

EDITORIAL NOTES

THEY OVERLOOKED THE GERMAN SITUATION

The first answer of the American Stalinists to the Hoover moratorium was a shocking revelation of the theoretical degeneration which has been brought in to the Communist movement under the flag of "socialism in one country."

Reducing all complexities to one common formula, the Daily Worker had no difficulty in explaining the moratorium proposal to its readers. The issue of June 22, following the publication of Hoover's statement devoted a leading editorial to the subject.

Yesterday the oncoming proletarian revolution in Spain was viewed with uneasiness in Pravda because it threatened to upset the European equilibrium and endanger the Five Year Plan.

The reactionary theory of socialism in one country is no abstraction, remote from the problems and tasks of the day, as many are apt to regard it.

"SAVING—GERMANY" FOR WHOM?

If the Hoover proposal for the suspension of war debts and reparations falls to hold back the proletarian revolution in Germany it will not be for lack of support in the capitalist camp.

From this standpoint one of the applauding voices deserves a special mention. On July 1 Norman Thomas hailed the moratorium policy as a step to save Germany and Europe from "collapse".

Thomas is fearful of a "collapse of all Europe, even of all of Western civilization, regardless of whether this collapse occurs under the Communists or the fascists.

beforehand, and that is why they acted. It ought to be obvious to every worker who stops to think—and there are many of them who have time and reason to think these days—that Thomas' fear of a "collapse under the Communists" is an echo of the fear of the ruling class and not an expression of the interests of their exploited victims.

But—it may be objected—Thomas said he also feared the Fascists. Yes, he did say it and he does fear them. In that sentiment he defends the special interests of the social-democracy which would be deprived of its function if bourgeois democracy—the present form of capitalist class rule in Germany—were supplanted by a Fascist dictatorship.

The Daily Worker on July 6 quoted the speech of Thomas with the reference to the "Hitlerites" deleted. An oversight, perhaps, of a careless editorial writer? Far from it.

REVIVING "THE APPEAL TO REASON"

The announcement of the revival of the "Appeal To Reason", with Fred Warren, its old managing editor again at the helm along with Haldeman-Julius, represents an attempt to interpret the discontent generated by the crisis in terms of pre-war radicalism.

The Appeal under Wayland and Warren was an agitator and therein lay its inherent defect. It was merely an agitator without weight or substance, scornful considerations of fundamental theory and, consequently, frothy, sensational, superficial, and crassly reformist.

Because of that experience and to the extent that the present-day movement of the militant proletariat has assimilated the lesson, it stands on higher ground and cannot be dragged back again to the swamps of yesterday.

At bottom this is what the struggle of the Opposition signifies. It derives its historic importance not only from its implacable antagonism to the old reformist agitation under the old and discredited trade-unions.

So you will give up the slogan, "Go to the masses"—say the advocates of agitation for its own sake. No. But in order to make its meaning clearer—to arm the movement against Appeal to Reasonism, open and disguised—the Opposition adds an amendment to make the slogan read: Go to the masses with a revolutionary policy!

—J. P. C.

Manuisky Makes an Unintentional Admission

Of all the plenums or congresses that the Communist International has held, the Eleventh Plenum which recently met without announcement of its sessions or attention to its deliberations or results, undoubtedly occupies the lowest rung in the ladder of the Comintern's history.

"In what way," he asks "does the higher stage of the present revolutionary upsurge as compared with preceding years express itself? In the fact that in a number of capitalist countries, and in a number of separate actions, the Communists are beginning to assume the independent leadership in the class battles."

"The Communists in China are not now carrying on a victorious Northern Expedition, occupying Shanghai and the other industrial centers, nor is Chiang Kai-Shek striking them in the flank at the moment of victory. The Communists are now independently, as a party directing the Chinese Red Army of peasants and workers against Chiang Kai-Shek, against all the counter-revolutionary generals and the united forces of the whole imperialist front.

"The Communists in Europe are not at this moment leading general strikes on the scale of the English strike of 1926, which was betrayed at the decisive moment by the Purcells, Citrines and other leaders of the General Council. . . . Had the Communists given independent leadership to movements like the General Strike in Great Britain or the Northern Expedition in China, it would have implied that they had won the majority of the working class and tolling masses, and this would have resulted in the immediate victory of the proletarian revolution.

There is surely an appreciable difference between the two "stages" in the second of which there are allegedly big advances and progress to record, and in the first of which there were in reality two of the most crushing and humiliating defeats ever experienced by an embattled proletariat—in England and China. What caused the difference? Why are the Communists "beginning" to assume "independent leadership" now?

Why didn't the Communists give "independent leadership to movements like the General Strike in Great Britain or the Northern Expedition in China (which) would have resulted in the immediate victory of the proletarian revolution"?

From Manuisky's report, no other answer can be found than that the Communist parties have failed to adopt the directives of the infallible international leadership, which is directed in turn by the infallible General Secretary. Had Manuisky refrained from invoking the past, matters would not have stood so badly for his conceptions, for god knows that the leadership of the various Communist parties is eminently incapable of executing intelligently any policy—right or wrong.

The whole truth of the matter lies in the fact that Stalin, Bukharin bear the full responsibility for the failure of the

Communists in England and China to put themselves at the head of the revolutionary movements. It was they who, abusing the immense power they had usurped, covered up a downright Menshevik policy with all the prestige and authority of the Communist International and the Russian revolution.

In England during the turbulent period of the general and the miners' strikes, when the classes were at sword's point Stalin and Bukharin presented the English Communist Party from acting as a party of the revolutionary proletariat and compelled it to function as the General Council's watchdog against the outraged feelings of the workers stabled in the back. During the strike, the British Communists were locked into one room with the "Left" wing of the General Council, with the Cooks and Co. and told to act harmoniously under the banner of the "minority movement".

Thaelmann and the "People's Revolution"

Thanks for the quotation about the "people's" revolution from Thaelmann's speech, which I glanced through. A more ridiculous and maliciously confused manner of putting the question cannot be imagined! "The people's revolution"—as a slogan and even with a reference to Lenin. Yet every issue of the paper of the Fascist Strasser is embellished with the slogan of the people's revolution as opposed to the Marxian slogan of the class revolution.

The evolution of the slogans of the Comintern is a striking one, precisely in this question. Since the Third Congress of the Comintern the slogan of "class against class" became the popular expression of the policy of the united proletarian front. This was quite correct: All workers should be consolidated against the bourgeoisie. This they afterwards transformed into the alliance with the reformist bureaucrats against the workers (the experience of the English general strike). Later on, they went over to the opposite extreme: No agreements with the reformists, "class against class."

In the revolution, consequently this is not a class revolution but a people's revolution. Thaelmann sings in chorus. In reality, the worker-Communists should say to the Fascist worker: Of course, ninety-five percent of the population is not ninety-eight percent, is exploited by finance capital. But this exploitation is organized hierarchically: there are exploiters, there are sub-exploiters, sub-sub-exploiters, etc. Only thanks to this hierarchy do the super-exploiters keep in subjection the majority of the nation.

The opportunists have their profound importance, not merely for the academic historian, but because only by knowing the yesterday can today be understood and tomorrow be prepared for. At the foundation of today's blunders lie the blunders of yesterday, which all of Stalinism's frenzied veering to ultra-Leftism cannot eradicate. The error of the past left unacknowledged and uncondemned is the source of its own reproduction tomorrow. The most striking illustration of this truism is the policy of the Right wing today. Read its press; observe its actions. Like a dissipated old man it relives the disgraceful experiences it went through jointly with the Centrists who expelled it. Its feeble organism is nourished solely upon uncondemned errors.

April 14, 1931 —LEON TROTSKY.

Economic Crisis -- What Next?

(Continued from last issue)

The "economic age" of an industry, in terms of the foregoing, will increase with time, and in general the older industries will show the clearest signs of "economic old age", although a new industry which has been developed rapidly may age fast.

Because of that experience and to the extent that the present-day movement of the militant proletariat has assimilated the lesson, it stands on higher ground and cannot be dragged back again to the swamps of yesterday. Agitation in itself possesses no revolutionary virtue. Only to the extent that it proceeds from revolutionary theory, and is constantly tested and regulated by it, does agitation serve as an impetus to the development of a class movement.

Applying the foregoing to the situation even in the so-called "prosperous" times ending in 1929, we find a number of industries which were sharply depressed and were unable to make satisfactory profits: textiles, coal sugar, lumber, meat packing, agriculture in general, fertilizers, furniture manufacture, paper rubber, shipping, and leather. To these may be added a group of industries which is able to make a profit in good times, but whose profits rapidly shrink in depression times: automobiles, clothing, building materials, iron and steel, machinery, mining, railways, etc.

The only possible alternatives are either ridiculously inefficient or are themselves symptoms of the growing disintegration of capitalism. 1. Growth of population does not of itself create new "markets" which must be defined as outlets for the sale of goods at a profit. Increased population in a decaying capitalist system means

Note: This is the first of a series of articles intended to interpret the daily economic life of the United States in accordance with the real course of its development and from a Marxian point of view. The present article deals with the general features of the crisis that began in 1929, seeks to isolate its causes, and discuss the prospects for the future articles will deal with specific industries—coal, copper, steel, automobiles, textiles, railroads and banking—from the standpoint of the economic background of the class struggle.—Ed.

By B. J. Field

thy" industries with those which have reached a more or less advanced stage of "economic old age" gives a general idea of the extent to which capitalist degeneration has already set in.

This analytical examination of the present state of capitalism in America by industries and groups therefore brings one to the same conclusion as a synthetic examination of the economic structure as a whole along the broad lines of the conflict between wages and profits, that is the economic contradictions of capitalism in America have already reached a highly acute state compared with past periods of development.

Politically, this can mean only one thing: a continuous assault on wages and living standards, offering a background for increasing radicalization of the working masses, while the increasing acuteness of the problems of capitalism paves the way for a breakdown of productive relations based on profit, and ultimately of the whole profit system of production.

Ways Out?

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only more mouths to feed not more jobs or more markets. To say that increased population means, by itself, the possibility of sales at a profit, implies that the contradictions of capitalism have already been overcome, as expressed in ability to earn profits, and therefore the increase in population cannot be the means of solving the problems of capitalism—this would be reasoning in a circle.

2. The hopes of a basic revival of American capitalism founded on the development of its export trade are quickly dashed by an analysis of what American exports really consist of. They are of two types. 1. Raw materials and foodstuffs, such as wheat, cotton, copper, and petroleum. These are in reality a survival of the pre-war days when America's place in world economy was as a supplier of raw materials to the more highly industrialized nations of Europe.

America is being displaced in these fields by still newer countries—Canada and South Africa in copper, Persia, Venezuela and Russia in oil, Argentina and Canada in wheat; the Sudan and Central Asia in cotton. 2. Highly-finished mechanical devices, luxuries appealing to a limited class in foreign countries; in this class are automobiles, typewriters, moving picture films, fountain pens, and similar "Yankee notions". Our exports trade is not built, like that of Great Britain on basic economic necessities—steel rails, ships, and the like. To develop such a trade would imply a great colonial expansion, for which America entered the race too late as a world imperialist power, after the best territories had already been divided up; or it would mean the radical displacement in the world markets of Amer-

ican competitors. The forcible acquisition of such colonies or of other competing markets (China, India) involves the perspective of deep revolutionary crises and the resperate alternative of war. 3. There remain two typical reformist illusions—increasing the real wages of American labor at the expense of "national savings" (in reality profits), and the peaceful, voluntary coordination of industry and labor to minimize or eliminate the "promotive" in favor of a planned system of national economy. We shall not find the patient comrades who have followed us this far by an elaborate exposure of the futility of such expectations.

Political Perspectives

We come back, therefore, to the probability of a prolonged period of wage-cutting as the last expedient to maintain a dwindling profit margin. This must result in acute wage struggles; and as the workers come to realize the hopelessness of the situation, these wage struggles will be transformed into political struggles. The great drawback to the development of political class consciousness in America hitherto has been the possibility for the worker to solve his problems individually, by escaping into the growing and prosperous bourgeoisie, instead of on a basis of class solidarity.

A proof of the close connection between "economic old age" and increasing acuteness of wage struggles which gradually assume a political tinge, is found in the history of the labor movement in two of the oldest and least profitable American industries, coal and textiles.

If the above analysis is correct, these opportunities will diminish rapidly, and the working class will be impelled increasingly revolutionary activities with a minimum of wasted time as struggle in the "socialist" reformist liberal, or other blind alleys. The crisis that began in 1929 may go down in history as the last of the crises on a century-old upswing of American capitalism, and as the door leading to a new era of struggle for the American proletariat.