

# Manifesto of the Communist International

THE new era has begun! The era of the downfall of Capitalism—its internal disintegration. The epoch of the proletarian communist revolution. In some countries, victorious proletarian revolution; increasing revolutionary ferment in other lands; uprisings in the colonies; utter incapacity of the ruling classes to control the fate of peoples any longer,—that is the picture of world conditions to-day.

Humanity, whose whole culture now lies in ruins, faces danger of complete destruction. There is only one power which can save it—the power of the proletariat. The old capitalist "order" can exist no longer. The ultimate result of the capitalistic mode of production is chaos—a chaos to be overcome only by the great producing class, the proletariat. It is the proletariat which must establish real order, the order of Communism. It must end the domination of capital, make war impossible, wipe out state boundaries, transform the whole world into one co-operative commonwealth, and bring about real human brotherhood and freedom.

World Capitalism prepares itself for the final battle. Under cover of the "League of Nations" and a deluge of pacifist phrase-mongering, a desperate effort is being made to pull together the tumbling capitalist system and to direct its forces against the constantly growing proletarian revolt. This monstrous new conspiracy of the capitalist class must be met by the proletariat by seizure of the political power of the State, turning this power against its class enemies, and using it as a lever to set in motion the economic revolution. The final victory of the proletariat of the world means the beginning of the real history of free mankind.

## The Conquest of Political Power.

Seizure of political power by the proletariat means destruction of the political power of the bourgeoisie. The organized power of the bourgeoisie is in the civil State, with its capitalistic army under control of bourgeois-junker officers, its police and gendarmes, jailers and judges, its priests, government officials, etc. Conquest of the political power means not merely a change in the personnel of ministries but annihilation of the enemy's apparatus of government: disarmament of the bourgeoisie, of the counter-revolutionary officers, of the White Guard; arming of the proletariat, the revolutionary soldiers, the Red Guard of workingmen; displacement of all bourgeois judges and organization of proletarian courts; elimination of control by reactionary government officials and substitution of new organs of management of the proletariat. Victory of the proletariat consists in shattering the enemy's organization and organizing the proletarian power; in the destruction of the bourgeois and upbuilding of the proletarian State apparatus. Not until the proletariat has achieved this victory and broken the resistance of the bourgeoisie can the former enemies of the new order be made useful, by bringing them under control of the communist system and gradually bringing them into accord with its work.

## Democracy and Dictatorship.

The proletarian State, like every State, is an organ of suppression, but it arrays itself against the enemies of the working class. It aims to break the opposition of the despoilers of labor, who are using every means in a desperate effort to stifle the revolution in blood, and to make impossible further opposition. The dictatorship of the proletariat, which gives it the favored position in the community, is only a provisional institution. As the opposition of the bourgeoisie is broken, as it is expropriated and gradually absorbed into the working groups, the proletarian dictatorship disappears, until finally the State dies and there are no more class distinctions.

Democracy, so-called, that is, bourgeois democracy, is nothing more nor less than veiled dictatorship by the bourgeoisie. The much vaunted "popular will" exists as little as a unified people. In reality, there are the classes, with antagonistic, irreconcilable purposes. However, since the bourgeoisie is only a small minority, it needs this fiction of the "popular will" as a flourish of fine-sounding words to reinforce its rule over the working classes and to impose its own class will upon the people. The proletariat, on the contrary, as the overwhelming majority of the people, openly exercises its class power by means of its mass organization and through its Soviets, in order to wipe out the privileges of the bourgeoisie and to secure the transition, rather the transformation, into classless Communistic Commonwealth.

The main emphasis of bourgeois democracy is on formal declarations of rights and liberties which are actually unattainable by the proletariat, because of want of the material means for their enjoyment: while the bourgeoisie uses its material advantages, through its

## Program Adopted by the First Congress of the Communist International, at Moscow, March 2-6, 1919

Translated by IDA FERGUSON

press and organizations, to deceive and betray the people. On the other hand, the Soviet type of government makes it possible for the proletariat to realize its rights and liberties. The Soviet power gives to the people palaces, houses, printing offices, paper supply, etc., for their press, their societies and assemblies. And in this way alone is actual proletarian democracy made possible.

Bourgeois democracy, with its parliamentary system, uses words to induce belief in popular participation in government. Actually the masses and their

## The Collapse of Capitalism

Declaration of the First Congress of the Communist International.

The contradictions inherent in the capitalist system have become manifest in a gigantic explosion—in the great imperialistic world war.

Capitalism is trying through organization to overcome its anarchy in production. Instead of numerous competitors, huge capitalist associations are being formed (syndicates, trusts, cartels.) The banks unite with industrial capital; the whole economic life is dominated by this financial oligarchy, which becomes a dictatorship through the systematic organization of its power. Instead of free competition—monopoly.

But while capitalist organization may modify the anarchy in the capitalist system of production in a few countries, this, by making ever sharper the opposition (the war of competition), intensifies the anarchy in world production. This war of competition between the great robber states leads inevitably to a giant imperialistic war. The struggle for profits drives on world-capital to acquire new markets, make new arrangements, engage in new combats for raw materials and colonial slaves to turn into cheap workers. The imperialistic powers that parcelled out the world among themselves—the African, Asiatic, Australian and American proletariat and peasantry that have been converted into working cattle—must sooner or later come in clash with each other, exposing the anarchic nature of their capitalist system. Thus arises the greatest of crimes—the world war of plunderers.

Capitalism is also trying to end the contradictions in its social structure. Bourgeois society is class society. The capitalists of the most civilized nations wish to cover up these social contradictions. Out of the plunder drawn from colonial peoples, capital "rewards" its own slaves at home, creates a common ground between the exploiters and the exploited, in order to oppress the peoples—yellow, black and red peoples—chains the European and American proletariat to its imperialistic fatherland.

But this method for the permanent corruption of the working class, which created its patriotism and spiritual subjugation, was converted into its opposite during the war. Physical demoralization, world wide enslavement of the proletariat, unbearable pressure, world hunger, misery,—that constituted the final reward of the "civil peace." It collapsed.

organizations are held far out of reach of the real power and the real State administration. In the Council-Soviet system the mass organizations rule and through them the mass itself, inasmuch as the Councils draw constantly increasing numbers of workers into the State administration; and only by this process will the entire working population gradually become part of the government. The Council system also builds itself directly on the mass organizations of the proletariat, on the Councils themselves, the revolutionary trade unions, the co-operatives, etc. Bourgeois democracy and its parliamentary system sharpen the separation of the masses from the State by division of the government into legislative and executive powers, and through parliamentary mandates beyond popular recall. The Council system, by contrast, unites the masses with the organs of government by right of recall, amalgamation of legislative and executive powers, and by use of working boards. Above all this union is fostered by the fact that in the Council system elections are based not on arbitrary territorial districts, but on units of production.

In this way the Council-Soviet system brings true proletarian democracy, democracy by and for the proletarians against the bourgeoisie. The industrial proletariat is favored in this system because it is the most aggressive, best organized and politically ripest class, under whose leadership the semi-proletarians and small farmers will be gradually elevated. These temporary privileges of the industrial proletariat must be utilized to draw the small farmers away from the control of the big landowners and bourgeoisie and to organize and train them as helpers in the building of the communistic structure.

## Expropriation of the Bourgeoisie and Socialization of Production.

The breakdown of the capitalistic order and the disruption of capitalistic industrial discipline makes impossible the reorganization of production on a capitalistic basis. Wage wars of the workingmen—even when successful—do not bring the anticipated betterment of conditions of living; the workers can only become emancipated when production is no longer controlled by the bourgeoisie but by the proletariat. In order to raise the standards of productivity, in order to crush the opposition on the part of the bourgeoisie (which only prolongs the death struggle of the old regime and thereby invites danger of total ruin), the Proletarian Dictatorship must carry out the expropriation of the greater bourgeoisie and junkerdom and convert the means of production and distribution into the common property of the proletarian State.

Communism is now being born out of the ruins of Capitalism—there is no other salvation for humanity. The opportunists who are making utopian demands for the reconstruction of the economic system of Capitalism, so as to postpone socialisation, only delay the process of disintegration and increase the danger of total demolition. The communist revolution, on the other hand, is the best, only means, by which the most important social power of production—the proletariat—can be saved, and with it society itself.

The Dictatorship of the Proletariat does not in any way call for partition of the means of production and exchange; rather, on the contrary, its aim is further to centralize the forces of production and to subject all of production to a systematic plan. As the first steps—socialization of the great banks which now control production; the taking over by the power of the proletariat of all government-controlled economic utilities; the transferring of all communal enterprises; the socializing of the syndicated and trustified units of production, as well as all other branches of production in which the degree of concentration and centralization of capital makes this technically practicable; the socializing of agricultural estates and their conversion into co-operative establishments.

As far as the smaller enterprises are concerned, the proletariat must gradually unite them, according to the degree of their importance. It must be particularly emphasized that small properties will in no way be expropriated and that property owners who are not exploiters of labor will not be forcibly dispossessed. This element will gradually be drawn into the socialistic organization through the force of example, through practical demonstration of the superiority of the new order of things, and the regulation by which the small farmers and the petty bourgeoisie of the cities will be freed from economic bondage to usurious capital and landlordism, and from tax burdens (especially by annulment of the national debts), etc.

The task of the Proletarian Dictatorship in the economic field can only be fulfilled to the extent that the proletariat is enabled to create centralized organs of management and to institute workers' control. To this end it must make use of its mass organizations which are in closest relation to the process of production. In the field of distribution the Proletarian Dictatorship must re-establish commerce by an accurate distribution of products; to which end the following methods are to be considered: the socialization of wholesale establishments, the taking over of all bourgeois-State and municipal apparatus of distribution; control of the great co-operative societies, which organizations will still have an important role in the production-epoch; the gradual centralization of all these organs and their conversion into a systematic unity for the rational distribution of products.

As in the field of production so also in the field of distribution all qualified technicians and specialists are to be made use of, provided their political resistance is broken and they are still capable of adapting themselves, not to the service of capital, but to the new system of production. Far from oppressing them the proletariat will make it possible for the first time for them to develop intensive creative work. The Proletarian Dictatorship, with their co-operation, will retrieve the separation of physical and mental work which Capitalism has developed and thus will Science and Labor be unified. Besides expropriating the factories, mines, estates, etc., the proletariat must also abolish the exploitation of the people by capitalistic landlords, transfer the large mansions to the local workers' councils, and move the working people into the bourgeois dwellings.

During this great transition period the power of the Councils must constantly build up the entire administrative organization into a more centralized structure.

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