

THE SUCCESSES OF SOCIALISM AND THE DANGERS OF ADVENTURISM

(Continued from Last Issue)

At the conclusion of the five year plan, the coal consumption per inhabitant in the U. S. S. R. will be one-eighth that of the United States. The Soviet production of oil is seven percent of the world production, the United States producing 68 percent of it, that is, ten times as much.

More favorable relations exist in the textile industry, but even here the difference in our disfavor is enormous: the United States has 22.3 percent of the weaving machines, England—34.8 percent, the Soviet Union—4.2 percent. These figures become all the more striking if one applies the number of weaving machines to the population figures.

The Soviet railway system will be increased by the five year plan by 18,000-20,000 kilometers and will thus reach 80,000 kilometers as against 400,000 kilometers of American railways [a kilometer is approximately five-eighths of a mile]. Out of every 100 square kilometers in area, the United States has 51.5 kilometers of railway. Belgium has 370 km., the European part of the U. S. S. R. has 13.7 km., and the Asiatic part has 1 km.

The figures of the merchant marine are still less favorable. England's share in the world merchant marine is 30 percent, the United States' is 22.5 percent, that of the Soviet Union—0.5 percent.

The United States, in 1927, had almost 80 percent of the world total of automobiles, while the share of the Soviet Union was not even to be calculated in tenths of a percent. At the end of the five year plan, 158,000 automobiles are provided for in the country. This means: one machine for more than 1,000 people (today, there is one machine for every 7,000 people). According to Ossinski, at the end of the five year plan we "will easily outstrip Poland" (if it remains at its present level).

False theory indubitably signifies mistakes in policy. From the false theory of "socialism in one country" flows not only a vitiated general perspective, but also a criminal tendency to paint up the present Soviet reality.

HAVE WE ENTERED INTO THE "PERIOD OF SOCIALISM"?

The second year of the five year plan is characterized in all the speeches and articles in this manner: "The national economy of the country has entered into the period of socialism." Socialism is declared already realized "at its foundation". Everybody knows that socialist production, be it only by "its foundation" is a production that satisfies the direct needs of man. However, in our country, with a frightful scarcity of merchandize experienced in the land, heavy industry increased last year by 28.1 percent, and light industry by only 13.1 percent, putting a hindrance upon the basic program. Even if this proportion which has been realized is acknowledged as ideally right (which in no way corresponds to the reality) there will nevertheless follow that, in the interest of a sort of "primitive socialist accumulation" the population of the U. S. S. R. is obliged to tighten its belt more and more. But this indicates precisely that socialism is impossible with a low level of production and it is only the preparatory steps towards socialism that are possible.

Is it not monstrous: the country does not rise out of the scarcity of merchandize, the feeding difficulties exist every day, the children lack milk—and the official philistines declare: "The country has entered into the period of socialism." Could socialism be more fraudulently discredited?

In spite of all the economic successes in industry and agrarian economy, the storage of grain today represents more of a "political campaign" than an economic operation. In other words, it is realized by state coercion. During the reign of the epigones, the word "smytchka" (alliance with the peasants) was spooled in every sense, but they forgot to give it the only correct sense, which consists of creating economic relations between town and country which permits the country to exchange its products, voluntarily and with ever-increasing interest, for industrial products. Thus, the success of the alliance with the peasantry consists of the diminution of "political" methods for the storage of grain, that is, of coercion. This can be attained only by the closing of the scissors of industrial and agricultural prices. But Stalin has affirmed, thirteen years after the October revolution, that the scissors are only "bourgeois prejudices". In other words he acknowledged that the scissors are spreading instead of closing. There is nothing surprising in the fact that the very word "smytchka" has completely disappeared from the official

dictionary.

A grain storage official, in explaining the slowness of the storing by the insufficient pressure of the local power on the Kulak, makes the following reflection: "The calculations and the maneuvers of the Kulak are not at all complicated. If he is taxed with three tons, he can make up for them by a penalty of 400 rubles. It is enough for him to sell upon the speculative market half a ton in order to recover his penalty with a surplus and thus retain for himself two and a half tons of grain." This striking reckoning means that on the speculative market the price of grain is at least six times higher than the state price, perhaps even eight or ten times higher, since we do not know at what the surplus is to be valued. This is how the scissors, which are only bourgeois prejudices to Stalin, pierce through Pravda and show their two points.

The communications on the progress of grain storage are given every day in Pravda under the epigraph: "The struggle for grain is the struggle for socialism." But when Lenin employed this phrase he was far from thinking that the country had "entered" into the period of socialism. The fact that one is obliged to fight—yes, to fight!—for grain, simple grain, shows that the country is still extremely far off from the socialist régime.

The elementary foundations of theory cannot be trampled upon with impunity. One cannot confine himself to the socialist forms of production relations—forms which are immature, rudimentary, and in agriculture, exceedingly fragile and conflicting—and make an abstraction of the principal factor of social development—the productive forces. The socialist forms themselves have or can have an essentially different social content in accordance with the level of technique. The Soviet social forms on the basis of American production—that is already socialism, at least in its first stage. The Soviet forms on the basis of Russian technique—are only the first steps in the struggle for socialism.

If one takes the level of present-day Soviet life, the daily life of the toiling masses, the cultural level, consequently, and the number of illiterates—and if one does not lie, does not stuff his mind, if one is not deceived himself or others, if one is not addicted to the vice of bureaucratic demagoguery—then it must be honestly recognized that the heritage of bourgeois and czarist Russia constitutes 95 percent of the daily life, morals and customs of the overwhelming majority of the Soviet population, while the elements of socialism represent only 5 percent. And this is in no way in contradiction with the dictatorship of the proletariat, the Soviet regime, and the enormous successes in economy. All this is the scaffolding around the future edifice, or rather around one of the corners of this edifice. To tell the worker-builders who are erecting this scaffolding with bricks and cement, who frequently do not appease their hunger and are liable to fatal accidents, to tell them that they can already move into this house—"we have entered into socialism!"—is to make fun of the builders and of socialism.

FOUR YEARS OR FIVE?

We are decidedly opposed to the lightness with which the untested five year plan has been converted into a four year plan. What do the facts tell us on this subject?

The official figures of the growth of industrial production amount for the second year to 24.2 percent. The growth provided for the second year of the five year plan (21.5 percent) is thus exceeded by 2.7 percent, but it is behind the four year plan by almost 6 percent. If one takes into account that with regard to the quality and the retail price there is a considerable retardation and that the calculable coefficient is attained by the lash, it will be clear that in reality the second year unfolded itself according to the rhythms of the five year plan and in no case according to the rhythms of a four year plan.

In the field of fundamental construction, the provisions for the year 1929-1930 have not been realized; almost twenty percent is lacking; the greatest retardation shows itself in the construction of new gigantic metallurgical factories, in the installations of coke production, in elementary chemicals and electrical construction, that is, in the fields which constitute the basis of all industrialization. At the same time, the decline in construction costs of 14 percent provided for in the plan has been realized only up to 4 percent. It is clear, without commentary, what is the meaning of this bookkeeping four percent dragged out by the hair: let us be thankful if the construction costs have not increased. The

combined coefficient of retardation of the plan will thus be greater than 30 percent and not 20 percent. There is the heritage which falls to the third year in the sphere of capital construction.

The "gaps" in the plan cannot be filled at the expense of light industry, as was usual to a certain extent in the first two years, since the most important retardation in the plan is to be observed precisely in the sphere of the production of finished objects. According to the five year plan, light industry should have risen in 1929-1930 by 18 percent; according to the four year plan—by 23 percent. In reality, it rose only by 11 percent (according to other data, by 13 percent). Yet, the dearth of merchandize requires extraordinary efforts in the sphere of light industry.

It has been stated that one of the specific tasks of the supplementary quarter* introduced between the second and the "third" years was the "stabilization by every possible means of the monetary circulation and of the entire financial system". This is an official admission for the first time that the financial system is shaken up at the end of the first two years of the five year plan by an empirical leadership devoid of all planning. The monetary inflation signifies nothing less than an uncertified loan contracted at the expense of the years to come. Therefore it will be necessary to repay this loan in the next few years. The appeal for the stabilization of monetary circulation demonstrates that although "we have entered into the period of socialism" it is necessary not to liquidate the chervonets, but rather to keep it intact. As to the theory, here it is simply turned upside-down.

PAST MISTAKES AND THE FATE OF THE PLAN

In this ailing state of the chervonets all the errors, all the false calculations, all the precipitations, disproportions, gaps, deviations and dizziness of the economic direction of the Centrists is summed up. The ailing chervonets constitutes the heritage of the first two years of the five year plan. To surmount the inertia of inflation is not an easy task. The application of the financial plan in the first month of the supplementary trimester bears witness to * This year the termination of the economic year has been carried forward from October to January—which inserts a supplementary quarter.

The Rank and File of the Miners Revolt

(Continued from page 1)

Where are the Communist party and National Miners Union forces now when this new rebellious movement is taking shape? Unfortunately their complete departure from the correct policy of building the Left wing within the existing mass movements, even though these may be under control of reactionaries, has brought them to a position of complete isolation—if not to use the stronger term—complete discreditment. The N. M. U. is non-existent as an organization in Illinois, and there could be no better proof of fatal results from a departure from correct policies. Today there is a splendid opportunity for a united Left wing to give actual leadership.

The misery of the conditions of the miners in the Illinois fields can hardly be described. Unemployment and stark misery stalks the coal producing territory. The Orient Mine No. 1, the biggest in the country, worked exactly 70 days during 1930. Several small strikes are now in progress in southern Illinois, fought tooth and nail by the union officialdom, by the coal operators, and by the state police. The mercenary combination the rank and file miners will henceforward find yet more solidly opposing them. Their road is not an easy one.

The National Committee of the Communist League (Opposition), in view of the situation now existing in the Illinois coal fields calls upon the coal miners to oppose with might and main the putting into effect of the Lewis-Fishwick-Walker agreement. We propose to the Communist party and the National Miners' Union forces the establishment of a united front of all Left wing elements in support and possible leadership of the present rank and file opposition movement. It should by all means be strengthened to bring a powerful delegation to the St. Louis convention on April 15. If at this convention there is a substantial delegation actually representative of the membership, the only correct road for the convention to take must be a complete break with the new unified clique of the officialdom, their policies, and their views. This should result in the formation of a new miners'

union on a class basis. Our N. E. C. has as its further policy the establishment of one union of all the coal miners of the country through the amalgamation of this new union to be formed with other sectional organizations opposing the Lewis-Fishwick-Walker machine, such as the new union organized in West Virginia and the National Miners' Union. Such a union, in order to fulfill its role, must come about through this amalgamation on a definite class basis so that it will really be able to struggle against the operators under a militant leadership and give the necessary guarantees for rank and file control through complete union democracy and all the measures necessary to carry this into effect.

But what we must not forget above all is that the success of the stabilization of the chervonets (which is absolutely indispensable) bear the germs of a no less great deflation in industry and in economy as a whole. Uncertified, and especially, secret loans, made at the expense of the future do not go unpunished.

As to the general growth of industrial production for the past two years, the figure is 52 per cent against 47 per cent provided for by the plan. That is to say, an accountable increase of only 4.5 per cent. If we take into account the retardation from the point of view of quality, we can say with certainty that in the best case we have approached during the first two years the provisions of the plan, and that "as a whole" only, that is to say, if we regard a whole series of internal disproportions only in the abstract.

The characterization that we have made of the weighty heritage of the first two years of the five year plan does not reduce in the least the significance of the successes that have been acquired. These successes are enormous in their historical importance and all the more significant because they were obtained despite the uninterrupted errors of the leadership. At the same time, the actual acquisitions not only do not justify the lightheadedness with which the jump is being made from five years to four years, but do not even give any guarantee for the execution of the plan foreseen for five years, because that necessitates the payment exacted by the disproportions and "gaps" of the first two years in the course of the three years to come. The less the leadership will prove capable of foresight, of raising their ears to warning, the heavier will the debt become.

To verify the progress made by the five year plan, to keep an eye on some branches, to curb others—not on the basis of a priori figures that are inevitably imprecise and conditional, but on the basis of a conscientious study of experiences—that is the chief task of economic direction. But it is precisely this task that presumes democracy in the party, in the trade unions and in the Soviets. The good progress of socialist construction is impeded by the ridiculous and at the same time monstrous principle of the infallibility of the "general" leadership, which is in reality only inconsistency and the general danger.

(To be Continued)

We urge the coal miners to make the experiences of the past, fundamental object lessons for the future. These experiences should be utilized as a warning against corrupt officials and opportunist careerists penetrating their ranks for the sole aim of acquiring office in order to become better agents for the operators. It is necessary that the coal miners also learn a serious lesson from the activities of Howat and the part he played by becoming a "progressive" shield for the underhanded treason of the Fishwick-Walker combination. The severest criticism and strictest vigilance will help in safeguarding against repetition. It is necessary that the Left wing demand from Howat as a condition of joint action of all forces of the opposition movement now developing in Illinois that he agree to this policy here outlined and that he be willing to cooperate with the Left wing, including the N. M. U. forces, for the realization of this policy.—A. S.

THE PHILADELPHIA CASES

From Philadelphia, we hear that the I. L. D. is finally taking up the question of the defense of comrades Leon Goodman and Bernard Morgenstern, two members of the Left Opposition arrested February 27 and held for sedition. No definite action has yet been taken, but we know from letters received from many cities that protests of I. L. D. members played a distinct role in compelling a change of front on the part of the organization's directors.