

masses rests upon the private ownership of social wealth, such as land, manufacturing enterprises, transportation facilities, distributing mediums, etc. Through the private ownership of these social necessities the property-owning classes, backed with all the powers of the state—the courts, the police, the militia—and of extra-legal organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan, ruthlessly, violently and forcibly confiscate the wealth produced by the workers and beat them into silent submission.

Peonage is deeply rooted in and grows out of the present feudo-capitalistic economic system of the South. The white and black propertied classes of the South have devised ways and means of co-operating in defending themselves against any who organize or question their right to exploit the masses. The white and black workers, too, must recognize that the race question is raised by their masters but to blind and confuse their class interests and to prevent the development of class organizations. They, too, must develop means of co-operating if they wish to free themselves from the yoke of peonage. They must strive now to solidify their ranks into truly class-conscious revolutionary political and economic organizations to enable them to change from Capitalism to Communism. Inspired with the visions of economic emancipation, they must determine not to let any obstacle stand in the way of the accomplishment of this change. White and black workers of the South, unite! Put an end to Slavery!

### THE LUSK BILLS

The Fathers of the Constitution, in the words of the historian, Woodrow Wilson, set out to establish a government which would safeguard the interests of the property owners. Hamilton, Madison and John Adams quite frankly declared that to be their purpose when they carried on the propaganda for the adoption of the constitution.

The increasing unrest among the workers and the increasing dissatisfaction with the mere formal political equality still existing (with occasional ousting of Socialist Congressmen and Assemblymen as reminders of what may happen) has resulted in the passage of many measures which more and more serve to tear the veil from the bourgeois dictatorship which has always existed in America. Among such measures recently passed are the Criminal Syndicalist laws, the Criminal Anarchy laws, the Sedition Acts, etc. The courts, the representatives of Capitalism—in the words of Justice Van Sicten—have stepped boldly into the breach to solidify the capitalist battlefield. With a few vigorous strokes they have deprived labor of the use of some of its most important weapons, namely the right to picket, the right to boycott and in effect, the right to strike.

The capitalist class is not overlooking any chances, however. It is not going to let labor get out of hand, if it can help it. Not satisfied merely with binding the fighting power of labor with the iron chains of injunctions, it, at the same time, at-

tempts to keep the minds of the workers in a capitalist straightjacket. It is a great help to the stability of the capitalist rule, if workers can be gotten to think like capitalists. The system of compulsory education, prevailing in practically every state of the United States, guarantees that the American children will be thoroughly drilled in Americanism—that is, that the capitalist system is the best of all possible systems.

Unfortunately there are many who do not pass through the public schools, namely, foreigners and children of working-class parents who cannot keep them in schools. Some of them have developed the habit of going to the workers' schools, such as the Ferrer School, the Rand School and the schools maintained by many of the Unions in the city. The representatives of the capitalist class at Albany last year took steps to put a stop to this. One bill was introduced which provided for the expulsion from the school system of any teacher who would express any thoughts not strictly in accordance with the wishes of the ruling class. Another was aimed at the radical workers' schools. All private schools were required to secure a licence from the State Commissioner of Education who was given authority to revoke the licence of any school which in any way taught doctrines considered dangerous. In spite of the opposition manifested by labor and various liberal groups, the bills passed through the Legislature but were vetoed at the last moment by the Governor.

This year another onslaught is being made on working-class education. Similar bills have been passed by the Legislature, aimed, this time, ostensibly, at schools which teach the overthrow of government "by force and violence or by other unlawful means." The real purpose of the bills is to give the hirelings of the employing class the means of effectively preventing any attempt on the part of the workers at an understanding of their condition, from succeeding. The notion seems to prevail that ideas can be chained up, that a barricade can be erected against their spread, and that if enough laws are passed against the teaching and propagating of Socialism, Capitalism will be safe forever.

The indications are that Governor Miller will sign the Lusk Bills and that they will become law. The one result they are bound to produce is to quicken the process of disillusionment which American workers are at present experiencing. They can but hasten on what they attempt to prevent, namely the destruction of the Capitalist System.

### The Labor Order of the Red Banner.

In order to distinguish before the whole Republic those groups of toilers and single citizens, who have manifested self-sacrifice, initiative, diligence and organization in solving the problems of economic life, the VIII Congress of the Soviets decided to establish the Labor Order of the Red Banner with its mark of distinction.

The All-Russian Central Executive Committee will work out the form of the Order and its mark, and define the conditions under which this order is to be granted.

Resolution of the VIII Congress of the Soviets.

## A New Policy Toward the Peasants

By NIKOLAI LENIN\*

The question of substituting taxation for assessments is a political one since it deals with the relation of the peasants to the working class. The relation between these two principal classes can be expressed either through strife or co-operation and the road which will be chosen will decide the fate of the revolution. It is necessary, therefore, for us carefully to analyze this problem and revise our present position. I must emphasize that the condition of the peasants has become critical especially because of the war, demobilization, and failure of crops, which are influencing them in favor of the bourgeoisie as against the workers.

A social revolution in a country where the largest portion of the population is made up of peasants can be carried out through a series of measures which would not be necessary in highly developed capitalist countries where hired industrial and agricultural labor represents the majority of the population. The situation in Russia is different. In Russia we have a minority of industrial workers and a large majority of small land-holders. In order that the social revolution be successful in such a country it must be supported by a similar revolution in one or several advanced countries, a condition which has not as yet materialized. The alternative is co-operation between the workers who control the powers of the state and the majority of the peasant population. This coalition then must be perfected in the broadest manner. The agitation for it must be carried above board. Political trickery has no place here and should be strongly condemned. Classes cannot be fooled. We have contributed a great deal during the past three years towards the political education of the masses. The lessons of the revolution and our experience have taught us to state the problem squarely, that the interests of the classes are different, and the demand of the small land-holder are not the same as those of the workers.

We are confident that the Socialist revolution in Russia can be saved only through a coalition with the peasantry, since the other countries have not as yet entered the period of revolution. At meetings, in the press, and at every other opportunity we should speak the truth on this matter. We should not hide the fact that the peasants are not satisfied with the prevailing conditions and do not propose to continue to live under the present arrangement in the future. They have expressed themselves categorically on this question, and as statesmen we must agree to analyze and attempt to solve the problem. We must say to the peasants, do you want to go back, do you want to restore private property, and free commercial intercourse and thereby come under the rule of the landlord and capitalist? Lessons from history, preceding revolutions and elementary principles of economics will

substantiate this inevitable result. If we analyze the matter and ask ourselves whether it is to the advantage of the peasants to part with the workers and allow themselves and the country to return to the domination of the landlords and capitalists, we will find that, notwithstanding the differences in the economic interests of the two classes, the peasants will favor us.

The antagonism among the various land-holding groups has almost disappeared, the land has been divided and the resources have been equalized. The village harbors the two extremes of the former agricultural community no longer—namely the exploiting and the landless peasants. Can this class of peasants be satisfied? If anyone among the Communists believed that the economic basis of the small land-holders would be changed in three years, he was a dreamer, and there were quite a few among us who did. How could such a country begin a social revolution without dreamers? Practice demonstrated, however, the important role experiments can play in the collective management of agriculture. These experiments have produced negative results because people having the best of intentions but without knowledge of management have gone into the villages to establish communes. It is no wonder that they have failed. Generations must pass before the psychology and the habits of the small landholders can be changed. Only the material basis, the use of tractors and other agricultural machinery on a large scale, and electrification can influence them considerably. By generations we do not mean centuries, but to obtain tractors, machines, and to electrify a great country, we must speak in terms of tens of years.

The question is how to accomplish this. We must try to satisfy the demands of the peasants which have not, as yet, been satisfied. The peasants are rightly dissatisfied, and will not be satisfied. We must declare that such a state of affairs cannot continue. How can the peasant be satisfied? When we know his needs, we know the answer. Agricultural economics teaches us that the primary needs of this class are: Freedom of exchange, and the ability to obtain goods and products. What good is freedom of exchange when there is nothing to exchange? Freedom of exchange leads to capitalism. It consists of an exchange of goods. Those who have learned the ABC of Marxism know that it leads to the division of classes.

Can the Communist Party agree to the freedom of exchange? Would this not seem contradictory? To this we must answer that the practical solution of this problem is not an easy one. I can foresee and I know from discussions with Comrades that the project of substituting assessments with taxation carries with it the permission for local trade. A detailed description of the spheres in which this exchange will operate will be worked out when we get to legislate about it. Our party, as the government party, should only adopt the principle and

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