

Soviet Economy in Danger

(Continued from page 1)

S. R., as plain, as homogeneous and as comforting as possible. Whoever disturbs this picture is none other than an enemy and a counter-revolutionist.

A crude and detrimental idealization of the transitional regime has particularly entrenched itself in the international Communist press during the last two years, i. e., during that period in which the contradictions and disproportions of Soviet economy have already found their way into the pages of the official Soviet press.

There is nothing so precarious as sympathies that are based on legends and fiction. There is no depending on people who require fabrications for their sympathies. The impending crisis of Soviet economy will inevitably, and within the rather near future, crumple the sugary legend, and, we have no reason to doubt will scatter many dead, beat friends into the bypaths of indifference, if not of enmity.

What is much worse and much more serious is that the Soviet crisis will catch the European workers, and chiefly the Communists, utterly unprepared, and render them receptive to social democratic criticism, which is absolutely inimical to the Soviets and to socialism.

In this question, as in all others, the proletarian revolution requires the truth, and only the truth. Within the scope of this brief pamphlet, I have deemed it necessary to present in all their acuteness the contradictions of Soviet economy, the incompleteness and the precariousness of many of its conquests, the coarse errors of the leadership and the dangers that stand in the path of socialism. Let our petty bourgeois friends lavishly apply their pink and baby-blue colorations. We deem it more correct to mark with a heavy black line the weak and indefensible points whence the enemy threatens to break through. The clamor about our enmity to the Soviet Union is so absurd as to bear within itself its own antidote. The nearest future will bring with it a new confirmation of our correctness. The Left Opposition teaches the workers to foresee dangers and not to lose themselves when they impend.

He who accepts the proletarian revolution not otherwise than with all the conveniences and life-long guarantees cannot continue on the road with us. We accept the workers' state as it is and we assert, "This is our state." Despite its heritage of backwardness, despite starvation and sluggishness, despite the bureaucratic mistakes and even abominations,

the workers of the entire world must defend tooth and nail their future socialist fatherland which is within this state.

First and foremost we serve the Soviet republic in that we tell the workers the truth about it and thereby teach them to lay the road for a better future.

Prinkipo, October 22, 1932.

♦ ♦ ♦

The Art of Planning

The prerequisites for socialist planning were first laid by the October overturn and by the fundamental laws of the Soviet state. In the course of a number of years state organs of centralized management of economy were created and put in operation. Great creative work was performed. What was destroyed by the imperialist and the civil war has been re-established. New grandiose enterprises were created, new industries, entire branches of industry. The capacity of the proletariat organized into a state to direct economy by new methods and to create material values in tempo unheard of hitherto has been demonstrated in actuality. All this was achieved against the background of decaying world capitalism. Socialism, as a system, for the first time demonstrated its title to historic victory not on the pages of "Das Kapital" but by the praxis of hydroelectric plants and blast-furnaces. Marx, it goes without saying, would have preferred this method of demonstration.

However, light-minded assertions to the effect that the U. S. S. R. has already entered into socialism are criminal. The achievements are great. But there still remains a very long and arduous road to the factual victory over economic anarchy, to the surmounting of disproportions, to the guarantee of the harmonious character of economic life.

Even though the first Five Year Plan took into consideration all possible angles, by the very nature of things it could not be anything but a first and a rough hypothesis, doomed beforehand to fundamental reconstruction in the process of the work. It is impossible to create a priori a complete system of economic harmony. The planning hypothesis could not but include old disproportions and the inevitability of the development of new ones. Centralized management implies not only great advantages but also the danger of centralizing the mistakes, i. e., of elevating them to an excessively high degree. Only continuous regulation of the plan in the process of its fulfillment, its reconstruction in part and as a whole, can guarantee its economic effectiveness.

The art of socialist planning does not drop from heaven nor is it presented full-blown into one's hands with the conquest of power. This art may be attained only by struggle, step by step, not by units but by millions as an integral part of the new economy and culture. There is nothing either astonishing or disheartening in the fact that at the 15th anniversary of the October revolution the art of economic management still remains on a very low plane. The newspaper, **For the Industrialization** deems it possible to announce, "Our operative planning has neither hands nor feet" (September 12, 1932). And in the meantime, the crux of the matter is precisely in operative planning.

We have stressed more than once that, "under incorrect planning or, what is more important, under incorrect regulation of the plan in the process of its fulfillment, a crisis may develop toward the very end of the Five Year Plan and may create insurmountable difficulties for the utilization and development of its indubitable successes" (Bulletin of the Opposition, No. 23, July 15, 1931). It is precisely for this reason that we considered the hasty and purely fortuitous "translation of the Five Year Plan into four years was an act of light-minded adventurism" (idem). Both our fears and our warnings have been unfortunately fully confirmed.

The Preliminary Totals of the Five Year Plan

At the present moment there cannot even be a discussion about the actual completion of the Five Year Plan in four years (or more exactly, four years and three months). The most frantic lashing and spurring ahead in the course of the final two months will have no effect any longer on the general totals. It is as yet impossible to determine the actual percentage, i. e., measured in terms of economy—the fulfillment of the preliminary program. The data published in the press take on more a formally statistical than an exact economical character. Should the construction of a new plant be accomplished up to 90 percent of its completion and then the work be stopped because of the obvious lack of raw material, then from a formally statistical viewpoint one may enter the plan as fulfilled 90 percent. But from the point of view of economy the expenses accrued must simply be entered under the column of losses. The balance sheet of the actual effectiveness (the useful functioning) of plants constructed or in the process of construction, from the viewpoint of the national economic balance, still belongs entirely to the future.

(To be continued)
—L. TROTSKY.

THE ONLY ROAD

From the Series of Articles in the Forthcoming Book 'The Only Road' :— by Leon Trotsky

CAN IT BE expected that the Central Committee of the Communist party will independently accomplish a turn to the right road? Its whole past demonstrates that it is incapable of doing this.

Hardly had it begun to rectify itself than the apparatus saw itself before the perspective of "Trotskyism". If Thälmann himself did not grasp it immediately, then he was told from Moscow that the "part" must be sacrificed for the sake of the "whole", that is, the interests of the German revolution for the sake of the interests of the Stalinist apparatus. The abashed attempts to revise the policy were once more withdrawn. The bureaucratic reaction again triumphed all along the line.

It is not, of course, a matter of Thälmann. Were the present-day Comintern to give its sections the possibility of living, of thinking and of developing themselves they would long ago, in the last fifteen years, have been able to select their own leading cadres. But the bureaucracy erected instead a system of appointed leaders and their support by means of artificial ballyhoo. Thälmann is a product of this system and at the same time its victim.

The cadres, paralyzed in their development, weakened the party. Their inadequacy they supplement with repressions. The oscillations and the uncertainty of the party are inexorably transmitted to the class as a whole. The masses cannot be summoned to bold actions when the party itself is robbed of revolutionary determination.

Even if Thälmann were to receive tomorrow a telegram from Manuilsky on the necessity of a turn to the path of the united front policy, the new zig-zag at the top would bring little good. The leadership is too compromised. A correct policy demands a healthy régime. Party democracy, at present a plaything of the bureaucracy, must rise again as a reality. The party must become a party, then the masses will believe it. Practically, this means to put upon the order of the day: *an extraordinary party convention and an extraordinary congress of the Comintern.*

The party convention must naturally be preceded by an all-sided discussion. All apparatus barriers must be razed. Every party organization, every nucleus has the right to call to its meetings and listen to every Communist, member of the party or one expelled from it, if it considers this necessary for the working out of its opinion. The press must be put at the service of the discussion; adequate space must be allotted daily for critical articles in every party paper. Special press commissions, elected at mass meetings of the party members, must supervise that the papers serve the party and not the bureaucracy.

The discussion, it is true, will require no little time and energy. The apparatus will argue: how can the party permit itself the "luxury of discussion" at such a critical period? The bureaucratic saviors believe that under difficult conditions the party must shut up. The Marxists, on the contrary, believe that the more difficult the situation, the more important the independent rôle of the party.

The leadership of the Bolshevik party enjoyed, in 1917, a very great esteem. And notwithstanding this, a series of deep-going party discussions took place throughout the year 1917. On the eve of the October overturn, the whole party debated passionately which of the two sections of the Central Committee was right: the majority, which was for the uprising, or the minority, which was against the uprising. Expulsions and repressions in general, were nowhere to be seen, in spite of the profundity of the differences of opinion. Into these discussions were drawn the non-party masses. In Petrograd, a meeting of non-party working women dispatched a delegation to the Central Committee in order to support the majority in it. To be sure, the discussion required time. But in return for that, there grew out of the open discussion, without threats, lies and falsifications, the general, indomitable certainty of the correctness of the policy, that is, that which alone makes possible the victory.

What course will things take in Germany? Will the small wheel of the Opposition succeed in turning the large party wheel in time? That is how the question stands now. Pessimistic voices are often raised. In the various Communist groupings, in the party itself, as well as its periphery, there are not a few elements who say to themselves: in every important question the Left Opposition has a correct stand. But it is weak. Its cadres are small in number and politically inexperienced. Can such an organization, with a small weekly paper (DIE PERMANENTE REVOLUTION) successfully counterpose itself to the mighty Comintern machine?

The lessons of events are stronger than the Stalinist bureaucracy. We want to be the interpreters of these lessons to the Communist masses. Therein lies our historic rôle as a faction. We do not demand, as do Seydewitz and Co., that the revolutionary proletariat should believe us on credit. We allot ourselves a more modest rôle: we propose our assistance to the Communist vanguard in the elaboration of the correct line. For this work we are gathering and training up our own cadres. This stage of preparation may not be jumped over. Every new stage of struggle will push to our side those in the proletariat who reflect the most and are most critical.

The revolutionary party begins with an idea, a program, which is aimed at the most powerful apparatus of class society. It is not the cadre that creates the idea, but the idea that creates the cadre. Fear of the power of the apparatus is one of the most conspicuous features of that specific opportunism which the Stalinist bureaucracy cultivates. Marxian criticism is stronger than any and every apparatus.

The organizational forms which the further evolution of the Left Opposition will assume, depend upon many circumstances: the momentum of the historical blows, the degree of resistance power of the Stalin bureaucracy, the activity of the rank and file Com-

Four Years of the Existence of The Militant

(Continued from page 1)

pride in the accomplishments. The Militant reflects today an organization small in numbers but functioning actively in the endeavor to attain a Marxian platform not only by theoretical discussion but also in the realities of the life of the class struggle.

Some Trade Union Experiences

We have mentioned our organizational growth, yet it is such experiences as those recorded in the Illinois mine field which begin to indicate both substance and form to our organization. We do not at all boast of control of the movement there or any section of it—a contention which we are repeatedly accused of by the scribes of the official Lewis-Walker organ and which they so hypocritically curse as a shield under which to continue their nefarious schemes of regaining control in the only sense understood by them—in the sense of autocratic domination. We did not contest the official party for control. But we did contest it in the struggle for correct policies and if anything then more definitely so do we in this sense contest the reactionary forces at work within the new union. We have in the past, we do today, and we will continue tomorrow, to counterpose our views to theirs and will seek further, on the basis of practical experiences, to convince the miners that they should follow these views.

In this sense we have achievements to record which will multiply in the future because they indicate already today certain substantial proofs of the correctness of our views. This is first of all measured by the actual results. And here we can definitely record the fact that the only force fighting directly for a Left wing union position at the Gillespie convention were those delegates who supported the views of the Left Opposition. They had earned the right to do so by their past record of struggle and by their leadership given to the strike. Numerically this force represented only four actual delegates. Thus it will be seen that our beginning is modest from the point of view of numbers but significant in political content.

before becoming members. But, as particularly the recent experiences have proven, this also offers additional possibilities of clarification with the result that the actual revolutionists turn toward the Left Opposition. Within the social reformist camp, however, the most decisive disillusionments are still to come and at an accelerated tempo in future struggles.

That there will be such struggles in the period we are now entering is clearly indicated by all developments to date. Is it to be assumed that Centrism, which is a basic phenomenon and not a mere chance one produced by a certain situation, can change and avoid its contradictions of false policies? On the contrary. As the class struggle develops in intensity it will become the more deeply involved in these contradictions with a cumulative effect. On the other hand, when we pose the question of the party to extricate itself from Centrism, that, of course, is an entirely different matter which cannot be decided in advance. This is not a question merely of individuals but of a system of leadership. Thus it has its important relations not only to the members now within the party ranks but also to the workers who are coming in the direction of Communism.

On Future Contacts

It follows from this, that is provided

we continue to pursue a correct course, that our future contacts will be recruited much more directly from the class struggle. That itself presupposes that we become an ever more important factor within it. In this respect the experiences from the Illinois coal fields should furnish important material for study. But that also, aside from the general conclusions at which we will arrive therefrom, points to the importance of the role that the trade unions will play in the future struggle. Hence it is so much more significant that one of the milestones in our most recent development of growth is so closely connected with the realities of the trade union question. But from this the further steps must lead in the direction of much deeper penetration into the trade unions.

At this time of the fourth anniversary we see the road of the Left Opposition clearly marked out. We have attained a basis. A modest one but a significant one. While we do not forget the fact that the international revolutionary developments work in our direction with accelerated speed, it is nevertheless correct to say that our future growth and developments will be achieved at a pace corresponding to the degree with which we more actively engage ourselves in the class struggle.

—ARNE SWABECK.

Roosevelt's Victory

(Continued from page 1)

control of the American workers. To initiate our own success and to minimize the reformers' gains against us is to lull our party to sleep to the real danger confronting us in the immediate period of the struggle between reform and revolution.

The 1932 opportunist election program, the inability to carry out the Leninist united front tactic outside the parliamentary plane for a solid class foundation upon a Marxian program, created internal shortcomings within the Communist party election activity, that on the one hand played into the hands of the socialists, because the program of Communism, of revolution, was blurred with opportunist blunders, making it difficult for the worker to see the difference between the parties of reform and revolution, and on the other hand where we won votes on the basis of the opportunist program and confuse this vote and consider the WHOLE vote as representing a clear cut revolutionary vote against a reformist vote. Facts remain, that a Communist party with an opportunist election program will obtain many reformist votes labeled Communist. When we have detail reports of the socialist and Communist votes, of reform and revolution, we will return to this problem.

The Democratic party of reaction with a "liberal" cloak has full power—next March. But the problems confronting the imperialists cannot wait until March. These problems are on top of the capitalists now and must be answered

to their class interests. The real rulers are making provisions for this now. While Hoover hangs on and Roosevelt waits they have instructed that a working agreement be reached. Indications are that this agreement has been reached. The imperialists through this "coalition" government until March will be able to move faster. The crisis with its problem of unemployment and reorganization and the international problem of debts and markets will demand more drastic steps. Roosevelt cannot answer these problems, no more than Hoover could. "He" can, however, hurry the process of strengthening the exploiters position in the coming class struggles and wars and revolutions. Our task is to expose this "liberal" friend of the "forgotten man" and see to it that in the leftward shift of the workers we are able to defeat the reformers in their attempt to hold the discontent and struggle in safe channels.—HUGO OHELER

ed to their class interests. The real rulers are making provisions for this now. While Hoover hangs on and Roosevelt waits they have instructed that a working agreement be reached. Indications are that this agreement has been reached. The imperialists through this "coalition" government until March will be able to move faster. The crisis with its problem of unemployment and reorganization and the international problem of debts and markets will demand more drastic steps. Roosevelt cannot answer these problems, no more than Hoover could. "He" can, however, hurry the process of strengthening the exploiters position in the coming class struggles and wars and revolutions. Our task is to expose this "liberal" friend of the "forgotten man" and see to it that in the leftward shift of the workers we are able to defeat the reformers in their attempt to hold the discontent and struggle in safe channels.—HUGO OHELER

THE MILITANT
Entered as second class mail matter November 28, 1928, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y. Under the act of March 3, 1879.
Published weekly by the Communist League of America (Opposition) at 84 East 10th St., N. Y.
EDITORIAL BOARD
Martin Abern James P. Cannon
Max Shachtman Maurice Spector
Arne Swabek
Vol. V, No. 46 (Whole No. 142)
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 1932
Subscription rate: \$2.00 per year, Foreign \$2.50. Five cents per copy.