

THE YOUNG WORKER

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The Sixth Anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution

By MAX SHACHTMAN.

IX years ago, November 7, 1917, the Russian working class established the first working class government in the world. Six years ago, the disillusioned soldiers, the tired and hungry workers and peasants shook themselves like a huge giant and flung into oblivion not only the insignificant heir of the haughty Romanoffs, Nicholas II, but also the hesitators and oil-pourers, Kerensky and his menshevik aides. At the call of the leaders of the working class, the bolsheviks, headed by Lenin, Radek, Zinoviev, Bucharin and Trotsky, the abortive constituent assembly was dispersed by a handful of husky red soldiers, and all power was placed in the hands of the Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' soviets. The first step towards the dawn had been taken.

The cry of "Peace and Bread" resounded thruout the length and breadth of the world and was echoed in the form of soviets covering one-sixth of the face of the globe.

But the mere establishment of the soviet republic did not by any means safeguard its existence. Just as it had been greeted with shouts of joy by the class conscious workers of the world, it was met with the most bitter hatred and active antagonism by the capitalists, no matter in what country they operated. They forgot their quarrels and hatred, and pooled them into a concentrated attack upon the first workers' republic. In it they saw a reflection of their future, and they thought that by shattering the mirror they would prevent the future from following the present. This, with the usual pigheadedness of the bourgeoisie.

Thus it was that the first day of the soviet republic was the first day of the struggle against the counter-revolutionaries and the interventionists. The soviets fought against the "republicans," and social-revolutionaries, and monarchists of all shades within its boundaries. For almost five years it fought the terrorists of the left, and suppressed the counter-revolutions of Korniloff, of Tchaikovsky, of Mahkno, of Denikin, of Wrangel, and of the host of others, minor adventurers and pawns of the Allies; it beat them with all odds against the soviets; it trampled their fated drives and flung them on the dung heap of history.

Besides fighting the enemy at home, the Russian workers had on their hands the Hessians of the Allies. The Bolsheviks had been forced to sign the bitter treaty of Brest Litovsk, but it gave them a breathing spell during which they flooded the German army with revolutionary literature. The end of the

World War was brought about more by this activity of the Bolsheviks than by any other cause. Then, with the end, so-called, of the war, the Allies and the Entente united in an aggressive intervention in Russia. For almost five years, the workers fought them successfully. The Russian workers who had lost millions in the World War, to which peasants and soldiers had been sent without equipment and were shot down in masses with only sticks and scythes as their defensive weapons; who were being subjected to the most cruel economic blockade known to history; who were starving for food and freezing with the cold winters of Russia; these stood up against the invading armies, the unconscious tools of the world's imperialists, and routed them. The French, the British, the Checko-Slovaks, the Japanese, the Americans who were illegally sent to Siberia by the late unlamented Woodrow Wilson, all succumbed beneath the revolutionary ardor of the Red Army. And "revolutionary ardor" is no mere phrase, because there were times when that was all the Red Army had with which to fight. Fortunately that was never lost, despite the blockade and the resultant misery.

In the meantime, the state apparatus of the soviet government was being built up more strongly. The dictatorship of the proletariat was surely suppressing all the signs of counter-revolution, and the Supreme Council of National Economy was beginning its work of rebuilding the structure of the nation's social and economic life.

Under the strong, centralized directorship of the Communists, production was being increased, living conditions improved, and the peasantry made satisfied by having been given the land.

Today in the year 1923, after six years of running the most furious gauntlet of lies, starvation, intervention, misery and all the other plagues that the world imperialists could visit on her, Soviet Russia is definitely on the up grade. Her industries are almost normal. In the large cities, the workers are already being paid more actual wages than the workers of Germany, Austria and other central states. Russia's army stands ever ready to defend herself from any attacks by an enemy. Where England has the tumults in Ireland, Egypt and India; while France and Germany are fighting over the percentage each is to get of Ruhr coal and iron; while Italy and Greece are practically at war; while almost every European country is menaced by some internal or external belligerency, Red Russia is at peace with herself and can afford to laugh and snap its fingers at its enemies who still nurture in the back of their



Nikolai Lenin

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head the thought that some day it will be safe and wise for them to make another attempt at the government of the Russian workers. But the Russian demonstrations on the occasion of the insolent Curzon note were enough to dispel any such wild and asinine notion. Soviet Russia stands out today as the initiator of a new system of society, as the bearer of new men and women and children, as the bearer of a new life and culture.

What significance has Soviet Russia for the young worker in America?

In the conditions of the young workers in Russia today, the American youth can see a situation totally different from his own. Where in the United States we find millions of children sacrificed on the altar in order that the bosses of the richest nation in the world may satisfy their greed, in Russia we see the most earnest desire on the part of the ruling Communists to improve the conditions of labor of the young workers and to abolish completely child labor. In Russia, many of the young worker have the four and six-hour day. Night work is entirely prohibited for them, and so is work in hazardous occupations, such as deep mining, chemical factories, and the like. There is no need for them to use their unions for striking. Instead their organizations are made the means whereby they raise their economic standards, their technical skill and efficiency to as high a point as possible. In Russia, the greater the production of commodities, the greater, in proportion, are the wages received by the workers. In the United States the greater the production of goods, the nearer the slave finds himself out of a job. Whenever there is any action, legislative or executive, to be taken by the government or the labor unions on a problem dealing in any way with young workers, representatives of the Russian Young Communist League are called in and consulted as to what their opinions are. And the opin-

ions of the Young Communist League prevail, because it is the recognized representative of the mass of young workers of Russia.

The soviet government gives the young workers, as well as the adults, every opportunity to carry on their educational, political, athletic, literary and social activities. Clubs are established in almost every village and city, where the illiterate are educated under the auspices of the Young Communist League. The Russian league is today recognized as the mass educator of the people. It carries on its educational campaigns incessantly, and always with the aid of the communists who rule Soviet Russia.

In spite of all the difficulties in the way, the young workers of Russia are on the way towards achieving the goal of the young Communist movement: the socialist reorganization of youth labor.

Soviet Russia stands out as a brilliant red light in the darkness of a world of capitalistic gloom. Soon the brilliance of the red light will be increased by additional blazes. Germany is tottering, and in the hour of despair, the German Communist Party is the party of hope. In the Balkans, revolution is brewing. In all the other countries of the world the seeds are planted and the proletariat shall do the reaping.

When we celebrate the sixth anniversary of the Soviet Republic this year, let us not forget that celebrations are worthless unless they result in something more concrete than applause and sentiment. Let us all join hands. Let the young workers line up in the ranks of The Young Workers League of America, and, gathering and consolidating our forces, gaining strength as we march along, we shall proceed invincibly towards revolution, to the overthrow of capitalism in America and the birth of the American Soviet Republic!