

RUTHENBERG, REVOLUTIONARY CHIEF

Appreciation of the Founder of Workers (Communist) Party

By JAY LOVESTONE

Lenin once wrote for DAILY WORKER, "The Communists of America prove by their long prison terms to which the bourgeoisie sentence them for communist agitation and propaganda, what capitalist democracy really means. They are tearing the masks from it and are exposing it as a reign of trust kings and speculators amid the subjection of the masses." Truly, no one symbolized this truth uttered by Lenin more than Ruthenberg did. He was thus often

spoken of as the most arrested man in America.

What makes Ruthenberg a revolutionary figure of paramount importance is not merely his tremendous abilities as shown in his service in the class war against the American capitalist class, but the devotion, self-sacrifice, courage and Leninist clarity characterizing his activities. Ruthenberg always emphasized the role of the Party as the only revolutionary leader of the working class.

It was Ruthenberg who was prim-

arily responsible for making the left wing in the Socialist Party nationally organization-conscious. There were many who were active propagandists for then then left wing Socialism, but a few, if any in 1919, realized sufficiently the need of crystallizing a definite left wing organization on a national scale.

Not only in his opposition to the imperialist war did Ruthenberg develop the full Leninist line but also in his attitude and practice in the

(Continued on Page Two)

C. E. RUTHENBERG AS REVOLUTIONIST

Appreciation of Party Founder

(Continued from Page One)

daily struggles of the working masses. He was a realist in the Marxist-Leninist sense of the word. The bourgeoisie were driving the masses into the imperialist war. Ruthenberg replied: "Down with the Imperialist War."

There was an election campaign in Cleveland. Ruthenberg said to the workers: "Make this election count in your fight." Ruthenberg did not suffer from parliamentary illusions. He was not a victim of parliamentary cretinism. In April, 1912, he said:

"We are not in the business of electing mayors. The election of a mayor or any other party official is merely an incident in our work. It registers the increase in our strength and that is about all."

By 1920 Ruthenberg's estimate of the official Socialist Party theory of capturing power by the ballot was this: "The Socialist Party emphasizes the participation in elections and the election of certain officials. It had become more or less a vote-getting machine to elect certain persons to public office rather than an organization which sought to bring about a fundamental change of the social system."

As a Bolshevik, Ruthenberg always kept in the forefront the main objective of the Communists in the class struggle—to revolutionize the minds and struggles of the masses and to build a powerful Communist Party to lead the workers to final victory. In all his numerous activities in the daily struggles of the workers, Ruthenberg never forgot that the primary purpose of the revolutionary working class movement in the United States is to overthrow American capitalism and to establish a proletarian dictatorship.

As the years go by and the American revolutionary movement of which he was so much a part broadens and deepens among the American working class, a proper appraisal will be made of his place in the American labor movement, and the quality of his leadership will become more pronounced. But he will not only be a part of the revolutionary traditions of the American labor movement. His incomparable services to the cause of the emancipation of the workers of the world have made him a part of the traditions of the world's proletariat. "We deeply grieve with you at the loss of Comrade Ruthenberg, leader of your party and of the international labor movement, whose ashes will rest beneath the Kremlin together with the heroes of the November Revolution," cabled the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to the Workers' (Communist) Party of America, when they learned of Ruthenberg's untimely death. The revolutionary honor accorded his memory by burying his ashes in the Red Square in Moscow bespeaks the esteem in which the Russian workers held the activities of Ruthenberg in the revolutionary movement of the international proletariat.