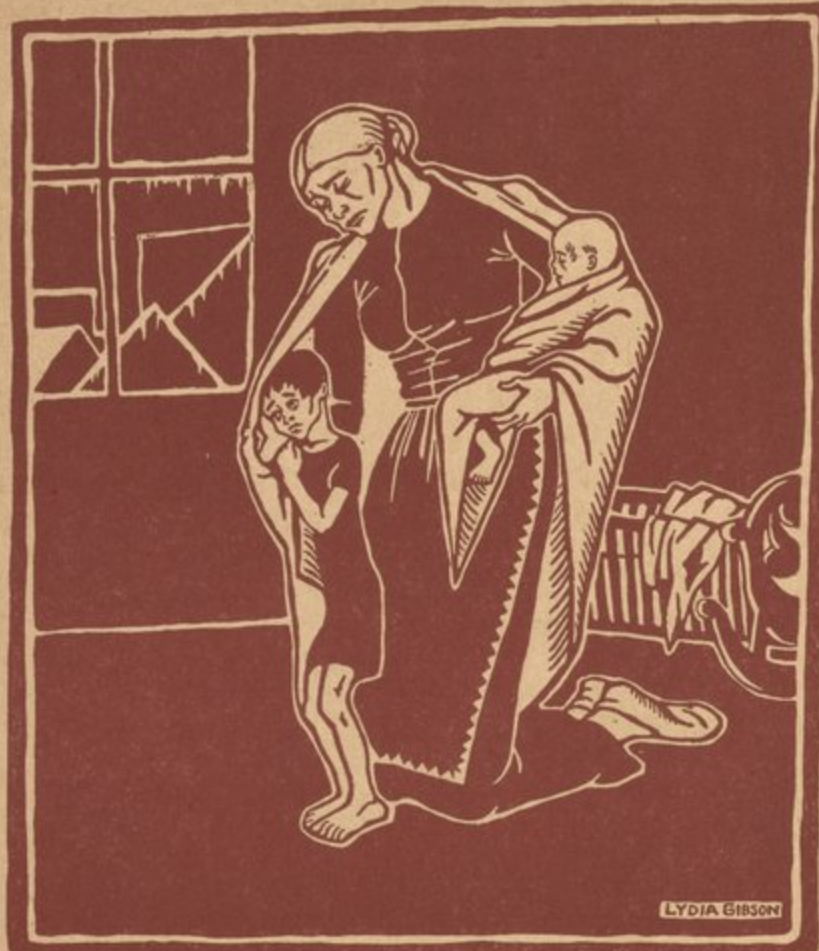


# LIBERATOR



MARCH 1924 20¢



**COLD**  
**HUNGRY**  
**HOPELESS**

## INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

is lifted out of the realm of vague phraseology when it is converted into concrete aid from the workers and farmers of one country to the workers and farmers of another.

## HUNGER BREEDS REBELLION — STARVATION FOSTERS LETHARGY

The German workers have passed from hunger to starvation. Capitalists in and out of Germany are interested in starving the workers from lethargy into humble and meek submission.

Workers and farmers of America are interested in feeding Germany's workers out of their present lethargy, into a condition which will make them fit to decide their own destiny.

The German workers ask NO CHARITY. They ask help which will help them help themselves. It is in this spirit that we ask you to contribute and pledge your support for the maintenance of the

## AMERICAN SOUP KITCHEN IN GERMANY

Russia's famine was caused by a natural phenomenon. Germany's famine is caused by capitalist greed. Don't let your German brothers be starved into complete submission to this greed.

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ADDRESS .....

Trade or Profession .....

COMMITTEE FOR INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' AID

# A WEEK

By Iury Libedinsky.

This tremendous piece of literature that has come out of the Russian revolution throws a new and revealing light upon the world struggle of labor.

Thinking people today in many lands are reading and discussing this international literary sensation that has already been translated into a multitude of different languages.

How can you fail to permit yourself to profit by the reading of such an epoch making book?

## WHAT ARTHUR RANSOME SAYS ABOUT "A WEEK":

In "A Week," Libedinsky paints on a small canvas an extraordinary inclusive picture of all that inner life of the revolution at which it is difficult for a foreigner even to guess; he does this without any attempt at proving anything; and he deals with something quite outside that life of Moscow and Petrograd which has been described and re-described until people are utterly tired of the very names of those cities. In this last his story is typical of much of this literature which comes not from the centre but from the far periphery. It is not in the centre but out there in the Urals, in the Ukraine, in Siberia, where town and country are in closer contact, where the civil war was fought, where a thousand minor centres are working out their problems for themselves, that the abstractions, the crude generalizations of the revolution resolve themselves in concrete instances, fit material for art. In Moscow, to take a single example, you see mathematical figures and curves on squared paper illustrating the increase or decrease of the area shown; it is out there that you see human beings literally fighting for their lives to get the seed to the fields.

That is the motive of this story, which is an account of a single week in a small town in the foothills of the Urals, in the Spring of 1921, before the New Economic Policy had eased the extremely hostile relations between country and town. It is the story of one of those revolts of desperately resentful peasants, led by Whites against the Reds and presently suppressed, which used to be dismissed in the newspapers in a paragraph of three or four lines in a column of other news. But into his account of it, Libedinsky has managed to work a large, carefully chosen gallery of revolutionary portraits.

## WHAT FLOYD DELL SAYS ABOUT "A WEEK":

This novel is an event in our literature, and in our lives . . . It is the first which deals not merely with the dreams, the struggles the martyrdoms of revolutionists, but with revolutionists at last successfully at work— . . .

The Revolutionists in the book are not by any means strangers to us. We know them all. And to us their true names may not be Stalmakhov and Repin and Klimen, and Comrades Lisa and Aniuta, but other names that have been often on our tongues. No, these revolutionists are of no alien and mysterious kind. In more peaceful days we have talked with them all, shaken their hands, and, in the cases of Comrade Lisa and Comrade Aniuta, perhaps been in love with them. We meet them again with a strange feeling of pride, of love, of happiness.

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*Robert Minor*

*Robert Minor*

DOHENY: "I think I hear my dogs among those wolves!"

# THE LIBERATOR

Vol. No. 3 [Serial No. 71]

March, 1924

## Teapot Dome

By Jay Lovestone

AFTER Coolidge had delivered his maiden speech there was a lull in the political storm that had threatened to overtake the country on the eve of the opening of Congress. The waters of the Potomac were calm. The president's yacht, the *Mayflower*, was converted into the Administration's political peace ship. On Saturdays the Potomac was closed to all ordinary shipping. It was open only to the royal yacht of the Coolidge family, the President's private pastor, cabinet officers, bankers, manufacturers, campaign managers, and dissatisfied senators from the agricultural areas seething with discontent.

The professional political experts and the capitalist non-partisan supporters of the Democratic and Republican parties were viewing the political situation with considerable relief. The powerful publicity machine of the Republican party was working very smoothly. The press was putting over with deadly effect the tremendous campaign for the Mellon millionaire tax scheme. Coolidge was picked as the sure winner. The big interests had definitely decided to throw their full weight to him and clinch his return to the White House.

Suddenly, petroleum appeared on the peaceful waters of the Potomac. A violent storm broke. The Teapot Dome exploded in the face of the men highest and most powerful in the conclaves of government and big business. As if from an unseen submarine, torpedo after torpedo was shot into Coolidge's royal yacht and into his presidential aspirations with deadly aim by the disclosures in the flood of talk emanating from the Walsh investigating committee.

The chart by which the political leaders of both capitalist parties were steering their course was besmeared and sullied with oil. Reputations tottered. Political futures tumbled. The most revered and solemn high-priests of the financial Sanhedrin became panic stricken.

In the history of American politics there has been no more sharp turn of the wheel than that following the Teapot explosion. Political leaders—Democrats, Republicans and Insurgents—have not been in such an agitated state of mind in many years. A long trail of lies finally led to an even longer trail of black truths. The United States government is now shipwrecked—stood on the rocks of the biggest and darkest scandal of the memory of the last two generations.

### The Nadir of Government Corruption.

Scandals are not new to the history of capitalist government in the United States. On the pages of the story of

American industrial and political development are crowded numerous scandals and near scandals, very much like the ones now held up to the scorn of the public eye by the Teapot Dome investigation. Grafts and corruption in the management of our governmental affairs are accepted as copy-book axioms by the capitalist politicians of the Republican and Democratic parties. The campaign handbooks these parties, even in the hey day of "normalcy," reek with cases of the vilest plunder of the country's resources, committed by Democrats and Republicans alike. These campaign text books usually resemble pirates' manuals. Scandal mongering and mud slinging are the perennial election practices of the game of politics as it is played in the United States by the parties of the employing class.

Yet the country is usually spared the enlightenment arising from the disillusion of the masses in the wake of startling revelations about the deep-rooted corruption that is inherent in the capitalist system of the private ownership of the means of production, exchange, and government. It is only during times of serious social rifts, during periods of sharp divisions within the ruling classes, on the eve of gigantic class conflicts that an attempt is made to reveal the rottenness of our whole political edifice. The captains of industry and finance always prey on the vitals of the country. But it is only in the midst of intense political struggles, at the moment of fundamental class realignments, that this organically diseased condition appears in ugly relief as a putrid eruption on the national body politic.

Thus, during the administration of Grant, when the "builders of the continent" were spanning the country with railway lines and were steadily winning their way to a strangle hold on the government, there was a sharp reaction in the various strata of the whole capitalist class and the working masses. The country was still in the throes of reconstruction after the Civil War. The class realignments took the form of a revolt against the dominant political party—the Republican party. The carpet-bagger government was being forced out of the South, which was rapidly returning to the fold of the Democratic Party. There was widespread dissatisfaction in the industrial centers of the North. The country was driving headlong toward the panic of 1873. It was under these political and economic conditions that the nation was treated to the astounding revelations of the Credit Mobilier, John McDonald's St. Louis

whiskey ring, and the Belknap affairs. Then the scabs of corruption broke out on the face and body of the Federal government. "Grantism" became synonymous with the defrauding of the government and innocent people by the leading stockholders of the Union Pacific, with financial experts placing shares "where it would do them the most good," with an investigation of the War Department and the subsequent resignation of the Secretary of War. Then cabinet members resigned to escape examination. Members of Congress were exposed. Even a Vice-President, Colfax, was involved.

During the administration of Taft the country was in the midst of another period of serious class rifts. The loss of the House by the Republican Party, often called "the revolution of 1910," the fight against Cannonism resulting in the removal of the Speaker from the Rules Committee and the transfer of the power of choosing this key committee from the Speaker to the House, the fight against the Payne-Aldrich Tariff Act, Taft's appointment to the Secretaryship of the Interior of Richard Achilles Ballinger, who had for years been known as a pliant tool of the corporations seeking to gobble up the country's natural resources, the charges by Gifford Pinchot, head of the Forestry Bureau, at the instance of a dismissed employee, Louis R. Glavis, of the Department of Interior, the exoneration of Ballinger by a packed committee, and the annulment of the claims of the Guggenheim-Morgan syndicate for the fraudulent land grants—these incidents weave the story of another national scandal. The Progressive Republican League was organized by LaFollette and the country was heading toward the 1912 split in the Republican Party.

Today, we are at the peak of another upward swing in the curve of sharpening class divisions. The serious economic depression in which the agricultural masses find themselves, the experience of the working masses with the employing class government in the national textile, railway and mine strikes of 1922, the ensuing practical loss of control of the House and Senate by the Republican Party, the fierce contest between the Democratic and Republican parties for the control of the government machinery, the appointment by Harding of Albert B. Fall, who had always been a consistent champion of the anti-conservationist interests, to the secretaryship of the Department of Interior, the handing over of the valuable oil concessions to Sinclair and Doheny, the resignation of Fall, the bedraggling with oil of several cabinet officers, the forced resignation of Denby, who as a member of the House fought thick and thin against the impeachment of Ballinger, the almost certain casting into the oil well of several Senators—these events are a most instructive parallel to the scandals of previous historical periods.

Little oil as the Teapot Dome Naval Reserve may contain, it has already started a political conflagration of giant dimensions. No one can any longer dare to say that the investigation is a mere tempest in a teapot.

Discovered in Wyoming, the oil spread to California, Mexico, Russia, and Persia. Now that Senator Dill has introduced a resolution calling upon Secretary of State Hughes for information regarding American oil concessions and negotiations in Burma, Mesopotamia, Palestine, Africa, Venezuela, Argentine, and the Dutch East Indies, there is no telling where the tale will end. It is said in Washing-

ton that you can't come up unseen and pat a Senator on the back without the Senators jumping for the window. The general feeling at the Capital is that the worst is yet to come. There is not a single spokesman of either party who dares guess where the cat is going to jump next.

#### Heavy Blow at Government.

The present reactionary Republican administration which was swept into the office by the greatest majority ever accorded a victorious party in any election, has an outrageous record of scandals. Practically every department of the government is involved in some scandal or other. The Treasury Department reeks with the corruption of its income tax bureau and the scandals of its prohibition unit. The Department of Agriculture has its own packers' and stock yards' scandal. The disclosures about the blatant corruption and graft bordering on debauchery in the Veterans Bureau have shocked the country. Congress is now planning to investigate the wholesale frauds of the Shipping Board. The Department of Justice has been under fire for some time because of its sinister inactivity in hunting down those guilty of war steals, totalling billions of dollars. Attorney-General Daugherty doesn't prosecute enough and has not been winning the cases he does prosecute any too regularly. The Department of State is sweating oil from every one of its diplomatic pores. The Department of the Interior is involved in the Reclamation Bureau scandal. The Post Office Department has raped the Civil Service Law of the land and the Civil Service Commission has tamely submitted. The General Wood oil and concession scandals in the Philippines will also prove one of the blackest chapters in the annals of American imperialism.

But big as all of these scandals are, the Teapot Dome Naval Oil Reserve steal has dwarfed them all. Congressmen and Senators have lashed themselves into greater fury over this case, and they have had good reason to. The scalding steam of the Teapot has scorched four successive administrations—the two Wilson, the Harding and the Coolidge administrations. Directly or indirectly, through the back door or through the main entrance, there are involved in this mess, Wilson's Secretary of the Navy Daniels, Secretary of the Interior Franklin Lane, Secretary of War Garrison, Assistant Attorney General Gregory, Secretary of the Treasury McAdoo, and that notorious wholesale distributor of the fake Sisson documents, George Creel; Harding's Secretary of the Interior, Albert B. Fall, and Harding's and Coolidge's secretaries of the Navy and the Department of Justice and whatever other names are still to be added to this galaxy of capitalist servants. This historical continuity of the flow of oil has rocked the country to its very foundations. The most elementary bases of popular confidence and trust in the government have been shaken to their very bottom.

#### Party Lines Shattered.

The Teapot Dome exposure is bringing in its train mud much filthier than the ordinary campaign slush. At first the Democrats rejoiced. The Republican Administration was being undermined. The scandal was brought into the innermost alleys of the cabinet. A Democratic Senator Walsh was the leading light in the whole drama.

The drooping Democrats were galvanizing their dark despair into roseate hopes. Then a bolt from the blue hit them. Little by little the donkey heroes were spattered

with oil. At first-Doheny was brought on the scene. Most people did not know that this same Mr. Doheny had been proposed at the Democratic convention of 1920 to be the party's Vice-Presidential candidate. The Democratic politicians still felt safe because they knew that the working and farming masses had not heard the speech of Delegate Lorin A. Handley of California, at the Democratic Convention, to the effect that Mr. Doheny built "himself to the pinnacle of success such as every American citizen loves and admires. The life of this man is a typical romance of American improved opportunity."

Even after Sinclair bluntly told the Senate Committee that he contributed to the Democratic and Republican parties, the Democrats persisted in proclaiming their purity and in denouncing their Republican adversaries as the only ones guilty in the scandal.

But, soon a bomb-shell broke in their camp. William G. McAdoo—the last royal son of bankrupt American liberalism as sold to the American people in the first Wilson Administration, and the most over-advertised standard bearer of "progressive democracy," was hurled into the oil cesspool.

The Democratic political wild-catting brought on by the dazzling prospects for 1925 soon ended. They could no longer twist everything into campaign material. The political dynamite in the whole affair with which the Democrats had so carelessly played, was now raising havoc with all their plans. The admission that Mr. McAdoo had been on the payroll of Doheny for five years and had pocketed the modest sum of a quarter of a million dollars of oil money (marked down to \$150,000), once and for all made it clear that both the Democratic and Republican parties were alike besmirched with the Teapot oil.

The exposure of the McAdoo-Doheny relations has had a blasting effect on the Democratic chances in the coming elections. McAdoo's resignation the day after his employment by Doheny became public property, was as political as his services to the oil magnate. The more Mr. McAdoo attempts to explain his connection, the worse it looks. At best Mr. McAdoo must do lots of explaining.

It is true that this false prophet of American liberalism is now protesting passionately his purity of heart. McAdoo wants to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds. His resignation only proves that the Democrats were entirely open to hire by the same capitalist interests. The only difference was in method of employment. The facts show that McAdoo and his Democratic colleagues were not above purchase when the price ran into the quarter of a million column.

Despite the decision of his own hand-picked jury, Mr. McAdoo and his lieutenants are still down in the depths. Their party may fool itself that it still has the man, the candidate, left. However, in clinging to McAdoo, it will be throwing away the big issue of the coming election campaign—oil. It will be a mighty difficult task to ask the masses to put Doheny's counsel in the White House. It is easy to understand how some political cynics in Washington circles resort to this little poem:

"You may break, you may shatter the can if you will,  
But the scent of petroleum will cling to it still."  
The black crepe is still hanging on the door knob of

McAdoo's presidential aspirations and on the Democratic party's pretensions to purity in the Teapot scandal.

#### The Government in Its True Light.

The feature distinguishing this Teapot Oil Scandal from all other cases of graft and corruption in American government is that in the light of its sordid facts there are revealed the outstanding class characteristics of capitalist government in the United States.

The role of the courts, the part played by the press, the unity of the stock exchange and the White House, the growing centralization of political power,—all of these are brought into bold relief by the staggering revelations made in the Teapot investigation.

The extent to which the press was of service in helping the big oil interests to rob the country of this valuable Naval Reserve, has not yet been determined and probably never will be. Yet we already know that the Albuquerque Journal of New Mexico, in the South, the Denver Post, in the West, and the Washington Post in the East have rendered invaluable services to those involved in this fraud perpetrated against the country.

One needs but examine the condition of Sinclair oil stock on the market during the period of negotiations and consummation of the fraudulent contract by Fall to convince himself that the best barometer of national politics is the stock exchange. The Sinclair stock fluctuated on the eve of the Fall-Denby negotiations and rose to dizzy heights as soon as the concession was a certainty.

In this case, as in all instances where fundamental capitalist class interests are involved, the courts have proved themselves to be the last line of defense, the bulwark of the reactionaries. When Fall was hard pressed, the courts ran to his rescue and safely hid him behind a paper barricade of flimsy legal technicalities. There is no doubt that Denby, Daugherty, and the Senators who may yet be dipped in the Teapot oil will follow the example set by Fall and call on the courts when they are in real danger.

The tremendous degree of centralization of power achieved by the government is brought into painful relief by the story of the Teapot scandal. It was by an executive order that Harding, in 1921, transferred the Oil Reserves from the Navy to the Department of the Interior. This transfer was made on the pretense of a need for greater government centralization through all public lands being administered by one department.

The constitution provides that Congress alone has the power to make appropriations for yards, docks, and tankage. Yet the Secretary of the Navy arrogated to himself the right to enter into contracts for the sale of oil valued at \$103,000,000 and to expend this huge sum for tankage, the cleaning out of harbors, wharfage and other improvements of this sort. These are strictly congressional rights.

And when the Secretary of the Navy transferred to the Secretary of the Interior the power vested in him by Congress, the authority to control the Teapot Oil Reserves, he violated the fundamental law of the land by surrendering a right only Congress can constitutionally transfer. This is another glaring example of the menace of government centralization in this country.

The very character of the counsel chosen by President Coolidge to prosecute the guilty portrays the basic class

interests dominating our government. It was no accident that Coolidge called upon so notorious a railway corporation lackey as Pomerene of Ohio and Mr. Owen J. Roberts, who a year ago denounced LaFollette for introducing the resolution to investigate the Teapot steal!

The rebuff tendered to the Senate when it called upon Coolidge to have Mr. Denby resign is most illuminating evidence of the irresponsible, unresponsive character of the American government. In the governmental system of the United States the Cabinet is merely an official family of the President. Coolidge lost no time in pointing out that the dismissal of an officer of the government "is exclusively an executive function" and that in accordance with the principles of Madison, it is "essential to the preservation of liberty that the three great departments of government be kept separate and distinct."

It is interesting to note that when the Senate passed a resolution requesting the President to withdraw American troops from Germany there was no such hostile reaction on the part of the Chief executive though this matter feeling towards the capitalist interests on the part of the President. The reason for the difference in the attitude of the President towards this request and towards the request for the resignation of Denby lies in the fact that in the latter instance the safety and political advantage of a clique of property protectors were involved.

#### The Root of the Evil.

Let no one mistake the real situation. Sinclair, Fall, McAdoo, Doheny, Denby, and Daniels, are not guilty of this fraud because they are especially bad men, or afflicted with an extraordinary degree of moral turpitude. As a matter of fact these men have been operating in the national game of politics according to the principle that better feelings towards the capitalist interests on the part of government officials leads towards better business.

Even if all those guilty in this notorious fraud were punished—a situation which is most improbable—the conditions making for such corruption would continue to exist. Other scandals would occur in time.

The soil in which these cases of political graft and corruption take root, the conditions under which such outrageous plunder of the country's resources takes place, are the conditions under which the ownership and control of the country's natural resources, the means of production and exchange, the government apparatus, are privately owned and operated for the benefit of a small, capitalist owning class, and to the detriment of the interests of the great working and farming masses. As long as the capitalist system prevails in economy and production, as long as the railways, the coal mines, the oil wells, and the credit and exchange facilities remain in the hands of a special propertied class of exploiters, the control of the governmental machinery will also remain in the hands of this capitalist ruling class. Not until the very last vestige of this twofold condition is uprooted, will there be an end to these huge steals and gross political corruption.

#### Political Significance.

LaFollette had been hesitating. He was not sure as to his next step. He feared to separate himself from the Republican party lest he burn all his bridges behind him. The oil upheaval has given tremendous impetus to the

likelihood of LaFollette heading a third party independent of the Democratic and Republican organizations. The fact that McAdoo has become an oil duck and therefore a rather lame contestant at best, will cause LaFollette to be more aggressive in the next few months. McAdoo had always some standing with the upper crust of the aristocratic section of the working class, particularly the highly skilled railway workers. It was on this section of the working class and on the farmers that LaFollette had pinned his greatest hope in the event of leading a third party out of the Republican fold. Fear of McAdoo's strength in these quarters has been lessened considerably by his shady relations with Doheny.

The last speech delivered by LaFollette in the Senate was replete with blistering invective against every ramification of the political machine of the Republican party. It was the most merciless and bitter denunciation of the reactionary Old Guard yet delivered by LaFollette. This speech showed that the Senator from Wisconsin was bent on making the leadership of Lodge and Longworth in Congress a by word and a jest.

The significance of this new angle to the McAdoo-LaFollette phase of our national politics cannot be overestimated. McAdoo is making a desperate attempt to steal LaFollette thunder. On January 28th the latter introduced a resolution to investigate the settlement of all claims arising out of Federal control of railroads and to report its findings and recommendations to the Senate. Soon after McAdoo sent a letter to his campaign manager, Judge Rockwell, in which he referred to the "unscrupulous railroad officials who filed false claims against the government." LaFollette knows that he stands no chance of repealing the Esch-Cummins Act in this Congress. He is therefore trying to stir up plenty of dust to make the railroads show dirtier and at the same time save his followers from disappointment over his failure to lower freight rates. McAdoo is parroting LaFollette's talk in order to steal this issue from him.

Here we have the sharpness of the conflict between McAdoo and LaFollette. Whether a third party is a certainty in the coming elections it is yet too early to conclude. But it is obvious that the exposures of the Teapot Dome investigation have tremendously enhanced the possibility of the birth of a third party, a liberal party, in the coming elections and have lent tremendous impetus towards the organization of a nation-wide Farmer-Labor class party.

The revelations of the Teapot investigation have proved vitriol to the raw wounds of the working and farming masses and have increased the disgust with which they have come to view the government. The capitalist politicians find it very hard today to gloss over conditions with illusions. The Coolidge managers are watching political affairs with increasing nervousness. What the harvest will be at the end of the investigation it is yet too early to predict. The statements of Vanderlip and Senator Moses to the effect that "those yet unnamed are greater in number and of more consequence than those already involved" are ominous. Today it would be more dangerous for the employing class to suppress this investigation than to go through with it, though their government officials will make every effort to hide as much as possible from now on.



# Imperial Hara-Kiri

By Scott Nearing

SUCH economists as Marx, Hobson and Lenin, have long held that modern imperialism would destroy itself through its own internal contradictions. The past few years have provided many facts to prove this theory.

Britain is the mother of modern empires. Not since Rome has any single state held so vast a dominion under her power. Her ships sail the seven seas and the sun never sets on her flag.

The British Isles are the manufacturing and financing centre for this Empire. Raw materials and food, produced in the colonies, are carried in British ships, manufactured on British machines and then sent back in British ships to colonial markets. The people of the British Isles cannot feed themselves, or produce the raw cotton, wool, rubber, coffee, hides and oil that they require for the maintenance of their economic life. All of these things must come from overseas.

Through the first half of the nineteenth century Britain had the world markets pretty much to herself. She profited largely, reinvested part of the surplus at home and sent the balance abroad, so that in 1913 she had 20 billion dollars invested outside the United Kingdom. Then too, the population increased. In 1801 there were 9 millions in England and Wales; in 1861, 20 millions; in 1911, 36 millions.

Prosperity seemed assured. The golden age was being ushered in. Then trouble came from two directions. On the one hand a rival (Germany) arose demanding a share of the world economic booty. On the other hand, the colonies and dominions began to do their own manufacturing.

Britain settled her score with Germany between 1914 and 1918 and finished the job with the Treaty of 1919. She took Germany's colonies, her investments, her ships, her iron and coal, her navy. Defeat in the imperial struggle left Germany naked and starving.

As for Britain, the victor, her national debt jumped from 774 million pounds (1854) and 678 million pounds (1914) to 7,460 million pounds in 1919 and 7,700 million pounds in 1923. In the latter year, with taxes high and an unusually favorable settlement with the United States, out of a total revenue of 910 millions, 332 millions or more than a third, went for "debt service." Britain has a capacity cargo of direct problems which she won with the war. She has something else: A group of colonies and dominions that learned, during the war, to be economically self-sufficient.

The war stopped the flow of British manufactured goods to British colonies. The latter must produce their own goods or do without. It also created a demand, in the war zone, for all of the goods that the colonies and dominions could manufacture and at top prices.

The response was immediate. Australia had 13,456 boot and shoe workers in 1913 and 15,286 in 1917. Canada produced 751,738 tons of steel in 1914, and 1,538,886 tons in 1917. India manufactured 4,220,000 pounds of woolen goods in 1913 and 9,744,000 pounds in 1917. The local

business interests were building their own industrial machines.

Nor did the process stop there. When the war ended, they went on producing locally because they found that it paid. The war had cut the foundation from under British economic power by setting up rival economic units in each of the British dominions.

The war had still another effect. Britain destroyed one rival between 1914 and 1918. During the same years, she created another—the United States.

Entering the war late in the day; profiteering enormously during the three early war years; losing only a fraction as much as Britain; far better equipped with resources, the United States was able to lend Britain 4.6 billions, to finance her part of the war, to build a great rival navy and merchant fleet, and to make huge investments, even in the British possessions (notably Canada). While the war removed one rival it set another, far more formidable, in Germany's place.

Not only was the war fought in vain by Germany (the vanquished), but Britain, the victor in the imperial struggle, finds herself on the edge of a trembling economic abyss over which her fellow victor (France) is now falling.

Accurately have the economists predicted, and truly will the historians write: "Capitalist imperialism is a form of social suicide."

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# "Third Party" or Farmer Labor Party?

By C. E. Ruthenberg

## I.

THERE are two movements for a party in opposition developing side by side in this country today. In the conventions called for May 30 in the Twin City and July 4 in Cleveland these two movements will take definite form.

In considering the question of what kind of parties are developing in the opposition movement against the two old parties the two possibilities are being referred to as "a Third Party or a Farmer-Labor Party." The contrasting of "Third Party" and "Farmer-Labor Party" has rather confused the issue to be settled than aided in clarifying it. The name "Third Party" does not necessarily carry with it an indication of the class character of the party so called. A Farmer-Labor party may be a third party in the sense that it is a mass party competing with the Republican and Democratic parties for political power. In fact many of the exponents of the organization of a new party use the two terms interchangeably. For them there is no difference between a Farmer-Labor Party and the Third Party.

There is, however, a basic difference between a Third Party and a Farmer-Labor Party for those who approach the subject with the key of Marxian science. An examination of the make-up of the Republican and Democratic parties, to which the new party is to be a third for those who call it a Third Party, will throw light on the subject.

Both the old parties are and have been dominated by the exploiting class of this country. There are different groups within the capitalist class and the struggles between the Republican and Democratic parties reflect the struggle between these groups endeavoring to forward their own peculiar interests. For instance, the struggle over the tariff reflects the old difference of interest between the capitalists who make their profits through manufacturing, and the cotton-raising land owners of the South allied with the middle-men. The two old parties, however, are alike in that they count as their supporters some sections of all classes. They are alike class parties in their use of the governmental power in the interest of the exploiting class, but in their composition and followers they are all-class parties. They are composed of workers, farmers, professional people, little and big business-men and capitalists.

Those who speak of the coming new party as the "Third Party" express in that term their idea of the make-up of the party they are seeking to organize. They want an all-class party. The Republican and Democratic parties are discredited and bankrupt, they argue, so let every one who is disgusted with their administration of the government and the candidates they put up, get together in a new party. Farmers, industrial workers, storekeepers, merchants, small business-men of every character, professional men, doctors, lawyers, bankers, brokers and real estate dealers, professional reformers of the Committee of Forty-Eight, yes, even small capitalists—let them all get

together and form one great, glorious Third Party to fight the decrepit, discredited two old parties!

A party with such a class basis could not have a clear program. It would be "against" some of the open, brazen looting of the nation, such as has been exposed in the Teapot Dome scandal or such as was evidenced in the guarantee of profits to the railroad companies, but it would not propose anything fundamental. It would surely be dominated by the middle class, and the farmers and workers would be the tail to the kite. Its ideal would be to make the great capitalists be "good"—and being "good" would mean to run their system of exploitation and oppression in such manner that some of the loot taken from the farmers and industrial workers would seep down to the groups composing the middle class, enabling the latter to make a really comfortable living without too much worry.

Those who describe the coming new party as a "Farmer-Labor Party" have something different in mind. They want a class party—a class party of farmers and workers. Naturally they would not exclude from the new party professional men or small business men, if these desired to go along. But they want the new party to be made up predominantly of farmers and workers, to be led by farmers and workers, and its platform to be written in the interest of the farmers and workers. Since the interest of the rich and well-to-do farmers more nearly coincides with the middle-class group, those who want a "Farmer-Labor Party" even go farther and demand that the new party be led by, and its platform be written to express the interests of, the poorer exploited farmers and the industrial workers. In other words they want a class party of exploited farmers and industrial workers, with any other group which wishes to go along as the tail of the kite.

## II.

The economic forces let loose by the war, which since the end of the war have kept the capitalist industrial system in a precarious state, have greatly intensified the struggle between the clashing economic groups which make up our social order. The billions of wealth destroyed during the war must come from somewhere. Who is going to pay the twenty-five billion we put into the war? The capitalists out of their profits, the middle class through reduced comfort, or the workers and exploited farmers in a lower standard of existence? Who is going to pay for the loss of markets growing out of the decay of capitalism in Europe—capitalists, middle class people, or exploited farmers and workers?

During the war our government became more centralized and gained new powers, and the big capitalists are using their control of the government to put the burdens of paying for the wealth destroyed during the war and the losses resulting from the disordered state of the capitalist system, upon the middle class and, still more, upon the farmers and industrial workers.

The small merchants and professional groups did not make the big profits of the war. They do not gain anything through a high tariff. Guarantees of profits to the railroads mean higher freight rates and travelling expenses to them. The well-to-do farmers are against the Esch-Cummins law which they claim increased the freight rates on their products and against the policy of deflation put into effect by the Federal Reserve Board which they blame for the low prices of their products.

The industrial workers saw the centralized federal government acting as the agent of the capitalists during the open-shop drive. The capitalists were bent on making the workers pay the cost of the war in lower wages and longer hours of work. The first step was to destroy the workers' organizations. The government gave all the aid in its power. Injunctions, courts and soldiers, Railway Labor Board legislation, Coal Commissions, the Daugherty injunction—all these helped to teach the industrial workers that the government, under a Republican or a Democratic administration, was their enemy.

Thus there has developed, side by side, a movement of the middle class and another movement of the poorer, exploited farmers and industrial workers, both directed against the old parties dominated by the big capitalists.

In Congress the middle class section of this movement expressed itself in the formation of the "progressive bloc" centering around Senator LaFollette. With the exception of Senators Shipstead and Johnson of Minnesota, who were elected by a Third Party calling itself by the name Farmer-Labor Party, the members of this "progressive bloc" are all still in the old parties. Their tactics in Congress and in relation to the old parties are typically middle class. They hesitate and vacillate. They dare not take a bold stand on any issue. They are afraid to break decisively with the old parties. They still have hopes that they may "reform" one of the old parties and become its leader.

It is from this group, particularly from LaFollette, Shipstead and Magnus Johnson, that has come the proposal to delay the May 30 Convention until after the old party conventions. They argue that after the Republican and Democratic parties have nominated their candidates there will be such disgust because of their candidates and platforms that the Third Party movement will sweep everything before it. Their hope is, however, that there will be no third party convention if it can be put off until after the old party conventions. They hope to sneak into one of the old parties, give it a "progressive" appearance and kill the movement for a class Farmer-Labor Party, or even for a Third Party.

The Conference for Progressive Political Action, while it came into existence under pressure of exploited farmers and industrial workers, is in the hands of reactionary labor leaders and leaders of organizations of well-to-do farmers. These leaders belong to the hesitating, vacillating middle class. At the St. Louis Convention this group, while considering the possibility of organizing a Third Party at the convention called for July 4 in Cleveland, still held to the lingering hope that one of the old parties would nominate a "progressive" whom it could endorse, and refused to go on record in a decisive manner for a new party. Should this group make the decision July 4 the party so organized

would undoubtedly be a "Third Party" and not a class farmer-labor party.

The movement among the masses of exploited farmers and industrial workers has thus far found clear expression only in the organization of the Federated Farmer-Labor Party and in the organization of such local parties as the Buffalo and Los Angeles labor parties. Elsewhere, as in Minnesota, South Dakota, Montana and Washington it mixed with the Third Party movement. The degree of "third party" admixture varies. In Montana, South Dakota and Washington there is certainly less, and the parties are nearer being real class farmer-labor parties, than in Minnesota, although in the latter state the Farmer-Labor Federation, organized inside of the Farmer-Labor Party, expresses the class farmer-labor viewpoint.

At the Twin City Convention on May 30 and at the July 4 Convention in Cleveland all these currents will mix. Small business men, bankers, professional men, well-to-do farmers, poorer, exploited farmers and industrial workers are moving together toward independent political action. In the May 30 Convention the class farmer-labor elements will unquestionably dominate now that the July 4 Convention is called. In the July 4 Convention the Third Party element will be in power.

### III.

What policy does a Communist party follow in such a situation? Does it say "it is a bad mess" and run away from it? Does it take the position that it cannot enter into a convention with small business men and well-to-do farmers, even though the poorer farmers and industrial workers are also there?

Not so the Workers Party. It is the declared policy of the Workers Party to send delegates to and participate in the May 30 Convention. It has launched a nation-wide campaign in support of the convention. It will use all its organization strength and its influence among the poorer farmers and industrial workers to secure such support for the convention as will cause it to be dominated by the class farmer-labor viewpoint and its candidates and platform to express that viewpoint.

The policy of the Workers Party is to develop, out of the present mixture of Third Party and Farmer-Labor Party movement, a class Farmer-Labor Party. It does not fear to fight with the middle class for leadership of the exploited farmers and industrial workers. It has clearly analysed the problem and is driving toward its goal.

There are those in our party who argue that, should we lose the fight through the formation of a party which is dominated by the middle class element, we must then desert the exploited farmers and industrial workers included in it, and thus preserve our purity as Communists. This policy of running away if we lose the first battle with the middle-class elements, is, however, not likely to be adopted. We must and will continue the fight. Our task will be to create a distinct organization of the exploited farmers and industrial workers and to prepare for the time when the great mass of exploited farmers and industrial workers will have learned by experience that they must stand erect on their own feet.

Third Party or Farmer-Labor Party? Our answer is strength; if not May 30, ULTIMATELY. A class Farmer-Labor Party. May 30 if we have the

# Simon Legree on the Night Shift

By Harrison George

HE DIDN'T look as though he belonged in a Chicago office. Over six feet tall, raw-boned, tawny-faced and with wide black Stetson hat set over straight dark hair, his own introduction was unnecessary to tell that he was from the Southwest. He had a certain air of resolution, due possibly to an ancestry more natural and noble than that of the Mayflower—the American Indian. For twenty-five years he crusaded for the old Socialist Party; he served time with the I. W. W. for having helped the Wobblies fight the Copper Trust in Arizona during the war. Having spent three years in prison with him, I could understand his action in taking to the soap-box on the streets of the cities of Oklahoma during a condition of civil war and attacking the Ku Klux Klan before crowds made up of armed partisans of the "Invisible Empire." His name is Stanley J. Clarke, and he was telling us about the Klan in Oklahoma. . . .

"Fred Miller of the Open-Shop Division of the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce, and leader of the Klan, has just denounced the Organizer for the Workers Party, J. E. Snyder, and myself as trying to 'bring a soviet government by organizing against the Klan.' The Klan is the great immediate issue in Oklahoma. While it is true that the great social question is economic—and I have said so for twenty-five years—yet when there is a fellow waiting around the corner for me, with a mask on his face, a pot of tar and a black-snake whip, that fellow is an issue. . . . !

"But of course 'ideas do not fall from heaven,' and the Klan beneath its obscure and varied immediate causes, has economic roots which are too complex to discuss briefly. 'White supremacy' doesn't want Negroes exterminated, but Negro labor intimidated; and as to the foreign-born, the Klan agrees with the Wall Street Journal which said—'We must keep the alien down—not out.'

"Klan economics in Oklahoma has two sides, however. The one which has furnished the sensational fight between the Governor that was—J. C. Walton—and the Klan, was in reality a fight between two capitalist groups over oil land leases from the state. I'll explain that before I take up the more important side of the Klan.

"Out of popular sight, but a factor in oil and politics is the state School Land Department, which leases oil-bearing school lands. Through a dummy 'independent' oil company the Standard Oil Company had leased more than a hundred sections of school land at fifty dollars a section and has monopolized the bulk of oil resources with many producing wells running by the ten thousand barrels a day. These leases are held by the Marland Oil Company.

"Not all independent companies are dummies for the Standard, and a powerful independent group began to fight to displace Governor Walton, who was holding down the state for the Standard. J. C. Wrightsman of Tulsa, a Standard Oil agent in politics, and the Marland Oil Company had contributed heavily to Walton's campaign fund. At Walton's impeachment trial it was proven that about

\$200,000 had been collected, that Walton's personal bank account swelled enormously while he was paying campaign expenses (!) and that he had been practically presented with a \$40,000 mansion by President Marland of the Marland Oil Company.

"The independents began a fight on the Standard's control through popularizing a fight against Walton by the Klan. One of wealthiest men in Oklahoma and the biggest independent is William Gray of Tulsa. Gray is a relative of United States Senator Mayfield, elected by the Klan from its realm of Texas. With Fred Miller, Campbell Russell and C. G. Hill of the Open Shop Division of the Chamber of Commerce of Oklahoma City—all Klansmen—Gray began to put the Klan on an oil footing against Walton and Standard control. The Klan at once found Walton to be a menace to morality, good government and the independent oil operators, and began to advocate his impeachment.

"Walton foolishly thought he could stop the Klan's attack by agreeing to certain superficial 'moral' demands of the Klan. He had already signed the law, introduced by a Klansman, making it illegal to teach the materialist conception of history in Oklahoma schools. He joined the national organization of the Klan over the objection of the local Klan, affiliating directly to Atlanta. He conferred with the Klan at Muskogee and Ardmore and agreed that in return for Klan support he would remove "radicals" from school offices. He kept his word, removed some and publicly denounced all "radicals." But the Klan kept up the fight—breaking its promise. Walton then repudiated Klan membership and declared his spectacular war against the Klan in Oklahoma. It has ended with the Klan as victor. Walton is impeached and Ed. Trapp, a Klansman and an independent oil operator, was raised to the position of Governor.

"What the independents are going to do now, with the Standard Oil leases nailed down, is an open question. The Standard, knowing that Walton was doomed, hastily sent its spokesman, the blind Senator Gore, to tender the olive branch of compromise to the Klan legislature the day it convened to impeach Walton. The two groups will find an equilibrium and it will be a case of 'Oil's well.'

"Now, about the other side—the blacker and more significant side—the side of secret terrorization, which has sent some thousands of men to arms in a condition of civil war where the life of no one is safe.

"An organization known as the 'Commodity Marketing Association' is connected with the United States Chamber of Commerce through the Farm Bureau Federation. In California it calls itself the 'Orange Growers Association' or the 'Raisin Growers Association' according to the product grown. In the state of Oklahoma it calls itself the 'Cotton Growers Association,' the 'Broom-Corn Growers Association' and the 'Wheat Growers Association'—all supposedly separate combines of real farmers. Actually it is a close

corporation with tentacles in every bank, and the banker forcing his farmer debtors to sign contracts with the Association selling his crop for five years, often at a price below that realizable by the farmer on the open market. Opposed to the Association is its organized class enemy, the Farm Labor Union of real farmers, with an actual co-operative marketing organization.

"The Klan in Oklahoma is on the side of the bankers and the Cotton Growers Association against the dirt farmer and the Farm Labor Union. It is naturally so, because the Klan organizes first the 'best citizens' of the village and city, who are of course the banker and merchant of the Chamber of Commerce. Thousands of atrocities, plain and fancy whippings, murder and mutilation have been committed to keep a subject class in a docile mood. That outrages were particularly directed against the tenant farmer is shown by the question asked by a Klan Senator from Muskogee County in debate on the so-called 'Bill to Unmask.' The question was, 'Do you know of any freeholder who has been intimidated by the Klan?' This 'Bill to unmask,' supposedly aimed at the Klan, actually legalizes its masks under an exception for 'religious ceremonies.'

"Thus the Klan, which in Texas posts a price for cotton-picking above which no picker, white or black, dare make demand, in Oklahoma forces on the working farmer the price set by the Cotton Growers Association. And this organization of Simon Legrees is protected in its crimes by the federal government, which is always blind to any white terror, foreign or domestic.

"One phase is at once peculiar and dangerous. The police forces of cities and towns, under control of local business men, are usually Klan; while sheriffs, elected by farmer votes in some counties, are anti-Klan. Each side arms its followers against the other, and a situation of civil war with the country against the city is a reality.

"The anti-Klan organizations arise spontaneously among the farmers, with Farm Labor Union members taking the lead. About 20,000 farmers were represented at the first state-wide anti-Klan organization convention. While Walton fought the Klan, Walton is no friend of the farmers—he left them holding the sack of promised reforms made at Shawnee. Likewise the Ameringer "socialists" who sold Walton stock to the farmers are not only in bad repute but are now trying to sell the 'Leader' newspaper plant to the Klan. The Oklahoma farmers have to make their own leadership or go with what there is of Oklahoma labor unionism into a class Farmer Labor Party."

"Well," I asked of Clark, "what ought good Communists do about it, anyhow?"

"You may find your answer to that question in Lenin's little book on the Dictatorship of the Proletariat," Clark replied, "where Lenin says 'The town invariably drags the country after it, and the country follows in the wake of the town. The question is, which class among the different classes of 'the town' shall drag the country after it, and what forms shall this leadership of the town take.'

"And if you want more specific direction," Clark added, "read the last letter of the Communist International to the Workers Party advising the Communists to point out

that 'the illegal organizations of the capitalist class . . . especially the Ku Klux Klan and the American Legion, are products of the foresight of the capitalists, that they are, in other words, the counter revolution organized in advance.'"



Don Brown

### Ruhr Forges

SMOKELESS chimneys, tall and still,  
Gape with black mouths to the sky;  
Shop and furnace, shaft and mill,  
Locked in somber silence lie;  
Gloomy forges dumbly stare  
On a desolate thoroughfare.

In the shops no sounding blow  
Falls with swift and measured grace  
On the waiting anvil's face;  
Ponderous presses, row on row,  
Mighty, massive, motionless,  
Brood in sullen passiveness.

Hushed the mingled whir and clang,  
Where the brawn-slung sledges rang,  
As with fervent strength they beat  
Shape to steel's reluctant heat  
Now a hopeless quiet weighs  
On the nights as on the days.

In the dismal, empty street  
Ceaselessly the sentries go  
Up and down, to and fro,  
And with rifles ready meet  
Looks of hate or hot despair  
With a hostile, scornful air.

In the houses children cry,  
Women weep, and life stalks by,  
A monstrous, cruel, unjust thing,  
Hideous and menacing.

Charles Oluf Olsen.



William Gropper

"I just dare you."

### Machine Man

"INCESSANT! Incessant! Incessant!"  
 Sobs the steam;  
 The exhaust-jets gleam  
 As they puff, puff, puff, puff,  
 Pair by pair,  
 In the sullen, smoke-streaked  
 Atmosphere;  
 And the head-saw's fiend-fanged scream  
 Comes cutting through the air.

In the mill where the pulley-wheels rumble and whirr  
 And the taut belts flare and whine  
 There is silence—silence that drones through the noise  
 A troublesome song in monotonous voice:  
 'You are mine! You are mine!  
 Every man in the mill  
 Is the slave of my will;  
 I fashion you all to one pattern of woe,  
 A dull, dreary pattern of woe."

Charles Olson.

### Eviction

THERE we have lain on weary nights, all through  
 The weary nights together, nights of dew  
 And those of doubt and nights when loud winds blew.

The corn husk mattress now is tied  
 And out the door they drag it, with the side  
 And head boards, pillows where last night you cried.

Who wants to buy at auction here a husk  
 Of corn and dreams like ivory, a tusk  
 Of moonlight through a window in the dusk?

Who wants the casters and the rusted springs,  
 Remembrance of a birth, a kiss? Queer things  
 In queer condition! (These a dollar brings).

And now the load moves off; with what small care  
 Our bed is loaded, high as movers dare,  
 Its legs absurdly sticking in the air.

Stirling Bowen.

### The Titan

HE BUILT his cabin just below the rim  
 And old men tell great tales of him.  
 The trappers gathered here on winter nights,  
 Near the dark river overlooked by this unfriendly hill,  
 Where the wilderness washed up its waves of silence to  
 his sill.

He was a black man with bold eyes and long red scar.  
 They tell about his courage in great fights.  
 His memory walks these hills like ancient Thor.

Now down a little sordid noisy street  
 Men with squirming souls traffic in steers and wheat.

Gwendolin Haste.

### A Thought on Peace Conferences

I KNOW the smell of warfare in a trench  
 Where your best friend draws flies like new dropped  
 dung,

I sicken yet when I recall the stench  
 Of bloating transport mules I've slept among,  
 And I have crouched in water that was green  
 With fetid gas, and prayed to God for night,  
 To hide the horror of strange objects seen  
 That still in dark were worse than any sight.

But not one poor, torn, rotting, putrid mass  
 That once was man who loved, laughed, questioned, swore,  
 And now is carrion under crawling grass  
 Turns me with loathing, as earth's lords of war  
 Who still, like grave worms, set themselves afresh  
 To batten on man's long enduring flesh.

G. B. Birrel.

# The Black Ten Millions

By Robert Minor

(Second Part.)

WHAT does the Negro in America require in order to escape his condition as an oppressed race? He requires:

Abolition of restrictions upon his right of residence; that is, abolition of "black-belt" segregation.

Abolition of distinction between Colored and white children in the schools; which distinction, with segregation, results not only in perpetuating race hatred, but also in the starvation of Negro schools.

Equal right to vote in the South.

The organization of millions of unorganized Negro wage-laborers in industry, in the same unions with white workers.

The organization of the Negro tenant farmers and share-farmers of the South to fight against peonage and other terrible hardships.

Abolition of laws in the Southern states which put the Negro on a sub-human plane, such as the laws against inter-marriage.

Abolition of the Jim Crow system on the railroads, in the parks, theatres, hotels, restaurants, and other public conveniences.

Drastic measures against lynching.

Drastic measures against the Ku Klux Klan.

Organized solidarity with the other groups of his oppressed race in other countries for common relief.

## The Negro Sanhedrin.

How did the Negro fare in the supposedly great gathering of all Negro organizations, the Negro Sanhedrin Conference just closed in Chicago? All of the above questions were placed before the conference. The outcome of each was as follows:

When it came to the question of housing, it became evident that the Sanhedrin conference was heavily dominated by Negro business men. These men are theoretically in favor of the emancipation of their race. And they talk eloquently to this effect. But when Negro working people among the delegates, through a delegate representing the Workers Party, offered a resolution calling for legislation by which the black-belt residence district could be broken up and landlords compelled to rent living quarters at a fixed rental to the first comer regardless of color and independently of the landlord's will, this measure was killed because the Negro real-estate men make enormous profits by confining the Negro tenant to a given district and charging him from twenty per cent more to twice as much as is paid for similar residence by white persons. The Negro had to give up that demand in deference to the Negro real-estate men.

When approximately the same working-class elements supported a measure demanding the abolition of separate schools for white and Colored children, on the ground that such separation is but the preparation for a future life of segregation, a Negro school-teacher from Virginia

arose and protested excitedly against committing the Sanhedrin to such a measure. The very evident and scarcely concealed reason was that he was doing very well in a good job; since he profited by segregation of the Negro race in schools the Negro must remain segregated.

The Sanhedrin conference was slightly besprinkled with Negro employment agents connected with the white chambers of commerce. So the Sanhedrin flatly and cold-bloodedly rejected the proposal to organize the millions of Negro industrial workers and confined their expression to mild and meaningless phrase about equality in the labor unions for such negro wage-workers as are **already** organized.

When it came to the question of treating the Negro as a human being before the law in the most intimate phase of life, the phase of marriage—of course, everyone agreed that the black and the white race have always mixed and are now mixing, and that laws against inter-marriage are merely laws protecting the Southern white man in illicit sexual practices. But when the working-class delegates, through the Workers Party delegation, offered a motion demanding the abolition of the laws against inter-marriage,—it turned out that so many of the gentlemen and ladies present had to cater to the good-will of white philanthropists that the Sanhedrin conference had to give up any idea of demanding equality in law respecting marriage.

Every suggestion of organizing the millions of black tenant-farmers and share-farmers who live in virtual peonage in the South was too offensive to the well-dressed business-men and women, so the plan to organize the Negro tenant and share-farmers had to be dropped in favor of a meaningless phrase.

A vigorous resolution for organized protection against the Ku Klux Klan, introduced by the (working class) African Blood Brotherhood, was coldly rejected.

In short, nearly every measure that the Black Ten Millions require ran headlong into one vested interest or another of the Negro bourgeoisie, and expired, leaving this "All-Race" conference of American Negroes on record practically for the preservation of the present condition of the Negro.

Why? Because in this conference the Negro business man and society lady undertook to be the spokesmen of their people. And the Black Ten Millions have, to a certain extent, consented to let them be the spokesmen. The Negro in America is more or less proud of his bourgeoisie, or thinks he is; he has been trained to think, and he is now being propagandized to think that to have a class of prosperous, well-dressed, limousine-riding members of his race, is somehow to get out of the wilderness of oppression. The outcome of this conference ought to be a flash of light to the toiling, suffering black millions: the Negro bourgeoisie is allied, hopelessly tied up with the white bourgeoisie; the white bourgeoisie ruled the Sanhedrin Conference through its allies, the Negro bourgeoisie.

In referring to the "Negro bourgeoisie," however, it must be remembered that it is, correctly speaking, a petty bourgeoisie, subject to wavering between the capitalist and working classes, as was shown by the strong response to speeches of the African Blood Brotherhood and Workers Party delegates.

#### Mass Organization.

But there is much more to the Negro movement than appeared at this gathering. The great, silent millions who had so few champions there, have not been left untouched by the World War. The stirring of the Black Waters in 1917 started a new spring to flowing—the spring of mass-organization. Many important Negro organizations exist and have existed for a long time. But none of them were mass-organizations.

The close of the war-period brought a new phenomenon—hundreds of thousands closely organized on a program of militant activity for race emancipation. The new phenomenon took place under the fantastic leadership of Marcus Garvey.

The biggest and most remarkable of all Negro organizations, the followers of Marcus Garvey, refused to be represented in the Sanhedrin. This is much to be regretted. One may laugh at this self-styled "Emperor of Africa" and point out the hollowness of his program to "redeem the Ancient Kingdom of Ethiopia" by reconquering Africa for the Negro. Garvey may be what his critics call him: a windbag and self-seeker. But that does not close the question, for this writer. For the fact remains that **Garvey organized four hundred thousand Negroes**—the first compact mass organization of the race ever formed in the world.

Seven years ago this lone Negro landed in the United States from Jamaica, to proselytize for the "Universal Negro Improvement Association," which he had formed in Jamaica in 1914. There is a curious prejudice between Jamaica Negroes and American Negroes. Yet Garvey in five years destroyed the tradition that the American Negro masses cannot be organized. He organized nearly half a million active, dues-paying members (he claimed four million members) on a basis of militant race-consciousness. Race-consciousness in a dominant race takes the form of race arrogance, and we are accustomed to despise it as reactionary (which it is). But race-consciousness in a people just emerged from slavery and still spurned as an inferior people—may be, and in this case is, **revolutionary**. True, Garvey is a Bolshevik-baiter. True, he might be called a "monarchist" since he set himself up as the "Negro King." He may yet be an instrument of the worst reaction and of ruin to his people, as indicated by his advice to them not to oppose the Ku Klux Klan, and by his recent concession to "white supremacy."

But Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association is a mass organization of four hundred thousand race-conscious Negroes, brought together on the basis of determination to throw off the remaining traces of slavery. **Such a phenomenon cannot occur without revolutionary effect**, no matter what its declaration of aims may be.

Garvey's organization fiercely proclaims itself to be a submissive, docile, anti-Bolshevik, reactionary organization. It tries to be. But look over the spontaneous, classic

cry of the Black Spartacus that rings through its fifty-four articles of faith adopted in its 1920 convention:

2. That we believe in the supreme authority of our race in all things racial: that all things are created and given to man as a common possession: that there should be an equitable distribution and apportionment of all such things, and in consideration of the fact that as a race we are now deprived of those things that are morally and legally ours, we believed it right that all such things should be acquired and held by whatsoever means possible . . .

7. We believe that any law or practice that tends to deprive any African of his land or the privileges of free citizenship within his country is unjust and immoral, and no native should respect any such law or practice.

8. . . . there should be no obligation on the part of the Negro to obey the levy of a tax by any law-making body from which he is excluded and denied representation on account of his race and color.

9. We believe that any law especially directed against the Negro to his detriment and singling him out because of his race or color is unfair and immoral, and should not be respected . . .

12. We believe that the Negro should adopt every means to protect himself against barbarous practices inflicted upon him because of color. . . .

16. We believe all men should live in peace one with the other, but when races and nations provoke the ire of other races and nations by attempting to infringe upon their rights, war becomes inevitable, and the attempt in any way to free one's self or protect one's rights or heritage becomes justifiable.

17. Whereas, the lynching, by burning, hanging or any other means, of human beings is a barbarous practice, and a shame and disgrace to civilization, we therefore declare any country guilty of such atrocities outside the pale of civilization. . . .

38. We demand complete control of our social institutions without interference by any alien race or races. . . .

45. Be it further resolved that we as a race of people declare the League of Nations null and void as far as the Negro is concerned, in that it seeks to deprive Negroes of their liberty. . . .

47. We declare that no Negro shall engage himself in battle for any alien race without first obtaining the consent of the leader of the Negro people of the world, except in a matter of national self-defense.

#### Which Way?

On what road lies the Negro's way to freedom? Can the Negro obtain free admission into the white bourgeois class, while a society of class superiority and class inferiority continues to exist?

Of course it is "theoretically" possible that with the retention of an upper and a lower class, the more prosperous Negro might be admitted to the upper class. But in hard reality:

1. Those Negroes who in spite of all handicaps accumulate property, are not admitted to terms of equality with the white bourgeoisie.

2. In the struggle (inevitable and now going on) between the capitalist class and the working class, the capitalist class never fails to stimulate and use every possible race prejudice—one of its chief means of dividing the adversary-class. Never a strike occurs in a big industry employing several nationalities of labor, but the employers strain every device for awakening jealousies and suspicions between the nationalities. The basic industries of America habitually and systematically choose several nationalities for employment in each plant, thus to prevent cohesion. The flames of race-hatred between the blacks and the whites can be made to burn to ashes any labor-solidarity when the employer's provocateur sets the match. This has been proven again and again with wearying repetition, in the great steel strike, the packing-house strikes, railroad shopmen's strike and countless others.

The capitalist class cannot forego the powerful weapon of race-division in its sharp struggle to divide and conquer



labor. Those who would retain the division of society into an upper and a lower class, must and will retain race prejudice and the present "white supremacy" as sacred American institutions. Taking the facts as they are: In a class society the Negro will inevitably be used as bait for race-hatred in the waters of class conflict.

### The Republican Party Goes Over to "White Supremacy"

The old, sentimental tradition to the effect that the Republican party seeks the freedom of the Negro is being exploded. Since 1875 the tradition has been a lie. Since the World War it has become a farce.

Capitalist interests have depended upon using alternately the Republican and Democratic parties. In those seasons when circumstances compelled their backing the Republican party, they found it embarrassing that the Solid White South voted always and automatically the Democratic ticket. With the Republican party black, there was no two-party system in the South. Yet the South is fixed in "white supremacy." To be able to swing the South at will either to the Republican party or to the Democratic party, the capitalist interests had to make the Republican party acceptable to the southern white man. To get the white vote, the semi-disfranchised and therefore half-useless Negro has to be disowned. So we see the Republican Party in a "Lily-White" movement in Virginia, Georgia and Maryland, notably, and in other southern states to a less degree. In Virginia the leading Republican politicians have declared in principle against the holding of office by Negroes, but generously granting that the Negro should still have the right to vote for white candidates. In Louisville, Kentucky, the Republican political leaders adopted the practice of excluding Negroes from republican nomination; and the Negroes retaliated by putting up an all-Negro ticket for municipal offices.

In October, 1921, President Harding tried to draw the "white supremacy" vote toward the Republican party. He made a speech attuned to "white supremacy." With a little carefully applied salve for the Negroes along the conventional lines of ambiguity, Harding committed himself and his party as "uncompromisingly against every suggestion of social equality"—which, as far as it means anything, means every form of right that anyone may want to deprive the Negro of. To rid the Republican party of the black stigma to Southern white eyes, he even suggested that the (voteless) Alabama Negro ought sometimes to "vote for Democratic candidates"! And Mr. Coolidge in his turn appointed Slep—whom the Negroes call "Lily-White Slep"—to be his secretary-for-Southern-vote-catching.

The Negro started his American career in the class of "hewers of wood and drawers of water." He is there now. It is to the interest of the ruling class to keep him there, and at the same time to keep him divided from the other "hewers of wood and drawers of water"—the white working class—by fanning the flames of race prejudice. It is to the interest of all hewers of wood and drawers of water—white and black—to overcome race prejudice and to come together.

The Negro's fate in America lies in the labor movement, and there it is bound up with the exponents of the new order—the "radicals"—those who are fighting against

the skilled labor caste system and broadening the labor movement out to the vast millions equally.

But the Negro's fate is a political question. Again we say the Negro cannot free himself from lower-class status, nor from the race-hatreds utilized to preserve the class system, until he helps to overthrow the class system. To get out of the exploited class, the Negro must abolish the exploited class.

### Where Are the Negro's Allies?

To discover the forces that are ready to join hands with the Negro for his emancipation, for his equality without reservation or evasion, it would be well to compare the utterances of the American Negro bourgeoisie and intellectuals with the utterances of the Communist International. The last Congress of the Communist International adopted a drastic program for the solution of the Negro's problem, both in America and internationally, and the following are extracts from its decisions:

"(3) It is with intense pride that the Communist International sees the exploited Negro workers resist the attacks of the exploiter, for the enemy of his race and the enemy of the white workers is one and the same—Capitalism and Imperialism. The international struggle of the Negro race is a struggle against Capitalism and Imperialism. It is on the basis of this struggle that the world Negro movement must be organized. In America, as the centre of Negro culture and the crystallization of Negro protest; in Africa, the reservoir of human labor for the further development of capitalism; in Central America (Costa Rica, Guatemala, Colombia, Nicaragua and other "independent" republics), where American imperialism dominates in Porto Rico, Haiti, Santo Domingo and other islands washed by the waters of the Carribean, where the brutal treatment of our black fellow-men by the American occupation has aroused the protest of the conscious Negro and the revolutionary white workers everywhere; in South Africa and the Congo, where the growing industrialization of the Negro population has resulted in various forms of uprisings; in East Africa, where the recent penetration of world capital is stirring the native populations into an active opposition to imperialism, in all these centers the Negro movement must be organized..."

"(6) 1. The Fourth Congress recognizes the necessity of supporting every form of Negro movement which tends to undermine or weaken capitalism or imperialism or to impede its further penetration.

"2. The Communist International will fight for race equality of the Negro with the white people, as well as for equal wages and political and social rights.

"3. The Communist International will use every instrument within its control to compel the trade-unions to admit Negro workers to membership or, where the nominal right to join exists, to agitate for a special campaign to draw them into the unions. Failing in this, it will organize the Negroes into unions of their own and specially apply the United Front tactic to compel admission to the unions of the white men.

"4. The Communist International will take immediate steps to hold a general Negro Conference or Congress in Moscow."



File



Maurice Becker

file

# The Present Situation in the Communist Party of Germany.

By A. Thalheimer.

THE retreat which the German working class began in October and the difference between the tense expectations and preparations of the Party and the actual course of events has naturally not failed to produce certain reactions in our German Communist Party. These reactions found expression in a temporary reduction of activity which found its ideological expression in the cry, "All or nothing." That is, since the deciding struggle could not be carried out, a strong feeling of hesitation grew up against entering upon the organization of those minor actions which were necessary and possible. This reduced activity became temporarily noticeable in the neglect of the elementary tasks which were laid upon the party by its relegation into illegality and the reprisals of Fascism. Examples of this were the distribution of illegal literature, placards, small posters, the carrying out of illegal propaganda and the other preparations of minor actions. One can say that this condition has been for the most part overcome and that the greater part of the party is taking up the tasks of the present with earnestness and eagerness. Thus for example in Berlin the circulation of illegal literature has been successfully raised from 5,000 to 20,000 copies three times a week within a few weeks. A corresponding increase in the activity of the party is visible in the other districts. In the matter of organization, the complete illegalizing of the party has not caused the difficulties which our opponents expected. Benefitting by the experience of the old guard of Communism in Germany, the Party has been able to adapt itself to this illegal work in a thousand ways. The chief organization work of the party in the present moment is to transfer the focus of the party efforts into the workshops and especially into the party cells there. This work is now being carried out. It is rendered more difficult by the fact that unemployment and short time have affected the members of the party very severely. The employers have made use of the opportunity to "purify" their works of Communists. However, the party has also found methods of organization to meet this situation. The numerous arrests of members of the party have left practically no gaps which it was not possible to fill up at once. In this respect the members of the party have shown a wonderful tenacity and self-sacrifice which dispenses any doubt as to whether the long period of legal work has caused the party to lose something of its revolutionary character. Naturally shortcomings show themselves everywhere which, however, are unavoidable in a task of such gigantic proportions. Loss of members on a large scale has not taken place. For the present however, the transfer of members from the German Social Democratic Party is a movement of individuals.

In the domestic politics of the party there are at present three chief currents. The party debates centre themselves around two chief questions: 1. The cause of the October defeat; 2. the general prospects of the revolution in Germany. As to the present tasks, a wide-reaching

unity exists in the party. These debates have led to the laying down of theses by the various groups which will shortly be made accessible to the members of the party.

The group that has so far led within the executive held the view that the reasons for the October defeat are to be found first of all in objective circumstances. It sees the chief cause in the hindering power of the Social Democrats and the yellow trade unions which was underestimated by us. The experiences in Saxony, Thuringia, and also in Hamburg show not only that the Left Social Democratic leaders were not prepared to fight for the defence of bourgeois democracy against Fascism, but that the same held good in the case of the majority of the Left Social Democratic workers. As a result of this it was impossible to fight the deciding struggle in October. With a divided front in the forces of labor and an insufficient technical preparation, it would inevitably have led to a shattering defeat of the party. As to the party, it recognizes that in the preparations there were a number of mistakes and weaknesses, both political and structural, which, without exception, can be traced back to one fundamental fact: the over-estimation of the speed of the revolution, the over-estimation of our own strength and the under-estimation of the strength of the opponent, above all the hindering power of the Social Democrats and the Amsterdam trade unions. At present the chief task is to call a halt to the retreat of the workers which is proceeding almost without any effort at resistance, and, at every point where the offensive begins, to attempt to build up centres of resistance through the party and to rally the workers around these centres. In the question of the revolutionary prospective, this group is of the opinion that none of the fundamental political or economic questions in Germany can be solved by the Junker-industrial military dictatorship, that the situation still remains objectively revolutionary as it was before, and that the class differences must become more intense. On the other hand this group sees no possibility at present to say at what rate this new sharpening will proceed, and what form it will take in its details. Certainly the party is an essential factor, but it is not the only one.

The group which up to the present has been the Left wing of the party considers the real causes of the October defeat and the revolutionary prospect to be quite different. It supports the view that the party should have accepted a decisive battle in October even at the risk of a defeat. In the October retreat it does not see a result of the relative strength, but an essential breaking down of the party and especially of the party staff. As a result, this group demands that the leadership of the party shall be placed in the hands of the Left. That the transition to minor actions has come up against considerable hindrances within the party is to be attributed in a large measure to



Profiteers

Georg Grosz

the effects of this view. In respect to the present task this group lays the chief emphasis upon the propaganda of the final objectives of the dictatorship of the proletariat and Socialism. This tendency within the party is to a certain extent emotionally directed, in a large measure by those sections within the working class, the unemployed and short-time workers, who as a result of their situation tend to overlook the objective difficulties of the path of revolution. The revolutionary prospective presented by this group states that within a very short time the situation will once more sharpen into a decisive struggle.

Between the two groups there is a middle group which chiefly criticizes the fact that the October retreat took place without sufficiently making use of the possibilities of minor struggles, and who tend to find the causes of the retreat chiefly in subjective mistakes of the party. It is difficult to give the views of this group clearly, as they are not a unit, and it is in the nature of a middle group to unite contradictory elements. Both in the Left and Middle groups there is a disposition, in the same way as after the March Action, to neglect the analysis of the objective situation and the consideration of the role of the party in connection with the strength of the other chief factors. These groups also feel that they can now say with certainty that as early as in the next few months the basis for extensive mass struggles will be present.

In our opinion the debates which are now taking place within the party are unavoidable and they will prove fruitful for clearing up the methods of the revolutionary struggle in German conditions. The process of the proletarian revolution in Germany is not simply a weak imitation of the Russian revolution, and so we must simply regard it as a sign of health that the party is endeavoring in all earnestness, by its own efforts to draw lessons for the future from the experience that it has had. In spite of all the sharpness of the debate it is certain beyond all doubt, that the overwhelming majority of the party will not tolerate any shaking of the unity of the party.

(See Theses of Thalheimer and Brandler in next column.)

## Theses on the October Defeat and on the Present Situation.

By A. THALHEIMER and H. BRANDLER

### I. On the October Defeat.

1. The October retreat was unavoidable and justified.
2. The fundamental causes of the October defeat are of an objective nature and are not due to essential tactical mistakes on the part of the Communist Party of Germany. The decisive cause is the influence of the Social Democratic Party still being too strong and hampering. The majority of the working class was **no longer** ready to fight for the November Democracy, from which it no longer derived any material advantage, and was **not yet** ready to fight for the Soviet Dictatorship and for Socialism.

Or in other words: the majority of the working class was not yet won over for Communism.

3. The mistake, common to the Executive Committee of the Communist International as well to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany, was the false estimation of the proportion of forces within the working class between the Social Democratic Party and Communist Party.

The Communist Party of Germany adopted a critical attitude in this respect towards the Executive Committee of the Communist International, but was not energetic enough. The Executive Committee of the Communist International has not attached sufficient importance to this criticism.

4. The consequences of this false estimation of the proportion of forces were:

a—The fixing of too early a date for the final struggle.

b—Neglect of the partial struggles and of the political preparation.

c—As a result of the lack of connection between the political and the technical preparations, the military-technical preparations also suffered.

5. Defects of a second and third category were:

a—In Saxony and Thuringia insufficient exploitation of the given positions in regard to disintegration of the Social Democratic Party, attracting Social Democratic workers into the Communist Party as well as to organizing military defense.

b—Clumsiness in the organizational adaptation of the Party for the task of civil war.

6. All these mistakes and defects do not **essentially** alter the fundamental relationship of forces between the bourgeoisie and the working class.

### II. On the Present Situation.

1. The military dictatorship of Seeckt bases itself socially on heavy industry and the great agrarians. It tries to subordinate the independent movement of the middle classes (petty bourgeois Fascism), partly by concessions and partly by repressions. It attempts to retain and to deepen the division of the working class into fractions, on the one hand by maintaining the appearance of bourgeois democracy and thereby winning over the Social Democrats as defense troops, and on the other hand by repressions against the Communist Party.

2. The duration of the military dictatorship depends upon:

a—The possibility of re-establishing a temporary economic equilibrium by increased exploitation of the working class and of the middle classes, by reduction of expenditure, and by requisite payment of taxes by the possessing classes. The first two measures are possible owing to the present conditions of power, the last is problematical and will be decisive.

b—The pace of winning over the majority of the workers for Communism and disintegrating and neutralizing the middle classes.

3. The pace of the renewed objective aggravation of the situation cannot yet be estimated. At all events a general sharpening of the class antagonisms and struggles must be expected.

4. The rate of winning over of the majority of the workers for Communism depends upon the Communist Party of Germany. All forces are to be concentrated on the political and organizational liquidation of the Socialist Party of Germany.

5. The political platform of this liquidation is:

**Negative:** destruction of the democratic and social-reformist illusions.

**Positive:** winning over of the workers for the struggle for the proletarian dictatorship and for socialism.

6. With this work of propagation of principles and criticism there must be combined political, economic and military partial struggles. The decisive struggle is the culmination and the resultant of these partial struggles.

7. The next task: obtaining liberty of movement (in the streets etc.) by revolutionary mass action (at first by peaceful and armed demonstrations, strikes, armed and protected meetings etc.).

8. Transference of the organizational centre of gravity into the shop nuclei.

9. Increasing the activity and discipline in the Party. Elimination of passive elements from the Party, at the same time closer connections with the broad masses.

Session of the Enlarged Executive of the Communist International, followed by a Special Conference of the Communist Party of Germany.

(See the Theses of the Left Wing in next column.)



Cafe of the Schiebers

Georg Grosz

## Outline of Theses on the Political Situation and on the Situation of the Party

(Laid down by the Political Bureau of the District Committee of Berlin-Brandenburg)

1. By the increased acuteness of the reparations crisis in January 1923, the economic chaos in Germany as well as the political collapse was furthered enormously.

2. This increasing economic and political pressure transformed the movement of the working class, which up to that moment had been retrogressing, into a rising proletarian movement of an offensive revolutionary character.

3. The first signs of the new revolutionary wave were the Ruhr struggles in May, the struggles in Upper Silesia, the metalworkers' strike in Berlin, the wage struggles in the Saxon Erzgebirge. These movements reached their culmination in the Cuno strike.

4. The significance of the Cuno strike lay in the following: The workers started with economic demands (note printers' strike, inflation crisis), and in the movement itself the strike assumed a sharpened political character (Berlin shop council refused to fight for economic demands and opened up the question of the government!). The Cuno strike revived and stimulated the forces of the proletariat and frightened and disintegrated the bourgeoisie. After the Cuno strike the bourgeoisie stood in fear of the "second revolution," the strata of the rural and of the urban petty bourgeoisie began frankly sympathizing with the working class and with the Communist Party. The objective conditions of Germany between the August strike and the October events had become ripe for the seizing of power by the proletariat.

5. Thus the Executive Committee of the Communist International was perfectly right when in October 1923 it ordered the Communist Party of Germany to prepare for the final struggle.

This fight could eventually have been introduced by a series of partial struggles, but it was the duty of the Party to enter the struggle in this historical situation with all its forces and to bring on a decisive battle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The chances for a victory of the Communist Party in October were very great. But the Communist Party ought to have ventured on this struggle even with the risk of a defeat which would have created good revolutionary traditions among the proletariat in favor of the Communists and thus would have prepared for victory. The best proof for the truth of this statement is the Hamburg struggle, which has been of very good service in enhancing the reputation of the Communist Party among the Hamburg workers.

6. The retreat of the Communist Party of Germany without any struggle in October, rendered easy the victory of heavy industry and demoralized and depressed huge portions of the proletariat. Confusion was also carried into the ranks of the Party itself, which confusion up to the present has not been eliminated (the Communist Party had promised to prevent Fascism from being victorious etc. etc.).

7. The causes of the October collapse of the Communist Party in Germany are as follows:

a—The Central Committee of the Party refused right up till October to prepare the Party members for the final struggle and did so only after having been compelled by the Executive Committee of the Communist International. (Prospects of a Government of left wing Social Democrats consisting purely of Trade Unionists in August). This preparation could therefore be done only very superficially and without real, practical effect in the press, propaganda, organization and general policy of the Party.

b—The limitation of the preparation to a purely military and technical one, without preparing the party politically and by propaganda for the slogans of the final struggle, in addition to which there had been practically no military technical preparations since the March Action; this neglect could not be remedied in the short period between the October Conference at Moscow and the decisive events.

c—The revisionist united front tactics and the alliance with the left wing of the Social Democratic Party, which was exhibited in its extremest form in Saxony and Thuringia. The Party had, by its tactics, rendered the left wing Socialist Democratic Party more popular among the working class than ever. The Communist Party had, by its years of united front tactics, created among the Communists themselves the sentiment of weakness and the prejudice that struggles, especially decisive ones, could only be risked in an alliance with the Social Democratic Party. (Theory of bringing over the Social Democratic Party from the left wing of the bourgeoisie to the right wing of the working class!)

d—Particularly, by its constant propaganda of the transition slogans within the frames of democracy and of the constitution (seizure of real values, Workers' Government!), the Party had neglected to keep alive the Communist program among the large masses. The most serious thing is that the Party did not correct this mistake even after the May struggles in the Ruhr district, not even after the Cuno strike, and in fact not even after the October defeat, and that right up to the October Conference at Moscow it obstinately clung to the theory and practice of gradualism.

From the theory and practice of the transition demands there resulted the concentration of the work of the Party majority in certain districts, where it was possible to proceed along with the left Social Democrats (Saxony and Thuringia!) and the neglect of other important fighting positions of the German proletariat, especially of the Ruhr district and of the Ruhr problem. (The Leipzig Party Congress did not deal in a specific manner with the Ruhr occupation!)

e—From the theory of the transitory demands, from the practice of proceeding along with the Social Democrats there arises the bitter struggle of the Party majority against the left wing of the Party, the organizational and personal effects of which have contributed to the inner weakening of the Communist Party.

8. The Enlarged Central Committee (Zentralausschluss) which held its conference after the October events, neglected to deal with all the problems pending in the Party. Since then, the crisis in the working class and in the Party has increased. The German working class has

surrendered the eight hour day to the employers without any fight, largely owing to the fault of the Communist Party of Germany. The Ruhr district is in a process of separation from Germany, the Micum negotiations will be followed in the next few weeks by official negotiations between the Governments. The dictatorship of the white generals brings hundreds of proletarians under preventative arrest and into prison without the workers defending themselves with sufficient energy. After a period of rising revolutionary tendencies within the proletariat, before and after the Cuno strike, we have arrived now at a period of dejection and depression.

9. The international crisis and the crisis of German capital will bring a series of new acute aggravations in the next months.\* The Communist Party of Germany must not meet with a second "German October" if it is not to lose all its prestige as a revolutionary party among the masses. A clear pronouncement on the mistakes committed, a final settlement with the revisionists within its own ranks, rupture with the theoreticians and practisers or gradualism and the quickest knitting together of all forces of the Party for illegal work must be carried out at once. Every week of further delay in this process of clarification renders the situation of the Party still worse and damages its fighting capacity.

10. Starting from the summing up of the October defeat, the Party must create a program of action. The most important points of the work in the next months are as follows:

a—Adaptation of the Party for the struggle for power, political, organizational, military and technical.

b—Stirring, concrete, immediate propaganda for the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. (The Party must show, in its daily agitation, how the white dictatorship is settling the problems of the proletariat and how the red dictatorship is to settle them.)

c—Propaganda of socialization. (Program of salvation, enraging propaganda against the big trusts and concerns. There must be started against the thirty or forty heavy industrialists, the same enraging propaganda as against Seeckt, Ludendorff and Hitler, even in a more concentrated manner. We must demonstrate to the largest masses, who is actually retaining the power and how the connection between the government apparatus and heavy industry is working).

d—Extension of the factory council movement into a political one, making use of the factory council movement for preparing the political Workers' Councils. Tireless propaganda for the proletarian councils as a pre-condition of proletarian dictatorship (control committees).

e—Working amongst the unemployed in connection with the factory councils, creating councils of the unemployed.

f—Provoking struggles for the eight hour day against the Special Courts, under the leadership of the Communist Party and of the factory councils.

g—Complete rupture with the right and left wings of the Social Democratic Party, in theory as well as in practice, strongest fight against the Social Democratic Party

\* Regarding this point detailed theses will follow.

## Theses on the Tactics of the October Retreat and on the Next Tasks of the C. P. of Germany.

(Elaborated and laid down by order of the majority of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany.)

### I.

#### The Situation before the October Events.

THE political situation in Germany before and during the October events was objectively revolutionary in the highest degree. The November republic was completely exhausted by the international complications of Germany resulting from the liquidation of the Ruhr adventure, by the rapid economic decay and by the increasing class antagonisms. Civil war seemed unavoidable. The Coalition parties hastened to do away with the democratic form of state through fear of the imminent proletarian revolution. They surrendered power to the Fascist generals, in order to save the bourgeois society and the capitalist form of ownership from the proletarian dictatorship. The Social Democratic Party of Germany including all tendencies, was a helper and an accomplice of the White Dictatorship, which alone could still save the domination of the great bourgeoisie.

### II.

#### Mistakes of Preparation and of Strategy.

The retreat of the party in the October struggles is to be explained not only by organizational, military or technical defects, nor by the unfavorable general proportion of forces, which was far more unfavorable when the Party adopted its measures for struggle than in the decisive month, but before all by the mistakes in regard to the tactical and strategical attitude of the party in the struggle for winning over the majority of the proletariat, which was the first premise for success. These mistakes were the result of a false valuation of the Party's role in these struggles. The main mistakes to be recorded are the following:

a—The Party did not perceive at the right time the importance of the great proletarian mass struggles in the Ruhr District and in Upper Silesia, and of the Cuno strike, and hence it did not change its position accordingly. These struggles were clear signs of increasing vigor and desire to fight on the part of the German proletariat.

b—The Party, furthermore, began its preparation for an armed uprising, not at the same time as it declared the dissolution of democracy (Cuno epoch and Ruhr occupation), but only immediately before the coming of the White Dictatorship, from which resulted the feverish, eleventh hour preparation for the military struggles and the feeble arming of the workers in the decisive days.

c—The Party tried to delay elementary mass movements before the October events up to the "final stroke" and thereby hindered mass movements, instead of furthering them. The press and the united front organs were utilized too little for preparing the struggle politically and for engaging in it. As a result, the struggle was taken up almost entirely as a struggle of the Party and not as a united struggle of the proletariat; the Party failed to connect its final aim, Dictatorship of the Proletariat, closely with the transition demands and with the partial struggles.



The Republic

and against the Trade Union bureaucrats within and without the Trade Unions.

h—Intensified working for the Communist program amongst the peasants, agricultural laborers, middle classes, officials and intellectuals.

11. For reorganizing the Party there is necessary:

a—Reduction of the Central Committee to nine men, reduction of the central apparatus to one tenth, elimination of the right wing from the leadership. Vital connection of the Communist Party with the political work of the districts.

b—Liquidation of the fight against the left wing on the part of the Party majority, by a common fight of the Party center and of the Party left wing against the Party right wing.

c—Convocation of a session of the Enlarged Executive Committee of the Communist International not later than in January.

d—Convocation of a Party Congress not later than in February.

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This outline is only intended to serve as a basis for discussion; the detailed theses will be published later.

(See the Theses of the majority of the Central Committee in the next column)



d—The Party has misjudged the role and the character of the left Social Democratic party leaders and has allowed the rise within the ranks of the Party of the illusion that these leaders would fight together with the proletarian vanguard.

e—In the governments of single states, the Party has not sufficiently utilized for strategic position for mobilizing the masses for organized resistance.

f—The cardinal mistake of the strategic attitude was, however, the Party's preparing itself exclusively for a "final struggle" for obtaining political power, and its rejection and prevention of partial struggles, struggles with partial demands and with less aggressive means and methods of struggle.

g—Following on this cardinal mistake, there was constructed an abstract calculation of the proportion of forces, without knowing or having examined the real proportions of forces. The examination of the proportion of forces and the determination of the date of final struggle can only be calculated and fixed by following these struggles themselves. This false theoretical strategy led to the evasion of any fight.

h—Finally, in the days decisive for the Party, the importance of the number of arms was generally overestimated, while the enormous subjective force and the readiness of the proletarian vanguard to offer sacrifices (lessons of the Hamburg struggles) were generally undervalued.

i—The fixed determination only to pass from the defence of the position in Central Germany to the final struggle, was false. As a consequence, after the White troops entered Central Germany, a great disorientation took place.

### III.

#### The Role of the Party in the October Crisis.

The Party mobilized resistance against the attack of the White Dictatorship with all the forces and means at its disposal. In the decisive moment, however, after the enemy had engaged in the most violent offensive, it evaded this struggle. This abdication without struggle made the masses confused, weakened confidence in the revolutionary leadership of the proletariat, lessened the great sympathies existing for the Communist movement, strengthened the vigor and the self-confidence of the enemy, hindered disintegration and derangement within the ranks of the White bands, and thus in an objectively revolutionary period, made more difficult the future struggles of the proletariat. The retreat of the Party during and after the Chemnitz Conference resulted from the great mistakes in the preparations for the final struggle mentioned above.

The retreat without struggle was false, because:

a—The Party and the active portion of the proletariat, being ready for the final struggle, did not understand the surrender of the positions in Central Germany without a struggle and did not comprehend the necessity of this retreat.

b—Among the hesitant and those portions of the proletariat and the impoverished middle strata sympathizing with the Communist Party of Germany, confidence in the

revolutionary solution of the economic, political and national problems by the Party was weakened.

### IV.

#### Perspectives of the Revolutionary Development.

The question put on the order of the day within the Party after the October defeat: a revolutionary rise or a deep decline of the revolutionary wave? can only be answered by the perspective of international development. This question is most closely connected with the question of the development of the capitalist system and of the aggravation or mitigation of the relations of the imperialistic powers, groups and States of Europe. Germany, being cut off from her sources of raw materials and from her most important industrial districts, is more than ever dependent upon the international groupings of the powers and upon the international reciprocal relations of these groups. In spite of the apparent pacifistic improvement afforded in the last weeks, an essential aggravation of the international relations can be reckoned with as a result of the French bourgeoisie utilizing its victory in the Ruhr District. In the sphere of economics also these are no symptoms whatever of a consolidation of capitalism, but, on the contrary, an increasing aggravation of class antagonisms. Above all things, in Central Europe (Germany, Poland, Austria) an extraordinary sharpening is to be expected before long. The rise of the revolutionary wave in Central Europe is therefore immediately imminent. It will take place at a quicker or a slower rate, accordingly as subjective revolutionary forces influence objective revolutionary crises in an accelerating or in a retarding manner. In this, readiness for struggle and desire to fight on the part of the German proletariat will be of decisive importance.

The White Dictatorship will not be able to maintain itself in Germany for very long, since the foundations on which it is basing itself are already beginning to waver. The forms of resistance, which it is not able to master, are the following:

a—The international dependence of Germany and the opposition of France against its strong armament;

b—the economic bankruptcy, accompanied by increasing unemployment which is becoming obviously chronic, above all as a consequence of the flight of Rhenish-Westphalian heavy capital into the spheres of French imperialism, a fact by which Germany is deprived of her most valuable provinces;

c—the complete bankruptcy of the finances of the Reich, the states and of the municipalities;

d—as a consequence of the financial bankruptcy, the impossibility of longer maintaining the forces of the state and also the military forces;

e—the increasing antagonisms in the very ranks of the interested bourgeois groups, antagonism of great land owners, middle propertied class and of heavy industry;

f—the proletariat, depressed, it is true, by the White Dictatorship, but not beaten;

g—the large strata of officials, employees, technicians and of the self-dependent petty middle classes, being proletarianized and becoming ever riper for the class struggle;

h—the agrarian proletarian and semi-proletarian population, becoming revolutionized at an increasing rate;

i—Fascism, decomposing ideologically, itself, owing to the open treason of heavy industry.

For all these reasons, tremendous tension and huge proletarian mass struggles are to be expected in Germany in the next months.

## V.

### The Role of the Party.

The Party is not only a portion, but the vanguard of the proletariat. Its position in the labor movement and in the struggles of the proletariat is not only within the masses, but one step in advance. When retreat becomes necessary the Party has to render this comprehensible to the masses, in an unflinching manner, and the Party will thereby maintain the confidence of the masses in itself even in rearguard struggles. The Party is at the same time the brain, the nervous system and the revolutionary will of the masses.

Acceleration of the pace of revolution depends upon its activity, its resoluteness, its courage, its clearness and insight, its tactics and strategy, its capacity for remaining in the closest contact with the proletarian masses and of leading them in the mass struggles in a skillful and comprehensive manner.

## VI.

### The Next Tasks of the Party.

a—The immediate and most important task of the party is to re-order the Party ranks so that they offer perfect resistance to the attacks of the White Dictatorship, so that the Party conserves absolutely its character as a mass party and maintains and strengthens its connections with the masses;

b—the fight against the prolongation of the working time, against the abolition of the eight hour day and against the reduction of wages must be organized by the Party everywhere by rousing propaganda and by extending and leading the defensive struggles. Even in cases where such struggles lead to a defeat, the masses must perceive clearly and distinctly that the Communist Party has tried with all its forces to take up and to lead this struggle;

c—the Party must stand everywhere at the head of the unemployed, lead their struggles, and unite them; all the unemployed must recognize that the Communist Party is caring for their needs and is fighting for their interests;

d—the connection of the Party with the working masses by the coordination of the movement of the unemployed with the organs of the Weimar Conference, with the Factory Councils, with the movements of Control Committees and of the "Centuries," as well as with all other united front organs of the proletariat, intensification of the Factory Councils movement, so as to make them the strongest organs of the united front in all the struggles of the proletariat;

e—the leadership of the economic struggles of the proletariat expressed in elementary outbreaks in connection with the Factory Councils movement and with the united front organs;

f—the political demonstrations of the employed in the shops with the unemployed, with clear and distinct slogans, with economic and political demands;

g—especially intensive work among the strata of the officials, the employees and technicians, as well as among the proletarian agrarian population;

h—the winning and the saving of the Trade Unions, which has become easier as a result of the present debacle due to the reformist leadership;

i—destruction and disintegration of the Social Democratic Party by ruthless exposure of its counter-revolutionary character; before all in this respect, the endeavor must be made to rid Social Democratic workers of any illusion as to the possibility of an eventual improvement and radicalization of the Social Democratic Party of Germany by the "left" leaders;

j—the leadership of the struggles having partial aims or the leadership of general struggles throughout the Reich with partial aims, together with the united front organs;

k—the fight against the White Dictatorship with the very methods and means employed by the White hirelings against ourselves;

l—the Party must, in an intelligible and vivid manner, raise in opposition to the Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie and its generals and its Fascist unions, the slogan of the Proletarian Dictatorship, concretizing and utilizing it in all vital problems of the proletariat for propaganda purpose;

m—for this purpose, the Party must set up a program of salvation showing the Proletarian Dictatorship as the only way to the social and national emancipation of the working strata of Germany.

## VII.

### Organizational and Inner Political Tasks

The next organizational tasks of the Party are the following:

a—The transformation of the Party upon the Shop Nucleus system, so that all functions of the local organizations are transferred to the shop nuclei and are carried out by them under the control of the Party;

b—the transformation of the Local and District Committees, so as to secure the deciding influence to the representatives of the shop nuclei;

c—in the Zentralausschuss (enlarged Central Committee) the greatest influence must be secured to the representatives of the most vitally important undertakings and of the most important branches of industry.

The next inner political tasks of the Party are:

a—Closest knitting together of all the forces of the Party;

b—fighting against any attempt at division, from whichever side it may come, denouncing such attempt as counter-revolutionary;

c—the centre of gravity of the inner party discussions must be transferred to the ideological camp, and not to the organizational, keeping, however, perfect communist discipline;

d—maintaining, deepening and employing in a corresponding manner the united front tactics, as they have been fixed at the Congresses of the Communist International.

# Literature and the Machine Age

By Floyd Dell

## Part II: We Ourselves

### VI

WE HAVE seen what the literature of the nineteenth century meant to those for whom it was written. What that literature meant to us, for whom it was not written, but upon whom it was thrust, is quite another matter. It meant, to many of us, almost nothing at all.

It was an intrusion of the past into our lives—an intrusion which most of us regarded as we did the garulous reminiscences of a member of the older generation, at a time when we wanted to go outdoors and play. It was something to be respected, tolerated, endured—but it was a nuisance.

We had our own lives to live—and all these classical utterances of nineteenth century literature had no relation to our lives. From the stormy mouthings of Byron to the sanctimonious solemnities of Tennyson, they were a bore.

It is not, of course, universally true that of the books of the past none had the power to reach into our lives and light them with more than a momentary and evanescent significance. Some rays from those broken lights did pierce, not dimly, into individual lives here and there—it might be the strenuous courage of Browning, the single-minded devotion to beauty of Keats, or something more remote and vivid still, a wind-blown tang of Elizabethan adventurousness, or a glimpse of the clear pagan loveliness of Sappho, coming to us like the sight of a naked wood-nymph to a ploughboy, making us wonder and dream. But these were solitary visions; what we most of all instinctively sought was lacking—

“Some common wave of thought and joy  
Lifting mankind again.”

We were of the present. And, though we did not realize it, what we wanted was an interpretation of our own time—an interpretation which would make us feel its significance, and the significance of our own part in it.

We were young, and the world in which we lived was the only world we knew. How could we understand the tempestuous hatred and weary doubt with which our fathers and their fathers before them had seen the emergence and development of this modern world?

We had no memories and no doubts with which to criticise the spectacle of this modern world, and instinctively we looked forward into it with confidence and belief. We felt that it was good. But we wanted to know why it was good.

And to this question of ours, the literature of the nineteenth century furnished no reply. The determined optimism of Browning was likely to seem to us a little silly, the sentimentalism of Dickens more than a little blithering. These were cheer for griefs we had never felt, consolations of which we did not understand the occasion. While as for the books of that past which formally and

consciously undertook to teach their readers the meaning of life, they simply bewildered us. What was Carlyle so angry about? And what was Ruskin trying to get at, anyway?

We did not know. Generally we did not care.

We wanted, though we did not realize it, a literature of our own—books produced by, for and out of the age in which we lived. But there were, quite literally, no such books. The truth was, of course, that in the time when we were growing up, the human imagination was a chaos, filled with the wreckage of a century-long conflict of which we were unaware, between utopian ideals and machine-made facts. That huge shattering of human hopes against the barrier of economic circumstances, a hundred years before, and that later mid-century collision in the realm of thought between theological optimism and scientific pessimism, had left the world of imagination in a state of confusion in which it was impossible for a while to do anything except pick up the pieces. And that is what the writers of our youth were doing—picking up little pieces of theological optimism and little pieces of scientific pessimism. We were living in the debris of an age that had gone spiritually to smash.

### Science and Jules Verne

Nevertheless, in our childhood, there was Jules Verne. He gave us a vision of the splendors of scientific achievement, of the mind triumphing over the stubborn limitations of our earthly environment. We were ready to believe in this age in which we lived as an age in which Science was magnificently remaking the world.

But there was no such interpretation offered—by anyone except the immortal Jules! And if we looked about us at the world, we saw why. Science was cutting up frogs in the laboratory, and stringing our towns with electric wires. It was not re-making the world; it was merely producing a variety of conveniences. And the most notable of these conveniences, the modern bathroom, was a symbol of the quality of its achievement. Here was nothing to arouse the lyricism of youth. Even the automobile, which began to appear on our streets, was not exactly a thing to stir the imagination. It was odd, it was efficient, but it was not a sign of the triumph of Science; it did not transcend the familiar world; it was merely what it seemed, a horseless carriage, and it could do nothing that a horse and buggy couldn't do—it could only do it more quickly . . .

### Science and Bob Ingersoll

And, of course, there was Bob Ingersoll. He was not forced upon us as part of our education by the authorities, and perhaps for that reason we found him interesting. He revealed to us somewhat of the battle that had been fought before we were born, between, as we understood it, Darwin

and the Priests. And hearing of that battle, we placed ourselves, characteristically enough, on the side of Darwin. We were for the present, and against the past.

There were some things we did not understand about that battle. It had been won, we were assured, by Darwin. And yet, it sometimes seemed, when we looked at the world about us, that the defeat had not been quite decisive. The theologians had apparently recovered from the defeat magnificently; and if one listened to an occasional itinerant evangelist, it would seem that the victory had been the other way about.

And so some of us took up the struggle anew. Not quite openly—for we found that our opinions were considered scarcely less than criminal by our families, teachers and friends. Even so, our secret heresy had all the charm that youth naturally finds in illicit adventure. We were few, but we felt all the more heroic in our fewness. And here and there was an utterly solitary, and very defiant and bitter, agnostic. We nourished our imaginations upon the fiery prose of Ingersoll; finding sometimes the greatness of Shelley's poetry in the fact that he, too, was an Atheist; linking our solitary rebellions with the grandeur and pathos of Copernicus, of Giordano Bruno, of unknown martyrs in all ages . . .

But the satisfaction of hating a tyrannical God in whom one does not after all believe, grows stale. And the happier we, if that phase of our intellectual career came to an end before we established contact with the select group of elderly town Atheists, who met in the back of some cigar store to read esoteric works of anti-clericalism, and to relate with solemn naiveté the story that every convent had a stock of guns in its cellar, awaiting the signal for a religious massacre. These fellow Atheists of ours, alas, were not Shelleys, nor Giordano Brunos. They were as superstitious, as dogma-ridden, as pious in their reverence for their own intellectual deities, as incapable of independent or critical thought, as any set of church members could have been. They were in fact a little church, saved by the gospel of Ingersoll; no less devout sectarians for being members of the sect of Heresy. And if by chance one of them were not a religious crank, his conversation nevertheless bore unmistakably the impress of an older and outworn generation of thought. Here was nothing to fire the mind, nothing to interpret the meaning of Today, nothing to show a road into the future—nothing, in short, to serve the purposes of Youth. All this quarrel belonged to the past. Atheism was a dead issue.

#### American Leaders of Revolt

Again—it may be from some linking of Kings with Priests in the Atheistic ritual of anathema—we stumbled upon the idea of Freedom, and were ready to give our young enthusiasm to its service.

In the literature of our own country, there was a mass of libertarian eloquence—the speeches of Wendell Phillips, the fiery Abolitionist poems of Whittier, the dithyrambs of Walt Whitman in celebration of the individual, the burning advice of Emerson to be uncompromising, the invective of Thoreau upon the spirit of social conformity—a veritable arsenal of swordlike thoughts with which to fit youth out for its first struggles with whatever tyrannies of traditional society it might meet.

But the authorities did not want us to have weapons against social tyrannies, and none of these—literally, none—had been given to us in the schools. Wendell Phillips was to us merely a name in the history lesson. Whittier was known to us only as the author of an extremely long poem about Snow, and two sentimental ballads—never as the angry writer of such lines as—

“Woe to the priesthood! woe  
To those whose hire is with the price of blood—  
Perverting, darkening, changing as they go  
The searching truths of God.  
“Feed fat, ye locusts, feed;  
And in your tasselled pulpits thank the Lord,  
That from the toiling bondman's utter need  
Ye pile your own full board!”

Walt Whitman was by these same educational authorities considered too indecent an author to be quoted; or if he did appear, it was as the Good Grey Poet, and the author of “O Captain! My Captain!” Emerson was a Philosopher (whatever that was) and the author of a very silly little poem about a Mountain and a Squirrel. And Thoreau, the stubborn Anarchist who went to jail rather than pay his poll-tax, was known only as a “Nature-Lover!”

The educational authorities did not want us to know the truth about this American literature. They were afraid that the real Emerson and Thoreau and Phillips and Whittier and Whitman would corrupt our young minds. So we were left to discover them for ourselves—which all too frequently we failed to do.

For there stood, in the way of our approach to this fiery part of our literature, the familiar monument of the Civil War. In our earliest childhood we had sat on father's or grandfather's knee and heard their own heroic adventures in that war. Later we had cheered parades of Grand Army veterans, and listened to Fourth of July orators, dinning that heroism into our young ears. Then we had to learn it all over again at school.

Too much heroism palls. We heard so much about the Civil War in those early years that we thought we never wanted to hear about anything connected with it again. The fact that this part of American literature had something to do with Slavery was enough to scare us away from it.

It is possible that the educational authorities were unduly alarmed, after all. For when we discovered fragments of this literature by our own enterprise, it was not easy to apply it to our own lives. These men had been Destroyers—fierce antagonists of a Compromise between free capitalism and a slave system. It is true that the agitation against negro slavery was related to a broader movement against a more widespread form of economic bondage. It is true that the kind of Freedom which Thoreau and Emerson wrote about was a freedom far surpassing that promised by the Emancipation proclamation. But we did not know these things, and there was none to tell us. We could read these books and emerge with minds unscathed by their fiery content. Many of us did read Emerson without discovering his significance; for he was the counselor of a kind of perfection too easily, in our ignorance, to be identified with the more familiar sorts of “character-building” platitudes.

Whitman, more fortunately, was one who could not be so misunderstood. But he came bearing many gifts, and among that strange riches we chose according to our desire. It would not be true to say that we found in Whitman what we wished to find; but among so many startling and contradictory revelations, it was easy enough to reject what we did not want. He was the great Liberator. He freed us— from whatever chains most irked.

But—"I ask," says Nietzsche, "not freedom from what, but freedom to what?"

We were spiritual vagrants, seeking the true road. If we paused in doubt at the beginning of some new path, Walt Whitman appeared to us saying, "Do not be afraid, camerado. It is a good path, and there are some fine ripe berries and a cool spring or two further on. Go ahead! You will probably run across me again some time, and if

there is anything I can do for you, you can count on me. So long!"—and he gave us a hearty clap on the back, and left us.

But where were we going? Pilgrims on an unknown pilgrimage, we wandered through those adolescent years, seeking a leader who would take charge of the expedition. Sometimes we felt that it was a journey of exploration and discovery; and sometimes we knew we were simply lost in the woods. Some of us made back tracks for Home, and found the voting of Father's ticket or the taking of Mother's advice a sufficient exercise of our powers for social good or evil... But this is the story of those who wandered, seeking understanding of themselves and of the mysteries of life.

(Continued in the April Liberator)

### Third Degree

**FIVE** strong detectives are in a cell with a prisoner,  
By God, they know they will make him speak!  
They push against each other blindly, like mad, thirsty bulls  
pent in a cattle car,

They are anxious, there is not enough room for them  
in the dark cell,  
Their heavy suits hamper them, their white collars choke  
them,

They grunt and sweat and curse as their blackjacks rise  
and fall,

Five strong detectives in a cell with a prisoner.

They have eagerly twisted the arms of the prisoner behind  
him until the bones cracked.

They have battered his pale temples with their blackjacks,  
and kicked in his fourth rib.

They have walked on his spine, and beat his mouth to a  
bloody pulp.

They have blackened his eyes, and flattened his nose,  
The five strong detectives in a cell with a prisoner,  
And by God, they will surely make him speak.

The moon, like a white innocent, blunders in, and then  
vanishes, knowing he's not wanted.

And a taxi-cab rolls by in the street above, with a drunken  
girl laughing to her man.

And a guard rattles his keys down the corridor, and the  
gas-jet whistles a lonely little tune,

And prisoners in the prison turn on their cots and dream  
they are home again,

While the five strong detectives argue in the cell with the  
prisoner,

Telling him, by God, he must speak.

Oh, lead blackjacks plead with the prisoner to speak, and  
hard shoes, and hairy Judas-knuckles.

And his pounding heart shouts that he must speak.

And his bleeding body weeps like a baby gnawed by a rat,  
Speak!

And his brain bursts with agony and screams, Speak,  
Speak!

And his blood moans: "Your woman waits for you, if you  
will only speak."

And the whole world roars with a million wild voices  
in his ears, Oh, Jesus, man! Speak!

But the prisoner will not speak.

It is a peaceful night in the city.

There are men and women idling through the hot summer  
streets,

Policemen lounge at every corner under the tall arc-lamps  
and dreamily swing their clubs.

Ministers are pondering sermons in their studies, and  
the Mayor is drinking lemonade at a roof-garden.

Judges are reading poetry aloud to their wives after the  
irritating day in court.

Lovers sit side by side in the dim movie houses and  
tingle as their bodies touch.

Mothers put their babies to bed, and father smokes his  
calabash pipe.

Their are a million homes so quiet that clocks fill them  
with ticking,

And there are five strong detectives in a cell with a  
prisoner,

And they know, by God, they can surely make him speak.

The blackjacks rise and fall, the iron heels stamp on  
the prisoner's face.

The detectives strip their wilted collars, and groan aloud  
like lovers in their ecstasy.

The prisoner shuts his eyes for a moment, and sees the  
million of stars that whirl in the universe of pain.

He bites his lips until they bleed, that he may not speak,  
He prays with dumb faith that the world he hates will  
never make him speak,

That the five strong detectives in the cell with him can  
never, never make him speak.

Michael Gold.

# REVIEWS

## Oil and World Power

*"The World Struggle for Oil", by Pierre L'Espagnol De La Tramerye, Translated by C. Leonard Leese. Published by Alfred A. Knopf, New York City.*

**B**URNING oil throws light in many dark places. Even though not ignited it illuminates many things. Witness what is going on in Washington at the present time. The reader of "The World-Struggle for Oil" will find that oil sheds light on many dark spots on the international diplomatic checker-board.

The author lays the foundation for his study by showing the importance of oil to the modern capitalist world. The invention of the oil-burning Diesel engine makes possible great economies in the cost of loading fuel and the storage space required. To load a ship like the Olympic with coal requires the labor of 500 men for five days. To supply the same ship even without the Diesel engine with oil sufficient for the same voyage requires the labor of only twelve men for twelve hours. The storage space required is less by half and the labor of supplying fuel under the boilers is reduced by even a greater proportion.

The World War also demonstrated the importance of oil. Ships, tanks, aeroplanes all require oil for their engines. Without oil no imperialist nation can hope to maintain its position in the world struggle. "Who has oil has Empire" a French diplomat wrote in 1919.

The United States is the greatest producer and consumer of oil in the world. The oil resources of the United States will, however, be exhausted in eighteen years, according to an estimate of the Smithsonian Institute. To meet this situation the Standard Oil Company reached out for the undeveloped oil resources of the world. At the same time the British Government began a struggle for these same oil resources. Through an alliance between the Royal Dutch and Shell interests, both of which have come under the domination of the British Government, it created the instrument to capture the oil resources of the earth.

The story of the struggle between Royal Dutch Shell and Standard Oil takes the author to every corner of the globe. Wherever there is oil or traces of oil these two competitors have appeared. The boundary lines of nations mean little in this titanic struggle for a new source of power. Under a score of different names the two great oil interests are fighting in every part of the Globe.

According to the author's view, Great Britain through the Royal Dutch Shell has the best of the fight up to the present. While the United States still produces the bulk the oil of the world, the Royal Dutch Shell has control of the larger part of the untapped resources. This explains Secretary of State Hughes' thundering notes against a British monopoly of oil in Mesopotamia and against the Dutch Government granting the Royal Dutch Shell interests the exclusive right of exploitation of the new Djambi field in the Dutch Indies. The struggle for Mexican oil waged by the Mexican Eagle—a British-controlled company now taken over by the Royal Dutch Shell interests—and the Standard Oil, largely explains the revolutions and

counter-revolutions from Diaz to Obregon. The Royal Dutch Shell has even invaded the United States and is drawing oil from California and Oklahoma. A close examination of recent events in the latter state would very likely show that the fight between Governor Walton and the Ku Klux Klan is but a mask behind which Standard Oil and Royal Dutch Shell are fighting for the oil resources of that state.

"Who attacks the Standard attacks the Washington Government directly" is the author's ominous concluding note. It is a warning worthy of being thought about by those who may be sent to the battlefields of the future war for oil to defend or establish the domination of the oil resources of the world by the Standard Oil.

C. E. R.

## Lullabies or Alarm-Clocks?

*"On a Grey Thread", Elsa Gidlow, Will Ransom, Chicago.*

*"Hill Solitudes," Benjamin Rosenbaum, B. J. Brimmer Co., Boston.*

*"The Hour of Judgment," Viola C. White, B. J. Brimmer Co., Boston.*

**T**ODAY the voice of the artist is often heard railing against the possibility of art being the voice of "propaganda." But this is the reflex of a childhood lived in a world where "pleasantness" (undisturbed bourgeois comfort) was the standard of art. The kicker in personal contact was bad enough; but, given a talent for words or paint or music, he couldn't be stifled. To be the voice of a mass, and that mass the sordid, the would-it-were-safely-sleeping!—this was inexcusable, this was "inartistic," this was above all, dangerous; it suggested that the mass wasn't sleeping quite so drugged a sleep as might be desired by a moribund world. Also, the artist is uncomfortably aware of the tremendous difficulty of the task. It is easy to pass for an artist if you only sing lullabies to drowsy spirits. But he whose art is for living people knows that their senses are sharp, their minds awake, their hearts burning with desire and hope. No delicacy of carving will obscure from their senses the shape of the brazier; if it does not keep their fire burning to warm them and light their night, it is useless; let it go with the other luxuries which they have been forced to do without! They will build a new hearth for this fire which has never gone out since the beginning of time.

Here are three little books of poetry. Elsa Gidlow, in "On a Grey Thread", cries over and over the struggle of sturdy vitality against the stony soil into which it has fallen,

"I am a seed in the dust,  
A live root bedded in night,  
And I am filled with a lust  
For something the worms call light."

In "Roots", and in "Disillusionment" she expresses powerfully the thrust of youth against the force of circumstance. In "World Cry" there is a fine arrogance.

"Love Song" and "Philosophy" prettily celebrate love as a refuge, and "Mnasidika" is really moving in its expression of the breaking down of feverish make-believe.

"Hill-Solitudes" by Benjamin Rosenbaum is one long plea for peace. This young artist wants to thrill; he

wants to be "burned by terrible beauty". Here are all the emotions and fires and urgencies of life, but acted out in shadowy pantomime. "Here life can reach the dignity of rest" is a strange line to be written by a young man of flesh and blood, of the Jewish race, in the year 1923.

Viola C. White, in the "Hour of Judgment" brings us a richer emotional quality, a clearer record of experience and thought. "Russia, 1918" has a loveliness in its simplicity. "To a Caged Bear," "Life Divided," and "Charity," are all records of moments of poignant reaction before a reality; and that, whether skillfully or crudely developed, is where a poem begins. We quote "The Hour of Judgment."

"You think that clad in lightning, he  
Will run on earth disastrously;  
That, seeing him shake on the air  
You will have warning to prepare?  
No! He is listening and low.  
Like a ragman he must go  
A dark way full of murmurings  
Till he hear the final things:—  
The crying of the hungry child,  
The worker, 'I no more believe,'  
The dream that shouts, unreconciled  
Though cell or torment it receive,  
Of what a new dawn shall achieve.  
Then he nods his ponderous head,—  
And the old order is dead."

The "Dialogues" and "The Russian Revolution" are more difficult to sustain, and have in places more the effect of a shorthand account than of poetry.

L. G.

## Salesmanship and Sabotage

*Absentee Ownership and Business Enterprise in Recent Times: The Case of America, By Thorstein Veblen. Published by B. W. Huebsch, New York.*

THORSTEIN Veblen's latest book, "Absentee Ownership," is an analysis of the development of capitalism in the last two decades, particularly in America. It is written in Veblen's customary caustic, satirical style, and is further away from the official schools of political economy than any of his previous works.

Throughout his treatment of the workings of the capitalist order Veblen presents convincing evidence of the inherent economic class basis of present-day production and exchange. He shows that capitalism has already attained that high stage in the development of class divisions and conflicts reached by feudalism in its most complete form.

Mr. Veblen draws a picturesque, yet accurate, parallel between the manifestations of class rule in the two systems—feudalism and capitalism. The feudal wars for plunder; the rendering of homage by the serfs to the lords; the role of such ideological forces as the rendering of homage by the serfs to their lords, and the loyalty to the feudal state personified in the prince or emperor; the division of the loot amongst the ruling class of yesterday; are put side by side and contrasted with the modern imperialist wars for conquest of new markets and sources for raw material, the loyalty of the nation, country and government, and the division of the spoils of war among the capitalist powers as

exemplified in the Treaty of Versailles and the conferences at the Hague and Geneva.

In contrasting the present economic system with feudalism, Mr. Veblen shows that capitalism has destroyed the element of personal interest and the ideals of workmanship which characterized the old handicraft system. These ideals have been supplanted by others necessary to perpetuate the present system of absentee ownership. Among such ideals Mr. Veblen finds salesmanship and sabotage. Through effective salesmanship and the proper control and manipulation of credit facilities, the market and the curtailing or sabotage of production at the behest of the employer, the absentee owners are enabled to continue as the ruling class.

Veblen explodes the myth appearing in bank directories and college economic text books that the captain of industry of today is like the owner under the old order, a manager or entrepreneur. Examining the influence of chemistry, physics, industrial organization and technique, Mr. Veblen shows that experts aided by these forces are now the real directors of industry. Mr. Veblen further shows that these factors have made for an intensification of the tendency towards absentee ownership—of the tendency towards widening the gap between the owner and the worker under modern large scale production.

The effect of absentee ownership on the farming class is presented in a most interesting fashion and in a somewhat novel way for an American sociologist. Mr. Veblen shows how agriculture today is one of the most profitable sources of exploitation for the absentee owners because of their control of transportation, credit and marketing facilities. The persistence of this condition is aggravated by the fact that, because of the very backwardness of the development of agricultural industry, the farming masses are still living to a large extent in the past.

The role of the government in the class conflict arising out of the present economic system is portrayed by Veblen in these concise words: "It has, as a matter of course, become the chief concern of the constituted authorities in all these civilized nations to safeguard the security and gainfulness of absentee ownership. This state of things is now plain to be seen, and it is therefore beginning to cloud the sentiments of the underlying population at whose cost this security and gainfulness are maintained."

"Absentee Ownership" borders on Marxian analysis and interpretation. Yet Veblen insists on steering clear from the scientific line of Marxism in his conclusion. To this extent Veblen obscures his otherwise lucid analysis of the recent developments of capitalism. Every Marxist knows, and Marx has very ably pointed out, that with the development of capitalism and the growth of the technique of industry, the personal element in production and exchange tends to diminish to insignificance. The larger the scale of production attained the greater the distance between the owner and the individual worker. The roles of industrial organization, improved technique and science in enhancing the development of large scale production were also treated most elaborately by Marx in "Capital." In such Marxist analyses of imperialism as were written years ago by Hilferding, Panakoek and Lenin, it was pointed out very clearly that agriculture is a most important source of exploitation for the big capitalists owning the key industries.

Absentee ownership is a logical symptom of capitalist big industry and big business. It is simply the human expression of the contradiction arising from capitalist production in which production and exchange are highly socialized while the means of production and exchange remain under individual ownership and control. Absentee ownership is merely the social expression of capitalist organization of industry at a particular stage in its development. One can never do away with absentee ownership without socializing the means of production and exchange. If the world were to go back at once to the glorious golden days of the handicraft stage and capitalism were to start anew from its nascent stage we would, in time, again reach the status of absentee ownership—the social form of economic class relationship attained under large-scale, socialized production and exchange, the means of which are privately owned and controlled.

The essential point in which Mr. Veblen falls down in his diagnosis is his failure to note that absentee ownership is not the disease, but that it is merely the scab breaking out on the economic body of capitalism which is inherently organically diseased. Because of this attitude of Veblen we find him making this conclusion; "The issue now is turning not on a question of ownership, as such, but on absentee ownership. The standard formalities of 'Socialism' and 'anti-socialism' are obsolete in face of the new alignment of economic forces."

Here we have it precisely wrong. The very private ownership of the means of production and exchange socially used is the soil where all the harmful effects of absentee ownership arise. Absentee ownership is merely a particular form which this capitalist ownership takes on at a certain stage of its development—the present trustified, imperialistic stage of capitalism. When Mr. Veblen says that the fight today is not so much against ownership as against the form ownership has taken on, he is allowing his highly analytical vision to be blurred by the dazzling forms capitalist ownership has assumed.

Mr. Veblen's "Absentee Ownership" is worthy of thorough study by every serious student interested in the class conflicts of today. On the whole the author has contributed a valuable addition to the library of economic and sociological thought which has been enriched by him many times in the past.

Jay Lovestone.

## Once Over

*The Coming of Man.* By John M. Tyler, Professor Emeritus of Biology at Amherst College. Marshall Jones Co., Boston.  
*Science Remaking the World,* Edited by Caldwell and Slosson. Doubleday, Page and Co.

THE first half of "The Coming of Man" is made up of some of the most fascinating and stimulating reading that I have ever encountered. The story of the rise of life from the protozoa is like a pantomime of all the dramatic and rebellious possibilities of life. And all through the book are flashes that open up new paths to our thought. But when the learned professor gets down to comparatively modern man, his interesting facts are interspersed with quaint moralizings. He proves that the history of man, of

living matter itself, is a long story of continually increasing power over the environment, of lessening dread of that unknown which must be "placated" by religion. Yet he cannot see that with the growing knowledge and lessening dread, the emotional need for religion is disappearing. But the fact that the old men occupied in gathering the objective data we call Science are, through fear, incapable of drawing the inevitable inferences, must not deprive us of the great and revolutionary implications in their discoveries.

"Science Remaking the World," edited by Otis Caldwell and Edwin Slosson, suffers from the same blight. Thrilling and beautiful facts are here and there obscured by moralizing. But the chart in the front of the book, showing side by side the important discoveries in all sciences since 1500 B. C., is bare of all such nonsense, and the chapters on Gasoline, on The Influence of Coal Tar in Civilization, and on Electrons, open out a picture of new possibilities to the mind that knows how to correlate its information. Unfortunately both books are too expensive for workers to buy individually; but groups, clubs and libraries should make them accessible.

L. G.

*Oil and the Germs of War,* by Scott Nearing, Published by Nellie Seeds Nearing, Ridgewood, New Jersey.

THIS interesting booklet has as a motto the statement made by Briand, former premier of France: "International politics today are oil politics." The pamphlet has three parts. The first part speaks of the new revolutionary significance of oil. The second part is a picture of the imperialist war policy born of the greedy competition for the conquest of oil. And the third part purports to give the remedy, stating that oil shall be given to those who need it, and recommending that: "The economic organization of the world must be undertaken by those who are immediately concerned with the economic activity—the men and women whose energy makes the wheels and keeps them turning. The new world organization must be a producers' organization built along the lines of modern productive activity."

There is a shortcoming in the development of ideas of the booklet, in that it does not analyze the relation between imperialism and capitalist state power on the one hand, and on the other hand the relation between the producers' world organization and proletarian state-power. The main thesis if the booklet is absolutely correct: the economic factor of the oil revolution produces the germs of war. But we must not forget to mention that the instrument in making these wars is the capitalist state power.

Scott Nearing's other main thesis is also correct: that the remedy against war and imperialism is the elimination of the capitalists. But here again we must not forget to mention that the instrument of this elimination is the proletarian state power.

The Teapot Dome oil scandal has made the oil question the center of public interest. We advise every thinking worker to read Scott Nearing's booklet. It is not only instructive; it is also interesting.

J. P.



*The March of the Workers and other Songs. Published by the Young Workers League of America, Chicago.*

**B**ETWEEN the bright red covers of this new song book are sixty-four pages of revolutionary songs, collected by the Young Workers League, with music arranged for group singing by Rudolph Liebich. Songs that have been sung by Wobblies around camp-fires; songs sung at old-time Socialist local meetings and picnics; songs from Michael Gold's operetta, "The Last Revolution"; songs once sung in hushed voices by the Russian workers in secret meeting places and now sung triumphantly in Soviet Russia—every form of human expression except despair. Even the lovely, impressive Workers' Memorial song closes with an inspiring promise to carry on and conquer.

Marching workers, singing workers united in song and in deed—what can stop us? Our minds clear, our arms strong, a song on our lips, we go forward to new and great achievements.

Ida Dailes.

### Down with the Obvious!

*Tulips and Chimneys, E. E. Cummings, Thomas Selzer, N. Y.*

**O**NCE you have conceded E. E. Cummings his personal idiosyncracies, like speaking of himself with a small i, neglect or erratic use of capitals and punctuation, the sprinkling of words across a page to look like a swarm of bees or a printer's nightmare, you are willing to admit that he can write poetry, though you may or may not like it. He is obsessed by the fear of being or becoming obvious and I am inclined to think there may be some ground for his fear. When a man has little of aesthetic or human importance to say, he is wise in being careful how he says it. Mr. Cummings evades the hated obvious by whipping words into fantastic and beautiful shapes. He builds against the enemy a veritable barricade of complicated, grotesque, colorful, always decorative sentences, from which he hurls ambiguous meanings or simple thoughts perverted out of all recognition. He writes parentheses within parentheses, as in "Songs," No. 1, till all meaning, if there was an original meaning, has been obscured. You drown in a sea of words and, drowning, grasp at here an exquisite phrase, there a metaphor like a shooting star, thinking, at last, I am getting somewhere! But you arrive at the end of many of the poems, drenched by a very fountain of diabolically combined words, not a whit wiser than when you commenced.

When Mr. Cummings dispenses with clap-trap he writes a poem. "Puella Mea" is one example, "Of Nicolette" another; and I like Nos. I. and III. of the section called "Orientale." The "Sonnets—Realities" have a certain ironic value.

There is no doubt that Mr. Cummings can do witching and evil things with words; nor that he possesses unusual poetic talent, and if he wishes to utilize it in the way he does it is, of course, his own affair. The result is, at worst, interesting, and at best, authentic poetry.

Elsa Gidlow.

### Correction.

*The October Liberator contained an article by Harrison George in which incidental reference was made to the death of the wife of Ricardo Flores Magon, as reported in the Federated Press of August 17, 1923, from their correspondent in Mexico. From a Los Angeles reader we learn that Magon's widow is alive in California, his step-daughter being the one who died in Mexico. The Federated Press has published the correction.*

## TROBAR CLUS BY RAMON GUTHRIE

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No voice to make such songs as he would sing?

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