

What Is Happening in the Soviet Union

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A Letter from Moscow

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The letter which we publish here may be considered as entirely authoritative being written by a well-informed comrade in Moscow who is in a position to know what is taking place. The present issue of the Militant contains the conclusion of the letter and makes it possible for our readers to be oriented more intimately on such questions as the status of the collectivization movement, the internal party situation, etc.

usually have posed the question in the Bulletin.

Despite the unremitting organizational raids, the Left Opposition lives. Oppositionist units and groups are disseminated everywhere, and in many places considerable Oppositionist nests are uncovered. There was hardly ever in this world at any time or anywhere such difficulty for a genuine Marxist trend to carry on its work, in the technical sense, as there is for us at present in the Soviet Union. This is one of those vicious jokes of history, on which the most expert dialectician can break his teeth. The more respectable part of the captulators motivates its capitulation precisely in this manner, "It is anyway impossible to carry on any illegal activities; at any rate, it is better to serve as an honest functionary of the workers' state."

THE OPPOSITION IN THE FACTORIES

In the factory "AMO", during the complications mentioned above, placards appeared inscribed, "Hands off the Working Wage" and a portrait of comrade Trotsky was hung up. The portrait was removed by the administration. The import of this fact does not require commentaries. It is to the point to add that the factory "AMO" was not so long ago renamed after Stalin, but here too there is no correspondence between the official name and the actual content. In another factory, the name of which I prefer not to mention, a portrait of Lenin was hung up, but drawn so that when approached from the sides it turned into a portrait of Trotsky.

Pioneer Publishers Notes

"WHAT NEXT" OFF THE PRESS! Well, we've done it. What Next? is off the press. And at reduced prices. When the news of the military dictatorship in Prussia reached us we sat down and went over our figures carefully to see whether we could not reduce the price and thereby make possible a quicker and wider sale. The result is the price announced in our ad.

What is required now is the collective efforts of all our comrades, sympathizers and friends to sell the book. It should be easy to sell this book: it is extremely timely; it is priced low; it is the only Communist publication in this country on the present situation in Germany; it is written by comrade Trotsky whose word is eagerly and attentively read by the workers who have not been convinced and never will be convinced that he is a counter-revolutionist. And on top of all this the book is offered free as a premium with a sub to the Militant.

WHITHER ENGLAND? Since our announcement last week of the arrival from England of Whither England? by comrade Trotsky we have received orders for a few. We want to remind our readers that our supply is limited (we received only thirty) and comrades who want a copy should order it at once.

GERMANY—THE KEY TO THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION, IN GREEK AND SPANISH We have been reminded by our Greek and Spanish comrades that in our announcement of comrade Trotsky's writings in foreign languages we omitted mention of the fact that The Key can be had in these languages.

In Russian we still have a number of copies of What Next? In Jewish we have a supply of comrade Trotsky's open letter to the C. E. C. of the U. S. S. R. on the subject of the deprivation of his citizenship. In Italian we have a number of copies of the Spanish Revolution in Danger. In Spanish we have the following titles by L. Trotsky: The Spanish

Interviews held. Muralov departed back to Siberia.

In the beginning of March a search was made in the house of V. D. Kasparova and her son; it seems that something or other that was "compromising" was found in the son's possession. Was it Lenin's testament perhaps? Or perhaps a copy of that letter written on his deathbed in which Lenin severed all comrades' relations? Not a few "compromising" documents were left behind by Lenin. But whom do they compromise? K. E. Gruenstein and his wife were also searched. They are in Saratov. Stalin will not allow the old, irreproachable revolutionist Bolsheviks like Kasparova and the Gruenstein couple, etc., to draw a carefree breath precisely because he knows how great their authority is, and what respect their names bear.

It is good that such "old-timers" remain who were not rendered impotent and drained by three revolutions, decades of struggle, years in prison and hard labor, and who did not succumb to the bureaucratic milieu. But still the most consoling fact is the new recruitment of the Oppositionist youth. In Sverdlovsk recently was discovered an organization of 75 members, of them eight are already in isolation. Sverdlovsk is not an exception. The arrests are almost unceasing, and serve as a gauge of the influx of new forces to us. In the places of exile are growing up ever newer and newer colonies of Bolshevik-Leninists.

RUMORS ABOUT RAKOVSKY

A few days, a rumor suddenly spread in Moscow about Rakovsky's death and it produced a fearful impression, actually, oppressive. Is Rakovsky really dead? People asked one another with a kind of horror. It's impossible! In these words was expressed the thought that it cannot be that the crime committed by Stalin in relation to Rakovsky has become irreparable. Happily, the rumor was shortly proven unfounded. It is remarkable that three months ago the same kind of rumor was spread about L. S. Sosnovsky and produced approximately the same impression. The memory of Sosnovsky amidst the workers of Leningrad, Moscow and the Urals is very fresh and strong. It was a puzzle to me—whence do these rumors originate? I am of the opinion that they are born of the profound disgust, the acute alarm of the wide circles of the party for the fate of their honored and loved comrades.

The report of Byzantov's death, this time, unfortunately, was true. It shocked all his friends greatly, and they are not a few throughout the land. He was one of the firmest, purest and immutable of men, despite his grave illness. As a Marxist and an agronomist, he very attentively followed all the processes in rural economy and the collective farms in particular. We shall miss very much indeed his judgments that were so serious and so well grounded both in theory and experience. So it is that life flows on, bringing us sorrow and happiness, we remain and some comrades are lost to us, and others, new and young, step forward and join hands.

Moscow. —M. M.

Organizing the Jobless

The Need for Change of Course in the Official Party Policy

Workers who have serious concern for the interests of their class cannot avoid posing the timely question of what is to become of the unemployment movement. With our advance toward the fourth crisis winter it naturally enters with so much more persistency, pressing for a solution. No actual relief measures have as yet been obtained. The numbers of the unemployed army are mounting higher but the emergence of a serious movement is still lagging.

Will anybody question the fact that such a movement, to have real meaning, should bring into its sphere of activity the trade unions, the various existing unemployment organizations and the working class political parties. Or, to put it more bluntly, the problem is to secure the necessary unity of action of all of these working class sections to fight for actual relief measures and to advance the movement to a higher plane. This does not at all leave out of account the sharp differences of aims and objectives. Of course, these fundamentally opposing differences remain. There can be no common ground between the aims and objectives of revolution and those of reform. Nor can there be any community of interests whatever between the revolutionary party and the reactionary capitalist lieutenants now in control of the trade union official positions. Nevertheless the united action of the workers from all of these organizations remains the imperative need when obtaining unemployment relief is to be seriously contemplated.

The Various Relief Programs

In surveying these various organizations it is apparent that the pressure of working class need exerts itself everywhere. Hence there is a good deal of identity in the programs of immediate demands. While the objectives differ sharply the immediate needs stand out clearly. The various organizations demand immediate governmental relief. They demand unemployment insurance and the shorter workday. Reformists make these demands to obtain reforms within capitalism and to cater to the working class support, though when the support is obtained, they will without scruples betray their own reforms. The revolutionists advance the demands for the working class needs to obtain them and to advance the struggle toward its revolutionary conclusion.

Even the American Federation of Labor, under pressure of these needs, is now compelled to somewhat change its front. The Executive Council at its recent meeting, in the swell resort of Atlantic City, instructed the meek Baptist, Wm. Green, to draw up a program for unemployment insurance. This reinforces the foundation upon which the revolutionists must put these organizations, including their leaderships, to the actual test. It increases the opportunity for the revolutionary party to forge ahead, initiating a mass movement.

If the party fails to do this it will be on the penalty of the reformist forces assuming uncontested leadership of the unemployment movement which will then develop without it and in spite of it. It is therefore necessary that the party without delay change its course in this respect.

First of all, the party must give up the idea of a separate unemployment movement narrowed by artificial limitations which demand that the party leadership and control be accepted in advance.

Secondly, it should utilize its present position of leadership in the Unemployment Councils to build a much broader unemployment movement. It should officially and genuinely propose to the trade unions, to the workers' unemployment organizations of the various groupings and to the Socialist party to join the united front for unemployment relief. It should particularly appeal to the workers of all these organizations that they put their leaders to the test by demanding that their organizations join the united front fighting for the needs of the unemployed.

Thirdly, the party must maintain its independent position, patiently explaining its objectives to the workers, making its tactics of the united front clear and constantly criticizing the reformist forces in the united front. The party has the duty of clarifying its revolutionary objectives by pushing the actual struggle for relief measures and demonstrating in practical experience that they can be only temporary measures, that the unemployment situation can find its final solution only through the proletarian revolution.

In the Leninist party these elementary requirements used to be accepted as the A B C of the movement. The fact that they have been forgotten, emasculated and pushed aside to give way to false policies makes necessary that they be re-stated again and again until accepted in practice. Mere lip service will not suffice, it is the actual practice which counts and it is the future life of the movement which is at stake.

We could well conceive of a structure for the movement in which the workers, employed and unemployed alike, are organized in the city block councils and centralized on a territorial or city wide basis into delegated bodies where the trade unions and other workers' organizations will send their representatives.

On the Program of Demands

Naturally the program of immediate demands for a genuine united front movement will first of all reflect the pressing needs of the present situation. But it is of the utmost importance that it be so construed as to take into account the identity of interests of the working class as a whole and not only its separate sections. It must particularly harmonize the needs and the objects of both employed and unemployed workers and unite them into one common stream. It must recognize the international aspect of the unemployment problem in such a way that it will strengthen the international class solidarity and help to break down the artificially erected national barriers. It must give articulate expression to the community of interests of the workers of the Soviet Republic and of the capitalist countries. That is why the Left Opposition has long since advanced the slogan of long-term credits to the Soviet Union. This has been rejected by the Stalinist leadership. But the continued failure to adopt this timely and correct slogan may easily play into the hands of reformist demagogues who may grasp it as an opportunity purely and simply to extend the capitalist market and endeavor to take it out of the realms of a working class issue.

In all of this, it is necessary to emphasize again the importance of the demand for the Six Hour Workday Without Reduction of Pay. There could be no objections to its timeliness. Moreover, with the advance of the crisis and the permanency of unemployment, a serious movement for its attainment could above all draw into its orbit and unite in action the employed and the unemployed workers. This demand would become a potent weapon of the united front. It does not in the least, however, obviate nor conflict with the other demands. For example, unemployment insurance still remains as necessary and as pressing as ever. And suffice to add only the fact of the growing misery and destitution bringing to the fore more sharply the need for immediate governmental relief.

The Party's Duty Is Clear

Illusions held of help coming from other sources outside of what the movement itself, by its pressure, can obtain, should soon be completely dispelled. The force of necessity will more positively propel the American working class into motion. The logic of coming developments will emphasize its community of interests and give it expression in the unemployment movement. From this point of view the position of the party assumes ever more importance which its leadership must not dare to fritter away.

Its duty should be clear. It is from the elementary needs and objectives that it must take its starting point. The genuine united front offers such a real starting point. It is a necessary prerequisite for the working class today without which it cannot hope to unify its forces for the greater revolutionary tasks. It is a necessary prerequisite for putting the misleaders of labor to the test and of finally separating them from their control and influence over large sections of the working class. It is the starting point to prevent their designs of sell-out and betrayals and to advance the class struggle to a higher level. The Left Opposition will fight with the party for these objectives.

—ARNE SWABECK.

(Continued from last issue)

To all sorts of critical remarks and demonstrations of Stalin's ideological insufficiency, the average Stalinist replied, "Yes, all that may be true, but he sure is a sly boot; you won't break your neck following him." Moreover the successes of industrialization and collectivization covered up all sins. The sharp about face came with the aggravation of the situation in necessities. "Hunger is an aunt to none." In deliberations concerning the situation in necessities, general formulas do not suffice. The Vuz nuclei, which as you are aware, are, or are reputed to be, the most reliable, i. e., those in which they swear by Stalin in every other phrase. But here is quite a novel fact, very symptomatic in the present atmosphere. In the nucleus of the Electro-Technical Institute, during a discussion over the foodstuffs situation, one of the petty apparatus retainers made an attempt at an exposition to the effect that "the situation was improving". Then and there one of the students threw in reply, "You, like Stalin, can see nothing." This insolent reply was taken up by the assembly with open sympathy, despite the presence of the members of the nucleus bureau, who pretended to be absent. The winged phrase, "You like Stalin, can see nothing", at once began to circulate about the town.

The forms of declination from Stalin take on a passive and temporizing character. The average functionary adapts himself to the party mass in the sense that he denies Stalin the manifestations of enthusiasm. Many episodes on this subject are circulating. Each one in itself is not very important, but taken together they fill in the picture. I was personally a witness to one of these incidents. On February 23, Stalin attended the Bolshoi Theater. Such visits are, of course, always prepared for, not only from the point of view of security (which is self-evident) but also as regards the proper "reception". In recent years the plaudits of the claque invariably called forth the support of a considerable number of the theater-bureaucrats. On February 23 Stalin's appearance was met, before my own eyes, with an icy silence. Evidently the claque itself, fearful of falling through, did not give the signal for the plaudits. However, what is more significant, is what takes place in this sphere at all kinds of subordinate meetings, at festivals, conferences, etc. At elections of honorary presidiums, or in sending of collective greetings Stalin's name appears obviously first. But while two years ago the pronouncement of this name was met with applause (the more violent, it is true, the more select, i. e., the more official the character of the assembly) now on the contrary the roll call headed by Stalin's name calls forth no "enthusiasm".

The reason for this is to be found in the entire situation and in the bitter experience. At present wide circles in the party and in the Soviets are becoming more and more convinced that what obtains is "a great master on little things". Of course, even three years ago those Communists who at least could put two and two together took stock quite clearly of the fact that after he had consummated the organizational struggle against the Left Opposition, Stalin then grabbed its platform as life-saving anchor. But even this was not debited against him. "Sly-boots"—that was the honorary epithet bestowed upon Stalin by the functionary, and it was often repeated after the functionary by the worker.

Among the academic youth, the authority of Stalin as a "theoretician" has fallen greatly. Everyone knows how long and with what persistence he strove to assure his theoretical reputation. Various fankeys, like Milonov, the former theoretician of the Workers' Opposition, have inscribed, it is true, Stalin among the "Marxian Classics" just as Schvernik enrolled him among the geniuses. But amidst our students and our Red professors, notwithstanding how this audience has been depraved by the Stalinist regime, there are still to be found not a few honest and clear young minds, and, in the last analysis, it is they who determine the unofficial public opinion of the proletarian students, and the cream of the working class in general. Stalin's far-famed report in the Society of Agronomists has cost him dearly. Trotsky's criticism has reached few directly, but indirectly, through intermediaries, it has penetrated into rather wide circles. But, indeed, we ourselves, "have grown beards too." There is no lack of people among us who are well acquainted with the Marxist system. No matter how the scandalous Stalinist report was advertised in the press, (Pravda even celebrated in its time the anniversary of the world-historical report) the results obtained were the opposite: the more solid academicians in the apparatus refer to the report with restrained but significant smiles: within the circles of the most advanced youth, it has become the source of numerous jokes and anecdotes.

STALIN'S DISCREET SILENCE

But even Stalin's purely political reputation has suffered exceedingly during the last year. At the XVII party conference Stalin did not utter a word. His silence produced a tremendous effect, and

Revolution in Danger; The Last Peppery Dish of the Cook, Stalin; The Five Year Plan; The Spanish Revolution; by Andres Nin—The Proletariat and the Spanish Revolution; What Are Soviets?; The January General Strike and Its Lessons; by Henri Lacroix—What Is Trade Union

Unity?; What Are Shop Committees?; by L. Fersen—What Is Trotskyism?; by Esteban Bilbao—Communist Unity; by Luis Garcia Palacios—Communism and the Agrarian Revolution. All of these pamphlets sell at two for five cents.

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