

EDITORIAL NOTES

THE THREAT OF ILLEGALITY

American capitalism is already giving advance notice of the bloody answer it is preparing to the slaves whom it denies a living within their slavery.

We do not credit the story, by means of which the police-murderers are attempting to cover themselves, that the first shots were fired from the crowd, and by a "Communist agitator" at that.

They are proceeding in the same way at Detroit. The four victims of their gunnery had not been laid away before they began a wild man-hunt for Communist leaders and set the legal machinery in motion to grind out wholesale indictments.

The menace of illegality for the Communist movement is undoubtedly growing, and it calls for the most serious and all-sided consideration.

There is no prescription that will guarantee legality. But within certain limits it can be safeguarded and strengthened by a correct policy.

THE SITUATION AND ITS TASK

One of the most important problems of American Communist tactics is to maintain an open legal, or at least semi-legal, position until a significant workers' mass movement has caught up with the conscious vanguard and joined with it in a common struggle on the concrete questions of the day.

If we are going to find our way in the charged social atmosphere of these days, the first obligation laid upon us is to see things as they are.

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changes in the life of the American working class, it is not permissible to forget for a moment that we alone will not and cannot be the authors of these changes and these events.

The material conditions are long ripe for a tremendous upsurge of militant labor. This we know and this is the foundation of our perspectives.

The sporadic movements which flare up here and there are organized by the small Communist vanguard and, for the most part, carried through by them in almost every case.

The Communist workers are not the working class. They are only its conscious section, and at present in America they are a small and numerically insignificant section.

A FALSE SLOGAN

The revolutionary fighting spirit of the Communist workers who demonstrated before the Japanese consulates last Saturday is not to be questioned.

Of course we support the Chinese people; we ought to expose and denounce the Japanese militarists in our general edly wrong to concentrate the anti-war campaign in America against the government; but in our opinion it is decidedly of Japan.

In this slogan there is the basis for a complete disorientation of the proletarian struggle around the question of the coming war.

The World Crisis and Its Revolutionary Implications

By LEON TROTSKY

It is the aim of the present lines to indicate—if only in its general outlines—the composition of the political world situation today, as it has resulted from the fundamental contradictions of decay capitalism, complicated and sharpened by the severe commercial, industrial and financial crisis.

1. The Spanish Revolution has created the general political premises for the immediate struggle for power of the proletariat. The syndicalist traditions of the Spanish proletariat have at once revealed themselves as one of the most important obstacles in the way of the development of the revolution.

By this example, we see that Fascism does not at all represent the only means of the bourgeoisie in its struggle against the revolutionary masses.

Needless to say, the Spanish revolution has not yet concluded. It has not solved its most elementary tasks (the agrarian, the church and the national questions) and is still far from having exhausted the revolutionary resources of the masses.

2. The situation in England can likewise be termed with a certain degree of justification, as pre-revolutionary, provided it is strictly agreed, that a period covering several years of partial ebbs and tides can elapse between the pre-revolutionary and the immediately revolutionary situation.

It contributes to it? In the event of war with Japan the Communists will be disarmed if the American imperialists can say: "You were more eager than we were; you demanded the expulsion of the Japanese diplomats while we were still striving for peace."

"The enemy is in our own country!"—this is the revolutionary slogan of Liebknecht and Lenin, the guiding line of the proletarian struggle against imperialist war.

In the pre-revolutionary situation, the most dull-witted of conservatism had acquired tremendous political predominance. It will in all probability take more than one month, perhaps more than one year, for the political super-structure to become adapted to the real economic and international situation of the country.

There is no ground for assuming that the collapse of the "national" bloc—and such a collapse is inevitable in the relatively near future—will lead directly to the proletarian revolution (it is a matter of course, that there can be no other revolution in England) or to the triumph of "Fascism".

3. France, which the sages of the Comintern had placed a year and a half or two years ago in the foremost ranks of the revolutionary "upsurge", is in actuality the most conservative country, not only of Europe, but perhaps of the entire world.

On the other hand, her present international position on the other, there is a crying contradiction which must inevitably lead to an explosion. To maintain her short-lived hegemony, "nationalist" as well as radical-socialist France is forced to depend upon the support in the entire world, of the most reactionary forces, of the most archaic forms of exploitation, of the abominable Rumanian clique, of the decadent Pilsudski regime, of the dictatorship of the Yugoslavian military; to uphold the dismemberment of the German nation (Germany and Austria), to defend the Polish corridor in East Prussia, to aid Japanese intervention in Manchuria, to spur the Japanese military clique against the U. S. S. R., to come forward as the chief enemy of the liberation movement of the colonial peoples, etc.

On the other hand, however, all indications compel us to assume that, if no great events take place outside of the country (the victory of the revolution in Germany or the reverse; the victory of Fascism), the development of the internal relationships in France itself will, in the next period, take a relatively "normal" course which will open up for Communism the opportunity of utilizing a considerable period of preparation in order to consolidate itself prior to the advent of the pre-revolutionary and revolutionary situation.

4. In the United States, the most powerful country of capital, the present crisis has laid bare frightful social contradictions with striking forcefulness. After an unprecedented period of prosperity which amazed the whole world with its fireworks of millions and billions, the United States at once entered a period of unemployment for millions of people, of the most appalling physical destitution for the toilers.

It is still hard to ascertain, at least from the distance, any measure of important radicalization in the American working masses. It may be assumed that the masses themselves have been so startled by the catastrophic upheaval in the conjuncture, so stunned and crushed by unemployment or by the fear of unemployment, that they have not as yet been able to draw even the most elementary political conclusions from the calamity that has befallen them.

parties are to be expected, as well as new attempts to create a third party, etc. With the first signs of a rise in the conjuncture, the trade union movement will acutely sense the necessity of tearing itself loose from the claws of the despicable A. F. of L. bureaucracy.

In the past, America has known more than one stormy outburst of revolutionary or semi-revolutionary mass movements. Every time they died out quickly, because America at every time entered a new phase of economic upswing and also because the movements themselves were characterized by crass empiricism and theoretical helplessness.

5. The Czarist adventure in Manchuria led to the Russo-Japanese war; the war—to the 1905 revolution. The present Japanese adventure in Manchuria can lead to revolution in Japan.

Present day China, no matter how entangled it may be by the dictatorship of the Kuo Min Tang cliques, greatly differs from the China which Japan, following the European powers, despoiled in the past. China has not the strength to drive out the Japanese expeditionary forces immediately, but the national consciousness and activity of the Chinese people have grown enormously.

6. In China, the necessity of a determined defense against the imperialist invasion will also bring with it serious internal, political consequences. The Kuo Min Tang regime arose out of the national revolutionary mass movement, which was exploited and strangled by the bourgeois militarists (with the aid of the Stalinist bureaucracy).

7. The present events in Manchuria prove particularly how naive those gentlemen were, who demanded of the Soviet Union the simple return of the Chinese Eastern Railroad to China. That would have meant surrendering it voluntarily to Japan, in whose hands the railroad would have become a weapon against China as well as against the U. S. S. R.

8. Cannot the Manchurian adventure of the Japanese, nevertheless, lead to war with the U. S. S. R.? It is understood, this is not excluded even with the wisest and most cautious policy on the part of the Soviet government.

the fate of all of China. In this gigantic historical struggle, the Soviet government cannot be neutral, take the same position with regard to China as to Japan. It is duty-bound to stand completely and fully on the side of the Chinese people.

Under what forms the Soviet government will support the struggle of the Chinese people in the coming period, depends upon the concrete historical circumstances. If it had been insane to surrender the Chinese Eastern Railroad voluntarily to Japan before, then it would be just as insane to subordinate the entire policy in the Far East to the problem of the Chinese Eastern Railroad.

The fundamental conditions of the East: its immense expanse, its countless human masses, its economic backwardness—give these processes their slow, their drawn out and crawling character. In any case, there is no threat of an immediate and acute danger to the existence of the Soviet Union from the Far East.

From ("Germany—The Key to the International Situation.")

German Opposition at Work

(Continued from page 3) issued now for material reasons). The pamphlets "Against National Communism", "Shall Fascism Really Be Victorious?" and "How Can National Socialism Be Defeated?" have all appeared in a second edition.

Due to the reasons mentioned above, the Permanent Revolution could not, at first, appear more than once a month. We had to overcome certain pessimistic sentiments against a more regular appearance.

The successes achieved are the fruits of a systematic work of preparation, which brought about the most effective utilization and application of the forces of which we disposed.

P. S. In further articles, there will be a more detailed report of the newly organized groups and connections.

CLASS IN MARXISM

It is not yet too late to join the class in Marxism taught by comrade Swaback every Thursday evening at eight o'clock, at our headquarters, 84 E. 10th St. Comrades and sympathizers are invited to attend.

Some of the remaining sessions, and they are more than half, will be devoted to analysis and discussion of the dispute with the anarchists, the dispute with the Utopians, historical materialism, and dialectics.

BACK NUMBERS OF "MILITANT" WANTED We are preparing files of the Militant for binding. We plan to bind in one volume all the issues from Vol. 1, No. 1 to Volume IV No. 12, the last issue of the semi-monthly Militant.

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