

"The Class Struggle Will Move Faster, Just Like Everything Else in America"--Engels

By SAM DON

A million workers demonstrated on May 1st. The militant traditions of the American working class of the first stormy days of American capitalism are being revived. But not just merely revived. The earlier militant traditions in this period of crisis, in this period of wars and revolutions, are enriched by a deeper revolutionary content. Led by the Communist Party, armed with Marxism-Leninism, the present day militant struggles of the American working class assume purposefulness and consciousness.

It is well to recall now some of the statements of Marx and Engels on the development of the American working class. The ideas bear testimony to their profound insight in the driving forces of the class struggle in America and their faith in the American working class. In 1892 Engels said:

"When the Americans once begin, they will do so with an energy and virulence in comparison with which we in Europe will be children."

And the American working class has begun.

In the brief period of "prosperity" the Second Socialist International declared Marxism dead. From Hoover through Hillquit to Lovestone and Cannon, American capitalism was presented as the proof of the fallacy of Marxism.

A typical expression of the attitude which pronounced Marxism dead is the following statement made in 1928 by one of the leading German Socialists and trade unionists, Mr. Tarnow, who said:

"We must distinguish two epochs in the development of capitalism, the epoch of British capitalism, which was limited in its possibilities of expansion, and the epoch of American capitalism, which on the basis of the latest technical advances can unendingly expand and develop. For the first epoch Marx and Lassalle were typical. They maintained that wages are determined by certain economic laws, that they depend upon the cost of labor power, etc. For the second epoch Ford is typical. He proved that capitalism can prosper while the workers need not at the same time remain poor."

Here the mass murderer Ford is substituted by the Second Socialist International as the savior of the working class in place of Marx. But it did not take long for capitalism itself to tear to shreds the "fine" theories of the leaders of the Second Socialist International.

The present world economic crisis, which began in 1929, demonstrated before the toiling masses throughout the world that it is not Ford, that it is not Kautsky and Hillquit, but Marxism and Leninism which they should choose as their guide to action.

In the beginning of 1930, Hilferding, the theoretician of the German Socialist Party could still muster courage to say:

"Modern capitalism is overcoming and removing everything which made for the anarchy of capitalist production."

Let us compare this statement of Hilferding's, of his unlimited faith in the stability of capitalism, with the following statement which appeared in one of the last issues of the *Annalist*:

"We have all hoped that the depression in business had spent its force. 1930 was bad. 1931 was worse. And now 1932 seems generally worse than 1931, but the most alarming feature right now is that there seems to be few signs that 1933 will be much better."

Thus we see how capitalism is "overcoming" its anarchy of production when its leading capitalists cannot even see signs of an improvement in the situation in the year 1933 when we are still in the midst of 1932.

In 1928 the American Socialist Party eliminated the class struggle clause from its constitution. Thus it demonstrated its complete sev-

erance with the basic principles of Marxism. Lovestone and Cannon have unlimited faith in the strength of American capitalism. Lovestone spoke of the Victorian age of American capitalism. That is, comparing American capitalism with the period of British capitalism when it enjoyed unchallenged monopoly on the world market, and when the British working class was in its most conservative period of history. But is there anyone today who would still dare openly to sing the praises of the strength and power of American capitalism as was done a few years ago? The present crisis dealt a body blow to the theories of the stability of capitalism and American exceptionalism, theories which attempt to replace Marxism with liberal "Socialism" and organized capitalism, and to substitute Ford for Marx.

Now more than ever the teachings of Marx and Lenin must become the torch light for the struggle of the workers against the offensive of the bourgeoisie. It is on the basis of a strict Marxian-Leninist analysis that the Communist International, with penetrating wisdom and Bolshevik foresight, told our Party at the beginning of 1929:

"With a distinctness unprecedented in history, American capitalism is exhibiting now the effects of the inexorable laws of capitalist development, the laws of decline and downfall of capitalist society." (From the opening address of the C. I.)

This analysis of the C. I., which is now strikingly confirmed, gives our Party a leading historical role.

Marx and Engels studied with great interest the specific features which at the time made the American working class move slower and not act as an independent class in comparison with European workers. They therefore carried on a sharp fight against those elements in the United States who, while professing to be Marxists, were sectarian and separated from the American labor movement.

Marx in a letter written November 23, 1871, to a member of the New York Provisional Federal Council of the First International spoke of the need to "put an end to all sectarian and amateur groups and in case of need to expel them." Engels spoke up very sharply against those who in the American labor movement "have not been able to use their theory as a lever to set the American masses in motion," against those for whom theory is "credo, not a guide for action."

Now that the American working class, with the changed situation of American capitalism, is beginning to play a leading revolutionary role in the international working class movement, we must free ourselves from the old sectarian traditions. To the extent that we free ourselves from these traditions, to the extent that we use theory as a lever for setting the masses in motion, to that extent will we fulfill the role as Marxist-Leninists, as the leaders of the American working class.

Engels and Marx already foresaw the severity and sharpness of the class struggle in the United States. Engels said:

"Nowhere in the whole world are they so brazen-faced and tyrannical as over there (America) where the battle is fought by the bourgeoisie with such weapons that decisions arrive quickly."

In order to meet these decisions, which arrive quickly, our Party must merge itself with the masses, arm itself with the theory of Marx and Lenin, so that in the shortest space of time it can overcome its isolation from the decisive sections of the American working class.

When we are faced at the present time with the war situation, in which the American proletariat is called upon to play a leading role in the struggle for the defense of the Soviet Union (14th Plenum

Resolution) we must take to heart the following statement of Comrade Stalin. Comrade Stalin in 1929 said:

"I think, comrades, that the American Communist Party is one of those few Communist Parties in the world upon which history has laid tasks of a decisive character from the point of view of the world revolutionary movement. . . . I think that the moment is not far off when a revolutionary crisis will develop in America, and when a revolutionary crisis develops in America it will be the beginning of the end of world capitalism as a whole."

It is in the spirit of this statement of Comrade Stalin, which is permeated with Marxism and Leninism, that we celebrate the anniversary of Marx.

Stalin on Marxism, Leninism

Leninism is the Marxism of the epoch of imperialism and of the proletarian revolution. To be more precise: Leninism is the theory and the tactic of the proletarian revolution in general, and the theory and tactic of the dictatorship of the proletariat in particular. Marx and Engels lived in a pre-revolutionary period, when imperialism was still in an embryonic condition, when the workers were only preparing for

By OTTO HALL

Karl Marx, in his study of the historic development of capitalism in America, ruthlessly exposed the source of the great fortunes accumulated by the pious capitalists in England and America engaged in the slave trade. He pointed out, in the first volume of "Capital" in the chapters dealing with the source of primitive accumulation of wealth, that these hypocrites, in their greed for gold, did not hesitate "to turn Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skinned" and that this "signalized the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production."

Marx not only exposed the viciousness of slavery, and the slave trade, but as the founder of the First International, he led a stern and uncompromising fight for the complete abolition of the vicious system of chattel slavery. He wrote many articles for the "New York Tribune" in the years preceding and during the Civil War, supporting

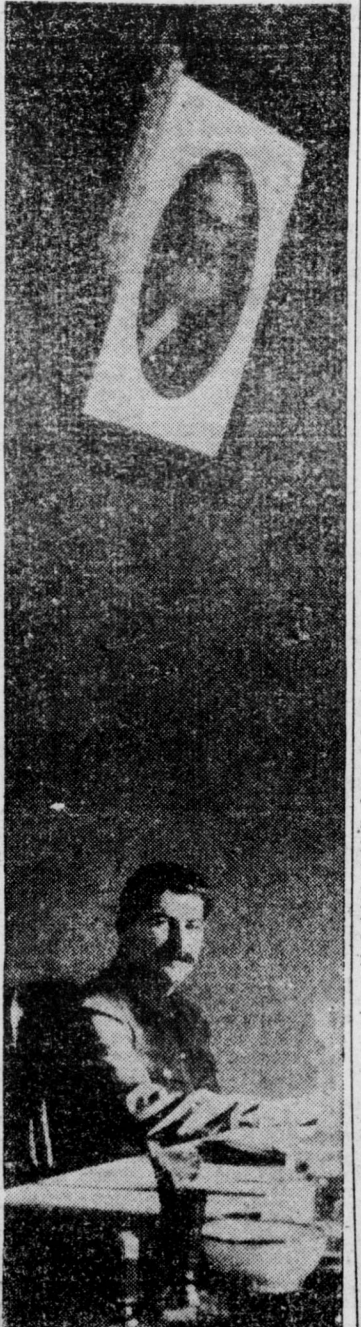
the abolition and mobilizing public sentiment against this vicious system of human bondage and was an important factor in mobilizing the workers, both in Europe and America, against slavery. He pointed out back in 1859, that "Labor in the white skin cannot emancipate itself as long as it is degraded in the black."

When the British textile barons who were accumulating great fortunes by securing cheap cotton thru the existence of the slave plantations in America, tried, during the early years of the Civil War, to mobilize sentiment in England favoring recognition of the Confederate States, Marx carried on a vigorous fight on the lecture platform, and through the columns of the Vienna "Free Press" against them. He succeeded in mobilizing the workers in England and other European countries against the slave system. Marx, who was living in London at this time, wrote to Lassalle on April 23, 1862 that: "The English middle class (and aristocracy) has never more shamelessly disgraced itself than in the great struggle that is taking place on the other side of the Atlantic. The English working class, on the other hand, which is suffering most under the bellum civile (Civil War), has never proved itself more heroic and noble. All the more is this to be admired when one knows as I do, all the means which were set in motion here (London) and in Manchester in order to get it to demonstrate. The only organ that they still had, the newspaper of the scoundrel Reynolds, has been bought up by the Southerners; likewise their most important lecturers. But all in vain."

It can easily be seen that through the agitation carried on by Marx, which resulted in the failure of the Southern confederacy to obtain moral and financial support of the principal European countries, was a great factor in bringing about its early defeat. Thus the struggles of the revolutionary white and Negro workers under the leadership of the Communist Party against the vicious campaign of lynch terror and suppression against the most exploited section of the working class becomes one of the most important tasks facing the workers at this time. The vigorous campaign carried on by the Communist Party for the self-determination of the Negro toilers in the "Black Belt" of the South and for their equal rights everywhere is not, as the social fascists and their friends of the N. A. A. C. P. claim, a new scheme of the Communists for self-advertisement, but the logical carrying thru of the teachings of Karl Marx.

The great majority of the Negroes in the United States are still on the land, and are living in actual slavery, in spite of their supposed emancipation, in the section of the South known as the "Black Belt." The vicious character of their exploitation, their re-enslavement on the plantation after the Reconstruction period when they were systematically deprived of the most elementary rights enjoyed by other workers, the super-profits extracted from their toil, definitely determines their class position as oppressed Nationals. Marx understood this very clearly when he wrote to Engels on July 25, 1877, commenting on the Hayes-Tilden compromise, which marked the end of the Reconstruction Period and the betrayal of the Negroes by the republican party. He stated that: "The policy of the new President (Hayes) will make the NEGROES, and the great expropriations of land (exactly the fertile land) in favor of railways, mining, etc., companies, will make THE PEASANTS OF THE WEST, who are already very dissatisfied, ALLIES OF THE WORKERS."

We see then, that an understanding of revolutionary Marxism gives the workers the means, through which they can achieve their final emancipation from the yoke of capitalist oppression.



The latest picture of the leader of the Communist International, Comrade Stalin, in his office in Moscow.

KARL MARX ON THE NEGRO QUESTION

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the revolution, when the proletarian revolution had not yet become an immediate and practical necessity. Lenin, the disciple of Marx and Engels, lived in a period of fully developed imperialism; in a period when the proletarian revolution was already under way; in a period when the proletarian revolution had already triumphed in one country, had made an end of bourgeois democracy and had begun the era of proletarian democracy, the era of soviets.

That is why I describe Leninism as a development of Marxism.

It is usual to point out that Leninism is preeminently combative and revolutionary. There are two reasons why Leninism has these peculiar characteristics. First of all, Leninism issued from the proletarian revolution, and therefore necessarily bears the imprint of that revolution. Secondly, Leninism originated and grew strong in conflict with the opportunism of the Second International—a conflict essential to success in the struggle against capitalism. We must never forget that between the epoch of Marx and Engels and the epoch of Lenin came the epoch when the opportunism of the Second International held unrestricted sway; and that a ruthless fight with this opportunism was one of Lenin's chief tasks.

Theory is the experience of the movement of all countries, taken in its general aspect. Theory becomes, naturally, objectless, if it is not connected with revolutionary practice, just as practice becomes blind if it fails to illuminate its path with revolutionary theory. But theory may become the greatest power of the workers' movement if it is indissolubly connected with revolutionary practice. Theory, and only theory, can add to the movement certainty, the power of orientation, and understanding of the inner connection of surrounding events; theory, and only theory, may enable practice to understand not only how the classes are moving at present, but also how and to where they must turn in the nearest future.

—From Stalin's book, "Leninism."

THE 2nd 5-YEAR PLAN AND THE ABOLITION OF CLASSES

The fundamental political task of the second Five Year Plan is the final liquidation of the capitalist elements and of classes in general, the complete removal of the causes which produce class differences and exploitation, the overcoming of the remnants of capitalism in economy and in the minds of the people, the conversion of the whole of the working population of the country into conscious and active builders of the classless Socialist society.