

MARCH OF EVENTS

By JACK WEBER

MINERS' STRIKE IN ENGLAND

The threat of a general strike of the English miners attracts the immediate attention of the class-conscious workers everywhere...

ENGLAND AND THE FAR EAST

The imminence of a further advance by Japan into North China has aroused the keenest apprehension among English capitalists...

itions that antagonize Japanese and British imperialism have reached the point where the traditional friendship resulting from the military alliance that existed up to 1922, begins to turn sour and to give way to hatred.

CLASS STRUGGLE IN FRANCE

The situation in France becomes more threatening to the workers daily. The battle between the Fascist Croix de Feu and the Socialist and Communist workers of Limoges...

TRADE TREATY WITH CANADA

Whose government is it? Roosevelt's treaty with Canada would almost by itself prove that the government follows the demands and the interests of big business...

Lessons of October

By Leon Trotsky

Editor's Note: This article was written for the French paper "Revolution," the organ of the Parisian revolutionary youth. The contents of the article clearly reveal as its main aim the utilization of the experience of the October Revolution to demonstrate to the reader the fatal nature of the policy of the "People's Front" in France...



I accept with the greatest readiness Fred Zeller's suggestion to contribute an article to "Revolution" on the occasion of the 18th anniversary of the October overturn. True, "Revolution" is not a "big" daily newspaper...

In the year 1917 Russia was passing through the greatest social crisis. One can, however, say with certainty, on the basis of all the lessons of history...

Bolsheviks a Minority in the Beginning

We must remember, however, that at the beginning of 1917 the Bolshevik party led only an insignificant number of the toilers. Not only in the soldiers' soviets but also in the workers' soviets the Bolshevik fraction generally constituted 1 to 2 percent...

The Poison of Patriotism Patriotism is the principal part of that ideology by means of which

the bourgeoisie poisons the class-consciousness of the oppressed and paralyzes their revolutionary will, because patriotism means the subjection of the proletariat to the bourgeoisie. The Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionaries were patriots; up to the February overturn—half concealed; after February—openly and brazenly.

ourselves." Our adversaries grew indignant. "If so, you are not simply sectarians, you are agents of the Hohenzollerns! You betray to them the Russian, French, English and American democracies!"

Cowardice of the Russian "United Front"

The judges in the dispute were the toiling masses; as time went on their verdict leaned more and more in favor of the Bolsheviks. And no wonder. At the time the Soviets rallied around themselves all the proletarian, soldier and peasant masses which became awakened for the struggle and on whom the fate of the country depended.

power and hid behind it. The aroused revolutionary masses never forgive cowardice and betrayal. First the Petersburg workers, and after them—the proletariat of the whole country, after the proletariat the soldiers and after the soldiers—the peasants, convinced themselves by experience that the Bolsheviks were right. Thus, within but a few months the handful of "sectarians," "adventurers," "conspirators," "agents of the Hohenzollern," etc., etc., transformed themselves into the leading party of millions of awakened people.

The Campaign Against the Bolsheviks

The entire press, including the papers of the Mensheviks and "Social-Revolutionaries" carried on a vicious campaign, really unheard of in history, against the Bolsheviks. Thousands upon thousands of tons of newspaper print were filled with reports that the Bolsheviks were linked to the Tzarist police, that they received carloads of gold from Germany...

Learning from Experience

Meanwhile a directly opposite process was taking place in the masses. The more they became disillusioned with the social-patriots, who betrayed the interests of the people for the sake of friendship with the Cadets, the more attentively they listened to the speeches of the Bolsheviks, and the more convinced they became of their correctness. To the worker in the shop, the soldier in the trench, the starving peasant, it became clear that the capitalists and their lackeys were slandering the Bolsheviks precisely because the Bolsheviks were firmly devoted to the interests of the oppressed.

Messrs. sceptics might say: but in the end the October Revolution brought the triumph of bureaucracy. Was it worth making? A separate article or perhaps two should be devoted to this question. Here let us say briefly: history goes forward not along a straight line but along a devious one; after a gigantic jump forward there follows as after an artillery shot, a rebound. Nevertheless history goes forward. No doubt, Soviet bureaucracy is an ugly ulcer, threatening both the conquest of the October revolution and the world proletarian. But the U.S.S.R. possesses something besides bureaucratic absolutism: nationalized means of production, planned economy, collectivization of agriculture which, despite the monstrous harm of bureaucraticism, lead the country forward economically and culturally moving backwards. The October revolution can be freed from the vise of bureaucracy only by the development of the international revolution, the victory of which will really assure the building of a socialist society.

Finally—and this is not insignificant—the October revolution is important also because it gave the international working class a number of priceless lessons. Let the proletarian revolutionists of France firmly learn these lessons and they will become invincible.

November 4, 1935.

\*To avoid misunderstanding, let us point out that this anti-Marxian party had nothing in common with revolutionary socialism.

Question Box

By A. WEAVER

N. W. BRONX— Question: On page 79 of "What Next?" Trotsky writes, "Lenin, through the press offered to compromise with the Social Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks: You compose the majority in the Soviets, he said to them. Take over the state; we shall support you against the bourgeoisie. Guarantee us complete freedom of agitation and we shall assure you of a peaceful struggle for the majority of the Soviets." Isn't Lenin's proposal here an exact model of the "United Front" or "People's Front" government proposed by the Seventh Congress of the C. I. and denounced by Trotsky as the complete repudiation of Leninism?

Answer: It is difficult to see how an equation can be drawn between the united front policy of Lenin and the policy of the Seventh C. I. Congress. In essence, Lenin's proposal is that which a revolutionary organization makes to other working class organizations in proposing a united front, of which the Soviet is the highest form: Make a bloc with us for concrete action against the capitalist class; at the same time that we will fully support this fight against the bourgeoisie, we reserve the right to agitate for our tendencies inside the ranks of the proletariat. The anti-revolutionary character of the Seventh C. I. Congress "united front" decision lies, not in the fact that it proposed such Leninist united fronts, but that it harassed the workers of the capitalist countries to their respective bourgeoisies under the formula of the "united front." Adopting a social-patriotic position on war and setting as their goal the defense of the "remnants of bourgeois democracy," i.e., having adopted a social democratic program, the Stalinist "Congress" then proposed the formation of blocs with OTHER class-collaborationist and even bourgeois parties for the furtherance of this program.

The class-collaborationist nature of the Stalinist proposals are clearly revealed by the slogan itself, the "people's government." A PEOPLE'S government will exist only under socialism. Until that time, because the PEOPLE are divided into antagonistic CLASSES, there can exist only CLASS governments; in this epoch either the state power of the bourgeoisie or of the proletariat. Since the Stalinists have definitely given up their program for the seizure of power by the proletariat, their slogan of the "people's government" is merely a camouflage for their support of the CAPITALIST governments.

M. C. NEW YORK— Question: In what concrete manner does the "antagonism between the city and the country" manifest itself?

Answer: The most outstanding manifestation of this antagonism in our epoch is the so-called price scissors which exists in Soviet economy. Because it is based on the division of labor between the town and the country and arises as a struggle between two major groups of commodity producers, the antagonism is reflected in the prices which each of the groups receives for its products. In the Soviet Union, which has inherited the antagonism, this is reflected in the fact that the alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry can be maintained only if the latter receive in exchange for their grain as large a share of city-made products as they would receive in the open market which, in the final analysis, is the international market. In other words, the alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry can be maintained only if the antagonism between the city and the country inside the Soviet Union is not more acute than it would be if the capitalist open market existed.

Another outstanding reflection of the antagonism is anti-Semitism. Because their course over centuries of time, primarily as merchants, has led them to live almost exclusively in large urban centers, there has been concentrated in the Jews, oftentimes in exaggerated forms, the physical and mental characteristics of city dwellers. The rural inhabitants (anti-Semitism is most prevalent in countries with large peasant populations) are thus easily led by reactionaries to vent their emotions on the Jews who appear to embody all that exploits the countryside. When a strong revolutionary movement, able to point out to the countryside the real source of its exploitation, exists, anti-Semitism is reduced to a minimum. In Germany it was precisely because the betrayal of the Social Democratic and Communist parties weakened the working class movement that Hitler was so successful with his anti-Semitic propaganda.

1,000 SUBS WILL SEND THE EIGHT-PAGE NEW MILITANT OVER THE TOP! GET BUSY!

Our Revolutionary Heritage:

Haymarket Sq.

By Leighton Rigby

The life of capitalist production depends upon profits. As capitalism declines, the capitalists seek to maintain profits by consistently driving down wages. By thus shifting the burden of decay to the shoulders of the working class, the rate of decline is temporarily slackened.

Reducing the speed of the fall does not, however, forestall the ultimate doom. Indeed, the very expedients brought into play to arrest the decline only serve to intensify class antagonisms and to make the overthrow of capitalism inevitable. The maintenance of profits at the expense of the working class must eventually kindle the fires of revolution.

This is true in the U. S. no less than elsewhere. Strikes will be "mediated" and broken by force of arms; the workers will be betrayed and misled. But in the end, the American proletariat will accept "no peace at the price of slavery!" It will arise and demand rebirth, not relief! The workers' state will be established.

It Can Happen Here!

It can't happen here? The American workers will continue to right wrongs with the ballot in the American way? Idle bromides, mouthed by those who have neither felt the pulse of the American worker nor reviewed his revolutionary heritage. It can and will happen here! The working class is awakening to the realization that American democracy is but sham and pretense. Calling to mind its revolutionary heritage, the rank and file will bring forth the workers' state and consistent democracy.

The development of a clearly-defined proletariat in the U.S. came later than in Europe. The opening of the West with its free land, tardy industrialization and immigration made the circumstances here unique. Before the period of the planters' revolution, workers were mostly craftsmen, without the common interests that are found today among the industrial workers. Moreover, a constantly birth-

population and dreams of new life in the West made solidarity among the workers, as a class, all but impossible. Add to this a steady influx of immigrants, bound by contract to work at low wages for heartless capitalists, and we see that the lag was not without good reason.

Our Varied Heritage

To say that working class solidarity was held back is the same as saying that the formation of labor unions was delayed. To be sure, there were unions, or societies, here and there prior to the 1800s, but there was no organization of workers on a broad scale. The coming of nation-wide working class solidarity and the rise of nation-wide labor organizations were necessarily simultaneous. The formation of the National Labor Union (1866) and those of the organizations which followed are outside the present discussion. The point is that our revolutionary heritage, as a whole, is not made up strictly of incidents of class war involving the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

The Shays Rebellion, for example, which I have already described, was a farmer-debtor revolt. The proletariat was not involved, nor had the workers even emerged as a separate class. But the Shays Rebellion is surely a part of our revolutionary heritage, because it was a militant struggle against oppression.

The labor struggles of the 1870s, which have also been described, were the beginning of a series of class conflicts in which the workers revealed militant, revolutionary characteristics. Industrialization had greatly increased, and the rapid exhaustion of free land was tending to precipitate the workers into a well-defined class with common interests. The Knights of Labor (1875) was the means through which the working class manifested its growing solidarity, because that body steered for "one big union" and welcomed to membership working men and women,

skilled or unskilled, regardless of color. In fact, its membership was so "Catholic" that the Catholic Church forbade its followers to join the union.

McCormick's Lockout

In October of 1884 the Federation of Trades and Labor Unions (Gompers' first attempt) set May Day, 1886, as the date for the inauguration of the 8-hour work day. The Federation of Trades had a short life, but the Knights took up the cry, and sympathizers added their voices to the swelling chorus. Agitation and demonstrations for the 8-hour day and union recognition prompted Cyrus McCormick (February, 1886) to lock out the 1,400 workers in his plant, saying that "the right to hire any man, white or black, union or non-union, Protestant or Catholic, was something I would not surrender." This lockout shifted the labor scene to Chicago.

As May Day approached, police, mounted or in close formation, took pleasure in bullying and clubbing workers wherever they assembled. The workers, on the other hand, answered by continuing to assemble. Eight thousand workers, representing labor in several industries and the International Workingmen's Association, marched to the lake front. Such slogans as "The Proletariat Must be Liberated!" were prominently displayed on banners as the assembly was stirred by militant speeches. And in the meantime (this was April 26) the McCormick lockout continued, and several strikes were in progress at other points throughout the city, including the steel plants, railroad shops and the stockyards. At least eight thousand workers were striking in Chicago.

May Day itself passed quietly enough. But two days later, when the McCormick workers held a meeting near the plant, there was bloodshed. The owner of the reaper works, who would consider no arbitration but was employing the Pinkertons and scabs, summoned the police to break up the meeting.

A hundred and fifty police swooped down upon the meeting and shot down workers right and left. Six were killed and at least twenty-five were soaked with their own blood.

The workers' press, the Arbeiter Zeitung, shouted out: "Blood! Lead and powder as a cure for dissatisfied workmen! This is law and order!" And the workers were equally aroused: "Revenge! Revenge! Men of war, this afternoon the bloodhounds of your oppressors murdered six of your brothers at McCormick's!" This was the call to Haymarket Square for a protest meeting on the following evening.

The meeting was held, a program of speeches had ended and the assembly was dispersing. Mark well! Up to this point there was no disorder. But suddenly, for no reason at all, a large cordon of bullying police marched into Haymarket Square, led by Inspector Bonfield, the biggest bully of the lot. They ordered the already dispersed meeting to disperse—police logic. A bomb was exploded, and one policeman was killed. The police immediately opened fire on the crowd, killing and wounding many. They rounded up scores, and eight men who had nothing to do with the bomb explosion stood trial—more police logic.

The eight who were tried faced a jury made up of men who admitted hostility and prejudice toward the accused. It was not by chance that stockholders, editors and printers of two "anarchist" papers in Chicago were chosen to be the victims. The capitalist press was yelling for blood, and unthinking innocents were echoing the cry. The prisoners were "anarchists!" That was enough! It was not a trial; it was a mass crucifixion. Four were hanged, one took his own life, two drew life sentences and the other fifteen years in prison.

No better evidence of persecution will be found than the very words of Judge Gary who presided: "The conviction has not gone on the ground that they did actually have any personal participation in the particular act which caused the death of Degan." Some of the accused were writers, and because of their "advice, in pursuance of that advice, and influenced by that advice somebody, not known, did throw the bomb that caused Degan's death." Capitalist justice!!