

VANGUARD

AN ANARCHIST-COMMUNIST JOURNAL

Published by the "Vanguard" Group—45 West 17th Street, New York City

VOL. I, No. 7

APRIL, 1933

..FIVE CENTS

The Panic and its Aftermath

Overshadowing the startling developments in the Far-Eastern and German situations there loomed the spectre of the great banking crisis gripping the country with the fear of total ruin and economic disintegration. For more than a week the circulatory system of our economic life was almost at a standstill, the semi-paralyzed economic organism grasping convulsively for some artificial means of respiration in order to carry on its most elementary economy. Told repeatedly that the economic crisis had exhausted itself, had already reached its bottom, the country was taken aback at this new blow striking at the very foundation of our system. With the banks tottering, the railroads on the verge of bankruptcy, the great insurance companies beginning to give way, a spirit of panic swept over the country leading many to believe that we are already on the verge of total dissolution and collapse, that we are already witnessing the beginning of the end, the crumbling and caving in of the system.

But social systems do not collapse automatically. Left to themselves they survive somehow, drag on, muddle through at the terrific price of social degradation and decay. Symtomatic as this banking crisis is of the process of disintegration taking place within the very depths of our economy, It does not presage the end of it for the present moment. Something more is necessary for the latter — the existence of a revolutionary movement, and that is now lacking in this country. Without such a movement the crisis will right itself. We are going to muddle through this panic at the expense of millions of men, at the cost of wiped out savings, of a currency inflation the main burden of which will fall upon the shoulders of the great masses of working people. The system is righting itself, adjusting itself to a lowered tonus of vitality, a shrunken sphere of economic activity. And what if the bones of innumerable victims are ground in the process of this adjustment! Just another phase of the inevitable business cycle! Capitalism cannot function but at the price of human misery — this is the jungle law of its existence, holding true at every phase of its development: of the frenzied high spots of its prosperity period, and so much more so of the inevitable time of reckoning of its crises.

Like the other phases of this ever deepening crisis, the banking panic in itself will not bring about the automatic collapse of the capitalist system, but it will mark another important stage in the growth of its inner contradictions. The meaning of this panic is clear: the day of reckoning could not be kept off any longer, the deflation of values brought about by the crisis had to be faced and under the present conditions they could not but be charged to the account of the masses of the American working class. A system of governmental economies — slashing the wages of government employes, robbing of the crippled and maimed war veterans — the wiping out of the humble savings of millions of workers, the attack upon the living standards of the workers through the means of debased currency, — all that means a much narrower basis of consumption for the capitalist economy of America. And all that goes hand in hand with the greater concentration of financial power in the hands of the big banks who are the only ones to win out in this financial panic. An impoverished working class, an impoverished farming population at one end and the growth of capitalist surpluses at the other — this is the immediate result of the panic as well as of all the other phases of the crisis. Therein lies the significance of the panic which we went through: another land mark on the road of the utter strangulation and decay of the system another phase of the inevitable process of monopolistic degradation, leading inevitably to an imperialist struggle for markets. Our system is heading for an explosion and the panic is but one of the milestones on the rapid course toward the latter. S. X.

The Paris Commune

The Paris Commune was proclaimed on the 18th of March. It lived only seventy days, but during this brief period, much light was shed on many of the problems which are facing the revolutionary movement even today.

The Commune had no definite socialist character at the outset. The social reforms that were instituted by the Council of the Commune were at the beginning, petty-bourgeois in their nature. They did not alter the economic and social structure. While Paris was in the throes of revolt, the Council magnanimously proclaimed the remission of rents to April, 1871. The foundations of private property were left intact. The council did not seize the factories and warehouses, and made little or no provisions for feeding the populace. It declared the idea of equal pay for all public officials, it "paid the federates on the barricades 1s 3p, and themselves 12s 6p per day". (Kropotkin) The Council abolished night work for bakers, and showed much concern about the welfare of the workers, but did absolutely nothing about the fact that "elegantes and

fine gentlemen could spurn the confederates, and bid them go and sell their lives for a mere pittance, and leave their 'betters' to feast at their ease in fashionable restaurants." (Kropotkin)

The Council of the Commune was notorious for its inefficiency, petty politics and blindness. The Council entrusted the defense of Paris to incompetent blunderers, and was in reality an obstacle in the path of the defenders of the besieged city. So immersed were they in their endless squabbles that they were caught unawares, and woke up only when Thiers and his army were already surrounding the Hotel de Ville. (Lis-surguray)

Despite the fact that no body could have been more democratically chosen, it was out of touch with the real needs of the people. Jacobins, Blanquists, Collectivists, Radicals and bourgeoisie of all kinds, with conflicting points of view, thrown together in a parliament, each intent on outwitting the other, each scheming to take power for himself, each imagining that he is the revolution, while in reality, the revolution is crystalizing itself in *spite* of their attempts to destroy it. Is it any wonder that the masses lost interest in the Council of the Commune? Is it not significant that whereas 200,000 took part in the elections of the Council on March 26, less than 50,000 voted on April the 16th?

This should serve as a lesson to those who believe that a parliament can serve any purpose, but the destructive one of impeding the progress of a revolution. How many times has the same thing taken place since the Commune? The betrayals of the Social-Democrats in Germany where Fascism now reigns supreme, the events in England under MacDonald, The attempts of the "workers" government in Spain to stem the rising tide of revolution, all show that the Idea of Parliamentarianism is false, misleading and counter-revolutionary.

Speaking of the Council of the Commune, Malatesta said, "From the socialist point of view, it did nothing. It protected property, and if it had lasted longer, would have compelled to act against the people like all other governments." However, as is the case in all revolutionions, the masses are far more revolutionary than their "leaders". The government of Thiers was overthrown by a spontaneous uprising of the workers of Paris. The sections of Paris proclaimed the Commune, and, spurred on by the Bakuninists, and Militant Federalists, the workers grew more and more revolutionary and strove to deepen the revolution. They demanded the abolition of rent and the rationing of food. They undertook to operate and control the idle factories for the benefit of all. They took care of the wounded, organized relief, and made attempts to awaken the revolutionary spirit of the rest of the country:

The "Internationalists" understood the need for decentralization and local autonomy. They proposed to achieve unity through a federation of autonomous Communes instead of centralization and concentration of

power in the hands of the State. They realized that the standing army has always been the bulwark of reaction, and the Commune replaced the standing army by the National Militia, the people in arms. More and more was the power flowing from the Council of the Commune into the mass organizations of the sections of Paris.

While it is true that the Commune was primarily a political revolution, it had already begun to change the basic economic and social relationships when it was drowned in blood by the reaction. It was charged with anarchist principles especially in the latin countries. In proclaiming Free Communism as the watchword of the Spanish Revolution, the revolutionary movement of Spain was greatly influenced by the Paris Commune.

We can learn great tactical lessons from the experience of the Paris Commune. A Revolt that does not *immediately take the offensive*, that does not arouse the remainder of the country and does not *deepen* the revolution, must fail. The failure of the Commune in preventing Thiers from leaving Paris, and the failure to launch an offensive against Versailles as soon as he did leave, gave the reaction time to consolidate its forces against the isolated Paris Commune.

The workers in the Paris Commune lacked a clear conception of the nature and aims of a revolution. They lacked a Vanguard. The old International, split by the Marxians and crippled by the Franco-Prussian War, could do little to supply that need. More than half a century of the development of the class-struggle has taught that now, as never before must we develop a strong revolutionary Vanguard, that shall be capable of providing a program of action not only for the present, but also for the coming social upheavals.

The wholesale slaughter of the Communards should teach us that the reaction will stop at nothing in order to crush the revolutionary movement. We should be prepared to resist the onslaughts of the Capitalists and the State through every means at our disposal. Only the organized working class, intent on gaining power and determined that it will *under no circumstances relinquish* that power to any political party or group, can effectively combat the armed force of the reaction. Let us learn from the experiences of the German proletariat, which allowed itself to be led astray by false prophets, and dissolved its self-defense organizations, thus rendering themselves incapable of defense against the Fascist plague.

S. WEINER

The Economics of the Transition Period

The Social Revolution will have to reckon with the fact that capitalism will bequeath to it an economy whose various branches will be

at differing levels of development, and because of the unripeness of some of those branches, it will be impossible to COMMUNIZE not only a number of industrial enterprises, but also entire branches of production such as agriculture.

Only those branches of industry are ripe for communism in which labor has ALREADY been socialized by capitalism and where it is only a question of socializing ownership. This category embraces all the manufacturing and auxiliary industries. But those branches of industry where not only ownership, but labor is also individual, and some of the primary industries, agriculture for instance, are not sufficiently ripe for communism. In those countries, the road to communism lies in a direction opposite to the one of the manufacturing industry, where the transition is effected from collectivistic labor to collective ownership, while here collective ownership must be established first and then proceed to collectivized labor.

The socialization of ownership is a revolutionary, violent ACT, the success of which is conditioned upon force, but the socialization of labor is a PROCESS, which requires for its development a set of definite conditions and a certain period of time. That is why we may say that the Social Revolution will be able to introduce collective ownership at once in the whole country, but will not be able to do it in respect to LABOR. But collectivistic labor is the main base of communism, which is impossible of realization without the former.

In virtue of this indisputable fact, we are bound to have on the morrow of the social revolution two basic systems of economy, hostile to each other in their principle — the COMMUNISTIC and INDIVIDUALISTIC — and an intermediary system — the COOPERATIVE — serving as a transition to communism. The community, therefore, will be forced to set up a system of interrelations with the sector of individual economy which will further the latter's rapid and painless dissolution within a communistic society. Consequently, the economic system of the transition period, will be characterized as a dualistic one, that is, communism will exist alongside of individualism, the former holding the key positions.

Starting from this premise which I deem correct, I conceive the economic order of the transitional period in the following form:

A. THE SYSTEM OF COMMUNIST ECONOMY

All the branches of industry in which labor has ALREADY been socialized by capital are to be SYNDICALIZED, that is, they are to pass into the hands of the industrial labor organizations, united along the direct industrial line on the basis of the principle of FEDERALISM, which allows a full measure of administrative self-government to each link of the organisational chain.

The syndicalized industry is built upon the basis of communistic industrial relationships. The syndicalization embraces the entire manu-

facturing industry with the exception of handicraft and home industries;** the auxiliary industries, to which may be referred: transportation, postal service, telegraph, telephone, radio, communal services, medical and sanitary services, statistics and distribution, education, science, arts and theatre; also those branches of the primary industries the labor of which has already become socialized by capitalism, as for instance, those branches of extractive industries like coal, ore, metal mining, or forestry, fisheries and those agricultural economies in which labor, owing to a high degree of utilization of machinery, has already become socialized in the process of production.

The organizational apparatus of the communistic society is to be based upon self-governing factories, transformed into industrial communes. In its unfolded aspect this apparatus presents an economic FEDERATION, consisting of the following links:

- a) The lowest cell — THE SELF GOVERNING FACTORY, or the industrial commune
- b) THE INDUSTRIAL FEDERATION of FACTORIES-COMMUNES
- c) Local CONFEDERATIONS OF INDUSTRIAL FEDERATIONS
- d) THE NATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF LABOR or THE COUNCIL OF NATIONAL ECONOMY AND CULTURE.

The Industrial Commune is to be supplemented by the organization of a consumers' commune which is but the other side of the same coin, since production and consumption are inseparable. The consumers' commune, fulfilling the functions of estimating the needs of the population and of distribution, is made up of the consumers' cooperatives, the apparatus of which is utilized for that purpose. The organizational framework of the apparatus of the consumers' commune is made up of:

- a) HOUSE COMMITTEES, as the most elementary organs for the purpose of estimating and distributing,
- b) LOCAL FEDERATIONS
- c) NATIONAL CONFEDERATIONS.

Inasmuch as the products of economic activity are the general possession of the National Commune, every member has an equal right to it and the consumption is therefore organized upon the principle of — TO EACH ACCORDING TO HIS NEEDS. The realization of this principle in its full scope will depend upon the given wealth of the commune.

Thus the NATIONAL COMMUNE arises out of the SYNDICALIZED production built upon the basis of communistic industrial relationships.

B. THE SYSTEM OF INDIVIDUALIST ECONOMY

Outside of the Commune there will be numerous elements which will continue to function as individualist economies: craftsmen, home indus-

** In the United States the home industries are of no importance at all as compared to factory production. —Ed. note .

ry workers and the larger part of farmers.

As to the independent craftsmen and home industry workers, the principle of voluntary cooperation must be applied, leaving free room for initiative and also allowing the utilization of all the available advanced technique. United on the pattern of the syndicalized production of a commune, these branches of industry become a part of the respective bodies of the National Confederation of Labor and their economic relationships with the commune are established after the type of the relationships of the industrialist agricultural economies.

This principle of cooperation is applied to those economies which conduct their activities upon land which has become socialized, exempt from the realm of capitalist relationships, that is, ceasing to be an object of sale, purchase and inheritance deals.

Just as the various branches of production of the Commune will be in the hands of the respective Industrial Unions, so will the land itself, land settlement and distribution, scientific agriculture, be managed by the Union of Agricultural Communities, as the constituent parts of the National Confederation of Labor.

The agricultural economy of the transitional period will be represented by three types: a) the individual, b) the cooperative, c) the communist which will be a constituent part of the National Commune. The predominant types will be of course the individual economy* in which there will prevail industrial relationships based upon the right of private ownership of the product of labor.

The Commune does not enter into any economic relations with single individual households and, therefore, the cooperatives are to become the **SOLE INTERMEDIARY** between the Commune and the individual household. The cooperatives will have to embrace millions of individual economies. The cooperative apparatus will be of the following type:

- a) Agricultural Associations for buying and marketing
- b) The Federations of Agricultural Associations
- c) The Highest Council of Cooperative Associations

The cooperative organs of the individual households enter into the closest contact with the estimating and distributing organs of the Commune which establishes a **BANK OF EXCHANGE AND CREDIT** and a large number of filial branches. This bank conducts all the operations of exchange and credit within the country and outside of it.

Thus the individual household delivers voluntarily their surpluses to their own cooperative associations which discharge the functions of purchasing and marketing. The cooperative associations deliver their

* This is true in respect to most of the European countries. In the U. S. the enormous application of the machine technique to agriculture has already made it ripe for the communization of some of its branches, like the cultivation of cereals, for instance. —Ed. note.

products to the Communal Banks or to its own branches, and receive all the necessary products and the money tokens of the Commune on the basis of barter or money exchange. The free market, speculation, commercial capital, and commerce itself are to be abolished.

Since, along with the commune, the individual economies will use the transport facilities, the post-office, telephone, telegraph, radio, schools, medical, sanitary and other communal services, the Commune will have to demand that they contribute their share towards the upkeep of those services in the form of a tax. The size of the assessment and its principles must be defined by the CONGRESS of the THE NATIONAL CONFEDERATION. The collecting of this tax will be done by the Communal Bank and its branches in the process of exchange.

G. MAXIMOFF

EDITOR'S NOTE — *We want to draw the attention of our comrades to this article on the concrete problems of social reconstruction. It is but a small part of what we hope our movement will be able to issue soon in the form of a pamphlet. The success of Libertarian Communism will depend on the degree in which it will be able to concretize its basic tenets in this given historic epoch.*

The scheme suggested by Comrade Maximoff gives the main outlines of this task and should therefore be welcome as one of the first steps in this direction. But it has to be translated into the language of American realities suited to the advance stage of American development.

Upon the enlargement of our magazine, we shall open up a discussion in its pages on the American aspects of this scheme, a discussion in which all the comrades sharing the basic views of Libertarian Communism will be invited to participate.

The Twilight of the A. F. of L.

Recent disclosures in the press concerning the inner corruption in the American Federation of Labor, while mirroring the general decadence of the capitalist system at this stage of development, is a particularly open and glaring manifestation of the corruption, betrayal and labor-racketeering that has been engaged in by the boot-licking labor lieutenants of the capitalist class in a more or less covert fashion since the very inception of the organization.

It is but the logical unfolding of events that such revelations as the Kaplan affair, in Moving Picture Operators Local 306, and the sentencing of Commerford, of Local 125 International Union of Operating Engineers, should come to light at a time of extreme and widespread economic distress resulting from the present crisis of capitalism. The intensified competition between the rival gangs of union racketeers for the shrinking spoils of the labor racket, which culminated in gun-play and

court battles, was just as inevitable as imperialist wars between rival capitalist nations — an inexorable dictate of history resolving the contradictions and over-ripe antagonisms contained within all institutions of the capitalist system.

While these revelations may be regarded by the naive as isolated instances of individual corruption, it really signifies the general process of disintegration of an organization which has lost its historic function. This disintegration process manifests itself in the more prosperous "skill monopolies", masquerading as labor "unions", as an out-right war between antagonistic groupss of "labor Union" bandits closely interlocked and forming a tight-knit net-work of professional plug-uglies, ward-heeler thugs and under-world gangsters; whereas, the decay of the A. F. of L. has assumed another aspect in those affiliate bodies which had, apparently, more truly represented the aspirations of the American working class, and consequently formed the real "labor front" of the A. F. of L. In these organizations the end is manifested as a genuine fermentation from below and, as in the U. M. W. of A., portends the first gropings of the militants of these organizations toward a unionism with a revolutionary ideology.

The A. F. of L., in performing its historic role of serving the material interests of a relatively thin layer of the American working class for a comparatively short historic period, could only be of a very limited usefulness because of its narrow economic base. Founded upon craft skill and only concerned with perfecting a monopoly over their particular commodity, the organization was doomed from the beginning to be nothing other than a bargain counter over which skilled labor was collectively bartered by "union" representatives, who generally accepted a corrupt consideration from the buyers as a reward for betraying their own members and preventing the organization from broadening its base and extending its scope to the larger unskilled section of the working class. Furthermore, the A. F. of L., in sacrificing the interests of the larger section of the working class was also a tool of the bourgeoisie in betraying the ultimate goal of the working class for the reward of immediate and temporary gains for the few, thereby constituting itself a bribed section of the proletariat and a bar to industrial solidarity.

The A. F. of L. could not perform its historic scabbing mission without appealing to the material interests and baser instincts of the favored few, without, at the same time, helping to stifle the growing class-consciousness and checking the power of class solidarity, the mightiest weapon of the proletariat. All of this logically led to the development of a spirit of smuggness and self-complacency in the ranks of the membership, which necessarily cultivated the growth of burocratic centralization of control and the consequent strangulation of the revolutionary elements which came to the fore from time to time. Yet, withal and

strangely enough, the A. F. of L. never lost an opportunity to make capital for its own purposes, out of the periodic industrial wars that sprang up spontaneously out of the unendurable misery. But when these purposes had been served the workers found themselves duped and sold out. However, in the measure that the A. F. of L. stifled the revolutionary elements it lost the momentum and driving force necessary for its own expansion, and as a result, even in the more favorable periods it ceased to draw in workers in large numbers. Ephemeral gains made during the World War, for instance, melted away and were permanently lost in the post-war slump.

The onward sweep of the machine, the tremendous increase in the body of general technological knowledge, the acceleration and widening of the scope of its practical application in recent years, in a word, the cumulative effects of the industrial revolution in the last period, while displacing enormous numbers of the working class and rendering them relatively superfluous, has, also, been responsible for the disappearance of skill and craft, which was the economic base of the A. F. of L. It is obvious then that the A. F. of L. has lost even its limited historical usefulness and by clinging to the structural forms and ideological impediments that were determined by conditions of a former period, it has become, an anachronism as well as fertile field for the parasitic growth of gangsterism and official corruption. Nor, does it stop here; as the general crisis of capitalism deepens and the clash of class interests becomes more intensified, with the proletariat engaged more and more in revolutionary mass action, the A. F. of L. will come out more openly and brazenly as the counter-revolutionary support to the decadent bourgeoisie. And that is why the silly attempts of the various groups to win over the official bureaucracy to more progressive policies are foredoomed to failure. Considered in the light of the recent disclosures and from the point of view of historic usefulness we can come to no conclusion other than that of the A. F. of L. has long ceased to be a rallying ground of the workers, and, therefore, cannot be used as a medium of organization, even in the more limited sense.

It is only on the basis of revolutionary industrial unionism, embodying in its fundamental principles the idea of the Social Revolution as its concrete task, visualizing its task in the light of the great role which the economic organization must play in the process of Social Reconstruction — a unionism free from the poisonous virus of parliamentarianism, and not hamstrung by political allegiances — it is only on the basis of such a type of unionism that the militant workers can base their hopes.

The twilight, following the black night of betrayal and corruption of the A. F. of L., signalizes the dawn of a revolutionary unionism that shall be, the basis of social organization of To-morrow!

H. S. SIGMOND

The Infallible Trotskyites

With customary Bolshevik infallibility as a basis and "historical-materialist" concoctions as a prop for this infallibility the "Left Opposition Gives Estimate of Spanish Anarchist Putschism" in the Feb. 13th and 15th issues of the *The Militant*. The Executive Committee of the Spanish Communist Left takes credit for this truly historical document — historical from the viewpoint of Trotskyist distortion of Spanish events. However, we thank the *Militant* most heartily for offering us this splendid opportunity for clarifying certain misconceptions regarding the Anarchist position in relation to the recent Spanish events.

In its general estimate of the recent outbreak, the Executive Committee of the Spanish Left referred to the Figols outbreak of the last year as an event of great revolutionary significance. Somehow it did not explain why the recent outbreak should deserve another evaluation than that of the movement of a year ago. This only confirms our opinion of the general kind of retrospective wisdom which the Trotskyites often flaunt in revolutionary struggles. We still remember that immediately after the Figols insurrection, Schachtman, following the example set by *The Militant*, in his speeches, ridicules this insurrection as a typical Anarchist outbreak ("bedchamber revolution", he called it) characterized by its customary Utopianism and lack of realistic approach.

The strategic genius of Schachtman is not needed to tell us that without support such sporadic outbreaks are doomed to failure. But what he and his ilk do not understand is the social significance of these uprisings until they actually manifest themselves. They cannot realize that millions of workers and peasants on the point of revolt cannot be disciplined. They still conceive of the Revolution as the march of a proletarian army through the country, leaving death to the bourgeoisie and emancipation for the proletariat in its wake, despite the lessons the events of the German Revolution should have taught them. No revolution is possible without being proceeded by sporadic outbreaks of the type of the Figols insurrection, Casa Viejas, and those others recently occurring in Spain. It is these very outbreaks that mobilize the workers around the defence of the Revolution. It is these attempts at immediate communalization of lands and the means of production that rise up as a symbol of workers' and peasants' emancipation and control. It is the slogans arising out of these conflicts that set the course the Revolution will take during the transition period of Socialist Reconstruction. It is the spontaneous release of the mass initiative that sets the tempo carrying the Revolution thru the period of Reconstruction to a successful conclusion.

And yet the authors of the "estimate" proceed to ask, "Did the last insurrection have any possibility of triumph?" Was the Paris Commune

a guaranteed affair? Was the December uprising in Moscow in 1905 guaranteed? Were all the sporadic outbreaks which preceded the October 1917 Revolt in Russia, such as the seizure of land by peasants in small out of the way places and attempts to place far away cities like Tzaritzin (Stalingrad) under Soviet Control, assured of triumph? No insurrection is assured of success, and despite the best laid plans of a Revolutionary Vanguard sporadic outbreaks will occur. Revolutions are made by the masses with the aid of their revolutionary mass organizations, and not by a political clique directing the great masses of insurrectionists as a general would his army. The latter is a bourgeoisie conception of history.

And then, to cover up its naive misinterpretations, the Executive Committee of the Spanish Communist Left states further, "It was in truth, to be feared that the Anarchists already disillusioned with the Republic, should take advantage of the first manifestations of the resurgence of the proletariat.....to hurl itself into an insurrectionary adventure....." When did the Anarchists have illusions about the Republic? It is true that some of the old reformist leaders of the C.N.T. — "the thirty" — had such illusions, but weren't they whole-heartedly condemned by the great bulk of Anarchists and haven't they been entirely eliminated for their reformist learnings? On the other hand, wasn't it Trotsky who insisted upon taking advantage of the democratic illusions of the masses and deepening them in order to utilize these illusions for the seizure of power?

Resurgence? Why, can the Anarchists in Spain be separated from the Spanish proletariat? The C.N.T. has proclaimed Anarchist slogans, tactics and aims. The expressed goal of the C.N.T. is "Libertarian Communism" There is no revolutionary activity outside of the C.N.T. If there were, then the Trotskyites would be found there and not, as they are, in the C.N.T.

Naturally enough, claiming to be the only true Vanguard of the proletariat, the Executive Committee of the Communist Left would insist that "Anarchism is not, and cannot be capable of leading the proletariat to victory". Anarchism does not intend to "lead" the proletariat (in the sense in which the Bolsheviks mean — the usurpation of the fruits of victory for their own party gains). But even the omniscient Trotskyites cannot deny the fact that the C.N.T. is playing and will continue to play an even more decisive role in the Spanish Revolution. And, as has already been pointed out, the C.N.T. is permeated with the principles and doctrines of Anarchism, as are the Spanish revolutionary workers and peasants.

The height of Trotskyist distortion of fact is manifested by the following: "Instead of conducting a campaign for drawing closer the railway workers of the General Union of Workers (UGT) — who are the majority — for taking advantage of the discontent produced by the

monstrously cynical policy of the Socialists, the C.N.T. makes impossible all reconciliation by proposing to go on strike under the slogan of the establishment of Libertarian Communism." This statement becomes doubly poisonous when we consider that it comes directly from Spain and from "revolutionists" presumably in the thick of it. Firstly, it is a deliberate and malicious prevarication that the C.N.T. does not seek a closer understanding with the rank and file of the U.G.T. It most certainly does and as a result whole locals and federations of the U.G.T. split off from the present body and either joined the C.N.T. outright, or formed autonomous, semi-syndicalist unions. The Syndicalists, however, know that there can be no understanding with the corrupt Socialist leadership of the U. G. T. The yellow Social-Fascists are playing a despicable role in Spain as everywhere else. During the preparation of the railway strike, a great effort was made by the Syndicalist workers to work out a common platform of action with the railway workers of the U.G.T. and a great deal was accomplished in this respect.

Secondly, it is another typical Trotskyite statement of "fact" that the C.N.T. would cooperate with the rank and file workers of the U.G.T. only under the slogan of the establishment of Libertarian Communism. The authors of the "Estimate of Anarchist Putschism" know, or should know, that that rumor was a Machiavellian act on the part of the Government to intimidate the rank and file railway workers. The Government knew the force such a united front would manifest in the threatening railway strike. The C.N.T., in order to counteract this provocative rumor issued a well-known (discounting the Trotskyites) manifesto, reassuring the U.G.T. railway workers that the participation of the C.N.T. would not make the strike a purely Anarchist affair.

Incidentally, how was it that the Russian October revolt was undertaken without the sanction of the Railway Union of Russia. The leadership of the union sabotaged the uprising. (Read Trotsky's "Russian Revolution") Where was the united front there?

The document in the militant concludes with an appeal "Against repression and reaction. For a National Congress of the C.N.T. For Communist unity." This refers to the expulsion of the Communist locals and the clique of the reformist Syndicalists of "the thirty". The C.N.T. is based upon the principles and tactics of Direct Revolutionary Action and any local which falls into the hands of politicians, whether they become Communists or yellow Syndicalist, and which because of this is drawn into parliamentary political action, automatically places itself outside of the C.N.T.

The intensification of the revolutionary movement centering about the C.N.T. (read our chronique on Spain), which is going strong, is proving that the latest events, far from halting the course of the Revolutionary struggles, have given them an impetus. It was sporadic and

was not meant to be a general revolt. It was like July 4th in Petrograd, 1917. It was one of those outbreaks the value of which cannot be measured by temporary setbacks. Already Casas Viejas is becoming a symbol of revolutionary hope of many a Spanish worker. And the time is not very far, when the Trotskyites will be forced to use their customary hindsight in characterizing the recent outbreaks as the great milestones of revolutionary development, just as they did so retrospectively in regard to the Figols insurrection.

GRANT LOWRY

International Notes

[EDITOR'S NOTE — *Spain and Germany! Two poles of socialistic development, two opposite currents of labor struggles taking their course at the great divide of the First International. Revolutionary intransigence and opportunistic grovelling, individual rebellion and socialistic goose-stepping — for years the latter had been held up as the great exemplary type of movement to be followed by the international proletariat. Outside of the anarchists, who was interested in the titanic struggles of the Spanish proletariat? Don Quixotism, the Spanish urge for heroics, visionary wind mills! Germany — that's the thing! It took the threefold betrayal of the socialist cause by the opportunistic German Social Democracy to show to the International proletariat the bareness of its pretensions. 1914, 1918, 1933 — the great milestones on its course of utter debunking. And in the light of impotent failure of the German Social Democracy, the great struggle waged by the Spanish proletariat assumes a deepened significance. Ex Hiberia lux! The great dawn of revolutionary hope is rising in the peninsula and it may yet be strong enough to dispel the heavy gloom of the Fascist reaction spreading from Socialistically bankrupt Germany.*]

The National Plenum of the C.N.T.

THE CONFEDERATION DECIDED NOT TO TOLERATE REPRESSIONS ANY LONGER, DECLARING ITSELF READY TO ANSWER WITH A REVOLUTIONARY GENERAL STRIKE ALL OVER SPAIN

The revolutionary outbreak on January 8th and the brutal action of the public authorities in repressing the outburst; the revolting and savage manner in which the assault upon Casas Viejas was affected; the beating up of the arrested comrades; the persecution of the press and the comrades of the C.N.T.; the passing of exceptional laws; the closing of the headquarters of the Syndicates; the setting up of military courts to deal with the outbreaks; the actualities of the revolutionary movement of Spain, — all that was reviewed by the national delegates re-

presenting nearly a million and a half of organized workers of the industries, transport, and fields.

All the regional delegates told of the surprise produced among the workers of the Confederation by the starting of the revolutionary movement on January 8th (a movement called to a sudden halt for strategic reasons). The delegates also stated that they brought with them express instructions not to allow any further repressions. The examining of all the possibilities brought out clearly the fact that the C. N. T. is stronger than ever. Notwithstanding the increasing difficulties imposed from above by the rivalry of the Socialist Party, the assets of the organization are rapidly growing. With the centers closed, the records confiscated, with numerous obstacles placed in the way of our propaganda — with all that, nothing discourages us, nothing stops the forward march of the C.N.T. Among the agricultural workers of Andalucia, the movement toward the Confederation has gained such momentum that it is impossible to satisfy their demand for membership cards. Of course, what matters in this case is the fact that we attract self-conscious, fully-developed individuals, that each of these proletarians carries in his heart the Anarchist ideal advocated by the C.N.T., that he is ready to struggle for Libertarian Communism. This, of course, in the present moment of great revolutionary passions matters more than mere dues and the routine work.

This is taking place in Andalucia as well as in other provinces! In Extremadura, in the two Castillas, in Aragon, Navarra, Catalonia, Galicia, and Asturias. From north to south, from east to west, the workers flock to the C.N.T. center around it, invigorate it and push it towards revolutionary action.

Everyone can see it for himself. He has but to go to the people, in the villages as well as in the cities, the estates, and the factories and talk to the downtrodden, despised and exploited. He will hear everywhere these people regret the fact that a mere accident should have precipitated events of January 8th "for it was not the proper moment". But our forces remain intact. The final conflict is irrepressible, whether it be soon or later, although the stupidities of the government may lead to an early outbreak.

The National Confederation of Labor (C.N.T.) is on the spot, ready for the struggle, intent upon victory. It can mobilize more than six million workers who will respond to its call for struggle.

The reports of the delegates were unanimous. To mention one is to know all of them. Here for instance is the report of the delegate from the province of Levante: "The organization of Levante is of the opinion that we should not tolerate repressions any longer, that the hour for concerted action has arrived and that if the persecutions of the C.N.T. do not cease it will be necessary to call within the shortest time a gen-

eral revolutionary strike and be ready for all the consequences." This is the decision of the Spanish workers of the C.N.T., expressed thru their delegates at the National Plenum of the Confederation just held.

From the "C.N.T. of February 4th (The official organ of the National Confederation of Labor—Confederacion Nacional del Trabajo).

[ED. NOTE—According to the C.N.T. of Feb. 25th the organization has unfolded a vigorous agitation in favor of the General Strike. Monster mass meetings are held, stirring appeals and proclamations issued, the working class is roused again to new struggles and conquests. We are on the eve of great events in Spain. Let every revolutionary worker keep his ear to the ground!]

— BOOK REVIEW —

"For Revolution" by V. F. Calverton John Day Pamphlet

THERE are several reasons to be given in answer to the question of whether a revolution is necessary. The degradation of the capitalist economy, the decay of the antiquated political institutions of parliamentary democracy, the need of a new form of libertarian social organization capable of effecting the necessary change towards a more progressive economy, the dynamics of the class struggle, leading inevitably to an explosion,—all this should be brought out and stated clearly in a pamphlet written for the specific purpose of overcoming the prejudice of the American mass against the idea of a revolution. These prejudices are not moral in their nature, nor are they mainly due to the difficulty of reconciling the revolutionary idea with American traditions. But to Mr. Calverton, objections of that kind seem to be the most important ones, since it is the refutation of the latter that occupies such a prominent place in his pamphlet. He seems to be very anxious to cast the halo of American traditions around the revolutionary idea, to sanctify it by precedents of American history and opinions of revered literary figures. He approaches the whole problem from the point of view of reflected values, which loom very large in the eyes of those sheltered groups of the American intelligenzia to whom Mr. Calverton's appeal is mainly directed. He does not answer the fundamental problems which are of such vital concern to the great mass of wage workers who are cruelly exposed to the impact of social realities. These problems revolve around the question of the possibility of finding a way out of the present debacle other than the precipitous revolutionary change of social institutions. It is on the basis of those questions that the workers will be won over to the revolutionary movement and not because they are concerned with historical traditions and precedents.

There is one precedent in which they may be very much interested, but then the approach will be made from an angle which is utterly foreign to Mr. Calverton. They may ask themselves whether the pattern of the Russian precedent must be blindly followed, whether there might not be another way of making a revolution, more in harmony with the popular hopes and aspirations, more in accord with the ideals of a revolutionary democracy. But then Mr. Calverton will have to travel a much longer way on his road of revolutionary self-education before being able to answer these questions satisfactorily.

—SENEX

This issue is late owing to unavoidable typographical delays—Ed.Note

