one shows even an understanding of how the propaganda and agitation must be conducted by explaining the difference between reform and revolution, how necessary it is to prepare both the party and the masses for the revolution.

Second,—it is necessary to combine legal (open) and illegal (underground) work. The Bolsheviks had taught this especially and insistently during the war of 1914-1918, while the heroes of contemptible opportunism scoffed at that, self-deceitfully praising "lawfulness," "democracy," "freedom" of the Western European countries, republics, etc. Now, only plain swindlers, bent upon deceiving the workers, can deny that the Bolsheviks were proven right. There is no country in the world, the most advanced and most "free" of the bourgeois republics, where the rule of the bourgeois terror does not reign, where freedom for agitation for the Socialist revolution, of propaganda and organization in this direction has not been forbidden. A PARTY, WHICH BY THIS TIME DOES NOT RECOGNIZE THAT, UNDER THE REIGN OF THE BOURGEOISIE, AND DOES NOT CARRY ON SYSTEMATIC, ALL-EMBRACING UNDERGROUND WORK, IN SPITE OF THE LAWS OF THE BOURGEOISIE AND BOURGEOIS PARLIAMENTS, IS A PARTY OF TRAITORS AND SCOUNDRELS.—A PARTY, WHICH BY ITS LIP-SERVICE RECOGNITION OF THE REVOLUTION IS FOOLING THE MASSES.* THE PLACE FOR SUCH PARTIES IS THE YELLOW BERNE "INTERNATIONAL." IN THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL THEY CANNOT BE. (Italics ours.)

Third,—a persistent and merciless war must be waged for the absolute expulsion from the working class movement of those opportunist leaders, who showed themselves before the war, and especially during the war, in the field of politics as well and especially in the "trade-unions" and co-operatives. The theory of "neutrality" is a hypocritical and contemptible subterfuge which helped the bourgeoisie to gain a hold upon the masses in 1914-1918. Parties which in words stand for the revolution, while in deeds do not carry on persistent work for the influence of the revolutionary—and only for the revolutionary party, in all and every mass working class organizations—are parties of traitors.

Fourth,—it is impossible to reconcile their condemnation of imperialism in words, while in deeds do not wage revolutionary war for the liberation of colonies (and dependent nations) from their imperialist bourgeoisie!—this is sheer hypocrisy. This is the policy of agents of the bourgeoisie in the working class movement. Such a party, English, French, Dutch, Belgian, etc., which in words is hostile toward imperialism, while in deeds do not wage the revolutionary struggle within the colonies for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, which does not help systematically the revolutionary work in the colonies which has already begun everywhere, which does not import into the colonies arms and literature for the use of the revolutionary parties there,—is a party of scoundrels and traitors.

Fifth,—the greatest hypocrisy is a typical phenomenon of the parties of the Berne "International": in words to recognize the revolution, and to pose before the workers with flowery phrases about their recognition of the revolution, while in deeds to display the reformist attitude toward such beginning of the growth of the revolutionary manifestations, which are the mass action of the masses, breaking bourgeois laws, stepping beyond the boundary of all legality, such as for instance, mass strikes, street demonstrations, soldiers' protests meetings among the troops, distribution of leaflets in military caserns and camps, etc. Any hero of the Berne "International," asked whether his party is carrying on such systematic work, will reply either with evasive phrases, screening an absence of such work: lack of organization and machinery for it and inability of his party to carrying on, or with a declaration against "treason of anarchists," etc. But just this constitutes working class,—its actual desertion into the camp of the bourgeoisie.

All the scoundrel-leaders of the Berne "International" have on their lips declarations of their "sympathy" toward revolution in general, and

** "Iskrist," or, "Iskrovitz"—followers of the magazine "Iskra," started by Lenin and Plechanov in Switzerland in 1903 and which was instrumental forces within the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party and led to their victory over the so-called "economists" at the 2nd Party Convention in 1904.

* Gentlemen of the Socialist Party of America, the Socialist Labor Party (and all other advocates of "legality," as, for instance, Y. F. and his friends), please accept the compliment, Editor.

toward the Russian revolution in particular. But only hypocrites and fools cannot understand, that the exceedingly rapid successes of the Revolution in Russia are the result of the work of many years of the revolutionary party in the above-indicated direction, of the building up systematically for years of an underground (illegal) apparatus for the leadership of demonstrations and strikes, for the work among the troops, of the study and creation of underground literature, summing up the results of their experiences and educating the whole party to the idea of the necessity of revolution, training and preparing leaders of the masses for such occasions, etc., etc.

The dearest and the most fundamental differences which summarizes all of the above, and explain the inevitability of an irreconcilable theoretical and practical political struggle of the revolutionary proletariat with the Berne "International," are the questions of the conversion of imperialist war into civil war—and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

The inflection of the Berne "International" with bourgeois ideology is best exposed in having failed to understand (or not wishing to understand, or simulating ignorance) the imperialist nature of the war of 1914-1918, it did not realize the inevitability of its conversion into a civil war between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie of all the advanced countries.

When the Bolsheviks as early as November of 1914 pointed out this inevitability, the Philistines of all countries retorted with stupid ridicule, and among these Philistines were all the leaders of the Berne "International." At present the conversion of the imperialist war into a civil war has become a fact in a number of countries, not only in Russia, but also in France, in Hungary, in Germany, even in neutral Switzerland, while the imminence of civil war is being noticeably felt in all the advanced countries without exception.

Now, to pass over this question in silence (as does Ramsey MacDonald) or to dispose of the question of inevitable civil war by using honeyed phrases (after the manner of Messers. Kautsky & Co.) is equivalent to direct treason to the working class, is equivalent to actually going over to the side of the bourgeoisie. For the real political leaders of the bourgeoisie have long ago understood the inevitability of civil war are thoroughly and systematically carrying out their preparations for strengthening their position in anticipation of just such an event.

Employing all the forces at their command exhausting gigantic energy, mind and determination, not shrinking before the most bestial crime, condemning whole countries to hunger, disease and starvation,—the bourgeoisie of all the world is preparing to suppress the proletariat in the impending civil war. But the heroes of the Berne "International," like fools, or hypocritical preachers, or worn-out, reformist string, continue to harp on the old, more abhorrent or more repulsive. There is no sight and MacDonaldis continue scaring the capitalists with the revolution, frighten the bourgeoisie with civil war, in order to wring some concessions from them, in order to win their consent for a policy of reforms. To this end only resolve themselves of the Berne "International."

This pitiful and contemptible method of these lackeys we already had occasion to observe in Russia in 1905 on the part of the liberals (Cadets), the "social-revolutionists." As to educating the masses in the realization of the inevitability and necessity to conquer the bourgeoisie in civil war to shape all our policies in strict conformity with this aim, to formulate, clarify and solve all questions from this point of view—the cringing, slavish conceits. And therefore, our only purpose must be once for all to shove all the incorrigible reformists, i. e., nine-tenths of the leaders of the Berne "International," into the filthy garbage pile of the servants of the bourgeoisie. (Italics ours.)

The bourgeoisie needs such underlings who still enjoy the confidence of some portion of the working class, who will paint the bourgeoisie in beautiful forms, blind the workers with their trashy stories, diverting the masses from the revolution by portraying the charming possibilities of the reformist path.

All the writings of Kautsky as well as our Mentally this sort of portrayal, the whimpering of the cowardly philistine who is afraid of revolution.

We have no possibility to repeat here in detail what fundamental economic causes make this revolutionary, and only revolutionary path inevitable and render any different solution of the day impossible—except through civil war. It must be written and volumes will be written on this question. Messers. Kautsky and other leaders of yet—but we need only add that understand this less distant from the truth than prejudice.

For the ignorant but sincere workingmen and supporters of the working masses understand more easily now, after the war, the inevitability of the revolution, of civil war and the dictatorship of the proletariat than such gentlemen as Kautsky and others, glutted with the most learned reformist misconceptions.

One of the most potent illustrations of the generally-observed phenomenon of the awakening of revolutionary consciousness in the masses are the novels of Henry Barbusse—"Under Fire" and translated into all languages with a circulation of 230,000 copies in France alone. The conversion of an ignorant and average man of the masses, completely held down by the weight of false ideas to the war, is portrayed in an unusually forceful, talented and truthful manner.

The masses of the proletarians and the semi-proletarians stand with us and are joining us by leaps and bounds. The Berne "International" is a staff without an army, doomed to crumble like exposed to the masses.

The Name Karl Liebknecht was made use of during the war by the Entente countries and the bourgeois press for the sole purpose of deceiving the masses, to make the bandits and robbers of the French and English imperialism appear as sympathetic to this hero, to this "only honest and true" hero.

Now the heroes of the Berne "International" are sitting in the same organization with the Karl Liebknecht who are planning the murder of Scheidemanns and Rosa Luxemburg, with the workers, who rendered hangman's services to the bourgeoisie. Ostensibly, lip-service attempts "to condemn" the Scheidemanns (as if "condemnation" can help to change the situation) actually, murderers. The late Harry Quelch was expelled by the German Government from Stuttgart in 1907, because he denounced a meeting of European diplomats as "a gathering of thieves." The leaders of the Berne "International" are not only a gather-

(Continued on page 5.)