

The World War and the Trade Unions

By A. LOSOVSKY.

SOON it will be ten years since the European nations had been thrown into the mad war. The world came out of the last war in an entirely different shape than when it entered into it. Millions of dead, millions of invalids, incalculable losses in wealth and means of production, the destruction of European economics and the subjection of Europe by the powerful capitalism of America—these are a few of the results of the "war for democracy."

The end of the war also brought to a close the world hegemony of the capitalism of Europe. The center of gravity was shifted to the United States. At the present the world is ruled by the dollar. The war was concluded by the Treaty of Versailles, and it is really hard to say what has contributed more to the ruination of the world—the four years of war or the six years of peace. The entire continent of Europe has been shattered to its foundations.

We recollect a few of the slogans of the last war. "To disarm the Prussian militarism," "Self-determination of peoples," "A war for civilization." All these slogans were on the banners of the democracy of Europe. The result of this "democratic" pretence was a terrible and shameless peace of brigandage—a peace which humanity had never had to live thru. Up to this very day Europe is suffering as the result of the consequences of this peace.

The last war would never have lasted more than a few months if not for the support it received from an entirely unexpected source—from the socialist parties and from the trade unions. It is hard to tell which of the two are the more responsible for it, the leader of the social-democratic parties or the leaders of the trade unions. One thing is certain, that both are responsible.

Would it have been possible for capitalist society to mobilize so many millions of workers for the slaughter without the support of the trade unions? Would it have been possible to keep on sacrificing millions of people in the course of years if not for the support of the labor organizations? Never! The most significant feature of the last war was that the trade unions appeared in the role of purveyors of food for the cannons. The leaders of the trade unions utilized the machinery of their organizations, the discipline of the membership that was built up thru years of struggle, in short everything, including even the craft prejudices of the membership in order to drive the masses to the slaughter.

More than that, the leaders of the trade unions were most instrumental in creating a basis of morals and ideals for the capitalist war. No sooner was war declared than Jouhaux, Legien, Leipart, Appleton, Henderson, and many others, made the great discovery of the existence of such a thing as "the Fatherland." The trade union leaders of the Allied countries were defending the idea of democracy against the barbarians of the Central Powers. The patriots of the Central Powers were saving civilization from the menace of the Russian Cossacks. They all pretended to be fighting in the interests of the workers, while what they were doing in reality was, to fight for the interests of their respective capitalist governments.

When we consider the history of the four years of war and see what the bureaucrats of the trade unions have been doing during that time to confuse the minds of the workers; when we also consider that these organizers of mass-murder, these initiators of the international slaughter, still continue to speak in the name of the working class; that there are still in existence millions of proletarians following these reformist leaders; when we consider all these facts, we are compelled to ask ourselves: the following questions: "Wasn't all this enough to free the working class from their reformist leaders? How many more tens of millions of people must be slaughtered before the masses will begin to see the light?"

However, such pessimistic ideas are groundless. It is necessary to understand the reasons why the reformists are still influencing the masses. And when these reasons are understood the ways will be found for combatting them.

How did it come about that the leaders of the trade unions gave their support to the war? How should we explain the fact that the workers of England have gone into the struggle against the workers of Germany with so much bitterness, and the German workers, on their part, have thrown themselves into the struggle against the French workers? These facts cannot be explained merely by governmental compulsion, or by martial law. It must be understood that the capitalists succeeded during the war in subjecting the working class also ideologically. As long as capitalist development is on the up-grade the working masses share to a certain degree in its prosperity. The more powerful capitalism becomes, the wider its spheres of influence, the more concessions can it make to the working class in order to enlist its service for the exploitation of the colonial peoples.

The world war was a struggle for hegemony on the part of finance and industrial capital. When the workers of England, France, and Germany, were defending their respective coun-

tries, they were at the same time, perhaps without being very much conscious of it, fighting for the extension of the boundaries of their respective countries. The capitalists had succeeded by means of their schools, churches, press, etc., to instill into the minds of the workers, love of country, national pride, and the desire to become bigger and more powerful than other countries. All these ideas found their expression in the very first days of the war. The labor organizations, trade unions, appeared to be nothing else than an organic part of the capitalist state. This became apparent only with the beginning of the war.

It is true that even before the war some of us had begun to see the danger of reformism. But nobody foresaw that these reformist leaders would bring the working class to the position to which they brought them. They began with the idea of national defense, maintaining at the same time that they will not surrender the class positions of the workers. But these were only words. Right at the outbreak of the war the labor bureaucracy transformed the trade unions into war machines of the capitalist state, the trade union leaders serving in many instances in the capacity of mobilizing agents.

The history of the four years of war is the history of a continuous betrayal of all the fundamental and elementary interests of the workers. Once the labor bureaucracy accepted the point of view of national defense, it later on was compelled to exercise the functions of the police with regard to the membership of their own unions. Later on they had to surrender everything the workers had won thru the years of hard struggle. They had to suppress every indication of dissatisfaction among the masses, and in doing so the labor bureaucrats were working hand in hand with the capitalist police. The labor bureaucrats knew only one slogan: "War to the end, at any cost!" Our great slogan: "Proletarians of all countries, unite!" they substituted with another slogan: "Proletarians of all countries, kill each other!" For the sake of the interests of the heavy industrialists and large bankers, the labor bureaucracy had brought corruption and destruction into the labor movement. This history of the role of the labor bureaucracy in the last war has not been written yet. When this is done it will be seen, every official leader of the trade union movement considered it an honor to be of assistance to his bourgeoisie in the last war.

Due to the activities of the labor bureaucrats, the nationalistic prejudices of the working masses had been raised to the highest point. These gentlemen had been preaching the wildest nationalism and imperialism, thus destroying the foundations of the international solidarity of the working masses. The logical consequence of these activities was the total collapse of the International. Thus have the labor bureaucrats fulfilled their "patriotic" duty. They have shown that their conception of trade unionism is to make the labor organizations part and parcel of the capitalist state, to subordinate the interests of labor to the interests of capital.

The war came to an end. And the enemies of yesterday began talking about the restoration of the International. But what kind of an International can these fellows create? What sort of an international labor organization can result out of the efforts of these "Fatherland patriots," these nationalists, for whom the bourgeoisie are more important than the interests of the working class. They may succeed in giving us the appearance of an International, its form, but never its real substance. They may succeed in bringing together a number of national organizations and call it an "International," but it will be nothing of the sort.

That, by the way, is what they actually did. The exhausted and betrayed masses had begun to feel again the need for an international working-class organization. These masses have compelled their nationalistic leaders to attempt to re-establish the international relations of the working class. But instead of bread, the labor bureaucracy has given the masses a stone. Instead of an International that can really unite the working class, leading them in struggle against capitalism, the labor bureaucracy has given us an appendix to the bourgeois League of Nations, and this they call a "trade union International."

This is how the Amsterdam International came into being. It is the same International which is being led by the social patriots of all countries, by the same people who are spattered with the blood that the workers spilled in the last war. We have seen these men at work. We have seen them begin their activities by agreeing to serve as an appendix to the League of Nations. We have seen them participate in the working out of the Treaty of Versailles. We have seen them support every bloody proposition that was put across by the bourgeoisie in the last six years.

Every time that the smell of powder is rising above Europe this International begins immediately falling apart. The only time these fellows speak against war is when there is no immediate danger of such. Who does not know these loyal pacifists? Have not they arranged the international peace congress in Hague? Didn't they decide to declare a general

strike at the outbreak of the new war? Didn't they create a united front with the petty bourgeois pacifists? Didn't they set aside the third Sunday in September, 1924, for anti-war manifestations? Haven't they again just the other day repeated that they are opposed to war? Is there still any doubt in anybody's mind as to the readiness of these men to fight war? He who takes the word of these fellows is a fool! These people will cry against war in time of peace, but when war begins they will be shouting louder than anyone else that the war must be continued to the very end.

Ten years have gone by. The world is today totally different from what it was at the outbreak of the world war. And the working class also is no longer the same as it was in July, 1924. The years of the war and the destruction of capitalism that followed the war have created among the masses a feeling of opposition, not only against capitalism, but also against the agents of capitalism in their own ranks. During this time the Communist International has come into existence and has grown into a big power. Also the International organization of the Red Trade

Unions. Ever new and more masses are streaming into the ranks of these two revolutionary centers.

Capitalism is fighting desperately for its existence, and still more desperately are fighting the reformist leaders. But it will not help them. They will, they must be driven out of their trenches. On this tenth anniversary of the world war, millions and millions of proletarians are throwing into the face of the capitalist world, their hatred and hostility. And in celebrating this tenth anniversary, the working men and women of all countries will remember who it was that attempted to create the moral and ideal justification for the world slaughter. They will remember how the reformists and bureaucrats have brought demoralization and destruction into the international working class movement. Remembering all this, the working masses of the world will then inscribe on their banners: "Down with capitalism! Down with the Fascist reaction!"

And then they will add: "Down with international reformism! Down with the social patriots! Drive the betrayers of the working class out of the labor movement!"

AS WE SEE IT

By T. J. O'FLAHERTY.

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Berry is president. Should they go on strike in sympathy with the typos, Mr. Berry would have them outlawed and blacklisted as he did in New York. And yet, it is difficult to imagine men with real spirit getting out a paper set up by scabs. But that is the gospel of the American Federation of Labor according to Sam Gompers.

In the United States wealthy business men subscribe heavily to the campaign funds of the capitalist parties in return for concessions and other advantages. Harry Sinclair swelled the treasury of the Republican Party and he got the Teapot Dome. Doherty was good to the war chests of both parties. He got a big stretch of California. Over in England the capitalist parties get the dough and it does not even cost them a concession. In return for titles wealthy men dump coin into the vaults of the Tory and Liberal parties. A whiskey distiller once rated as a wealthy man died leaving debts of \$3,000,000 behind him and his assets consisted of an application for a title on which he paid the regular fee. It appears the distiller paid the money (\$250,000) to Lloyd George and got no title. Another gentleman, Col. Parkinson wanted a "Sir" to his name and he went to the Tory party. He made a deposit but after waiting for a considerable period for his title, he became impatient and went to Tory party headquarters and was told that he had the money to the wrong person. He sued and recovered his deposit.

General Smedley Butler was given leave of absence several months by President Coolidge in order to give the general the opportunity of cleaning up Philadelphia. Mr. Butler started his campaign with much blowing of trumpets and beating of drums. Shortly after he assumed office, the general was riding down the street one morning when he saw a suspicious-looking character on the street corner. He stepped out of his automobile and approaching the suspect, stuck his gun into his ribs and told him to make speed in any direction that would lead him out of Philadelphia. According to the press report, the alleged evil doer went, and may be going yet for all we know. But so is General Butler. The brave man has come to grief. He has become a cropper in his attempt to make Philadelphia even a more dismal hole than it was. One try at being a Mussolini is enough. And the papers that heralded his appearance as the beginning of the Ku Kluxation of the United States ignore his passing. Only "Labor" a so-called labor paper published in Washington sheds a tear over his enforced resignation.

Another moral scavenger to fall by the wayside is Glenn Young, notorious Williamson County raider. Young, early last spring undertook under direction of the Ku Klux Klan to take a shine out of the moonshine business in that locality, but it is believed that his real object was to smash the unions of the miners. However much blood was spilled and Young traveled thru Chicago several times like a walking arsenal. Since then his star has waned. An East St. Louis judge has remanded 21 of the famous Herrin rioters of February the 8th back to Williamson County and Young must stand trial in Herrin or Marion. He does not relish the prospect.

The Reverend Norman Thomas, LaFollette's candidate for governor in New York state, writes that John W. Davis is a nice clean man and is too decent to do the dirty things that Harry S. Daugherty and Mitchell Palmer did while the above worthies were public officials at Washington. But the Rev. Doctor believes that pure tho Davis is LaFollette is purer, and furthermore the latter is backed by what is left of the socialist party. The Reverend Thomas seems to think he

is yet in the pulpit and that no sheep no matter how black is immune from a coat of spiritual whitewash. Good democrats, good republicans, good socialists, they are all the same to the "revolutionary" Doc.

William J. Burns succeeded in getting his name into the Washington Herald a few days ago. The poor fellow. Perhaps you don't remember the fellow. Well, he is the man who solved the Wall Street bomb plot 99 times and arrested almost half the population of the United States in his search for the "culprits." "Ha! I have him now" Burn would exclaim when some deluded moron would confess to a series of crimes from the shooting of Dangerous Dan McGraw to the Wall Street explosion. His life of ill-fame was brought to an end when he got the gate along with his master Daugherty. How Burns managed to break into the news now was on the occasion of his taking a trip to Europe where he intends to rest. Thousands of workers would like to have the pleasure of placing a lily in his right hand and a bunch of daisies at his toes.

The French government has introduced a measure for the transfer of the ashes of Jean Jaures to the Pantheon, where the ashes of France's great heroes, mostly militarists, are kept. Jaures was assassinated by a French patriot on the eve of the world war in 1914. Had he not been killed he would very likely have spent several years in jail, or perhaps have the honor of being legally murdered as James Connolly was by the British government for carrying his protest against war beyond the talking stage. The ashes of the socialist Jean Jaures will be honored by the very government that stood for the imperialism of France and has since the armistice supported the Rhur invasion. It seems socialists dead or alive cannot keep away from the capitalists.

"But for the grace of God" declared E. Crowe, when about to examine a juvenile witness in the Franks murder case "there is the corpus delict in this murder." How very thotfu of the Deity. But one would have more respect for his grace and his alertness if he showed equal consideration for the Franks boy. Rather peculiar that God gets thanked when somebody escapes but never gets blamed when somebody doesn't escape. Furthermore if God hadn't been asleep on the job Mr. Crowe would have lost much valuable publicity.

A little woman carrying a large Bible approached the door of the courtroom where Leopold and Loeb are on trial. "I need no admission card" she told the guard, "I was sent here by God to bring His word to the two boys. I came all the way from Detroit, Mich., because the call to me from above was so urgent." The guard was not taking his orders from anybody so far away and refused admittance to the celestial envoy.



The Poor Fish says: It's real mean of the pacifists taking advantage of the War Department's slip of the tongue in calling "Inspection Day" by the more hard-sounding title of "Mobilization Day." Calvin says it doesn't mean a thing but good, red-blooded patriotism.