

Second Thoughts on the Fourth of July

This is the second and concluding article by Jay Lovestone on the revolutionary methods of struggle employed by the colonial fathers in overthrowing the rule of the British crown. The first article appeared in last week's issue of the magazine and dealt with the tactics of force and violence in the revolution of 1776.

By JAY LOVESTONE.

The Form of Government.

WE can understand why the American capitalist today is shuddering at the word dictatorship. When they hear the word dictatorship uttered by workers they know that it means the dictatorship of the workers to supplant the present dictatorship of exploiters. When the bourgeois apologists speak of the holiness of the present form of government they try to make us believe that the people living in America have always had the same form of government, that this present form of government is immutable, that it has eternal blessings for the masses.

Our revolutionary forefathers, when they decided to destroy the domination of the British ruling class, did not put much faith in the then existing governmental institutions under which they were living. Our forefathers decided to set up their own governmental apparatus. The first thing they did was to clean out the courts, which then, as now, were the bulwark of the reactionaries, the Tories (those who were loyal to the existing government).

In a letter which Lorn Dunmore, governor of Virginia, wrote to Lord Dartmouth, dated December 24, 1774, he gave a description of the governmental apparatus set up by the revolutionists to displace the existing government. He said:

"A committee is chosen in every county to carry the Association of the Congress into execution. They inspect the trade and correspondence of every merchant; watch the conduct of any inhabitant; may send for, catechise and stigmatize him if he does not appear to follow the instructions of their Congress. Every city, besides, is arming an independent company to protect their committee and to be employed against the government, should occasion require. Not a justice of the peace acts except as a committeeman. Abolishing the courts of justice was the first step taken."

The American revolutionists set up a very effective dictatorship to uproot all those loyal to the government of the exploiters and oppressors at that time. Anybody who did not declare himself on the side of the revolution was treated roughly. Even before the Declaration of Independence was issued, Connecticut declared that there should be no more freedom of speech

for those who were loyal to the government and against the revolution. Those loyal to the government were not allowed to get together. Such privileges were accorded to them in cases where they were attending funerals, and then they were watched carefully by the committees of safety which were set up by the revolutionists. Those loyal to the government were completely disarmed.

The first American revolution also set up a very effective "cheka" for weeding out Tory elements. Let us see how this "cheka" of 1776 worked in Massachusetts, the state which has given us that flower of all Americans—Coolidge.

"In Massachusetts it was provided that a meeting of the inhabitants of each town might be called, at which a strong patriot should be chosen as chairman. Any citizen present at the meeting might give him the name of anyone suspected of Tory sympathies and, if a majority present voted affirmatively, the person named was arrested and tried at the next session of court. If convicted, he was shipped as soon as possible, AT HIS OWN EXPENSE, to Europe or the West Indies."

Those refusing to accept allegiance to the revolutionary government and continuing their loyalty to the overthrown government were put into jail, kept there forty days and later deported, in many cases to some part of the British dominions. And if any of these loyal to the government returned the penalty awaiting them was: "Death without benefit of clergy."

"Foreigners" Help American Revolution.

A lot of talk is now going the rounds about "Bolshevik money," about money from other countries, to help finance the revolution in America. This is sheer nonsense. The only ones in America who have seen Bolshevik gold or gotten any money from the Soviet government are such capitalists of the type of Henry Ford. Revolutions are not created artificially. Revolutions must grow out of the objective conditions in the country. Still, it is very instructive to note the role foreign money played in insuring the success of the first American revolution. The French government spent at least 25,000,000 francs in financing the American revolution, to overthrow the government existing in America in 1776. It has been said by no less an authority than Admiral Mahan that the American revolution was really won on the high seas in the naval battles between the fleets of Spain and France on one side and Great Britain on the other.

Professor Edgerton has well summed up the role of foreign governments in helping bring the first American revolution to a successful conclusion when he said: "The war had lasted long enough for clear-headed Americans to

recognize the extreme difficulty of bringing it to a successful conclusion without foreign allies."

The French fleet and French soldiers had much to do with the surrender of Cornwallis (defending the existing government) to Washington, champion of the revolutionary government.

Yes, our American bourgeoisie today would not like to confess to the workers that it was largely thru the alliance of our American forefathers with "foreigners," largely thru the use of "foreign" money that the first revolution was a success and that a goodly portion of the foundation for the development of capitalism in the United States to its present heights was thus laid.

Cheating the Workers.

THE workers paid for and fought the revolutionary war.

The workers took seriously the slogan of the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. While the wealthy stayed at home, or often hired substitutes to fight for them, the workers, the mechanics, the poor farmers had to go to the front. The suffering of the soldiers at Valley Forge defies description. At the same time the rich were waxing fat on fabulous war profits. Many of the leaders of the revolutionary movement in 1776 preached radical doctrines to the workers, but these leaders failed to put these doctrines into practice except against the British ruling class. Adams summed up the situation very well when he said:

"The petty aristocracy of clergy, loyalists, and merchants scorned the poor, had no belief in their political wisdom and at the same time was thrown into period panics on account of fear of them. It was all very well when the common people were to be goaded to action and war . . . to talk about all men being created equal and of the rights of all to the pursuit of life, liberty and happiness, but once the war was won, the old doctrines of the superior rights of the well-born to govern and the superior sanctity of their property came once more to the fore. . . ."

"The people had been under the delusion that they had fought an eight years' war for the rights of man and at the time of the formation of the constitution many towns objected strenuously to this further limitation of the franchise. Dorchester claimed that men might be 'useful and respectable members of society' even if they did not possess £50."

The Washingtons and the Hamiltons tried their hardest to stop the revolutionary movement from proceeding further and from altering the relationship of classes, yet it was an alteration of the class relationships in favor

of the common people which was the outstanding feature of the revolutionary war propaganda.

Since the first American revolution the history of the United States has been a history of the struggles of the masses for an alteration in the class relationships.

The first phase of the American revolution was not really complete until the election of Jefferson. Jefferson, it must be remembered, was the spokesman of the workers and the poorer farmers. Hamilton, his chief opponent, was the leader of the Federalists, the big commercial interests which desired the establishment of a strongly centralized government, a national bank, higher tariff, an army, a navy, and even talked for some time of establishing an American titled aristocracy. For weeks the first senate was debating as to the title that should be given to the president and how the senators should be addressed.

The decisive vote for Jefferson in the college of electors was cast by one who served a four-month jail term for violating the seditious law passed by the Federalists against the working and farming masses.

With the victory of the North over the South in the Civil War the hegemony of the American bourgeoisie over all other classes was complete. Since the continuation of the Civil War the American capitalists have been consolidating their hold on the resources, industries and government of the United States. But since then there has also been developing a definite proletariat. The proletarianization of the United States has been increasing at an accelerating pace since 1893—the time marking roughly the disappearance of free land and the establishment of the basis for capitalist monopolist control of the basic resources of the country. The struggle waged in the first revolution must be continued by the American workers today. The American workers have splendid traditions to live up to. Comrade Lenin has well pointed that out some time ago. Our traditions of struggle in the first American Civil War in 1776, in the second American Civil War in 1861, in the subsequent heroic battles against the railroad capitalists, the coal kings, and the oil barons affords plenty of inspiration.

On this day marking the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence from those who exploited our forefathers in 1776 it is time for us to think very seriously of the necessary steps to be taken for signing a new Declaration of Independence—a Declaration of Independence from our exploiters today.

We can proudly tread the paths beaten by our revolutionary forefathers. They can teach us much. Let us learn from them. Let us act.