

The International of the Peasants and Farmers

By I. Amter.

An International of the Peasants and Farmers has been achieved!

Assembled in the St. Andrews Hall of the Kremlin, the gold ceiling of which, as a Ukrainian peasant most eloquently said, is made of the "blood of the workers and peasants", representatives of peasants' and farmers' organizations in fourteen countries participated in this event of world-wide importance. Delegates from all States of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, Germany, France, Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, Finland, Esthonia, Norway, Sweden, Bulgaria, Lithuania, United States, Mexico and Japan, participated in the conference which launched a movement that will unite the peasants and farmers with the workers of the city in struggle for the emancipation of the producing classes.

The peasants and the farmers today are suffering under the yoke of capitalism. High taxes, high mortgages, interest, low prices for their produce in exchange for the high cost of industrial products monopolized by the industrial barons, the danger of war, the burdens that the peasantry and farmers must bear—in blood during the war, in economic and political burdens after the war—the obligations and loans, the complete disorganization and destruction of their social life, the denial of opportunities to their children—these are some of the burdens that the peasants must tolerate. This is their lot as a result of the power that the capitalists and landowners possess.

The capitalists have demonstrated that they will do nothing to alleviate the situation of the workers. In Germany the masses of the workers are literally starving, while the capitalists and financiers gather bigger profits and build up more gigantic fortunes. The small and middle peasantry of Bulgaria, Czecho-Slovakia, Germany, Poland, even of the United States, stand face to face with positive destruction, if the struggle against capitalism is not taken up with militancy and carried through to victory. Capitalism has no intention of relieving the peasants of their burdens: peasants and workers do not exist to produce goods for the producers to consume. *They exist only to create profits for the capitalists and landowners.*

The peasants and farmers assembled in the Kremlin resolved to take up the struggle—not alone—but together with the workers, for the liberation of both classes. The peasants alone cannot free themselves. History has shown that unless the peasants unite with the workers in the struggle against capitalism, they will be beaten. In Bulgaria, they had power; but they were under the influence and control of the big peasants and landowners. Overnight a military clique overthrew the peasant government, murdered the premier Stambulisky, and instituted a White Terror against the peasants and workers. In Italy, the workers could not attain power because they were unaided by the peasants. In the industrial countries, the workers will not be able to hold power, if they succeed in obtaining it, unless they are helped by the peasants. Both of them face the same enemy: capitalism. Together, therefore, they must combat this enemy for the attainment of a Workers' and Peasants' Government, to replace the capitalist dictatorship that holds the world of producers in its bloody grip today.

What can the peasant and the farmer expect from capitalism? What has capitalism to offer? The aim of capitalism is profits—not production, not consumption by the producers.

Capitalism is not interested in raising the economic and social status of the producing class. On the contrary, capitalism seeks the improvement of the situation of the producers only if this improvement means an increase of profit. In the mines of Corea, work is done in the most primitive manner, because human labor is cheaper than machinery. On the plantations of the southern part of the United States, modern machinery is not copious, for the labor of the Negroes and "poor whites" is far cheaper. Capitalism is interested in monopoly prices, which mean high profits. It is indifferent to the sufferings or happiness of the hundreds of millions of workers and peasants on whose lives these profits are built up.

Today the capitalists themselves are forcing the issue. Determined to retain the right to exploit and oppress, they have overthrown constitutional law in most states of Europe. In Spain, Bulgaria, Italy, military rule prevails; in Finland, Estonia, Rumania, Japan, reaction is in the saddle. In so-called "democratic" countries, like the United States and South American states, constitutionalism is becoming a joke. Fascism, Ku Kluxism in its multitudinous forms, armed with guns, tanks, and airplanes, are ready to shoot down the workers and peasants who rebel against the conditions that are forced upon them. Germany stands in the throes of a revolution against these intolerable conditions. The capitalist governments are making ready to call to arms the sons of the peasants, farmers and workers: the German workers and peasants must be drowned in blood.

The war must be resisted with all the power at the disposal of the united workers and peasants. The capitalist governments must be told that the peasants and workers and their sons will refuse to march against their German brothers. The unity of the workers and peasants, nationally and internationally, and the destruction of international capitalism is the goal of the revolutionary peasants and workers of the world.

This will be no light struggle. The peasants are still greatly under the influence of the reactionary forces of capitalism. The church, the press, the school, the moving pictures, attachment to old customs are holding the peasants down. The capitalists hold up the flag of revolution as a bogey by which to frighten the peasants. The emblem of Fascism, the "Hakenkreuz", is the star of the international bourgeoisie. Against that, the workers and peasants raise the flag of revolution.

What will they attain by the revolution? They will throttle capitalism. They will institute a society wherein only the producing classes will benefit. Soviet Russia is the emblem in the sign of which the peasants and workers will become free. Soviet Russia is not yet free. The Soviet Government has still to cope with capitalism. The black reaction has made it impossible for this huge agricultural country to build up its economy separate and apart from capitalism. The invasions and the counter-revolution attempted to destroy Russia's industry: Soviet Russia has been obliged to depend on her low state of industrial production and on her primitive agriculture, to reconstruct what has been destroyed, and to widen and deepen her agriculture. *But the peasant of Soviet Russia has received the land. He has no mortgages, no interest to pay. Out of his produce he pays a tax to maintain the government and to provide for the social institutions that the Workers' and Peasants' Government provides. The peasant knows that the Soviet Government is the government of the peasants and workers; that its only aim is to promote the welfare of the producers. Soviet Russia has not yet reached her goal; but she is on the upgrade, while all the States of Europe are driving to destruction.*

In Soviet Russia the peasants have learned the great message of cooperation. The cooperatives are a tremendous power not only for production, but also for consumption. The consumers' leagues in the city and country work in close contact with one another. In capitalist countries, the farmers' cooperatives must build up their power as one of the effective means of fighting the economic battle. Just as capitalism is international, the peasants of the different countries must cooperate internationally. The peasants of Soviet Russia, for instance, could furnish fodder and fertilizers to the peasants of Germany. The cooperatives of the industrial countries could supply machinery and other mechanical means of production to the Russian peasants. Through their cooperatives, the peasants and farmers must assist the industrial workers in their struggles against the employers—during strikes, lockouts etc.

The peasants and farmers belong to many kinds of organizations, which are under the influence of the big peasants and farmers, and of the land-owners and city capitalists. In order to make these organizations effective weapons in the struggle against capitalism, the small peasants and farmers must get control. They must instill a fighting spirit into the organizations: the big peasants and farmers are in league with the exploiters. In Europe, they have special privileges: they cut off public roads and declare them private; they own large woods, and

woe to the peasant whose cow or calf walks into the woods. They are at the head of the local tax board and put themselves into a low tax class. As a result of this fact, the small peasant has to pay a far higher proportionate tax than the big peasant. This is just as true of America and Canada. In America, furthermore, the farmers have the railroads and grain speculators at their throats. As a result of the control that the food speculators have over the market, the peasants and farmers all over the world are forced to sell their products at a low figure. Through manipulation of the exchange, the speculators raise the prices, so that the consumer has to pay a manifold price for agricultural produce. This is purest robbery of the peasant and of the worker.

What is the significance of the International Peasants' Council that has been formed amid the enthusiasm of all the delegates present? Sixty years ago, the International Working Men's Association was formed, to take up the fight of the workers against capitalism. Sixty years later, the revolutionary peasants and farmers assembled in Moscow and decided to take up the fight *together with the workers* against the joint enemy.

The peasants and the farmers who sat in the Kremlin were *real* peasants and farmers. The presidium of the conference consisted of Ukrainian, German, Mexican, Polish, Czechoslovakian, French, Bulgarian and Scandinavian peasants and an American farmer. Internationalism dominated the conference. Complying with a request of the conference, a delegation called upon Comrade Gregory Zinoviev of the Communist International to address the conference. Tremendous enthusiasm greeted his appearance. In his address, Comrade Zinoviev pointed out the significance of the conference, which is bound to unite the peasants and farmers in action all over the world. Comrade Clara Zetkin also spoke a few words. The peasants and farmers debated each point on the agenda like experts: they have suffered and out of their sufferings have come the decisions of the conference.

The conference elected a Council embracing all the countries represented, but is free to add to its number as other countries affiliate. It also elected a Presidium of eleven members. At the meeting of the Council the day after the closing of the Conference, a General Secretary and Assistant were elected. For the time being, the seat of the Council will be Moscow.

An International of the Peasants has been formed. Long live the unity of the peasants and workers of the world!

IN THE INTERNATIONAL

A Letter from the E. C. C. I. to the Italian Socialist Party

Dear Comrades,

The Italian Socialist Party is a striking example of how treacherous leaders ruin a labor party. This rôle was once played by Nenni and Vella. Is it possible to imagine worse treason to the cause of the proletariat?

As is known to you, comrades, the Enlarged Session of the Executive of the Comintern has already declared itself ready to make the greatest concessions to the Italian Socialist Party. The Comintern was prepared to admit the Socialist Party at once to its ranks, as a sympathizing party, despite the anti-revolutionary attitude of the present leaders. It need not be said that these concessions were not made for the sake of all these Nennis and Vellas. The Comintern knew very well that Italy is passing through extraordinary conditions at the present time. The Italian working class is bound by Mussolini's chains. It is hard to imagine a more difficult position for our class. We know that you workers who have joined the ranks of the Italian Socialist Party, and who feel attached to this party, sympathize wholeheartedly with the Comintern. And we know that it is only the White Fascist Terror and the cunning machinations of your so-called leaders which hold you back from affiliation to the Comintern. And we know too that the chief task to be undertaken in Italy today is the collection of the whole of the revolutionary forces of the proletariat. And therefore we were ready to do our utmost to facilitate your affiliation to our International.

Nenni and Vella have the intention, in the future as in the past, of unscrupulously and insolently serving the interests of the bourgeoisie. They are prepared to go to any lengths to prevent the affiliation of the Italian Socialist Party with the revolutionary proletariat, and are trying to paralyze the forces of the party. In order that Signors Nenni and Vella might not find it so easy to execute their traitorous designs, the Comintern carried on lengthy negotiations with the present Central Committee of the Italian Socialist Party, and refuted all the arguments adduced against affiliation with the Comintern. The situation is now perfectly