

WORKERS
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UNITE

THE MILITANT



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Hitler in Power; Civil War Starts

LEON TROTSKY

The Danger of Thermidor

An Analysis of the Significance of Stalin's Latest Speech

The Soviet regime rests on the alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry. The proletariat constitutes the minority of the population; the peasantry, the overwhelming majority. Yet in the hands of the proletariat are the most concentrated means of production. The forces of the peasantry, on the contrary, are split up through their economic relations. Still more, it is not a homogeneous group. As long as there is no thoroughgoing change in technique and economy in the village—and for this even under the most favorable circumstances the work of a whole generation would be needed—the peasantry will crystallize out of itself a stratum of kulaks, which inevitably strives towards capitalism. The mechanical destruction of the present kulaks decides nothing. After the alleged "liquidation of the kulaks as a class" the Soviet press constantly keeps complaining (having gone over from materialism to idealism, since bureaucrats are kulak idealists), of the power of the kulak "ideology", of the remains of kulak psychology, etc. In fact, behind these complaints is hidden the fact that the middle class of peasants, although locked up into kolkhozes, faced with the present level of technique and economy, sees no other way out for itself than to lift itself up to the level of the kulaks.

What the Peasant Demands

In the October upheaval two revolutions were interlaced; the end of the democratic one and the beginning of the socialist. By doing away with lease payments, the democratic revolution saved the peasantry almost half a billion gold rubles. The fruits of the socialist revolution are valued by the poor peasants according to the quantity of industrial products which he can obtain in exchange for a given quantity of grain. The peasant is no utopian; he does not demand that socialism be built up in one country and in five years at that. But he does demand that socialist industry deliver him goods under conditions which are no worse than those of capitalist industry. Under these conditions, the peasant is prepared to extend an unlimited credit in political confidence to the proletariat and its party. The Soviet state would receive the possibility of maneuvering according to the internal conditions and the world situation, and of drawing the peasantry into socialist economy.

The basis of mass collectivization can only be the equivalent exchange of the products of industry and agriculture. Without going into the theoretical economic hair-splitting, we must regard as "equivalent" such an exchange as will stimulate the peasants, individual as well as collectivized, to fill as much land and harvest as much grain as possible, in order the greater part to the city in selling to obtain for it as large a quantity of industrial products as possible. Only such reciprocal economic relation between city and country—what Lenin called the "smytchka"—can free the workers state from the necessity of taking forcible measures against the village to compel the exchange. Only from the moment when the voluntary exchange is assured will the proletarian dictatorship be unshakable. The "smytchka" thus secured, means the closest political alliance of the poor peasantry with the urban workers, the firm support of the decisive masses of the middle peasantry, and consequently, the complete isolation of the kulaks and of all capitalist elements in the country in general. The "smytchka", thus secured, means the unshakable loyalty of the Red Army to the proletarian dictatorship, which in view of the successful industrialization and the unlimited human, largely peasant, reserves, will make it possible for the Soviet state to repulse any imperialist intervention.

As the Left Opposition has declared since 1923, industrialization is the prerequisite of the march towards socialism. Without a rising industrialization neither linen nor nails, not to speak of tractors, can be supplied to the peasants. But industrialization must be carried through at such a tempo and in accordance with such plans that the relation of the quantity of goods between city and village will steadily if slowly improve, and the standard of living of workers and peasants rise. This foremost condition of the stability of the whole regime limits the permissible

tempo of industrialization and collectivization.

Back to War Communism

It means nothing to add, "Has the five year plan abolished classes and introduced socialism?" But we must unquestionably ask, "Has it assured the 'smytchka' between city and country?" The answer is "No", it has shaken and weakened it. In his last speech at the plenum of the Central Committee, Stalin boasted that the planned collectivization had been exceeded three times over. But who needs these figures outside of the bureaucratic boosters? The statistics of collectivization do not take the place of bread. There is no meat and no vegetables. The city has nothing to eat. Industry is disorganized because the workers are hungry. In its relation to the peasant, the city has passed from a semi-voluntary exchange through a tax in kind to compulsory expropriations, that is, to the methods of war-time Communism.

The hungry workers are dissatisfied with the policies of the party. The peasantry is dissatisfied with the leadership. The peasantry, with collectivization, industrialization, and industrialization, with the city. Part of the peasantry is dissatisfied with the regime. What part? We cannot know, but it is clear that under present circumstances, it can only grow. "The planned collectivization has exceeded three times over!" But that is precisely the misfortune. The forced kolkhozes not only do not lead to socialism, but on the contrary undermine the foundations of the dictatorship of the proletariat by becoming the organized form of the strike of the peasants against the city. By hiding its grain from the state or purposely limiting its seeding, the peasantry places itself on the road of the kulaks. "Permit me," it

(Continued on page 4)

GIVE NOW!

The drive to SAVE THE MILITANT is the first order of business of the League and its sympathizers in the present period. We are confronted with the most serious financial condition possible and unless we obtain several hundred dollars, the very existence of the MILITANT is threatened. On top of this, the Post Office threatens to revoke our mailing rights if we skip another issue.

What are you doing about this? Have you called on your fellow-workers and ask for contributions? Help Save the MILITANT. Send in your contribution at once and then visit your friends and collect funds for the MILITANT.

The MILITANT has performed an international revolutionary duty to the class and the party in keeping the Marxian theories and the Bolshevick-Leninist needs of the day before the English-speaking workers of the whole world. While the press of Stalinism sways between opportunism and adventurism the MILITANT has held high the international revolutionary principles of Marxism. The need of the organization is not a retreat to a semi-monthly but an increase in propaganda in order to keep pace with the growing activity of the League and the sharpening world events. In all parts of the country the demand for our press and our literature is on the increase. The demand is one positive side of the problem. The other side is the organizational end. We must send out organizers, but all this will fail of accomplishment unless the MILITANT is kept before the workers each week.

You cannot allow the financial difficulties to drown the voice of the MILITANT. You must strain every resource to help SAVE THE MILITANT. Send in your contribution at once, solicit funds for the Militant. Rush all Funds to the MILITANT, 126 East 16th St., New York City.

—HUGO OEHLER.

Opposition's Demand for United Front Is Need of the Hour in Germany

Responsibility for Rise of Fascism Must be Established

President von Hindenburg, the victorious candidate of the socialist "Iron Front", the "bulwark of the Republic against Fascism", has finally appointed Hitler to the Chancellorship of the Reich. With the Fascist leader are his lieutenants, Hermann Goering, Speaker of the Reichstag, who is in control of the Prussian police force of 150,000 armed men, and the notorious Dr. William Frick, who has taken over the Ministry of the Interior.

The Hitler government starts out with the inclusion of all the other representatives of the extreme reaction in Germany. The von Papens, Hugenberg, von Krosigk, von Neurath and Selbigs represent all that is intensely chauvinistic in Germany, all that stands for the domination of heavy industry and the preservation of the "dirty East Prussian" agrarian lords. In the first collection of forces under Hitler, the monarchists, nationalists, militarists, bankers, landlords and trust magnates rub shoulders amicably with the most prominent representatives of Fascism.

Schleicher's Role

The von Papen government, and the von Schleicher regime which succeeded it, fell after having accomplished to the maximum of their abilities the task and role assigned to them. Neither of the two "Presidential" governments which preceded Hitler had behind it a parliamentary majority upon which to lean, or a mass movement to base itself on. These representatives of the Bonapartist bourgeoisie could only be stop gaps, creating the illusion among sections of the working class that they stood "above the classes" and would regulate the conflicts between them. Even more than Papen, von Schleicher succeeded in winning the benevolent neutrality of the reactionary social democratic trade union leaders, headed by Loh, a neutrality which meant nothing short of a new betrayal of the working class. In the period of their domination, Papen and Schleicher did all they could to stave off the resistance of the working class, to weaken and demoralize it, to avoid—in the interests of the bourgeoisie—the heavy costs of a civil war, and to stake their cards upon the mirage of an economic boom.

The fact that Hindenburg, who was undoubtedly hostile to Hitler, even if not in a fundamentally class sense, finally called upon the Fascist leader to take over the government, is eloquent testimony to the desperation of the German bourgeoisie. Capitalism, in its "normal" state, never does more than keep its Fascist hordes in reserve. The German ruling class knows that the seizure of power by the Brown-shirted bandits, especially in a country with a well-organized and socially conscious working class, means civil war and the consequent disruption of the economic and political life of the country, at least until the issue of the struggle is decided. The German bourgeoisie has gone to all conceivable lengths to avoid the heavy expenses of a civil war: it has turned over the government to social democrats; it has drawn them into bourgeois coalitions; it has sought to preserve an equilibrium with the aid of the Breuning party of ultramontanism; it has resorted to the Bonapartist regimes of Papen and von Schleicher. But none of these expedients has enabled it to emerge from the profound crisis undermining its domination, the crisis which has driven hundreds of thousands of workers to the support of the party of social revolution. For just as the bourgeoisie finds it impossible to rule in the old way, the masses are refusing to live

OPEN FORUM

TECHNOCRACY
AND OTHER TRENDS IN
BOURGEOIS POLITICAL ECONOMY
Technicians and the Working Class

SPEAKER:
HUGO OEHLER
Friday, 8 P. M. FEBRUARY 10th
126 East 16 Street,
ADMISSION: 15c

Auspices:
N. Y. Br. Communist League of America
(Opposition)

Pass Philippines Bill Over Veto

The Filipinos, under the leadership of Quezon and a large section of the national-bourgeoisie, are fighting the Independence Bill. The 35 year struggle for independence is taking on a new form, since the Independence Bill comes from the United States. This can be accounted for when one realizes what is behind this bill. The Independence Bill tries to please different layers of the American exploiters, and in doing so, has forced Congress to turn out an Independence Bill loaded with jokers. The Bill retains all of the essential needs of the imperialists and at the same time attempts to eliminate the advantage the national bourgeoisie of the Filipinos have with regard to those commodities they export to America in competition with other American producers.

The Bill in its final form provides the following safeguards for imperialists: The Filipinos must call a special convention to adopt a republican constitution. Ten years after this they will have "independence." The Bill reserves the right for naval bases and retains the right to military posts after the attainment of "independence." At the same time the Bill provides the following for the American competitors, who were the main ones to drive through the bill. After ten years the Islands will be outside the American tariff walls. In the meantime the imports are to be limited. A graduated scale of export tax on commodities of a competitive nature that are sent to America will be imposed. In this period all goods shipped from the United States to the Islands will be duty free. Emigration will also be cut.

The Bill attempts to unite all sections of the American people behind it. It will have all sections of the Filipino people against it, except the section of American flunkies. The American workers must demand the immediate and unconditional release and freedom of the Filipino people.

10,000 in Strike in Detroit

Wages and «Dead Time» Issues in Briggs Auto Walkout

Marking one of the first mass struggles of the auto workers against the boss class since the crisis started, more than 10,000 men at the four plants of the Briggs Mfg. Corp., makers of auto bodies, in Detroit, have struck against "dead time." ("Dead time" is the time piece workers are kept idle without pay while being shifted to other departments or, while forced to wait for repairs or parts necessary to their process in the industry. Piece workers lose many hours a week through this method of wage cutting. It is "little things" like this that make basic wage rates so misleading in the statistical reports.)

According to the Daily Worker the progress of the strike movement reads as follows:

January 12—500 workers strike against 20 percent wage cut at Briggs Vernon Highway Plant in Detroit.

January 21—1,000 workers in Motor Products Corp., Detroit, strike against 15 percent wage cut.

January 24—Strike in Briggs Highland Park plant, Detroit; and Hayes Body plant in Grand Rapids, Mich.

January 25—Strike of Briggs Mack Ave. workers brings total up to 8,000.

January 26—Two more Briggs plants strike and raise total up to 10,000. Capitalist press "discovers" the strike movement.

January 27—Motor Products workers, who won their strike, refuse to work on material from Briggs plants. 700 of these workers join A. W. U. Ford lays off 150,000.

January 28—Murray Body Company forced to close through fear; men join strike movement.

Solidarity of Workers!

The Briggs Company—three hours after Ford paid a visit to his Highland Park plant in which the Briggs factory in Detroit is housed,—agreed to abolish "dead-time" and guarantee its employees an hourly wage. It also agrees to raise some wages, though not as high as the workers demand and in some instances the new scale is lower than the old. The company, however, has not negotiated with the strike committee but has simply posted the notice of its proposals. At-

tempts were made, of course, to arouse the Ford workers against the strikers with the argument that the Briggs strikers have thrown them out of work.

The workers had until Monday noon, January 30, to return to work or be replaced by men from Detroit's army of unemployed. But so far the workers have maintained their solidarity and their effectiveness through mass picketing.

The Briggs strike became effective January 26, when, after several prior outbreaks, 10,000 closed their ranks against the boss. Ford is trying to take advantage of the situation. He seized the opportunity to lockout 150,000 workers in his employ, on the pretext that the failure of the Briggs Co. to deliver bodies disrupted the entire Ford, belt system of production. This was an attempt to turn the Ford workers against the strikers. But the workers have not been taken in by this lying cant. They have refused to work on stuff coming from Briggs.

In his efforts to discredit the strike Ford has spread the story that rival manufacturers have instigated the workers against Briggs. Speaking of the men who work in the plants that bear his name Ford said: "There is not a man among them that would strike..." even if his scale of wages is little, if any, higher than that of other manufacturers. "Lies! We are confident that the Ford workers will not be long in following the example of the Briggs workers. And as for needing instigation!"

CANNON AT FORUM

Comrade Cannon will speak this Friday, Feb. 3 at 8 P. M. at the Left Opposition Open Forum at 126 East 16th Street. The subject of his lecture will be "Is the Time Ripe for a New Federation of Labor." He will discuss in this lecture the most important conference in Gillespie, Ill., in which comrade Cannon participated and which adopted the policy of the Left Opposition. It promises to be an intensely interesting meeting. Be sure to attend!

mass meeting The CRISIS in GERMANY

SPEAKERS
James P. Cannon
Max Shachtman

Stuyvesant Casino
SECOND AVENUE, Near NINTH ST., SUN-
DAY, FEB. 5th, 8 P. M. ADM. 15 CTS.