



THE PROLETARIAN

A Journal of International Socialism.

He Obeys His Master



Communism—"How about it friend, shall we capture this fellow?"
 Non-Political Actionist—"Aw, the State is a myth."

SPARTACAN SPARKS

England and France and the other democratic countries, who are not like the Bolsheviki, and who never broke a pledge, have failed to pay the interest installment due on the ten billion dollars they borrowed from U. S. We do not like to call attention to these facts, but we are just a little bit short ourselves, and if we could get that interest now, we could buy ourselves an overcoat and the kiddies some shoes.

The children of Austria are starving, and those of Germany too. We feel more than sorry, but the children of New York and other places are in the same fix. Isn't this a beautiful world? But don't agitate, don't kick, for "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the kingdom of heaven."

Now that the prohibition amendment has been added on to our constitution, may we suggest another amendment, which we believe will do more good than the last amendment: On and after January first, in the year of our Lord, one thousand nine hundred and twenty, this constitution shall be null and void, and of no effect whatever. Amen.

When the factories closed down here in Detroit by reason of the coal shortage, Dodge Brothers posted a notice in their shops to the effect that because of orders received from the DEMOCRATIC fuel administrator, they were compelled to do so on ad nauseum. Under such circumstances it seems quite easy for their employes to discover what to do. Just vote the Republican ticket, of course, and let the Republican mine owners select their own coal administrator.

Our president (not Sammy Gompers, the other one), tells us in a magazine article that "the doors that do not respond to the keys the people hold will be blown down and free passageways erected in their stead." "In the new day that is dawning only those governments that have no secrets from their peoples can long endure." That sounds very good, much better than the fourteen points even, but as an old politician once said, Platforms are made to get into office, and not to be executed, and so with magazine articles. They are written for some purpose or other, but never, under any circumstances, to be put into practice.

Victor Berger was re-elected to Congress by a majority of over four thousand votes. We are not now, and never have been, in accord with Victor Berger, but we do believe that the people of Milwaukee have the right; even under our constitution, to select the person they want to represent them in Congress, and the question will now be decided whether the constitution is going to be respected or rejected.

We are often surprised at the stupidity of the master class, but for pure boneheadedness, there is nothing like the situation existing in New York city. One hundred and sixty-odd thousand children going to school underfed every day. Teachers not making enough to live on. Now imagine a scene, where anemic looking teachers who exist on starvation wages, have to drill into the heads of underfed children the fact that this is the greatest, the richest, the most

prosperous, and the best country in the world. And then wonder why the teachers sometimes are radical and why out of the one hundred and sixty thousand underfed children a few have brains enough to kick. From the socialist point of view, things certainly look good, one hundred and sixty thousand potential agitators.

Our old friend, Eat Less Herbert Hoover, has an article in a current magazine on the Bankruptcy of Socialism. If Herbert Hoover had not been relegated into innocuous desuetude, we might have suggested to our staff of writers to pen an article on the intellectual bankruptcy of Herbert Hoover.

The newspapers are now telling us that Paderewski is resigning from the Premiership of Poland because he is a poor administrator although he is a good statesman and clever diplomat. In other words, the temperamental gentleman is a better statesman than an administrator, a better diplomat than a statesman, and a better piano player than a diplomat.

From time to time our War Department has issued statistics on the intelligence of the men who were drafted into the army, and if the War Department is to be believed, twenty-four per cent of the men are illiterates, and ten per cent below the intelligence of a ten-year-old child, while a great number were below the average standard of intelligence. We are, of course, perfectly aware how busy a man Mr. Baker is, but would it not be possible for Mr. Baker to have his statisticians investigate the American Legion, and find out for us, of what group the American Legion is formed. Whether of the ten per cent, or the twenty-four per cent. This would be, no doubt, very interesting.

"Senators probe high cost of silk stockings." As prices always fall following a senatorial "probe," this important news ought to send a thrill of renewed hope through the heart of the average wage worker's wife.

What has become of the steel strike? Did Gary win that without a writ of injunction?

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A Year Gone By

By DENNIS E. BATT

As one looks back this has been a hectic year in the Socialist movement in America. Viewing the kaleidoscopic changes that have taken place within the last twelvemonth is apt to make the uninitiated somewhat dizzy. The year opened with an avalanche of propaganda launched against the reactionary and conservative elements in control of the Socialist party. Everywhere opposition was developing against the officialdom. The so-called left-wing elements were growing stronger.

In the State of Michigan, a strong-hold of revolutionary socialism for years, all opposition was wiped out and the forces of the organization solidified. The state was at the highest point in membership and organization that it had ever attained. In the spring convention held in the city of Grand Rapids the lid was clinched on for revolutionary socialism. An uncompromising stand was taken on all fronts, and all opportunistic measures were repudiated.

In the meantime other strong left-wing elements were developing. In New York state the fight was particularly keen and caused many locals to split wide open. Very few locals, with the exception of Rochester have not suffered from the crucial test through which the movement has passed. Rochester was better able to stand the struggle because of the fine educational work that has been going on there for some time. Most of the elements of the left-wing were massed behind the strong emotional propaganda of The Revolutionary Age, which took the form mostly of denouncement of the national organization and the individuals governing it. The appeal gathered behind it great support because it was something that most anyone who was opposed to the "National Office" could endorse. A dual organization grew up within the party known as the "Left-Wing." Membership cards were issued, dues collected and a sort of a party within the party formed. Michigan held somewhat aloof from the Left-Wing, and while working in harmony with it did not endorse its program, realizing that it was not all that it should be, and that the membership of it was rather a heterogeneous conglomeration. Later events were to prove the correctness of this deduction.

A definite and well organized campaign was carried on to capture control of the National Executive Committee at the election that went on in April and May. A slate was selected and the votes concentrated in order to beat the old machine. Long before the date set for the counting of the vote it was a foregone conclusion that the so-called "left" candidates would win the election. To those in charge of the national office this was plainly discernable. It was necessary to take action, and they did so.

On May the 27th the National Executive Committee of the Socialist party expelled the Socialist party of Michigan and suspended various language federations. A charge was made that the left-wingers had stuffed the ballot boxes in order to beat the old gang. The charge, of course, was ridiculous. The Socialist party of Michigan met this expulsion at its Emergency

Convention by issuing a call for the organization of a new party. Instructions were given to the delegates that were to attend the National Left-Wing Conference from the state to endeavor to secure the conference's co-operation in the call.

At the National Left-Wing Conference the opinion of the Michigan comrades in regard to the make up of the Left-Wing was more than justified. Confusion reigned supreme. All brands of socialism imaginable were represented in that body. Political actionist and anti-political actionist had gathered together to figure out some way of capturing the Socialist party for revolutionary socialism. It had occurred to but few that there might be many opinions as to what constituted revolutionary socialism. The lack of any uniform understanding was painfully apparent to all. A split was bound to occur in such a mixed body—and it did occur.

The only elements in the conference that saw the necessity of organizing a new party (The Michigan-Federation Groups) withdrew and issued a call for a convention to form the Communist party. The balance of the conference confidently planned the capture of the Socialist party for "revolutionary socialism." Confidently they supposed themselves to be the "left-wing." They were soon to find that the "left-wing" had left the conference with the so-called minority and that those who still remained represented little but themselves.

A national office was set up in Chicago by the National Organization Committee and an intense campaign was carried on to make the organizing of the new party a success. It was very soon apparent that the National Left-Wing Council, the executive body of what remained of the Left-Wing, had no support. The majority of them finally saw the necessity of uniting with the National Organization Committee. This they did by signing the call for the organization of a new party.

As was expected, the "old guard" used the capitalist police to defeat the "left" delegates to the Socialist party convention. They were forced out of the hall and ultimately formed another party, refusing to come to the Communist convention. In this most of the delegates from Ohio violated the mandate of their state convention which had instructed them that in event of the Socialist party not being captured for "revolutionary socialism" they were to come to the Communist party convention. Unquestionable personal ambitions played a part in dividing the so-called "left" forces at Chicago. But personal ambition alone will not explain the chaos that reigned there. A general lack of understanding was apparent to all.

The Communist Labor Party Convention drew up a rather brief program repudiating the use of parliamentary machinery altogether, and containing many other objections. The best and most charitable thing that has been said about the convention is "that it was spontaneous" and its program certainly shows its spontaneous character. It falls a long way short of apply-

ing proletarian understanding to the conditions of this country.

At the Communist party convention things went along quite smoothly, due to the fact that the dominant element was a well organized machine. It worked like clock-work, and could not but excite the admiration of anyone who had any experience in conventions. The results that were obtained, however, have not being satisfactory to those who have the best understanding of revolutionary principals and tactics. The outcome of the three conventions at Chicago in themselves is nothing to boast of, but the general effects will undoubtedly be good. The rank and file of the movement is learning from these divisions that it is necessary for them to have a better understanding of the principles upon which a revolutionary party must be organized. This is manifesting itself by the increase of interest in study throughout the country.

The PROLETARIAN UNIVERSITY is experiencing, because of this, a great acceleration of action. An organization entirely apart from all parties, it offers something that appeals to all intelligent working men and women. Founded nearly two years ago for the purpose of promoting the study of the classical proletarian literature it is filling a long felt need. The effects of its work are bound to be felt in the raising of the standard of understanding of all groups. Locals throughout the country are realizing this, and have called upon the home office of the university for assistance in starting schools in their locals. The facilities of the university are being taxed to the utmost, and the outcome certainly will be beneficial to the movement. The time has gone by when one can sneer

at "book-larnin'" in the socialist movement with impunity.

A glance backward through the year presents an encouraging picture. It has not been a disappointment and augurs well for the future. The influence of the reactionaries of the Socialist Party has been broken. The membership has awakened somewhat and is beginning to inquire into the reasons for all this. They wish to know more of the so-called "hair-splitting theories that have divided the more active comrades. There is just one way for them to find out and that is by studying the theories upon which the movement is founded. They are beginning to do this.

There are those of course who look upon the study of socialism as an end in itself. Those, who because of their studies, become armchair philosophers or parlor-socialists. This extreme is as dangerous as the other which sneers at one "who writes books." It seems a shame that it should be necessary to agitate for education within the socialist movement, nevertheless, we must do so. But while doing this, we must not lose sight of the fact that education is only the means not the end. The object of education is to secure intelligent action from the working class and not to have them die smart.

The education of the last year has had its effects, which are visible to those who are in touch with the movement. It has been felt in the economic organizations of labor as well as the political. Ultimately those who understand will dominate and then the hour will have arrived. In the light of the past we can not be apprehensive of nineteen-twenty. If we carry on our educational work with enthusiasm, intelligence and vigor we can look forward from this morning of the new year towards a glorious sunset.

Czarism In America

In the past the country has been startled by many different acts of brutality. Everyone stood appalled at the revelation of the brutality of the Belgians in the Congo a few years back. We have all had our thrill of disgust at the tales of beastiality of the Huns in Europe during the recent bloodfeast. Most everyone has listened with bated breath and sympathetic ear to the revelation of the suffering undergone by the revolutionists during the rule of the Czars in Russia. These things have always awakened in us a thrill of resentment together with a feeling of pride. We have resented that any human being anywhere should have to undergo such brutal treatment. We have swelled with pride at the thought that these things could not happen here in America. Here, at least, was one spot on the face of the earth where men were free to speak their own minds and not be subject to the autocracy of anyone. Public officials here were the servants not the masters of the people. Content with this peaceful thought we have slept only to be rudely awakened to the realization that this boasted liberty of ours is only a myth. A liberty that is to be respected only when it does not threaten the property rights of those that rule and rob the working class of the country.

The Iron Heel has descended and is now crushing out the last vestige of liberty possessed by the American working class. Thousands of workingmen and women throughout the country are lying in jail as the result of the outburst of the Department of "Justice"

on the evening of January the second. As an example of degenerate brutality the raids are not to be equalled in the annals of civilized history. The actions of the agents of "law and order" in the city of Detroit is a fair sample of what other agents did in other localities. Unless one actually witnessed the scene it is difficult to believe that civilized human beings could be guilty of such outrageous conduct.

Viewing the scene after their departure one would naturally come to the conclusion that a horde of savages had been at work. Men who are really civilized could not perform the wanton acts of destruction that were performed by these guardians of liberty and justice. It is quite certain that if every one of the hundred million inhabitants of the United States could see the results of the activities of the agents of the government their respect for authority would be elevated. Such ignorant acts of vandalism can do naught to make us respect the institutions that these agents represent.

Doors were smashed into splinters when the keys that would open them were easily obtainable by the authorities making the raid. This in spite of the fact that no resistance was encountered. Scores of people who were at the House of The Masses merely to dance or eat in the cafeteria were placed under arrest in spite of the fact that they had no connection whatsoever with the Socialist or Communist party. In fact some were detained who did not know the difference between

a revolutionist and President Wilson. A second cook that had been hired that day, and who had absolutely no connection with the organization, was arrested.

Among the most prominent Detroit men arrested in the raid are Al Renner, President of The Proletarian University, and John Keracher, secretary of the same institution. The charge against them is violation of Michigan's criminal syndicalist law. The charge is ridiculous, of course, but it will take a good fight to clear them.

Offices were stripped bare of everything. It made no difference whether the things taken could be used as evidence or not. Some things were taken that certainly could not be. Fifty dollars' worth of postage stamps were "taken" from one office. We are not sure whether the possession of postage stamps is a violation of the criminal syndicalist law or not. That certainly must have been the reason for seizure, for if we are to take the actions of the raiders as criterion by which to judge their intelligence they certainly have no use for postage stamps. The ordinary desk accoutrements such as paper knives and metal mounted rubber stamps of standard variety vanished along with the rest of the office paraphernalia. It was to be expected that anything bright would go. We have always understood that persons of low intelligence were attracted by anything that reflected light.

Show cases were stripped bare of the books that they contained. Several thousand dollars' worth of literature was taken away, the major part of which was scientific books and can not possibly be used as evidence of the violation of any law.

Nor did their acts of brutality cease with the arrest of everyone on the premises and the destruction of every useful thing that they could find any use to destroy. The five or six hundred people who were arrested in various parts of the city were taken to the Federal building and there quartered on one floor in emulation of the Black Hole of Calcutta. Toilet facilities were insufficient to accommodate a quarter of the number, and the ordinary things that help one to lead a sanitary life were denied to the prisoners. While in the custody of the agents of the Department of "Justice" the victims were not able to wash themselves. It seems to be the aim of the powers in charge to reduce the men that they seized to the condition of nervous wrecks. For days they were kept without food until the condition became so bad that the government was forced to give some food to the prisoners. This has been followed by the lying statement of the agents of the Department of "Justice" that the men were given ample food. Nothing could be further from the facts. If it were not for the food that was given to the prisoners by their friends many would be reduced to the condition of starvation. Sleeping upon stone floors did not help many of those incarcerated. Barkey, the chief of the Department of "Justice" says that this is better than most of them have been used to. This "humorous" remark gives one an insight into the make-up of the individuals that uphold the present system. These kind of people are supposed to inspire the workers with respect for the institutions of America. It is doubtful if they will have much success toward inspiring respect for institutions which they themselves ignore and hold up to contempt.

The instigators of the raids can not even lay claim to being patriots. Their patriotism is only skin deep. Dr. Johnson was never more correct than when he said "Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel." It is

indeed such in this case. Not one bit of evidence can be produced to show that the people arrested in these raids are guilty of any violation of the laws of the country. Attorney-General Palmer is but using the issue of the "Reds" to create a little political thunder to help his own presidential campaign. Patriotism does not enter into it except as a screen behind which to hide his deeds of violence against the workers. The loyalty issue is but a barrage behind which he may advance his own candidacy for president. Some blind alley must be found to lead the workers into this election, and it might as well be the "red" one as any other. Some kind of a herring must be dragged across the trail, and "Making the United States safe for Democracy" will serve the purpose nicely. Evidence doesn't count. Palmer's masters must be shown that he will go to any length to serve them and is thus admirably fitted for their purposes.

Detroit's experience in these raids is only typical of the outrages committed throughout the country. From past experience and fragments of news that reaches us we know that other cities are passing through the same trial and in some places more brutal treatment has been given to the workers. Everyone is liable to arrest under the new opinions voiced by the agents of the Department of "Justice." That is anyone with ideas that are at all tinged with progressiveism. The slogan of the defenders of the reaction is "Think as we do or go to jail." To be opposed to capitalism is to place oneself outside of the pale of the law. To think differently than the present administration in this country is to become an undesirable citizen. To disagree with capitalism is to forfeit all consideration at the hands of its proponents. The tocsin has been sounded. The struggle is on, not for revolution itself, but to determine whether it is going to be criminal to differ in opinion with the present administration and other defenders of capitalism.

We are entering dark days that are a reflection of the dark days that existed in Germany under Prince Bismarck's Anti-Socialist laws. Open, direct and brutal violence is the method that is to be used. The reactionary forces are out to crush every progressive worker's organization. All isms are to be killed in America, according to one agent. Communism, Socialism, Unionism, etc. First comes the "reds," then will follow the more conservative groups. None are safe from the Iron Heel of American reaction. Force as used by Bismarck in Germany is to be employed against the American workers. The Hun autocracy is to be outdone in brutality against the proletariat. The powers that be have revived in America the Cossacks and methods of the Czar. Autocracy has flown Europe to take roost in the land of the "free." The imperial ambitions of Caesar were never protected in a more ruthless manner than the privileges of the ruling class of America.

Our masters do not know their history well or they would know that this brutal display of force will accomplish them nothing. They are but playing the part of a modern King Canute in their efforts to stay the rising tide of proletarian progress. The onward march of the last slave class is not to be stopped by any ruthless outbreak of armed force. History is with the revolutionary workers and the future belongs to them. Bismarck tried it in Germany and his kind and the Kaisers are gone. The Czar tried it in Russia. He lies in an unknown grave. For a time these brutal tactics

may appear to succeed, but we do not lose confidence. We are spurred on by the knowledge that the Czar had his proletariat and that the American capitalist class is

too stupid to profit by his example. If that is a violation of the criminal syndicalist law, make the most of it.

The Collapse

The coal strike is over. There are those, of course, that would have us believe that it is not over, but nevertheless the time has arrived for the post mortem examination. To try to make ourselves think otherwise would be playing into the hands of the enemy. The facts of the case are all that we need, and from them we can learn a lesson. The biggest strike that this country has ever seen collapsed after having been successfully conducted for over a month. In some quarters this may have come as a surprise, but it was to be expected. Pressure from the outside by the government and weakness within combined to defeat the miners in their demands.

The meeting of the National Board consisting of the District Presidents and members of the Scale Committee resolved itself into a struggle between the National officials and those who more accurately represented the radical wishes of the rank and file of the organization. The radical element wished to prolong the strike and carry on the fight. The arguments of the national officials finally prevailed and the strike was called off. Fear that to carry the strike further would break up the organization was one of the reasons for accepting the offer of settlement. It was argued "that the power that had defeated Germany could easily defeat the United Mine Workers of America." In which they were not far wrong. A little further and the miners will be brought to understand that the workers must get control of the "power that defeated Germany" and use it to defeat the capitalist class.

The national officials have asked that faith be placed in them by the miners, which was done. The miners have placed their faith in their leaders. Now, let us watch the results. The national officials, in turn, have placed their faith in Wilson, who will see that "justice is done to the miners" by the commission appointed to investigate the mine controversy. We don't doubt that something will be DONE to the miners. The miners may hope that this fifteenth point of "justice to the miners" has a better fate than the previous fourteen of savory memory. When one recalls the easy way with which his promises have been filled in the past it does not do to be optimistic about the future. Under the scourge of the pleas of patriotism and humanity the miners are reluctantly returning to their labors. Mindful all the time that the hand that walloped the Hun is ready to wallop them if they don't behave.

In the meantime what has become of the miners' demands? Where are the shorter hours and more money? The miners are to get a fourteen per cent increase in wages pending the results of the investigation of the commission. But nothing is said about the reduction of hours. The national officials of the union are to receive the same increase in their salaries as the men do in their wages. Thus the now large salaries of the officials are to be still larger. A shortening of hours would not affect the officials, and we wonder if that will have anything to do with the final

settlement, or if it has had anything to do with the acceptance of the fourteen per cent without any mention of hours. The two most important demands of the miners have been ignored entirely. The question of hours and days per week has been given no consideration, and it is very doubtful if anything radical along this line will be included in the final agreement.

For years the miners have been struggling to arrange their contracts with the mine owners so that they would expire in the fall of the year instead of the spring. The sagacity of this can easily be seen. The best time for any worker to strike is when the thing that he produces is the most needed. No one would worry much about a coal strike in July or August, but coal strikes in December are rather serious things. The coal that is ordinarily used in the homes can not be diverted because that would cause Bolshevism to develop among the people, and that would not do. We would advise the miners that the thing to do is not to enter into any contracts with the owners of the mines but to arrange things so that they could terminate their agreements anytime they wish. All the efforts of the miners to close their contracts in the fall of the year have now been thrown away. It is quite certain that the commission will not be able to fix an agreement until spring, and this will leave the miners in the same predicament that they were in before.

It was planned at the Cleveland convention that the National Board should draw up an agreement to present back to the re-convened convention, thus eliminating the chance of officials to act contrary to the wishes of the rank and file. According to this, the National Board had no power to come to any agreement with the mine owners. Thousands of the miners hold this opinion and have, so far, refused to go back to work, but eventually they will be forced to return because the majority are doing so. The radical elements on the board tried to force the board to live up to this understanding, but without avail. A motion to refer the matter to the re-convened convention as was planned at Cleveland, or to the miners themselves by referendum, was defeated. The officials did not dare to trust the rank and file with the matter, knowing that they would turn down the temporary agreement. The fear of jail because of the injunction, of course, played its part.

It is to be hoped that the miners will remember those who have not fulfilled their desires in this crisis, and when the time comes pay them off as they deserve. The memory of workingmen as a general rule is very short, and the hope will probably be in vain. It will take time to develop better memories, but develop they will. This is only an armistice. Eventually the miners will be forced to take up the active struggle again only to find themselves up against the same forces that have defeated them this time. They must be taught the lesson that this is not a struggle between mine owners and mine workers merely, but a struggle between class and class that will only end when the working class makes a conquest of political power.

Syndicalist Flaws

"Why do you constantly harp on origins and fundamentals," complained a speaker at a recent meeting in Detroit. Adroit questioning had shattered a beautiful house of cards which he had constructed. And so it is in many instances. As Huxley once remarked: "The destruction of a beautiful theory by an ugly fact is one of the tragedies of science." It is this very insistence upon facts to the exclusion of air castles and fancy that marks the chasm between the dreamer and the thinker.

The problem that is uppermost in the mind of every class conscious worker is: How can the ownership and control of the economic resources be transferred from the present ruling class to the whole people? It is apparent that economic control is based in the possession of private property. That there is no disagreement on this point is proved by the fact of the demand for the "abolition of private property" by all organizations of revolutionary workers; even the mild-mannered radical will usually agree to this. The difference of opinion, and the resulting differences in tactics and organization, arise almost entirely over questions dealing with the manner in which this change of control is to be accomplished.

The particular question for discussion in this article is the proposition that "No class ever gained political supremacy without having first gained economic supremacy." The same idea is expressed, in modified form, by the statement, "political power is the reflex of economic power." In actual practice these concepts are the basis for the contention that the most effective methods for the emancipation of the working class is through "economic organization", "industrial organization", "Organizing the economic power of the workers", and so on. Usually, those who hold such ideas also labor under the mistaken notion that political power is expressed only in elections. This view is narrow and erroneous. Political activity assumes many and varied forms, ranging from propaganda and education to open civil war.

The statement that "No class ever gained political supremacy without first having gained economic supremacy" implies that political activities are of secondary importance, and not necessarily essential to the success of the working class movement. More than that, when carried to its logical conclusion, it means that economic power is ALONE sufficient. For if economic control is the object to be attained and this can be accomplished by economic means, of what value or use would the ensuring political supremacy.

This is the theoretical basis of the various syndicalist and semi-syndicalist organizations. That many labor unions hold similar views (including Mr. Gompers with his slogan of "no politics in the union". is evidence that the principal is not necessarily revolutionary. The syndicalist organizations of Europe have on more than one occasion proved to be decidedly reactionary.

Although these theories of the syndicalist, followers of Proudhon, have many times been repudiated they continue to exist under various disguises—such as "building the new society within the shell of the old", "direct action on the job", "political power is the reflex of economic power" and so forth.

The literature of socialism is replete with evi-

dence refuting these contentions; without going into detail, a few illustrations from history will suffice to show the manner in which ruling classes establish themselves.

At about this period the commercial cities became Roman Empire reached the highest point in its political and economic power. Then came the onslaughts of vast hordes of barbarians from the north. With practically no economic organization, and with only a few days supply of food as their sole economic resources, they destroyed the vast economic organization of a world empire. Out of the resulting chaos arose the feudal system, merging what remained of Roman civilization with the tribal customs of the Huns, the Vandals, the Goths and other barbarians.

From this time on till the Twelfth century Europe was ruled by the sword.

At about this period the commercial cities become strong enough to demand and obtain their freedom from feudal restrictions. Leagues of commercial cities were formed for the purpose of protecting the wealth of the rising merchant class; under the protection of their own military and naval forces the cities rise to greater wealth and power. Gradually, centralized government and written laws supplant the rule of force based upon "right and custom." This resulted from the alliance of the merchants of the cities with the kings as against the clergy and lesser nobility. Feudal restrictions continuing to hamper the development of the new social class, a period of violent revolution ensues. The political dominance of the nobility was destroyed. "The hitherto unassailable stone castles of the nobles submitted to the mannon of the burghers, the fire of their guns pierced the mail-armor of the knights. The supremacy of the nobility fell with the heavy armed cavalry of the nobility" (Engels). The political revolutions of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth centuries gave to the bourgeoisie political dominance, and this BEFORE they had risen to the position of the dominant economic class.

Later developments were along the same line. "The industrial capitalists, these new potentates, had on their part not only to displace the gild masters of handicraft, but also the feudal lords, the possessors of the sources of wealth" (Marx). The capitalist class did not attain full control of the economic resources until AFTER it had attained political supremacy, and had by force displaced the class which was actually in possession of the "economic power." "In actual history it is notorious that conquest, enslavement, robbery, murder, briefly force, plays the great part." Recent history bears out this view, as in the case of the Civil war in this country. In Russia, the Soviets gained political supremacy at a time when the economic supremacy was yet in the hands of the nobility; the Hungarian revolution was political, not economic. And the threatened revolutions in other countries will take the same form.

The contention that "No class ever obtained political supremacy without having first secured economic supremacy" is true to some extent of previous classes. Both the merchant class and the capitalist class possessed a certain amount of economic power, arising from their wealth, previous to obtaining political control. But it must be remembered that the

struggle between the bourgeoisie and the feudal lords was a struggle between two propertied classes, while the struggle between the proletariat and the capitalists is a struggle between a propertied and a non-propertied class. The rising capitalist class sought and obtained political power for the purpose of protecting their already acquired property. The working class seeks political power, not to protect its property but to abolish all forms of property. Ponder carefully the following enlightening passage from the Communist Manifesto:

"All the preceding classes that got the upper hand, sought to fortify their ALREADY ACQUIRED (ECONOMIC) STATUS by subjecting society at large to their conditions of appropriation. The proletariat cannot become masters of the producing system, except by ABOLISHING THEIR OWN PREVIOUS MODE OF APPROPRIATION (wages) and therefore also every other previous mode of appropriation. They have nothing of their own to secure and to fortify; their mission is to destroy all previous securities for, and insurances of, individual property."

The class struggle is not a struggle between two groups, each possessing certain economic powers, it is a struggle FOR economic power; a struggle for the possession, control and ownership of the economic resources. The possession and control of the present owners, the capitalists, is maintained and guaranteed by the state, through the use of its coercive powers—the arm, the police, the judiciary, etc. The first step, then, for the non-possessing class is to obtain control of these powers and to use them for the purpose of evicting the present owners; transferring the ownership to society at large.

In modern capitalistic countries the tendency is for the economic power to concentrate into ever fewer hands; the economic position of the workers becoming constantly more precarious. In such circumstances it is an idle dream to contend that without having gained control of the powers of the political state the workers can secure control of the industries, the mines and mills and shops.

JOHN O'GROATS.

Freak Strikes and Unions

It is interesting to note that French Syndicalists, some time ago, hailed Bergson—the philosopher of Spiritualism and Idealism—as their prophet. Bergson proclaimed himself an Anti-intellectualist; the Syndicalists at once expressed their delight, for they, too, prefer emotionalism to intellectualism,—hence their applause of the embarrassed bourgeois metaphysician and mystic.

The fact is significant as being another evidence of the fundamental unsoundness of the anarcho-syndicalist-industrial union position. With no knowledge of Historical Materialism, unaware that Marx had overthrown metaphysics, innocent of any consistent and workable social philosophy of their own, the adherents of this particular school of opportunists seized eagerly upon a reactionary metaphysical philosophy, and affirmed it the basis of their faith!

Well, they were not so far wrong, after all; Bergsonian sentimentalism IS, for them, highly appropriate. Syndicalists scorn education, reject both the need and the value of enlightenment for the masses, and rely on mass emotion, on mob delirium, on the stirring myth of the general strike.

Certainly the idea has spread and spread rapidly.

The "general strike" has become in every country the dream of the union leaders and the nightmare of the employers. The contagion has spread not only within the laboring classes but in associated and professional classes, among the "white-collared proletariat" and the hangers-on of the capitalist class. It has become a joke—and a sign of the times.

The guards of the New Jersey state prison at Trenton, for example, have organized a union and applied for affiliation with the American Federation of Labor. The inmates of the Pennsylvania Working Home for Blind Men have united to demand higher wages, and may strike. Actors and actresses have recently carried out their first strike, one of the demands of the chorus girls being for "free stockings." British domestic servants affiliated with the National Federation of Women Workers are agitating for a new wage scale, British doctors in Dundalk have struck for higher salaries in the public dispensaries, and British pastors (good heavens!) are actually threatening revolt. Drug clerks in New York city, including soda water dispensers, called a strike a few weeks ago, demanding increased wages and a closed shop. Finally there comes news from England that Kennedy Jones, M. P., has organized a "Middle Class Union!"

All of this has a cause, and a significance. Its cause lies in the increasing difficulty of making a living, the greater certainty that members of the lower and middle classes cannot rise into the group of powerful capitalists, the growing acuteness of the class struggle, and the spread of a half-class-conscious ideology. Its significance lies in the fact that under such conditions the world is rotten ripe for Socialist propaganda. Social forces are moulding social thought, and paving the way for understanding—and action. Understanding, however, must come first, if there is to be EFFECTIVE action, Bergson and the Syndicalists to the contrary notwithstanding. The formation of unions and the spread of strikes are evidence, in themselves, not of revolutionary action, nor of a revolutionary mode of action, but of a growing readiness to accept and carry out revolutionary Socialist teachings.

Notice

In the December issue of *The Communist*, official paper of the Communist Party, appeared the minutes of the meeting of the Central Executive Committee of that organization. Of particular interest to our readers was the report of a resolution adopted instructing members of the Communist Party to sever connections with *The Proletarian*, the Proletarian University and Proletarian Clubs. Many inquiries have been received as to this action and its effect on *The Proletarian*. Having received no information other than the bare statement printed in *The Communist*, we are not in a position to say just what the future relations of these organizations will be.

Lincoln Colcord, in *LaFollette's* magazine, quotes Abraham Lincoln as follows: "This country, with its institutions, belongs to the people who inhabit it. Whenever they grow weary of the existing government, they can exercise their constitutional right of amending it, or their revolutionary right to overthrow it." Honest Abe Lincoln. How lucky you are to have lived before the days of the "New Freedom" and the Criminal Syndicalist Laws.

Sidelights On Historical Materialism

By MURRAY MURPHY

No law or principle is so misunderstood by both its advocates and its opponents as the Materialist Conception of History. It is very common, of course, to identify Economic Determinism with Historical Materialism, whereas the latter term, on the contrary, is far the broader one, including not only the powerful economic influences operative in history, but all the other material factors as well, together with all the interacting and reacting causative influences at work in society, which are, in the last analysis, effects of material evolution. Historical Materialism is, in its broadest sense, a whole philosophical system; it not only explains past history and present conditions, but it makes actual SCIENCES out of History and Sociology and Politics, and even Ethics.

However, the mistake of confusing the whole of Historical Materialism with what is, in modern society, its most significant factor, is after all not a very serious error in comparison to some of the absurd uses of the term. In a recent editorial of the *Melting Pot*—to take a prize illustration from a supposed Socialist magazine—occurs the following passage:

"The Law of Economic Determinism has never, until the Russian Revolution, been intelligently followed by a united working class. The class struggles of the past, and the present day strikes, are but partial recognitions of that law. Only the profiteering classes of all ages have been guided by economic determinism in their social acts."

Of course this is nothing but nonsense. The "Law of Economic Determinism" is a natural social law, and doesn't have to be "followed," either intelligently or otherwise, any more than the law of gravitation. It works in society, and has always worked, whether we want it to or not. The "profiteering classes" are not the only classes that have been "guided" by it. The business of the working class is not to "intelligently follow" this law, but to UNDERSTAND it—and thus understand why society is divided into classes, and how society can be freed FROM classes.

That expression, "profiteering classes," is, to digress for a moment, in itself an illustration of "Economic Determinism." It shows the point of view of the petty bourgeois reformer, who opposes "profiteering" (unfair profits), but considers a "fair" profit to be perfectly admissible. It cannot be too often reiterated that the "reform Socialist" is always about one per cent Socialist and ninety-nine per cent "reform"—he wants to "re-form" and REVIVE capitalism.

Coming back to the philosophical side of Historical Materialism, it may be well to point out that this is a Deterministic philosophy; it maintains that human actions are really determined, if we trace them back far enough, by forces—material forces—beyond our control. The pleasant conceit of "freedom of the will," has, therefore, in its usual metaphysical significance, no place in such a philosophy. In other words, Historical Materialism teaches that the causal relation holds true in the field of human action just as it does in the physical and chemical world; there is no such thing, metaphysically considered, as freedom or chance. Hence, the only meaning to be correctly ascribed to chance is simply a law or laws not yet understood; and freedom for the individual can only mean

that the pre-determined forces WITHIN him, rather than the pre-determined external forces, are able to control his actions. As an example of this last point, a man may decide to deliver a Socialist speech, and be free to do so, but his desire and ability are inner factors determined by his heredity and environment; now while speaking, or after having spoken, he may be arrested and jailed, or perhaps struck by lightning, and the external forces thus acting on his overpower the internal ones. But these outer forces are no more curtailments of his metaphysical "freedom" than are the inner forces that impelled him to speak; both are pre-determined by their causal antecedents, which likewise were causally produced. Hence, although we strive for "freedom of speech," "emancipation from wage-slavery," and so on, we must bear in mind that this freedom, dialectically considered, means freedom from certain definite external restrictions, not "absolute freedom." We Socialists recognize that the class to which we belong is subject to the same determining social laws that every other class in history has been subject to, and in consciously working out our mission we know that we are exercising the only freedom there is, the only freedom worth having.

Herein lies the chief philosophical difference between Socialism and Anarchism. This may be seen from the following quotation from an editorial in the July number of *Freedom*, a journal of "constructive Anarchism":

"The individual's direct and inescapable personal responsibility for all his actions is an unavoidable condition of his very existence as an individual. Every action engaged in by an individual must arise within himself; that is, be willed by him. He is therefore completely responsible for it. Unless this were so the conception of an individual as a discrete being would be impossible. The basis for this conception is entirely rational."

This is nothing more than the same old bourgeois ideology, as expressed in Christian theology and the Declaration of Independence. Of course every action by an individual "must arise within himself,"—but what determines those inner tendencies of his? What moulds his inherited faculties, his thoughts, his will? True, we help to mould our own minds by the way we react to our environment,—but what determines our power of reaction? Only the materialist philosophy of Marx can explain this consistently; Proudhon and Stirner and Bakunin completely fail.

The non-revolutionary character of a doctrine which, like Anarchism, is not based on Historical Materialism, is shown by another paragraph from the same magazine. Speaking of Russia, the editor says:

"With the starvation as described by Minor existing, it is hard to see how things could be very different in Russia unless the people there were united and conscious in a desire to sacrifice themselves in order to have the revolution spread throughout the world. This is of course an unthinkable proposition and while as Anarchists we deplore and regret the discipline and loss of personal liberty and the consequent curtailment of the creative instinct among the masses, some of us find consolation in the knowledge that the inspiring Anarchic wave that Minor describes will have left its

influence behind it and will modify the tyranny of Lenin's Social Democratic State."

To talk about tyranny and the "loss" of liberty in a land just rid of Czarism is something of a joke!

But all of this philosophical matter must not be allowed to obscure what Engels terms the dominant factor, i. e.: economic conditions and forces. Even such an academic thinker as Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, a professor in the University of Cambridge, recognizes its supreme importance. He says:

"We are used to think of Marathon as a great victory won by a small enlightened Greek race over dense hordes of the obscurantist East; of Thermopylae as a pass held by the free mind of man against its would-be enslavers. But Herodotus does not see it so. Herodotus handles the whole quarrel as started and balanced on a trade dispute. . . . Always at the root of the story, as Herodotus tells us, we find commerce, coast-wise trading, the game of marriage by capture; no silly notions about liberty, nationality, religion, or the human intellect. It is open to us, of course, to believe that Troy was besieged for ten years for the sake of a woman, as it is pleasant to read in Homer of Helen watching the battlefield from the tower above the

Skaian gates, while the old men of the city marvel at her beauty, saying one to another, "Small blame is it that for such a woman the Trojans and Achaeans should long suffer hardships." But if you ask me do I believe that the Trojan war happened so, I am constrained to answer that I do not; I suspect there was money in it somewhere."

Money in it somewhere,—yes. And that's the case with the second Mexican war now brewing, as well as with certain wars in quite recent history. Still further, in the strike of the English bank clerks whose chief grievance is the continued employment of girls, the money question looms so large as to render invisible the chivalric soul of these clerkly gentlemen.

Economic factors most certainly underlie the tremendous social forces now seething under the crust of capitalist society. Economic conditions cause the unrest, and make the workers ready and anxious for the philosophy that expresses their class interests—the philosophy of Socialism. And the economic urge impels men already familiar with this philosophy to spread it among their fellows. Working class education is the ripened means of social progress, and working class emancipation, the result.

International Notes

By JOHN KERACHER

Russia In the proletarian struggle Russia continues to be the bright spot. With the fall of Omsk and the routing of Kolchak their military status is excellent; thousands of prisoners and large quantities of supplies have fallen into their hands, and the road to the Orient opened, affording access to food and other supplies. Victory in the East will have a direct bearing on the Allied blockade in the West and upon the negotiations at Copenhagen and Dorpat. News dispatches tell of an uprising and the establishment of a workers government at Irkutsk, Kolchak's new capital; eight important towns beyond Omsk have been captured by the Soviet forces in their advance along the Trans-Siberian railway.

The advance into Siberia has been greatly aided by the support of the Soviet forces of Turkestan; not only have these forces menaced the rear and flank of Denikin, they have also cleared the territory bordering on China, Persia and Afghanistan, thus clearing the way for Bolshevik contact with peoples now under the yoke of Allied imperialism. The policy of financing and otherwise supporting anti-Soviet forces may yet find its sequel in the uprising of the subject masses of India, Persia and Afghanistan.

That the British government is aware of the danger to its rule may be seen in the plans for "self-government" for India. Whether their schemes to stave off the movement for Indian independence will prove successful or meet with the same fate as the Irish "self-government" plans, which have only added fuel to the fires of revolt, remains to be seen.

About the middle of November a Labor member of the British parliament, O'Grady by name, journeyed to Copenhagen to confer with Maxim Litvinoff, representative of the Soviet government. (Litvinoff formerly represented the Soviet government in England, but was deported). The official reason for Mr. O'Grady's mission was the discussion of terms for the return of British military and civilian prisoners. It

was admitted, however, that other matters of greater importance might be taken up with Soviet representative by the "Labor diplomat," or "Labor imperialist," to use O'Grady's own term.

This new type of diplomat represents the city of Leeds in Parliament, and is described by the press as a "broad-minded socialist." Evidently he is broad-minded enough to serve as an errand boy to the bourgeoisie government of Britain. On December 10th, Litvinoff was in hourly communication with Moscow, by wireless, (the Seventh All-Russian Soviet Congress being in session), whence he received peace proposals which were immediately communicated to the Allied legations in Copenhagen. As we read that O'Grady has returned to London for further instructions from the British Foreign Office, it is evident that Litvinoff's proposals were of considerable importance. The conference is to be resumed in January.

Litvinoff had already met with the representatives of the Baltic States at Dorpat, which conference was later renewed. At this conference the question of disarmament proved a stumbling block; the Letts being unwilling to lay down their arms. The Esthonians likewise refused to concede the occupation of territory in which the forces of Yudenich had taken refuge, and also refused to guarantee that Esthonian territorial waters would not be used as a basis of operations against Soviet Russia. The Esthonian and other delegates have held out against peace proposals, desiring to discuss an armistice only.

Whatever may be the outcome of these negotiations, it is apparent that the Soviet government has no desire to impose harsh terms upon these small countries, but merely seek assurance that they will give no further trouble. It will be interesting to compare the final terms of the settlement with the "Brigand's Peace" of Brest-Litovsk and the "Democratic" Peace of Paris.

Germany The overwhelming majority received by the Moderate Socialists in the elections for the German National Assembly resulted from the belief of the war-weary people that peace and plenty was at hand. The Allied Council had promised much if the country remained orderly, hence the efforts of the Ebert government to suppress the Spartan revolt had the support of a goodly portion of the people. The Kaiser and the Junkers had been forced out, and hope was divided between the fourteen promises of Mr. Wilson and the promises of the new republican government.

For months after the signing of the armistice the blockade was virtually continued in full force. Those who had howled loudest against the ruthlessness of the Hun did not hesitate to continue the starving of women and children long after the fighting had ceased. It was not until there was danger of revolution engulfing the fruits of their victory that the blockade was lifted; foodstuffs were delivered with the stipulation that supplies would be cut off if civil war continued. The Moderates hated and feared two minority parties—the Pan-Germans and the Spartacans. The former were in disgrace because of the disastrous results of the war; after a valiant struggle for proletarian liberty the Spartacans were brutally crushed by the forces of Noske the Butcher.

Since those stirring days a gradual change has been taking place. Those who looked to Versailles expecting liberal terms of peace were sadly disappointed; as a result new political alignments have appeared. The Majority Socialist support is rapidly disappearing. The Independent Socialists have adopted an attitude of increasing hostility toward the government, and since last March the membership has increased from 300,000 to over 750,000 at the beginning of December. Writing from Leipsig on December 5th, M. Philips Price, correspondent of the Daily Herald, the leading British labor paper, says: "While the Majority Socialists are rapidly disappearing as a political factor in Germany, the parties of the two extremes are increasing, on the one side the Monarchist-Pan Germans, and on the other side the revolutionary Marxian groups of the Left."

If carried to its logical conclusion this condition will bring about the fall of the present government, if not an actual and open struggle between the forces of the revolutionary proletariat and the capitalist imperialists, or Pan Germans. The policy of exacting methods of the Peace Council has been an unconscious aid to the revolutionary movement. The triumphant Allies seem determined to seize upon any pretext to tighten their economic strangle hold upon Germany and her allies. In spite of the fact that the Allies had contemplated the very same action, the sinking of the German fleet at Scapa Flow has been made the pretext for further crippling the stricken foe. New demands were thrust into the peace terms demanding the surrender of harbor equipment, floating docks, dredges, cranes, etc., to the amount of 400,000 tons. This will practically close up some of the German ports, and will severely cripple if not destroy entirely their maritime trade.

This pressure upon a government which had depended upon Wilson's Fourteen Points, and had preached patience to the masses, is having its effect. The power of the Moderates is dwindling, in spite of all the social reforms they have inaugurated. They are forced ever to the Right and into the arms of the

Militarists, while the workers move steadily to the Left, creating a condition that is almost certain to result in civil warfare. Two hostile classes are gathering into opposite camps, and conditions are driving them on to the final conflict.

England The British government, in pursuance of its policy of "disinterested" patronage of weak nations that it TAKES under its imperial wing, is now preparing to CONFER upon Egypt a constitution. It is to be no high-handed, "made in London," constitution; the British government does not work in that clumsy manner. It is to be one suitable to the interests of Egypt itself. Such is the conclusion that a casual observer might arrive at, upon reading the remarks of Lord Curzon in the British parliament. The "Noble Lord" should know something of imperial (sometimes called colonial) policy, for was he not Viceroy of India? And did he not take good care of Britain's subject millions there?

Lord Milner who rose to "fame" in Boer war days, is to be dispatched to Egypt with a staff of investigators to learn just what the country needs. It will be no "ill considered" scheme either, if Lord Alfred has the framing of it, for, like his Peer, Curzon, he is well versed in the gentle art of governing by imposing "the will of the people" upon themselves.

Curzon when in India, with his first Yankee wife, travelled in state from palace to palace, dining and hobnobbing with rajahs, maharajas and ruling princes of the land, who showered presents upon them in regal style, for there is now a bond of union between those who rule from within and those who rule from without. The old saying "there is honor amongst thieves" has more than a grain of truth in it.

With such a splendid example of "empire building" before him, Milliner should not fail to find out just what THE PEOPLE of Egypt want and proceed with his plans so that the aforesaid people will cooperate with Britain in the gentle game of administering the affairs of Egypt. The people, in this case, will, of course, be the same kind as Curzon used to fraternize with in India. The toiling, useful masses of Egypt will likely "get theirs" in promises, if they don't get something worse, for the revolt that shook Britain's hold during the war was from the ranks of the working class.

In the Congressional Record of October 30th, midst the records of Congressional controversy over the peace terms, appears the following, under the caption "The Egyptian Question":

"Resolved: That the United States in ratifying the covenant of the league of nations does not intend to be understood as modifying in any degree the obligations entered into by the United States and the Entente Allies in the agreement of November 5, 1918, upon which as a basis the German Empire laid down its arms. The United States regards that contract to carry out the principles set forth by the President of the United States on January 3, 1917, and in subsequent addresses, as a world agreement, binding on the great nations which entered into it, and that the principles set forth will be carried out in due time through the mechanism provided in the covenant, and that article 23, paragraph (b), pledging the members of the league to undertake to secure just treatment of the native inhabitants under their control, involves a pledge to carry out these principles."

"The protectorate which Germany recognizes in Great Britain over Egypt is understood to be merely a means through which the nominal suzerainty of Turkey over Egypt shall be transferred to the Egyptian people and shall not be construed as a recognition by the United States in Great Britain of any sovereign rights over the Egyptian people or as depriving the people of Egypt of any of their rights of self-government."

In 1831 the Egyptian army drove out the Turks, and would have at that time overthrown their power in Europe as well had not Britain and France stepped in to save Turkey as the Dardanelles buffer state against Russia, which these powers have always feared. Since then the policy of Britain towards Egypt has been to insist upon its independence. A policy that has served well so long as Egypt was menaced by other powers, in particular Turkey.

In the same year (1831), Egypt was granted, by the Treaty of London, autonomy from Turkey with an annual tribute to be paid by them to the latter. With the exception of this tribute Egypt was free and independent. The population, however, has shown signs of rebellion from time to time, and in 1882 the British occupied the country and suppressed an uprising against the Khedive and the ruling class. The excuse offered for these actions was helping to establish order, much in the same manner as their recent "helping Russia" schemes. Since then Britain has continued to maintain armed forces there, upon one pretext or another.

At the outbreak of the war, Britain proclaimed a Protectorate over Egypt, deposed the Khedive and placed another on his throne, who could be depended upon to take orders, that is, we should say take advice, from the "protectors" of the country; a "war measure" nothing more, no infringement, but rather an aid to Egyptian independence, as it were.

During the war Egypt furnished its quota of man power to the Allied cause. When the armistice was signed they selected a Commission composed of four of their leading citizens to the Peace Conference. The British caused these four citizens to be arrested and thrown into a military prison at Malta. To quote again from the Congression Record, Oct. 30th (data submitted by Egyptian Delegation):

"When the Egyptian people learned of this act of perfidy on the part of Great Britain their indignation was intense. National self-determination demonstrations were held throughout Egypt. Great Britain answered these demonstrations for national self-determination, the principle for which Great Britain had ostensibly fought in the war, by FIRING MACHINE GUNS INTO CROWDS OF THESE PEACEABLE AND UNARMED, LIBERTY-SEEKING PEOPLE, KILLING MORE THAN A THOUSAND AND WOUNDING VASTLY MORE."

"General Allenby finally, by force of Egyptian public opinion, advised the British government to permit the Commission to proceed to Paris. When the Commission reached Paris they asked for a hearing before the Peace Conference. This was denied them. They wrote to President Wilson and asked for a conference with him. Their appeals were in vain. Some days after the Commission reached Paris the so-called Protectorate of Great Britain over Egypt was 'recognized.' The holding of Egypt by Great Britain is not a protectorate in the legal sense of the word, but under the guise of a protectorate Great Britain is holding Egypt today as a subject and conquered nation."

Millner's Mission no doubt will succeed in the usual British way of framing a scheme similar to the recent Persian one, granting the Egyptian people the absolute and inviolable right to tie a rope with their own hands, around their own necks. Then Britain can announce to the world as did their Embassy at Washington in September last, "Great Britain has carefully avoided destroying the sovereignty of Egypt."

Japan The Kolchak debacle in Siberia has brought in its train a new situation in the Far East. As Japan is now the last hope against the advancing Bolsheviki, strenuous efforts will be made by them to hold control of Vladivostock and as much of the Siberian coast line as possible. The lone hand that Japan has played amongst her occidental Allies is now

bearing fruit in the form of a more independent control of the eastern Pacific. The sending of British and American troops not to speak of mercenary Poles and Czecho-Slavs, to help "save Russia" was not openly opposed by Japan, yet she must have viewed with alarm military operations of the western powers so near her own front door. The old saying "everything comes to those who wait" seems to have worked in Japan's case, for in the last five years she has gained more by watchful waiting than has some of the nations which played a more militant part. As Policeman of the eastern Pacific she soon will have the beat entirely to herself.

In Eastern Siberia between Irkutsk and Vladivostock Japan is said to have 30,000 well-equipped troops which are in co-operation with Czaristic elements there under General Seminoff. It looks as if the wily Japs intend to make another Shantung of that portion of Russian territory simply by continuing occupation of the same, and the western powers can scarcely object to her making a success of a policy which in their hands has proved to be such a failure. If the British, American and Czech troops are withdrawn, which seems more than likely now, it leaves Japan a free hand to fight Soviet Russia or to negotiate a peace on the basis of territorial concessions, the latter policy is one that Soviet Russia seems to favor. In any case the advantage of recent developments in that district are greatly to the advantage of Japan, the western powers no matter how much they dislike the strong position of their Oriental rival, are compelled to make a choice between her and Bolshevik control of that great eastern gateway Vladivostock.

On the Japanese side of the fence, looking west, they are confronted with many problems that have naturally arisen as a result of their imperial expansion. Like Britain they are an island power with a formidable navy, and most of their armies, again like Britain, are armies of permanent occupation of conquered territory, which is more or less in a continuous state of revolt. China, their gigantic slumbering neighbor is more than a handful for them, and Korea which they have continued to occupy and coerce since the Russo-Japanese war, is a continual thorn in their flesh. Revolts have broken out there on several occasions, as indeed they have done on the mainland of Japan itself less than two years ago, culminating in the rice riots at Yokahama and other Japanese cities.

This further addition to the Yellow Empire, if such it be, will prove to be a further addition to their troubles as well. The "peaceful" penetrating of Jap imperialism, will have to combat the penetration of Bolshevik anti-imperialism. An uprising in any of these possessions, might prove to be the signal for revolt in the whole Oriental world.

Lloyd George says he is willing to make peace with the Bolsheviki as soon as they elect a constituent assembly. Isn't that nice. Another peace like the last one, and there won't be any place left that is peaceable enough to hold a peace meeting.

A hundred per cent American, Oswald, is a workman who will stand the harpoon without quivering. The more he is kicked the more he loves his master, the fuller the jails become with his rebellious fellow workers the louder grows the strains of "My Country" from his loyal throat.

A Retrospect

By FREDERICK ENGELS

The following article by Frederick Engels has been very much quoted and we therefor take pleasure in reprinting it from the July, 1902, issue of *The International Socialist Review*. The article has also additional value because of the great tactical questions that are convulsing the international movement at this time. It presents Engels' views on some of the great questions that are confronting the movements at this time and all should peruse it with pleasure and profit.—Editor's Note.

As the February revolution of 1848 broke out we were all, as regards our views of the conditions and course of revolutionary movements, under the influence of previous historical experience, especially that of France. It was just this latter which had controlled all European history since 1789 and from which now once more the signal for a general upheaval had gone out. Hence it was natural and inevitable that our ideas of the nature and course of the "social" revolution proclaimed at Paris in February, 1848, the revolution of the proletariat, were strongly colored by recollections of the prototypes of 1789 to 1830. And particularly, as the Paris revolt found its echo in the victorious uprisings at Vienna, Milan, Berlin; as all Europe up to the Russian border was swept into the movement; as then in June at Paris the first battle for supremacy was fought between proletariat and bourgeoisie; as even the victory of their own class so convulsed the bourgeoisie of all countries that they flew back again into the arms of the monarchic-feudal reactionists whom they had just overthrown; under all these circumstances there could be no doubt in our minds that the great decisive conflict had begun, and that it would have to be fought out in a single long revolutionary period with varying success, but that it could only end in the final victory of the proletariat.

After the defeats of 1848 we did not by any means share in the illusions of the political pseudo-democracy which was grouped around the outskirts of the provisional governments. This was counting on an early, once for all, decisive victory of the "people" over the "oppressors;" we were counting on a long struggle after the removal of the oppressors, a struggle between the antagonistic elements hidden in this very "people" itself. The pseudo-democracy was expecting from day to day a renewed outbreak; we declared as early as the autumn of 1850 that at least the first chapter of the revolutionary period was closed and that nothing more was to be expected until the outbreak of a new economic world crisis. And for this very reason, too, we were excommunicated as traitors to the revolution by the same people who afterwards almost without exception made their peace with Bismark,—so far as Bismark found them worth having.

But history has shown that we, too, were wrong, and has exposed our view at that time as an illusion; it has done more; it has not only demolished our error, it has also totally recast the conditions under which the proletariat has to fight. The 1848 method of warfare is today antiquated in every particular, and that is a point which at this opportunity deserves to be more closely examined.

All previous revolutions resulted in the displacement of one class government by another. All previous ruling classes were, however, only small minorities compared with the subject mass of the common people. A ruling minority was overthrown, in its

stead another minority seized the helm of state, and remodeled the political institutions according to its own interests. In every case this new minority group was one which the progress of economic development had trained for and called to rulership and for that very reason and only for that reason, it happened that at the time of the revolution the subject majority either took sides with it or acquiesced in it. But ignoring the concrete details of each particular case, the common form of all these revolutions was this, that they were minority revolutions. Even when the majority assisted, it was, consciously or unconsciously, only working in the interest of a minority; this fact, or even the passive non-resistance of the majority, gave to the minority the appearance of being the representative of the whole people.

After the first great victory the successful minority as a rule became divided; half was satisfied with what was already won, the other half wished to go farther yet and made new demands which at least in part were in the real or apparent interest of the great mass of the people. These more radical demands were in particular instances carried through, but for the most part only temporarily; the more moderate party again got the upper hand, the latest gains were wholly or partly lost again. The radicals then raised the cry of "treason," or attributed their defeat to accident. In fact, however, matters stood about so:—the results of the first victory were made secure only by another victory over the more radical party. This done, and thereby the immediate demands of the moderates being attained, the radicals and their following disappeared again from the stage.

All the revolutions of modern times, beginning with the great English revolution of the seventeenth century, showed these features, which seemed inseparable from every revolutionary struggle. They appeared to be also applicable to the struggles of the proletariat for its emancipation; all the more applicable, as in 1848 the few people could be counted who understood even in a general way the direction in which this emancipation was to be sought. The proletarian masses themselves even in Paris after the victory were still absolutely in the dark as to the course to pursue. And yet the movement was there, instinctive, spontaneous, irrepressible. Was not that exactly the condition in which a revolution was bound to succeed, though led, it is true, by a minority, but this time not in the interest of a minority, but in the truest interest of the majority. If in all the more prolonged revolutionary periods the great masses of the people had been so easily won over by the merely plausible inducements of ambitious minorities, how could they be less accessible to ideas which were the purest reflex of their economic situation, which were nothing else but the clear, intelligent expression of their own wants, wants as yet not understood by themselves and only indistinctly felt? It is true this revolutionary temper of the masses had nearly always and generally very soon given way to lassitude or even to a reaction into the opposite attitude, as soon as the illusion had vanished and undeception had taken place.

Here, however, it was not a question of dazzling offers merely, but a question of promoting the most

vital interests of the great majority itself,—interests which, it is true, at that time were by no means clearly seen by this great majority, but which in the course of practical enforcement were bound soon enough to become clear to it by the convincing force of experience. And now when in the spring of 1850 the development of the bourgeois republic which arose out of the “social” revolution of 1848 had concentrated all actual power in the hands of the great bourgeoisie, and this having monarchial inclinations too; when on the other hand this same development had grouped all other classes of society, both peasants and small-bourgeoisie, around the proletariat in such a way that in and after the joint victory the controlling factor would be, not those others, but the proletariat itself, grown sharp-witted through experience—was there not every prospect at hand for turning a minority revolution into a majority revolution?

History has shown that we, and all who thought like us, were wrong. It has made it plain that the condition of economic development on the Continent at that time was not yet ripe enough by far for the abolition of capitalist production; it has proved this by the economic revolution which since 1848 has transformed the whole continent and has for the first time effectively nationalized large-scale industry in France, Austria, Hungary, Poland and, more recently in Russia, while out of Germany it has actually made an industrial state of the first rank,—all on a capitalist basis, which system therefore in 1848 was still capable of great expansion. Moreover, it is just this industrial revolution which first brought about clearness everywhere in class relations; which shoved aside a lot of middlemen who had come down from the early manufacturing period and in eastern Europe even from the guild system; which created a genuine bourgeoisie and a genuine factory proletariat and pushed them to the front place in the social development.

Thereby, however, the struggle of these two great classes, a struggle which in 1848 existed outside of England only in Paris, and at most in some few great industrial centers, has spread for the first time over all Europe and reached an intensity which in 1848 was inconceivable. Then there were many confused sectarian gospels with their different panaceas; today the single transparently clear and universally recognized theory of Marx, which sharply formulates the ultimate aims of the struggle; then, masses separated and differentiated by locality and nationality, bound together only by a feeling of common suffering, undeveloped, tossed helplessly back and forth between enthusiasm and despair; today one great international army of socialists, unceasingly advancing, daily growing in numbers, organization, discipline, intelligence and certainty of victory. If even this mighty army of the proletariat has not yet attained its object, if far from wresting victory at one grand stroke, it has to press slowly forward from one position to another in a hard, tenacious struggle, this proves once for all how impossible it was in 1848 to effect the transformation of society by a mere sudden onslaught.

A bourgeoisie, split into two dynastic monarchial factions, but which demanded before everything else peace and security for its financial transactions; confronting it a proletariat, conquered but still threatening, and around which the small-tradesmen and peasants were grouping themselves more and more; the constant threatening of violent outbreak, which after all offered no prospect of a final solution,—that was

the situation fitted as if made to order, for the forcible usurpation of the pseudo-democratic pretender, Louis Bonaparte, y-clept the Third. On December 2, 1851, with the aid of the army, he put an end to the strained situation and secured internal peace for Europe in order to beautify it with a new era of wars. The period of revolutions from the bottom up was for the time being closed; there followed a period of revolution from the top down.

The setback from 1851 towards imperialism gave new proof of the unripeness of the proletarian aspirations of that time. But it was itself destined to create the conditions under which they must ripen.

Internal peace secured the full development of the new industrial life; the necessity of keeping the army busy and of turning the revolutionary activities away from home engendered war in which Bonaparte under the pretense of giving effect to the “nationality principle,” sought to rake up annexations to France. His imitator, Bismark, adopted the same policy for Prussia; he played his political grab-game, his devolution from the top, in 1866 against the German confederation and Austria, and not less against the recalcitrant Chamber of Deputies in Prussia. But Europe was too small for two Bonapartes, and so the irony of history would have it that Bismark overthrow Bonaparte and that King William of Prussia should restore not only the small-German Empire, but also the French republic. The general result, however, was this, that in Europe the autonomy and inner unity of the large nations, with the exception of Poland, had become a reality; true, it was only within relatively modest limits, but yet far enough so that the developing process of the working class was no longer materially hindered by national complications. The grave diggers of the revolution of 1848 had become the executors of its will; and beside them arose the proletariat, the heir of 1848, already threatening, in the Internationale.

After the war of 1870-71, Bonaparte disappears from the stage and Bismarck’s mission is completed, so that he can now subside again to the level of an ordinary country squire. But the closing act of this period is formed by the Paris Commune. A treacherous attempt by Thiers to steal the cannons of the Paris National Guard called forth a successful revolt. It was again demonstrated that in Paris no other revolution is possible any more, except a proletarian one. After the victory the leadership fell uncontested into the lap of the working class, just as a matter of course. And again it was shown how impossible it was even then, twenty years after the former effort, for the leadership of the working class to be successful. On one hand France left Paris in the lurch and stood by looking on while it was bleeding under the bullets of McMahon; on the other hand the Commune wasted its strength in a barren quarrel of the two disagreeing factions, the Blanquists, who formed the majority, and the Proudhonists, who formed the minority, neither of which knew what to do. The victory of 1871, which came as a gift, proved just as barren as the forcible overthrow of 1848.

With the fall of the Paris Commune it was thought that the militant proletariat was everlastingly buried past resurrection. But quite the contrary, its most vigorous growth dates from the Commune and the Franco-Prussia war. The complete transformation of the whole military system by bringing the entire able-bodied population into the armies, now running up into

the millions, and by the introduction of firearms, cannon and explosives of hitherto unheard-of power, put a sudden end to the Napoleonic war era and assured a peaceful industrial development by making impossible any war other than a world war of unprecedented gruesomeness and of absolutely incalculable consequences. On the other hand, the increase of the army budget in geometrical progression forced the taxes up to an uncollectible point, and thereby drove the poorer classes into the arms of socialism. The annexation of Alsace-Lorraine, which was the immediate cause of the mad competition in preparations for war, might goad the French and German bourgeoisie into chauvinism towards each other; but for the workingmen of both countries it was only a new bond of unity. And the anniversary of the Paris Commune became the first general holiday of the entire proletariat.

The war of 1870-1871, and the overthrow of the Commune had, as Marx foretold, shifted the center of gravity of the European labor movement for the present from France to Germany. In France it took, of course, years to recover from the blood-letting of May, 1871. In Germany, on the contrary, where industry was developing faster and faster, forced on in hothouse fashion by the providential millards from France, the social democracy was growing faster yet and more enduring. Thanks to the intelligence with which the German workingmen made use of the universal suffrage, introduced in 1866, the astounding growth of the party is revealed to all in incontestable figures. In

1871, 102,000 social democratic votes; in 1874, 352,000; in 1877, 493,000. Then came the high official recognition of these gains in the shape of the anti-socialist law. The party was for a moment demoralized; the number of votes in 1881 fell to 312,000. But that relapse was soon overcome, and then under the pressure of the anti-socialist law, and without a press, without a recognized organization, without the right of association or of assembly, the growth began to increase more rapidly than ever. In 1884, 550,000 votes; in 1887, 763,000; in 1890, 1,427,000. Then the hand of the state was palsied. The anti-socialist law disappeared; the number of socialist votes rose to 1,787,000, over a quarter of the total votes cast. The government and the ruling classes had exhausted all their expedients; they were useless, aimless, resultless. The tangible proofs of their impotence which the authorities, from night watchman to imperial chancellor, got shoved under their noses and that, too, from the despised workingmen, were numbered by millions. The state had got to the end of its Latin, the workingmen were only at the beginning of theirs.

Moreover, in addition to this, the German workingmen had done their cause a second great service, besides the first one, consisting merely in their existence as the strongest, best disciplined, and most rapidly growing Socialist party; they had shown their comrades of all countries a new weapon, and one of the keenest, in showing them how to use the ballot.

(To be continued).

The Socialist Forum

J. S. of Buffalo, N. Y., wants to know if the Workers pay taxes? To have a clear understanding of the question of taxes it is necessary to understand the reason for the existence of taxes and taxation.

It requires enormous amounts of money to maintain the various Governmental institutions and as no section of the capitalist class desires to foot the bill for the support of those institutions of oppression, this necessary money is obtained by collection of taxes. The question of taxation is a perpetual issue on politics as different groups of capitalists are always endeavoring to place the burden of expenses of the Government on some other group. If taxes are dodged by one group they will fall on another group as they are a necessary expense of capitalism. It is easier for the larger and richer corporations to sidestep the tax assessor because their holdings are so vast and often take the form of stocks, bonds and mortgages which are harder to assess than the property of the small owners. Because of that condition the latter group pay more than their share of taxes.

The workers are not interested whether the large or small capitalist pays the expenses of government. When he allows the question of taxes to influence his political thought he is merely wasting his time. The workers as a class have no property that can be taxed, and therefore pay no taxes.

The average workingman will not accept that statement. He will claim the workers pay some taxes, and even some "Socialists" maintain that the workers pay all taxes because they produce all the wealth. If taxes were based upon production the latter claim might be true, if the workers had anything to pay with, but wages as a rule being barely sufficient to supply food,

clothing and shelter, governmental institutions would be forced to suspend operation if they depended on the producers footing the bills. Taxes are collected from owners of property not producers of wealth. The claim, very often put forth that the landlord pays the taxes out of the rents he collects from his tenants and therefore if taxes are high rents will be high and if taxes are low rents will be low, is erroneous.

F. F. of Rochester, N. Y., wants to know if the commodity struggle is not of vital importance to the working class. This is a very hard question to answer F. F. as we do not know of any commodity struggle. In this part of the world we have not seen commodities doing any struggling and are slightly at a loss to understand what you mean by "commodity struggle."

There are other struggles in society that affect the working class besides the class struggle, but most of them arise from the class nature of society. The workers as owners of the commodity labor power are engaged in a perpetual struggle to keep its price up around value and the capitalist class always striving to force the price down. That is a struggle between buyers and sellers. As sellers of a commodity which is usually a glut on the market the worker is in competition with other sellers of that commodity who are members of the working class. The cry for one hundred per cent organization by the A. F. of L. and the One Big Union by the I. W. W. are efforts to reduce the competition amongst the sellers and place them in a better position to dicker over the price with the buyers, the capitalists. Those struggles are of vital interest to the workers and cannot be avoided by the work-

ing class until classes disappear and labor power is no longer a commodity.

We have the reverse side of the shield in the ranks of the capitalist class. As buyers of labor power they organize in employers' associations to be better able to meet a demand for higher prices from the sellers of labor power. They also have to meet competition from sellers of commodities in the same line of business in the country and also in the world market. There is also a struggle between different groups of capitalists for control of raw materials in undeveloped countries and those struggles develop a political struggle commonly known as war. The workers become very much interested in those fights when they reach this stage as they generally do most of the fighting and suffer most as a result of the struggle, while certain groups of capitalists increase their wealth and **entrench themselves** for the time being more firmly on the backs of the workers.

If houses and flats are plentiful, supply greater than demand, rents will have a tendency to fall, but with the increase of repressive measures by the government taxes will probably rise. A rise in taxes is very often used as an excuse by the landlord to raise rents, but that does not make the cause. Landlords will raise rents whenever possible whether they pay taxes or not.

The worker who owns a home pays taxes as a property owner not as a worker but the percentage of workers who own homes is so small that it does not alter the fact, "That the capitalist class, not the working class, pay taxes."

The argument that every time the worker buys a suit of clothes, a pair of overalls or a pair of shoes he pays taxes is incorrect. The price of all those commodities are determined by the law of value and supply and demands. They are always sold for all the traffic will bear and if the market will not stand a rise in price additional taxation cannot be added to the price of the commodity.

The workers are not robbed as consumers or taxpayers but are exploited as producers. As workers we are not interested in taxes, our interests lie in educating our selves and fellow workers to own and control the means of wealth production so that we can individually enjoy what we socially produce.

F. R. of Omaha is very much put out because we do not advocate industrial action. That is a job that the flunkies of capitalism are looking after very well. Practically every capitalist sheet we read is a strong advocate of more work, for the workers of course, and more work means more industrial action. We realize that we cannot get along without industrial action but we are in favor of more of it for the capitalist class and their exponents and less of it for the working class.

As for the advocates of industrial or so-called direct action it is a misnomer. If you study closely the tactics of all organizations that take a conscious part in the class struggle you will find that they are all taking political action of one form or another. Your objection "that we do not advocate industrial unionism and therefore cannot be revolutionary" implies that all industrial unions are revolutionary. The facts do not support your contention. The O. B. U. of Canada is far from a revolutionary organization. The syndicalists in Europe have proven themselves reaction-

aries at different times.

The industrial form of organization is the up-to-date form to meet the master class in a battle for better conditions but in the struggle for ownership of the means of wealth production the workers are forced to take political action whether they are members of an industrial organization or not. Understanding the historical mission of the working class, we realize that a knowledge of their class position, the cause of that position in present day society and the only way out, is the main question.

Therefore the function of a Socialist paper is to spread the knowledge necessary to solve that question and abolish the necessity for industrial unions.

Those struggles are all over the control or the purchase and sale of commodities, between owners of commodities functioning as buyers or sellers. We would hardly be correct in terming this a commodity struggle as the struggle is carried on by human beings with with the passing of chattel slavery human beings were taken out of the commodity category. The struggles arise out of the class nature of society and will disappear with the disappearance of classes and the inauguration of the co-operative commonwealth.

The Falling Rate of Profit

T. M., of Omaha, Nebraska wishes to know if the political economists are correct when they assert that profits are growing smaller.

Profits are not growing less, but the rate of profit has been reduced owing to a change in the composition of capital. To illustrate, we will take a manufacturer of shoes of 50 years ago. His capital was \$1,000, made up of \$500 constant capital (buildings, machinery, etc.), and \$500 variable capital (wages). His total profit for the year was \$250. The rate of profit is 25 per cent, but the rate of exploitation is 50 per cent, as all profit is derived from the variable capital but estimated on the total capital. The business grows and twenty-five years later the capitalization is \$100,000, with \$15,000 variable and \$85,000 constant capital. The profits are now \$10,000 or 10 per cent, while the rate of exploitation has risen to 66 2-3 per cent. The business grows and the total capital is increased to \$1,000,000, divided into \$800,000 constant and \$200,000 variable. The rate of profit drops to 5 per cent or \$200,000, but the rate of exploitation has risen to 100 per cent. It will be noted that while the rate of profit has fallen, the total profit is greater.

This process is known as the "law of the falling rate of profit," and while the figures are simply used as an illustration this is the general tendency of capitalist development. During the war this process was arrested in some industries and the rate of profit was very high, but with the return of normal conditions this tendency, which puzzles the minds of bourgeois political economists, will return.

Only through a knowledge of Marxian economics is it possible to explain this phenomenon. Equipped with this knowledge the problem is comparatively simple. Herein lies one of the main reasons for the increasing unrest. With the change of the composition of capital (more constant capital in relation to variable capital) we have a greater degree of exploitation. This is keenly felt by the workers even though they do not understand the cause, and is expressed in the numerous strikes and other labor disturbances.