DISCUSSION ARTICLES

A Reply to the Discussion

tional Committee or criticism of it. The main conclusions-although some of them represent a distinct and original contribution of the Left Opposition and are the action of the Conference in regard ought to see the force of this opinion. to them.

Our draft has been submitted to an international discussion, and a beneficial criticism from that source is not yet ex cluded. But in the ranks of our own national section the estimation of the problems and the tasks formulated by the National Committee have not ye been successfully assailed. Critics of the National Committee are not lacking, but their contributions do not go to the roots of the new issues. They attempt either to revive questions long settled in our But, my dear friend, the "Save the Un- be to accept his view. ranks or to obscure the main questions with superficial quibbles over minor points.

A Discredited Idea

rightful representatives of these tenden- turning its back on all that rich expericies. In their discussion articles they ence and on the methods which, in spite only recapitulate the attitude and point of all the errors, yielded such great reof view they have constantly maintained sults. But why should we emulate them? against the National Committee. Since On the contrary we are hammering them the conflicting positions cannot be re- nearly every week in the Militant for a conciled-and they cannot be because they have nothing in common-nothing ample of the "Save the Union" moveremains but for the National Conference ment, making allowance of course for to pronounce a judgement on them and the altered conditions. end the disputes. Here I wish only to make a few remarks on the critical articles of the comrades mentioned and to explain once more why we still hold to minence to the I. W. W. out of all prothe views we have maintained against portion to their actual merits while he them.

Comrade Rose renews his long-standing feud with us on three very important relief campaign led by the party "grew questions: On the evaluation of the history of the party; on the present status and the perspectives of the party; and on the attitude of the Left Opposition based on the Pennsylvania-Ohio strike. toward the party. With us as well as The later entrance of the I. W. W. into with comrade Rose all three of these the relief situation as a result of the questions are intertwined and, also in Colorado strike only served to muddle each case, the conclusions have a system. the situation and polson the atmosphere atic character. They are mutually ex- with reactionary slander about misapculsive and cannot be joined together. propriation of funds. Our first Conference more than two years ago spoke very decisively on these points. In our opinion the Second Conference should reaffirm the judgment and put a period to contentions over them.

Comrade Rose's first fault, from which the others flow, is his grossly distorted view of the history of the party. This is not without valid reasons. During all the years of the party's formative period and its emergence as a dynamic factor in the class struggle at the head of the conscious workers' movement he stood aside from the party and took no part in the making of its history. He learned about the party from the scandal sheets and kitchen-gossip of its enemies. On that basis he serves up an account and interpretation of the party's past that bears very little relation to actual fact. And in part, by the concessions he continually makes to the standpoint of the anti-party sects who still hold him as a captive, his exposition of party history is somewhat provocative.

If it was a mistake in the first place to organize the party, if it was wrong to belong to the party since its foundation, if the circles of word-radicalism which conducted a venomous fight against the party since its inception were correct -if all this were so, comrade Rose,'s approach to the question would have a certain justification. Needless to say we do not share such a view nor the conclusions deriving from it.

Distorted History

Take a few samples of comrade Rose's history at random: In each instance we any conclusions based upon the ability find them to be distorted, one-sided and of American capitalism to solve its probfalse. "The native proletarian elements lems or to overcome its contradications. . . . round the I. W. W. were at first It proceeds from the inevitable intensineglected by this rising movement" (the fication of these contradications to hold party). But this is presented as solely out "prospects of struggle which will inthe fault of the as yet groping and crease in breadth and depth and miliinexperienced party. The reactionary tancy". And precisely under the likely course of the I. W. W. leaders in fom-, variant of an upward conjuncture of enting antagonism to the Communist American capitalist economy. movement-and this was the really decisive element in the situation-is left out of account. Finally, he says, there came an appeal to the I. W. W. from the The crisis which followed the short spe-Communist International "over the heads culative post-war "boom" marked a beof the American Communist leadership Not so. It was the lelegation of the ism, within which the business cycles party to the Comintern that drafted the still operate but are changed to the appeal and the whole party supported degree that the general period has

Comrade Rose speaks of party members "sent in 'to capture or destroy the tem of economy represented by the Soviet I. W. W.'" Who were they and when was such an instruction ever given out ous part in any future perspective. Each by the party? We read about it in the I. W. W. papers in their campaign to capitalism, bringing it nearer to its end. poison their members against Commun- The increasingly planetary character of ism, and nowhere else. By such critic- the conjunctures of capitalist economy isms of the party comrade Rose only has become particularly expressed in the on the home market, by continuous exsucceeds in giving away his sources of more uniform and more universal phase information about it.

impression that the Passaic strike This testifies to the growing intensity and migrants, in addition to the growing was a landmark in party develop- scope of crises as a part of capitalist population, into producers and consumment, that it was handled on a national scale with considerable skill and that it signalized the party's supremacy in the radical labor movement. But what does comrade Rose see in this event? He sees "the slowness of the crisis particularly records as a universal capital for railroad material, machinery party leadership to accept the gage of phenomenon within capitalism the grow- and building which had been practically bers will appear even more regularly. battle"-some of Weisbord's absurd gos- ing standing army of unemployed on the at a standstill during the war, as well as All comrades and readers of the Millsip retailed five years later to glorify one hand, and on the other, a growing himself. Again: "The collective, party abundance of credits seeking new markets Meanwhile, however, American capitalism ternational Bulletin. \$1.00 for 10 issues. wisdom could find no better road than for investment. However, the latter in had entered the world market and world Money orders, checks or bills should be to hend over these workers bag and bag- its overwhelming preponderance is in the affairs on a large scale. It would there- sent to the Militant, 84 East 10th St.,

It must be admitted that the confer-| gage to the A. F. of L. fakers, to dis ence discussion material has yielded very sipate and demoralize." What is this little either in the way of positive sup- but I. W. W. chatter, later repeated by plement to the draft thesis of the Na- Browder and similars to justify the "turn" of the "third period"? So far absence of any serious attacks on its from repudiating the course of the par's in the Passaic strike-taking it as whole, we mean, not denying or justifying certain errors—the Left Opposition presented in the American movement for has always maintained that the party the first time-may be taken as an in- must go back and appropriate some of its dication of the general support of the fruitful experiences. If you will stop organization for the propositions of the for a moment to compare Passaic with National Committee and a forecast of the present strategy in Paterson you

waged a heated struggle over them in ion" movement was the instrument through which the party came to head a huge mass movement of miners for the first time. It is true enough that the Comrades Rose and Carter are the party leadership of the present day is policy which borrows much from the ex

Repeating Slander

Here again comrade Rose gives a probelittles the achievements of the party. According to him the national miners' out" of the I. W. W. strike in Colorado. Nothing of the sort. The relief campaign was organized months before and was

rade Rose offers is false to the core, vague and confusing proposals which and provocative as well. You will never comrade Rose outlines in his articles. get the Left Opposition to accept the I .W. W. version of party history. Just consider such an expression as this: in reply to discussion will appear next "The party pounced upon this movement week).

[the relief campaign, "brought to a fore be incorrect to speak of prospects of head" by the I. W. W.) as a godsend." American capitalism overcoming its crisis Why not add that the party stole all merely on the basis of the process of the money and thus round out the story business cycles operating in the home market. This would entirely ignore the that all its enemies have told?

With such a view of party history as fact that its sources of power are spread comrade Rose has expounded in his ar- all over the world. And it is precisely in ticles it is only logical that he should see nothing good in it today and no ther field of expansion. hope for its future. According to his opinion, the American Communist Party -which never was any good-"cannot any longer be classified as even possess ing the potentialities of a 'mass party in the face of its miserable failures it all fields". Can the Left Opposition trifle for a moment with such an esti mation? Here is a sweeping statemen indeed, which forbids the party to grov regardless of external events.

The Communist Party of Germany ha no better policy and no better leader ship-if we allow for proportions-and One more example: In our platform yet it influences millions and continues adopted at the First Conference we gave to grow. We should not take the rea review of the mine strike of 1927-28 sponsibility of prohibiting the American and the subsequent developments. We party to grow stronger. The facts of life did not spare criticism of the party er- will most likely veto the order and disrors in the whole campaign for we had credit us entirely. As a matter of fact for return on capital investments. the recent advances of the National Minthe party. But comrade Rose sees only ers Union under party leadership octhe husk of the nut; the kernel escaped cured since comrade Rose made the first him altogether. He laments the "Save draft of his document. That fact, and marily in these economically backward the Union" movement as "the famous many others which can easily be cited, movement of unpleasant memories". show how false and dangerous it would American imperialism is again gathering

False Viewpoints

The theory that the party was worthless in the past and hopeless for the future brings our critic inevitably to a collision with the policy toward the party which the Left Opposition has pursued since its inception. Only one conclusion can follow from this premise - to form another party. But this idea has been so hopelessly discredited in the Left Opposition, in America as well as on an international scale, that comrade Rose stops short of the logic of his own position and exhausts himself with negative criticism of the tactics of the Na tional Comittee which proceed from different premise. The content in all of his criticisms, accordingly, is indefinite ness, contradiction and half-formed con clusions.

We cannot determine the line of the Communist League in this manner, First we must clearly define the premises upon its industrial goods and simultaneously which our work as a faction of the party for the extradiction of surplus value-new is founded. Tactical conclusions follow from this. It is of course possible even then to disagree on the tactical application of the basic policy. But in that can well enough serve as a complement case the disputes are narrowed down, they can be put concretely and definitely. ture of American capitalism, The attempt to work out a common tactic when the premise is contraditory is doomed to failure from the start. This, Such an account of the affair as com- in our opinion, is the source of the

> -JAMES P. CANNON. (The second article by comrade Cannon

Problems of Our Perspectives

Our thesis breathes not one particle of | hands of one imperialist power-the Unispirit of a coming "Victorian age" for ted States. American imperialism in the Lovestonian sense. Nor does it project the possibility of a "Victorian age" for American imperialism parallel to the development of British imperialism in the nineteenth century. But we do give the reasons which "are still effective enough to warrant its ability to extricate itself out of its present crisis by shifting the burden of it not only upon the working class at home but upon the nations of Europe," without even excluding the possibility of another boom.

This we believe, is the most likely variant for the immediate future which can be quite well substantiated by the present economic and political trends. But at the outset let us remember that

this question is closely bound up with the perspectives of the world's revolutionary movement. It will be of decisive importance whether it progresses toward new victories or whether it suffers new serious defeats.

Hence, our thesis does not at all dray

Fundamentals of Present Crisis

The capitalist system of society as whole has reached its period of decline. ginning of a period of crises for capitalchanged. This period also marks the beginnings of the development of a new sys-Union which, of course, will play its serinew cycle becomes a historical step in of the industrial cycle in each crisis dip, We have always been under the though not uniform in the rising "booms" economy. At the beginning of this crisis, France was still to some extent an exception-to the extent, mainly, to which

To substantiate the possible variants upon which our general strategy is based for the bourgeoisie." Both are still true this respect, the proletarian vanguard throughout the capitalist world.

The Basis of Possible Revival

The law of uneven development of capitalism holds no possibility, after the acute phase of this crisis is overcome, of a business revival comprising all countries. But this very uneven development, which is more pronounced under the imperialist epoch, holds precisely the possibility of the stronger power emerging from the crisis, passing through depression to revival, at the cost of the weaker. Crises are the periods of capitalist production. They are manifested in the, purely economic aspects by a restriction of output, diminution of stocks on hand by a falling price level, thus releasing money for renewal of fixed capital, which means production of means of production, factories, machinery etc., re-employment of labor and increases of variable capital.

parison of stocks on hand is shown: 1930 1928 1929December Total Raw 186 195 156 Materials

Apparently, however, there is as yet in

this country no diminution of stocks on

hand. According to Survey of Current

Business for Feb. 1931, the following com-

Total Ind. Finish. Products 122 119 Prior to the war, the American production cycles were based almost exclusively pansion of national market, by extending the frontiers to tap new natural resources and by turning a constant stream of imers. They became particularly expressed in the extension of railroads. The postwar boom of 1921-1929 was still based her economy is still made up of smail mainly on the home market. It became scale and peasant economy. Also this expressed mainly in the renewal of fixed

proven one additional means of capitalist expansion throughout its history. From its very inception, it began by battering down barriers for this expansion set up by feudalism, first by "liberating" the peasants from serfdom, thus creating a new equilibrium. Immense areas and population can still be developed capitalistically once there are the apparently sufficient guarantees

The crisis releases enormous amounts

the world arena that it will seek its fur-

Further World Market Expansion

The majority of the world's population

still consist of peasants (still mainly en-

gaged in natural economy). To turn

the peasants into elements of capitalist

production, i. e., producers and consumers

of capitalist society, is one of the im-

portant processes of captialism and has

its breath from the first shocks of the stock market crash and the crisis. It is preparing to conquer new territories. Its most important weapon will be a combination of capital exportation with export of goods, granting of long term credits and outright loans for the purchase of industrial goods. American imperialism has long had its eye on China with its 420 million population, overwhelmingly peasant in its make-up, engaged mainly in natural economy. Of course, it would not pour in heavy investments merely to develop sources of production in competition with its own cotton fields, its own copper mines or its own steel mills. No: it would enter primarily to turn the vast field of peasants into elements of capitalist production, into producers and consumers; to first of all invest into fixed capital, which means building roads, railroads, factories, machinery, etc., thus making the investments for promotion of sale of super-profits. So far, the Chinese worker is already on a much lower level, making the super-profits possible. This prospec

To develop such backward countrie capitalistically, although offering a means of expansion for a time, does not at all solve the contradictions of world capitalism, nor of any of its component parts. On the contrary, it vastly increases these contradictions. But to draw from that a conclusion based upon the absolute inability of American capitalism to extricate itself from this present crisis is simply ridiculous.

to a revival and a new upward conjunc

America's Role in the World Market American imperialism won the war. It established its world hegemony. It intervened in Europe in 1923 to defeat the German proletariat and "stabilize" German capitalism. It intervened again it must be proved whether, despite this in 1931 to postpone the German revolugeneral crisis period, room for expansion tion and to put the screws on France. It at least for single capitalist powers can is intervening now in England. In this still be found. One of Marx's dictum process of interventions, it has poured reads: "There is no such thing as a millions upon millions into Europe bepermanent crisis." Lenin never tired of cause its hegemony demands a certain emphasizing that: "There is no situation measure of "stability" of the capitalist for which there is absolutely no way out equilibrium. While such capital investments are made also for the promotion today. And it depends decisively upon of exportation of goods, they are above the maturity and actions of the prole- all designed to strengthen the Wall Street tariat to what extent capitalism can re- hegemony and thereby serve constantly cover from the crisis or whether it will to put each of the European powers on proceed more rapidly in its decline. In a more limited ration in world economy. Evidently, Wall Street does not in the

unfortunately shows great weaknesses least fear the consequences to its own market within these competing powers by limiting their rations or even crushing them as competitors. That will not reduce the size of world market still available. But it will relatively strengthen further its imperialist hegemony and its struggle for re-division of the world.

So far, however, these forecasts have taken into account only the possibilities of American capitalism extricating itself out of the present crisis in connection with its possible further expansion on forcible adjustments of the relative over the world market. Yet each step in this jalist agriculture. direction inevitably produces the most furious conflicts of capitalist state relations as well as of class relations, and, as far as the latter are concerned-not the least at home. But this part of the problem-so important for our perspectives of coming sharpened struggles-it will be necessary to leave for another article.

-ARNE SWABECK.

OUR INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN

The International Bulletin of the Communist Left Opposition which is published in French and German by the Interternational Secretariat, and an English edition of which is published by the Communist League (Opposition), is now being put on a subscription basis which will considerably facilitate its publication and distribution. The annual subscription is one dollar.

The Bulletin contains reports of the work and the views of the Opposition groups throughout the world, and is the main channel for the exchange of opinions in the Left Opposition and for the discussion of disputed questions.

Six issues of the English edition have already been issued and the future num-

Contradictions of the Agrarian Crisis

The agrarian crisis presents itself as capitalist production is the constant ina blending of the contradictions of a theoretically pure capitalism with those produced by the law of uneven development. Here we have before us not only the striking discrepancy between the productive forces and the solvent demand but also barriers erected by the backward mode of production restricting the free flow of capital in the creation of the average rate of profit. From the latter fact that the preponderable position of capitalist scale, that to the small producer the farm is not an investment but the very basis for his existence, from this fact there arises the radical distinction between agriculture and industry, be tween the agrarian and the industrial

The present agrarian crisis which more to the extension of grain culture of the of liquid capital seeking new fields of in- has its more profound roots fixed in the vestments. Such are to be found pri- enormous technological improvements (fertilizers, machinery, etc.) much of countries, colonies and semi-colonies. which was applicable even to small scale agriculture,

Effects of "Return to Normal"

rehabilitation of Eastern Europe grain is that of another imperialist war which fields in the face of the huge acreage in- must, however, lead not only to its temcrease in America, could only result in porary solution by higher grain prices, the dizzy fall of the wheat bushel; con- but to the solution of all the contradiccurrent with and supplementing the tions of capitalism, to the social revoludeepened industrial crisis on the other tion. hand, whets yet more its edge on the attenuated condition of the city working masses.

On the theoretical field it hammers de cisively the nails into the coffin of the dogma of Malthus-Ricardo, and affirm in dazzling manner the contention o Engels: "Against the competition of the virgin prairie soils and of the Russian tims, had, however, a revolutionary and Indian peasants ground down by taxation, the European capitalist farmer and peasant could not stand up at the old rents. A portion of the soil of Europe fell definitely out of the competition for the raising of grain, the rents feil everywhere . . . This acocunts for the woes of the landlords from Scotland to tal outlay involved. The law of the Italy, and from Southern France to formation of an equal rate of profit Eastern Prussia. Fortunately all prairie makes it very ridiculous to imagine heavy lands have not been taken under culti- capital investments in the field suffering vation. There are enough of them left from the acutest overproduction. The to ruin all the great landlords of Europe creditor hesitates to foreclose the mortand the small ones into the bargain." gages; they realize well that a portion (Vol. III, page 842.)

is immediately followed by a withdraw- must keep tens of millions in a state al of capital from the affected lines and of desolate vegetation. As with other its reinvestment in a more profitable sphere. This process, regarded by Smith also can capitalism not supersede small and the other economists as another instance of the unerring machinery of Providence flagrantly ceases to function in the case of small scale agriculture. The farmer will not only continue after his investment yields him no return, he will persist after he works for a return ridiculously below a living minimum. This tendency originally due to the ingrown instinct of the petty-bourgeoisie, is more substantially reinforced at the present period when the city holds for him the unquestionable fortune of the breadline.

Attempts at Organization

The unbridled anarchy of the world market calls forth both in agriculture as well as in industry attempts at organization. In the latter sphere these take the form of trusts, cartels, etc., which, being based on the highest developed technology, are up to a certain point revolutionary in content, insofar as they consolidate the economic foundation for the next mode of production. In agriculture, the most ambitious of such attempts is the Canadian Wheat Pool. Involving largely small scale farmers, affecting only distribution and leaving the sphere of production untouched, the Wheat Pool must be appraised as a reactionary petty-bourgeois Utopia, and like all such, foredoomed to shatter on the rocks of the inexorable historical process. It may be well said that the Wheat Pool presents the same caricature of a capitalist industrial trust as Stálin's adventurist 100% collectivization, based on primitive ploughshare offers of Soc-

The industrial crises in the past have been by their very nature cyclic in character. Even the present crisis, which may be considered the first of the down- the agrarian crisis, which is offered but ward crisis, will undoubtedly be fol- two lines. The problem is as urgent as lowed by a partial revival at least in it is untouched. That difficulties pro-America. With the agricultural crisis sent themselves in its elaboration is no this is not so. The reasons for this are excuse for such flagrant negligence. The innate in the nature of the commodity task of the Opposition is not that of reproduced, and in the form of the produc-

Above we have briefly sketched the effect of small scale farming on the price level, and it directly follows that the crisis would be of a more permanent on the agenda of the coming Conference. nature than the industrial crisis.

The most fundamental tendency

crease of the specific gravity of the constant capital over the variable apital, and of the fixed capital compared with the circulating capital. It is this fact which gives to an increased consumption of constant capital the role of the decisive factor in the overcoming of the periodical crisis. Agricultural products appear practically entirely in the productive process as circulating capital and for the greater part as variable capital. world agriculture is carried on a pre- The above mentioned tendency presents itself from this point of view as a continued increase of the importance of industrial production at the expense of agriculture. The determining factor in the alleviation of the industrial crisis, the opening up of new markets for constant and especially fixed capital, only indirectly and to an increasingly limited immediately receives its capping charactextent affect the agrarian crisis. The ter from the tremendous impetus given very technological development which increases the productivity of agriculture by Western Hemisphere during the War and diminishing the importance of agriculthe period of revolutionary upheavals tural products in the productive process, and crop failures immediately following. diminishes the prospects of greater grain markets.

The agrarian crisis can be temporarily overcome only through the agency of calamities brought about by the workings of nature or social chaos. The first possibility is that of an international crop The return of normal conditions, the failure, which is improbable; the other

Society does not travel along lubricated rails, as the "gradual" philistine would have us believe. The historical process hews its way, having no qualms not only for individuals but even for the physical existence of classes. The extermination of the yeomanry in England accompanied by the unfathomable misery of its vicsignificance. The present suffering of the farmers can have none such. With wheat at forty cents, and less, a bushel, and with a most uncertain future, it is hardly likely that there should be present the incentive for the establishment of large capitalist farming with the capiof the payments is better than none. We In industry a fall in commodity prices have reached a stake where capitalism remnants of pre-capitalist society, so scale agriculture by farms on a capitalist basis; here we have the revolution in permanence.

A Revolutionary Force

Murxism beginning with unquestionable historical data arrives at the conclusion that the peasantry can play no independent revolutionary role. This does not, however, excuse at all the tendency all too prevalent among certain Communists to "overlook" the agrarian exploited. Truly did Kautsky remark that in the same degree as agriculture recedes in favor of industry does the peasantry gain in political importance. Not only in the backward agricultural countries but even in America does the peasantry present an enormous revolutionary potentiality.

Marxism, in contradiction to other ideologies, can have no desire to set barriers up to the historical process. With objective eye it adjudges each social phenomenon by the criterion of hindering or advancing the social development. With this in mind, and considering the fact that small scale production is but a decaying remnant of a previous productive mode, we must declare ourselves categorically opposed to . any demands serving the purpose of retarding the disappearance of small peasant property. The preservation of small property has always been one of the cherished resorts of the reactionaries in their struggle against the rising proletariat. Our approach to the farmer must be such as to bolster not his petty-bourgeois instinct but to awaken the proletarian half of

The most deplorable failing in the thesis is the utter lack of an analysis of peating ready-made formulae, but it is we as the vanguard of the vanguard on whom rests the tasks of forging new weapons for the movement. It is essential that the agrarian question be put

—W. KREHM.

SPANISH REVOLUTION

The Revolution in Spain 10c

The Spanish Revolution in Danger . . . 15c

These two pamphlets will give the reader an invaluable analysis of the present situation in Spain and the prospects of the further development of the revolution. The standpoint of the Opposition, in contrast to that of all the other groups involved in the present Spanish situation (the official Communist party, the Maurin group, the syndicalists, and others), is presented with the exceptional clarity and pentration for which the author is so well-known.

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