

of Workers' Government

By JOHN PEPPER

The enlarged session of the Communist International which met in June in Moscow has issued a new slogan for the Communist parties of the world—the slogan of the workers' and farmers' government. The Communist International has by this means placed the old slogan of workers' government upon a broader social basis.

The new slogan of the Communist International is no new slogan for our country. It is the slogan of Comrade Zinoviev declared at the session of the enlarged executive: "Our American Party, the Workers Party, has already of its own accord found the slogan of workers' and farmers' government." The Workers Party of America was the first party within the Communist International to apply the new slogan theoretically as well as practically.

The Theoretical Formulation

Theoretically, the problem was first brought up in my Labor Party pamphlet, from the standpoint of inquiry concerning the alliance of farmers and workers: "A Labor Party will grow provided it does not attempt to be a party for and over everybody, but rather a class party—namely, a party that will not fail to include the Labor Party shall be able to meet the working farmers,—that is, the tenant farmers and mortgage farmers. Such omission would be a mistake of the greatest magnitude, from the standpoint of the future of the working class. One of the most important conditions for the victory of a Labor Party is that it develop the cooperation of the farmers and workers, which has become traditional in America. America is a favorable exception in this respect. Of European countries such collaboration takes place only in Soviet Russia. In the former third parties (Greenback Party, Peasants Party) were in the hands of the farmers, the workers being merely an unconscious appendage. If a Labor Party is to be born and to grow, the relation must be reversed."

I then brought up the question, upon which in my pamphlet "Underground Radicalism," in the section, "Can We Utilize the Conflicts Within Capitalist Society?" I wrote in this pamphlet: "There are Communists who believe that we should use revolutionary means to win the workers' government for class divisions within the bourgeoisie. They believe that the only way to wage

the class-struggle, is to consider capitalist society as one solid reactionary camp which always confronts the workers in a closed phalanx. But the slogan of workers' and farmers' government, a slogan of the bourgeoisie, Marxism: Marxists have always asserted that the various divisions and conflicts within capitalist society, must be used to the best advantage of the working class.

"Ferdinand Lassalle, the famous German Socialist, once said that the bourgeoisie is a single-reactionary mass. But it was Karl Marx who protested and polemized against this unscientific and superficial assertion. He said that the bourgeoisie is 'Capital' that the utilization of the class struggle between industrial capital and big land owners in the Forties, procured the important social concession of the ten-hour day for the English workers.

"From Marx to Lenin, every real Marxist has practised the tactic of analyzing the various class-divisions within capitalist society, and exploiting the class-conflicts within the ruling class, for the benefit of the workers. The tactics of the Communist Party during the entire Russian revolution, is a mastery application of this tactic. The whole Russian revolution from the internal political point of view, is but a proletarian utilization of the class-conflicts between the peasants on the one hand, and the big landowners and big capitalists on the other. Lenin's tactic was alliance of workers with poor peasants, neutralization of the wealthy peasants, and alliance with the big landowners and capitalists.

"The main difference between Bolshevism and Menshevism was exactly this question of the utilization of the conflicts among the various classes. The Mensheviks 'claimed': 'It is middle-class reactionaries and therefore the working class should ally itself with the capitalists against the feudal landowners.' The Bolsheviks said: 'This is a proletarian revolution, and therefore the right peasant alliance between workers and peasants against big capitalist and big land owners.'"

Then, on the basis of this theoretical deliberation, the Agrarian Program of our Party set forth openly the slogan of workers' and farmers' government.

The New Slogan Before the Farmers

In practical agitation, the slogan of workers' and farmers' government was first applied in the Joseph trial against Foster. The Communist representatives of the working class, faced a farmer jury in the St.

Joseph trial. In summing up the trial, I wrote then as follows in "The Worker" of April 14: "From every point of view the trial is a historical event. For, at the present, the representative of the American middle class workers, appears before the capitalist judiciary and a farmer jury will render the verdict on him. Here are arrayed before us the three most important classes of American society—the worker, the capitalist, and the farmer. The worker is the defendant; the capitalist is the prosecutor; and the farmer will give the verdict. A historical symbol truly reflecting the historic situation of the American masses march on as the active forces of the revolution. The capitalists oppress these masses even more fiercely thru its governmental powers of suppression. And the victory in this ever sharpening class conflict will go to that class which receives the support of the farmers." The Central Executive Committee of our Party took up this question and decided that the whole defense was to be centered on the workers' common interests of workers and exploited farmers. In the Foster trial, C. E. Ruthenberg, with mastery clearness and in a popular manner that was exemplary, first presented the slogan of farmers and workers' government before the farmer jury, and then ally to the public at large.

The July 3d Convention of the Federated Farmer-Labor Party then provided the Workers Party with a second and even greater opportunity to present the slogan of workers' and farmers' government to the exploited farmers (even at the expense of Marxian clearness), whereby the slogan of workers' and farmers' government was turned, by the slogan of the Workers Party, into the slogan of the united masses of the Federated Farmer-Labor Party.

Revolt of American Farmers

Of course, the chief motive has been mainly the social and political alliance of workers and farmers with itself. We could not but realize that a portion of the labor aristocracy and most of the high officials of the trade union are hopeless for the cause of the revolution, having deluged themselves with the wages of self. At the same time we saw that the exploited tenant and mortgage farmers were revolting with ever growing bitterness, against the capitalist and the capitalist government. It is today only in the United States, that the capitalists and the old capitalist parties bear the revolt of the farmers more than

the action of the working class which is split up into so many divisions and led by so many reactionary leaders. We have seen that all third party revolts have failed, because the masses must parities only when, in addition to the urban elements, the lower middle class and workers, were joined by the rebellion of the farmers.

Lessons of European Revolutions

But apart from the development in America, the lessons of European revolutions have convinced us that the support of the farmer is necessary, in order to achieve the victory of the proletarian revolution and to maintain the power of the laboring masses.

History shows us that all revolutions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have received the initiative from the cities. The great French Revolution and the revolution of 1848 in France, Germany and Italy, were led by the urban middle class. The leadership of the proletarian revolution in 1917 in Russia and in 1919 in Hungary was that of the urban workers. Since the birth of capitalist society, those revolutions have always been led by one or other of the two principal classes of modern society which are created by capitalism itself—the capitalists or workers. But history shows us that only that revolution, which understood how to make an alliance with the farmers, has been able to maintain the revolutionary class a long time in power. The great French Revolution was victorious, and could wage war for years against the bourgeoisie because the French bourgeoisie freed the peasants and gave them the land of the feudal aristocracy and the church. The German revolution in 1848 failed miserably because the cowardly German middle class did not dare to lead the German army. When the Hapsburgs dispersed the Frankfurt national assembly with bayonets, not one hand was raised to defend the revolution. But on the other hand, the Hungarian revolution of 1848 could maintain itself for years and conduct a victorious war against the Hapsburgs because Ludwig Kossuth, with revolutionary instinct, won the peasants over to the revolution and great the revolution of 1917 was great proletarian revolution of 1917 in Russia is the achievement of the working class; but the proletariat would have lost power ten times over, and could not have waged revolutions against the bourgeoisie, if it had not given land and freedom to the Russian peasants. It ought not to be forgotten that the Com-

munist workers of red Petrograd and the peasins of Trotsky organized the Red Army, but that four-fifths of the masses of the Red Army consists of peasants who defended their liberties against the bourgeoisie and counter-revolution. On the other hand, the Hungarian proletarian revolution of 1919 failed in four and a half months because its leaders had not understood how to secure the alliance of peasants with the workers. They carried out the theoretically correct "socialization of land, instead of giving the land to the peasants, as was Lenin's policy in Russia. Therefore, the Russian revolution and the Hungarian revolution too narrow for it to be able to live and be victorious.

The history of revolutions teaches us that the revolutionary class must be able to bring together all disconnected elements of the leadership. It must understand the social and political penalty of death for the revolution; otherwise it drives the other classes into the arms of the counter-revolution. The revolutionary peasant fight against the bourgeoisie and Trotsky fought against the counter-revolution, while the Frankfurt assembly in 1848 and the Hungarian proletarian dictatorship of 1919 were overthrown by the counter-revolutionary peasant soldiers of Hapsburg and Horthy.

The Working Class Must Lead

The farmers, even when they are disoriented and rebellious, could never play an independent political role, and could never rule independently. The history of the great German Peasants' Revolt of the sixteenth century shows this just as clearly as does the history of the peasant revolt of Stambulch in Bulgaria in the twentieth century. Only centralized classes, that is only the capitalist class or the working class can seize or hold the centralized government for a long time.

The capitalist class has become counter-revolutionary of Stambulch through the world. The only class which is revolutionary today, is the working class. Only the initiative of the working class can overthrow capitalism. The exploited farmers must head that the farmer and the workers from capitalism only when they ally themselves with the workers. But on the other hand, the workers must realize that they can win only if they place themselves at the head of that farmer and that they can retain power only if they know how to secure the alliance of the exploited farmers.