

from making any protest by the bludgeon of the patriotickster and the Sedition Acts, and partly cajoled by the hope of prosperity and lower prices after the coming of peace. Peace did come; but the promises did not materialize. On the contrary: unemployment and lower wages came; while the cost of living, instead of declining, soared upwards again. Capital insists on its profits, during peace as during war.

There is "feverish activity" in the Wilson Administration concerning the high cost of living. Conferences are being convened, investigations ordered; the President is to address Congress on the domestic problems of food prices, race riots, strikes, discontent generally—another cascade of verbal syrup with which to drug the minds of the people. Secretary Baker is disposing of the army's food surplus under terms "making it available to the people"—a drop in the ocean of requirements. Congress is considering legislation of the most puerile character. This is action on the crisis!

The wrath of the people is being cunningly directed against the meat packers—the whole capitalist system being guilty, it tries to evade its guilt by making a particular trust the scapegoat. This wrath against the trusts breaks out now and again; a particular trust is "disciplined" and legislation adopted; but still the trusts proceed to make profits and monopolize industry. The memory of the masses is short, but one may still remember the wrath against the Standard Oil Trust, its prosecution and "dissolution"—and then reorganization, with the trust still dominating the oil industry, and its stock more valuable than previously, dividends still higher.

The claim is that the "Big Five" among the meat packers constitute a trust. Precisely; but there is plenty of anti-trust legislation: why has it not been invoked? Simply because as a matter of fact, the meat trust (and the finance-capital it represents) is more powerful than the government. During the war Food Administrator Hoover realized "that the only way he could deal with the big packing interests was to let them deal with themselves—so he invited them to participate in a system of self-government which included a government exercised by them over all the lesser lights in the food industry." The public imagined that the government dominated the trusts; but it was the trusts which dominated the government, using the government to control competitors and garner fabulous profits.

Trust "investigations" mean simply playing with the high cost of living. That was the experience of yesterday, and is the game of today. The high cost of living is a product of the whole system of relations, national and international, of Capitalism. To break the high cost of living it is necessary to break these relations, which are a fetter upon the forces of production—to substitute production for use in place of production for profit.

But they are making the meat trust the scapegoat. Senator Kenyon, Progressive, has introduced a measure to "regulate" the packing industry—to drive out the packers from control of stockyards, to make refrigerator cars common carriers, to license the packers and confine them to the packing business. But these measures would not lower the cost of living, except slightly and temporarily perhaps, they would simply foster the illusions of "independence" of the small producers, but with the trust actually still dominant. It is precisely these small producers who are most active in the campaign against the trust, still fondling the illusion of independence and success.

The meat trust of the "Big Five" is a typical product of the monopolization of industry by finance-capital—characteristic of the era of Imperialism.

The facts, as gathered by the Federal Trade Commission, are briefly as follows:

There is "an approaching packer domination of all important foods in this country and international control of meat products with foreign companies"; the "Big Five," the five packing companies dominating the industry, jointly or separately hold interests of 762 companies, producing or dealing in 775 commodities; their gross sales for 1918 amounted to \$3,217,000,000; they control the hide market and can regulate the price of shoes; they control 87 per cent of the production of lard-compounds, 82 per cent of cattle slaughtering, at least half of the poultry, eggs and cheese in the main channels of interstate commerce, as well as scores of other commodities over which they exercise partial control or complete monopoly. The "Big Five" are now completing a monopoly over meat-substitutes. They pursue the usual trust methods of competition, such as securing from railroads superior service at lower rates than wholesale grocers pay for similar service.

All this means monopoly, international in scope. The British Government has been investigating the "American Meat Trust," and according to former Food Controller J. R. Clynes, the trust is a peril against which "some effective form of inter-Allied action is not impossible." Monopoly is international.

The financial aspects of the Packers' Trust are important. Their financial power is very general and mighty. "They are factors," according to the Federal Trade Commission, "in cattle-loan companies making the necessary loans to growers and feeders of live-stock; are interested in railways and private-car lines transporting live stock and manufactured animal-products; in most of the important stockyard companies—the public market for the bulk of food-animals—and in live-stock trade papers on which growers and feeders rely for market news. They are interested in banks from which their competitor packing-houses borrow money; in companies supplying machinery, ice, salt, materials, boxes, etc. . . . deal in hides, oleo, fertilizer."

This centralization, accordingly, is not industrial as much as it is financial: it is the domination of industry by finance-capital, for purposes of speculation, market control and world monopoly.

The centralization of production should mean plenty for all. Under Capitalism, it simply means huger and more regular profits. Centralization under Capitalism "regulates" production in order to insure profits; and part of this "regulation" consists of limiting production. This *limitation of production*, necessary to Capitalism, is a factor in high prices and responsible for the impossibility of Capitalism ever assuring plenty to all.

The packers are part and parcel of that financial Imperialism which now dominates American business, and the world. To crush their power means to crush financial Imperialism—that is why all promises of relief under Capitalism are illusory. Congress can not act: it is impotent. The only way out is economic reconstruction by means of the Communist Revolution.

Unity

HERE is a magic in the plea of "unity" that captures the sentimental Socialist. But unity is not unity unless it is of *fundamentals*—a unity of *deeds* and not sim-

ply of words. As is usual with instinctive folk philosophy, the adage "in unity there is strength" constitutes only a partial truth.

The Social-Democratic Party of Germany made a fetish of unity; and the consequences were deplorable. The *organization* unity was maintained by the sacrifice of principles, by concession after concession to non-Socialist groups and purposes; until the Social-Democratic Party was not a unity but a swamp. According to Franz Mehring, the fatal defect of the Independent Socialist Party was that it split away from the old party *too late*. The indecision of the seceding elements bred indecision in the new party. When the test of action comes, the indecision that that develops out of superficial unity proves disastrous, inhibiting action and fatal to the unity of deeds.

The unity of the Socialist Party was never more than formal. It was never fundamental. The loose policy of the Socialist Party was to invite all "radical" elements into the Party, with the consequence that the party was never unified on purposes and means. Formally, petty bourgeois Socialism dominated; but only formally; the moment the call of revolutionary Socialism was heard, the proletarian elements in the Socialist Party revolted against the domination of petty bourgeois Socialism.

But this revolt is simply the first act of the drama. The logic of the situation compels an absolute separation of the revolutionary proletarian elements from the petty bourgeois moderates. The unity of the two in one party would be equivalent to the unity of bourgeoisie and proletariat in parliamentary democracy—the bourgeoisie would inexorably come into control again: unity of bourgeois and proletarian necessarily means bourgeois domination *over* the proletariat. The unity of petty bourgeois Socialism with proletarian Socialism inevitably means the supremacy of the petty bourgeois.

It is necessary, accordingly, to rigidly separate the two. This means breaking the unity of the Socialist Party. But this unity, let us remember, was broken by the moderates. Nor is it the task of the Left Wing to restore that unity: the restoration of the old pestilential "unity" means abandoning the tasks of revolutionary Socialism. Out of this split, historically necessary and vitalizing, must come the Communist Party of the United States, affiliated with the Communist International and united on revolutionary fundamentals. Division and separation are indispensable in the process of developing revolutionary understanding and unity.

But, objects the sentimentalist, we must unite all our strength against the common enemy—bourgeois oppression. But strength comes not out of the "unity" of compromise, but out of the unity of conscious and identical revolutionary ideals. In the first two months of the Russian Revolution, with a crisis infinitely more acute than ours, comrades in the Bolshevik Party urged unity of all Socialist forces. But Lenin implacably objected. "Let us not isolate ourselves," they urged. Lenin answered: "This isolation is temporary, and will ultimately become a source of strength. Unity with the others is compromise, and compromise is fatal. It is not a question of numbers, but of correctly expressing the actual tendency of the revolution." Lenin was right: events justified his relentless opposition to a fraudulent unity.

Unity? Yes—the revolutionary unity of a Communist Party, uncompromising, implacable, united on the only basis that makes for strength—the unity of conscious agreement on revolutionary fundamentals.