Our Revolutionary Heritage:

Corn Rebellion

By Leighton Rigby=

are unaware that in 1917 three- terests not at all. quarters of a million men were predarkness of the late war.

There are two reasons for the failure of the movement: timid and irresponsible leadership, and unsuitable circumstances for success. The first cause, if recognized as a fact, needs no elaboration. The 'tion,"

Opposition to War

Before the press, movies, song writers and spell-binders could build up the maximum of war hysteria, there was much trouble throughout the land, I.W.W. organ- and march to a specified point Naturally, this number is still tious, were busy on the West Coast and in the East. Thirteen hundred objectors were deported from Bisbee, Arisona, and herded into a stockade at Hermanas, New Mexico. Forest fires and bombings were blamed on those who opposed the war, whether the blame was well placed or not. Lack of organization alone prevented unrest and doubts from assuming real significance.

After the exposed portions of the country became ill with war hysteria, there still remained certain was unknown. One of these included several counties in Oklahoma and parts of neighboring states. That section provided the locale for the Corn Rebellion.

In accounts I have read of the reception of the Draft Act in Oklaoma, too much emphasis has he people involved. This condition has been offered as the main excuse for "backward" urban citizens were the mobilization against war service. Without a doubt, the fact that newspapers were not generally read and movies were seldom seen did tend to retard the growth of the war spirit among the tenant farm- Only at Holdenville, where two ers of Oklahoma. But how backward were they, really?

The Burden of Oppression

It must be remembered that these people were oppressed by urban money lenders who often demanded nearly a hundred were later sent- and got, if crops were sufficiently good—four or five times the conventional rate of interest. Also, there was little good land at the disposal of poor fenant farmers.

The and got, if crops were sufficiently enced to prison, federal or state. Those who were set free received advice in the matter of patriotism from kindly and "enlightened" judges.

The archery of the Spanish there was little good land at the disposal of poor fenant farmers. Good crops were rare on the scrubby soil that was left after investors It was bound for failure from the had taken the choice land. And first. But it stands as proof that there was an important result of class conscious American workers this oppression: the poor farmers will not willingly fight for the inbecame daily more class conscious terests that oppose them and beat and were convinced that a capital-them down.

If American workers generally ist war concerned their final in-

This class consciousness naturally paring to march on Washington and turned the people toward the doc- ing of the documents in his sat- these categories, each would numwrest the reins from the "Big Slick" trine of Karl Marx. In several of rapy, 3,646 people were expelled ber more than 900. Yet Eikhe and his war birds, it is only further the counties affected, the Socialist from the party, 8 percent of the himself states that the Trotskyists proof that the domain of patriotism vote in 1914 was over one-third of entire organization. During the and Zinovievists comprise the largis a disenlightened realm indeed, the total cast. I do not mean to check-up, it appears, that "we suc- est group numerically next to the Press files yield little concerning infer that this, in itself, meant a ceeded in uncovering not only iso- White Guards. Therefore, there the Corn Rebellion; inspired histo- definite revolutionary trend. I lated individuals but entire councannot be less than 1,000 expelled ries make no mention of it; and merely state that if being "back- ter-revolutionary Trotskyist - Zino- Bolshevik-Leninists in the West-

even the venerable Dr. Beard pass- ward" means lacking the quality of vievist groups skulking in the Siberian region alone, or approxies it without a word. But the cheering the spirit of progress while ranks of the party." Khatayevich mately 20 percent of all those exmemory must not be lost in the being oppressed by that same pro- does not supply their number. But pelled. Says Eikhe, "From the

The Working Class Union

Toward the middle of 1914, the second is also understandable when Working Class Union was organwe consider that capitalism was ized in Arkansas. The original prise 1,800. In addition the arfirmly in the saddle, by virtue of a purpose of this organization is not fortifying its position by deep jabs of the U.S. into the World War party"; but here the reference can cede that Siberia is an exception with the needle of patriotism. Even came nearer, the W.C.U. began to though it failed to materialize, how- advocate overthrow of the capitalever, the proposed march on Wash-ist government in Washington. ington gives us reason to know that Leadership was poor from the start, the Draft Act of 1917 was not "ac- but by 1917 some 35,000 farmers in cepted by the people of every sec-Oklahoma and surrounding states alone were able to embrace the broad pattern of the Working Class

> nection with the march on Wash- ber falls to the share of the "Trotington was briefly this: on a given skyists," even then we get a very day, the local chapters would gather imposing number (500 to 1,000). where they would be joined by purely hypothetical in character. other groups of the district. This army would set out for Washington. Along the way, the size of the army would be enlarged manyfold by the addition of new recruits and previously readied groups, e.g., among the I.W.W. Barbecued cattle and roasted green corn would constitute up revealed that "in several city the food supply.

It is true-the leaders, the fiery orators were idealists, unsound in the regional agricultural departtheory. And they were also timid. ment, the fruit and grape trust)." Their smooth flow of words had This brief item does not state what won many to the banner of the proportion of the expelled these parts of the U.S. where the disease W.C.U.; but after this was done, groups composed, but it does admit they either demonstrated their utter incompetence to lead or ran away.

> The Battle and Its Outcome After several false starts, in 20% "Trotskyists" in West-Siberia August of 1917 the W.C.U. in the were a few skirmishes, but without good leadership, the case of the tenant farmers was a hopeless one. member were killed, were there

Several hundred members of the W.C.U. were made prisoners, and nearly a hundred were later sent-

The Corn Rebellion was put down.

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Expel 20,000 Oppositionists from C. P. S. U. In Recent "Cleansing" Under G.P.U.

(Continued from Page 1)

party with forged documents," (Pravda, December 26, 1935). These two groups together comeign spies who penetrated into the than a score at the most. Subtracting the above-mentioned catenot less than 1,600. Or is Khatayvich perhaps hiding some other categories of the expelled? Which ones? Why? But even if only a The strategy to be used in con- half or a third of the above num-

The Black Sea Region

In the same issue of Pravda, in were expelled, 7 percent of the organizations there existed countergroups (the "Krasny Aksai" plant, that even after the check-up "un-

gress, these people were backward, he does cite other figures: "1,500 total number of Trotskyists and I prefer, however, to think those White Guards, kulaks, members of Zinovievists expelled from the people backward who are oppressed Petlura, Makhno and other bands; party about one half worked in the and see no glimmer of hope for re- 300 sneak-thieves and spectators educational institutions; . . . The who wormed their way into the Trotskyist-Zinovievist garbage (!)

took particular pains to pervade the ideological sector, seeking to be closer to the truth. utilize it for propaganda." The reference here is obviously to new party members, from the student working class youth. We may conas regards the high percentage of on the one hand, keep the total Bolshevik-Leninists: the youth is secret, while on the other, it makes being obviously subjected to the gories there remains to the share influence of the exiles (the same

Where Repression Is Strongest

In the Kharkov district out of

were expelled. Secretary Zaitsev breaks down into categories only 2,356 cases of expulsion, checked by the highest organs. Among these are: 907-kulaks and White Guards; 594-moral degenerates and breakers of discipline; 120sneak-thieves and spectators; 42bourgeois nationalists, and, finally, a small item we find that in the 120 Trotskyists. This time we are Asov-Black Sea region, 4,324 people given quite a definite figure, and, moreover, without any mention of total number checked. The check- Zinovievists. If we take into consideration the fact that in Kharrevolutionary Trotskyist-Zinovievist Petrovsky and Co., the physical extermination of the Opposition has been going on since 1923, with a bestial ruthlessness so thorough that its fame has spread throughout the entire Soviet Union, then even the modest number of 120.

ize. No great numbers came to one expelled (11 percent) and 1,935 aggerating the influence of the thod is so well adapted to the in-

The Spanish organization of the and methods of the League of Na- no conditions! -To enter temporar-

"Left Communists." which was al. tions." Is there anything left out? ily into a mass political organiza-

the right and to the left, with the of two Left bourgeois parties, the against the reformist leaders for

Catalan Federation of Maurin into Socialist party, the Socialist Fed- the banner of the proletarian rev-

a party of "Marxist (?) Unity", ou eration of Labor, the Communist olution-that is opportunism; but

a centrist program. Some of our party (why, of course!), the So- to conclude a political alliance with

own periodicals, misled by this cialist Youth (too bad!), "Syndi- the leaders of a reformist party on

name, have written about this calist party" (Pestana) and finally the basis of a deliberately dishon-

underfoot, The new feature lies

Political Betrayal

In this connection, it is in place

es with the aid of . . . a credulous during the years of its upsurge titution of Marxism?

ways a muddled organization, merg. Signatories to this infamous tion in order to carry on an irre-

ed, after countless vacillations to document are the representatives

imagination. Reality will not be and they did everything in their

restrained thereby from bringing power to betray it and trample it

The newspapers report that in in the signature of the party of

Spain all the "Left" parties, both Maurin-Nin-Andrade. The former

bourgeois and working class, have Spanish "Left Communists" have

made an electoral bloc on the furned into a mere tail of the

basis of a common program, which, "left" bourgeoisie. It is hard to

in the nature of things, differs in conceive a more ignominious down-

of capitalist justice from the in- of the causes underlying the de-

fluence of capital-) And more of generation of labor bureaucrats.

the rejection of the nationalization to me twice, each time with glow-

return," along with the customary fact, which under different condi-

reject workers' control, involves to recall that the Spanish "Left |

the control over banks : . 1 by the Communists," as their very name

bankers themselves, through the indicates, posed on every appropri-

close to the Fourth International, ty" (Juan Andrade).

There is nothing more dangerous

no way from the program of the fall!

French "People's Front" and all

other fake programs of the same

type. Here we find "reform of the

tribunal of constitutional guaran-

of land by the bourgeois republi-

cheap promises in favor of the

peasantry '(credits, higher prices

for agricultural products, etc.), the

program declares for the "recovery

(!) of industry" and protection

for small industry and petty mer-

chants. Then follows the inevit-

able "control over banks," which,

since the bourgeois republicans, according to the text of the program,

in accordance with the "principles the Socialist party. Never! Under

body political betrayal. And An. any case, even talk was excluded

drade's conduct is nothing else but of any "common programs" with

betraya of the proletariat for the the Laborites. Internationalists

and its "sanctions."

20,000 Expelled

If we take the West-Siberia coefficient, then we would arrive at a number of not less than 40,000 expelled "Trotskvists" and Zinovievists for the entire Soviet Union. We have already stated why this number must be considered as too large. But even if we take the deliberately minimized Kharkov percentage of the expelled "Trotskyists," i.e., over 5 percent, then, out of the 200,000 expelled, we would get more than 10,000. If, finally, we take the average between the West-Siberian and Kharkov figures, then we get 20,000. In all probability the latter number would

The enormous political significauce of the above data is clear enough to anyone. A question remains: Why does the bureaucracy. public partial data which is sufficiently clear for general orientaof Trotskyists and Zinovievists, as phenomenon, we might add, was to tion? The answer is very simple: well as oppositionists of all types, be observed under Czarism as well.) the bureaucracy crawls out of its skin to avoid giving publicity to the Bolshevik-Leninists, while at the same time it is compelled to 50,000 members, more than 4,000 broadcast a warning: Beware! "They" are many! "They" are growing! In any case, there is no longer any talk about "remnants" and "handfuls still to be crushed."

New Purge in Preparation

concilable struggle in its ranks

I.L.P. and Spain

thereby be promoted from the party to the concentration camps. The Power of Our Program

The Bolshevik-Leninists were and tion, as a banner, our tendency has remain the most irreconcilable en- a mass character in the U.S.S.R. emies of the bureaucracy which and today it is obviously drawing to straight. The struggle of the opseeks to perpetuate its position as itself new and fresh forces. Among a ruling caste. Small wonder that the 10 to 20 thousand "Trotskyists" the Stalinist clique assigns the expelled during the last months of first place in its amalgam lists to 1935, the representatives of the old-"Trotkyists." They have er generation, the participants in earned this honor by their entire the movement of the years 1923kov, the satrapy of S. Kossior, struggle. The very nature of the 1928, comprise tens, perhaps hund-

most recent purge testifies in the reds, but not more. The basic mass best and clearest possible way to -all are the new recruits. Morethe growth of their influence. The over we must not forget that the of foreign agencies" expelled from bureaucracy can no longer make above data applies only to the the party during the purge deserves short shrift of its enemies by party. But there also exists the particular attention. Such cases means of the terrorized party, or Y.C.L. with its many-millioned are of course entirely possible. But even publicity before it. The publyouth! It is precisely in their midst they, by their very nature, can only comprising more than 5 percent of lic purge has been replaced by a that unrest assumes a particularly exposed enemies" continue to crop the expelled (2,356) seems truly star-chamber, i.e., it is transferred aggravated character. It is frightentirely into the hands of the G. fully difficult for young revolution- sufficed to take care of forwarding It is all too clear that the bu- P.U. Of course, the expelled, too, ist to learn Leninism in the U.S. the information. But why do the In the West-Siberian region, reaucracy has not and cannot are placed in the same hands-for S.R. But without any doubt their newspapers keep harping about Oklahoma district began to mobil- 3,576 members of the party were have the slightest motives for ex- physical extermination. This melevel is incomparably higher than spies? The Stalinist press could candidates (12.8 percent) Secre- Bolshevik-Leninists. That is why interests of the bureaucracy that The great tradition lives on. In without special instructions from formed. At the behest of civil tary Eikhe writes in Pravda: we must look upon the figures that Stalin has immediately projected a secret places lies hidden the old above. But what is the purpose of "Among the expelled the largest have seeped into the press as the new cleansing: from February 1 oppositionist literature. On the the issued order? It can be correctnumber are kulaks and White minimum. Moreover, since 1924, to May 1 of the current year. Old shelves stand the books of Marx. ly divined. During the years of organized to bring the "draft dodg- Guards from Kolchaks armies- the Stalinist clique has preferred party cards (these, it appears, have Engels and Lenin (they dare not Stalinist autocratic rule in the U. these constitute almost a third. to expel oppositionists as "moral become "tattered") must be ex- proscribe them as yet.) The Soviet S.S.R. not a few foreign Commun-Then come the Trotskyists and Zin- degenerates" and even as "White changed for new ones, and the in- papers are compelled to publish ovievists . . ." (Dec. 23, 1935). Ac- Guards," There can be no doubt structions of the C.E.C. contain a news of events in the entire world. cording to this statement, the Bol- that precisely the most influential rigid proviso that during the re- The international literature, under shevik-Leninists take the second and active Bolshevik-Leninists were placement of party cards, the se- the banner of the Fourth Interna- centration camps and exile. Ever members of a posse and one W.C.U. place numerically. All the ex- expelled under these very categor- cretaries, i.e., the organs of the tional, is already a very rich one pelled, with the exception of the les: it is all the easier to make G.P.U. must once again check the today. Our ideas and slogans pen-White Guards, fall into not more short shrift of them in the concen- entire party personnel and issue etrate into the Soviet Union thrthan four categories. If the ex- tration camps or en route to exile. new cards only to those who have ough a thousand channels—in part, ly tore free from the Stalinist

earned "confidence." Perhaps sixthrough our Russian Bulletin. Thus months later we shall learn how the precious primacy of revolutionmany new Bolshevik-Leninists will ary thought is being made secure, Under the lash of the bureauc-

Louis Fisher and similar gentle- tear loose from its class to take this respect is the fresh testimony dangerous than the persecutions, of the Jugoslav comrade Cliga). even today the Fourth International for a single day. If not as a doc- section in the U.S.S.R. trine, then as a mood, as a tradi-

mere electoral support of labor candidates, if they support the by arming its foreign lackeys with League of Nations. The Spanish at least some semblance of an exsection concludes a bloc with bourgeois parties on a common program astonishing were the agents of the of supporting the League of Nations. Is not this the extreme in the domain of contradictions, confusion and bankruptcy? There is agencies". These villanies, howno war as yet, but the sections of ever, will not pass scot-free. The the London "International" are al- working masses will hear the truth, ready pulling in just the opposite The organizations of the Fourth directions. What will happen to International will be at their posts, them when the ominous events

"Unity"—with Whom? But let us return to the Spanish

party as though it was drawing the "Labor Party of Marxist Uni- est program serving to dupe the ironical is the name "Marxist Unmasses and cover up the bourgeoi- ity" . . . with the bourgeoisie. The Most of these parties stood at sie-that is valour! Can there be Spanish "Left Communists" (Anthan to exaggerate one's own forc- the head of the Spanish revolution any greater debasement and prosdres Nin, Juan Andrade and others) have more than once tried to parry our criticism of their collaborationist policies by citing our The "Party of Marxist Unity" is lack of understanding of the "spea member of the celebrated Lon- cial conditions" in Spain. This is don Bureau of "Revolutionary So- the customary argument put to use cialist Parties' (the former I.A.G.) by all opportunists-for the first The leadership of this Bureau is duty of a genuine proletarian revnow in the hands of Fenner Brock- olutionist lies in translating the way, secretary of the Independent special conditions of his country Labor Party. We have already into the international language of written that, despite the antiquat- Marxism, which is accessible even ed and apparently incurable pacifist beyond the confines of one's own A few months ago there was prejudices of Maxton and others, country+. But today there is no published, in Madrid, Juan Andra. the I.L.P. has taken an honest rev- need of these theoretical argutees" as well as rigid support of de's book, 'The Reformist Bureau- olutionary position on the question ments. The Spanish bloc of the the "principle of authority" (!) cracy and the Labor Movement," of the League of Nations and its tops of the working class with the as well as the "freeing of justice in which along with quotations sanctions. Each of us has read left bourgeoisie does not include in from all influences of a political from Marx, Engels, Lenin and with pleasure a number of excellit anything "national," for it does and economic order" (the freeing other authors, an analysis is made lent articles in the New Leader. not differ in the least from the During the last parliamentary el- "People's Front" in France, Czechoections the Independent Labour slovakia, Brazil or China. The the same. The program has in it Juan Andrade forwarded his book Party refused to give even electoral "Party of Marxist Unity" is meresupport to the Laborites, precisely ly slavishly conducting the same ing dedications, in which he calls because the latter supported the policy that the Seventh Congress can members of the bloc but "in me his "leader and teacher." This League of Nations. In itself this of the Comintern foisted upon all refusal was a tactical error, its sections, absolutely independent tions would have only made me Wherever the I.L.P. was unable to ly of their "national peculiarities." happy; compels me at present to run its own candidates, it should The real difference in the Spanish announce all the more decisively have supported a Laborite against policy this time lies only in the fact in public that I never taught any. a Tory. But this is incidental. In that a section of the London In-

*In search for justifications for their policy Maurin-Nin refer to sake of an alliance with the bour- would have combined support in the Spanish electoral law which elections with an exposure of the makes it extremely difficult for a crawling of the British social-patri- young party to run its own candiots before the League of Nations dates. (See the resolution of the C.E.C. "Batalla," No. 234.) But We take the liberty to put a this argument is worthless. Elecmedium of their parliamentary ate occasion, as irreconcilable rev- question to Fenner Brockway; just toral technique cannot justify peragents, like Azana and similar olutionists. In particular, they what is the purport of the "In- fidious policy, in the shaps of a gentlemen. Finally, the foreign thunderously condemned the French ternational" of which he is the common program with the bour policy of Spain will be laid down Bolshevik-Leninists for entering secretary? The British section of geoisie.

racy, and not without direct provocation on the part of the Yagodas, Medveds and others, isolated ele-The above cited data may per- ments of the youth take to the path haps appear utterly unexpected to of individual terror, i.e., to the path many. We have purposely done all of despair and hopelessness. The our computation before the read- Bonapartists avidly seize upon terer's eyes so as to exclude the pos- roristic acts in order to justify sibility of any suspicions of sub- their bloody repressions of the Opjectivism or bias on our part. The position: this method is as hoary whole gist of the matter lies in the as the ancient sordidness of privifact that under the influence of the leged despots. But the main section

Stalinist press and its agents (like of the revolutionary youth does not men) not only our enemies but also to the road of individualistic admany of our friends in the West ventures. The program of the have imperceptibly become accus- Fourth International even though tomed to the idea that if any Bol- it does not promise instantaneous shevik-Leninists still exist in the miracles does point the only correct U.S.S.R., then they are almost all and unconditionally certain way in hard labor camps. No! That out. The growth of the Fourth is not the case at all! The Marx- International on the world arena ist program and the great revolu- strengthens and inspires our friends tionary tradition cannot be rooted and followers in the U.S.S.R. We out by means of police measures, can state with certainty that de-To be sure, in the U.S.S.R. the Bol-spite the thirteen years of hounding, sheviks find it harder to work to-calumny, and pogroms, unsurpassed day than in any other country in either in vileness or cruelty, despite the world (of greatest interest in capitulations and betrayals, more Nevertheless, the functioning of the already has its strongest, numericrevolutionary mind is not suspended ally largest, and most tempered

> No, we have not the slightest ground for falling into apathy. Progress is neither smooth nor pressed demands great sacrifices. But the future is ours. The latest bureaucratic purge in the U.S.S.R. is proof, even to the blind: the future is ours! L. Trotsky

P.S. Insistent mention of "spies

be rare exceptions. An ordinary secret circular letter would have ists-Oppositionists have been shot, A far greater number is languishing in solitary confinement, conmore news about this is penetrating abroad. Of exceptional value are the reports of A. Ciliga who recentchains. The bureaucracy must in some way parry these revelations. planation. There would be nothing Comintern to proclaim all the foreign communists shot and arrested in the U.S.S.R. as "spies of foreign

ternational has also adhered officially to the bloc with the bourgeoisle. So much the worse for it, party of "Marxist Unity." How As far as we are concerned we prefer clarity. In Spain, genuine found who will mercilessly expose the betrayal of Maurin, Nin, Andrade and Co., and lay the foundation for the Spanish section of the Fourth International! January 22, 1936

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