Bolshevik Congresses Once and Now

On the Eve of the Congress

ruling party of the Soviet Union control of the party and establishis being called upon to give its ing the cult of the Leader.

reaucracy. First of all: why wasn't a regular party congress convened in three the leader and the leaders (local of civil war. Moreover, in all the years and eight months? Under leaders are deified within the the most onerous conditions of un- imits of a definite territory) and derground struggle and emigration, the violation of the statutes, the from the years 1903 to 1907, four congresses took place: in Brussels-London, Geneva, Stockholm and at arbitrary intervals, after even economic and the political, demonaction and of the complete decline .utely evident. All these phenom- bureaucracy obviously does not of the party that set in, interrupted na in their entirety mean the liq know how to make both ends meet sian proletariat must not take po- by these methods, they carried the the regular succession of congress aidation of the party as an active theoretically. es. Only in 1912 did a Bolsehvik political whole that checks, elects conference gather in Prague, equi- and renews its apparatus. The first valent in importance to a congress. No sooner did the revolutionary congress reads: where and why did movement revive (1912-1914) than the Bolshevik party disappear? the war broke out.

In April 1917 a new party conference is called, similarly equal in importance to a congress. Four months later, at the end of July 1917, under conditions of semi-ilfollowing five congresses are conof the party and of Soviet policy. gerous to elevate the Soviet reality merging of the state and the party. freedom.

. . . . Such was the regime prior to the death of Lenin and prior to the skyism". The 13th and 14th congreat delays, necessitated by back. pered Marxian criticism. 15th congress was called, contrary torship is caused by the need of political conclusions from the "liqto the party statutes, more than suppressing the resistance of the uidation of the classes". though the statutes did not and state is in the main achieved. The state coercion, and signifies the apconvene all future congresses every have to complete it. The 17th party by no means to a bureaucratic retwo years. This decision was car- conference already decided—this gime. Is it this that we see in ried not without inner friction in decision is now repeated day in- reality? If "politics" has disapthe apparatus itself: it was difficult day out-that the task of the second peared in the U. S. S. R. it has disto explain openly why the Bolshevik five year plan is not only the "liq- appeared for the masses only. All ruled by usurpation, not merely in fact but according to the letter of the statutes as well, not a voice of protest was raised in the party. For two reasons: (1) no one believes that the apparatus congress is capable of changing anything in the work of the ruling summits; (2) if any one would try, in his simplicity, to protest, he would immediately be expelled from the party. The "cleansing" which preceded the congress expelled tens of thousands of people for lesser sins. If in the classic period of Bolshevism a discussion lasting a number of weeks preceded the congress, the present congress was preceded by a bureaucratic cleansing which dragged out for a half a year. Under these conditions the congress will be a ponderous parade of the

Liberals and social democrats have frequently drawn a very superficial analogy between Bolshevism and Fascism. The late Serrati, former leader of the Italian Maximalists and a Communist during the last years of his life, said to me in 1914: "To our shame, Mussolini learned more from the Bolsheviks than we did." It is not necessary to explain the irreconcilability of the aims which the two principal world currents serve: one wants to perpetuate decaying capitalist society by means of universal police-rule, the other wants to liquidate classes and states by methods of the revolutionary dictatorship, thus liberating society and the human being. But in the course of a combat mortal enemies frequently exchange weapons. The fact is that if in the struggle for power the Fascists have borrowed the last period the Soviet bureau. alone can make them a cohesive cracy has familiarized itself with and battling army. many traits of victorious Fascism, Any failure to make the neces-

bureaucracy.

The impending congress of the first of all by getting rid of the ences also disappear. In reality no one of the rulers

approval of the political leadership. It is impossible to read without a perspective. The second five year the economic plan and the work of a feeling of embarrassment and plan, calculated on a full and comthe Comintern, in accordance with sometimes shame the Soviet press plete liquidation of class distinca formula prepared in advance. where in each column, in each arti- tions, does not foresee at all a However, these three closely inter- cle, each telegram and report of a mitigation of government coercion, connected spheres present a number meeting, the "Leader" is bonored nor a decrease in the budget of the of burning questions which the con- and praised in the very same un- G. P. U. The ruling bureaucracy gress cannot and does not want to changed and universally obligatory does not prepare in the least to answer. Not because these quest expressions. Even a journalist like give up its commanding positions, tions conflict with the interests of Louis Fischer, who is not very on the contrary, it supplies them very presentation is incompatible pureaucracy, found it necessary to guarantees. Coercion, even within ter of these standardized panegyrics. already has such a harsh charac-

.nits, the convocation of congresses gence between two perspectives, the the productive forces. juestion which arises before the

Bureaueratic Dictatorship and Social Contradictions.

The barsh character of the dicta-

(Continued from page 1)

to the dishonor of the workers to

accept. An honest leadership

worthy of the name will have no

need of being ashamed to organ-

ize its ranks even for such an out-

come if the conditions impose it

. . . .

hope and prospect for a victory

remain unimpaired. It is neces-

sary, however, that the steps be

taken which have been indicated

in these pages on several occa-

sions. The rank and file have

shown a superb spirit, a flawless

solidarity, a gratifying militancy.

There is no doubt that even more

houses can be pulled out on strike

and the movement extended still

further. And this is just what

msut be done at once to assure

victory. But for this, the im-

provements in the organization

But as matters stand now, the

upon the workers.

of the withering away of the state out of its highest intensification, here should be deep social contra-Jictions which give rise to this process. In what direction must we ook for them?

of the U. S. S. R. believes in such author of these lines in the columns significance of these declarations perspective of a further intensification of the methods of the dictator-

actionary conclusion that the Rus- labor board to keep hands off while. tion and weakening of purely state no less false than those of Radek, tain the check-off. functions. Some people believed The theory of Kautsky, Otto Bauer, For social development in gen-them. Louis Fischer, is one of his Leon Blum and others assumes an legality, the Sixth party congress articular, a course and norms of sions into the realm of theory, tried of social forms: having reached the hour work day and for the five-day thracite claiming 50,000 members; chine. assembles and sets out the political pure reason cannot be prescribed. to present the merging of the Com- necessary maturity, the productive premises for the October uprising. It is naive to say that the Soviet missariat for Trade with the trade- forces invite Messrs, socialist lead-Eight months later a new party state is not a dictatorship of the unions as the beginning of the liq- ers to power. Everything takes congress is called upon to solve the proletariat merely on the basis that uidation of the state. In reality, place within the framework of dem-Brest-Litovsk disagreements. The he given form of a dictatorship we have only a merging of two bu- ocracy with full comfort for all the loes not correspond to our a priori reaucratic apparatuses. The new participants. In reality, the princonceptions. But if reality cannot statutes of the party, which are cipal characteristic of historic deyear, and each of them marks an be judged by ideal norms, it is just to be ratified by the 17th congress, velopment is the constant disruption important bourgeois politicians were important epoch in the development as inadmissible and no less dan- make a decisive turn towards the of the equilibrium between the part of Stavisky's swindling apparproductive forces and politics, in-Each congress is preceded by a into an ideal norm. The historic -but how?-by a final and formal side the productive forces themdiscussion unfolded with complete failure of the Comintern is caused replacement of the party as well as selves, for example, between indus- the masses now began to break primarily by the fact that it pro- of the mass Soviets by the single try and agriculture, between the loose. Its dramatic expression was however, that Doumergue will succlaimed the Soviet state, more pre-bureaucratic apparatus. It is not social weight of the bourgeoisie and the attempt of thousands of Paris-ceed in stifling the rebellious mood geoisic indulges in complacency. cisely, the Soviet bureaucracy, as a question of the "whithering" away the weight of the proletariat, bea categoric imperative. Meanwhile, of the state in the Engels sense, tween the potential power of the puties. Undeniably the demonstradeath of Lenin and prior to the declaration of war against "Trot- he international proletariat as well but on the contrary, of its further proletariat and the real force of its liberal New York World-Tele- zation now than in the somewhat as the Soviet state itself need noth- bureaucratic concentration. It is party, etc. Contradictory historic organized by reactionary elements. skyism". The 13th and 14th congresses already took place after ing more urgently than free, unhamno wonder that the ruling summits conditions forced the Russian proletter of the severely rebuked the careless young letariat to take power first, al. Camelots du Roi-an organization tion is made....An event of this However exaggerated this statetheoreticians for attempting to draw though from the point of view of led by the scions of the nobility kind is never forgotten. It lights ment may be, revolutionaries can to the party statutes, more than suppressing the resistance of the proletariat of to plot openly its own destruction—
two years after the 14th: it was everthrown ruling classes and to The withering away of the party desired by a chew of force to bring the likely to burst out with greater problem in France today is one of necessary first to smash the opposi- undermine their economic roots. in the socialist sense of the word the United States, England, or desired by a show of force to bring intensity later." ion. In the autumn of 1927 the But according to the official theory presupposes the liquidation of pol- Germany to have taken power first. about a swing to the right in the ion. In the autumn of 1927 the But according to the omeial theory presupposes the inquidation of pol-line of the saddle leadership, and especially the Inter-central Committee decided—al-this basic task of the workers' lities in general, therefore also of the workers' lities in general, therefore also of the line of though the statutes did not and state is in the main achieved. The state coercion, and signifies the aptionalized the means of production, to crowd out the republic. Russia would have been doomed to the fate of China.

struction of dairy cattle, and this and petty bourgeois supporters and to de-nationalize the cow, giving it ed the men to affiliate with the A. back to the peasants as private F. of L. and made efforts to secure property. Only very recently the the intervention of Green himself. the same reasons to transfer the of the A. F. of L. Philadelphia Taxition because they, like we, are horses to life-time use of the peas- men's Union was sent to New York concerned only with the advance- ants. The real key to the puzzle as general organizer of the stirke. day into the treasury of the union The strike has already recordment of the interests of the work- of bureaucratic omnipotence lies in At the same time La Guardia if the union would agree to their ed positive gains for the taxi men these simple facts. We say, and called in Morris L. Ernst of the working. in which a faction monopoly or if certain ancient religions, also be- act as mediator. Ernst arranged a

exhausted by milk, it only begins tory. The men voted down this the vote into reality. with milk and bread. The contra- "settlement" and demonstrated It is not clear exactly how the what is of paramount importance dictions pass through the whole what they thought of it on the Socialist Panken got into the strike for the taxi drivers; win or lose system of economy and of social streets against the scab drivers. and how he became one of its they will come out of this strike of promise that their solution is too complicated and requires a was the attempt to use the inde-tain; he is a partner to the latest another thing. This strike of the

Disagreements within the uncontrolled bureaucracy must be settled from above, by the "Leader" who is but the personification of the ap-But if it is not a question now

THE MILITANT

Polemizing in 1932 against the convention. But what is the real

of the Berliner Tageblatt, Radek of conciliation? Are they intended explained to us with his usual play- to secure peace and harmony in the ulness that socialism means the mine camps with a filled pay ennationalization of the means of pro- velope and a "full dinner pail" for duction and distribution and noth the miners? That is not the moing more, and that if working class tive. children do not get enough milk. The cringing pledge of these "inthis is explained by the scarcity of dustrial statesman" before the coal cows and not by the absence of so- operators is an effort to guarantee it is necessary to recall the fact ine. the workers' state but because their critical with regard to the Soviet with ever new and more material cialism. Despite all its captivating that there will be no fight for imsimplicity this theory is radically proved wages and working condiwith the interests of the ruling bu- point out the insufferable charac- the formal framework of the party. false. Socialism presupposes not tions made by the miners so that only the nationalization of the Lewis may secure formal recogni-The connection between deifying ter as it never had during the years means of production but also the tion of the union and collect the ability of the latter to satisfy all check-off on the dues payments. official speeches and articles the human needs. Precisely because of The operators of the Pennsylvania this the old primers stated that captive mines, that is, the United of the valiant fight of the country. There are still socialist society is possible only on States Steel Company empire, showabolition of criticism of the sum- ship is pictured. This crying diver- a certain level of development of cd Lewis that they could beat him It is true that social democrats intimidation, frame-ups, and bludagain in London. The years of re- more arbitrary cleansings-is abso- strates irrefutably that the ruling drew from this proposition the re- geoning. They had told the NRA

party as a ruling party was denied uidation of capitalist elements and politics is monopolized, centralized, the belated and jumpy economic and in the demonstration. Among them dozen Fascist grouplets contend for portance for the U. S. S. R. Under the right which it enjoyed in the classes in general" but "complete personalized. It would be the great- cultural development have not disrevolutionary underground: the liquidation of causes which engendest the dictatorship of the the "ingratitude of the Third Rep- of reaction. Money will now flow ed its trust not in the forces of inrevolutionary underground: the indication of the Leader is proletariat: they have merely tak-ublic". But these masses did more to them from the coffers of the ternational revolution, but in pacts to give it instructions for the fu- tion" as well. In the conditions engendered by personal bad tastes en on an unrecognizable form. The to give it instructions to the second five year plan is and by official subserviency. This productive forces of the U. S. S. R. transformed its political character. than before. While the liberal ments. The Stalinists have argued 1930) however, was convened not to create, state power will have purely psychologic explanation ex-develop now in a nationalized form From an expression of Royalist re- press tries to center attention on that Hitler's triumph was not an two years after the 15th (January nothing more to do. The struggle plains nothing. In reality the dei- but they still pass the stages left action, its voice was changing to the demands of the Royalists, laugh unmitigated evil from the revolutwo years after the 15th (Junuary and a haif years against external dangers would re- fication of the leader is a necessary far behind by the advanced capital- that of the oppressed masses of the ing them off as silly and outmod- tionary viewpoint, since "it threw after, that is, already in violation quire, of course, also in a social- clement of the present political relist countries—especially if reckoned country, to become a thundering pro- ed, Fascism, the reaction a la mode Poland and France into our arms." of the new statutes. Finally, be- st society, a powerful military or- gime of the U. S. S. R. Since the on a per capita basis. From this test against political corruption, is being prepared. tween the 16th and the 17th con- ganization but by no means inter- workers are denied the possibility follow, despite the "liquidation of economic collapse and relentless gresses three and two-thirds years al government coercion, not a re- of re-electing and directing their classes", the social contradictions exploitation. From the organized "the common sense of the French him the steel trust, whose handy have elapsed. During the twenty time of class dictatorship. Where apparatus, some other instance is of Soviet society as well as the Royalists and would-be Fascist people" the democratic traditions man, Tardieu, may become Doummonths that the Central Committee he causes disappear the consequencessary to solve state problems. great theoretical confusion of the groups, the government had little of 1789", the parliamentary opposi ergue's Foreign Minister, the illustration of the groups, the government had little of 1789", the parliamentary opposi ergue's Foreign Minister, the illustration of the groups, the government had little of 1789", the parliamentary opposite the consequence of the groups, the government had little of 1789", the parliamentary opposite the consequence of the groups, the government had little of 1789 and the consequence of the groups of the gr

> all the children should drink milk from that of the reaction. to their heart's content. If the between the Kolkhoses. Sovkhoses man", who the bourgeoisle hopes, cline in its own membership report- gel" of counter revolution. and individual peasants, between various layers of the proletariat, reaucracy. Precisely these sharp constant conflicts which take on inevitably a social, and in their tendencies, a class character, de- them and the companies against mand the powerful intervention them. from above, that is, state coercion. When La Guardia saw the tor-Sometimes, we see how a fight rent he attempted to unload responabout milk leads to a malicious de-sibility before his own bourgeois forces the government authorities hamstring the movement. He advisgovernment found itself obliged for As a result of his "help" Gailbraith not at all for paradox's sake, that American Civil Liberties Union to that is lacking.

January 20, 1984.

Another "Victory" for Lewis

The U.M.W.of A.Convention

(Continued from page 1)

erators' organization, addressed the

at his own game of vote stealing,

No Strike Assurances

ious gains been recorded by the

covering almost two decades.

The Insurgent Unions

week. Yes, but on this point also, the Progressive Miners Union in Lewis hastened the assurance that Illinois, which lays claim to 30,000 there would be no truculence in members. New unions have sprung the attitude of the union. He warn- up in Washington, West Virginia, ed the delegates not to raise false and Nova Scotia. But the indepenhopes back home that such desires dent union in the anthracite, headcould be obtained. "We do not ed by Cappelini and Maloney has wish to cripple the inustry or em- not differed essentially in its methbarass the federal government or ods from the U. M. W. The sothe recovery administration," he called progressive leaders of the said-There must be no strikes, ac- Illinois union have adopted all the cording to Lewis. In glaring con-bureaucratic methods of expulsions trast to these assurances, however, and frame-ups of the Lewis mach-

However, the indomitable spirit miners except by fighting for them, of the rank and file coal miners has by using the powerful strike weat remained. It is due to their vitality and fighting ability that the U. The most brilliant pages of Amer- M. W. has revived and today repreican labor history carry the story sents perhaps the strongest union miners. But they also record the great latent forces hidden within innumerable betrayals perpetrated the smoke-filled mine fields. There by Lewis during the administration is no reason to believe that the policies which prevailed at this Indianapolis convention mark the in-In 1925 he made his infamous auguration of a new epoch. On the proposal to drive 350,000 miners contrary. The spirit of rebellion wer in general. They came to the elections in their mines for the from the industry. The scourge of will again assert itself. The econ-Young Soviet theoreticians, it is same conclusion for Germany of establishment of their company un-unemployment and the increase of omic pressure upon the miners will true, have attempted to present the 1918 as well and through the officers ion. Lewis did his best to betray machine mining aided this nefarious call forth their resistance against matter in such a way that the so- of Noske brought this admonishment the miners who struck for recog- plan. Where once upwards of 800, the continuous and increased encialist growth of the country and forcefully to Karl Liebknecht and nition of the U. M. W. Now he 000 coal miners worked in and slavement. This resistance will rethe liquidation of the classes lead Rosa Luxemburg. But the conclu- promises that there will be no around the mines, there are now duce the deceptive conciliation and before our very eyes to the mitiga- sions of the social democracy are strikes so that he may thereby ob- 400,000 men employed. Many re- peace proposals to naught. In the volts against the Lewis regime mine fields are excellent prospects have occurred, and insurgent unions for new and more serious rebellions But the convention went on re- have been created. There is today and for much more serious contests eral, for proletarian dictatorship in generally not very fortunate excur- extremely harmonious evolution cord for higher wages, for the six- an independent union in the an- against the treacherous Lewis ma-

Masses Shake French Regime

(Continued from Page 1)

The long pent-up discontent of "sensible" socialist accounting it which the liberal French Republic new flames of revolt which, even draw small comfort from the recent would have been infinitely more has decade after decade permitted though smothered for a while, are record of the French C. P. The ever, obeyed the Mensheviks, not to get into the tent the nose of the a more rapid and intensive devel powerful revolutionary party more

the thousands, workers hastened its enormous body of discontented The coming of Doumergue to However, the disproportions of to the Place de la Concorde to join petty bourgeois readers. Half a power, it must be added, has its im-

will tame the masses. This flerce ed by Piatnitsky at the recent 13th reactionary was co-author of the Plenum continues its sectarian, disimperjalistic Franco-Czarist secret ruptive course. The two bureautreaty of 1917. He is an enemy of cracies togetehr manage to keep reform and democracy, and a profes- half the working class immobile sional Red-baiter.

It is doubtful in the extreme, its energy in futile forays,

L'Ami du Peuple, organ of million- black hundred forces? The possi-What the Royalists did not count aire Senator Coty, is preaching an bility cannot be doubted. The task on was the mood of the masses. By unadulterated Hitlerian doctrine to is posed.

to fear. But in the close-packed tion of the Socialists, for the head- sory nature of Stalinist diplomacy Socialism, that is a society of mass which boldly went head-on ing-off of Fascism would be as is again exposed. harmonious production and distri- against armed and mounted soldi- futile and deceptive as it proved Once again it is demonstrated bution, presupposes at any rate that ery, there moved a different spirit to be in Germany. The Socialist that only the revolutionary prole-Party of France continues to work tariat of France can help restrain Hence the launching of cavalry to hold back the workers of the French capitalism from launching cows are nationalized but their and machine gunners against the country from militant extra-parla- against the Soviet Union a Franconumber is insufficient, or their demonstrators, hence the press cen- mentary struggle, And the Com- Russian-Polish army of intervention udders dry, it is still not socialism, sorship and suspension of civil munist Party of France, having under the leadership of Adolf Hitbecause for lack of milk conflicts liberties. And hence the calling to learned nothing from the German ler, whom Leon Trotsky long ago arise; between the city and village, power of Doumergue, "the strong catastrophe or from the steady de- characterized as "the super-Wran-

while the other half throws away

So apparent in this that the bourspeed; can the real revolutionary With open reaction in the saddle leadership, and especially the Inter-

With a fierce Communist-hunter To trust in such a situation to in the saddle of France, and behind

between all the toilers and the bu- The Significance of the Taxi Strike conducted the negotiations for the

(Continued from page 1)

ently they were and are eager to referred to the future for distribusaw when the company drivers ing. went on strike. Terminals and Before this maneuver was put piers reserved to the company cabs over on the men they tried to spread by contract were now inviting them | the strike to other sectors of transto come in and render "service to portation. They chose the bus the public". The independents of drivers and conductors of the Fifth fered to pay two dollars apiece a Ave. buses as the point of attack.

scheme. They realized that if the strikers, and it has helped their cause of insufficiency of cattle, bas- number of meetings. The fruit of independents were out on the streets strike to the extent that it has ed themselves on the bull Apis, the his efforts was a "settlement" which that would be a powerful lever in made it difficult for most and imposreligion of bureaucratic sovereignty said nothing about the recognition the hands of the bosses to break sible for some diners to reach the bases itself on the cow-not on the of the union, minimum wages or the strike. They sacrificed the money hotels. It has set an inspiring examone that exists, but on the one maximum hours. In addition the and voted for "no cabs on the ple of working class militancy and proposed distribution of the accum- streets." And forthwith they re- will undoubtedly be an impetus to The problem is, of course, not ulated tax money was unsatisfac- paired to the streets to translate other workers to struggle against

relations. The question, however, But the nub of the boss strategy spokesmen. But one thing is cer- with a union. We are also sure of will mean the triumph of the special article. -L. TROTSKY. pendents to divide the ranks. An perfidious sell-out aranged by La taxi drivers will not be the last. independent is the owner-driver of Guardia, Ernst and some people on

the Committee of Thirteen which strikers. The terms of the sell-out one cab. The five-cent tax question are the worst imaginable. The did not affect them as it went into question of union recognition which their pockets. They are likewise in has became the crucial one in the different to the hours and wage strike is not even mentioned. The question. In short they are petty wages and hours question is ignorbourgeois individualists. Conseque ed. The accumulated tax money is reap the harvest of fares that they tion. The men get absolutely noth-

and the entire labor movement. It But the strikers saw through this stiffened the morale of the hotel their intolerable conditions. And

and direction of the strike are essential prerequisites. The leadership is the decisive problem. It must prove capable of organizing and coordinating the work, of drawing in all progressive forces, of discarding all

narrow and clique tendencies, of inspiring the workers with selfconfidence, of sharpening and extending the demonstrations and picket lines by heightening the morale, of instilling the workers at the daily mass meetings with the knowledge and spirit which

sary improvements has opened the door to the Stalinist wreckers. The only way to eliminate this dangerous cancer is by making the necessary corections and then by dealing with the Stalinists in the only way permissible to class conscious militants: by proving in objective discussion and above all in practise, the superiority of the policies and conduct of the union's leadership to the misleadership of the 18th

EDITORIAL

Street incompetents. For our own part, we stand with those who seriously pursue such a course, and with no one else. And although we represent only a minority in the ranks of the Amalgamated, we are ready to cooperate with all the progressive and militant forces in the union who are marching in the same direcers and their strike. Especially a labor strike is the last place clique tendencies can be permitted. Their continued existence can only prove fatal, because they

are an insidious poison. A genuinely collective direction of the strike, a heightened note of militancy, a serious concern with the organization of the work. a sober approach to the prospective outcome of the. strugglethese problems, at the end of the second week, now stand out, full workers and their union!