

In the Labor Unions

By B. J. WIDICK

The American labor movement is watching with considerable anxiety the fate of the union movements in England and France in the present war.

Shop Stewards

Daladier and the French military machine recently ordered the abolition of the shop steward system, among other drastic decrees.

The shop steward system has been recognized as the real life, the heart, and the backbone of a good union.

Protection for the rank and file on the job comes primarily through the shop stewards.

Daladier seeks to kill two birds with one stone in his order abolishing the shop steward system.

War Taxes

How much social dynamite is packed in the French industrial system is indicated by two other decrees of the Daladier government.

Under the pressure of the rising costs of living on the one hand and the cut in wages on the other hand, combined with longer hours, speed-up, and accumulation of grievances, the French workers are building up a terrific resentment that will turn into a gigantic explosion.

Is it a wonder that the French Foreign Legion and other picked colonial troops are "judiciously" distributed behind the front lines?

England Too?

The rank and file workers in England are worrying about the probability that the Chamberlain government, with the approval of the labor fakers, will further curtail the rights of the union movement under the guise of war emergency measures.

Do they also face the signing of a pact between the government and the labor bureaucrats which brings the application of compulsory overtime and wage cuts, coupled with longer working hours? Are concentration camps for militant workers, and forced labor under military control the next step in England?

A story appeared last week that indicates how the English workers are feeling. Union bureaucrats agreed with an industrial concern not to press for the solution of certain grievances and a wage dispute.

How many more of these events occurred which do not escape the censorship? Undoubtedly many. The seeds of unrest are inherent in the war production schedules.

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Trotsky On Lenin's Program

Editor, The New York Times New York City, N. Y. Dear Sir:

On November 25, The New York Times published a letter signed by John Stuart Hamilton which begins with the words: "Leon Trotsky's letter in The Times is replete with unproved insinuations."

My letter contained the affirmation that Lenin and the whole Bolshevik party without a single exception considered it impossible to build a socialist society in one country, all the more so in one as backward as Russia.

The political reason for Stalin's turn was that the Soviet bureaucracy had succeeded by that time in erecting their own "socialism," that is, in firmly assuring their power and well-being in one country.

A SINGLE QUOTATION AND THAT ONE DISTORTED

In order to demonstrate that there was no break whatsoever, Mr. Hamilton takes the following quotation from Lenin's article written in 1915: "... The victory of socialism is possible, first in a few or even in a single capitalist country."

By the "victory of socialism" Lenin means here, as is clear from the quotation, the conquest of power by the proletariat and the nationalization of the means of production but not at all the construction of an isolated socialist society.

And further: "A careful study of the relevant historical material has convinced this Commission that Lenin's actual view on this subject was that while the socialist revolution could triumph initially in a single country, it could not be ultimately successful without the aid of successful socialist revolutions elsewhere."

It is moreover not astonishing that on the question of the construction of socialism in a single country Mr. Hamilton is incapable of finding anything aside from a falsely interpreted quotation of 1915? Power was conquered by the Bolsheviks in 1917. During the five years in which Lenin remained at the head of the Soviet nation he expressed himself innumerable times in speeches and articles about the conditions for realizing a socialist society.

When departing for Russia after the February revolution, Lenin wrote in a farewell letter to the Swiss workers: "The Russian proletariat cannot with its own forces victoriously achieve the socialist revolution. But it can improve the situation in which its chief, its reliable ally, the European and American socialist proletariat, will enter the

decisive battle." On April 23 (1918) he said at a session of the Moscow Soviet: "Our backwardness has pushed us forward, and we shall perish if we cannot hold out until we meet a mighty support on the part of the insurrectionary workers of other countries."

On the third anniversary of the October revolution, Lenin confirmed this: "We always staked our plan upon an international revolution and this was unconditionally right. We always emphasized the fact that in one country it is impossible to accomplish such a work as a socialist revolution."

At the tenth Congress of the Russian Party, March 1921, Lenin explained: "In Russia we have a minority of workers in industry and an enormous majority of petty land-owners. In such a country the social revolution could achieve its final success only on condition of its timely support by a social revolution in one or several advanced countries."

THE DEWEY COMMISSION DECISION ON THIS

Mr. Hamilton refers to the fact that Lenin's quotation of 1915 is "familiar" to me and that consequently I am hiding it consciously from the readers of The New York Times.

This necessarily made it the object of a special research by the Commission of Dd. John Dewey in its investigation of the Moscow trials. One can disagree with John Dewey and his collaborators in the sphere of philosophy and politics, that is precisely the case with me, but there is scarcely one reasonable man in the world who would dare to deny the outstanding intellectual honesty of John Dewey.

By the end of the same year he changed this explanation to read as follows: "Having consolidated its power, and taking the lead in the peasantry, the proletariat of the victorious country can and must build a socialist society. Can and must! And this diametrically contradictory explanation of Lenin's position ends with the same words: "Such, in broad outline, are the characteristics of Lenin's theory of the proletarian revolution."

Mr. Hamilton tried to accuse me of the concealment of one quotation from Lenin—we have just seen with what success. I accuse the Comintern school not of the concealment of one quotation but of the systematic falsification of ideas, facts, quotations in the interests of the Kremlin ruling clique.

Mr. Hamilton thus has only repeated the long-ago unmasked falsification of Prosecutor Vyshinsky.

HOW STALIN TRIED TO CHANGE LENIN'S THOUGHT

The initiative for the falsification belongs however not to Vyshinsky but to Stalin. In April 1924 in a pamphlet entitled "The Foundations of Leninism" Stalin wrote: "The overthrow of the power of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of the power of the proletariat in one country alone does not, per se, mean the complete victory of socialism. The chief task, the organization of socialist production, still lies ahead. Can this task be performed, can the final victory of socialism be gained, in one country alone, and

Existence of Opposition In U.S.S.R Revealed by Soviet Newspapers

It is becoming more and more difficult to penetrate behind the thick veil of secrecy and official verbiage of the Stalinist Russian press, which now arrives weeks late. The newspapers are filled with glowing reports of successes in every field, peacans to Stalin—with the war news pushed to the background. The official tone is that of "calm assurance," "optimism" and "invincibility."

Interspersed with these ritualistic reports, however, are extremely cautious comments which supply a key to the real situation. Hints are forthcoming of the fact that industry and agriculture are suffering from many grave weaknesses. Who is to blame? No longer do we hear that it is the fault of "wreckers" etc. Nor does the blame fall on the undisciplined and backward elements. Not at all. Local and regional directing bodies are blamed, especially the party organs. We cite only the latest instance at hand of this new approach. In discussing lags in collective farms, Pravda has the following to say:

"Everything is unloaded on the shoulders of the collective farmers, but the leaders of the region and of the collectives seek in every way to shield themselves. Yet the real reasons for the lag of the collective farm... are rooted in nothing else but the inept leadership of the labor force both on the part of the regional leaders as well as of the administration of the collective itself. Leaders of no small number of other regions can easily lay bare these evils among themselves, if they seek seriously to study the rea-

sons for the lag of this or another collective in their territory." (Pravda, November 21, 1939).

Without the joint efforts of the proletarians in several of the most advanced countries? No, this is out of the question. The history of the Russian Revolution shows that the proletarian strength of one country alone can overthrow the bourgeoisie of that country. But for the final victory of socialism, for the organization of socialist production, the strength of one country (especially a peasant country, such as Russia) does not suffice.

Several weeks ago, the company hired an extra force of electric furnace men whom they intended to use as scabs if a walkout materialized. Strike votes are now being taken by the Steel Workers Organizing Committee in all Crucible Steel plants.

The newly hired workers, in spite of the fact that the CIO has fallen down miserably in organizing the fight for adequate relief standards for the unemployed, joined the older men in a protest walkout against company attempts to institute the stagger system. The new men solidarized themselves with the determination of the men not to work Saturday and Sunday without time and a half for overtime.

When the management met the grievance committee, on Dec. 1, the company offered a "compromise" to the union, which included a provision to fire the new men at once. Thus the company hoped to precipitate a split in the ranks of the men involved.

Men Stick Together The electric furnace men held a meeting that afternoon to vote on the "compromise" proposals. Since most of the new men had not yet received a pay check and were financially unable to join the union, the officers decided to The stagger system requires these

December 6, 1939 Coyocan, D.F. Mexico

YPSL XMAS SOCIAL—916 9th Ave., at 59th St. Meet you under the mistletoe at the greatest affair yet. Dancing, refreshments, entertainment. Admission, 25 cents. Auspices, New York Division YPSL.

name in this instance is of special significance. Gamarnik was head of the Political Department of the Red Army, purged together with the other Marshals of the Red Army. The "fate of the Gamarnikites" is of particular meaning to the Red Army ranks where thousands have been purged on that very charge. It can only be a warning to dissidents within the Red Army itself!

Industry still suffers from acute labor shortage. Since September there has been a consistent campaign in favor of lengthening the working day. Supplementing it, has been a campaign to draw in women into industry and to remove "outdated" restrictions for the employment of women in the heavy industries.

The situation in the coal industry has not improved. The leading article in Pravda for November 12 places the responsibility for the "shortcomings" in coal production on the regional heads and the administration.

Millukov's paper, Poslednyaya Novosty, (published in Paris) carried an interesting interview with a recent "arrival" from Moscow who stated that Molotov and Zhdanov did not expect the outbreak of war and refused to believe the war news when first reported. (Poslednyaya Novosty, September 22, 1939).

The inclusion of Gamarnik's

Harrison Steel Workers Show Inspiring Solidarity

HARRISON, N. J.—The New Jersey trade union movement will remember for years to come the inspiring act of solidarity that has recently occurred among the electric furnace men in the Harrison plant of Crucible Steel.

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Comrade Editor: The return of the Appeal to once-weekly publication can only signify for us an unfortunate and inopportune retreat. At this time, on the very eve of a world war, it is absolutely imperative that we reach an ever greater number of workers with our message and our program.

What has caused this retreat? I would lay the blame primarily upon the branches and not the National Office. Let me cite the case of Toledo (with which I am most familiar) as an example. During the time I have been in the branch (approximately a year) we have most certainly not taken the paper into the workers' neighborhoods.

About three weeks ago, by dint of concerted effort and determination, we succeeded in breaking out of the rut. How did we do it? I'll tell you. First by establishing definitely who was and who was not exempted from the job. Heretofore everybody had claimed exemption on one pretext or another. Clearly, all were not entitled to exemption.

The ice has been broken, distribution turns out to be very simple and doesn't take over an hour or so, and the comrades actually get a kick out of it! Which all proves that the Appeal can be circulated.

I take the liberty to speak in this manner because I know from personal experience that the Socialist Appeal is today better received by workers than our press has been in any former period. Oakland, Calif. Elsie Meyers

I want to urge every branch in the country that has difficulty in solving this problem to try our tactics. (1) Exempt only those who have very valid excuses; (2) let the leading comrades (this is most important!), the executive committee, etc., set the pace and show by example what can and must be done; (3) impress upon every member the vital necessity of carrying on this work.

I stated above, the primary reason for our retreat lies in the failure of the branches, by and large, to carry on their share of the work. However, the National Office is not entirely blameless. As the letter from comrade Curtis testified, the Appeal in the not-too-distant past has not been very suitable for popular consumption. The headlines devoted to Shachtman's councilmanic campaign etc., are a case in point.

I have covered some local trade union meetings with the Appeal consistently for the last three months selling from 15 to 25 papers at each meeting and repeating sales to the same workers week after week.

Perhaps if Curtis would check on the local situation which he discusses, he may find that insufficient effort has been made to sell our paper to the same group of workers consistently.

Capable and nationally known leaders of our party often travel hundreds of miles for the opportunity of speaking to no greater number of workers than a capable and devoted comrade can interview while selling the Appeal at union meetings.

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WORKERS' FORUM

To the Editor: The Non-Partisan Committee for the Defense of Fred E. Beal takes this opportunity to inform his friends and well-wishers that efforts are being continued unremittingly for his release with prospects that are distinctly encouraging.

Those who desire to express their good-will toward Fred E. Beal and the spirit of the Christmas season by a gift or a letter may send same to him at the Calcedonia Prison Farms, Halifax, North Carolina. Fred likes candy, cake, genuine Jewish pumpernickel, books, magazines, a pair of earphones for a radio, winter wear, etc.

The efforts exerted thus far and the work entailed in the future necessitate an appeal for funds. We can conceive of no more worthwhile cause in the interests of American labor toward which a Christmas contribution can be made than to the Beal Defense Fund. May we urge readers to send their donations to our office, Room 610, 19 West 44th Street, New York, N. Y.

HUGO POLLOCK, Secy. Non-Partisan Committee for the Defense of Fred E. Beal.

Places, because they do not make enough much tougher for workers and progressives than Crump's Memphis.

I suppose people in other parts of the country think that workers here like to be slaves and do not care to build any unions, but that is not so. We, no more than workers in the East and West, want to be slaves, but circumstances over which we have no control have made this a tougher spot to unionize than the East and West.

There are lots of people in this town trying to organize progressive unions, but it isn't easy to build healthy unions in a town, where your leaders are either killed, jailed, or badly beaten and chased out of town, and many of the people who are for them (especially the CIO) have had very little or no union experience and are all waiting for someone else to tell them how to do it.

Several likely looking movements started in this town recently, but they are all suffering from New Dealitis. As soon as enough people here discover that the NLRB is not a Board whose sole purpose is to help the workers organize, but is just an organ created for the purpose of preventing strikes, even this town can become a good union town. Let's hear from a few Southern workers occasionally. Just call me Memphis Memphis, Tenn.

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