

# The Universal Crisis

By  
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THE capitalist system is in its death throes; its end has commenced.

The world wide war destroyed the productive powers of Europe, drained the life blood of the people, and burdened the states with gigantic war debts. Many people, when the war was finished, believed that the victorious countries, at least, could expect a period of expansion and recovery during which capitalism would be rebuilt. But today it is clear that it will be impossible to rebuild it. In the conquered countries, stripped bare by the victors, economic stagnation and social ruin becomes increasingly intensified. From them the paralysis develops westward—to France, to England, to the neutrals, to America. Intercommunication has become disorganized; the lack of raw materials makes the reconstruction of industry impossible; and, because of the lack of man-power and of manures, the harvests are not sufficient to meet the needs of the people. Still more grave is the chaos in the currency. Under capitalism in normal times money is the oil of the social machine, the instrument of every economic transaction. Today the uncertainty of the exchanges paralyzes the nerves of capitalist production—the credit system. The ever-mounting price of commodities is only one of the symptoms of the economic dislocation. The middle classes are reduced to the position of proletarians by the high prices, while the masses themselves are forced down into still deeper misery. If the purchasing power of money decreases,

the workers are compelled by means of strikes to defend their standard of living, and, because of that, the conflicts between capital and labor grow ever more acute and more wide spread.

What does that mean? The American banker Warburg says: "Europe is bankrupt." In other words, Capitalism is lapsing.

It is only possible to understand the deeper causes of this by the teaching of Marx concerning the essential character of Capitalism. All the solutions advanced: State control of prices; increase of production by means of more intense and longer labor on the part of the workers; the restoration of free exchange; each and every device put forward in order to save the present order of things, appears as so much pitiful nonsense in the light of Marxist theory concerning the mechanism of capitalist production and circulation. That production is not for use, but for profit. Every business enterprise is, today, paralyzed at its commencement by the difficulty of selling its products, even when it succeeds in breaking down the barriers caused by burnings, by strikes, and by the difficulties of communication. Because Germany cannot buy, England cannot sell, and so the crisis spreads throughout the whole "civilized" world. In America huge quantities of goods are to be found, but Europe cannot buy because of the increased value, in European money, of the dollar, and also because of the high cost of trans-

port. We hear again and again of huge credits proposed to be made by American banks to Europe. But it is certain that no bank or combination of banks will offer its millions, even if that is the only way to save Capitalism. For Capitalism is a blind force which drives along its own masters like so many blind slaves, thirsting for gold. In no direction can we see any reason to expect the reconstruction of the capitalist system. Whole populations have become pauperized and need help! the world becomes plunged more and more into chaos and misery.

In face of this collapse of human society the mass of men stand deaf and blind. The bourgeoisie tries to make itself, and others, believe that the revolutionists are preparing a forcible destruction of capitalist society in order to replace it by a socialist one. It does not realize that Capitalism is destroying itself, that Socialism is the only possibility, and the only foundation of reconstruction, which the human race must accept unless it wishes to perish together with Capitalism. The bourgeoisie persecutes the revolutionists and hinders their propaganda in the senseless hope thereby to save Capitalism, while, indeed, by those means it only prolongs human misery, and delays the coming of the new world order. That deafness and blindness concerning the coming dissolution of Capitalism is the historic fatality of the bourgeoisie.

But the mass of workers are also blind

and deaf to this dissolution. They regard the march of events without understanding, and without knowledge. To hope that the collapse of Capitalism will find a proletariat revolutionary prepared and conscious of its mission is now shown to be utopian. The collapse proceeds too rapidly, events spring too suddenly before the eyes of men for them to be able to adapt their minds to the new realities. That, however, does not mean that they will do nothing, and quietly submit to perish together with the world capitalism; it means that the transformation in Western Europe and in America will not proceed along the same simple and easy way as in Russia. Infinitely greater difficulties must be conquered in those countries where a deeply-rooted bourgeois civilization has impressed itself almost ineradicably upon the mind of the workers. The road to Socialism will be by tortuous ways, across many barriers, under the debris of old ideals, through new deceiving, vain experiments, and great events. A year of gigantic universal struggle lies before us.

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## Why These Strikes

CLEARING THE GROUND.

WHAT ails the working-class in America? Why the many strikes? Why this tremendous unrest?

Some would blame it on that magician of the "High Cost of Living"—the profiteer. Others blame it on the war. The latter would have us believe that the present proletarian dissatisfaction and restlessness are temporary. They will pass as soon as the "war effects" are forgotten and the world "settles down". Of course the "bloodthirsty" agitator comes in for indictment. What is the answer?

A large employer of labor has recently said: "In former years we have always been able rather easily to arrive at adjustments... But today there is something different; there is something stirring, something which I cannot comprehend, and I am not sure that the men themselves comprehend it. He goes on to call it "subconscious restlessness".

The Communist, unlike the bourgeois or his liberal apologist is not dozed by this condition. Astonishment would overcome him if conditions were otherwise. There is nothing puzzling in this "subconscious restlessness". The strikes,

promptly remedied by the amendment rushed through a couple of weeks ago.

It took the jury only an hour and ten minutes to find Winisky guilty of desiring not to "capture" the bourgeois state, but "to conquer and destroy it," which, as Judge Weeks said, and all Communists will agree, "means nothing else than the overthrowing of the existing government."

unrest, dissatisfaction, decrease in efficiency, and general uncertainty are only the symptoms of a chronic malady. They are only signs of the times. The present lack of social equilibrium cannot at all be understood if it be viewed thru bourgeois spectacles. The downing of tools and decrease in production are not the cause of the deep unrest. On the contrary, the unrest is the cause of the strike wave and decrease of efficiency.

WHAT'S SO AND WHAT ISN'T SO.

Before delving into the why and wherefore of the present situation a few simple truths must be repeated. These are obvious to all but those who delight in throwing sand into their own eyes.

The present dissatisfaction is not so much with labor as a means of livelihood. The worker does not complain simply because he is a worker. He complains of the raw deal he receives in the workshop. For some reason or other he feels that not all is on the level in the factory and outside. The laborer cannot yet put his finger on the sore spot. He is vague. He sorely needs clarification. He cries for direction.

This "epidemic" is not local. It grips both victor and vanquished. Democratic Japan and America, "Socialist" Germany and democratized Hungary, victorious Italy and ruined Austria all face the same problem, tho its manifestation may be different. This "epidemic" knows no pole. The "background" Orient is aflame. Unrest has gripped the colonies of that arch-liberator and

superresuscitator of "small nationalities"—England. Only the particular material conditions prevailing in Egypt and India have given the struggle of the masses there a national color. Apparently the why and the wherefore of this ferment are deeprooted and universal.

WAGES AND HOURS.

Are the masses disturbed by small wages? Not on your life! Any employer will confess that disturbance in production is not brought about by disagreement over wages. Grant the worker a raise to-day and he'll be back in a few weeks of hours the overforemostmoreom—and ask for another. Is the question of hours the bone of condition? Not by a long shot. Quite often the demand for shorter hours is rather a demand for more money than for more rest. Push a camel thru a needle's eye? Well, stop this recurring demand (at an accelerated pace too) for more pay and less work. This process truly violates the Law of God, nature, and the Holy Ghost—that everything has an end. There is no end to the cry for more pay and less work.

THE SORE SPOT

But where is the sore spot? The whole thing is the sore spot. The entire system is cankerous to the core. Capitalism finds itself to-day in the throes of social bankruptcy. Bankruptcy in every sense of the word stares capitalism in the face. Moral and political as well as financial bankruptcy are in our midst. "This bankruptcy finds expression in a revolutionary ferment which is

apparent everywhere, in the armies, in the working class and lastly, in circumstances, for there are already "foreign bodies" in the capitalist system: a fundamentally antagonistic structure, the Republic of the Soviets of Russia".

It is this condition of bankruptcy which gives rise to the wave of strikes, dissatisfaction, uneasiness and decreased inefficiency.

IN DELIRIUM.

The champions of bourgeoisdom are delirious. What shall be done? Panacea is hurled upon panacea. Calumny, deceit, hypocrisy, treachery, murder all are of no avail! A rose by any other name is just as sweet. A League of Loot labelled "League of Nations" is just the safety valve. But there is a hitch! Conferences to save international peace, conferences for industrial exchange, conferences for industrial peace, thousands of arrests and deportations, peaceful annihilation of Communist Russia are some of the most recent trump cards played by such master gamblers of Imperialism as Wilson and Lloyd George.

THE TASK BEFORE US.

The World Imperialists are preparing consolidation. Anything to retain mastery in this epoch of tempest and revolt. A bourgeois victory centuries to come. Capitalism is at present in an awful hole. If it can get out of this hole it will ride in on a most vicious military dictatorship. Historically the capitalist system has outlived its function. Its continuation means an era of barbarism.

The war has destroyed many  
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