

Against the Masses

By JAY LOVESTONE

1. A Rigid Constitution

The American Constitution is replete with the most cleverly devised and deadly effective means of baffling the will of the masses and making it almost impossible for them to alter the form of the government. The Constitution makes it impossible for the working masses directly to propose or even ratify changes in the fundamental law.

An extraordinary majority is required even to amend the Constitution. A two-thirds majority of both Houses on application from the Legislatures in two-thirds of the States is required merely to set in motion the machinery for Constitutional amendment. Then, the ratification of the proposed amendment can come only after it has been assented to by conventions or the legislatures in three-fourths of the States, as Congress may decide.

On this basis, approximately one-fiftieth of the population, so distributed as to constitute a majority in the thirteen smallest states, can defeat any amendment proposed. With the control of the Government and the press resting securely in the hands of their employers, it is practically impossible for the workers to utilize the Constitution as a means of effective fundamental change. Because of countless obstacles, the workers cannot win a bare majority for a mere reform. It follows then that the belief that the workers can, under even more aggravated circumstances, win a two-thirds majority for a fundamental change, is utterly untenable. Likewise, the belief of the reform-Socialists that the American Consti-

tution makes it possible for the working class to make a revolution in the formally legal way is farther from the truth by a greater distance than that through which Lucifer fell.

Apropos of this feature of our constitution Woodrow Wilson said:

"None of the written constitutions of Europe are so difficult of alteration as our own."

Of over two thousand proposed amendments only nineteen have been adopted so far. The first twelve were inconsequential. The next three were adopted thru the force of arms—that is, while the Northern Army of Occupation still held the conquered Southern States or as a price for readmission to Congress. In fact, not a single one of the Constitutional amendments adopted to date is of a fundamental, social nature. In no other country in the world has the employing class such an effective barrier against possible encroachments by the workers. This distinction between legislative and constitutional amendment does not exist in any other country in the world.