COV CANONIZES LENIN

Hats Off to the Ladies
Mary D. Brite, Advisory Counselor, sends miscellaneous books and magazines.
Alice S. Cheyney of the City of Brotherly Love sends twenty volumes.
Mrs. Rachel T. Dunlop, Santa Fe, N. M., sends Tawney's "Acquisitive Society" and Blanchard's "Outline of the British Labor Movement."
Lucy Hall of Watertown, Wis., sends ten dollars.

"YE BEDTIME POETRIE"

The campus bell rings. I look up from my study of the determination of wages. It is a little past nine. I put a few pieces of green wood into my tin stove, shut off the drafts, turn down the light, step out into the cool night, and stroll up to White Lodge.

Through the trees a dim gleam illumines the windows of the Lodge. The night is very dark so that great precaution must be taken so as not to turn an ankle among the heap of stones that litter the approach to the doorway. Someone ahead opens the door and a burst of conversation and laughter breaks on the night. A flood of light reveals the stony approach. Leave the door open, I call out. In a moment I am in the room. Some dozen or fifteen youths, in the rough garb of workers and in all sorts of negligent attitudes, occupy the crude pine benches against the dark wainscoted walls. In the center of the room a kerosene lamp stands precariously on the edge of a book and paper littered table. The soft flame is just strong enough to bring out the dark beams of the ceiling and the book-lined shelves along the walls. The faces of the students stand out with pleasing indefiniteness as in candlelight.

Beside the table, between the lamp and the stove, "Father" Zuech lounges in a great leather chair. With his legs dangling over one arm, his body slouched down, and his head cushioned in an opposite angle so that the light falls over his shoulder he selects a word or two, piled carelessly in his lap and begins to read. The bedtime poetry group

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The Stabilization of Capitalism

By WILLIAM EDWARD ZEUCH

I

For the past year or two Professor John R. Commons of the University of Wisconsin, who is one of the ablest exponents of an enlightened capitalism, has been presenting his views about the future of our economic system.

Professor Commons announces that capitalism is here to stay. He discards the Marxian analysis of our capitalistic society. Marx, he maintains, knew only the crude, harsh, undeveloped capitalism of his day; he could not foresee the forced self-recovery of capitalism which is now evolving into a permanent, stabilized capitalism.

According to Professor Commons, Marx overlooked or could not foresee such important developments as: (1) the formulation and adoption of corporation laws which permit large concentrations of capital with widely scattered holdings; (2) the rise of trade unions which have curtailed the power of employers in the determination of wages; (3) the enactment of social legislation, such as unemployment insurance, accident insurance, old age pensions, etc., which has lessened the worker’s feeling of insecurity and has given him a stake in the continuation of capitalism; (4) the incompetency of labor, as a class, to manage industry; and (5) the great opportunities offered the individual worker under capitalism.

While practically every student recognizes the inadequacy of the Marxian analysis, yet there is no denying the fact that this did point out general tendencies that cannot be seriously questioned. At the same time we are not at all sure that Professor Commons’s analysis of economic tendencies is not superficial.

Our corporation laws, which made possible large concentrations of capital and wide dissemination of holdings, have not lessened the centralization of the ownership of the means of production and distribution. As has been pointed out in recent surveys of stock distribution, the amount of stock held by small investors has been greatly exaggerated; it is but a small fraction of the total amount of the total corporate stock of the country. At the same time the relative amount of non-corporate property, held by individuals or in partnership, has been decreasing steadily. Many of the so-called independent businesses of today are merely agencies of corporations and sell corporation products as dictated. Ford and others actually license their agents.

During the last decade alone thousands of small businesses as well as hundreds of large businesses and tens of thousands of farms have passed from individual ownership to the ownership of banks, loan companies, insurance companies, and other kinds of corporations. The banks, for example, have never informed the public as to the number of farms and business concerns that actually passed to their control during the last ten years. Compared to the continuous and steady concentration of productive wealth into corporate holdings, the dissemination of corporate stocks among workers is negligible.

III

We are very skeptical, to say the least, as to whether the trade unions have had any appreciable influence in forcing industrial corporations to disgorge a significant share of their profits in the form of higher wages. The number of organized workers in this country is not a great portion of the working public. Some of the greatest industries where the profits are largest have never been organized. The standardization of the industrial processes and the introduction of labor-saving machinery have broken and are breaking many trade unions. In addition, many corporations are successfully eliminating craft unions and substituting emasculated company unions that are under the control of the corporation.

At the beginning of the late war we saw the meagre results of a generation of struggle for higher wages on the part of the organized workers as compared with the insignificant large gains for the farmers, who are not organized. The unions today are, relatively speaking, weaker and less effective than for some years. The whole tendency of modern industry is to reduce labor power to an undifferentiated mass. If this tendency continues—and there is little doubt that it will continue—skill in industry in the future will not be required to any considerable extent. For this reason labor cannot expect to hold that monopoly of the job on the part of a few fortunate highly skilled workers that now enables them to get higher wages than the general run of
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common laborers. Many unions will follow in the footsteps of the type-setters and the glassblowers. There is now and will continue to be a break­up of the very craft organizations that Professor Commons maintains are the very bulwark of the capital­istic order because of the preferential wages they receive. This leveling down of the craft unions is going on throughout the world.

In view of these conditions it ap­pears very far-fetched to attribute any great power to organized labor generally, or to craft unions specifically, for forcing industrial corpora­tions to share their profits with their workers.

When one surveys the capitalistic nations today one does not know whether to attribute Professor Commons' claim of the security of the worker under capitalism seriously or ironical­ly. There is vast unemployment in this capitalistic world of ours. A capitalistically-bred war broke down the social legislation in all those countries where it had been most highly de­veloped. Unemployment insurance in Germany and England did not survive the stagnation that followed the war. The workers found that all the splen­did social legislation on the statute books did not save them from want, misery, and starvation. The English workers have been living on doles for years because the capitalistic society of Britain—the oldest capitalistic so­ciety in the world—could not cope with its problems. It is idle folly to talk of the security of workers under capitalism in the face of the unem­ployment, insecurity, and general misery in the capitalistic nations to­day.

While the attempts of workers to manage industry on a basis of indus­trial democracy have been for the most part dismal failures when tried in shops or in colonies, yet we can­not but think that Professor Com­mons evades the issue of the possi­bility of labor ownership and opera­tion through the delegation of power and responsibility as exemplified in the great and eminently successful co­operative establishments of Europe. Laborers have gone into manufactur­ing, mining, banking, and many other economic activities and are succeeding. The workers may have been a bit slow in finding the proper method but certainly no one can declare dogmatically in the face of their achievement that labor is in­capable of conducting industry.

Then too, Professor Commons makes the unwarranted assumption that the owners of industry are the managers of industry. That assumption might have been fitting forty years ago. Today the managers of industry, especially of corporate en­terprises, are almost always hired technicians working on a salary basis. The owning directors delegate the responsibility for the running of the industry to these hired technicians. Thus, we find that not only the co-op­erative enterprises of the workers but the capitalist enterprises of the wealthy are managed by technicians on a basis of delegated responsibility. The actual owners in neither case manage their enterprises.

VI

Professor Commons asserts that capitalism offers unusual opportuni­ties to the individual worker. Just what are the chances of individual adv­ancement under a developed capital­ism? An examination of the concerns in those sections where cap­italism has become firmly established discloses the fact that an increasing proportion of such concerns and the vast bulk of the wealth represented therein are inherited and not the product of individual effort. For every Henry Ford who rises to wealth on his own merits we find a dozen Edsel Fords, Vincent Astors, and John D. Jrs., who are carrying on on a basis of training for the custodianship of vast in­herited property. It then appears that it is just three generations from shirt sleeves to shirt sleeves is false in a world of inherited corporate wealth.

What chance has the average worker in a world made up of powerful concentrations of inherited corporate riches? What chance has our young farmer or artisan as compared with a young Harriman or a young Vander­bilt? Would it not be nearer the facts to say that capitalism with its insti­tution of inherited wealth is still­ing opportunity? How can one say that there is equality of opportunity among persons of equal capacity un­der capitalism?

The denial of equality of opportunity does not arise from the inherit­ance of corporate riches alone. In all sections of the world that have been settled for any length of time the land holdings are largely in the hands of individuals who have inher­ited them rather than in the posses­sion of persons who have developed or earned them. This is especially true of the resident land owners in long-settled, rich, farming sections.

VII

We cannot conceive of an enlight­ened industrial society stabilizing itself on the basis of fixed profits flowing to an owning caste. This would be the very essence of a stabilized capitalism as pointed out by Professor Commons. Furthermore, it is inconceivable to us that an intelligent so­

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Book Review

LENIN'S STATE*

A short time ago I overheard Dr. Zeuch aptly and strikingly define the State, as "a monopoly of violence." That, clearly, is what Lenin meant by the State, though he defined it in other terms.

"The State," he declares, "is a particular form of an organization of force; it is the organization of violence for the purpose of holding down some class." Then he queries:

"What is the class which the proletar­iat must hold down? It can be only, naturally, the exploiting class, i.e., the bourgeoisie." With iron logic, bolstered up with copious quotations, the great theorist shows Marx and Engels, especially the latter, in complete accord with this Communist idea of the state.

Further elaborating the idea, Lenin says: "The overthrow of the capital­ist class is feasible only by the trans­formation of the proletariat into the ruling class, able to crush the inevi­table and desperate resistance of the bourgeoisie, and to organize, for the settlement of economic order, all the toiling and exploited masses. The pro­letariat needs the State, the central­ized organization of force and violence, for the purpose of guiding the great mass of the population—the peasantry, the lower middle­class, the semi-proletariat—in the work of economic Socialist reconstruc­tion."

Clearly, also, Lenin does not wish to, has no notion of, "capturing the State" in order to use the machinery of "political democracy" in and for the upbuilding of a Socialist society. What he aimed at was the "smashing" of the political State by the in­dustrial State, i.e., of the capital­ist State by "The State of the State of the Workers and Soldiers Deputies."

This pamphlet is not only a clear and powerful exposition of the views of Marx and Engels on the State but is also a crushing polemic directed against the "Opportunism" and "Reneg­ade" socialist opposition to Bolshe­vism. It should be read and studied carefully by all those interested in the labor and farm movements for economic and social freedom.

COVANI.

*The State and Revolution by N. Lenin Daily Worker Pub. Co., Chicago 20 cents

There is assuredly no more ef­fectual method of clearing up one's own mind on any subject than by talking it over, so to speak, with men of equal vision and grasp, who have considered it from a totally different point of view.—Thomas Huxley.
Poetic

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is in session. I miss the first few lines in the noise of the settling down of the group. Then his voice flows on:

"Raving politics, never at rest—as this poor earth's pale history runs.

What is it all but a trouble of ants in the gleam of a million million of suns?"

"Well that is not a very comforting sentiment" I think to myself. But this is only a beginning, an introduction. The poet continues to pile up the disagreeable and distressing contrasts of life. Finally the disturbing recital comes to a close:

"What the philosophies, all the sciences, poesy, varying voices of prayer,

All that is noblest, all that is basest, all that is filthy with all that is fair?

What is it all, if we all of us end but in being our own corpse-collins at last,

Swallowed in Vastness, lost in Silence, drown'd in the deeps of a nameless Past?

What but a murmur of gnats in the gloom, or a moments anger of bees in their hive?"

"Father" Zeuch lays aside the book with a quiet, enigmatic smile. He looks along the faces ranged around the walls until his glance rests on someone in the farthest corner.

"Well Irving, do you consider that poetry?" he asks. Evidently there are a dozen Irvings for as many voices begin speaking at once ready to praise or to rend as the spirit moves. "Father" Zeuch brings some semblance of order out of the conflicting voices by the simple device of paying attention to only one at a time. He listens, goading a talker here and there with a barbed question. There is much decided opinion. Finally someone chirps up, "Say, who is the author of that anyway?"

"Oh," "Father" Zeuch replies with just the least hint of a chuckle, "This is a poem from that hopelessly Victorian, Alfred Lord Tennyson."

We saunter home voicing our opinions about poetry to our fellows and to the silent pines. My room is still warm. I turn up the light; it is a quarter to eleven. I poke up the fire, yawn a bit, get ready for the night, blow out the light, crawl into bed, and pull up the covers.

"—a murmur of gnats in the gloom—

— a trouble of ants in the gleam of a million million of suns"; what an outlook on life. I roil myself more snugly in my blankets. The stars twinkle mockingly through my window.

Society Notes

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Labor. Thousands of workers have been added to Commonwealth's labor supply. After a rather rough ride over stony trails, three hives of bees purchased some months ago at a sale were set up adjacent to the campus. Aside from the continuous suggestion their presence offers to the student body, they constitute a promise of honey for Commoners in the autumn.

Orpheus. Eating, sleeping, working, studying, and playing struggle for place and recognition in each Commoner's twenty-four hour day. Each activity suffers or gains advantages at times. Any wanderer on the campus at midnight may see the gleam of a lamp as some worried student bents over his table reading or writing. Sleep, however, gets her revenge; she will not be robbed. Many a morning the breakfast bell is answered only by the audible slumber of the workers as he sleeps through the breakfast hour. Roused at last he rushes off to class yawning and hungry.

A Salt. Victor Aronson of the Marine Transport Workers arrived from New Orleans to enroll for the Spring semester. Victor has spent six years at sea. He plans to prepare himself for any sacrifice. The battle of the century began that the pressure of critical situation solicits the aid of labor.-Daniel Webster, April, 1824.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

Labor in this country is independent and proud. It has not to ask the patronage of capital, but capital solicits the aid of labor.—Daniel Webster, April, 1824.

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Society will continue to permit the inheritance of enormous industrial organizations with all the power and prestige that that inheritance entails any more than we now permit the inheritance of political power as enjoyed by royalty in the absolute monarchies of a past age.

It may be that we will go through a temporary stage of stabilized capitalism. Should such an era come, however, it would lead inevitably to some sort of stabilized collectivism. Capitalism cannot endure without a prospect of profits. Stabilization would mean the fixing of profits ultimately at what the courts or commissions would call a reasonable rate. In an era of stabilization the protection of the public would make imperative a strict control of the operations of enormous industrial concerns. Society as a whole, through its political agencies—the courts and commissions—will be forced more and more to fix the rules of the game within which and by which business will function. We are of the opinion that the workers organized into a political body will have as much, if not far more, to do with this hastening of social control of productive industry than workers organized merely as economic groups. If our capitalist industrial society reaches this stage of strict regulation of economic operations and strict limitation of the amount of business profits it will have become institutionalized economically and ready, so it would seem, for the next stage which will be an era of socialized industry under scientific, technical control. In other words, society will hire brains to operate industry for social welfare, just as the workers and capitalists now hire brains to operate industry for class welfare. An era of stabilized capitalism, should it come to pass, would seem to be only a means to this end.

We should not forget, however, that there is always the possibility that the pressure of critical situations may catapult us into an era of collectivism before capitalism gets a chance to crystallize, even temporarily.