

23 Years of the Russian Revolution

Twenty-three years ago this week, on November 7, 1917, the workers of Russia established their own power under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky.

It was the first great break-through in a war-weary and blood-sodden world. The triumph of the workers in Russia opened the road to the fight of workers everywhere for peace, bread, and freedom.

In the days of October 1917, Lenin and Trotsky warned a thousand times that the Russian Revolution would stand or fall upon the success of accompanying workers' revolutions in the more advanced countries of Europe. In Germany, Austria, Hungary, and through the colonial empires of the great powers there was an answering surge of revolutionary struggle.

Trotsky welded the workers' power in Russia into the Red Army that crushed or expelled one after another the interventionist forces of Britain, France, the United States, and Japan, and defeated and dispersed the White Russian puppets of the interventionist powers—Kolchak, Deniken, Wrangel, Semenov.

HOW 'STALINISM' GREW

But elsewhere in Europe the power that fell to the workers was snatched from them in one country after another. Social Democratic agents of the capitalist rulers assumed the mantle of government only to preserve intact the capitalist order. Thanks to them, the capitalist order survived the war everywhere but in Russia. The victorious imperialists gained thereby the strength to put down by force or by guile the national and colonial revolutions in subject lands from Egypt to Korea. The Soviet power survived only in backward, war-exhausted Russia.

In this festering isolation, Stalinism germinated and grew. The broad workers' democracy under Lenin and Trotsky was replaced by the narrow petty bourgeois bureaucracy under Stalin. The firm, unequivocal revolutionary internationalism of Lenin and Trotsky gave way to the conservative nationalism of the Stalinist clique. Stalin set out to build "socialism in one country"—a regime in the image of the bureaucracy, a regime doomed, as Lenin foresaw, to be strangled between hostile imperialist camps unless the workers of the world successfully intervened by extending the revolution.

The steady degeneration of the Soviet State that followed under the rule of Stalin, produced grotesque deformities at home and weighed like a leaden yoke on the revolutionary movements abroad.

As the capitalist world went from crisis to crisis in the post-war decades, there came again opportunity after opportunity to check the capitalist plunge toward new and still more ruinous wars and to put the world back on the rails toward the new socialist order so brilliantly heralded by the Russian Revolution of November 7, 1917.

But in every case the narrow nationalism of the Stalinist clique sapped the revolutionary vigor of revolting masses and produced fresh defeats in country after country—in China, in Austria, in Germany, in Spain, in France and in Belgium.

THE PRICE WE PAY

The new world war of 1939-40 is the price the human race is paying for those defeats. The Soviet Union itself—in the name of whose security Stalin strangled revolutions in all those countries—stands today in the utmost peril of its very existence. Workers everywhere have been herded into the new slaughter which is the only way capitalism has left if its domination over society is to be maintained.

Has anybody in these fateful years shown the peoples of the world any other road than the road of Lenin and Trotsky?

Is there a way out in the program of bourgeois democracy? Nobody seriously believes that anymore, least of all the bourgeois democrats. In Europe they gave way supinely to Fascism. Now they are lashing us into this war on the strength of promises—the same false, empty, hollow, promises—that after it is all over they are going to erect some new kind of system. But we heard all that in 1914-18. The "democrats" were victorious then. They produced for us the shining, new world... of 1940.

Is there a way out in the program of the Social Democrats? Scarcely! They are the ones who helped the bosses fight the last miserable war and they are the same ones who are helping to fight this one and are mouthing all the old lies over again on behalf of capitalist rule.

Is there a way out in the program of Hitler? We know what Fascism means to the human race. We have seen it at work in Germany, in Italy, and in the countries conquered by Fascist armed might. We know that Fascism is the logical development of capitalist rule. We know it is the road back to barbarism.

Is there a way out in the program of Stalin? But it is the program of Stalin that strangled the revolution throughout the world, deformed and all but destroyed the revolution in Russia. It is the program of Stalin that produced the decay of the great revolutionary Communist movements that arose after the last war. It is the program of Stalin that has effaced all but the single remaining conquest of October—the collectivized means of production.

OURS IS THE ONLY PROGRAM

No, the only program that still stands is the program of Lenin and Trotsky, the program of the October revolution of the workers of Russia.

It is a simple program. It says that capitalism has outlived its usefulness as a way of organizing society. It says that capitalist powers can no longer produce for the needs of the world's people, can only build machines for war and can only wage war for division and control of markets, of wealth, and of labor. It says that the way out is the fight for a new socialist international order of society. It tells the workers to take power from their capitalist rulers. It calls for destruction of artificial national barriers on a socialist basis, their replacement by a rational worldwide production and exchange of goods. "To each according to his need, from each according to his ability." And it says that this can be achieved only if workers wrest the power from those that hold it today.

This is the banner of Lenin and Trotsky and of the Russian Revolution. This is the banner of revolutionary workers the world over. This is the banner of the Fourth International. Under this banner the program of November 7, 1917, will tomorrow become the program of all peoples on the face of the earth.

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LEWIS DOES IT AGAIN; THIS TIME FOR THE REPUBLICANS

War Scene Shifts To Mediterranean

The shift of the main theater of war to the Mediterranean signifies the beginning of a new phase of the titanic world struggle between British and German imperialism.

Hitler has apparently abandoned for the present any attempt to crush Britain by direct assault, invasion of the British Isles. He is moving instead to isolate the British completely from the European continent and from the Near and Middle Eastern units of its empire.

To do this he has to make the Mediterranean an Axis lake. This is the ultimate objective of the drive begun by Italian forces against Greece early last Monday morning.

Presumably the Italian thrust at Greece is one point of a many-pronged attack. The Italian drive from Libya into Egypt and toward Suez is certain to be resumed. At the same time Hitler is dangling huge pieces of Africa before the nose of Franco to facilitate passage of German forces through Spain for an attack on Gibraltar at the western end of the Mediterranean. The Hitler-Petain and Hitler-Laval meetings of last week assuredly had as one of their objects the acquisition of Syria and other Mediterranean holdings of the French as bases for the seaward operations against the British.

A Lengthy Struggle
From the standpoint of the war in general, the Mediterranean offensive of the Axis opens what is certain to be a lengthy and costly struggle. Probable Axis victories on land will not decide the issue until British seapower has been destroyed or rendered useless. That will not be speedily or easily accomplished.

In more immediate particular, however, this new phase of the war brings Turkey and beyond it the Soviet Union once more to the crumbling edge of the precipice. The Dardanelles lie right in the path of the new Axis advance. The Turks face not only the Italians crossing Greece but even nearer home have to calculate on the likelihood of German attack from the Rumanian Black Sea coast and from Bulgaria.

What Will Stalin Do?

For "cooperation" in the present Axis strategy, Hitler has offered a "peace" treaty to France and a small share of the spoils to Spain. What, if anything, has he done to assure the continued immobility of the Soviet Union? Or, more exactly, has Hitler reached the point where he may take Joseph Stalin's services for granted?

As Nazi armed power approaches still another Soviet Frontier, Stalin may feel fearfully compelled to move again
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As You Go to the Polls

An Editorial

As you go to the polls this Tuesday, fellow-workers, what real choice do you have in casting your ballots?

In a few places you can vote for candidates who represent the independent political action of the labor movement. In New York you can vote for a number of local and Congressional candidates of the American Labor Party who are running on that ticket and on no capitalist ticket—for that reason they deserve your support. In Minnesota you can similarly vote for some candidates of the Farmer-Labor Party. In New Jersey you can vote for George Breitman, Socialist Workers Party candidate for United States Senator. In Minnesota you can vote for our party's candidate, Grace Carlson, for United States Senator. And there are a few scattered candidates here and there who are also running as representatives of labor groups and do not appear on any capitalist ticket.

But this list of candidates that you as a worker can conscientiously vote for is pathetically small. It doesn't include the presidential ticket, nor the gubernatorial tickets, nor—in a word—does it cover more than a tiny fraction of the offices for which votes are to be cast.

Isn't it a pretty shameful picture that, at this hour of the clock, you can't go into a ballot booth and cast a straight ticket for Labor's own, independent party and a labor program? You wouldn't dream of voting for the bosses' man in an NLRB election in your plant, or in a union election. You're not a company union man, you're a loyal union man. Yet you're being told on all sides to be a company union man in national politics, you're told to vote for one bosses' man or another—Roosevelt & Co. or Willkie, Inc.

And loudest among those who're selling you company union politics are the "labor statesmen." Hillman and his crew are yelling for

Roosevelt, Lewis and his boys are yelling for Willkie. The Stalinists, Lewis' henchmen, are trying to make it appear that his supporting Willkie is somehow more praiseworthy than Hillman's supporting Roosevelt. We say that there is little to choose between these two crimes. Both Hillman and Lewis are selling you company union politics.

And at this hour of the clock! At this moment in the greatest crisis that has ever faced the human race! When, after eight years of the New Deal, it has become clear to the naked eye that no capitalist politician, party or government can lead us out of this epoch of war and militarism.

This is the epoch of the death-agony of capitalism. But like a dying monster convulsively thrashing about, capitalism can deal us terrible blows in its death-agony. It can even, if we let it, destroy modern civilization in the course of the Second World War, and plunge the remnants of the human race back into barbarism. The class that embodies capitalism can lead us to total destruction—and to nothing else.

To vote for representatives of this class—Willkie, Roosevelt or Zick, it doesn't matter what his name is—is to vote in favor of death and destruction. That is what Hillman and Lewis and Green and Tobin are telling us to do.

Let us resolve, before it is too late, to change our course, and change it fundamentally. Let this be the last election in which Labor isn't represented by its own party. Let us turn our backs on company union politics. Let us, from this moment on, dedicate ourselves to building Labor's own, independent party. And let us build it, not as just another party, but as the party of the CLASS that represents the only salvation for humanity. For only the rule of the working class can put an end to this epoch of war and militarism.

"Neither To Laugh Nor To Weep"

Within the hour in which Secretary of War Stimson drew the first fateful number of those who will be called for the draft, the news spread through all the back tenement halls, down into the dime "flops" of the Bowery, back and forth between the dark windows in narrow air-shafts. "158!"

The mother of David Nathan Goren, 23, of the East Side was on the way to a tailor to get her David's suit pressed. The news came to her on the street. The suit fell to the sidewalk. She wept hysterically. "I'm just a poor widow, and they have to take little David. That's what Roosevelt is doing to the country."

Into the streets ran George Gonzales, of Brooklyn, when he heard that he held the "lucky" number. "Whoopie! I'm in the army now!" he shouted gleefully. George is 25, single, and has been jobless for over a year. Regular meals and a place to sleep look good to him.

"It's tough getting a job these days," bitterly exclaimed John Guerin, of Amsterdam Avenue, when he heard his number was first called. "The employers are holding off, you know, on men of draft age. They surely won't give me a job now."

Mrs. William Karachine, of the East Side, was widowed four weeks ago. Her only son, Joseph, 22, holds the draft number, 158. "I just lost my man," she wept.

But the tears are in vain. Vain, too, the laughter mostly hysterical, invoked by the monstrous jest that here at last is a "job". Before the war is ended, there will be heaped up mountains of personal agony for hundreds of millions. For them, the wretched and disinherited of the earth, there is no hope of individual justice.

But there is another justice on the way, not a personal but a class justice.

Leon Trotsky saw his sons and daughter die, the victims of a bloody reaction. He wandered the face of the earth, and lived in dungeons and prison camps. He fought no personal justice, but fought only for his class. To all the anguished people of the world caught in the whirlpools of historical destiny, he gave this simple message of wisdom: "Neither to laugh, nor to weep. But to understand."

And then to act.

Negroes Good Enough to Draft But Not to Vote, says Governor

NASHVILLE, Tenn., Oct. 25—Negroes have done nothing to aid or build up the United States, according to Governor Prentice Cooper, and they are lucky to be able to live in this country.

Such was the reply given to a committee of colored citizens that called upon the governor to ask him to appoint some Negroes to the draft boards. He added, "This is a white man's country."

The majority of the working population of Tennessee are Negroes. Governor Cooper's remarks, reported to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, included the following: "This is a white man's country. America was settled by English,

Scotch and Irish settlers who came here and shed their blood for it. White men cut down the trees, plowed the fields and developed America. The Negro had nothing to do with the settling of America. Of course Negroes worked some, but they came to the scene later, after New England was settled. You fellows ought to feel proud that you are in a great country like America. It is the best place for you and your people. Now, one important thing you preachers ought to tell your boys is to go to the stations and register for military service, because if they don't they will be arrested and fined \$10,000 or put in prison until they work it out. I have a job to do as Governor of

Tennessee and that is to see that all men of draft age register, white and colored, and I don't intend to have any trouble or confusion doing it."

Governor's Ignorance
The Governor reveals not merely the blood-thirsty bigotry of his class, but his profound ignorance of historical facts as well.

The Negroes played a leading part in the building up of the early colonial empire in America. African slaves were among the crew on Christopher Columbus's first voyage to the New World. From 1520 on, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Dutch and English vessels poured Negro slaves into the West Indies.

The first Negro slaves arrived on the mainland of America at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1620, less than a year after the first settlers arrived in New England. From that time on, the Negro people have played a great role, and particularly in Governor Cooper's South, in doing the most toilsome work in developing the country. The importance of the Negro slave to the economy of the South was one of the prime factors in the background of the Civil War. In this war, as well as the World War, the Negro workers, as the official records show, played a truly brave role.

As a "hewer of wood and drawer of water"—something which Governor Cooper's lily-white

Deals Blow To Labor's Freedom

John L. Lewis has done it again. The tawdry lies and artificial enthusiasm that he worked up for Coolidge in 1924, Hoover in 1928, Roosevelt in 1932 and 1936, he has now served up on behalf of Wendell Willkie.

Up to the last moment, many militants in the labor movement hoped that Lewis would not do it. They hoped that Lewis would support neither of the candidates of the two old capitalist parties. They hoped that Lewis would utilize this dramatic occasion to call upon the workers to begin right now to build Labor's own, independent party.

"Halfway through Lewis' speech," reports the organizer of an SWOC lodge, "the whisp-er went around the hall: 'Lewis is turning thumbs down on both of them.' And there was a ripple of strong approval, even from those who have been wearing Roosevelt buttons handed out by the SWOC leadership. That's what they wanted to hear—that the head of the CIO wasn't taking either one of them."

But if these men were bitterly disappointed, it was only because they had harbored illusions about Lewis. They had come to think that Lewis was different from Hillman or Murray or R. J. Thomas, because Lewis had not joined the others in singing Roosevelt's praises. But what did the difference between Lewis and the others really amount to? A question of price. The others sold cheap. Lewis held out for a bigger price. And when Roosevelt wouldn't pay more for Lewis than he had paid for Hillman, Lewis decided to sell his wares to Willkie.

Lewis shares with Hillman and the rest of these "labor statesmen" the same outlook; they all acknowledge the capitalists as their masters, not one of them appears in the political arena as a working class fighter against all the bosses. Like Hillman, Lewis dislikes strikes and militant trade union methods, and prefers "good relations" with the bosses. Like Hillman, Lewis wants above all "good relations" with the capitalist government. Essentially they hink of gains for labor as crumbs from the master's table.

That mentality of Lewis was especially revealed during his speech when, after declaring for Willkie, he added: "... It is a reasonable hope that these gentlemen (Willkie's supporters, Girdler, Weir and Grace) acting in their corporate capacity, will soon execute collective bargaining contracts with the CIO." Thanks to my support of Willkie—that was Lewis' plain meaning!

What of the many martyrs who died on the picket lines? Presumably they died in vain—if what is really necessary is to support Roosevelt or Willkie, as Hillman and Lewis tell us.

One beneficial result of Lewis' speech for Willkie can be recorded—many a union militant will now understand that Lewis is no better than Hillman.

(Other articles on Lewis' speech appear on pages 2 and 3)