

LENIN'S LIFE AND WORK.

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a Communist Party should be. It is not worth while to pass any new resolutions, whatever until examination has been made into the question of the extent to which these theses have been fulfilled. These theses form the test, the measure of the progressive development of the parties of the Communist International, of their conversion from left social democratic parties into really communist parties!

Lenin's third document was his draft of the theses on the colonial question. These theses have also not yet become part and parcel of the very being of the communist parties of the West, whose bourgeoisie holds hundreds of millions of human beings in its rapacious claws in the colonies. Neither has it fully penetrated the consciousness of our young communist parties in the East. The work being done in the colonies by our English, French and Dutch comrades not only encounters great difficulties on the side of the police of the imperialist powers, but finds another obstacle in the imperfect preparation of our comrades for work among masses of colonial peoples of an unheard of low degree of culture. Our comrades in the colonies often err along the paths of left communism. Themselves educated by a literature which proclaims the fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat, it is only with the utmost difficulty that they can adapt themselves to combining the work of gathering together the young proletariat and the craftsmen of China, Corea, Persia, India and Egypt, against the foreign and native bourgeoisie, with the attempt to support the national emancipation movement of the young native bourgeoisie against the capitalist centre by which it is being suppressed. Decades will again have to pass before actual practice will be successful in combining the struggles for national emancipation among the colonial peoples with the proletarian revolution in Europe and America. But one thing is clear: Lenin's genius has pointed out the path to be pursued by the international proletariat.

In the figure of Lenin, and in his works, we have for the first time in the history of class warfare a comprehensive centre, in the literal sense of the words, for the workers of the whole world. For the first time we begin to emerge from the blind alley into which the European proletariat has run, to tread the path of a real world movement. The book written by our Indian comrade Roy, gave us the first theoretical example of Lenin's teachings tested in a concrete instance. The struggle carried on by the newspaper published by Roy himself gives us the first example of the periodical application of Lenin's teachings, and we may confidently maintain that this test has shown how far and how deeply our leader could see. At the time of the Hamburg Congress of the Second International, the Hamburg social democratic newspaper printed a poem of welcome to the congress. The poet called upon the Chinese coolie in the rice fields, to the negroes on the cotton plantations of South America, to the black men working in the gold mines, inviting them to gather beneath the emancipating standard of the International. But these are mere empty words. This same Second International is now celebrating a great victory. Its leader, Ramsay MacDonald, has formed the first labour government. And whom has he appointed as minister for the 300,000,000 oppressed Hindus? Sir Sidney Oliver, an official belonging to the old staff of colonial authorities, the governor of Jamaica. This colonial official is the tried and tested protector of the sugar plantation owners of Jamaica. Will he call the Indian slaves of his Majesty the King beneath the flag of the Second International, or will this perhaps be done by Lord Chelmsford, the one-time viceroy of India, now appointed First Lord of the Admiralty by the grace of MacDonald, leader of the Second International? It is only the Communist International which can organize the colonial peoples, and Lenin's work in showing us this path will never be forgotten in history, nor by the international working class and the whole of humanity.

At the Third Congress of the Communist International Lenin was still at his fighting post. The

revolutionary wave of 1918-19 had ebbed. The German CP., grown into a mass party of the proletariat, had not taken the altered conditions into account, did observe that the offensive of capital had already set in, allowed itself to be provoked, and plunged into an armed struggle, without possessing even the sympathies of the majority of the working class. We all admit the error committed by the Party. We all rejected the theses submitted by the German central, which drafted a theory of offence at the moment of political retreat. But we, the immediate functionaries of the Communist International, knew that the Party Central, consisting as it did of the old leaders of the Spartacus union and of the best leaders of the Independent party, was the sole possible Central for the German communist movement, and we wished to teach our German brother party as kindly as possible the lessons to be learnt from this defeat. Lenin forced us to alter our theses five times. He forced us to say brutally to the German Communists, and to the Communists of the whole world: "First win over the majority of the proletariat, and then you may turn to the task of seizing power!" Lenin saved the Communist Party, and with some decision he supported the united front tactics, which encountered violent resistance in the ranks of the Communists—and not only in the ranks of the West European communists. With extraordinary fine feeling he pointed out the main differences existing between Russian conditions in the year 1917, and the conditions under which the West European communists have to fight. He understood exactly that here we have proletarian mass organizations possessing a past extending over half a century, and in the hands of yellow leaders, so that the work before us is extremely complicated, and demands much perseverance. Such a situation calls for a number of compromises, disagreeable to communists, but unfortunately unavoidable if the majority of the proletariat is to be won over. Overburdened with state work, Lenin had no time to follow the detailed questions of the development in the West, and yet he possessed a certain sense enabling him to grasp the essential differences in the positions of the different countries, and the tasks of the different Communist Parties.

At the Fourth Congress of the Communist International Lenin gave a report on the situation in Russia, though he had just recovered from the first attack of that disease which has now robbed us of him. The congress received him with enthusiastic joy, and it was with the greatest sorrow that we observed the painful slowness with which our beloved leader had to seek for the words enabling him to express his clearly defined ideas in a foreign language. Before giving his report, Lenin put the question, accompanied by a wink of one eye: "And what shall we say when we are asked about the immediate prospects of the world revolution?" and then added immediately: "I shall say that when the communists behave more sensibly, the prospects will improve." Lenin gave instructions on the methods of war against war to the Russian trade union delegation going to the Hague. This last piece of advice given by Lenin to the international proletariat represents a perfect example of his extraordinary sense of reality. He declared that those who promise the carrying out of a general strike in the case of a fresh outbreak of war, in face of the lessons taught by the imperialist war, are either fools or humbugs. If we cannot prevent the imperialist war, then the masses will be drawn into the war and then we shall be compelled to enter the war ourselves, in order to work for the revolution in the ranks of the imperialist armies. Our task is to exert every endeavour to prevent any fresh outbreak of war. And again Lenin unfolded, point by point, the plan of daily revolutionary work against the danger of war.

One year of work in the Communist International without Lenin now lies behind us. This year brought us two great defeats: in Bulgaria and in Germany. We must learn the lessons of these defeats alone, without Lenin. The revolutionary wave is not rising as we had expected it to rise during the past summer, and if it does not rise next year, then we shall have a number of complicated questions to clear up. We shall have to decide the question of

how we can best gather the masses around us during the period of reaction, of capitalist offensive, and how we can combine the daily struggle with the preparation for the fight for the dictatorship. We have 42 parties. Each of these parties exists under its own special conditions. It is a task of extraordinary difficulty to accord due consideration to all these special conditions, and still to carry on united communist work. But we shall accomplish this task. Are we not in possession of the legacy which Lenin has bequeathed us, the inexhaustible store of his ideas, his methods, tried and tested in many attacks and retreats? We shall learn from Lenin's works. As with Marx's tenets, it is not the results and concrete solutions which have here the greatest value, but the method of solution, the way in which this greatest of proletarian revolutionists approached the problems.

The Communist International and the Russian proletariat have suffered a severe loss. But if ever it could be said that death has only taken the body of a leader, in no case could these words be truer than here. And therefore the Communist International will shed no tears by Lenin's graveside, but will turn with tenfold energy to the task of making its own all that is immortal in the teachings of Lenin. And with Lenin's sword in its hand the communist International will stride forward to victory!

Our beloved leader is no longer among us. We shall accomplish our task by means of the collective thought of the whole of the communist parties of our International.

Lenin's banner and Lenin's teachings arm the Communist International for the whole epoch still dividing us from the victory of the proletarian world revolution.

(The End)

THE IMPORTANCE OF HISTORY.

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convenient creditors. This great French historian's summary of the rising is worth quoting: "The records prove that the events of 1381 caused no change in the condition of the peasants. . . . The insurrection had only one appreciable result; it let loose popular passions which retained their violence for many years." Passion does not happen to be a successful manner of going about social reconstruction. One might as well ask a surgeon to take out one's appendix in a passionate manner. Legislation and administration need the coolest of heads.

But this article did not start with any intention of discussing matters of history in detail, but rather to give a dry list of books in which the leaders and followers of Labor may learn a vast number of facts which will prove of value in strengthening their case against their opponents. History is the statement of what happened yesterday and the day before; and it is an indication of what will probably happen, and what ought to happen, tomorrow and the day after that. There is surely every advantage in foreseeing your enemy's moves; and many of the moves in the great game of world chess called life, have been worked out already in the history of the past, worked out, indeed, with almost the scientific precision which we find in the manuals that deal with the smaller game of chess which we play on chequered boards.

For example, what is the use of slippery-tongued gentlemen rising on political platforms to tell us that multi-millionaires are no danger to the State, but even an indispensable factor in an energetic social organization. For we can turn up the history of any race in the world and we will not find one that has not been ruined by excessive wealth. It was plutocracy that brought the great Roman Republic to its ruin; it was the great financiers who sucked the blood of Italy. Incidentally there is another useful point to be learned from the history of that moment. The great Republic had grown so corrupted by wealth and political adventurers that it could only save itself by accepting an Emperor. Now there are certain persons who can find no other way of delaying real social reconstruction except