

THE CONFESSIONS OF A COUNTER-REVOLUTIONIST OF 1776.

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Reminiscences of an American Loyalist 1738-89. Edited by Jonathan Boucher. Published by Houghton Mifflin Company.

(Concluded from previous issue.)

How the Pro-Government Men Were Treated in 1776.

THIS preacher proudly confesses of having "the honor of being set down as a government man." Boucher may have had this honor. But he certainly had no pleasure at the hands of the first American revolutionists, as is evident from the following:

"I was soon restrained from preaching, and the press was no longer open to me. The first open and avowed violence I met with was on account of my expressly declining, when applied to by some noisy patriots heretofore of no great note, to preach a sermon recommending the suffering people of Boston to the charity of my parish. Their port was shut up by act of parliament; and it was alleged that they suffered thus in the common cause. Contributions were collected for them all over the continent; the true motive was by these means to raise a sum sufficient to purchase arms and ammunition. I also refused to set my hand to various associations and resolves, all, in my estimation, very unnecessary, unwise and unjust. In consequence, of which I soon became a marked man; and tho I endeavored to conduct myself with all possible temper and even caution, I daily met with insults, indignities and injuries. At length the informations respecting my supposed inimicality to America were regularly sworn to, and laid before the provincial committee sitting in Annapolis . . . A body of militia was ordered to take me immediately into custody, and accordingly not less than two hundred came to the Governor's where I was on a visit, to seize and carry me before the committee."

What a living picture of the first American Revolution! How our pure and unhyphenated democrats must chafe to think that it was thru such means that their "glorious American democracy" scored its decisive victory over British "monarchism" and tyranny! To what depths of eloquence will our Constitutional, peaceful socialists who speak so volubly of the gradualness, of the peaceable, civilized methods so inherent in and inseparable from the Anglo-Saxons engaged in settling political disputes—changing class relationships. And above all, how our bourgeois law—and order angels can rant against the czarist priests, exploiters, and pogrom agents being denied the use of the press and pulpit for the express purpose of restoring czarism and hoodlignism.

Fortunately, the second American Revolution, learning from the first in no small measure, will act as determinedly in sweeping away the bourgeois opposition to social progress, to a fundamental betterment of the conditions of our working and farming masses.

But let Boucher put some finishing touches on this vital historical point. When he preached peaceableness his audience would rise and leave. He also lets us in on a further picturesque and instructive secret about life in a revolution:

"And for more than six months I preached, when I did, with a pair of loaded pistols lying on the cushion; having given notice that if any man, or body of men, could be possibly so lost to all sense of decency and propriety as to attempt really to do what had long been threatened, that is to drag me out of my pulpit, I should think myself justified before God and man in repelling violence by violence."

So—to this Reverend, Christ was extraordinarily generous and brought not only peace but also a couple of loaded revolvers. This apostle of peacefulness and non-resistance to the oppressive measures of the British

ruling class was trying to sell the lord to his customers with a sermon in one hand and a loaded gun in the other. Novel methods, indeed. But these were revolutionary days in America.

Some Questions of a Counter-Revolutionist.

When Boucher saw that his sermons could no longer go with the Americans he decided to flee rather than be deported. Entertaining the opinion of most of the Tories, he thought the struggle would be of short duration, and prepared to return soon. He left for England fully convinced that the government would make short shrift of the revolutionists. But before sailing Boucher addressed a series of questions to the people of Maryland. Some of these we reproduce as extremely thought-provoking regarding the attitude of the reactionaries of 1776 and their counterpart, the reactionaries of 1926.

"What good reason can be given for any committees, not known to the laws of the land or the constitution, taking upon them to debate and determine on matters of the highest moment, and which affect the very vitals of our constitution?"

Certainly, the reactionaries, then, as now, hated and feared the new organs of state power being set up by the new ruling class. Everything that the subject class does to secure freedom and supremacy is always illegal and against the prevailing constitution.

"Did one man in a thousand of the people of this province give a vote for any of the members of the said general committee?"

How strikingly parallel to the complaints and attacks of the czarists and capitalists the world over against the Soviets! Boucher and his colleagues defending the tyranny of his ruling class and absolute monarchy in America call democracy to their rescue! This is also typical of the anti-Bolsheviks of today—whether they be the champions of capitalism in the bourgeois parties or the defenders of the bourgeoisie in the social-democratic leadership. Speaking actually for perpetuating bourgeois oppression and exploitation, all of the "freedom-lovers" (for the ruling class, of course) talk like the Bouchers of 1776 of "justice or common sense, or even of the common ideas of liberty."

But here is another set:

"What is tyranny but the assumption and exercise of power without authority?"

"What liberty can the people of this province be said to enjoy, when their arms necessary for their personal defense have been arbitrarily taken away from them; when they no longer have a free press; when the ministers of the word of god are dictated to and controlled in their holy function and when even the freedom of private debate is overawed by committee censures and the denunciation of tar and feathers."

The ruling class at any particular historical moment always looks upon itself as the source of all authority. When Boucher speaks of disarmed people, he is expressing his grief at the disarming of the counter-revolutionists—those loyal to the government. And what a vivid picture we

have here of the class dictatorship set up in America by our forefathers in order to secure the victory for bourgeois democracy. Only to the superficial observer is this contradiction puzzling and painful. To the Marxian this "contradiction" is a reality which reveals the crux of the whole strategy and tactics of class warfare.

A parting shot was fired by Boucher in his last letter to Washington, dated August 6, 1775, in which he closes: "You are no longer worthy of my friendship; a man of honor can no longer without dishonor be connected with you. With your cause I renounce you."

This was no longer the day of verbal arguments. The day of arms had arrived. The First American Revolution was on. Reverend Boucher embarked. Afterwards, in common with other Loyalists in general, he obtained a regular pension from the British government.

A Book For Students.

We have given only a few typical selections from these confessions of a counter-revolutionist of 1776 to let in some welcome light on the First American Revolution. It will take much light to penetrate and break the mist in which our official historians have wrapped our First Revolution and hidden its real class character and basis from the masses.

No student of American history—viewed as a dynamic story of class struggles—can afford to miss this book. A critical and thorough examination of its contents will well repay those who are prepared to draw valuable lessons for the problems of today from our struggles of yesterday.

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