

The Struggle Over The League of Nations.

We can say, without fear of successful contradiction, that there is very little interest taken in the fight over the League of Nations in Communist quarters. This is but natural. Our position on the League of Nations was adopted long ago. It was adopted even before the League Covenant was written. We did not have to see, like the "Socialists" and the Liberals, whether the League of Nations was based upon "liberal" principles, whether it was "democratic" or "just". A League of capitalist nations can never be anything but a league of capitalist states. Such a league may be based on the most "liberal" and "democratic" principles—that cannot be blind Communists to the real nature of the League, any more than Communists are blinded by the sham democracy of the capitalist states themselves.

Sincere liberals may oppose this particular League of Nations. They may call for reservation, clarification, amendments, etc. Or they may decide for the rejection of the whole covenant as being undemocratic. But between such an "liberal-Socialist" and Communist opposition to the League there is a wide and unbridgeable gulf. They must never be confused. The danger of confusion, of course, lies far less from the side of the Communists than of the liberals, especially, the petty-bourgeois Socialists. The "Socialist" opposition to the League is of a variegated kind suited to their opportunism. The Communist opposition is crystal clear. The Communist analysis mercilessly exposes the nature of the capitalist state. It explains to the workers that a combination of capitalist states can never be anything better than its constituent parts.

Our position requires also a criticism of the liberal and "Socialist" relations to the League. Such criticism is at the same time, a criticism of liberalism and moderate socialism in its relation to imperialism.

The election controversy has, however, furnished us a new angle of approach. Superficially it seems paradoxical that if the League is what we claim for it, an organization of international brigands, a league of capitalist-imperialist states in furtherance of their selfish schemes of world domination and exploitation, that a large section of the bourgeoisie in this country,—and the largest and most class-conscious at that—should be opposed to the League of Nations. Nor is this section of the bourgeoisie the anti-imperialist element. The bourgeoisie represented by the Republican Party have always been in the forefront, leading and guiding the imperialist policy in the Philippines, Cuba, South America, etc. Even now, a writer in the N. Y. Times, October 28—warns the Mexicans that Lodge, Knox, Hughes and Fall stand for intervention in Mexico—that a Republican victory at the polls means war with Mexico and the conquest of that country, unless indeed the Mexicans are ready to submit gracefully to the American capitalists. Why then are our American imperialists opposed to the Imperialist League of Nations?

It is indubitably true that the bourgeois opposition in this country to the League of Nations is to some extent, sham, mere "politics" played by politicians out of employment. Yet behind this veil of sham there is a sincere bourgeois opposition to the League of Nations covenant. The nature of this antagonism is most clearly seen when we analyse the defections from the regular party ranks. Especially noteworthy are the Republican defections. They fall under two heads, financiers and publicists, educators, etc.

First as to the publicists, educators, etc., the pro-League independents; they are the exponents of middle class democracy. Their point of view is most aptly set forth in the words of the banker, Thos. W. Lamont, in his letter to Edwin F. Gay, publisher of the Evening Post, Mr. Lamont's own paper. Lamont writes as follows: "I, first and last, the League recognizes that wars are due largely to misunderstandings and misrepresentations. The cure for misunderstanding is candid interchange of views. The antidote for misrepresentation is common accessibility to the facts. The present League creates an organization for the interchange of facts and of opinions. To prevent the growth of distrust is the vital need of the world to-day and to do that end, the League is clearly designed". This is the stock pacifist conception of the cause of wars. It is because of this conception that pacifists are continually searching for honest diplomats who will candidly declare their ideas and policies.

Only the naive, puerile brain of a pacifist, or the willfully perverted mind of a banker like Lamont can for a moment entertain the thought that a war which was responsible for the death and starvation of millions, the crippling of millions more, the most dreadful devastation ever wrought in the world's history, could in any manner be due to mere misunderstanding. However, it is convenient for Thomas Lamont to appear as naive and simple as a child—professing a total innocence and ignorance of material facts—even though such knowledge is absolutely indispensable in the banking trade of which he is one of the leading figures.

The great American financiers, the firm of Morgan & Co., of which Mr. Lamont is a partner have never made a secret of their sponsorship of the League of Nations. In fact, they have a goodly share in the framing of the Versailles Peace Treaty and the League Covenant. Moreover, to go back a year and a half in our history, it was Morgan & Co. who had a copy of the Peace Treaty even before the Treaty

was refused to the Senate by Wilson, and at the same time that the Government asked that the terms be not made public.

The struggle over the League of Nations is essentially a struggle between two sets of capitalists, between two categories of capital, to wit, LARGE-FINANCE CAPITAL and INDUSTRIAL CAPITAL. Large finance-capital has sponsored the League from the very beginning. It wants the League and is straining for its creation. Industrial capital, on the whole, detests the League. It wants it destroyed or at least, its coercive power rendered nil.

The antagonism of large finance-capital and industrial capital lies in the nature of both classes of capital and their special functions in the World War. The great banks have by their financial dealings been bound hand and foot to Europe. Their solvency depends upon the solvency of European bourgeois governments. Bankers have never been known to lend money out of generosity. The enormous sums loaned to France, England, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, etc., must be returned and with interest. Default in payment means loss, insolvency and bankruptcy. The difference in attitude taken towards Europe by financiers and industrial capitalists is most curiously shown by statements of returned travelers. Bankers on their home-coming are, as a rule, pessimistic. The whole burden of Europe's troubles seems pivoted on their shoulders. They talk of Bolshevism, depreciation, starvation, imminent bankruptcy industrialists, on the other hand, generally maintain their optimism. They speak of reviving trade, increased business, renewed industrial activity—though of course with "labor troubles".

The great financial capitalists have a general interest in the condition of capitalist society as a whole. The conditions in any one particular industry or group of industries are of much less importance to them than the general conditions prevailing in industrial society as a whole. The politics of a nation, its domestic and foreign policy are of vital concern to them. Large finance-capital may be compared to the heart of a huge organism. It is the heart of capitalism. Industry, trade, commerce are the veins and arteries, the channels that carry capitalism's life blood to its heart. Political and social conditions are the organic conditions which aid or retard metabolism going on in the economic organism.

It is because that American finance-capital has to a great extent been functioning as the heart of European capitalist society that it is so profoundly and intensely interested in European affairs. The rebuilding, the reconstruction, the solvency of Europe is its prime concern. It has no territorial interests in the Eastern hemisphere—of that we shall speak later. No wonder then that it wants peace in Europe. The longing for peace on the part of our bankers is real and substantial and not cloudy. The N. Y. Times, the mouthpiece of Wall Street bankers urged the Poles to make peace with Soviet Russia; certainly not on account of its Bolshevism. And whereas other newspapers boastfully proclaimed the Riga Peace as Polish victory, the Times soberly commented that it was not Polish victory, but that it was as Joffe said, "a peace without victory;" but with a necessary peace for the Poles as well if not more so than for the Russians. Peace is becoming more and more recognized as a condition sine quo non for any rehabilitation in Europe. The American financial capitalists desire the business of supervising the peace of Europe. The mutual jealousies, economic, national, racial and religious antipathies excited among the small nations must be quieted. This can be accomplished by, at least this task can be approached by, a seemingly neutral organization like the League, through the intermeddling of and extra-European power like the United States. Our League interventionists do not express this thought crudely and in naked language. They clothe it with beautiful, idealistic phrases. Lamont, in the above-mentioned letter to Gay, thus unburdens himself, "Shall America equipped in intellectual power and material resources to lead a world, now turn her back and with clouded vision, reject that moral leadership WHICH THE LESSER NATIONS OF THE EARTH ENTREAT HER TO ASSUME?" The Kipling brand of imperialism dilated plaintively on the "White Man's Burden". Our newer Lamontian imperialism tearfully echoes the burden of the larger nations.

The industrial capitalists, and the small bankers on the other hand, do not see things in the same light as their larger financial brothers. Their interests in Europe are remote, not intense; particular, not general. Their eyes are on their own country. Domestic issues, as they call it, occupy their attention almost exclusively. Their most important foreign issue is the tariff. Indeed, it is significant that while Harding has more than once mentioned the tariff in his campaign speeches, Cox has been uniformly silent on the subject. As a result of this localism of industrial capital, the industrialists are hardly interested in the peace and stability of Europe. To them interference in European affairs means enter taxation (always a nightmare), diversion of American business interests, embroilment in questions in which they are not concerned, or concerned but remotely.

There is another factor which goes to make American imperialism hostile to a League of Nations. Our imperialism has gravitated

chiefly around that body of principles which has gone by the name of the Monroe Doctrine. Though it is true President Monroe announced his famous policy in 1823, long before the growth of American imperialism, it is in effect a new doctrine applied to modern conditions, the political circumstances in Europe and America which gave rise to that doctrine having disappeared. The Monroe Doctrine, revived by the torch of modern imperialism is an expression of the fact (1) that American imperialism is too late to engage the world as its field; (2) that by geographical position, the Western hemisphere is the choice field for American imperialist conquest. American imperialism has sought to retrieve its loss in European imperialism by asserting all of the Western hemisphere as the sole and exclusive monopoly of American capital. The right of the United States to arbitrate the European-Asiatic affairs involves the recognition of the right of a League of Nations purporting to represent the whole world to interfere in matters pertaining to the Americans. In passing it is well to note that participation in a League of Nations is in itself an abandonment of the original Monroe Doctrine which has as its first condition, non-participation of the United States in European wars. American imperialism at present would rather assert its exclusive dominion over the whole Western half of the world, than surrender one title of its monopoly for the doubtful privilege of entering into the European-imperialist arena.

No doubt, American capital can enter the League with reservations as to the Monroe Doctrine. To those who worship legal formulas and words, this affords consolation. History, however, has brutally proven more than once the worthlessness of words, the sterility of phrases. American lawyers versed in the constitutional history of their country appreciate only too well the cheap value of reservations and interpretations. American imperialism guards its treasure too highly to be deceived by prospective reservations or legalistic interpretation.

Our analysis has shown that the League controversy has for its base, despite the camouflage of ideologic phrases, a social economy; this economy, the conflicting interests of two groups of the exploiting class. Both sides carefully, though to a large extent, unconsciously conceal their economic interests, behind systems of political philosophy and ideology. Some of the participants in the controversy interpret it as a conflict between the ideas of nationalism and internationalism; others, between selfishness and idealism; still others as a conflict between Americanism and Pro-Britishism. To the Marxist, this is an interesting example of how political systems and prevailing prejudices are shaped and moulded in support of economic class interests. We should never cease insisting on this truth. More than that, we should ever be busy, studying and interpreting history, current as well as past, in the light of the great Marxian truths.

Statement of G. E. B. of I. W. W.

(FROM DECEMBER 18, SOLIDARITY)

G. E. B. BULLETIN.

On account of the articles appearing in the O. B. U. Monthly, attacking revolutionary organizations of this and other countries in a manner which is contrary to the policy laid down by the General Executive Board at its previous sessions, and so many complaints coming into the General Office, the General Executive Board has found it necessary to remove the Editor, John Sandgren, in order to maintain harmony and discipline in the organization.

(Signed) GENERAL EXECUTIVE BOARD.

VOTE ON THE REFERENDUM.

The vote on the Third International having been counted and tabulated, it was found that all propositions were defeated, and as many resolutions and protests were received from Industrial Unions and Branches, as well as from individual members, and as a majority of the G. E. B. had sanctioned the withdrawal of the referendum on the above proposition,—the G. E. B. has declared the ballot void—excepting the Constitutional amendment of electing G. E. B. members direct by the Industrial Unions that they represent, which was carried.

(Signed) Chairman, G. E. B.

REPORT OF BALLOT COMMITTEE.

We, undersigned ballot committee on referendum of Third International and Constitutional Amendment, have made a tabulation of total vote cast, and find the following to be the result:

1st Proposition—YES:	602;	NO:	1658
2nd Proposition—YES:	913;	NO:	1118
3rd Proposition—YES:	1111;	NO:	994

The Ballot Committee finds 127 protest ballots voting NO on all propositions of the Third International, that, therefore, defeat the entire referendum on the Third International.

We also find 319 defective ballots that had to be thrown out.

Vote on Constitutional Amendment:
YES: 2254; NO: 246.
(Signed)