

The March of the Revolution

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THE present world situation is one that should hearten and stimulate every revolutionary worker to intensified struggle. Ceaselessly events are shaping up for the downfall of capitalism and the world victory of Socialism. Capitalism grows weaker and its foundations decay; the world revolutionary movement becomes stronger and the basis for Socialism extends. Irresistably the center of gravity in the world relation of class forces moves away from capitalism and towards the proletarian revolution.

Born and bred under capitalism as we have been, and with a consequent tendency to ascribe to present-day institutions a semblance of permanency which they in reality do not possess, we are much inclined to underestimate the speed of the development of the capitalist crisis and the world revolutionary movement. The whole situation is a brilliant justification of the analysis and policy of the Communist International.

A DECAYING CAPITALISM

Today world capitalism is in difficult and rapidly worsening position. The present economic crisis, the most devastating in the history of capitalism, is adding enormously to the already existing difficulties arising out of its steadily developing general crisis. The economic crisis, already two years old, grows constantly more acute and menacing. "The mode of production," as Engels says, has indeed risen "in rebellion against the form of distribution." World industry and agriculture are prostrate and no relief is in sight. The crisis has increased the unemployment, wage cuts, mass starvation and pauperization, both in imperialist and colonial countries, to an altogether unheard-of degree. The precarious post-war capitalist stabilization has been fundamentally shattered.

The economic crisis has also rapidly hastened the development of the already acute war danger. Never were the capitalist international antagonisms so sharp; never were the armaments so huge and deadly; never was the menace of a world conflagration so imminent. The whole capitalist world presents a scene of ever-sharpening imperialist struggle over markets, natural resources, and political hegemony. The great capitalist powers are in a dog-eat-dog struggle with each other, seizing and enslaving the weaker countries and organizing against the Soviet Union. Capitalism,

driven on faster than ever by its basic economic contradictions, rushes headlong to a war incomparably the most terrible and devastating in human history. Capitalism is not only rapidly forcing huge million masses into actual starvation but is also a vast murder machine preparing to drive the human race to the shambles.

As the general crisis of capitalism develops so fast under the stress of the present economic crisis symptoms of demoralization begin to appear among the bourgeoisie. Their beloved system of exploitation is breaking down. They see this, and they are alarmed, confused, and at a loss as to how to prevent it. Thus W. P. Simms, Scripps-Howard Foreign Editor, expresses this fear and confusion in an article on Oct. 5. Referring to the many recent international conferences, he says:

"The object of these epochal goings and comings, it is admitted behind the scenes, is nothing less than to prevent, not merely the collapse of this or that particular country but of the white man's universe as a whole. For recent events have driven Washington, London, Paris, Berlin, and Rome to the startling realization that only some sane accord on international finances, economics and armaments—and that promptly—can prevent a general smash."

The capitalists see one after another of their schemes and panaceas fail to check or cure the enveloping, destructive crisis. They are just beginning to realize what Marxians knew long ago, that they do not understand their own economic and political system, and a deadly fear is developing among them that it has most serious if not fatal flaws.

The economic smash has dealt a mortal blow to the American theory of mass production and "high" wages which, only two years ago, was hailed all over the capitalist world as the cure for the recurrent cyclical economic crises. This whole conception has exploded with a loud report, to the special consternation of the pride-inflated American bourgeoisie. Mussolini was even unkind enough to say that the cause of the present economic crisis was exactly American mass production methods.

All the capitalist attempts to stem the crisis by regulating production and bolstering up sagging prices have fallen dismally, both in the United States and internationally. Among such ill-fated schemes were the Hoover conferences of two years ago to liquidate the crisis by a building boom, the wheat and cotton fiascoes of the Federal Farm Board, the many plans to "stabilize" the mining industry, "Alfalfa Bill's" comic opera regulation of production by troops, the British and Brazilian adventures in rubber and coffee price fixing, the defunct European steel cartel, Chadbourne's sugar scheme, etc. The recent "World Congress for Social-Economic

Planning," held in Amsterdam, displayed utter capitalist confusion and adjourned without developing a program.

Nor has fascism the glamorous appeal it once had as a solution of the capitalist crisis. It is true that world capitalism, in its efforts to throw the burden of the crisis upon the workers, develops inexorably everywhere in the direction of fascism and fascist methods of terrorism; but, with Italy, this classical land of fascism, as deep in the mud as the other capitalist countries are in the mire, it is hard even for capitalists to believe that Mussolini has found the solution for the basic economic problems of capitalism.

The capitalists see little light in the social fascist program of organized capitalism and super-imperialism. They see in the Socialist program just what it is—not an economic panacea for capitalism and not a rival economic system—but a weapon at their disposal to use against the workers to force them down to lower standards and more intense capitalist exploitation under the guise that all this is necessary for the sometime transformation of capitalism into Socialism.

To add to the capitalists' confusion and alarm comes the amazing and meteoric rise of the Soviet Union. They see its industries flourish inexplicably, while their own decay just as inexplicably. They sense that they have to do with a new and higher social order. They begin to develop an inferiority complex towards the Soviet Union. They talk confusedly about applying "its useful lessons for capitalism." They babble futilely about adopting its principle of planned production, and of developing capitalist five-year plans. And a paralyzing fear clutches at their hearts at the thought of the revolutionizing effect being produced upon their starving toilers by the great successes of the Russian workers in building Socialism. At the World Congress for Social-Economic Planning, Pollock, a German scientist, declared:

"The Soviet Union has filled millions of workers and peasants with hope and belief in a better future and of the possibility of further progress. With us, on the contrary, things get worse every year. If capitalism is not capable of arousing equal enthusiasm and readiness for sacrifices in the masses, then there can be no doubt that they will finally choose the path of the Soviets."

Pessimism and confusion tends to spread among the bourgeoisie. Their old-time confidence in the God-given destiny of capitalism shakes a bit. With growing concern they begin to see clearly shaping up the world struggle of the forces of Communism against those of capitalism. They see the menacing threat to their class rule, and they are uncertain if and how they can defeat it. Their old-time economic and political soothsayers have failed them, the

relentless progress of the crisis having made ridiculous their optimistic plans and predictions. They call for dictators and political Messiahs to solve their overwhelming problems. They put forth one scheme after another to liquidate the crisis. Thus we are treated to a whole series of "Swope plans," "Woll plans," "Hoover plans," etc., etc. Even the Illinois fundamentalist preacher who seeks to solve the crisis by all-night prayer meetings has about as much of a following as many of the discredited capitalist economists.

Meanwhile, the capitalists follow a practical course of action which sharpens every contradiction of capitalism. All plans to cure the crisis failing, and hoping at least that it will eventually liquidate itself in the time-honored manner, they take steps which inevitably deepen the whole crisis. They carry out wholesale wage cuts, unheard of speed up, starvation of the unemployed, expropriation of the poor farmers, tariff wars and international financial banditry, organized credit inflation, ruthless domestic and foreign competition, intense rationalization of industry, etc., all of which tend to sharpen the contradiction between the capitalist modes of production and distribution and therefore intensify the crisis as a whole. And to complete their destructive program, which stands as a bar to the further progress of the human race, the capitalists are preparing more rapidly than ever an attempt to solve the insoluble contradictions of capitalism by a resort to arms and mass slaughter.

THE GROWING REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT

Although capitalism thus rots at the heart it will not fall of its own weight. It must be overthrown by the revolutionary working class. This Marx and Lenin have clearly taught us. The developing general crisis of capitalism prepares a favorable objective situation for the revolution. But no matter how difficult the situation may become the capitalists will find some way to continue capitalism, let the cost be what it may, in mass starvation and war, until the workers develop sufficient clarity of program and organization to give it its death blow. The positive measure of the progress of the revolution is the extent to which the workers and poor peasants are developing revolutionary organization and struggle.

Even a glance at the world situation must show a rapid growth of the revolutionary movement. A deep radicalization of the workers, a strong revolutionary upsurge, spreads among the toilers of factory and field everywhere. Faced with actual starvation, increasingly disillusioned with capitalism, and more and more inspired by the Soviet Union, these masses enter into struggle against capitalism in ever-increasing numbers and with constantly more determination and revolutionary clarity. It is only in the sense of a develop-

ing world-wide movement against the capitalist system itself that we can understand the vast revolutionary upheavals in China, Indo-China, and India; it is what lies at the base, if not so developed, of the "revolutions" in Latin America. It alone can explain the great wave of strikes and revolutionary political movements now developing in Europe.

Of course, to a very large degree, this expanding and deepening mass struggle against capitalism is still unorganized and confused in program. In the industrial countries the social fascists, both rights and "lefts," and even the open fascists, are able, by the use of radical demagoguery, to put themselves at the head of large masses of discontented workers, poor farmers, and city petty bourgeoisie and thus to break up or demoralize their struggle against the capitalists. In the colonial lands, likewise, the demagogic Gandhis still exert a great sway and serve to shield the native capitalists and world imperialists from the sharpening attacks of the exploited masses.

But the iron logic of the class struggle is swiftly and relentlessly exposing these tricky capitalist agents. The unmasking of MacDonald, the gradual crumbling of the German Social Democratic party, the going over of many fascist workers and leaders in Germany to the Communist Party, the growth of the Communist Party in India, the establishment of Soviets in China, etc., etc., are all typical of the general world trend towards the revolutionary clarification and organization of the struggle against capitalism. The Communist Parties gradually intrench themselves in every country. More and more definitely the Communist International becomes the actual leader of the world's oppressed and of their struggles against the oppressors. Clearer and clearer, out of the welter of local issues, grows the basic world issue of Communism versus capitalism.

But, of course, it is above all in the Soviet Union that the revolution acquires its greatest strength and stature. There the toilers are making a stormy and ever-more rapid advance, highly demoralizing to the whole world capitalist system. The brilliant success of the Five-Year Plan throws consternation into the capitalist world and inspires the workers of every country to new militancy and struggle. While industry in all capitalist countries is paralyzed, industry in the Soviet Union is developing at a pace totally unequalled in the whole history of industry. While capitalist agriculture is in a crisis which brings mass starvation to hundreds of millions, Russian agriculture, through collectives and state farms, proceeds upon the highest stage in the world, bringing prosperity, culture, and happiness to the great masses. While 35,000,000 starving workers walk the streets of capitalist cities unemployed, every worker in the Soviet Union has work. While wage rates and living standards of the

workers drop catastrophically all over the capitalist world, wage levels constantly rise in the Soviet Union.

Small wonder then that the capitalists everywhere are alarmed and begin to show signs of demoralization. For them the world scene is full of evil portents and dire forebodings, with their own ruinous and uncontrollable economic crisis, the rapid radicalization of the worker and peasant masses, the growth of the Communist movement and the beginnings of disintegration of the socialist parties, and, to fill their cup of worry to overflowing, the spectacular advance of the Soviet Union. Small wonder also that this same picture of world capitalist decay and revolutionary growth is an inspiration to the workers of the world for renewed battle against the rotting capitalist system.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVE

The capitalist system, as Marx and Lenin have taught us, is not of uniform strength in all its parts. Because of its uneven development in the various countries it is as a chain of stronger and weaker links. Thus the revolution advances, not by breaking the chain simultaneously in all its links, but by beginning the break at the weakest links. Old Russia was such a weak link and the Russian revolution such a break. Already the tension upon the whole world capitalist chain is great and it rapidly becomes greater. So far has the capitalist decay proceeded that the possibility of the rebellious toiling masses causing a new serious revolutionary break in the capitalist chain becomes more imminent and it may occur at any time. This perspective of threatening breaks of the weaker capitalist links has been outlined at the recent plenums of the Comintern Executive.

That world capitalism is under a constantly increasing strain and that it gets into real danger of a revolutionary break in its chain is exemplified, not only by the broad developments of crisis and revolutionary struggle indicated above, but also by many significant signs of the past few months. Among the more important of these have been the Spanish revolution, the mutiny in the Chilean navy, the intense German financial crisis, bringing about the moratorium on war debts and a frantic effort of international capitalism to save Germany from Bolshevism, the fascist putsch in Austria, the growing financial crisis in the United States, with the huge government deficit, hundreds of bank failures, and Hoover plan of credit inflation, and finally, the British financial crisis, with the down-fall of the Labor government, the naval mutiny, the hunger riots, and the abolition of the gold standard in Great Britain and other countries.

These great shocks are not the natural accompaniment of return-

ing capitalist health, but definite signs of capitalist disintegration and decay. They are not the end of the movement but only its beginnings. They are the advance tremors of still greater economic and political earthquakes that are brewing.

Already the strain upon several of the capitalist weaker links becomes dangerously great. In first line there is the critical situation in Germany. Here the revolution grows manifestly nearer. Various factors combine for the rapid development of a revolutionary political crisis; the industries are paralyzed and the financial crisis becomes ever deeper, huge masses of workers and poor farmers are starving, the bankrupt Social-Democratic party is gradually disintegrating, the capitalist class turns more openly to fascism. Then, what is decisively important, the Communist Party is growing by leaps and bounds. The class struggle sharpens on every front. The German working class is gradually drawing together its forces for a revolutionary attempt to free itself from the intolerable slavery of capitalism.

A proletarian revolution in Germany would be a deadly blow to the whole system of world capitalism. It would in all probability draw with it Poland (already in deep crisis) and other countries on the Russian border. Thus, with the U. S. S. R., would be created a gigantic and undefeatable Soviet bloc. This great Soviet Union, supported by increasing movements of the workers in the capitalist countries, would certainly be in a dominant position on a world scale as against the decadent capitalist system. The center of gravity in the world relation of class forces would be definitely on the side of the revolution.

Thus profound would be the effects of a successful proletarian revolution in Germany. Yet, so acute has the German situation become that such a revolution may well be a matter of the near future. The fear of this devastating smash in Germany is a living one in the minds of capitalist governments everywhere and is an enormous stimulus to their war plans against the Soviet Union. Prof. J. T. Thayer, in October *Current History*, describes the temporary easing of the German financial crisis as a six months' reprieve from world bankruptcy.

Capitalism is threatened with serious disaster not only from the advancing German revolution, but also from the deepening war danger. Considering the increasing radicalization of the toiling masses, the establishment of the Communist Parties in the various countries, and the expanding power of the Soviet Union, another great war, directed against the Soviet Union or amongst the imperialist powers themselves, would almost certainly provoke revolutionary upheavals fatal to big sections of capitalism. A new world war could very likely result in a Soviet Europe.

Despite this danger, which many capitalist writers see, the imperialist countries press on with their mad rivalries and struggles. With increasing armaments and belligerency, they make the question of war so sharp that any spark may start a terrible conflagration. Never was the war tension so great. Innumerable proofs have been given that the various peace conferences, Kellogg pacts, League of Nations activities, etc., are no protection against war, but are only so many pacifistic frauds behind which the imperialists advance their war plans. The Manchurian situation again vividly exemplifies the acute war danger. It might readily become the starting point for a general conflict for a great war that would result fatally to European capitalism.

Can the capitalists cure the general crisis and decay of their system? Can they turn back the forward march of the revolution? Can they even secure a temporary respite from the present crushing economic crisis by a revival of industry? As for the last question, the answer to it is problematical. If there are no serious breaks in the capitalist chain in the meantime it is probable that, at least in the stronger countries, capitalist economy will round out into the next cycle, emerging from the present low stage of production to higher levels of industrial activity. But that this upward turn will come soon or extend far is doubtful. Already whole sections of capitalist economy are in more or less chronic depression and crisis, and the tendency is decidedly for this condition to spread. The great colonial markets of China, India, etc., are in chaos. Many of the industrial countries, including England, Germany, Poland, etc., defeated in one manner or another in the struggle for markets, have had an almost unbroken industrial depression for years. Also agriculture, coal mining, textiles, and several other industries are suffering from chronic overproduction the world over, including the United States. Any recovery, therefore, that may be registered from the present world economic crisis can only be very partial and temporary in character. It would be bound to be soon followed by a crash more far-reaching and devastating even than the present one.

As for the first question—can the capitalists cure the growing general crisis of capitalism?—this we must answer decisively in the negative. Capitalism cannot be stabilized. The basic contradiction between the capitalist methods of production and of distribution—the tendency for the productive forces to expand and the markets to contract—relentlessly undermines the whole capitalist system of the private ownership of industry and exploitation of the toiling masses. All the capitalist schemes of debt moratoriums, credit inflation, wage cutting, attempts to regulate production, etc., will fail dismally to bridge over this fundamental contradiction. It causes

ever-more devastating economic crises with wholesale impoverishment and radicalization and revolutionary organization of the *masses*; it produces ever-sharpening rivalry between the imperialist countries and results in the menacing danger of war. Inexorably the general crisis of capitalism develops and its tempo becomes faster and faster. The whole social process goes relentlessly towards the overthrow of the obsolete capitalist system and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. As the Communist International has so often declared, this is indeed the period of the revolutionary transition from capitalism to socialism.

WHAT WE MUST DO

Shall we, from all this, assume a fatalistic attitude and conclude that capitalism is doomed and will fall regardless of what we may do? Of course not. It is our great task to build the Communist Party and the revolutionary mass organizations and to bring the workers into ever greater collision with capitalism. Without such work on our part there can be no revolution. The sharpening of the world crisis of capitalism, therefore, must not be a signal to us to relax in our revolutionary efforts but to enormously extend and intensify them.

Nor can we base our activities upon merely promulgating revolutionary slogans and enthusiastic contemplation of the approaching revolution. The very basis of our whole fight must be the everyday grievances of the workers. We must be the leaders in the fight for unemployment insurance and relief, against wage cuts, for the rights of Negroes and foreign-born workers, etc.

Only in such day-to-day struggle and work in the shops and among the poor farmers can we build our organizations and secure mass leadership. And only by the systematic politicalization of such battles can we teach the masses of toilers the real meaning of the class struggle and mobilize them for greater political tasks; the building of the Communist Party, the defense of the Soviet Union, the final overthrow of the capitalist system.

The present situation presents a wonderful opportunity for us to build our Party, the T.U.U.L. unions, and all the other revolutionary organizations. The masses are rapidly ripening for our leadership. But we must not assume that mechanically they must come to us for leadership, that because our general program is correct, we are automatic heirs to mass leadership. Such leadership we can win only in the open struggle. It is true that the social fascist traditions and organizations are weaker in the United States than, for example, in Great Britain and Germany. This is an advantage we have over other countries, and we must make the most of it.

But we must not be led into underestimating the danger of social fascism. We already see that the American bourgeoisie is trying to remedy its "historical error" by insidiously strengthening the social fascists on every possible occasion. We must be very vigilant and energetic to prevent the social fascists from intrenching themselves among the masses. Especially must we be on our guard against the "left" phrase-mongers of the Muste type who, in this period of the rapid radicalization of the workers, will spring up in many places to demoralize the workers and to prevent the advance of our Party. All the resources we have, especially the youth, must be skillfully mobilized and developed to meet adequately this highly favorable situation.

Our Party has gigantic tasks in this, the leading country of capitalist imperialism, in the organization and education of the great masses. But with the assistance of the Communist International, it will prove equal to these tasks. Already, in the recent big movements of the unemployed, of the Negroes, and in the various strikes, our Party has proved, despite many weaknesses, its growing ability to lead the struggling workers. Our Party is now taking its first steps towards becoming a mass Communist Party. And our recent Central Committee Plenum, with its great stress upon shop work and the everyday struggle and immediate demands of the workers, clearly outlines the road we must follow to go on with the Party's revolutionary development.