

# DeLeonism, Then and Now

by Herbert Zam.

The expulsion and splits which were a permanent feature of the SLP from then on, robbed the SLP of the most active revolutionary elements as well as of those elements having the greatest contact with and influence among the workers. The development of the SLP since then has demonstrated with what merciless logic the germ of sectarianism operates to destroy a promising organization once it obtains roots and a breeding place. The history of the SLP is a lesson and a warning to all revolutionists, except those, who like the present leaders of the Party and of the ECCJ, refuse to see what is before their eyes.

It is quite significant that in all his activities against "pure and simple" trade unionism, DeLeon took no measures to guard against the penetration of petty bourgeois, anti-trade union elements. Thus the 1900 convention, which prohibited membership in the SLP to officials, paid and unpaid, of the trade unions, and forbade SLP members to join the trade unions, at the same time defeated a motion to exclude employers from membership in the SLP. We see an exact duplicate today in connection with the "new" fraternal orders which the Party is establishing.

Lack of space does not permit the discussion of other questions raised by the articles previously mentioned. It might be well, however, to mention that DeLeon's "internationalism", which Comrade Rasky praises, consisted in the belief that the proletarian revolution would start in the United States because it was the most industrially developed (where did we hear that before?) and that all the Socialist movements must follow the SLP to be regarded as "really revolutionary". He considered international Socialist action and organization as unnecessary and a waste of time and money, as well as an "annoyance" to the American delegates.

## DeLeonism, Thirty Years Ago and Today

It can be quite easily guessed what part of the content of DeLeonism is attracting the Party leaders of today. It is his dual unionism. Today, they do not worry about the size of a trade union, so long as it is "revolutionary". Nothing original! The SLP said in 1900 (Trade Union Resolution): "The strength of a labor organization is not in the number of its members, not in the amount in its treasury, but in the height of its aims, and the depth of its solidarity." Today, they are making a virtue of splitting labor organizations, and the biggest splitters are the biggest heroes. Also nothing original! The highest praise which the SLP candidate for President of the U. S. received in 1900 was the following by the one who nominated him: "This candidate smashed the Central Labor Union of that city (Haverhill, Mass.—H.Z.) and it has never been resurrected and I hope never will." Today the Party trade union leaders are trying to emulate this example.

## The "Lenin of America"

That Comrade Rasky considers DeLeon the American Lenin is obvious from the many concrete parallels he draws between the two. "Like Lenin, DeLeon . . . is a constantly recurring expression in his article. . . . the history of the SLP became inseparable from the political history of Daniel DeLeon, just as the history of the CPSU is closely connected with the name of Lenin," declares Comrade Rasky.

Indeed DeLeon and the SLP are inseparable but not "just as" Lenin and the CPSU! In fact for opposite reasons. Lenin continually pushed the CPSU to the masses and the masses to action against capitalism. DeLeon continually dragged the SLP away from the masses and substituted revolutionary-sounding phrases for revolutionary action. Under DeLeon's leadership the SLP entered "on a broad political highway"—to impotence and obscurity.

"A comparison between DeLeon and Lenin naturally presents itself to one's mind. DeLeon's views on inner-party questions resembles Lenin's even in the style in which they are expressed."

So Comrade Rasky! To make such a comparison between DeLeon and Lenin is a travesty on the life-long struggle Lenin carried on for the establishment of a Bolshevik party and Bolshevik methods of work. DeLeon's methods were the direct opposite of Lenin's. Lenin demanded the widest inner-party democracy, the participation of the membership in working out policy, the broadest discussion of differences, the discussion of problems before final decisions are made and action taken, but iron discipline in carrying out decisions once made. DeLeon just reversed this procedure. He first made his decisions and carried them out, then tried to convince the membership of the correctness of these decisions, then expelled those who disagreed, and finally called a convention for rubber-stamp approval. The most momentous step in the history of the SLP, the formation of the Socialist Trades and Labor Alliance, was taken in this manner. DeLeon tolerated no opposition or opponents. Not discussion but expulsion was his method of persuasion. DeLeon related not only Party organs but also non-party institutions as if he were a divinely appointed dictator. Thus on one occasion when he was not fully pleased with the National Executive Board that the ST&LA had elected, he

just removed it and himself appointed another one!

## A Scholastic Marxist

In the foregoing brief discussion of a number of phases of DeLeon's activity and political beliefs, we have seen whether a parallel can be drawn between Lenin and DeLeon. Comrade Rasky and Comrade Marmor have given their answer. Let the reader judge whether that answer can stand unchallenged in the light of a real analysis of DeLeon's works. Suffice it to sum up this question by pointing out that in all of DeLeon's works we see no mention of imperialism, in spite of the fact that he lived in the period of full bloom of imperialism (DeLeon died in 1914). That this question was not unknown during DeLeon's lifetime we can see from the controversies that raged on the question of imperialism between Lenin, Bucharin and the Russian Marxists and Luxemburg, Hilferding, Kautsky and others who differed with Lenin's conception. This "oversight" on DeLeon's part was a result of his static interpretation of Marxism, his refusal to apply the basic Marxian laws to the latest developments of capitalism. All of DeLeon's "Marxism" consisted of lifeless abstract scholasticism. It is from this basic shortcoming that all of DeLeon's major errors can be traced.

## DeLeon's Positive Contributions

Naturally, the nature of this article

does not permit of the discussion of DeLeon's positive contributions to American Socialism, which are many and valuable. We had to confine ourselves to refuting the false estimates which placed DeLeon on the same level with Lenin. When an objective attempt is made to trace the development of American Socialism and to properly estimate the various outstanding figures, no doubt the valuable contributions of DeLeon will be recognized. No one who knows anything about this development will fail to give to DeLeon a higher place than to Hillquit or to Berger. DeLeon was indeed an inveterate fighter against the brand of opportunism represented by Hillquit; he was indeed fanatically devoted to the interests of the working class and gave his entire life to the workers. He strove to be a revolutionary Marxist. But his own serious shortcomings and deep sectarianism, scholasticism and opportunism make it impossible to consider him the Lenin of America. Just because he fought Hillquit no more makes him the forerunner of American Communism than Debs, or Haywood. American Communism developed out of many revolutionary elements in the American labor movement, particularly out of the most revolutionary elements of the Socialist Party. But of all factors contributing towards this development, the SLP, the Party of DeLeon, contributed least.

This concludes the series of articles on "Lenin or DeLeon".

# VENIZELOS MOBILIZES FOR WAR

by Basil Kalfides

With the black clouds of war spreading over the horizons of Europe the political situation in the Balkan peninsula deserves our closest attention. The Balkan peninsula holds the key to the Far East, to India, Australia and China. In the pre-war struggle of German and English imperialism for the control of the East, the Balkans were used as the experimental ground for the political and diplomatic intrigues of the Entente (England, France, Czarist Russia) on the one hand and the Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria, Italy) on the other. Germany's goal was to build a road from Berlin to India, the famous Berlin-Bagdad railroad. The slogan was: "Nach Osten!" Great Britain tried to block the German penetration to the East thru the Balkans. The Balkans therefore became the battleground for the two gigantic imperialist groups. Alliances, intrigues, protectorates and spheres of influence were the order of the day until the situation culminated first in the Balkan and then in the great World War, which started in a war between Yugoslavia (Serbia) and Austria.

## Realignments After the War

After the World War the situation changed fundamentally in the Balkans as well as in Europe as a whole. German imperialism was defeated and thus one of the great forces in the colonial East was eliminated. But if Great Britain got rid of a dangerous rival with the collapse of Germany, an even more dangerous enemy appeared on the horizon—the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics.

This time the "enemy" does not have to carry on diplomatic maneuvers for the penetration of the Balkans. For that matter, geography is secondary consideration to the Soviet Union as a defender of the rights of self-determination and emancipation of national minorities and enslaved peoples.

A realignment of forces began to take place in order to meet the situation. Today, as far as England is concerned, the Balkans are important not from the point of view of blocking German imperialism from reaching India but rather as an instrument of attack against the Soviet Union. Italy and France, on the other hand, have a double interest in the Balkans, first in order to attain hegemony in the peninsula and, secondly, in the interest of an attack on the USSR. In the performance of this complicated and rather difficult task both England and France are depending upon the most able diplomat in the Balkans, Eleftherios Venizelos.

## Venizelos Back in the Political Arena

As soon as Pangalos' dictatorship was overthrown by General Kondylis, Venizelos was called over from France to take over the reins of government in Greece. The first act of Venizelos was to prepare the way for elections that would give him an undisputed majority. Then he would be able to proceed to his ultimate objective.

The elections were held. Venizelos carried with an overwhelming majority, after having outlawed the Communist Party of Greece and having utilized the 1923 election lists without much regard if the voters were dead or alive. Thus Venizelos obtained a legal foothold and was able to speak for the Greek people, so to say.

With the "people's mandate," Venizelos proceeded to a large-scale offensive against the labor movement, against the Communist Party and the left wing unions. Parliament passed a law making

Communism a crime. Hundreds of Communists were exiled to deserted islands in the Aegean. Union halls were closed and funds confiscated. The International Red Aid was declared illegal and persecuted.

## Venizelos Makes His Grand Tour

After his offensive against "subversive" elements at home, Venizelos began a grand tour of European capitals. He had interviews with Mussolini, Aristide Briand, Baldwin, etc. and then returned to Athens. The capitalist press announced at the time that Venizelos was "traveling for his health"—and also trying to secure a loan for Greece.

The next step towards his goal of establishing an anti-Soviet block in the Balkans was taken by Venizelos in the calling of an all-Balkan "commercial conference" in Athens to discuss tariff questions in the Balkans and to draw up commercial treaties—so it was said. Those who understand politics know what commercial treaties mean and what is hidden under the cloak of "commerce".

Another step in the construction of the Balkan bloc was the calling of the all-Balkan Olympic games in Athens. Psychology and sentiment play their parts in politics.

After the Balkan Commercial Conference Venizelos visited the Bulgarian capital and then proceeded to Angora, the capital of Turkey. The Greek royalists and part of the Pangalos opposition tried to utilize the visit of Venizelos to Turkey in order to arouse the people against the government. They accused Venizelos of "sacrificing" Greece and of "surrendering" everything to Turkey in the interest of foreign imperialism. They attempted to organize a coup d'etat but were immediately suppressed.

Venizelos was received with the greatest honors in Angora, by Kemal Pasha and a treaty of mutual neutrality was drawn up providing that in case of war with any other power neither Greece nor Turkey would attack one another.

This treaty lets the cat out of the bag. Venizelos has at last succeeded in neutralizing Turkey in case of an attack against the USSR in which the Balkan states will participate. After the Greco-Turkish treaty came Yugoslavia. Here Venizelos did not have to visit Belgrade. The foreign minister of Yugoslavia, Marinkovich, visited Athens. Venizelos gave a dinner in honor of Marinkovich at Hotel Great Britain. The Yugoslavian minister told the Greek press that his country was "not at all alarmed" at the rumors following the Greco-Turkish treaty. Nor was it "disturbed" at the conference that had taken place in Angora between the Greek delegation and the premier of Hungary, Bethlen.

## "In the Interests of the Civilized States?"

Marinkovich declared:

"The Balkan people are duty bound to prove that their struggle to form free and independent states corresponds with the interests of all civilized states. This duty our two countries will not violate and in the endeavor to achieve this end, which is the basis of their policy, I am sure that we can depend on one another."

These few words of the Yugoslavian diplomat explain a good deal. Both Greece and Yugoslavia are working in common for the "interests of all civilized states", and this is the basis of their policy in the Balkans. In European diplomacy "civilized states" means big capitalist-imperialist countries—while "uncivilized states" means the Soviet Union.

After the dinner Venizelos made a