

KAUTSKY ENLISTS FOR DEFENSE OF CAPITALISM

This is the second and concluding article on "Kautsky and the Coming War."
—Editor

"A conflict between two democratic states," writes Karl Kautsky in the final chapter of his four-volume work on "War and Democracy," "is unthinkable today."

What are we to conclude from this remarkable statement? That bourgeois democracies like the United States and France and England are incapable of warring with each other? are free of capitalist-imperialist tendencies? that England and the United States will never go to war over oil, and control of the seas, and South America, and the Pacific and world hegemony? Can this four-volume work be the voice of a Socialist, a Marxist or even a Realpolitiker, a realistic bourgeois commentator on political affairs? Does Kautsky really think that the masses of the proletarians and non-capitalists rule those countries and determine their foreign policy? The answer is that Kautsky does! Or at least he says he does!

"By democratic states," he writes, "we mean those who are not merely endowed with democratic constitutions, but dominated by independent and politically schooled masses supporting themselves upon wage labor or, at least, labor of a non-exploitative character. A conflict between two democratic states is unthinkable today."

So? This is the man who once studied Marx, interpreted and defended his views. This is the man whose war posi-

tion the New Leader (issues of Nov. 9 and 16, 1935) reprints and hails as the war position of Socialism. Imperialist England, imperialist America, imperialist France, who stride iron-heeled and spurred over prostrate peoples in Asia, Africa, Australia and Latin America, are given a clean bill of health after the First World War and in advance of the Second!

"Quite different," continues Kautsky, "is the situation with respect to despotic or semi-despotic states, controlled by elements subsisting not upon their own peaceful labor but upon exercise of power and exploitation." Shades of J. P. Morgan, has it come to this!

"A peaceful democratic state," he continues, "coming into collision with a warlike, despotic state is placed before the alternative of yielding to the extortion of the despot. . . . But it is an old rule that concessions never

satisfy an extortionist but serve only to increase his avarice, so that violent collision of the two states proves inevitable."

Thus does Kautsky give the faded remnants of a Marxist blessing to the "democratic" brigands in the next scramble for imperialist loot, and justify the next war to "make the world safe for democracy," on the part of France, England, the United States, before it even begins. Verily, the old man is up early this time. He has learned something about chauvinist apologies from the First World War and is beginning his war preparations betimes.

You may think, reader, that I am unfair to Kautsky. Perhaps he is not talking of France, England and the United States, not of the looters of India, Morocco and the Philippines, but of some future Socialist democracies? Alas, no, dear reader. He makes himself painfully clear. The "democracies" he means,

"still constitute the majority of the civilized peoples of the earth." And between them "a conflict is unthinkable." If only all imperialist powers were such democracies, then the League of Nations could adjust all disputes, and war would be unthinkable. "It is not true that capitalist competition leads to war," he continues, ". . . the warlike element in modern capitalism is now on the decline. (This is written in 1935 with the nations armed over the ears and the new scramble for the forcible redivision of the earth already begun!) The capitalists have learned to enter into understandings with each other on the question of monopolies. (Like the Vickers-Krupp-Schneider-Creusot understandings prior to 1914!) The exploiting and adventurist elements in democratic countries who still have an interest in war no longer possess the power to provoke war. . . . Only in undemocratic states can the warlike elements, if assisted by peculiar cir-

cumstances, still mobilize the power to make war."

Has the dominant robber-baron bourgeoisie of the three greatest imperialist powers of the world ever found a better, a more brazen, apologist than this old renegade from Marxism belying and denying all the teachings of his youth and all the elementary evidence of common sense? Is there space any longer for such writings in a socialist paper? Any place any more in the labor movement for a paper that will print such shameful glorification of imperialist capitalism without a word of scornful comment, with unctuous praise!

NEW EVILS OF "LESSER EVIL" THEORY

Kautsky has found new uses, or abuses, for the unfortunate theory of "the lesser evil."

"In war," he writes, "our attitude must be determined not only by what we think of our own government but also of the opposing government. More than ever it becomes necessary to formulate our policy not on the basis of regarding the despotic governments involved as one solid reactionary mass, but on the basis of the lesser evil. We may oppose bitterly a despotic government under which we live, but when this government is attacked by a despotism still worse than ours . . . we cannot escape the necessity of halting our opposition temporarily until such time as the enemy is repulsed." Thus the German social chauvinists supported the Kaiser because compared to the Czar he was the "lesser evil," and the French social-patriots supported French imperialism because it was

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C.P.O. Member Meet in Enthusiastic Response To Lovestone's Report; Raise Nearly \$3,000

NEW YORK CITY—Several hundred members of the Communist Opposition responded enthusiastically to a report of the conference of the International Communist Opposition, delivered by Jay Lovestone last Sunday.

Lovestone, who was the American delegate to the conference, dealt with a letter from the I.C.O. which was dispatched to the Comintern; the present opportunist line as it expresses itself

in France, Germany and Czechoslovakia; condition of the I.C.O. and its sections; and the problem of communist unity. He ended his report by a call to the membership for an intensified struggle against the present ultra-right line of the Comintern.

In line with this perspective Lovestone reported plans for the extension of the work here as well as in Europe. Full time organizers are to be placed in the

field here and in the middle west, Workers Age is to be enlarged and increased financial support to the I.C.O. is planned. To carry out this program the National Buro needs \$5,000 and proposes to raise this sum by the end of February.

The attitude of the membership was expressed in the response to the appeal to make a beginning on this \$5,000 drive. A sum of \$2,825 in cash and pledges was raised on the spot.

Kautsky Enlists for the Defense of Capitalism

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"attacked by Prussian autocracy" and now Kautsky wishes to make the betrayal of the class struggle in wartime into a permanent system for the next and all future wars!

NEW "DEFENDER" OF SOVIET UNION

Karl Kautsky in his dotage has long been a professional Russenfreßer. His venom-dipped polemical pen has sput-

Communist International to-day convenience tends to replace conviction.

FAR more clear and accurate information as to the fundamentals of the present economic conditions can be gleaned from the latest report of Mr. J. F. T. O'Connor, Controller of the Currency, than from the bulletins of the Department of Commerce or the drummers of the National Office of the Democratic Party.

The 5,000 odd national banks are clogged with holdings of government obligations. This condition is not a matter of choice on the part of the banks, but rather one of compulsion. Private industry is not only not expanding, but contracting and the profit opportunities it affords are shrinking. Under such circumstances the government bonds at a lowered rate of interest must be taken on by the banks. It is a sort of Hobson's choice for the bankers. Furthermore, the trend towards an increase in the bank holdings of federal securities is both marked and constant.

The piled-up assets which some shallow observers might greet as a sign of reviving prosperity are symptoms of economic stagnation rather than extension. The bankers would certainly like to lend money. However, the element of interest and to no small extent the question of security are involved here. Were the economic situation less unsound basically than it is, this problem would not be so acute.

Regardless of all rosy proclamations which Washington may issue and certainly will issue with increasing frequency as the election campaign warms up, the fact of the matter is that the responsible men in the federal administration know better. The same can be said of the authoritative spokesmen of the big banking interests. Hence Chairman Leo T. Crowley of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and Robert V. Fleming, President of the American Bankers Association, have been working overtime seeking to have banks return to the business of loaning money to private industry. So far their appeals have fallen on stone ears.

tered endlessly against the only land where the workers rule. But to put over his theory of the "lesser evil," he is willing to admit that even the Soviet Union may yet be the lesser evil.

"Socialists who consider it their duty to oppose the Soviet despotism in Russia in most emphatic manner will thus be moved to support Soviet Russia should it find itself attacked simultaneously by Germany and Japan. There can be no doubt that in such event the Socialist International, like the League of Nations, will be on the side of Soviet Russia."

Alas, we must still doubt the Socialist International if the Kautskys lead it. And as to the League of Nations, what malevolent fraudulence can lead any friend of humanity or socialism to conceal the fact that whenever the imperialist powers unite, as sooner or later they will, against the Soviet Union, the League of Nations will be the banner under which they will lead their anti-socialist crusade?

But let us be under no misapprehension. Kautsky is not a defender of the Soviet Union because it is building socialism. Not for socialism's sake, but only for the lesser-evil-than-Japan-and-Germany's sake.

"What has been set up in Russia is the state economy of an Oriental despotism—not the socialized production of human beings."

Human beings or no human beings, against at least those two countries, Kautsky regards Russia's "Oriental Despotism" as the "lesser evil." But what will happen if the League of "Democratic" Nations, if France, England, and the United States should lead the attack? The reader would be mentally myopic indeed who does not envisage Kautsky seeking to place the banner of the Second International in the very forefront of that attack.

TWO WAYS OF SKINNING A CAT

Kautsky doesn't care how he does it, provided he succeeds at long last in patching up an argument against the conducting of a revolutionary struggle against war.

"In a democratic country," he writes. "a Socialist Party must bow to the will of the majority . . ." Hence in the United States, France, England, the war is "unthinkable," yet, as an afterthought, when it does come, no revolutionary struggle against war.

"In undemocratic states, however," continues Kautsky as the reader holds his breath expecting a call to revolution at last from the venerable man, "in undemocratic states in which the govern-

ment keeps the people down by force . . . no party must be called upon to do what may not be within its power to accomplish." With this sorry philistinism the breath of revolution dissipates into thin air.

PEACE AND DEMOCRACY—WITHOUT SOCIALISM

Capitalism has had many a defender in its heyday. But as it visibly decays and disintegrates before our eyes, as it grows ever more despotic, ever more warlike, as its achievements crumble, as its democracy withers and produces the fungus growth of fascism, as its world-market cosmopolitanism degenerates into autarchy and mad-dog nationalism, as its intermittent crises work into the nightmare of systemic crisis, as its intermittent wars interrupting peace go over into an epoch of armed camps, world wars interrupted by armistice breathing spells, the number of apologists grows less, their voices feeble and more uncertain, and few indeed would dare deny that peace and freedom are becoming more and more incompatible with capitalism, that capitalism in the days of its decline spells war, crisis and fascism.

But not so Kautsky. His impudence knows no bounds. Like the exploiter who was once a trade unionist, so the capitalist apologist who was once a Marxist, is the most shameless of his tribe.

"Some Socialists," he writes, "like to assert that enduring peace, like true democracy, must remain a dream as long as capitalism is not superseded by socialism." (Can he be thinking of the younger Kautsky who wrote "The Road to Power" and the polemics against Bernstein?)

"Fortunately," he answers the younger Kautsky and all revolutionary socialists, "this extreme view is as false as the view, with which it is coupled, that democracy . . . is possible only under a Socialist regime. What is true is that the establishment of democracy must precede Socialism and world peace . . ."

Now at last, we have the key to what the Old Guard means by its fetishism of bourgeois democracy, its so-called "democratic socialist program." It is not merely opposition to proletarian dictatorship. It is also opposition to revolutionary struggle against capitalism, to revolutionary struggle against war. It pretends that we can get the fruits of socialism without the struggle for socialism, that we can have the fruits of socialism (enduring peace and true democracy) without socialism, that we have them already in "democratic" countries, in capitalist America, England and France! It turns out to be all of a piece: the op-

position to their silence. Be that as it may, one would surely expect the "lefts" to support the demands of the progressives that the administration dissociate itself from Cherkess. Nothing of the kind occurred. The "lefts" kept their mouths shut and thereby helped the administration over a particularly rough stretch of road that for a time threatened to upset it considerably.

UNEMPLOYMENT QUESTION

Or take another case—a question of great significance for the members of the local—the unemployment question. The progressives proposed: registration of all unemployed; strict adherence to a list in handing out jobs; elimination of temporary jobs during the season thereby placing many unemployed to work; and that the present staff of the union immediately carry this into effect.

The administration proposed to solve the problem—as they do most questions—thru purely bureaucratic-administrative methods: the appointment of Wasilevsky to head a special department for the unemployed (at \$115 per week); open separate offices for this work; and the employment of a staff to canvass the shops for openings in which to place unemployed. These proposals constitute an added expense of \$12,000 a year, even without the new proposal, just made, to appoint two assistants to Wasilevsky. This at a time of widespread unemployment and therefore decreased income.

One would think that at least on this the "lefts" would find their bearings and support the progressives, but they did not. True to their bargain with Cohen and Wasilevsky they went right down the line in support of the administration proposals!

AS TO UNITY

It is with such a record of support of the administration that the "left group" now comes to ask for unification with the Progressive Group. The latter has placed one condition before any discussion on concrete matters: that the lefts break their pact with the Cohen-Wasilevsky group! An eminently proper demand in the face of several months of "left" activity along the new policy.

Just as in the past the progressives exercised caution in associating with dual unionist elements, so must they now be on guard against a merger with elements that can hardly be told from their conservative or reactionary leaderships.

position to proletarian dictatorship, the opposition to revolutionary struggle against capitalism, the opposition to revolutionary struggle against war, the shameless gilding of the prison bars of capitalism, what are they all but one and the same thing, an opposition to socialism itself?