

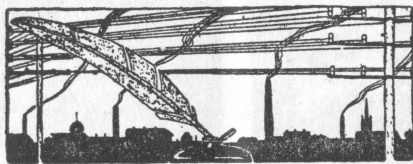
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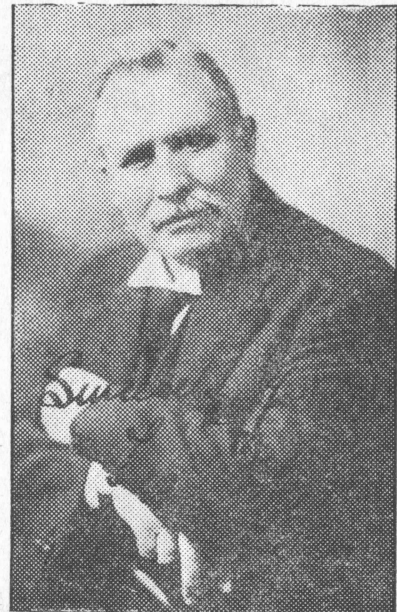
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"THE WALL OF THE COMMUNARDS."

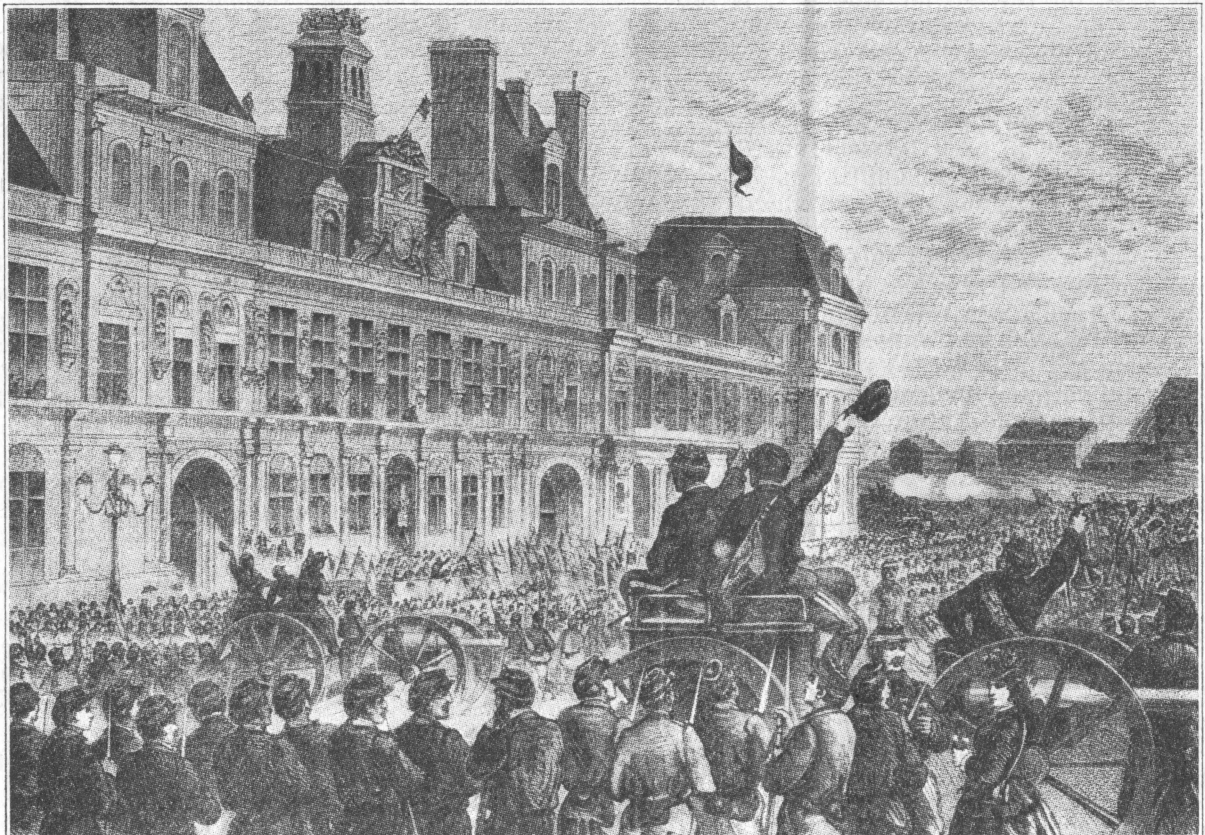
The heroic struggle on March 18th, the establishment of proletarian dictatorship by the Central Committee of the National Guard was the first attempt at workers' rule since the foundation of the modern labor movement. Marx took an active interest and was diligently studying the development of events in France and the reaction toward the Paris Commune throughout the world. Although the majority of the Communards were Blanquists and among the minority who were members of the I. W. A. were more Proudhonists than socialists, Marx abstained from open criticism of the activities of the Commune. Marx recognized in the Commune a united front of the various revolutionary groups determined to fight the bourgeoisie and the miserable Thiers' government. The fraternal sympathy and loyal support of all revolutionists were immediately shown to the Commune. Marx wrote to Varlin and Frankel, members of the Commune and French representatives in the I. W. A.: "I wrote in behalf of your cause several hundred letters to all corners of the world where we have connections. The working class was for the Commune at the start." The French police accused Marx and the I. W. A. of being responsible for the Commune, and even reproduced "official" instructions to the Paris members to rise against the government. The publication of "Zinoviev let-

ters" and Comintern "plots" in various countries by the minions of capitalist governments are proofs of the old saying that history repeats itself.

The Marx-Kugelmann Correspondence.

During the Commune Marx wrote a letter to his friend Dr. Kugelmann in Hanover, which Lenin considered one of the greatest revolutionary documents and which he said ought to be reprinted and hung on the wall in the home of every class conscious worker. Outside of the famous "Address of the General Council" which we shall mention later, the letter to Kugelmann gives Marx's reaction to the great revolutionary drama which was being enacted before his eyes. The Marx-Engels correspondence, where so much valuable material on revolutionary tactics is to be found contains no letters regarding the Commune. The last letter to Engels during that period was written on September 16, 1870, and the next on August 29, 1871. During this time Engels was in London and lived near Marx.

In 1907 Lenin edited a Russian translation of Marx's letters to Kugelmann, written between 1862 and 1874 and published by the *Neue Zeit* in 1902. Kautsky, who was then editor of the famous socialist journal, wrote that the years which the correspondence between Marx and Kugelmann covered were "the most important



The Proclamation of the Commune.



Louis Auguste Blanqui.

bakeries; limitation of the payment of officials to not more than worker's wages; abolition of fines levied upon workers; and granting the workers the right to operate the shops and factories deserted or closed by their owners.

Writing on the 40th anniversary of the Commune, Lenin made the following elementary Marxian observation: "In modern society the proletariat, enslaved by capital economically, cannot rule politically before breaking the chains which bind it to capital. This is why the Commune had to develop along socialist lines, that is, to attempt to overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie, the rule of capital, the destruction of the very foundations of the present social order."

Cut off from the rest of the country, and having lost strategic opportunities at the beginning, the Communards were soon to fight for their very lives. Thiers reorganized his forces at Versailles. With the aid of soldiers hurriedly returned from the German camps and the benevolent attitude of the Prussian troops, he was able to marshal new forces and make war on Paris. Thiers' troops were permitted by the Prussians to concentrate around the city. The Commune allowed it to go undefended, except the eastern part which was inhabited by the working class population. From May 21 to 28 the city was subjected to a bombardment by

the Versailles army. The Paris workers retired to their quarters, fought like lions to defend the Commune. The counter-revolution showed no mercy. Fighting against odds the Commune fell amid ruin and destruction, brought by Thiers' avenging hordes. As a result of a week's fighting thousands lay prostrate in the streets, more thousands of captives were taken to the Pere la Chaise cemetery where they were slaughtered in groups and many more were exiled to penal colonies.

Marx's Epic on the Commune.

The first attempt at proletarian dictatorship was short lived. The heroic struggles of the Paris workers, the actual achievements and potential possibilities of the Commune, have since been the subject of wonder and study by the revolutionary movement of the world. The first to come forward with a complete analysis of what had happened in Paris was, of course, Marx himself. The blood of the Parisian workers, spilled in the cause of proletarian emancipation hadn't dried when Marx read to the General Council of the I. W. A. a paper which was destined to become one of the greatest pieces of political writing ever penned. Two days after the fall of the Commune, May 30, Marx read his famous "Address" which later became known under the title "The Civil War in France." From a letter to Professor Beesly on June 12, we learn that the "Address" was more than twice as long as was published.

When the Address was published in June, 1871, the authorship was not given. The names of the members of the General Council were affixed to the document. Marx was forced however, soon to announce himself as the author because of the attacks in the bourgeois press. In a letter to Kugelmann, June 18, Marx writes: ". . . Now, this manifesto, which you will soon receive, is creating a devilish excitement, and I have the honor to be at this moment the man who is vilified and threatened more than any one else in London. This is, really, fine—after twenty years of a muddy idyll! The government organ, *The Observer*, threatens me with court proceedings. Let them try. I dare the canaille!"

Marx wrote "The Civil War in France" to meet the attacks upon the Commune from the bourgeois and reformist ranks. In true Marx fashion he drew a picture of the forces which brought it about and hurled his invectives against the bourgeoisie and its agents. He knew that all crimes in existence would be charged against the Paris workers, just as the Bolsheviks were accused of all crimes which could be conjured up by the morbid mind. He unmasked the enemies of the Commune before they had a chance to speak. He also had in mind the faint-hearted, the 'I told you so' revolutionists, when he analyzed the conditions under which the Commune had to work and

mune should have recognized that the workers, having assumed power, cannot rule with the old State power, the machinery used before for its own exploitation." Engels concludes: "In truth, the State is nothing but an apparatus for the oppression of one class by another, in a democratic republic not less than in a monarchy."

Here is Marx's analysis of the nature of the State in capitalist society. "At the same pace at which the progress of modern industry developed, widened, intensified the class antagonism between capital and labor, the State power assumed more and more the character of the national power of capital over labor, a public force organized for social enslavement, an engine of class despotism. After every revolution, marking a progressive phase in the class struggle, the purely repressive character of the State power stands out in bolder and bolder relief."

And further again, after analyzing the results of the various revolutions from 1830 to 1871, Marx concludes on the nature of the capitalist State: "Democracy is, at the same time, the most prostitute and the ultimate form of the State which nascent middle-class society had commenced to elaborate as a means of its own emancipation from feudalism, and which full-grown bourgeois society had finally transformed into a means for the enslavement of labor by capital." The Commune, according to Marx, "was not only to supersede the monarchical form of class rule, but class rule itself." The different measures of the Commune were aimed at the very foundations of bourgeois rule. It was "to serve as a lever for uprooting the economical foundations upon which rests the existence of classes and therefore class rule. With labor emancipated, every man becomes a working man and productive labor ceases to be a class attribute." Marx saw in the Commune not merely a revolt, not only an experiment. He saw in it a proletarian dictatorship exercis-

ing the will of the working class to abolish these forms which made class rule possible.

Speaking about those who usually prattle of the emancipation of labor until labor really begins to emancipate itself, Marx says: "The Commune, they exclaim, intends to abolish property, the basis of all civilization! Yes, gentlemen, the Commune intended to abolish the class property which makes the labor of many the wealth of the few. It aimed at the expropriation of the expropriators. . . . But this is Communism, 'impossible' Communism!"

Marx shows that the middle classes had everything to gain from the Commune, and in fact, the Paris petty bourgeoisie benefited by the legislation regarding the moratorium on debts and the payments of rentals. Similarly, in the case of the peasants, Marx declares that the Commune was perfectly right in telling the peasants that "its victory was their only hope."

Marx on "National Defense."

Marx speaks of the last stand of the Paris workers, who fought against terrific odds. He shows how their defeat was accomplished under Bismarck's patronage. The fact that they were but recently enemies did not prevent

the Prussians from helping Thiers in his murderous work. Marx was moved to make the following observation on the nature of nationalism and war, after witnessing the cooperation of the German militarists and French reactionaries in their onslaught on the Commune:

"The highest heroic effort of which old society is still capable is national war: and it is now proved to be a mere governmental humbug, intended to defer the struggle of the classes thrown aside as soon as that class struggle bursts out in civil war. Class rule is no longer able to disguise itself in a national uniform; the national governments are one as against the proletariat."



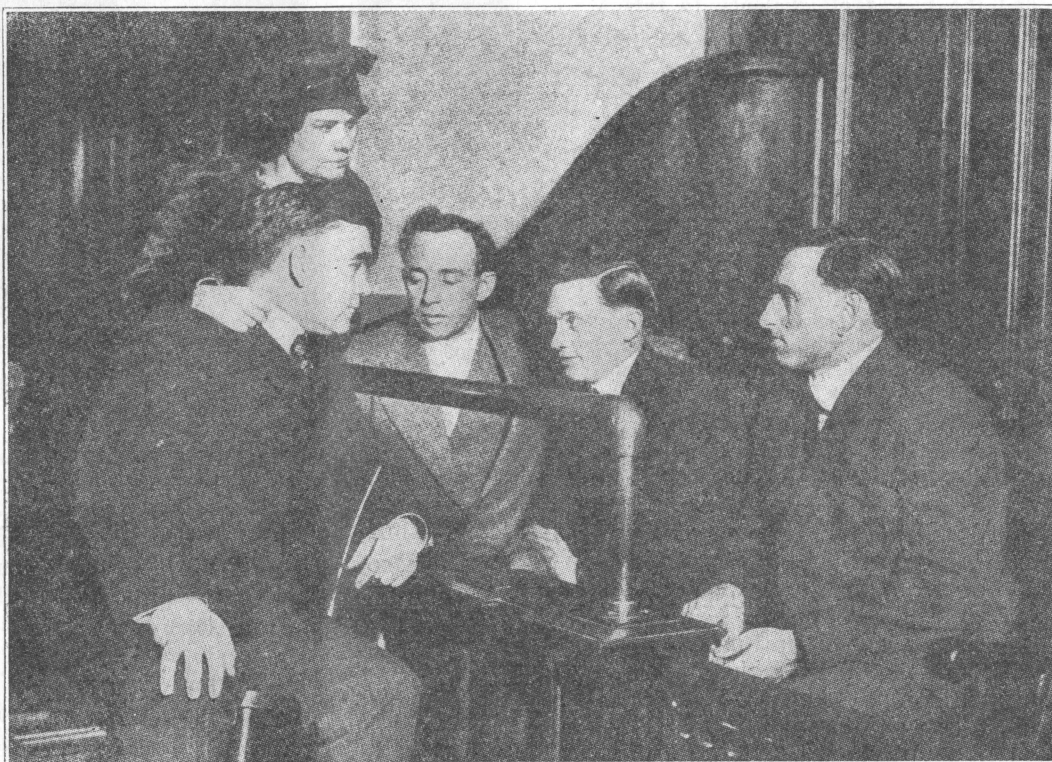
Louise Michel.

In Union There Is Strength.

Hitherto the various workingclass organizations whose members fell foul of capitalist justice had their own defense committees whenever necessary. But experience proved that this diversity had serious drawbacks. The various organizations were playing a lone hand. There was duplication of effort, overlapping and a tendency in the direction of organizational fetishism. Mutual jealousy was not easy to avoid. The sentiment for a co-ordinated all-inclusive, non-partisan defense organization gained ground and this sentiment assumed tangible organizational form in the birth of the International Labor Defense.

"The continued persecution of the workers in this country and the unmistakable signs of its intensification call for the organization of all the forces at the disposal of the workers for the struggle against this terror and its sponsors. This condition, if allowed to continue, will mean the destruction, or at best, the serious weakening of the labor movement. The need of this period is for every conscious workers to pledge his support to a concerted movement whose purpose is to concentrate the resistance of the whole working class and all those sympathetic to the cause of the workers, in defense of the militants who are singled out or grouped together for a target of attack by organized capitalism.

Until now, workers' defense has been spontaneous and sporadic. Defense committees have



Left to Right: Rena Mooney, Tom Mooney, Ed. Nolan, W. K. Billings, Israel Weinberg.

The Formation of the I. L. D.

In a manifesto adopted by the conference which launched the I. L. D. it was pointed out that there had been more persecution and jailing of workers during the last ten years than in any other period of equal length in the history of the United States and that, far from this condition showing any promise of decreasing, there was every indication that the assaults against the workers would continue with increased vigor. With regard to the persecution of workers in this and other countries the manifesto declared:

been created hastily as cases arise and frequently have had to depend on workers without adequate connection and experience to properly handle them. Wide-spread publicity often is not secured and the power of the labor movement at large is not mustered for the defense. As a consequence, many obscure workers have been railroaded to prison without the knowledge of the labor movement, "unknown soldiers" of the class war. All possible forces must be rallied for the defense of every worker attacked through the courts or otherwise by the agents of capitalism.

This conference, consisting of delegates from all sections of the labor movement and from ex-

isting labor defense bodies, sets up the International Labor Defense for the purpose of fulfilling this mission. The International Labor Defense is a non-partisan organization. Its object is to unite all forces for labor defense. It constitutes itself as an ever-ready and ever-willing champion for the defense of all workers attacked for their activity in the labor movement, for expression of political opinion or for industrial affiliation.

The International Labor Defense will seek to collect material and give publicity to all cases of working class persecution, to expose brutal treatment of class war prisoners and to bare secret anti-labor activities such as labor spy systems, etc. This conference proclaims that the International Labor Defense stands ready to provide legal, moral and material aid to all workers persecuted for their activities in the labor movement or for expression of opinion. The conference considers it a first duty of the working class to look after the comfort and well being of its hostages to capitalism and to supply material comforts and the means of existence to their families.

The International Labor Defense will organize and lead nation-wide campaigns for the release of all class war prisoners, conduct a relentless struggle against anti-labor legislation, and fight for the repeal of all criminal syndicalism, criminal anarchy and sedition laws—exceptional measures designed to give a legal covering to the attacks of the ruling class upon militant workers and the whole labor movement.

The conference sends its warmest fraternal greetings to all class war prisoners in America and to the victims of the white terror abroad. It declares its unqualified solidarity with the exploited workers and farmers the world over and appeals to them and to all sections of the American labor movement to rally to the International Labor Defense in its task of fighting back the capitalist jailers and hangmen."

The International Labor Defense has on its national committee prominent progressive intellectuals, trade union militants, members of the I. W. W., Communists, socialists and farmer-laborites. It elected as its national chairman, Andrew T. McNamara, prominent in the progressive wing of the International Association of Machinists. Edward C. Wentworth, author, is vice-president and James P. Cannon, long an active figure in the workingclass movement, is executive secretary.

The Work of the I. L. D.

Since its formation the I. L. D. more than justified the expectations of its founders. Tho only a few short months in existence it has already established itself firmly in the hearts of the militant workers of the United States.

It has defended and aided in the defense of several important cases, among which are: the frame-up against the shoe worker, John Merrick in Haverhill; the Farrell case in Farrell, Pennsylvania, where South Slavic workers were indicted; the Ford and Suhr case; the trial of



Charlotte Anita Whitney.

the Pittsburgh Communists; the Zeigler frame-up; the Crouch and Trumbull case; the Michigan Communist cases; the appeal of Anita Whitney and the Benjamin Gitlow case.

Outside of those major cases the I. L. D. is weekly called upon to defend workers who run up against the capitalist legal machine in the performance of their duties in their class.

Besides defending American class war prisoners the I. L. D. organized campaigns to save Rakosi and other victims of the Horthy dictatorship and Julio Mella, Cuban revolutionary worker who with several other workers was thrown into prison by the agents of the American sugar trust in that country. The White Terror in European countries, the bloody deeds of the imperialists in Asia, Africa and South America against the colonial peoples are given publicity by the I. L. D. and the American workers are aroused to a realization of their duty to their fellow workers in other lands.

(Continued on page 212.)

higher and higher, hundreds of thousands of farmers are leaving their farms every year because they are unable to make a living upon the land. The standard of life of the American farmer is falling fast. Farmers generally throughout the country frankly state that they see no hope of ever being able to pay their debts, their main struggle at present being that of paying interest and taxes, and even this is now becoming impossible. Efforts of bankers, businessmen and farm leaders of the social-democratic type to relieve the bad economic situation which has arisen among the farmers, without abolishing the capitalist system which is responsible for the farmers' distress, have proved and will continue to prove futile.

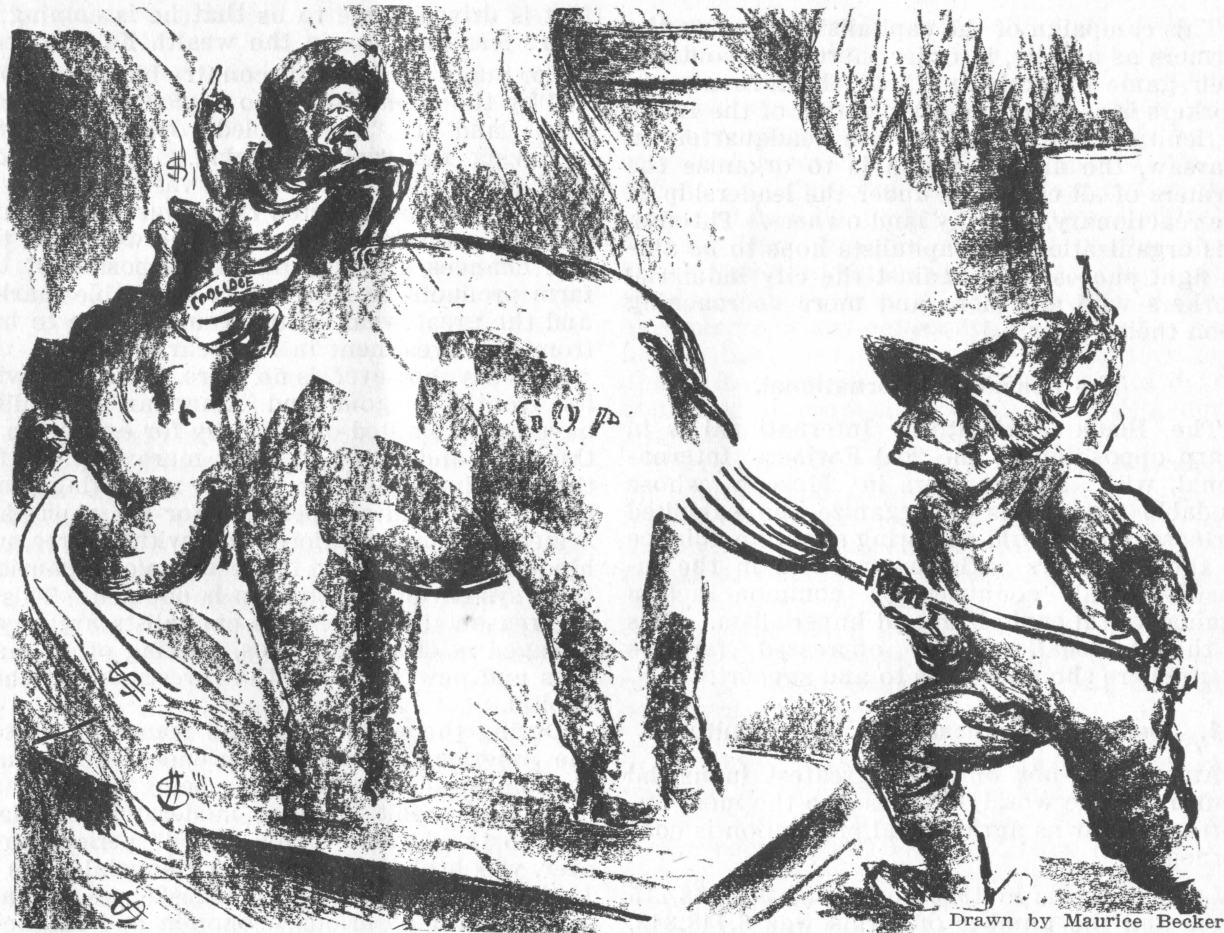
In Soviet Russia alone there is an upward trend. Here the farmers have gotten rid of their exploiters, the capitalists, and are building a new future for themselves and their families. Despite the great destruction of the imperialist and civil wars and the ignorance and slavery inherited from the czarist regime they are forging ahead culturally and economically. All this talk about revolts of these farmers against the Soviet government, concerning which we hear so much in America and other countries, is of course absolutely nonsensical. While in Europe last year I traveled over 2000 miles in the

farming territory of the Soviet Union, saw the Russian farmers at work in the fields and I know that they are steadily increasing their economic well-being and loyally supporting the Soviet government. Why shouldn't they? It is their government and it fights for their interests!

Significant Tendencies.

The farmers learn by experience. More and more they are trying to understand just what are the causes for the conditions under which they now suffer; more and more are they rolling over in their minds how they can find a way out of the dilemma in which the capitalist system has placed them, and now they have come to the conclusion that the cause for their misfortune is due to the extortions they are subjected to by the "Big Interests," "Big Business," as represented by speculators in food products, great grain combines, and banks. It is true that they are yet somewhat hazy about their understanding of the capitalist forces which are exploiting them, but, nevertheless, their antagonism towards the capitalist interests mentioned above is unmistakable.

It is also noticeable, especially in the older countries, that the farmer is becoming conscious of the fact that he does not represent



Drawn by Maurice Becker

gotten heavily tied up with investments in the Pennsylvania's stock.

B. Stolberg, in a recent article in the "Nation," declared that the Amalgamated Bank is "investing only in enterprises sympathetic to the labor movement" (Nation, Sept. 30, 1925, p. 350). This simply is not so. The Amalgamated plays the market, makes short term loans to business men, etc., and derives much of its income from the surplus value of workers in other industries.

But Stolberg is more fortunate in grasping the situation in an article in the Century, entitled the "Peter Pans of Communism," in which, tho he does not understand or draw the proper conclusions from it, yet he sums up very "nicely" the tendencies sketchily described in the present article with the intention of stimulating investigation. (That is the purpose of my article, not Stolberg's). He declares:

"Undoubtedly this archaic Gompers' method is passing. It is too primitive and unconcerted to balance the rights of labor in our complex industrial civilization. But instead of going socialist, the progressive (!!!) wing of American labor is molting into trade union capitalism. With the instinct of self-preservation (as the Stolberg and other writers for the liberal bourgeoisie understand self-preservation), it is ADAPTING ITSELF TO OUR IMPERIAL CAREER . . . (emphasis mine—B. D. W.). Hence arises what one might call the new economic policy of American labor. Even now it could not very well 'throw off its chains' for already those chains are worth close to one billion dollars in capital investment and business enterprise."

Stolberg, like Hobson in the passage summarized above, has grasped one side of the present development in our labor movement. As to the counter-tendencies, that shall be the subject of other articles.



First Russian Baron (to the other): Ah, my dear friend, how familiar! This is America—but how like our Holy Russia of the Tzars!

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