

## 2 YEARS AFTER Sacco and Vanzetti

This August 23rd will mark two years after the night when life was burned out of two of the finest spirits ever devoted to the great cause of the working class. On that night the cultured, respectable and frock-coated elite of Massachusetts civilization, and Fullers, Lowells and Thayers threw the switch that sent a fatal current through the tortured bodies of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti. The great thinkers and the masters who are kind enough to rule us looked on with open approbation or with a silence worse than assent. "It will teach the damned Reds a lesson."

### THE LESSON OF CLASS JUSTICE

But it also taught hundreds of thousands of American workers a big lesson. The deadly electrical flame that seared the martyrs gave a ghastly illumination to the whole structure of prejudiced, vengeful class

ful days. The man whom Stalin has appointed to "lead" the fight against the war danger, was for winning the last war "at all costs", "bought either \$450 or \$500 worth of bonds" made dozens of speeches and "carried on a regular campaign" in the stock-yards "to help make" he loans a success."

These are the credentials which qualify him to denounce us as "counter-revolutionists" and "renegades". They are not unlike the credentials of other leaders of the Stalin slander squad throughout the International.

In 1921 the left tide in the labor movement was flowing and Foster discovered the Russian Revolution—and that not without considerable persuasion and inducement. When Ralph Chaplin and the writer went to see him early in that year he was still hesitant and evasive. He replied to a direct question as to his belief in the proletarian revolution with the strange words, as I remember them: "Well, I used to have a lot of faith. I walked twenty miles once to vote the Socialist ticket".

His entry into the Party in 1921, following a trip to Russia and an agreement to support and build up the T. U. E. L. was an undoubted advantage to the movement just emerging from the underground and seeking contact with the masses. His trade union prestige and connections were a great factor in giving life to the trade union tactics adopted at the Unity convention earlier in that year and which retain their validity today. Even his conceptions of "dual unionism" as the cause of all the evils in the radical movement served a purpose in correcting the sectarian currents on this question.

As a Party leader he failed to justify the hopes placed in him and was not long in demonstrating that he had learned more from Gompers than from Lenin. His methods were marked by an ingrained and incurable dishonesty. His inability to put any question squarely, his systematic muddling and misrepresentation of issues and his subordination of the task of educating the Party to the immediate aim of securing votes in a faction struggle had a sad effect on the workers around him. Their political development was arrested in its most elementary stages, and what became finally crystallized as the Foster faction was always a picture of political impotence. His influence as a political force in the Party dwindled progressively and the new role of leadership he now enjoys could only have been conferred by appointment.

The reaction in the Communist International represented by the dominance of apparatus Centrism, is flowing now and Foster is riding with it. In political questions his chief characteristic has been adaptability, incapacity to withstand pressure and maintain a position as a minority. He has always been fighting for power but always sacrificing or adapting his position to the exigencies of that fight. A record of the various positions he has taken on disputed Party questions would be a chart of shifts in pressure from one side to another in the course of the struggles. He used to be against "dual unions" to a dogmatic extreme intolerable for one who tried to view the labor movement from a Marxist standpoint. Now the "Left" tide in the Comintern has carried him to a directly opposite position. The same on the question of the progressives. It is really hard to believe that the man who talks so radical now was an ally—and more than an ally—of Fitzpatrick a few short years ago. A new change in Comintern policy, which under the present regime is apt to come anytime on 24 hours notice, will find Foster on the bandwagon ahead of everybody shouting for the "new line" and denouncing anyone who holds on to the slogans he is promoting today. No one would welcome a new shift in policy to the Right more than Foster. He has an innate conservatism and talks radical now, because he must, with tongue in cheek, like an atheist priest repeating his prayers.

Foster fits well into the world machine of Stalin which has replaced the original staff of Lenin's International. Between his present role and his old one there is an intimate connection. Such leaders will last as long as Centrism maintains itself in the International and will go down with it.

justice of the capitalists. There were undoubtedly millions of workers who could not convince themselves to the very last minute that the Massachusetts reactionaries would dare to go through with their hideous murder plans. The execution revealed to them that the ruling class hesitates at nothing to consolidate and retain its power to exploit the working class. The execution revealed to them the fact that the courts, juries, the whole system of American "democratic justice" is an instrument in the hands of one class alone for the persecution of another class; that intimidation, terror and legal murder are not the least of the weapons of the bourgeoisie.

Sacco and Vanzetti were murdered because they were working class fighters, devoted, selfless, and without fear. They were made an example of. They were led to the electric chair in the face of the protest of literally millions of workers in every part of the world. The American capitalist class, feeling secure in its almighty power, did not want to "lose face" by yielding to the pressure of the people.

The fight for the lives of the two martyrs proved over again that the working class can gain nothing by accommodating itself to the limitations of its class enemy, the capitalists. The "well-meaning liberals", the yellow socialists, and the anarchists who were so perturbed by the storm of the workers' mass movement, who wanted to fight for Sacco and Vanzetti by being respectable and very legal in the eyes of Coolidge, Fuller and Thayer, only stood in the way of the struggle and helped to lull the workers into false security and delusions that led to inaction. Wittingly or unwittingly, they played the cunning game of the Fullers. It was they who sought to split the united defense movement, who sought to soft-pedal on the militant struggle, who sought partisan ends by fighting in every way against the Communist elements who were the leaven and backbone of the movement. That must be remembered.

### THE MOVEMENT MUST BE REVIVED

That gigantic movement which rallied hundreds of thousands and more to its banner showed that the healthy class instincts of the American workers had not been entirely blunted by a false "prosperity" and democratic illusions. It proved that the American workers can be aroused to march in unison for their class interests. Such a movement must be revived. It is an imperative need. Sacco and Vanzetti were not the first and not the last. The capitalist class is working to make Gastonia another Boston. It still keeps Mooney and Billings buried in California. It still takes its toll of the Centralia I.W.W. for defending themselves from American Legion lynchers. Scores of other workers in this country and thousands throughout the world, add to the number of victims of capitalist class justice. For all these, and for those to come, the workers must be aroused to protest and act, the movement must be gathered and built.

The defense of the imprisoned militants is the first duty of the working class. A stubborn fight for the release of the class war fighters will serve as the monument we erect to Sacco and Vanzetti. Their names have been imperishable symbols of revolt. Their murder was the last word spoken on them by their executioners. The working class has not yet spoken its last word.

Honor to the glorious fighters who have fallen! We never forget.

## Bucharin Formally Ousted

The official Party press has finally announced that the Tenth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. decided to "relieve" Bucharin, Humbert-Droz, Serra and Gitlow from the secretariat, and to expel Lovestone, Jilek, and Comrade Maurice Spector from the Executive. Comrade Spector is the only one of those named to be expelled for his support of the Bolshevik-Leninists (Opposition).

The removal of Bucharin, which seems to have been the sole accomplishment of the Tenth Plenum, is of little interest now. The delegates to the sessions had nothing to say about it and the mechanical raising of their hands was the purest and most needless formality. For the last five years Bucharin has been praised to the skies by the Right-Centrist bloc in the Comintern. He was put into Zinoviev's place as chairman of the C.I., when Zinoviev joined in the Opposition Bloc in the Russian Party. At the Sixth World Congress, held only a year ago, Bucharin was the spokesman for the Executive Committee and for the Russian Party. He gave the political report, and the program report. He was re-elected chairman. His removal from the C.I. was decided in secret caucus by Stalin a long time ago. His actual removal took place some months ago, again by Stalin decision. The Tenth Plenum only served to rubber-stamp enthusiastically the decision with which they had nothing to do. When the Opposition and The Militant reported that Bucharin was already slated for removal, the official Stalinist press, and all of the functionaries from Stalin to Foster and Lovestone, accused us of counter-revolutionary slander and "speculation" on differences in the Russian Party, which they swore did not exist!

## PEACE TALK Smoke-screen for War

The temporary suspension of cruiser building by the MacDonald government in England, followed by the Hoover regime in the United States, as a result of the conversations between the Laborite and Dawes, the American Ambassador at London, has opened a "new era of peace and harmony" for the hundredth time since the World War. The liberal capitalist press, led by the Nation and New Republic, are puffing themselves blue in the face with glee. The socialist press, trailing a poor second as usual, is welcoming the action as a further peaceful step towards the brotherhood of man and the abolition of bloodshed and turmoil. Norman Thomas opens up on the first page of the New Leader with pious joy in his heart at the thought of the \$30,000,000 saved for the prosperity of his beloved taxpayer every time a cruiser is discarded, and on the last page the cynical Oneal chuckles with maudlin editorial approval of the drubbing Hoover administered in his letter—"clever and deadly in its logic"—to McNutt, the commander of the American Legion.

### A WORLD ARMED TO THE TEETH

We have had enough of these "new eras", however, to be more than sceptical of their realization either through MacDonald or Hoover. World capitalism has been disarming regularly, every half year, since the end of the World War, disarming to such an extent, in fact, that history can find no parallel for a world bristling so belligerently with the most efficient armaments as today. The sum total of all the disarmament conferences up to the present day has been the scrapping of old, outmoded and useless weapons of war, the expenditure of ever-increasing proportions of national budgets for chemical and air equipment, a continual series of "small wars" of the big powers against their smaller victims, and preparations for "big wars" against each other or unitedly against the Soviet Union.

The present proposal to discard a few cruisers has about as much significance as an agreement to discard bows and arrows in the Spanish-American war. All the cruisers in the world may be scrapped without it making very much difference, for as Mr. George Young, a noted member of the British Labor Party and an old hand at diplomacy under half a dozen British governments, said at the Williamstown Institute of Politics: "Cruisers will soon be about as useless as battleships." He continues:

"In tackling the most expensive and least efficient branches first, the danger is that more and more there will be a concentration on the most novel and efficient weapons, the submarines, the airplanes and poison gas."

"Moreover, these novel weapons to which national armaments may be reduced in ten or twenty years, depend for their effectiveness on rapid and ruthless offensives against the civilian population. Therefore the net result of the present movement may be to make warfare wholly destructive to civilization, and history teaches us that the more destructive weapons of war become, the greater the temptation to use them."—(New York Times, August 5, 1929.)

Mr Young is correct when he indicates that the junking of cruisers is merely one way of improving the efficiency of war.

### AMERICA'S "PACIFISM" IN EUROPE

There is yet another reason for America's "pacifism"—in Europe. The United States is determinedly interested in having the European powers pay their debts to Uncle Shylock. Heavy military and naval expenditures diminish the chances of rapid repayment of debts to the United States. Without for a moment surrendering its aggressive intentions in Europe, the United States is all to the good when less money is spent by European capitalism on war preparations and more is left to pay the American debt. As a concession, the United States can even afford to discard ship for ship in return. The American imperialists are as well aware of the following fact as we are: In case of a war, it is not the superiority by even a half a dozen units of this or that arm of warfare that will decide the victory, but the tremendous predominance of American industry over that of any other power. We are not living in the days of knights in armour, and it is the steel mill and the chemical plants that decide the outcome of a military conflict.

Modern capitalism can just as soon disarm and inaugurate permanent peace as it can stop exploiting the working class. Militarism and war are inseparable parts of capitalism itself. MacDonald's "pacific" gestures and Hoover's balloons-full of hot air serve a good purpose to the master class: they help to delude the masses into bitterly false hopes of peace under capitalism. It is not in "disarmament" negotiations that American capitalism shows its real face. It is in its brutal oppression of the islands of the Caribbean and the Pacific, its military invasion of Nicaragua, its boldly aggressive challenge to the European powers contained in the Hawley-Smoot tariff, and in kindred actions. Capitalism will be disarmed only when it is swept out of its seat of power. The Russian workers have shown the way.