

THE TASKS OF THE COMMUNIST PRESS

By JAY LOVESTONE.

TO talk of the role the Communist press plays in the class struggle, is to talk of the role of one of the most powerful weapons employed by the revolutionary proletariat in the struggle for the abolition of the bourgeois order and the establishment of a Communist society.

The capitalist press is an integral part of the state apparatus of the exploiters. The capitalist press is part of the whole mechanism. Side by side with the army, the naval forces, the institutions for mis-education, the bourgeois newspapers and magazines are used by the ruling class to maintain itself in power.

IN fact, the development of a class press serving against the workers is as much a criterion of the power of any national capitalist group as is the development of its spy system and military apparatus. The press of the exploiting class functions all the more effectively, with all the more cunning, as the bourgeoisie tighten their grip over the proletariat. The press serves the capitalists as a fountain source for new strength, for winning over new allies, for poisoning the minds of the workers.

The poison pen of the employing class is one of the most dangerous foes that the proletariat has to contend with in its struggle.

IN the United States, the capitalists have developed what is perhaps the most effective subservient press in the possession of any ruling class. We do not speak here merely of numbers. Nor do we speak here merely of the influence that one or a handful of the so-called national newspapers wield in this country. We speak here of the extremely dangerous role and the almost immeasurable dynamic part played by the American press in mobilizing sentiment for the exploiters and against the workers. Truly, the American press has altogether too often succeeded in painting the American government as a government playing a neutral and non-partisan role in the struggles of the working class. The poison pen of Wall Street has on many occasions served to paint the devils of our ruling class as saints in whose hands the safety of our working mass rested.

One need only recall the part played by the capitalist press in the great national strikes of 1922. We have not forgotten the myriads of sticks of dynamite that the railway workers are supposed to have employed during the 1922 shopmen's strike. The outrages attributed to the striking textile workers were indescribable, even by the bourgeois press. The coal miners, of course, were not spared. In

the present anthracite strike, we see the entire capitalist press loyally serving the interests of the operators against the miners thru the skillful propaganda that is now being made. The anthracite miners are supposed to be receiving high wages. The anthracite miners are supposed to have big bank accounts. Last but not least, the country's coal bins are just

overfilled with anthracite.

UNDER these conditions, it is clear to the workers that they must build their own press. But precisely because it is so necessary for the workers to have their own press, it appears that the difficulties are not realized by the workers who suffer most from the lack of a press of their own.

A working class, to succeed, must have a fighting press. It must be a press which speaks for the workers as effectively and as unflinchingly as the best of the bourgeois papers do for the capitalists. Class interests, the interests of the working man, must be paramount and must serve as the only source of inspiration for a fighting proletarian press. This, in

effect, means that a fighting proletarian press can serve and live only as an organ of a disciplined political group of workers. A real proletarian newspaper thrives only to the extent that it wins the confidence and support of the working masses. This can be won only if the workers' press sets the pace and serves as a sort of a lighthouse for the struggling workers. Such a press must be the mouthpiece of a revolutionary political party, for unless day in and day out the press proclaims the interests of the workers in all their struggles, and gives to these struggles the broadest possible basis, it cannot play a decisive role in the class struggle.

AND here we consider the Communist press. A Communist press finds nothing too small, nothing too insignificant in the struggles of the workers, to explain, to interpret, and to utilize as a means of arousing the interest of great masses of workers and mobilizing them against their exploiters. Concretely, the Communist press has the following principal tasks to achieve if it is to be worthy of being called an organ of a section of the Communist International. The unification of the workers, the co-ordination of the sundry class conflicts, the giving of a political character to these struggles, are all objectives of a Communist party, the achievement of which depends to a great extent on the effectiveness of the Communist press.

Specifically, a Communist newspaper, should strive to: capitalist government and the bourgeois order. This must be done not thru mere abstract formulations of grievances against the ruling class, but thru such propaganda as will broaden the outlook of the workers, as will deepen the hatred by the workers of their bosses, for the tangible everyday experiences these workers go thru. In short, the propaganda of a Communist press must take root in the objective, in the concrete conditions, in which the working class finds itself at a particular time.

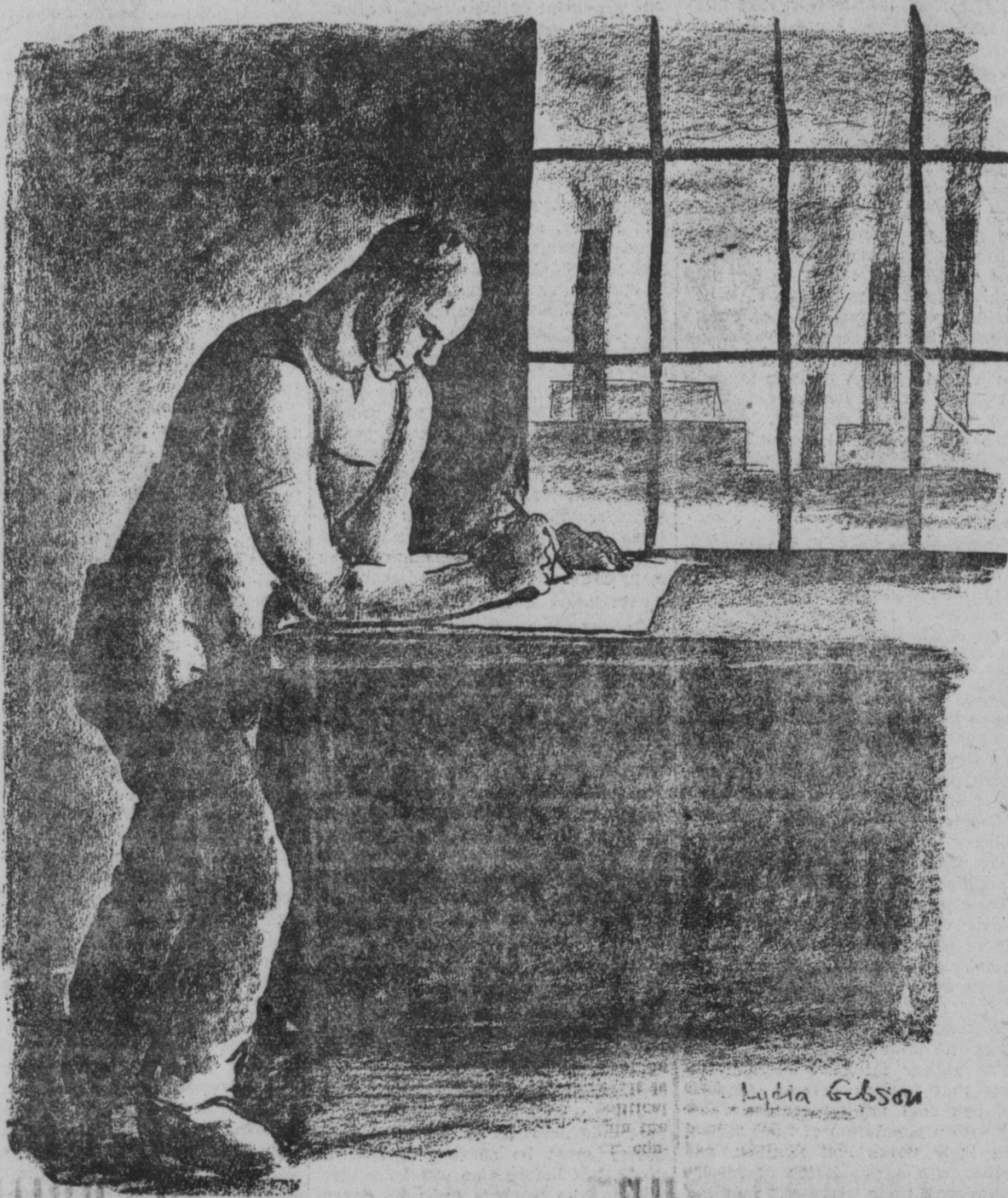
2. Make clear the traitorous role played by the labor lieutenants of capital, the reactionary trade union bureaucracy. This must be achieved only thru bringing to light the actual misdeeds of these misleaders of the working class.

3. Be a leader of the workers in advancing their ideology along class lines. A Communist press must be a red press. It can never be a yellow press. A Communist press should never pander to the prejudices, to the political backwardness, to the bourgeois notions with which the masses of workers may be afflicted at a particular period. On the contrary, a Communist press must resolutely and openly wage an unceasing campaign against this poison put into the body of the working class by the bourgeoisie.

4. A Communist press must strive to elevate the theoretical knowledge of the workers. A Communist press must encourage the development of revolutionary theory among the workers. A Communist press must systematically educate the workers, particularly their leaders, in Marxism and Leninism.

OUR Communist press will develop itself into a real leader and teacher of the American workers to the extent that all our newspapers and magazines succeed in these four main tasks. Our Communist press in America will become a real steel rod in the lives of our proletariat, only when it succeeds in embedding itself deeply into the hearts of the working masses thru establishing its leadership on these four avenues to the revolutionizing of our presently politically backward working class.

THE SOURCE OF OUR NEWS



Lucia Gibson

The Bolshevization of Our Foreign-Language Press

By ALEXANDER BITTELMAN.

THE Bolshevization of our press is only one phase of our general task—the Bolshevization of the party. Hence, the Bolshevization of our press will proceed at the same rate of development as the Bolshevization of the party as a whole. The sooner we make our party a real Bolshevik party, the sooner shall we have a real Bolshevik press.

Special Problems of Our Press.

However, the Bolshevization of our press offers some special problems. This is particularly true for our foreign-language press. And it is these special problems of our foreign language press that we are going to discuss in this article.

Our foreign language press must become more American.

In what sense? Naturally, not in the sense of the imperialist jingoes, or the American legion, or the ku klux klan. Their conception of American

language groups. The duty of a Bolshevik is to fight, first of all, the capitalists of his own country. A Bolshevik press has precisely the same duties.

Our foreign language press must become more political.

This is true for the party as a whole. In this instance, as in many others, our press merely reflects the general political immaturity of our party. We must become more political.

Merely to report a political news item is not enough, altho it is very important. It is also not enough merely to express indignation or joy, as the case may be, at a particular event in the class struggle. What is decisive, what really makes a newspaper a political organ, is the lead and direction it gives to its readers for concrete political action in a given situation.

Some of our foreign language pa-

There is no political agreement, consistency or uniformity even within the limits of one paper. Every political writer has a policy of his own. It is clear that such a condition cannot be permitted to exist in a Communist Party.

Second, the life of the party is very poorly reflected in our press. Judging by the amount of space that our party life is given in our press, by the treatment it receives, and by the general way in which it is handled, one would think that the party is a sort of a fifth wheel. This is not only bad, in a general way but absolutely detrimental to the growth of our party and of our press.

Third, the Central Executive Committee has, up to now not really directed and managed the affairs of our foreign language press. There has been no unifying and centralizing organ to transform our foreign language

press from an aggregation of so many papers into a unified whole serving in a concerted manner the task and struggles of the party.

The Bolshevization of our foreign language press must begin by correcting these defects of our press. There will be created, as part of the Agitprop department, a special bureau to centralize and co-ordinate the work of our papers. Party editors and party writers must meet in periodic conferences to familiarize themselves with current party policies and to bring about the maximum co-ordination and agreement in the carrying out of party campaigns.

The Agitprop department will arrange to unify the political line of all of our party papers.

To Bolshevize our foreign language press means at this moment to make it more American, more political and more party.