

# Second Thoughts on the Fourth of July

By JAY LOVESTONE.

PRIOR to this year we communists in America called the day on which the Declaration of Independence was signed, July fourth. It occupied just the same place ideologically, politically, that July fifth, or sixth, or June thirtieth did. Until 1926 it had very little significance as a historic day for us.

This is the first time that we speak of the Fourth of July. This day assumes a real significance for us.

We must look out against any Americanization craze in our Party. In the bourgeois sense of the word, Americanization is a very dangerous thing. In the bolshevik sense of the word, Americanization at once affords a hope for the future and practical results in the present.

To speak of Americanizing our Party in the bolshevik sense of the word, means to speak of the Party adopting tactics based on the objective conditions. Examination of these objective conditions will indicate that historical traditions much as they appear to the superficial observer as abstract forces, are in reality very concrete elements, very substantial phases of the objective conditions at hand and transmitted.

The American bourgeoisie have always prided themselves on saying that there are no classes in the United States, never have been, and never can be. The history of America, like the history of any other country, is the history of class struggle. The first American Revolution is a gigantic class struggle. If we scratch the surface of the historical evidence of the first American Revolution, we will find that the Civil War was a class war. This Revolution grew out of conflict of economic class interests. It was not a single event; it was the climax of a series of events.

It is not my purpose to describe any battles or skirmishes or deal with the military disasters or victories of the contending forces of the first American Revolution. Such investigations are relatively unimportant for

the American workers in 1926. What is timely for us at this time is to trace certain facts of the first American Revolution, to see what lessons we can draw from this tremendously significant historical event and to see how the experiences of our forefathers stack up in the light of the estimates of these experiences given by our bourgeoisie. More than that, what is most valuable for us is to compare the tactics, the practices and activities of the American masses and their leaders in 1776 with the advice now being given to the American workers by those whom they still, unfortunately in the main, recognize as leaders today.

Much ink is being spilled by the robed, untitled and well-paid defenders of the present system in their attacks on the opponents of the capitalist order. These apologists of the exploiting class are shouting against the revolutionists. They are yelling against a dictatorship by the proletariat. They are ranting against the use of force. They say that is foreign, that is un-American. They are yelling from the housetops against the American workers having anything to do with other workers from the different countries in their struggles against the bosses. The official historians and editors of our ruling class are working overtime propagating the idea that the present form of the American government is eternal, and that it affords the workers of this country an opportunity in pursuit of life, liberty and happiness.

Let us examine these "eternal truths" that are hurled so gratuitously by the exploiters at the workingman.

It ill becomes the defenders of the bourgeois class which is a small minority of our population to speak of the sanctity, of the inviolability of the majority rule. American democracy today is the most crass, the in spots well camouflaged, expression of minority rule in the interests of a minority, at the costly expense of the vast majority of the population, in the world.

The American workers can very

well draw inspiration on the question of majority and minority from the experiences of the first American Revolution. The workers and exploited farmers of this country are the overwhelming majority of this country. But in view of the fact that the capitalists who are a small minority are speaking so much against the Communist Party because it frankly says that the proletarian revolution at the outset may be initiated by a minority in the interests of the great majority, it is worth while to analyze the background of the first American Revolution for extremely valuable lessons.

At the time of the first American Revolution the Patriots (those who were against the government) were in a minority. The Loyalists (those who were for the then existing government) were numerically very strong. The conscious supporters of the government at that time were at least a third of the entire colonial population. They formed a majority in such important colonies as New York, South Carolina, and Pennsylvania. It is estimated that at least 100,000 persons who were for maintaining the government existing then in America, were exiled by the revolutionists. Their property was confiscated. They were tarred and feathered and they were treated much more roughly in many respects than the Czarists who were for maintaining the old reactionary government in Russia were by the Bolsheviks. The Communists of today can learn many lessons from the American Revolutionists of 1776 in treatment of counter revolutionists, of Loyalists, of Tories. The noted historian, Adams, in his book "New England in the Revolution" declares that "More colonials served in the Imperial than the Revolutionary army." He further says, "If we accept the estimate that at the beginning of the war one third of the people were in favor of independence, a third of the people were opposed to it, and one third indefinite, it is evident that two thirds could not have been counted upon to sustain the Patriots' (revolutionists,

those against the government) side with any ardor."

Force and Violence.

American workers have been sent to jail for defending themselves against the terrorism of the existing Tory government in the United States. Many states have passed laws which provide for severe jail penalties, and years of imprisonment to be visited upon any worker who dares even insinuate in the most indirect manner that the workers and poor farmers have a right to defend themselves against the brutalities of their exploiters.

In this light it is interesting to recall the declaration of the Continental Congress of 1774, which so forcefully declared:

"We are reduced to the alternative of choosing an unconditional submission to the tyranny of irritated masters, or RESISTANCE BY FORCE. THE LATTER IS OUR CHOICE. We have counted the cost of the contest, and find nothing is so dreadful as voluntary slavery."

No more inspiring words have been uttered for American workers by any Communist section of the world.

Let us go on to listen to one of the leaders of the American Revolution, Tom Paine. Incidentally, we should remark that Tom Paine has been much underestimated by the bourgeois historians and has been much neglected. These classic words of Tom Paine mean very much to the American workers today. We should think very seriously of what Tom Paine meant when he said:

"By referring the matter (the grievances against the British ruling class) from arguments to arms, a new point for politics is struck. All plans, preparations, etc., prior to the 19th of April (the battle of Lexington), are like almanacs of last year."

Let the American workers think of Ludlow, Calumet, the Bisbee deportations, the slavery in the mining sections, the tyranny in the steel regions, in the light of these meaningful words of Paine.