

---

# Long Live Leninism, Cry New Yorkers: Greatest Revolutionary Meeting Overflows Garden.

by Norman Smith

Published in *The Daily Worker* [Chicago] v. 1, whole no. 333 (Feb. 7, 1924), pp. 1-2.

NEW YORK.— The greatest revolutionary demonstration in the history of New York took place here, at Madison Square Garden, when 15,000 workers pledged themselves to carry on the work of Nicolai Lenin, in whose honor they had gathered.

Ten thousand men and women were turned away from the doors, full to overflowing an hour before the meeting began. Police reserves on the job said they had never seen anything like it in all their experience. The overflow crowd was gathered up by the workers Party ushers and assembled in Central Opera House, which was hastily engaged.

## **Solemnity Gives Way to Cheers.**

Inside the mighty Garden, the masses filled every available bit of space in the great arena and in the galleries which rise tier after tier along the walls.

They sat down in an atmosphere of solemn emotion that was deepened by the strains of the Russian funeral march played by the Russian Symphony Orchestra, but before the meeting was over their enthusiasm for Lenin's cause overcame their original grief and they were cheering the call of the Russian workers to carry on the fight for world revolution to which Lenin had dedicated his life.

## **Proletarian Unity, Says Radiogram.**

The message from the executive of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was read by Chairman Benjamin Gitlow in an interval in the speaking program:

"We have lost in Lenin the captain of our vessel," began the Moscow radiogram. "That loss is irreplaceable, because

in all the world there never was such luminous pain, such mighty effort, such inflexible will as that of Lenin, who led our government safely through its worst dangers. Henceforth his work is set on the right road.

Hundreds of thousands of comrades of Vladimir Ilich, firmly support the mighty banner. Already it is transfiguring the whole world. Proletariat of all lands, unite!

Comrades and brothers, raise higher our red flag. Know no hesitation in the struggle for liberty. The proletariat can never lose.

Proletariat of all lands, unite!"

## **Calls to Battle, Not Mourn.**

Gitlow, as he opened the meeting, was quick to change the emotional tone from the solemn one of mourning to the fervency of struggle and triumph.

Beginning with the announcement that 10,000 people had been unable to find room in the overflowing arena, he declared that was proof positive that Lenin was not only the leader of the Russian masses but of the masses throughout the world.

"Lenin was head of our international revolutionary movement," continued Gitlow, "yet the movement instead of being weakened, has taken on new life and ever greater masses are inspired. This is symbolic of the fact that the revolutionary movement can never be destroyed in the future by anything that may happen."

## **Ruthenberg Speaks.**

C.E. Ruthenberg, Secretary of the Workers Party, was given a great ovation when he arose:

"Since the first written record, men have sacrificed that people might be free," he began. "If you go back to Greece, you find slaves revolting so they could play a part in a free society. If you read

history through the thousand years of feudalism, you will find an exploited class struggling to be free. At all times there have been dreams in men's hearts that oppressed and oppressor would be no more.

"When future historians write the record of these years, they will write Nicolai Lenin down as leader of that movement that led the workers into the struggle to abolish capitalism from the face of the earth.

"Lenin fought for the workers everywhere; other statesmen fought for the right of individuals. Lenin gave the workers' world his life. He gave his life organizing the working class into a party that could fight for soviet republics in every country upon principles followed by the Communist Party."

### **Sees Soviet America Coming.**

"The German Workers Republic will be followed by the Workers Party of America establishing a soviet United States.

"It was Lenin, who in the early days of the Russian revolution recognized that the bourgeois state must be replaced by soviets."

Concluding, Ruthenberg said that workers' America will struggle with the Philippines against American imperialists, and will fight everywhere to abolish American capitalism and build a communist society.

Beethoven's music filled the interim until Ludwig Lore, editor of the *Volkszeitung*, German communist daily of New York arose, saying:

### **Lore, On Lenin the Statesman.**

"Today we pay homage to Nicolai Lenin, the greatest statesman of the age. Lloyd George, Bethmann Hollweg, Clemenceau, and Asquith were merely politicians. They live just for today and make decisions for the momentary interests their class represents.

"Nicolai Lenin was not only the greatest of statesmen, but the great proletarian statesman. Everything he did was determined by the interests of the working class of the world over. If we can point to the greatest concrete achievement of Lenin, it is

that he turned the concept for working class solidarity into a living, pulsing reality.

"In Lenin's memory the world's workers will stand together through good fortune and bad, in war, in peace, in joy, in sorrow. In his memory the last vestige of national hatreds will disappear. In his memory, the working class of the world will pledge its support to Soviet Russia as the first great exponent of the oppressed rising to power and determining their own destinies."

### **Numerous Telegrams Read.**

Here followed reading of numerous telegrams from locals of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union and other labor organizations and workmen's circles, expressing their sorrow at Lenin's loss and their determination to carry on his work.

Then the chairmen called for a cessation of the cheering and began to read the call to world solidarity that had been radiogrammed by the workers of Russia. The air was charged with the electricity of repressed emotion as the audience listened breathlessly, then the huge shouting of 15,000 voices acclaimed the slogan, "The Proletariat Never Never Can Lose. Proletariat of All Lands, Unite."

Chopin's funeral march again set the solemn note and then the chairman sent the battalion of collectors through the crowd. The sum of \$1,500 was raised.

### **"Long Live the International!"**

With unanimous vote the assemblage then decided to send the following responses to the Soviet Republic, promising anew their fealty to the Communist International:

"In monster mass memorial meeting 20,000 New York workers expressed their sorrow at the death of the greatest proletarian revolutionist, Nicolai Lenin. They pledge their support to the Soviet Republic in its valiant struggle against world imperialist capitalism and they resolve to do their full duty in bringing about the world revolution which will emancipate the international working class.

Long live the Communist International!

Long Live Soviet Russia!"

### **“Long Live Leninism!”**

Lenin’s portrait, with the inscription, “Lenin is Dead, Long Live Leninism,” which stood on the platform expressed the sentiments of the audience by this time. The genuine grief they felt at the loss of their leader was submerged in the ecstasy of determination to carry on his work and they joined in crying out the slogan.

Moissaye Olgin, the next speaker, talked in Jewish [Yiddish], and exhorted the thousands present to engrave this motto on their hearts.

### **“Join Lenin’s Party,” Says Foster.**

William Z. Foster followed with an appeal for membership in the Workers Party that crystallized the feeling of the sympathizers present.

He first paid a tribute to Lenin’s great revolutionary brain.

“Lenin was not only a great thinker; he was also a great strategist. I have no hesitation in saying that Lenin’s action at Brest-Litovsk saved the Russian Revolution. Lenin was brave enough to go to the workers and appeal that they allow a certain percentage of capitalism to return to Russia. It required a courageous man to do that. Lenin by that piece of strategy saved Russia.

“The Workers Party is the party of Lenin. If you believe in what Lenin taught, in what he did, you can express it, if it amounts to anything, only by joining the Workers Party. The Workers Party follows out the principles of Lenin’s strategy. It is the only party in America, both in the political and in-

dustrial fields, with a correct policy for the workers.”

### **Gompers is Boosed.**

The enthusiasm that greeted the name of Lenin suddenly turned to boos as Foster introduced the name of Gompers, with the remark:

“Russia has its Lenin; America its Gompers.

“Gompers has not changed his mind in 40 years,” went on Foster. “Under Gompers’ political zero policy not enough political influence has been developed to elect a dog catcher.

“If you have come here in the spirit of emulation of Lenin’s work, you will join the Workers Party. I hope that this, the greatest meeting ever held in New York, will triple the membership of the Workers party. Join the party of Lenin and help forward the revolutionary movement.”

### **Forward Boycotts Lenin News.**

The gigantic Garden demonstration evoked news stories and comment in all New York’s papers, except the *Jewish Daily Forward*, which completely ignored the affair.

The *New York Times* declared that Foster urged 15,000 people to join the party of Lenin and further the work of revolution in the United States. And the *New York World* reported that Madison Square Garden glowed red. Packed to limit it echoed shouts of thousands, who arose to their feet to cheer Chairman Benjamin Gitlow and the slogan, “Lenin is Dead: Long Live Leninism!”

*Edited by Tim Davenport.*

*Published by 1000 Flowers Publishing, Corvallis, OR, 2006. • Free reproduction permitted.*