

The Five Year Plan and World Unemployment

(Continued from page 1)

poning the manifestations of a crisis, and in this manner gain a new breathing space for the isolated Workers' State. The task of the moment is a planned retreat from the position of adventurism.

However, in addition to this "minimal" variation, it is necessary to prepare immediately another, more extended variation, calculated not only on the internal but also on the external resources. The perspective of the proletarian revolution in Europe is by no means less of a reality than the perspective of a genuine collectivization of the Russian peasants. More correctly, the second perspective becomes a reality only in connection with the first. The official leadership of the Communist International conducts its policy as though we were on the eve of the insurrection of the European proletariat. At the same time, the economic plan for ten-fifteen years is constructed with the aim of "out-distancing" the whole capitalist world by means of an isolated Workers' State. This incompatibility, flowing from the reactionary, utopian theory of socialism in one country, runs through the program of the Comintern and all its policies. Nobody knows the dates, but it can be said with certainty: the conquest of power by the European proletariat is undoubtedly closer to this date than is the liquidation of the classes in the Soviet Union.

The elaboration of a minimal plan with the aim of mitigating the approaching crisis must necessarily proceed from the fact of the present isolated position of Soviet economy. But simultaneously it is necessary to create a variation based on the mutual interlinking of Soviet and world economy. The general plan elaborated for ten, fifteen or more years can under no condition be construed any other way.

Obviously, systematic and all-embracing economic cooperation of an international character will become possible only after the conquest of power by the proletariat of the advanced capitalist countries. However, the time of this overthrow cannot be foreseen. That is why preparations must be made in time, politically as well as economic.

World Unemployment and the Soviet Union

Secondly, there is every reason to count that under the conditions of the present commercial and industrial crisis, particularly in case of its further aggravation, the Soviet government, by a correct policy, can gain an incomparably larger access to the resources of the world market. Unemployment is a factor of huge importance which can make its impress upon the policy of the next future. Under the blows of unemployment the powerful edifice of the conservative trade unions and the social democracy can suffer deep-going cleavages before the infinitely more powerful edifice of the capitalist state begins to crack. But this will not happen of itself. The correct direction of the working class struggle acquires an exceptional significance in the conditions of a social crisis. The general strategic line of Communism must obviously, more than ever before, be directed towards the revolutionary conquest of power. But this revolutionary policy must be nourished by the concrete conditions and tasks of the transition period. Unemployment occupies an ever more central place among them. One of the most important slogans of the transition period can and must become the demand for economic cooperation with the Soviet Union. But the agitation under this slogan must in turn have a thoroughly concrete character, armed with facts and figures. It must base itself on a general economic plan which takes into account the ever-increasing interlinking of Soviet with world economy. This signifies that the general plan must be built upon a genuine Marxist foundation and not upon the theory of an isolated socialist society.

In the present European and world unemployment, conjunctural events are bound up with the organic processes of capitalist decay. We have more than once repeated that conjunctural cycles are inherent in capitalist society at every stage of its de-

velopment. But at different stages these cycles have a different character. Just as in a person's declining years a flow of strength is always uncertain and brief and every illness, on the contrary, affects the whole organism, so the conjunctural cycles of imperialist capitalism, especially in Europe, show a tendency towards the diseased swelling of crisis by comparatively short rises. The question of unemployment, in these conditions, can become the central question for the majority of the capitalist countries. It is here that the knot is tied between the interests of the Soviet Union and the interests of the world proletariat.

The task by itself is clear and indisputable. It is only necessary to approach it correctly. But that is precisely where the difficulty lies. At the present time, the international education of the world proletarian vanguard is based on two ideas: "The Soviet Union will build socialism without you" and "The Soviet Union is the fatherland of all the toilers". The first idea is false, the second abstract. Moreover, the one belies the other. This explains the astonishing fact that the struggle against unemployment is now directed by the pocket calendar of Kuusinen and Manuilsky ("March 6th", etc.), and passes over the economic problems of the Soviet Union. Yet the connection between the one task and the other is quite obvious.

Ways to Aid Unemployed and the Soviet Union

Complete collectivization on the basis of the peasants' holdings is an adventure pregnant with a crisis in agricultural production and with dangerous political consequences. But if the possibility arises to fructify the collective farms in time by an influx of advanced technique, then collectivized agriculture could pass far more easily through the period of infantile illness and be able, almost in the next few years, to realize a greatly improved harvest, with such stocks for export as would radically change the picture of the grain market of Europe and later on put the consumption of the working masses on a new foundation. The menacing disproportion between the swing of collectivization and the state of technique flows directly from the economic isolation of the Soviet Union. If the Soviet government could even use only the capitalist credits "normal" in interstate relations, the tempo of industrialization, as the framework of collectivization, could even now be considerably enlarged.

By all these circumstances, the Communist Parties of the West are placed before the task: of tying up, in their agitation, the question of unemployment with the most essential factors in world development, and, in the first place, with the economic development of the Soviet Union. And what is needed for this?

First, to stop fooling the workers of the West with regard to the genuine situation in the Soviet Union. Together with the indisputable and immense successes arising out of nationalization, to show them honestly at the same time the internal contradictions arising out of the isolation of the Soviet Union and mistakes of leadership, and threatening it with political dangers.

Second, to explain to them that these dangers could be considerably diminished, and later overcome, by the establishment of a broad and coordinated interchange between the Soviet Union on the one side and Germany and England, for example, on the other.

Third, to demonstrate that many tens, and later on hundreds, of thousands of workers would be able to find work in the annual, planned orders for machinery and agricultural implements of the Soviet Union.

Fourth, to explain that through these conditions the Soviet Union would receive the possibility to export a far greater quantity—leaving aside wood and other raw materials—of grain, butter, meat and other products of consumption of the broadest masses.

The importation of machinery and the

exportation of raw material and food products could, by an adequate agreement, be set into direct dependence upon each other, on the basis of a large plan equally accessible to the understanding and the checking of the Soviet as well as the foreign workers.

The successes hitherto achieved in Soviet industry assure a necessary basis for this entrance into the international arena. It is not a question of naked agitation, but of serious, well thought out economic proposals, motivated by all existing experience and clearly formulated in the language of technique, economics and statistics. In this connection the Soviet government must certainly proclaim its full readiness to facilitate an all-sided examination of the accomplishments of the economic agreement for interested labor organizations (trade unions, shop stewards' committees, etc.).

Unemployment and the United Front

If we approach the question politically and in the first place from the point of view of the relations towards the social democracy and Amsterdam, the task can be formulated as an application of the policy of the united front on a scale such as it has not been and could not be practiced up to now.

But is it possible to hope that MacDonald, Hermann Mueller, the trade unionists of Amsterdam and the American Federation of Labor would consent to such a combination? then is it not utopian? is it not conciliationism? etc. Such an objection will undoubtedly be made by those who yesterday hoped that the British trade unionists would declare war against imperialism for the defense of the Soviet Union (Stalin and Company). We did not nourish these pitiful illusions at that time and we do not nourish them now. But it must be considered that economic agreements of a social democratic government with the Soviets for the diminution of unemployment in its own country is nevertheless far more probable than the war of the reformists against imperialism. When the crisis develops further, the reformist governments, which base themselves upon millions of organized workers, can be driven into such a vice that they are compelled—to one extent or another—to yield to economic cooperation with the Soviet Union.

We have no desire or need to guess the extent to which it would be realized in actuality. Should the social democracy be averse even to the discussion—in the first period that is most likely to be the case—then the plan will at the very outset imbue the masses of the workers to struggle against the social democracy. In any case, the reformists in power will find it more difficult to defend themselves from an agitation based on a concrete plan of economically advantageous cooperation with the Soviet Union than from the shrill yelpings on the subject of "social fascism".

It is evident that this plan of campaign in no way assumes the softening of our political relations towards the social democracy. On the contrary, by correct direction the campaign outlined above can seriously shake the positions of the international social democracy which for the last few years received immeasurable support through the policies of Stalin-Molotov.

Socialist Construction and the International Revolution

The necessity of posing the task of socialist construction in an international sense rises out of the internal needs of the economic development of the Soviet Union and at the same time represents the most persuasive and irrefutable propaganda in favor of international revolution. But in

* The paper of the Italian Left Communists, *Prometeo*, says quite appropriately that if it is very difficult for the social democrats to refute the accusations that they are agents of the bourgeoisie, it is, on the contrary, very easy for them to refute the affirmation that they are Fascists. In labeling the social democrats social fascists, the Comintern renders them a signal service.

order to enter upon this road it is necessary to learn over again. Instead of a soporific optimism, the revolutionary tocsin must be sounded. It is impermissible to be content with the ritualistic conjuring against military intervention. It is necessary to put the economic problem squarely. The Communist agitator must say openly and honestly to the masses of the West:

"Don't believe that socialism will be built up in Moscow without you. They have accomplished quite a bit, but they cannot accomplish everything. The many things they have already accomplished are only a small part of what is still to be done. In order to help them, such measures must now be taken as will at the same time help you workers against unemployment and the high cost of living. The Soviet government has an economic plan for cooperation with foreign industry.** Everybody can familiarize himself with it. To be sure, you are not obliged to put blind faith in me or in the Soviet government. Demand the examination of the Soviet proposals by our trade unions, our party, or by our social democratic government (Germany, England). This government must be compelled finally to take the road of economic agreement with the Soviet Union because that is the more effective and advantageous road of struggle against unemployment."

But is there any hope that with their present leadership the Communist Parties are capable of a serious revolutionary mobilization of the masses? We will not decide this question beforehand. The policy which we defend has such profound roots in the objective situation and in the historical interests of the proletariat that it will finally make its way through all the obstacles. It is entirely a question of time. But that is a very important question. The duty of the Left Communist Opposition is, therefore, to use all its strength to shorten the period.

Prinkipo, March 14, 1930

** We proceed from the assumption that such a plan must be created.



STEEL SLAVES NEED UNION

PITTSBURG, Pa.—W. E. Chalmers, of the University of Pittsburgh who spent months in a survey of labor conditions in steel trust towns, among other things says:

"Contrasted with a highly efficient labor spy system maintained by steel corporations to ferret out discontented workmen, the absence of any union in the field to lead in the fight against sharp wage cuts, unemployment and long hours

"The sweep of technicology through the steel plants," has been unparalleled in any other industry. In a 3-year period from 8 to 23% of the working force has been eliminated in various departments of typical mills. The Edgar Thompson works at Braddock a Pittsburgh suburb, have cut the number of workers from 7,000 to 5,000 in four years while maintaining production.

"On the other hand the big steel corporations have never been so prosperous. Although the fourth quarter of 1929 was one of industrial depression, U. S. Steel reported the highest profits of any quarter in its history. Record profits have been matched by record unemployment, sharp wage reductions and the maintenance of long hours.

"In continuous process departments of the bigger mills, the 8-hour day is in effect. In other departments, and in some of the smaller mills, the 10-hour day is customary, but 12-hour shifts and the 7-day week are by no means uncommon. Four thousand men are on the 7-day week in the Pittsburgh area alone. Every third week U. S. Steel Corp. workers must work 16 hours straight in 24 hours."

Efforts to organize these mills, despite discontent, will not be easy, said Chalmers. The steel trust and other companies, following the 1919 revolt, organized an elaborate spy service. Company towns are under the iron rule of company henchmen; free speech and assembly are unknown; eviction can follow agitation; and boarding house keepers are often company agents."