

Discussion Articles

On the National Recovery Act

To interpret correctly the NRA one must understand bourgeois democracy in its full form and base his analysis on the uneven development of capitalism.

Bourgeois democracy, symbolical speaking, is an elastic substance—in countries where it exists, the ruling class attempts to stretch the democratic concept to an extent necessary to meet the conditions and reactions of the masses, to cover up the shortcomings of capitalism.

President Roosevelt, in speaking about the dictatorial power invested in him by Congress, said that it was done within the bounds of democracy. He was correct. The boundaries of democracy reach out far. The ruling class outlines these boundaries and moves them whenever necessary.

Only in the event of the ruling class contending with enervating conditions and a revolutionary proletariat who threaten the existence of their state, will they change their form of rule. When bourgeois democracy in its most extended form fails to cover up the discrepancies of capitalism (if the workers are not ready to take over power themselves) the democratic form of that capitalist government dies in the struggle between the two classes and is replaced by capitalism with open tyranny against the masses. Fascism.

To say that the NRA is a step toward state capitalism would be incorrect. What we understand by state capitalism is that when business in a country disintegrates to the extent that it no longer pays profit on investments, the state takes over these industries to save whatever it can for the capitalists of their system of exploitation. It is not inevitable, however, that capitalism of a country when finding itself in such a position must necessarily develop into state capitalism.

We know that when aggravated conditions arise in other countries the ruling class there used violence and open suppression of the workers in order to maintain themselves in power.

Furthermore, we do not know just what form state capitalism would assume if it was to come about. This would depend upon the general economic conditions and the sharpness of the class struggle in the country at that period.

Measures of the NRA alone without the required conditions could not lead the country into state capitalism. Its attempt to bring about class collaboration does not necessarily carry such germs. As to the monopoly in industries that the NRA leads to this with a greater speed than before. We must know that monopoly is part of imperialism.

In predicting the transition to state capitalism there lies the danger of mistaking centralization of wealth, accelerated by the crisis, for the final breakdown of the economy of the country and the transition to state capitalism.

Even in the event that the railroads and a few other industries are taken over by the government, it would not mean that we entered the period of state capitalism. This has been done by governments under different conditions before.

Outlining state capitalism as a possible phase of capitalist development, it would be incorrect to assume that the former can begin before the crisis threatens to wipe out the top layer of the ruling class. It would also be incorrect to assume that the capitalists will without a struggle, give up the phase of competition in their system in a way that it will curtail their profits. Similarly it would be incorrect to say that the capitalists can use the machine of bourgeois democracy to move gradually into state capitalism. The greed that exists in capitalism and the dissatisfaction of the masses that grows proportionally with such conditions, point to conflict instead.

The mistaking of the NRA with state capitalism creates the danger of confusing the workers as to what the stage of the struggle they are in and bringing them to the false conclusion that capitalism solves its own problems by the process of evolution and will eventually change into some form more beneficial to mankind.

At the present stage of development a section of the American masses retain their false concept that the capitalist state operates for the benefit of the people. To expose the NRA as a step toward state capitalism is neither correct nor would it react favorably for the revolutionary movement. Many workers who are not class conscious would welcome the idea of state control as a way out.

The United States, being a country of vast natural resources and having entered the capitalist phase at a later period, developed industrially on such a tremendously large scale that together with its imperialism it was able to keep its so-called equilibrium until the beginning of 1929. Because of that, the crisis came to this country upon different conditions from those in Europe without finding a strongly organized working class.

The past opportunities of the country actually monopolized by the few, but interpreted generally in application, created in the United States a bourgeois ideology within its working class. Unlike the European workers who passed through scores of years toward crystalliza-

tion as a class, the American worker, with his individualistic psychology remained separated from his fellows, going through year after year of the crisis under severe hardships with hopes for better times returning.

The ruling class in the United States has hardly a solidified proletariat to contend with, but, the condition of the country and the 17 millions unemployed in themselves constitute a threatening force against the system. As the reaction of things always are in accord with the conditions that bring them about, the NRA is the logical outcome, reflecting American conditions and therefore the American way of doing things.

On the one hand this is an extreme move to stop unemployment and on the other, the execution of the plan is left mostly to the employers. As such the NRA can have very little success in a system based upon rugged individualism.

The NRA is meant to have one other function for the ruling class and that is, an institution through which they will try to shape the ideology of the American working class in such a way as to check their dissatisfaction from flowing into revolutionary channels.

Through clever maneuvering the NRA characterizes itself as a labor agency, pretending to take the part of the workers. It thereby aims to give the impression that all differences can be met by the NRA. This gives it the form of an American institution for the collaboration of both classes meaning to instill into the minds of the workers that such a thing is possible.

The NRA is a desperate attempt on the part of the ruling class within the workings of bourgeois democracy to prolong their system of exploitation.

HARRY BRAND.

Conclusions from German Defeat

Modern history will record no greater crime than the defeat of the German working class and the rise of Fascism under conditions which were favorable for a far different result. The German proletariat, the flower of the international working class, was defeated without a struggle.

The dialectic of the whole historical process was toward the Bonapartist regime of Von Schleicher—Von Papen. Not only was this unopposed by the Bonapartist regime itself which posed the whole question on the point of a needle—Fascism or Communism—was not understood and the Stalinists continued to play with the treacherous theory of "social Fascism" and the isolationist theory of the united front below. The enemies of the revolutionary proletariat could ask for nothing better.

Incidentally, the defeat of the German working class does not stop there but becomes a defeat for the world working class. In Hitler is to be perceived the super-Wrangler of the world imperialist bourgeoisie. Not only has the world revolution been set back by decades but at the same time a way has been opened up for an attack on the Soviet Union through the destruction of its most powerful ally, the organized German proletariat. Nor is this all. From a potentially possessing merely the weapon of a general strike the German proletariat might have become a STATE ally possessing the revolutionary state—rifles, artillery, cannon, etc.—which it could have brought forward in the struggle for the defense of its sister republic.

Lenin and Trotsky saw in the Russian revolution a stage in the world revolution. Since 1917, the basic contradiction of capitalism, next to the antagonism between the productive forces and the national boundaries which points to the inconsistency of the national state, has been the existence of the workers, republic on the one hand and the capitalist encirclement on the other. The eclecticism of Stalin-Bucharin, which combines the reactionary non-Marxist theory of socialism in one country with a hypocritical lip-service to the slogan of world revolution, is a denial and a renunciation of this fundamental, correct viewpoint of Leninism. From such a hopelessly utopian, theoretical departure there follows basically the blunders of tactics and strategy from which—and from which alone—can be explained the terrible tragedies of the Chinese and the German revolutions.

The Marxist theory of the Permanent Revolution is, in its essence, the only theory that follows logically from the Leninist formula of imperialism as the last, the decay stage of capitalism—an epoch which will be marked by wars and revolutions. The rotting structure of imperialism—capitalism weighed down with the contradictions which are inherent in its now outgrown property relationships threaten in its death crash to snuff out the whole of mankind's technical and cultural accomplishments. The next stage in the evolution of society is Communism. The next and only historically progressive class to become conscious and to carry out the tasks imposed upon it by history is the proletariat. Hence the epoch of revolutions which follow in the path of decaying capital-

ism are proletarian revolutions. Upon the recognition of this depends the tactics of the revolutionary party.

Are the Stalinists capable of meeting the test? Germany, China and to an extent England show that they have not been equal to it in the past. History shows that the Comintern has been transformed from the organizing center of the world revolution into the organizer of gigantic defeats. But what are the perspectives for the rebirth, the regeneration of the International of Lenin and Trotsky? Dragged by the poisonous theory of social-

ism in one country, weighed down by the oppression of the bureaucracy the perspectives are dim and few. The Stalinist International is incapable of making a revolution anywhere. It has met its 4th of August. If its betrayal was unconscious it is nevertheless fatal and its good intentions can be pointed to only with a feeling of remorse and shame. The road to hell is paved with good intentions. Never before has history imposed such a gigantic task as that which faces a small group of revolutionists today. The capitalists are in a murderous offensive and the workers in retreat or at best in a weak defensive—such is the picture when we look at the situation at large. The Second International is

an international only in the sense of the international betrayal of labor; the Third International is as incapable of rousing and leading the workers as the Second International is unwilling—what can be expected of them? It is necessary to face the facts. In Germany and China new parties are needed. The deceitful and lying accounts about Soviets in China and "revolutionary upsurge" in Germany proved to us that these people are not revolutionists but miserable clowns who play and play badly at the "game", revolution.

The German working class will live to travel the road of revolution again. Upon the wreckage of its cruel and senseless defeat, of its blasted hopes, out of the dead ashes of its burned out illusions will spring its regeneration, its rebirth. But these will not be blotted out by the hideous nightmare of the past. The dialectic of the situation lies in the fact that out of the recognition of its weaknesses in the past will rise the cause of its greatest strength in the future—the cautious selection of its leadership. When it travels the road of revolution again it will do so under the leadership of tried and seasoned revolutionists, those who have led revolutions before, the heroes and battlers of the victorious Bolshevik October.

G. ROBERTS.

Nationalization and the N.R.A.

The initial stage of the "new relations" of capital and labor under the Blue Eagle has given rise to new hopes and illusions on the part of all shades of reformists. This is due to the fact that, in working out the slave codes for the different industries, the trap was baited with "concessions" to the workers. This enabled the capitalist to put through their plan with a minimum of "labor strife". Many of the old working class problems have been presented in a new light by the N.R.A. One of these problems is the question of nationalization of the industries. Therefore, it is essential to understand this question and to explain the relation of nationalization to reaction, reform and revolution.

Complete nationalization of industry cannot exist under capitalism, but nationalization of different industries in different forms is an essential part of capitalist development. In the period of decay capitalism, the question of nationalization is often a life and death question of capitalism. This is also true in times of war. Either class can use the slogan of nationalization of the industries. The application, reform or revolution, depending on conditions and class relations and on how the slogan will materialize in life. Fascist reaction, reformist social democracy, laborist or revolutionary communism—each of these, at certain stages of the class struggle, require a program of nationalization. The slogan must apply to that requirement.

To begin with, one can say that under capitalism the use of the slogan of nationalization, by itself, is a slogan of reformism and nothing else. Even if one adds to this slogan the demand for worker's participation in the nationalization, it is still confined within the realm of reformism. Take for example, the NRA. It represents the first steps toward partial nationalization of industry. It is the embryo. The capitalists of the coal and railroad industries are divided on the question. Some are urging nationalization, with compensation, in order to be relieved of a bad investment. If the NRA does not bring the desired results, through the organization of a form of cartels and the elimination of the small producers, steps toward nationalization of the sick industries will be taken by a section of the capitalists and reformers. They will enact "temporary emergency measures" which will become "permanent" until the industries again pay dividends.

To issue the slogan of nationalization of the industries, such as the "Humb Plan", etc., in relation to the NRA, would be to render service to reformism as well as to reaction. Does this mean that we close the door to the use of the slogan of nationalization? As an isolated, separate, propaganda slogan, yes. But not if it is pro-

perly coordinated with other slogans and actions suitable for the objective conditions.

The NRA brings this question to the fore. But present conditions require that we place the other slogans and actions first and the slogan of nationalization as secondary, and as an auxiliary slogan to the other.

The Working Class Approach

Since the capitalists and the workers can both use the slogan of nationalization one must answer the question of how it will be possible to distinguish the class content of the one from the other. The coordinating slogans must deal with the question of workers' control. This is the working class approach to the question. The working class action must be in the direction of working class control. Slogans serving this aim must be applied.

It is time to stop the agitation and action in the trade union field with propaganda for workers' control of production, open bookkeeping in the capitalist industries and nationalization without compensation. The main emphasis must be placed on propaganda and action dealing with the question of workers' control of industries.

The most important action today, toward this end, deals with the trade union question. This has been pointed out in the Militant week in and week out. Without a strong Left wing in the trade unions, armed with a correct policy, the revolutionary Communist cannot even consider the question of nationalization and workers' control in any concrete sense.

The working class content of the slogan of nationalization is distinguished from the enemy class content on the question of propaganda and action toward workers' control. The question of workers' control includes the question of nationalization, but the nationalization does not itself include or imply workers' control. It is up to the workers to decide this question. To grab the problem at the wrong end will play into the hands of the reformists. The revolutionists must guard against loose talk on the question of nationalization.

The best way to insure the proper application of the slogan of nationalization and workers' control is to speed up the work and activity of the present stage which deals with our trade union policy and trade union work. Once the revolutionary Communist is entrenched in the trade unions this slogan will become a living issue in this stage of American capitalism.

HUGO OEHLER.

N. Y. CHICKEN DINNER For the Benefit of the GREEK WORKERS CLUB "PROTOMAGIA" Saturday, October 14, 8 P. M. At 126 East 16th Street ADMISSION 50c

THE DEVIL'S GRANDMOTHER AGAIN

About the United Front with Grzeziński . . .

L'Humanite of September 19th reproduces the photograph of Grzeziński, the former social-democratic chief of police of Berlin, in the role of witness before the London counter-trial in the case of the burning of the Reichstag. It is clear that the poor editors of L'Humanite did not think about the significance of their printing this photograph. Otherwise, they would have resigned with shame, admitting that they have no right to be in charge of a workers newspaper.

The London counter-trial which attempts to establish the truth in the matter of the burning of the Reichstag is an act of political struggle against Fascism. The judges, witnesses, experts make their appearance at this trial not through compulsion but in order to achieve a definite political aim: a struggle with the bands of Hitler, Grzeziński detests Communism; he proved it in deeds, having shot down Communist workers. However, the same Grzeziński voluntarily appears at the London counter-trial to testify in favor of the Communists; Torgler, Dimitrov and others against the Fascist Goering and Co. By publishing the report

of the London counter-trial and in particular the photograph of the witness Grzeziński, L'Humanite participates in a united front with Grzeziński against Goering. Is this not clear?

More than two years ago we wrote that in the struggle against Hitler we are ready to make a united front not only with the devil and its grandmother but even with Grzeziński himself. The unfortunate editors of L'Humanite and the "Cahiers de Bolchevisme" spilled not a little ink then, trying to prove our complete adherence to social Fascism. Truly fate is unmerciful to these people. Grzeziński could have died in time, or could have gone over to Fascism so as to lighten somewhat the lot of the ill-fated editors of L'Humanite. But Grzeziński lived through, emigrated, appeared at the trial in favor of the tried Communists and thereby forced L'Humanite to print his photograph as an ally in the united front.

The London counter-trial, no matter how modest its political significance, is nevertheless very much worthwhile. Perhaps the readers of L'Humanite—the editors are

Perspectives for Revolution in U.S.

When President Roosevelt signed the National Industrial Recovery Act he expressed the belief that history would record it as the most important and far reaching legislation ever enacted by the American Congress: "It represents", he said, "a supreme effort to stabilize for all time the many factors which make for the prosperity of the nation and the preservation of the American standard of living."

To stabilize for all time—this is not possible in a world of flux, of constant motion, in which economic equilibriums are established to be shattered again. Least of all is it possible in a capitalist world—and still less so during its period of decline and decay. Nevertheless Roosevelt knew his futility. He knew that the NRA would form the foundation upon which American imperialism hoped to make new advances and new conquests in the world market. Today the administrators are impatient to get this whole machinery in complete working shape in order to start seriously upon this advance. But today such an advance is also a problem much more complicated than before.

Results of Early Expansion

American capitalism in its early period of development had at hand all the prerequisites for monopoly capital within its own borders. When centered within the industrialized northeastern states, it found, by pushing westward, a mighty field of expansion for export of capital and export of means of production. But the resulting powerfully developed national economy, the vastly expanded productive forces and surplus of capital available produced also its opposite—growing interdependence upon world economy. American capitalism extended its structure throughout the world and acquired a world basis. Up to this point the law of uneven development of capitalism by which the various countries pass through their development in different forms and different tempi, has acted as a lever favoring the United States. Through this uneven development,

Strike Wave Points the Way of the Future Development

which, as comrade Trotsky reminds us, is more of a historical reality than a law, the United States reached its stage of combined development. This took on the form of a highly advanced industrial system alongside of a backward political ideology which is most directly reflected within the working class. The international colonization, or rather the seemingly limitless expansion of the home market is, of course, the main factor and forms the basis for this retarded consciousness. Enormous capitalist profits and super profits allowed for the maintenance of a higher standard of living for the labor aristocracy. Class collaboration and thereby reinforced the means of keeping the working class as a whole in subjection. Upon such a foundation the super structure of bourgeois democracy could attain its greatest triumph and secure for itself a long lease of life.

American Capitalism Depending Upon World Equilibrium

But speaking in historical terms American imperialism arrived belatedly upon the world arena. It was therefore deprived of the luxury of floating leisurously with the upward current of growing capitalism as was enjoyed by British imperialism for an extensive period of time. The American counterpart was compelled to make a forced march at dramatic speed to acquire a world base. But its emergence coincided with the period when the capitalist system on a world scale had passed its peak and was heading in a downward direction. That its own inner contradictions have become vastly intensified by this process has already been proved by the crisis reaching its greatest proportions precisely in the highly advanced United States.

During the period of growing capitalism the unevenness of development of the various countries was far greater than now. Today the world has become more uniform. The backward countries have supplemented their backwardness with the latest industrial advances. Capitalist economy is world economy extending beyond the legal boundaries and intertwined among nations. Its outstanding feature is the interdependence of the various national economies. Each of the contending powers are dependent upon the world equilibrium and subject to all of its shocks and turns. Most of all is that the case of the United States because of its far flung interests. It should, therefore, not be necessary to reiterate the indisputable fact that when the United States penetrates further into the world market the mighty barriers of conflicting imperialist interests arise in all their imposing magnitude.

Future Trends Within the Country

But this is only one side of the problem. Within the United States itself, its new world advance will impose a terrific strain upon the class relationship existing at present. This relationship can by no means be held within its present bounds even with the assistance of the NRA machinery, which is designed primarily for such a purpose. The slightly favorable turn in the economic conjuncture which is now in evidence tends by itself to spur the workers on to make increasing demands and thereby bring more to the surface and make more acute the conflicts engendered by the capitalist mode of production. With the NRA institutions attempting to check these conflicts they will assume more of a political character. At present the heavy crop of strikes which are spreading like wildfire everywhere indicates the future trend of developments.

In this country we are moving no longer within the orbit of conditions of the past. The margin of capitalist profits formerly available for the maintenance of a higher level for the labor aristocracy has become seriously narrowed. American capitalism, in order to effectively pursue its furious onslaught upon the world market, and to be prepared for the competition it meets, needs above all a low wage level throughout its industrial enterprises. To maintain the tranquility of class relationships of the past on this basis is not possible. We must therefore visualize the immediate future in the United States as one of sharply intensified struggles with the added phenomenon of disturbances reaching revolutionary proportions not at all out of the question.

No one can as yet predict whether a real and substantially favorable change in the economic conjuncture can be accomplished in the United States. But the conflicts and disturbances which will grow out of the efforts for its accomplishment can be foreseen. The formerly favorable lever for the United States constituted by the uneven development of capitalism has been turned into its opposite and is reacting against the United States. It is now compelled to seek the new roads of advance within a decaying world system. It is compelled to assume the major responsibility for checking further class disturbances and, if possible, for the crushing of further proletarian revolutions inevitably growing out of the more intense world exploitation. If to this is to be added the possibility of failure to arrive at a favorable change of economic conjuncture, then it is necessary to say that the perspectives for the United States assume a much more directly revolutionary character.

The relations of world economic forces have changed with the rise of American capitalism. With the shifting of the world economic center to the United States this change became more definite and more direct. But with this shift, there is also a corresponding shift—at first only slowly but sure to gain in momentum—of the revolutionary center from Europe to America. In a general sense we formerly counted upon the revolution to be accomplished in Europe first and upon the victorious European proletariat to fight to hold its own against reactionary America. It is now possible to say, still speaking in a general sense, that this outlook has been reversed by the dialectics of the relation of forces. Revolutionary struggles here move up to the very top of the agenda of historically immediate possibilities.

It is said in informed quarters that a reporter of an important capitalist paper ventured the prediction to Roosevelt: "If you do not succeed with the New Deal you will be known to posterity as the worst President the United States ever had." Roosevelt answered laconically: "If I do not succeed with the New Deal I will be known to posterity as the last President of the United States."

—ARNE SWABECK.

Resolution on the Paris Conference Adopted by the Int'l Left Opposition

(Resolution of the Plenum of the International Left Opposition (Bolshevik-Leninist) on the Conference of Left Socialists and Communist Opposition Organizations held at Paris, August 27-28, 1933.)

1. The very fact of a conference of 14 parties, organizations and groups of most heterogeneous character and tendencies was the result of a very deep crisis of the socialist and communist movements, or more exactly the fruit of the collapse not only of the Second but also—on another historical level and due to other causes—of the Third International.

2. There can be, it is clear, no thought of the building of a new International by organizations which have profoundly different and even opposite principle bases. The Left Opposition participated in this conference under its own banner with the aim of assisting in the principled separation from reformists and centrists and of drawing together truly homogeneous revolutionary organizations.

3. The only real result of the conference, but an exceptionally important one, is the declaration signed by four organizations (L.O., S. A. P., two Holland parties: R. S. P. and O. S. P.) which represented the first deliberate step in the new foundations of the new International of Marx and Engels.

4. The Plenum clearly realizes that the four named organizations of different political origin cannot attain complete unity on fundamental principles, tactical and organizational methods within a few days. At any rate, the attained result creates sufficient basis to believe that the future work of the organizations on the programmatic Manifesto and tactical documents will make it possible not only to assure the necessary unity of concepts, but also to attract under

the banner of the new International a number of other revolutionary organizations and fractions.

5. The Plenum considers it necessary immediately to begin the elaboration of the programmatic documents and to create a technical secretariat which could, while yet in the process of editing the Manifesto and the resolutions, enter into contact with sympathetic organizations so that their opinion, suggestions and criticisms may find a reflection in the text of the programmatic documents.

6. The Plenum instructs its representative in the programmatic commission to be guided by the basic ideas expressed in the Declaration of the Bolshevik-Leninists and made public at the Paris conference of August 27-28th.

7. With regard to the decisions adopted by the heterogeneous majority of the conference and permeated through and through by this heterogeneity, the Plenum of the Bolshevik-Leninists does not find it possible to take political responsibility for these decisions. Insofar as the adopted decisions may lead to this or that practical action (for example boycott of Hitler Germany) the Left Opposition is ready according to circumstances, to take part in actions which correspond to its general principles.

On the basis of practical activities the Left Opposition will always aim at a closer drawing together with parties and organizations nearest to it. Only under this condition can a broad and courageous policy of the united front for immediate political aims help the work of the building of the new Communist International.

The Plenum calls upon all sections of the International Left Opposition to realize fully the historic importance of the step made. A task of immediate urgency now consists in giving the "Declaration of Four" the widest possible publicity in the Communist, Socialist, trade-union, and especially, youth ranks. Through newspapers, leaflets, posters, in speeches and discussion it is necessary to popularize and to interpret the meaning of the Declaration. Without sparing any effort it is necessary to rouse the proletarian vanguard to the building of the new International.

The declaration of the Bolshevik-Leninists made public at the conference ends with the words: "Our revolutionary responsibility is immeasurably great. Let our creative work rise to the height of this responsibility." Let us fully realize that these words refer first of all to the Bolshevik-Leninists themselves.

—PLENUM OF THE INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT. Sept. 13 1933.

In taking this position the Plenum only makes use of the right which the Conference granted until October 15th to all the participating parties, namely: to ratify, or on the contrary, to reject the resolutions of the conference.

A. F. OF L. CONVENTION Next week's Militant will carry a report and review of the A. F. of L. Convention now in session at Washington.

If the number on your wrapper is 193 your subscription has expired. If you want to get the Militant promptly every week renew your subscription at once: \$2 per year for a half one; \$1 per year for fifty issues. THE MILITANT 126 East 16th St. N. Y. C.