

An Economic Analysis?

Or Factional Demagogy & Forgery

As was to be expected, the Political Bureau of the Communist Party has drawn up a resolution on "The Economic Crisis and the Tasks of the Communist Party" published in the *Daily Worker* (1-11-1930). We will yet take occasion to write in greater detail on the general line of analysis and conclusions of this party document. It is enough now merely to say that it is an average example of non-Marxist electirism, a piece of sophomoric research-clipping work, without any clean line to illuminate its jumbled statistics, and with a conclusion that flows from no premises. It picks up one quotation from a financial journal here, another from a bourgeois economist there, glues them together with a couple of quotations from 10th Plenum resolutions, and presents the resultant hodge-podge as an economic and political analysis.

As for its political conclusions—they are disgraceful: no strategical task is elaborated except the recommendation that the party must win the masses of the American workers (How?) participate more actively in the struggles of the workers (with what program and policies?) recruit new members (in what way? and what has prevented the recruitment up to now?) and similar meaningless platitudes. There is no review at all of the enormous tactical blunders of the party and the policies that have led it from one defeat to another.

The document, in short, is worthless. It is one of those shoddy products ground out with monotonous regularity by the party thesis mill and just as regularly laid out on the shelf of the archives room—forgotten in less time than was consumed in writing it. Nevertheless, we shall return to it at another opportunity. We limit ourselves now to the section of the resolution dedicated to the Opposition—for nowadays a yard-long attack against "Trotskyism" is the absolutely required sauce for an otherwise tasteless and unpalatable party thesis.

"Trotskyism" Dead Again

The section on the Opposition (Point 21) begins with the religiously observed formula that the "Trotskyist group" is bankrupt, breaking-up, anti-Communist, and even openly anti-Soviet. But how has the Militant in spite of "bankruptcy and disintegration", been able to transform itself into a weekly? The authors of the thesis explain: "With the money received by Trotsky for his articles against the Bolshevik Party and the Soviet Union from Hearst and Lord Beaverbrook" i. e., the explanation of people who cannot conceive of a movement functioning in any way other than their own, other than with subsidies from the international Stalinist apparatus which corrupt the movement and transform the official parties into changeless echoes of any and every pronouncement of their financial patrons. But when it is impossible to elaborate intelligent and effective political arguments, others must be substituted, and in this case with all the characteristic features of Stalinist swindle.

In a recent issue, we pointed out how the *Daily Worker* had deliberately and maliciously misrepresented the viewpoint of the Militant on the question of the present economic situation in the United States. It simply took a sentence out of a news story in the Militant, which referred entirely to the dress-making trade, distorted it, and with fine scorn and contempt, presented it as though that were the Alpha and Omega of the Militant viewpoint of the situation. In spite of our exposure, this piece of cheap journalistic misrepresentation worthy of the yellow press is now re-consecrated and printed over again in the thesis as a "crushing refutation of our position."

But the thesis-grinders are not satisfied with misrepresentation alone. In the resolution, they go a bit further and resort to outright forgery. They write: "In its issue of Nov. 30th, the basic ideas of Lovestone are clearly echoed; while admitting depression in some of the most important branches, United States capitalism is described as 'on a road of production increase such as has not had its parallel in history.'" (*Daily Worker's* emphasis). Now let us see what actually appeared in the Militant. We wrote (November 30, 1929):

"The Wall Street crash was not due solely to the speculative mania, which only aggravated the situation. Its roots go deeper. Since the end of the World War, the U. S. became the world's banker. Easy

money' made possible an embarkment on a road of production increase such as has not had its parallel in history, accompanied by an unprecedented export of capital." (Our emphasis).

Compare the quotation made by the party thesis with the original, and the clumsy forgery becomes apparent. What we did was to make a simple and incontestable statement of fact: that after the World War—not today, but twelve years ago!—the U. S. increased its productive forces and output to a degree never before known in history. Only a hopeless idiot or a revived Egyptian mummy could deny this well-known fact. But what the forgers did in their thesis was to make it appear as though the Militant claims that the United States today, now, not twelve years ago, is on the road of an unparalleled production increase! By the "slight" change in grammatical tenses, the Stalinist swindlers wipe out a whole decade of American economic history, and thus "achieve" another "argument" against the Opposition! Lenin once said that a demagogue is the worst enemy of the working class. Are swindle and forgery different in any degree from demagogy?

The resolution finally "clinches" its attack upon our position with the following half quotation from the Militant: "But the United States is still in a sufficiently strong and arrogant (?) position in world economy and politics to endeavor to overcome its economic difficulties at home." (*Daily Worker* emphasis). From this quotation is omitted the balance of the sentence: "by pressure on two points: on the U. S. workers in the form of a more intense drive to lower wages, lengthen the work day, speed up the workers, and on Europe, in the form of a decreased ration for France, Germany, Italy, England and the rest of the world market."

What is wrong in this statement, the *Daily Worker* does not say. Does it contest the absolute correctness of these words? That is hardly likely; it would fly in the face of the party resolution itself (Points 10, 11, 14, etc.) But what of that? For the thesis writers in the party today all such "petty matters" of honesty, independent political thought, analysis proceeding from facts and not wishes, are entirely subordinated to the main problem of destroying the so-many-time-destroyed Opposition. If it cannot be done with fact, then falsehood must serve. If no arguments are available, then demagogy must be pressed into use. If your opponent's position is unassailable, distort it, misrepresent it, or manufacture for your opponent such an untenable position that you will be able to attack him. For the Stalinist press and those who fill its columns, these tenets are the beginning and the end of all political wisdom.

Karakhan Takes a Pleasant Trip to Turkey

But, Unlike Trotsky, He is not Confined on an Island by Friend Kemal Pasha

The diplomatic representative of the Soviet Union, Karakhan has just made a triumphal voyage to Turkey. Everywhere, at Angora as at Constantinople, his passage was the occasion for demonstrations of an exceptional warmth. In the course of his trip, he made some declarations to journalists which are interesting to note. The manner in which he spoke of official personages is pretty astonishing. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tewik Rushdi Bey, is his best "friend" and he "harbors feelings of the deepest respect" towards the president of the council, Ismet Pasha. The conventional language of diplomats it will be said. Perhaps, but of bourgeois diplomats, and in this domain as in the others, the Soviet Union must demonstrate that it is not a State like the others, that it is a proletarian State. Its diplomats should distinguish themselves, although not in the manner of Bessedovsky.

Nevertheless, it is not there that the most important point lies in the declarations of Karakhan. That which is serious and symptomatic, in our opinion, is that, upon arrival at Angora, the associate of the Soviet commissariat for foreign affairs cried:

"This city reflects the calm and firm security with which the new Turkey is built, which supports itself upon its own forces and puts its hopes in the creative force of its people and in them alone. What I have seen, especially in this regard, is not strange to me. They are the same ideas and the same state of mind that prevails in our country. We are building up our life, our material and intellec-

The Professor's Nightmare

A Story of the Great American Worker-Boss that Never Existed

Dr. Thomas Thornton Read, Professor of Mining at Columbia University, having spent three years studying the "American at Work", and having found that the American "does several times the amount of productive work accomplished by an Asiatic or a European", seats himself (one may suppose) in a comfortable chair and puts his undoubtedly remarkable brain to work to discover the reason why. After some little time spent in mental acrobatics he arrives according to the *New York Times* of January 5, at these equally remarkable conclusions: first, that the American workers are not wage slaves, but, on the contrary, bosses, one and all, with "mechanical slaves" doing the work for them; second, that the American "converts food into energy at a higher rate than any other nationality" but "utilizes much of that energy in play rather than work" (!); third that the economic system of America "is based on the ability of American business men to find ways to provide employment for every one", so that the worker and his employer can both live well on the fruits of their joint enterprise".

As the Professor, after having given his discoveries to the world, via the *Times*, dozes quietly in his chair, there suddenly appears before him a tall, lean creature dressed in workmen's clothes, carrying a bundle under his arm. The Professor gives a start and exclaims, "Who are you? What do you want?"

"I am the American Worker", replies the apparition in a hollow voice "and I want you to come with me."

"But I have just spent three years seeing you at work," the Professor remonstrates. The stranger hands him a suit of working clothes and repeats: "Come along."

The Professor gives a deep sigh but gets into the clothes and asks, "Where are we going?" "To work", is the brief response, as the door enclosing the Professor's cozy study bangs behind them.

"Let's hop over to Detroit and see how things are going there," says the stranger.

"Ah, Ford," the Professor smiles. "Yes, indeed, let's be off to the Ford plant—that's the place to go; scientific management—everything's systematized there, you know—the machines do all the work and the men have scarcely anything to do, yet get good wages for it."

The stranger gives him a sorrowful look, which quickly disappears however, for in the shake of a lamb's tail the traveling workers find themselves in Detroit, outside the Ford works. Several hours

pass before he enters the promised land, where he undergoes a rigorous examination.

"Can you use a wrench?" finally asks the agent in a tone of doubt.

"Is that all I have to do?" answers the Professor gleefully, and he makes not the slightest objection as the agent pushes him over to a foreman who conducts him forthwith to the Hall of the Machines. Here long rows of Tin Lizzies in all stages of development travel on an endless chain. The Professor is furnished with a wrench and a box of nuts. He is placed in position and instructed that when a car reaches him he must put a nut in a certain spot and tighten it up. He is warned that he must do this before the car reaches the next man, and that he must repeat the same operation on the next car as it comes along.

"This is too easy," smiles the Professor and playfully gets busy on the first car as it arrives. He repeats the operation on the second while his companion watches him quizzically. The first hour of his labor passes quickly, but by the time the second has gone the ardor of the nut manipulator has begun to ebb. His motions slacken.

"Get a move on, there," comes the voice of the foreman and the Professor braces himself for the worst, for his head is already dizzy and his imploring looks in the direction of his former companion have had no effect.

"Say, I'm getting tired of this. Can't I do something else for a change?" he finally calls across. And adds, "For heaven's sake, don't they ever stop this chain?"

Great heavens, he must put on nuts for ten hours today. What a nightmare! What a nightmare, indeed! But eventually the whistle blows. It's time to quit.

"Come on and eat something and then you can go to bed. You'll have to be up early tomorrow," says his companion. "There's another day ahead."

"No! No! Not another day, not another hour. I've had enough."

"Very well, then so be it. But let's go to the office and get our money."

"Well, what do you want?" asks the clerk as the Professor stands mutely waiting for his reward.

"I want my share of our joint enterprise."

"What's that?"

"I want my share . . ."

"Oh, you mean you want your wages. Sign this."

"No, no. I am an American Worker. a boss. I want my share of our profits."

"Say, what the heck are you talking about? Did your work affect your brain? Here's your five simoleons and now beat it!"

"What, only five dollars for ten hours of slavery at a machine? And Ford gets millions!"

"It's no use to argue," admonishes the stranger. "That's the wage they pay you for a day's labor; you can take it or leave it. There are thousands outside all ready to step into your shoes at the same price." He takes the tired Professor to the nearest park and seats him on a bench.

"Listen to me, Professor," he begins. "You've had some real experience now as a worker, and I hope it's taught you something. If you had had it first, and talked afterwards, you would have arrived at different conclusions than you did after your three years' survey. You would have learned, for instance, that American as well as European and Asiatic workers are all wage-slaves, selling their labor power as a merchant sells his commodity, for what it costs to reproduce it. The amount of wealth the workers produce in the shops has nothing whatsoever to do with the wages they receive. They get only enough for a bare existence, and if the American worker produces, as you say, three times more than the European worker, he is nevertheless only exploited the more in doing so.

"I'm leaving you now, but you can sit here as long as you like and think the matter over."

"Oh, please don't leave me. I've got only five dollars in the world, no job and no place to go."

"You've got plenty of company. There are three or four million just like you—without money and no prospect of a job. So console yourself with that. Write to the 'Times' about it."

"It is evident that Stalin and Dzerzhinsky must be made politically responsible for this whole campaign of genuine Russian Nationalism."

Repelled and subdued as long as Lenin lived, Stalinist nationalism has since succeeded in imposing itself by methods that the Left Opposition does not cease to denounce and combat.—A.R.