

MARCH OF EVENTS

By JACK WEBER

THE STRESA CONFERENCE

What happened at Stresa was a foregone conclusion long in advance of the actual conference. Hitler sweeps aside the armament clauses of the Versailles Treaty, establishes Germany's complete freedom to prepare for the next war, and all that the former allies can do under present conditions is to admonish Hitler that he had better not do it again. This time, say the helpless premiers, we will yield to you—but next time, look out! Stresa thus marks the success of Nazi diplomacy in winning England to support German rearmament — for use against the Soviet Union. At the same time Great Britain makes it perfectly plain that the reparations clauses and the armament provisions of the Versailles system may be void—but the territorial changes made by the war stand. Hitler need not expect to recover from the British lion what has once come under its claws. If German capitalism needs to expand, let it be to the East!

If Stresa marks the final rumbling of the post-war Versailles system for guaranteeing to the victors the spoils, it signifies at the same time the weakening of French hegemony in Europe. French imperialism feels this keenly and hence seeks help to maintain her slipping position. France is aware that the German militarists fear nothing so much as a military alliance between France and the Soviet Union. Thus far this alliance, all but consummated, has been held as a threat over Hitler's head. But having accomplished his first major objective, Hitler immediately proceeds towards the accomplishment of his next object, the separation of France from Russia. That is the meaning of the vague and formless offer to sign an Eastern Locarno pact without any military assistance clauses. That offer is intended to gain time and to head off the Franco-Russian alliance. In this move the Nazis have the fervent support of the reactionaries of both France and England. The Daily Express of Lord Beaverbrook ridicules the idea of defining an aggressor: "The truth about all the rignarole from Stresa is that Locarno and all its works have been reduced by the new events to utter nonsense. Are we going to bomb Paris because France invades Germany to assist Russia which has been invaded by Germany? No, sir!" And in truth, who will ever stop on the outbreak of a war to determine the aggressor? Only self-interest determines the combinations made in an imperialist war.

STALINISM AND THE WAR DANGER

To the working class it must be made clear that Stresa is a step not towards peace but towards war. Faced with the prospect of imperialist war and intervention against the Soviet Union, the Stalinists reveal the depths to which they have dragged the October Revolution.

Capitol News Letter

By JACK ELDER

WASHINGTON, D.C.—As there was every reason to expect, the A. F. of L. leadership has short-circuited the Akron rubber strike. As there was every reason to suppose, Green and Co. have led the rubber workers into a settlement which licks labor on each and every point. The workers have been handed over to their employers, not in exchange for a mess of pottage, but what is worse, in exchange for a mess of words.

The terms of the agreement exemplify to perfection the bureaucrats' infinite capacity for betraying the rank and file into "settlements" which are utter defeats. By comparison, the automobile settlement of March 1934 was a triumph for organized labor. By comparison, the miserable textile strike settlement of September 1934 was the complete victory which Gorman said it was.

The rubber workers were about to strike for union recognition. According to the terms of the settlement, the employers recognize no union whatever. They promise, instead, to meet with "employees and with chosen representatives of ANY GROUP of employees." As in the automobile settlement, Green & Co. yield majority rule and accept proportional representation; back water on union recognition and advance toward works councils.

The rubber workers were about to strike for collective agreements which would raise wages, shorten hours, and improve other working conditions. According to the terms of the settlement, the employers promise to post on bulletin boards

Any appeal for revolutionary action of the international proletariat is completely ignored while the Stalinists confine their efforts for peace completely to the realm of diplomacy and maneuvers behind the scene. In their efforts to maintain their bureaucratic power in the Soviet Union, they sacrifice again and again the interests of the working class at home and abroad. By their own illusion that an "enduring" military alliance with imperialist France can stave off fascist intervention: by their willingness to defend the status quo, which means the upholding of capitalism in its bourgeois democratic form at the very time when this must give way in France (the present key to the international situation) either to fascism or to communism: the Stalinists corrupt the minds of the French workers with the same false views. They prepare the road to defense of the fatherland and to fascist victory by giving the French workers false, opportunist guidance instead of clear understanding and directives. Instead of utilizing the united front between themselves and the Socialists for involving the French workers in struggle against the Bonapartist Flandin government, which steadily paves the way for a fascist military coup d'etat, the Stalinist party actually extends the united front to the supporters of the Bonapartist regime and thereby places the workers at the service of the bourgeoisie.

The whole situation in France calls for energetic revolutionary leadership and for revolutionary activity, including the arming of the proletariat for the breaking up of fascist bands and for the preparation to seize power,—and the Stalinists proceed to denounce the real Marxists who see the situation in all its clarity and offer the only correct policy to the French proletariat as police agents. When historically the bourgeoisie has reached the end of its rope and can offer nothing but the profoundest misery to the workers, the Stalinists attempt to confine the activities of the united front to a struggle for immediate demands, for impossible concessions from the capitalists. Proposing a basis for organic unity to the Socialists that is in line with the bankrupt policies of the Comintern, the Stalinists would confine the struggle against the extension of conscription to two years of service and thus against the war preparations —to monster petitions! Instead of preparing the workers for a direct attack on the entire capitalist system, the Communist Party of France calls for a fight on high prices in order to lower them. In Germany the ultra-leftist course of Stalinism was a direct cause of the victory of Hitlerism. In France if the workers are misled into following the reactionary guidance of the Third International, then the ultra-opportunist course of the bureaucrats in the present juncture will prove the cause of the success of French fascism.

"any changes in hours, wages, or working conditions arrived at through negotiations with any group of employees." But the employers do not oblige themselves to enter into collective agreements of any sort. They do not oblige themselves to enter into collective agreements with the A. F. of L. unions as exclusive spokesmen of the wage-earners.

The rubber workers were about to strike because the employers went into the federal courts to challenge the election orders which the NLRB handed down some months ago. According to the terms of the settlement, the A. F. of L. promises to call no strikes until the federal courts have passed on the validity of these orders. If this means anything, it means that the A. F. of L. has waived the right to strike in the rubber industry for a year to come or more. For it will take at least a year for the election order cases to get from the Circuit Court of Appeals to the U. S. Supreme Court.

Worst of all, the A. F. of L. skates let the rubber workers in for compulsory arbitration, open, patent, and unashamed. To begin with, there are to be no strikes until the U. S. Supreme Court passes on the authority of the NLRB to order elections. In the interim, however, grievances may arise: the workers may object to the speed-up; to starvation wages; to violations of code labor provisions. All such grievances, it is provided, "shall be referred to a fact-finding board of three neutral members approved by the Secretary of Labor."

The agreement does not say directly that the awards handed down by the board shall be final and binding. Indirectly, however, the terms of the agreement have this effect. For the A. F. of L. shall be released from its obligation not to strike, only in the event that the employers refuse to comply with the terms of the award. If the employers do comply, then the obligation holds.

Leadership Trusts in Washington But the leadership of the strike was even more backward than that. Not only did they fail to realize that the forces of government would

be involved in necessity, and involved against them, but they even went so far as to hope for and welcome intervention by the government. It was their job to know beforehand how many and who would be the enemies they would have to face, namely, manufacturers, strike-breakers, armed thugs, militia, soldiery, citizens committees, vigilantes, etc. Instead they believed that the strike would line up the workers on one side, and the manufacturers, with perhaps a few scabs, on the other. The government did not fit into their scheme of things, except as an impartial observer, with fatesly learnings toward the masses of down-trodden workers.

They welcomed the troops, and feebly complained of the various forms of vigilante squads in the South. But later even they saw the troops as that which they could not but be, and had been all along: allies of the manufacturers, strike-breakers in uniform. A number of deaths shocked the vacillating and timid officials of the U.T.W. Again a wall of complaints came from them. Gorman swore by the blood of the dead that the strike would not end before the industry was shut down completely, and the workers on strike took upon themselves the task of shutting it down. The strike was spreading with terrific momentum. The manufacturers were frantic. The troops they had out were not sufficient. They asked more more: they asked for the army, the navy, the leather-necks.

That threat was enough. The timorous, weak, inept officialdom of the U.T.W. suddenly called off the strike, while the spirit of the strikers was at its highest, when the mills that were still being kept open asked for picket lines.

What were the conditions that called off the strike? What truce, what peace treaty had been signed? The President of the U. S. had offered to nominate a committee to study the conditions of the textile industry, workers included, and propose measures to remedy the ills of the industry. The Woban Commission was found acceptable to the manufacturers, and the general strike was ingloriously called off.

The sentiment of the workers is most eloquently proved by the fact that the calling off of the strike was not its actual end. For the strike continued, now broken, for some time yet in a number of localities, petering out gradually, and dying a shameful death.

What Now for the Textile Workers?

By FELIX GIORDANO

The Main Task After the Betrayal Is the Organization of Union Progressives

The textile workers, who were poorly organized before the advent of the N.I.R.A., took the opportunity which the situation offered them and went in for organization on a national scale.

Almost overnight the United Textile Workers of America, heretofore an organization of minor importance, saw its membership doubled and trebled, and became an influential union of the American Federation of Labor.

The workers flocked to the union with the idea that manufacturer and worker would meet on the impartial field of government legislation, and that the one who was able to show greater solidarity and strength would reap the greatest profit from it, over the magic signature of the government.

The actual signing of the code, which legalized as an American standard such wages as \$12.00 per week, made labor wonder if it had not been tricked into something altogether inimical to it. The workers were unsatisfied. They needed more. They wanted more. If they could not get it through legislation, then surely there must be some other way of getting it, and they set about to find this way.

There was, of course, no lack of clear-sighted people who told these workers that only through struggle could they achieve anything at all. The dominant note in the unions speedily became struggle. Now to organization, unwilling to believe that union leadership is not always ready to follow the dictates of the membership, they trusted the U.T.W. leaders, and to them entrusted their fight. Some old hands did not cherish any such illusions; they distrusted that leadership and tried to change it. They expected the support of the new element in the union, which, by virtue of its being new, was not a part of the "machine" and could be brought to rebel against it. The ferment was enormous. New workers and old members were indignant over the fact that some prominent officials of the union had been ready to accept \$9.00 as a minimum wage; old members and new tried to prepare the ground for a change and tried to bring that change about.

The U. T. W. Convention

Under the stress of these intentions the U.T.W. Convention was called in the summer of 1934. What happened will probably never be known. The old officials of the U.T.W. were nominated for re-election, and were elected by acclamation. The opposition slate was not even presented. This in spite of the fact that up to and especially during the convention rumors of an opposition headed by Emil Rieve, of the hosiery workers, had found their way into the press, and were played up quite a bit on the very eve of the election.

However, if the leadership was not changed, it had at least been given a very definite task, a new task. A general textile strike had to take place in America. The deadline was set for September 1.

It is important at this point to analyze the forces which moved the textile workers and which were responsible for the strike.

As already mentioned, the newly organized workers were disappointed in the New Deal as embodied in the code.

Labor-Saving and Speed-Up

Further, they were impelled to take drastic action by the conditions of employment and, mostly, unemployment which still prevail. Of recent years the manufacturers have been trying to counteract a depressed market by efforts to produce cheaper. Newer types of machinery and labor saving devices were introduced, the wages of labor were cut, the intensity of production was made to reach a higher pitch.

Labor had to bear the brunt of the new conditions. But labor could not continue to bear this burden indefinitely. A point was sure to be reached, sooner or later, when there would be open revolt, industrial strife. And since these conditions existed on a national scale, the struggle that would come against them must also be national in scope.

These were the reasons for the general strike. And the convention of 1934 proved that the saturation point had finally been reached, the last straw put on the back of the workers. The delegates to that convention were primarily interested in having a strike call issued. All in all, these delegates wanted a strike not because they knew how to conduct one—most of them were inexperienced in strikes—but because they had come to learn that only through a strike could they obtain the things that they wanted. It was not a strike against the employers; it was primarily a strike for certain conditions and changes.

This, of course, in the minds of the workers. Confusedly they knew that a strike involves two parties. They were conscious of their own, and were willing and ready to fight anyone that would line up on the other side.

who had shown such militancy in the face of tremendous odds, who had defined the employers and the militia, these workers could not allow such a brazen betrayal of their interests to go unchallenged. Rebellion brewed and took form. It is as yet unorganized, and therefore ineffective; but given the proper leadership, it will yet bring some results.

Heaping Insult on Injury

And, as if to add insult to injury, while the echo of the musketry had not yet died away in the streets of Rhode Island towns, the leaders of the U.T.W. published an open letter to the manufacturers' association proposing unity of action for the purpose of gaining markets for the manufacturers!

Welcome to Soldiers

They welcomed the troops, and feebly complained of the various forms of vigilante squads in the South. But later even they saw the troops as that which they could not but be, and had been all along: allies of the manufacturers, strike-breakers in uniform. A number of deaths shocked the vacillating and timid officials of the U.T.W. Again a wall of complaints came from them. Gorman swore by the blood of the dead that the strike would not end before the industry was shut down completely, and the workers on strike took upon themselves the task of shutting it down.

Conditions of Truce

What were the conditions that called off the strike? What truce, what peace treaty had been signed? The President of the U. S. had offered to nominate a committee to study the conditions of the textile industry, workers included, and propose measures to remedy the ills of the industry. The Woban Commission was found acceptable to the manufacturers, and the general strike was ingloriously called off.

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The Lack of Left Wing

But the workers were forced to realize that there was no other organization to which they could turn for leadership in this struggle, no other organized group, no Left wing. There was only defeat.

They acknowledged it, but did not resign themselves to it. These workers who had put so much faith in the leadership of their union,

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor: In your March 30 issue you state, "Starvation Faces Million New York Jobless." Why should the rich, magnificent city of New York be pestered with that horde of dirty, ragged, hungry bleds? Why should 37 percent of the city be taken up with their filth and squalor? Why house that bunch of ingrates, who are so inconsiderate as to be in need and requiring food? Hoover mightily got rid of that unsightly army of bonus seekers, when they were marring the landscape around Washington. He had them just burned out like wasps without even speaking to them. What did it matter to him that they had suffered the tortures of hell? Those who had the good fortune to escape being wounded suffered the indignity of being infested with lice. How would the immaculate Hoover have liked being in a vermin nest? But the millionaires' money was saved, therefore those poor fools who helped save it were driven out of their camps near Washington with fire and tear gas. Therefore the city of New York ought to do likewise and burn out that million of hungry jobless people. Do like William the Conqueror did. Burn them out and use that 37 percent of land for golf links, new forests, flying fields, banging gardens, arcades, and anything they saw fit that would beautify the city.

Millionaires junk their automobiles when they have served their purpose then why not junk the people who have served their time?

They could use the bodies for fertilizer. They would be too poor to be made into soap.

According to the papers, Andrew Mellon made \$200,000,000 since 1932. As a matter of fact, just to use up that interest without touching the principal, at the rate of \$100 a day, it would take him over 5500 years to do it. Just figure it out for yourself. But that mass of hungry people must be content with 8c per meal. No wonder there was a howl to pink slip the income reports. They are ashamed of their unholly possessions at such times.

only elected last summer. Furthermore, even if there were a possibility of changing the leadership this year, the probability of accomplishing that change would be very slim. For that change a machine must be built to cope with the present one. Evidently, this new machine cannot be built in a day.

The Only Alternative

There is only one alternative left for the workers. That alternative they must take and make use of, if they are to change the course of their history from defeat to victory.

Progressive Organization Imperative

Nor is that enough. The coming struggles of importance are going to be national in scope. Progressive elements will not be effective if organized only locally. It is necessary for those groups to come together with all other progressive groups in the industry and organize nationally into an all embracing movement that will be able to supply the workers with actual, even if not nominal, leadership. They must come to an understanding as to the policies to be pursued, and act as an organized body, solidly, not for the purpose of splitting the unions but rather to maintain the very existence of them; for unless the unions do change their line of strategy, the workers will not remain in them much longer.

The Road Ahead

In the meantime the whole apparatus of the state has made its position even clearer. Both profits and unemployment have increased sharply in the last year. Labor provisions in the codes are either being scrapped altogether, or are not being lived up to by the manufacturers. The President's employment program is a further threat to the workers' standards and is interpreted as such. A new movement on the part of organized labor is under way. It is freely predicted that this year will see another gigantic wave of strikes, even greater than those of the last two years. The textile industry is going to have its share of strikes, both local and national. What guarantees have the workers that their struggles are not going to be a repetition of the textile strike of 1934?

What must they do, what changes must they effect in their organization to make it the instrument that they will need in the coming struggles? What, in other words, is the immediate task of the workers in all industries, and especially in the textile unions?

If the workers are to see their strikes carried out in a militant, fighting way, they must have a militant, fighting organization to direct them and guide them. This the United Textile Workers is not. Very few unions are that today.

What possibility is there then of changing the union so that it will meet the requirements which the workers must impose? Is there at the present time an immediate possibility of changing the leadership of the United Textile Workers?

The answer is evident. The officials of the U.T.W. are elected for a term of two years, and they were

only elected last summer. Furthermore, even if there were a possibility of changing the leadership this year, the probability of accomplishing that change would be very slim. For that change a machine must be built to cope with the present one. Evidently, this new machine cannot be built in a day.

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Question Box

By A. WEAVER

N. Y. NEW YORK— Question: Is it correct to use American history and traditions to advance the proletarian revolution, e.g., was it correct for the N.U.L. in Ohio to name a club after John Brown?

Answer: The revolutionary movement would be lacking in elementary tactical and strategical sense if it did not attempt to make use of the revolutionary traditions of American History. Lenin once had occasion to remind us of these:

"The American people has a revolutionary tradition adopted by the best representatives of the American proletariat, who gave repeated expression to their full solidarity with us, the Bolsheviks. This tradition is the war of liberation against the English in the 18th and the Civil War in the 19th centuries. . . ." ("A Letter to American Workers")

If the revolutionary traditions in American History can be a weapon in the hands of revolutionists, it is necessary however, that one knows how to make use of such weapons; with a gun one may commit suicide as well as shoot an enemy.

A great deal of skill is required in handling this particular weapon. Through decades of propaganda the capitalist class has succeeded in identifying itself with many of the revolutionary traditions so that such holidays as the 4th of July, for example, are usually associated with patriotism and reaction. And to adopt such a day as a working class holiday would probably be suicide.

As a symbol of rebellion, however, probably nothing could be more appropriate than the selection of John Brown. While we can disagree with the method which Brown attempted to use in freeing the slaves, i.e., the substitution of a mass movement by a military adventure involving only a handful of men, Brown remains a symbol of the struggle against slavery, and particularly because he had both Negroes and whites in his raid on Harper's Ferry, his name symbolizes the unity of the Negro and white in the struggle for freedom.

It is no accident that "John Brown's Body" was the marching song of the Union soldiers, fighting one of the progressive wars in history. (Remaining questions to be answered in following issues.)

SAMUEL B. BROCKTON—

Question: In the pamphlet "The Kirov Assassination" Trotsky, speaking of the situation within the Soviet Union, states, "No way out can be found except through the regeneration of the Bolshevik party." Does this mean that he stands for the reform of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union rather than for the building of a new party in that country?

Answer: Critics of the Workers Party, attempting to make factional capital out of this sentence, have been broadcasting the fact that Trotsky no longer believes in building a new party of the Fourth International in the Soviet Union. Were these critics really serious, and here their entire methodology exposes itself, they would have at least waited for confirmation of their assumption, instead of basing themselves on a single sentence the interpretation of which was in doubt.

In a subsequent article, Trotsky states the following: ". . . Only the vanguard of the proletariat could restore the Soviet state to health by ruthlessly cleansing the bureaucratic apparatus, beginning with the top. But in order to do so, it must set itself on its feet, close its ranks, and re-establish, or more exactly, CREATE A NEW revolutionary party, the Soviets, and the trade unions. . . ." (See the New Internationalist for March 1935. Emphasis mine.)

The matter hardly requires further comment.

Question: What is meant by the slogan of "Defeatism" in connection with an imperialist war?

Answer: The Leninist formula of "Defeatism" does not mean that the defeat of one's own country in time of imperialist war is a lesser evil as compared with the defeat of an enemy country, but that a military defeat which comes about as a growth of the revolutionary movement is infinitely more beneficial to the proletariat and to humanity than a military victory assured by "civil peace." Not only will the victorious proletarian revolution make up for the damage caused by such a defeat but will also create the final guarantee against all wars and defeats. In time of war the formula of the revolutionary party must be that of Karl Liebknecht: "The chief enemy of a people is in its own country."

man who has been in the claws of the Nazis for more than two years and who behaved no better and no worse than the average type of respectable revolutionary office holder in the G.P.C. could be expected to behave.

Is Torgler Being Victimized by the C. P. Bureaucracy?

We take the liberty of reprinting the following news item from Neue Front, organ of the Socialist Workers Party of Germany. We can only add our hearty approval of its demand for clarity on a subject which the bureaucrats of the Communist International seem to be treating with criminal lightheartedness, to say the least. The article appears in the first April issue of the paper.

On February 28, G. Dimitroff made a speech in the Moscow Writers' Home. In it he dealt with the Reichstag Fire trial. According to the account in the Basler Rundschau, he said among other things:

"The accused themselves represented a colorful political assortment. Among them were representatives of various social strata, tendencies and types, etc. On the one side there were the representatives of the revolutionary section of the working class, of the revolutionary proletariat, and on the other, the representative of the lumpenproletariat—the pitiable and tragic figure of van der Lubbe. But there was also a representative of the remnant and debris of philistinism and the spirit of officialdom in the revolutionary workers' movement—Such a classic type we had with us in the person of the well-known comrade (I could even say erstwhile comrade) Torgler."

After this assertion, which cannot help but astonish the uninitiated, it must be assumed that there has been a break between the Communist Party of Germany and Torgler, who to the best of our knowledge is still in prison. Should this be true, however, then we can explain in which they would declare what has happened to their Central Committee member Torgler, who was also known to be the secretary of the Communist fraction in the Reichstag.

On the other hand, if this public remark of Dimitroff is confined to Torgler's behavior in court, which is not impossible—considering the fact that that same issue of the Rundschau (a Stalinist organ) which reports Dimitroff's speech contains an appeal that ends with the slogan "Free Thaelmann, Torgler and all the imprisoned Anti-Fascists"—then we would be duty-bound to protest and to condemn Dimitroff's remark and its publication as rank disloyalty towards a

L. C. Mobile, Ala.