

THE MILITANT

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13 Years of Russian Revolution!

The socialist fatherland is thirteen years old this week! It is worth reminding those who have come to take it for granted, that the first stormy days of the Russian revolution were the days of those false prophets in the camp of the capitalists and their "socialist" assistants who predicted that the "Russian chaos" would dissolve in a few weeks into a peaceful capitalist democracy. The few weeks became a few months. The few months gave way to a few years. The capitalist class, so firmly convinced that their services as masters are indispensable to society, could not imagine the working class not only taking the state power into its own hands, but running it successfully for more than a decade and organizing a classless society. The social democrats, steeped in their parliamentary-democratic prejudices, and reflecting the hopes of the master class they really serve, refused and still refuse to give sanction to a proletariat that came to power by any means other than that of the MacDonalds, the Hillquits, the Vanderveldes, the Noskes and Muellers. The thirteenth anniversary of the Russian revolution adds another tombstone over these rotten prophets. The proletariat has shown its ability to seize power, to hold it, and to lay the foundations for a new society, thus opening a new chapter in the history of human kind.

THE OBSTACLES IN THE ROAD

To the Russian proletariat and its party, the Bolsheviks, go the honor of being the first. They have drawn with bold, majestic strokes the outlines of the road the working class everywhere must travel in order to emancipate itself from the yoke of capitalist enslavement. Never before has a ruling class been subjected to such arduous tasks, or confronted with such apparently insurmountable obstacles. The wrack and ruin of the imperialist war; the oppressive heritage of czarist backwardness, ignorance, bureaucracy; the devastation of the civil war organized by the domestic reaction and backed by foreign imperialism; the direct military intervention of Wilson, Poincare, Benes, the Milkado, the Kaiser, Lloyd George and Co; the economic and then the credit blockade; the ravages of the famine—the plagues of biblical times could hardly have been worse than these.

Added to these obstacles, which a state where the few rule could never have overcome, have been difficulties of another nature. The Russian proletariat came to power under the Red Flag, the banner of the international working class revolution. It calculated upon the rapid and indispensable development of the revolution in other countries to come to its aid. A combination of circumstances—some of which might have been averted by correct Bolshevik strategy—set back the revolutionary movement, and compelled the Russian working class and peasantry to continue the work of defending and strengthening the proletarian fortress by their own direct efforts. That enormous progress has already been made since the day when power was taken, in the face of the burdensome, unwanted heritage of the past, is eloquent proof of the giant's vitality of the proletariat, its immense capacities, and the inspiring power of the socialist ideal.

THE TREACHERY OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS

At the same time, it is implicit with the truth that the state aid of the revolutionary proletariat of Europe would have changed infinitely more the complexion of society today, would have produced successes before which those attained on a national scale would shrink into insignifi-

ficance. The treachery of the social democrats, who sold their proletarian ideals for the right to serve the capitalist class in the ranks of the working class, is revealed in truly monstrous proportions in the lights of this fact. Their effective work in stemming the revolutionary tide—frequently at the safe end of machine guns—is the historical crime that has set back society for a decade and threatens to set it back for another.

But these are not the only difficulties of the Soviet power. To ignore the others, today more acute than ever, is to do that peculiar, detestable dis-service to the revolutionary cause for which a whole section of the Communist movement and its

leadership primarily, has been selected. The infuriated cries of these courtiers and courtesans, who regard revolutionary critics as *lese majeste*, make this criticism all the more imperative, for its absence is a guarantee of decadence.

The threat to the Russian proletarian revolution to which we refer is a reflection of the whole capitalist encirclement of the U. S. S. R., of the pressure of imperialism and the war danger from without, and the upward strivings of the capitalist elements within the Soviet Union itself. The danger is embodied in the ruling regime within the Bolshevik party, the corrosive course of Centrism oscillating between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie,

embodied in the dominant Stalin faction. The Party and the revolution have been sincerely punished by it.

For proletarian internationalism, the Stalinist usurpers have substituted a petty-bourgeois nationalism, a "consoling" philosophy of socialism "in one country." For the live, pulsing, vigorous proletarian Party, Stalinism has substituted a hideous caricature in which all that is retained of democratic centralism is an exaggerated bureaucratic domination, where the Party worker does not dare to criticize or speak his mind. For the fighters and leaders of the October revolution whom it has sent into Siberian exile, in the prison, into banishment, it has substituted a servile group of incompetent yes-men. For the policies of Lenin, triumphant at every time, it has elaborated a revisionist concoction which produces only defeats and setbacks, and that not only in the Soviet Union, but throughout the world revolutionary movement. In undermining the revolutionary proletarian base of the Bolshevik party it is undermining the October revolution. It has led the workers' republic from one crisis to another, barely escaping catastrophe only because it adopted, at the last minute, one part or other of the platform of the Leninist Opposition it persecutes so rabidly. Our allegiance to Bolshevism, our fealty to the October revolution which has changed only by becoming more profound and staunch, compels us to aid the cause of the world revolution by indicating the danger threatening it and organizing the struggle against it.

THE MEANING OF THE OPPOSITION

The proudest heritage of the world proletarian vanguard, the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, the foundations of the Bolshevik revolution, are embodied in the Left Opposition. It is pledged to defend them tenaciously, without yielding to the assaults of capitalism or its socialist retainers, or to the ravaging attacks of Stalinism. The vanguard fighters hail the 13th year as the victory of Bolshevism, but not of Stalinism. Our warmest greetings to the proletariat of the U. S. S. R.! Our warm and comradely salute to the courageous fighters of the Bolshevik Opposition whom a usurpatory clique has confined in dungeons and exile, and to their leader and ours, comrade Trotsky!

Long live Bolshevism and the world revolution!

—S.n.

RESULTS OF THE ELECTION

Outstanding in the national elections just concluded is the enormous increase of Democratic party strength in the country, raising it to a power it has not enjoyed since the days of Woodrow Wilson's administration. To state it more accurately, it should be said that the most significant feature was the almost unprecedented defeat of Hoover administration.

Hoover and his party were swept into office with an immense majority in 1928. Traditional Democratic strongholds in the South were captured for the first time since the Civil War. Despite the relatively huge vote for Smith at that time, the Democratic party seemed to have received a blow at its very vitals.

The 1928 Hoover was the great monument to the unparalleled "prosperity", the fat years of American capitalism.

The Democratic Sweep

Speaking volumes for the jerky and abrupt rapidity of events and changes in our times, less than two years in office were required to deliver an even more crushing blow to the administration than Smith suffered in the presidential elections. Lost fortresses have been retaken by the Democrats. The most extravagant predictions of Democratic leaders pale before the actual returns. As colorless a candidate as Roosevelt succeeded, in spite of the stigma of Tammany Hall, in piling up an absolutely unprecedented plurality. Mossy Republican states like Ohio, Illinois, Kansas and elsewhere went Democratic. In Minnesota, a Democratic Senator was returned for the first time in almost three-quarters of a century. The Democrats took over most governorships and lost but one. They have changed the relationship of forces in both houses of Congress, where it appears at this writing that they may be sufficiently represented to organize both houses for themselves. In a word, Hoover and the Republican Party were almost everywhere heavily snowed under.

In 1930 Hoover defeat is the first political tombstone erected to mark the passing of prosperity.

The fierce crisis, with its mass unemployment, has made its mark on the elections. Even the hardy perennial of American politics, prohibition, took a distant second place. The intoxication even of the masses with a delusive prosperity which produced the tremendous Hoover majority, has given way a blind dissatisfaction of the masses with the crisis and its ravaging effects. The Democratic party was "endorsed" only in the most purely parliamentary sense. In actuality, the Democrats were not so much the recipients of an endorsement as the Republicans—short-sighted held solely responsible for the crisis, instead of being regarded as one of the pillars of capitalism which produced the crisis—were the recipients of a

condemnation.

Hoover is the staunchest representative of capitalist reaction, as is the principal opposing party—the Democratic. The revolt against the Republican party was not led by the big bourgeoisie, but by the petty bourgeoisie, the middle class so brutally hit by the crisis. The middle class led the mass of the workers and poor farmers behind it, directing the futile revolt into the stagnant pool of the second capitalist party.

The profound dissatisfaction of the masses is incontestable. Equally incontestable is the fact that the proletariat in the United States has not yet taken the first big steps to break away from the ideological and organizational dominance of the bourgeoisie. If the votes for the Democrats do not prove this sufficiently, the votes for the Communist and Socialist parties do.

The Socialist vote must have been a great disappointment to those who received it. In spite of the contemptibly petty bourgeois, reformist campaign it conducted—revolting to any class conscious worker—it only superficially doubled its vote (according to reports at hand up to now). We say superficially, because in reality, it did little more than stagnate. In New York City, for instance, the standard bearer, Weldman, doubled his 1928 vote, it is true, but recorded no increase over the 1922 vote, not to speak of Thomas' mayoralty vote last year, or Hillquit's 1917 vote. For a so-called "radical" party today to double, or even treble its vote in comparison with a pre-crisis i. e. 1928 or earlier, vote, is no achievement at all. The S. P. received thousands of petty bourgeois votes; its disgraceful Jewish-nationalist campaign in some districts ("every good Jew should vote for Vladeck") brought it many nationalistic votes. But the distribution of its vote nevertheless shows that this petty bourgeois party of capitalist democracy gained a majority of its support from workers.

The Communist Vote

This is all the more noteworthy in face of the poor showing of the Communist Party, a penalty for which Stalinism makes our Party pay. In New York City (the only count at hand at this writing) Foster got 15,560 votes more than double the Weinstein vote of last year. But that was a humiliating low point for the Party. The Party's banner bearer this year did not succeed, however, in even doubling the 1928 gubernatorial vote, that is, a vote cast before the crisis or the unemployment! The tottering S. L. P., with less than one-tenth the Party's apparatus or influence, quadrupled its 1928 gubernatorial vote!

We will return more exhaustively to the results of the elections in the next issue.

In the Next Issue

Pressure of space, due largely to the need of publishing the declaration of the Marine Workers' Opposition, compelled us to omit from this issue a number of very important articles: the A. F. of L. convention in Boston, a complete analysis of the elections, the continuation of Trotsky's article on Stalin as a theoretician, and many others. They will all appear in the next number of the paper, which will be printed in about a week in order to make up for the delay in publishing the present number.

See p. 6