

THE

WORKERS OF THE WORLD - UNITE!



Communist

THE 7th WORLD CONGRESS

DUTT REPLIES TO CRITICS

THE LABOUR PARTY IN U.S.A.

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THE EVE OF THE SEVENTH CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

THE Seventh World Congress of the Communist International will be of enormous significance for the whole of the International revolutionary movement.

The importance of the Congress will chiefly consist in the fact that, on the basis of an analysis of the enormous class changes that have taken place during the period that has elapsed since the Sixth World Congress, it will reveal to millions of proletarians, toilers of the East, the West, and America, the colonies and semi-colonies, the broad REVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVE of emancipation from capitalist slavery, from the horrors of the crisis of capitalism, fascism and the impending war, the perspective of the MATURING OF THE REVOLUTIONARY CRISIS OF THE CAPITALIST WORLD, THE BEGINNING OF A NEW ROUND OF REVOLUTIONS AND WARS.

This perspective of the Communist International stands opposed to the perspective of poverty, slavery, annihilation and fascist barbarity, which world reaction will bring if it is successful in curbing the working class and the toilers.

This perspective of the Comintern stands opposed to the "perspective" of the Second International, of world social-democracy which, at the time of the Sixth Congress, taught the masses to expect the prolonged prosperity of "organised" capitalism, and is now directing the masses to base their calculations on the prolonged victory of fascism, on the recession of the revolutionary movement.

There is no doubt that the most important task of the Congress will be to point out THOSE PATHS which must be taken in the situation of to-day, in order to ensure victory during the second round of revolutions and wars. The most important task of the Congress will be to analyse the new situation which has arisen since the Sixth Congress on the basis of the accumulated experience, and on using the broadest self-criticism, to define the NEW TACTICAL TASKS, and, first and foremost, the tasks of the UNITED FRONT TACTICS in the struggle against the offensive of capital, against fascism and war, and on basis of the united proletarian front, the tasks of establishing a powerful people's battle front against fascism and war in all capitalist countries.

* * *

What is the situation in which the Seventh Congress of the Comintern will meet ?

The seven years which have passed since the Sixth Congress of the Comintern have been a period of TREMENDOUS CLASS CHANGES, characterised by two

opposite lines of development—the VICTORIOUS DEVELOPMENT OF THE U.S.S.R., AND THE CONTINUED DECLINE AND FURTHER DECAY OF THE CAPITALIST WORLD. Precisely these years have been the years of most intense STRUGGLE, OF COMPETITION BETWEEN TWO SYSTEMS—the Socialist and the Capitalist—a competition in which Socialism has come out victorious. This victory has had a deep revolutionising effect upon the minds of millions. It is precisely this historic space of time that has clearly demonstrated, in sharper relief than before, the advantages of the new Socialist system, and the utter bankruptcy of the capitalist system.

The decisive point in the relation between the two systems during the period from the Sixth to the Seventh Congresses WAS THE FINAL AND IRREVOCABLE VICTORY OF SOCIALISM IN THE U.S.S.R.

But the victory of Socialism in the U.S.S.R. is the victory of the proletarians of all countries. This is why we have every right to say that THE VICTORY OF SOCIALISM IN THE U.S.S.R. IS THE SECOND VICTORY SINCE THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION of the international proletariat, is a tremendous change in the relation of class forces in favour of Communism. It is precisely this victory, and the growing might of the U.S.S.R., which are THE CHIEF FACTORS to-day which intensify the shattering of the foundations of the whole of the capitalist system, the deepest cause of the more acute sharpening of the world crisis of capitalism, and which are the corner-stones of the maturing of the new revolutionary crisis.

Can there be any doubt that the successes in the U.S.S.R. increase among the broad masses of capitalist countries the will to overthrow capitalism ?

"To-day," said Lenin in his speech in May, 1921, "it is our economic policy that has most influence upon the international revolution . . . On this arena the struggle is now taking place on a world scale. If we solve this task, we shall have won on an international scale for sure and for always." (Vol. XXVI., pp. 410-411, Russ. Ed.)

The leading section of the Communist International—the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, headed by Comrade Stalin, the mighty leader of the proletariat and of the oppressed peoples throughout the world, HAS SOLVED this task irrevocably, once and for all, thus predetermining the victory of the world proletarian revolution.

More and more obvious is becoming the EVER-GROWING INFLUENCE of Socialist Construction in the U.S.S.R. over the fate of world capitalism and over the development of the liberation movement of the

world proletariat and the peoples of the colonies and dependent countries. The conviction that it is necessary to fight for Soviet Power, to overthrow the yoke of the capitalist system, is to-day penetrating more and more deeply into the ranks of the broad masses, in so far as they are actually feeling the growth of Socialism in the U.S.S.R., are actually seeing how a society without classes, without oppression, without exploitation, can be built up, and how classes must be destroyed. The proletariat of the capitalist countries are aware of the advantage of the Socialist System, such as is being realised in the U.S.S.R., when they compare the deep economic crisis, the growth of unprecedented unemployment and poverty in their own countries, with the U.S.S.R., where not only is crisis unknown, but where, on the contrary, there is a mighty wage of economic progress; where Magnitogorsk, Dneiprogos, Kuzbas, etc., have been created; where tremendous tractor works, a chemical and aviation industry, etc., have been established; where unemployment has been abolished and the material position of the workers is improving from year to year. It is enough to call to mind the victory of the Five Year Plan. In his historic report at the joint Plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission of the C.P.S.U., in January, 1933, Comrade Stalin, summing up the results of the First Five Year Plan, said:

“... the capitalist countries are pregnant with the proletarian revolution and precisely because they are pregnant with the proletarian revolution, the bourgeoisie would have liked to find in the failure of the Five-Year Plan a fresh argument against revolution, whereas, on the other hand, the proletariat is striving to find, and indeed does find in the successes of the Five-Year Plan a fresh argument in favour of revolution, against the bourgeoisie of the whole world.

“THE SUCCESSES OF THE FIVE-YEAR PLAN MOBILISE THE REVOLUTIONARY FORCES OF ALL COUNTRIES AGAINST CAPITALISM—SUCH IS THE INDISPUTABLE FACT.

“There cannot be any doubt that the international revolutionary significance of the Five-Year Plan is really immeasurable.” (J. Stalin, *The Results of the First Five-Year Plan*.)

The workers also feel the advantages of the Socialist System when they see that, while fascist terror and oppression are growing throughout the world, in the U.S.S.R., a new epoch of Soviet democracy is beginning. The masses see that the U.S.S.R. is the freest country in the world, that the U.S.S.R. alone is the bulwark against world reaction. And, indeed, what would be the appearance of the world today if there were no U.S.S.R.—no outpost standing in opposition to fascist barbarity and violence?

And while the menace of a new bloody butchery hangs over the world, the only country that is consistently pursuing a policy of peace is the U.S.S.R. which has become the centre of gravity of all people and all countries, the stronghold of all the toilers against the menace of war. All this taken together

is having a particular influence upon the social-democratic, reformist workers, the more so since this influence comes at a time when the capitalist world is passing through a deep decline.

The Congress is faced with the task of again emphasizing with all its force that thought which is already penetrating deep into the minds of the toiling masses, namely, the need to defend and strengthen the might of the U.S.S.R. Just as in time of peace, so IN TIME OF WAR, THE ACTIONS OF EVERY REVOLUTIONARY ORGANISATION MUST BE DETERMINED BY THE INTERESTS OF STRENGTHENING THE MIGHT OF THE U.S.S.R. AS THE BASE OF WORLD SOCIALIST REVOLUTION. THE ENEMY OF THE U.S.S.R. IS THE CHIEF ENEMY OF ALL who desire the victory of Socialism, the victory of the world proletariat.

As the Bolsheviks indicated, out of relative stabilisation, there inevitably came the crisis, the end of capitalist stabilisation. The hopes of the bourgeoisie and the prospects put forward by their agent, social-democracy, have been mercilessly defeated by living actualities. The world economic crisis, which began in 1929, reaching its lowest depth in 1932, shook the foundations of capitalism, threw millions of workers into poverty, and ruined the peasantry and the urban petty-bourgeoisie.

The pressure of the capitalists upon the working class and upon their wages, the increased rationalisation that has been introduced, the increase in unemployment—all this has REVOLUTIONISED the situation, has intensified the struggle of classes, and urged on the workers to new class battles. Big class battles have taken place (the Ruhr, Lodz, the strike of textile workers and miners in France, the strikes in India, etc.).

At the same time, the revolutionary movement in India, in Indo-China, in Indonesia, on the Philippines, in Africa, and other parts of the world, has sometimes taken on the form of national wars of liberation from the imperialist yoke and colonial exploitation. The most decisive factor, of course, was the beginning of the Soviet revolution in China, the formation of the Chinese Red Army, and the creation of Soviet regions. The establishment of a Soviet Government on part of the territory of China is of the greatest historic importance, China, with its many multi-millions; China, that has suffered so much, the China of the workers and peasants, has found, in the Soviets, the only power capable of freeing the toilers from their double yoke.

A new centre of attraction has grown up, in the form of the Chinese Soviet People's Republic, for all colonial and semi-colonial peoples who are waging a struggle for their emancipation.

All these revolutionary processes during the first years of the world economic crisis were proof OF THE SHARPENING OF THE INTERNAL CONTRADICTIONS OF

CAPITALISM, OF THE RISE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT OF THE WORKING CLASS AGAINST THE CAPITALIST REGIME DURING THE FIRST YEARS OF THE WORLD ECONOMIC CRISIS.

However, on looking back, we can say that, in consequence of the treacherous rôle played by social-democracy, which took upon itself the task of "curing capitalism," in consequence of the influence which the reformist trade unions had over the workers, THE REFORMISTS WERE SUCCESSFUL IN HOLDING BACK THE WORKING CLASS DURING THE PERIOD OF THE GREATEST SHARPENING OF THE WORLD ECONOMIC CRISIS FROM THE BATTLES WHICH THEY COULD AND SHOULD HAVE UNDERTAKEN. The Communists had a strong influence over the movement of the unemployed. But the movement of the unemployed, precisely because of the influence of social-democracy, did not have the support of the workers engaged in industry. As a result, the movement of the unemployed also began to decline a little later.

But this is not all. In so far as the forces of the working class were weakened by social-democracy, the proletariat was not in a position to exert the necessary influence over the revolutionary movement of the peasantry. As a result, capitalism was able to improve its position somewhat, at the expense of the workers, the peasants and the peoples of the economically weak countries and of the colonies. The world economic crisis develops into the depression of a special kind.

However, the transition of the crisis into the depression of a special kind did not mean the end of the economic crisis, and a transition towards economic boom. The development of the economic situation in 1934 showed a considerable drop in production in several of the most important capitalist countries. The new capital investments, and the restoration of basic capital were extremely insignificant. There was apparent an obvious tendency for the depression of a special kind to be prolonged.

* * *

How did the transition from crisis to the depression affect the revolutionary working class movement ?

The transition from the lowest point reached by production, by the industrial crisis to the special kind of depression did not lead to a "depression" of the revolutionary movement, which had begun to increase during the period of the world economic crisis. It is precisely DURING THE PERIOD OF DEPRESSION that we have the BIGGEST BATTLES OF THE WORKING CLASS AND TOILING PEASANTRY since the time of the Sixth Congress (Austria, France, Spain, Poland, peasant risings in Galicia, etc., etc).

An especially clear manifestation of the period of sharper class battles that had arrived was the DEVELOPMENT of the revolution in China, the revolution in Spain, which began in 1931, and reached its

highest level of development in 1934, in the armed uprising and formation of Soviets in Asturias and Biscay, and the revolutionary upsurge which began in America, which was the main fortress of world capitalism at the time of the Sixth Congress, etc. All these facts taken together rendered it possible for the Comintern at the 13th Plenum which took place precisely in the period of depression to speak of "a ripening of the revolutionary crisis of the capitalist system."

The explanation of this fact must be sought for in the following :

FIRSTLY, it was precisely in this period that the toilers began to feel particularly keenly the consequences of the crisis. The bourgeoisie were able to improve their business affairs ; profits increased. But, at the same time, capitalist exploitation also increased. Despite the increase in production, the permanent army of unemployed, which was two and even three times greater than the number of unemployed before the crisis, remained. The agrarian crisis continued, as did also the mass pauperisation of the poor and even the middle peasants.

SECONDLY, the growth of fascism and the danger of war throughout the world, and in particular, the victory of fascism in Germany, led to a tremendous change in the minds of the rank and file of the social-democratic and reformist workers. The establishment of fascist dictatorship in Germany, which hampered the revolutionary struggle of the German proletariat, had, at the same time, A REVOLUTIONISING INFLUENCE over the workers, not only of Germany, but of other capitalist countries, since it revealed without a shadow of doubt all that fascism brings to the toilers.

The reply to the growth of the danger of fascism was, as compared with the period of the Sixth Congress, the tremendous intensification and the urge for unity of action, the development of a united proletarian front against fascism in Germany, and in all the other capitalist countries, and against the offensive of capital, against the menace of war.

The proletarian united front is the tactic of uniting the proletariat for joint struggle against the class enemy, that mobilises the broad masses to resist the offensive of capital, fascism and war ; it is the chief form of drawing the basic masses of the social-democratic and reformist workers over to the side of proletarian revolution. WE ARE STILL AT THE VERY BEGINNING OF A BROAD ORGANISATION OF THE UNITED FRONT, but already, in the majority of the Sections of the Comintern, a change can be seen. Already to-day, the success of the united front in France, Austria, Spain, and other countries, has brilliantly shown what can be achieved by militant workers through unity of action.

In the struggle against fascism, the proletariat are employing higher forms of struggle than those which were to be observed previously. The proletariat now does not, as in Germany, retreat before fascism without putting up a fight, but retaliates against the fascist offensive either by ARMED struggle (in Austria in February, 1934, and Spain in October 1934), or by using the weapon of the GENERAL POLITICAL STRIKE (February, 1934 in France). And if the heroic armed struggle of the Spanish and Austrian proletariat did not lead to victory, it was because social-democracy had the support of the majority of the working class when the battles took place.

The experiences of Austria and Spain have shown the workers of all countries that there can be no victory over the bourgeoisie without making a determined break, not only with the Right wing, but also with "Left" social-democracy, without the working class rallying to the leadership of the Communist Party.

THIRDLY, the bankruptcy of the two largest parties of the Second International—the German and Austrian social-democracy, which began the crisis within the Second International—weakened the retarding rôle which social-democracy plays in regard to the working class. Considerable sections of the social-democratic workers, many of the lower social-democratic organisations, have entered the struggle in spite of the resistance of their leaders. Under the pressure brought to bear upon them by the masses, the reformist trade unions are more and more frequently compelled to go into strike action.

And finally, FOURTHLY, the most decisive factor determining the sharpening of class battles was the final, irrevocable victory of Socialism in the U.S.S.R. As a result of this, the U.S.S.R. has become the decisive factor which helps to mature the idea of storming capitalism in the minds of the masses of Europe, America, the Orient, the colonies and semi-colonies.

Thus, the higher level to which the masses ARE BECOMING REVOLUTIONISED under the conditions of the deepening decline of capitalism and the end of capitalist stabilisation on the one hand, and the victory of Socialism in the U.S.S.R. on the other, led to the situation where THE GENERAL CRISIS OF CAPITALISM IS ENTERING A PERIOD OF SHARP CONFLICTS BETWEEN THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CONTRADICTIONS OF IMPERIALISM, A PERIOD OF A NEW REVOLUTIONARY CRISIS IN THE CAPITALIST WORLD. This is what is new in the characterisation of the international political situation.

That is why Comrade Stalin, in his speech at the 17th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, declared :

"This means that a revolutionary crisis is maturing and will continue to mature. And the more the bourgeoisie becomes entangled in its war combinations, the more

frequently it resorts to terroristic methods in the struggle against the working class and the toiling peasantry, the sooner will the revolutionary crisis mature."

THE PROLETARIAT IS MORE AND MORE TAKING THE ROAD OF REVOLUTION. But, while the proletariat more and more seeks to find a way out of poverty and oppression along the road of revolution, the bourgeoisie, on their part, are more and more seeking a way out of their situation along the road of FASCISM AND WAR.

* * *

During the period between the Sixth and Seventh Congresses of the Communist International, fascism has won victories in several countries (Germany, Austria and others).

FASCISM IS BECOMING MORE AND MORE THE CHIEF FORM IN WHICH THE BOURGEOISIE BRING ABOUT THEIR CLASS DOMINATION.

"Fascism," said COMRADE STALIN at the Seventeenth Congress of the C.P.S.U., "has now become the most fashionable commodity among bellicose bourgeois politicians."

The haste with which the bourgeoisie are developing fascism in all the capitalist countries only goes to show that they are already unable to rule by the old methods of bourgeois democracy.

"In this connection the victory of fascism in Germany must be regarded not only as a symptom of the weakness of the working class and as a result of the betrayal of the working class by Social-Democracy, which paved the way for fascism; it must also be regarded as a symptom of the weakness of the bourgeoisie, as a symptom of the fact that the bourgeoisie is already unable to rule by the old methods of parliamentarism and bourgeois democracy, and, as a consequence, is compelled in its home policy to resort to terroristic methods of administration—it must be taken as a symptom of the fact that it is no longer able to find a way out of the present situation on the basis of a peaceful foreign policy, as a consequence of which it is compelled to resort to a policy of war."

The bourgeoisie are trying (and they have been successful in several countries) to defeat the proletariat (if only temporarily) BEFORE THE MASSES TAKE THE DETERMINED TURN TO REVOLUTION. Fascism has been successful in this, above all, because social-democracy paved the way for fascism.

By introducing terror into the political system, by depriving the workers of all forms of independent organisation, fascism aims at leaving the working-class without leaders, at depriving it of its leadership by demolishing the vanguard of the proletariat. However, the experience of Germany shows clearly that FASCISM IS INCAPABLE OF ERADICATING COMMUNISM, THAT THE COMMUNIST PARTY IS ALIVE AND IS SPREADING ITS INFLUENCE. In the deepest underground conditions, under the constant blows of fascism, a NEW Bolsheviki generation of the Communist Party of Germany has grown up, and the finest cadres of professional revolutionaries are being trained.

Influenced by the lessons of defeat, the consciousness of the masses of workers that it is necessary

to turn to methods of revolutionary violence in the struggle against fascism and capitalism, that it is necessary to fight for proletarian dictatorship, for a Soviet Germany, is maturing more and more.

In addition to this, it should be noted that fascism is trying to penetrate into the ranks of the working class through a whole system of social and national demagoguery, by means of terror and bribery. The fascists are making particularly big efforts (and here they really have met with some success) to dope broad sections of the population with the poison of chauvinism, nationalism, bestial hatred of the "inferior races," etc.

There is not the slightest doubt that the Congress will draw attention to the fact that, in several Sections of the Communist International (including the Communist Party of Germany), the danger of chauvinism, has not been seen with sufficient clarity; the struggle against nationalism has not been adequate.

By demolishing the workers' organisations, FASCISM TEMPORARILY STRENGTHENS THE POWER OF THE BOURGEOISIE. But, as experience has shown, fascism is not in a position to bring capitalism out of the crisis. The mass base of fascism is shaky, unsteady and unstable.

Fascism, which increases capitalist oppression to the utmost degree, which smashes pacifist, democratic illusions, which openly reveals the class nature of the bourgeois state, and which lets loose civil war, at the same time aids the masses to come to an understanding of the fact that emancipation can be achieved only by forcibly overthrowing capitalism. The internal and external contradictions are sharpened to the utmost under fascism. This is why we can say that fascism, in the long run, HASTENS ON THE MATURING OF THE REVOLUTIONARY CRISIS THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE CAPITALIST WORLD.

But there is not, nor can there be, an automatic downfall of fascism. Merely the objective premises for mobilising the masses for the overthrow of fascism and capitalism are created. This is why the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, in the second point of the agenda, will examine the problem of fascism, the methods to be adopted in the struggle against it, and, first and foremost, the problem of the united proletarian front. This question, without doubt, will be one of the central questions at the Congress.

* * *

The Seventh Congress of the Comintern will examine the problem of war in its entire scope, especially as regards the question of the growing menace of an anti-Soviet war, and the tasks of the Sections of the Comintern in the struggle against war.

The growth of fascism has aggravated to the utmost the entire international situation. The Versailles Treaty, on which the post-war system of relations between the imperialist countries was built up, has

now been torn to pieces by German fascism. Preparations for war are going forward at a feverish rate in ALL the capitalist countries. The Washington Naval Agreement has been torn up. Japanese imperialism has begun a new offensive on China. Preparations for war and chauvinism constitute the programme of the foreign policy of the imperialist bourgeoisie of all countries. But the CHIEF instigators of war to-day are German fascism and Japanese imperialism, dragging fascist Poland along behind them. Germany, Japan and Poland have the backing of the anti-Soviet circles in the ranks of British imperialism, which is supporting Germany, Japan and Poland in their military adventures, and especially in unleashing an anti-Soviet war.

That war has not yet broken out is due, first and foremost, to the Peace Policy of the U.S.S.R. to the increased power of defence of the U.S.S.R. and especially to the fact that the frontiers of the U.S.S.R. in the East and in the West are now strongly fortified.

But, within the capitalist world itself, imperialist contradictions are developing around the question as to WHETHER THERE SHOULD BE WAR TO-DAY OR NOT. For example, an imperialist country like France, which is satisfied with the spoils which it gained from the previous war, has no desire for war at the present moment.

The U.S.S.R. is making use of these imperialist contradictions in the interests of strengthening peace. The small, weak countries, fearing the loss of their independence in the event of war, and also imperialist countries like France, despite the class contradictions between these countries, COLLABORATE TO SOME EXTENT WITH THE U.S.S.R. in maintaining peace to-day. But the real force which makes it difficult to start war is the U.S.S.R. and the activity of the toilers of all countries.

One of the corner-stones of the power and might of the U.S.S.R. is the support given to the Soviet Union by the workers of capitalist countries.

The Communists of all capitalist countries should remember that the peace policy of the U.S.S.R. will all the more successfully promote peace, the more actively the Communist Parties mobilise the masses for the struggle against the war plans of their own bourgeoisie.

Of course, the efforts of the U.S.S.R. and of the international proletariat seriously complicate the beginning of war. But we should remember that, despite all these efforts, WAR MAY BEGIN ANY DAY.

The task of the proletariat and of its vanguard—the Communist Parties—is to bar the way to war by organising the masses for proletarian revolution. We should remember that, if the war, nevertheless, begins, it will give such a shock to all the capitalist countries, as "will certainly unleash revolution and put in question the very existence of capitalism in a number of countries, as

was the case in the course of the first imperialist war." (Stalin. "Report to 17th Party Congress.")

The main task of the Sections of the Comintern is to stand at the head of the masses in the fight for peace against the instigators of war, preparing the proletariat for the struggle to convert the imperialist war into civil war, assisting to the utmost in bringing about the defeat of their own bourgeoisie in the imperialist war, fighting with all the forces at their disposal for the victory of the Red Army.

The peace policy of the U.S.S.R., in particular the conclusion of the Franco-Soviet and Czech-Soviet agreements, and the tactics of the Communist Parties of France and Czecho-Slovakia, have met with the entire support of the toilers of France and Czecho-Slovakia. This is why the Communist Parties INCREASED THEIR INFLUENCE CONSIDERABLY at the recent elections in France and in Czecho-Slovakia, which took place immediately after the conclusion of the agreements.

* * *

The seven years that have passed since the time of the Sixth Congress have been years of the further Bolshevisation of the Sections of the Comintern, years in which the ranks of the Communist Parties have been strengthened. The authority and influence of the Communist International have increased. *The relation of forces has changed in favour of the Comintern*, and to the detriment of the Second International. This is, first and foremost, the result of the policy, the programme, the strategy and tactics of the world Party of Communism.

The crisis which the Second International is experiencing to-day is undoubtedly deeper than during the period of the first round of wars and revolutions. To-day the chief line of contradictions undermining the Second International is THE INTERNAL STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE REACTIONARY LEADERS AND THE RANK AND FILE WHO ARE SWINGING TO THE LEFT, AND ARE TURNING TO THE ROAD OF THE PROLETARIAN UNITED FRONT.

The attitude towards the united front is one of the most acute questions which is dividing the parties of the Second International; it is the testing material which determines the question as to who is turning to the left and who is manoeuvring with "left" phrases.

Social-democracy, the main social support of the bourgeoisie, is being shattered. It would be a mistake, of course, to adopt a mechanical conception of the question of the crisis in the Second International. While, for example, in Germany and Austria, social-democracy has suffered crushing bankruptcy, in the Scandinavian countries, etc., social-democracy is still strengthening its influence. And of course, it depends upon us, upon the activity of the Communist Parties first and foremost, whether we shall be able to prevent the revival of social-

democracy in those countries where it has disintegrated.

Now, as never before, is the objective situation favourable for revolutionary work, for the work of the Communist Parties to win the masses to the revolution. But only a powerful party can win the masses and prepare the revolution. This is why the Seventh Congress of the Communist International will be faced with the task of emphasising to the utmost the rôle of the COMMUNIST PARTIES in winning influence among the masses, in winning over the majority of the working class, in preparing for decisive class battles. The main commandment before all Sections of the Comintern should be the following statement of Comrade Stalin :

"Some comrades think that as soon as a revolutionary crisis occurs the bourgeoisie must drop into a hopeless position, that its end is predetermined, that the victory of the revolution is assured, and that all they have to do is to wait for the bourgeoisie to fall, and to draw up victory resolutions. This is a profound mistake. The victory of revolution never comes by itself. It has to be prepared for and won. And only a strong proletarian revolutionary party can prepare for and win victory. ("Report to 17th Party Congress.")

At the Congress, all the Sections of the Communist International will have, on the basis of the most serious self-criticism, to expose their weaknesses and thus facilitate the conditions for a successful forward advance. Most of all, we must avoid mechanical, stereotyped routine in drawing up new tasks in the sphere of tactics. Now, as never before, we must demand that every party, that every Communist, display initiative, the ability to stand at the head of the masses, the ability to formulate the smallest economic and political demands, and to link them up WITH THE MAIN SLOGAN OF THE COMINTERN—THE SLOGAN OF SOVIET POWER.

When we look back to-day, it becomes particularly clear that, during the stage that has passed, the Sections of the Comintern have had, as well as big successes, also one decisive shortcoming, namely, AN OVERESTIMATION OF THE SPONTANEITY OF THE WORKING CLASS MOVEMENT, AND AN UNDERESTIMATION OF THE ORGANISATIONAL RÔLE OF THE PARTY. This is the key to the solution of the question as to why our Sections have not become stronger in the reformist trade unions, why they have not sought out contacts with the social-democratic workers, why they have not made use of the wealth of opportunity which the whole situation that has arisen since the Sixth Comintern Congress has afforded them. Communists on all sides have been waiting for big successes, not as a result of stubborn work among the masses, but DIRECTLY from the growth of unemployment, the bankruptcy of enterprises, the destruction of the social-democratic parties, etc. The most-determined struggle must be declared

against reliance on spontaneity, on letting things work out for themselves.

Now, as never before, ideological firmness, adherence to principle, watchfulness and purity in the ranks of the Sections of the Comintern, is important. This is why the struggle on two fronts must be waged stubbornly. The Communist parties were victorious by carrying on an irreconcilable struggle against counter-revolutionary Trotskyism and against Right and "Left" opportunists. In order to guarantee further successes, sectarianism, the chief stumbling-block which prevents the Communist Party from penetrating into the ranks of the masses, must be eradicated, and a struggle carried on against THE CHIEF, THE RIGHT OPPORTUNIST DANGER, which

expresses itself in dragging at the tail of events, and adapts the struggle to the moods of the masses, in allowing the influences of social-democratic ideology to penetrate into the ranks of the masses.

* * *

Throughout the world, the revolutionary crisis is maturing. Therefore, get deeper down among the masses.

Broaden out the united front of the fighting proletariat!

Develop a powerful people's front in the struggle against fascism and war!

Set out boldly to meet the decisive conflicts between the classes, for the victory of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat!

TOWARDS THE 7th CONGRESS

THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF POLAND BETWEEN THE SIXTH AND SEVENTH CONGRESSES OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL (PART II.)

By J. LENSKY.

The Main Questions of Tactics

THE exceedingly strained political situation, the liquidation of the remnants of the social political gains of the proletariat as carried out by the government, the immediate threat of the fascist unification of trade unions and the sharp frontal attack of capital, have strengthened the striving for united front among the masses. As a result the leaders of the Polish Socialist Party and the Bund were forced to oppose the initiative of the Communists with ever shrewder manoeuvres.

"The united front fever," as it was termed by one of the leaders of the Socialist Party, has compelled the Socialist Party of Poland to call a workers' conference in Warsaw. This conference was to be a substitute for a broad united front. By means of limiting elections and by the appointment of delegates, this conference was to misrepresent the actual desires of the Warsaw proletariat. Around it the Communist Party developed a mass campaign for a genuine united front. In other industrial centres (Lodz, Dombrova, Belestok, etc.), the Communist Party took the initiative of calling workers' conferences into its own hands. In contrast to the Socialist Party of Poland, our organisation linked up the calling of these workers' conferences with a platform of concrete action (strikes, demonstrations, etc.).

A group of "lefts" headed by Zaromboy were unsuccessful in their attempt to convene sham conferences of workers' delegates in Warsaw to replace the united front. The very fact that, in

spite of the electoral machinations of the organisers of the conferences, the workers' left opposition comprised one-fifth part (20) of the delegates, and the platform of demands it put forward was accepted by the conference, was proof of the popularity of the united front among the Warsaw proletariat and the activists of the socialist organisations. This also explains the fact that the conference unanimously passed a resolution against the pro-Hitler policy of the Polish government, and in defence of the U.S.S.R.

In our tactics, in connection with the conference, we particularly stressed the united front of struggle on behalf of the platform of concrete demands which it passed. The more actual of these was the struggle of the Warsaw tramwaymen and gasworkers, for whom the trade union Left opposition agreed to join the minority in the committee of action attached to the reformist trade union, and do their utmost to assist the executive of those trade unions which joined in the strike. The Warsaw organisation of our Party appealed to the local Polish Socialist Party with the proposal that they give joint support to the municipal workers, and launched a campaign of solidarity in the factories and trade unions. Defence of the collective agreements of the municipal workers, and the right of trade unions to conclude collective agreements were of importance on a regional scale.

The Communists behaved in the same way con-

cerning the resolution in defence of the U.S.S.R., passed under the influence of our struggle on the proposal of the Left workers' opposition.

Conferences, resolutions, say the Communists, must not remain on paper. First and foremost it obliges the leaders of the Polish Socialist Party and the Polish Bund to terminate slander against the proletarian state. The masses, including also many Social-Democratic workers, really want to defend the U.S.S.R. from the invasion of their own and foreign imperialists. These masses see in the Soviet Union, the only proletarian state in the world which is building socialism, a mighty prop in the fight against fascism and capitalism. They feel that in defending the U.S.S.R. they are defending the cause of the workers, their own class interests.

The Polish Communist Party has achieved considerable success in the sphere of the united front, chiefly thanks to the change in its every-day practical work. Whereas a year ago our organisations found it difficult to adapt the new tactical methods, whereas their campaign was limited to agitation for the united front around the appeal of the Central Committee, now the whole of the Party is alive with the problem of the united front, its practical realisation, and the local organisations display much initiative. The first big step along this road has now been taken. A big breach has been made in Social-Democracy. Wide access has been found to the Social-Democratic workers. Comradely connections have been established with a considerable part of the activists who are swinging to the left. Agreements have been concluded with several Social-Democratic organisations, especially with rank-and-file organisations.

The basis of our successes in the sphere of the united front was the combination of an appeal to the leading organisations of Social-Democracy and the development of action from below, with various forms of direct influence upon the Social-Democratic masses, activities inside their organisations, and the formation of united front committees in the factories from among the organised and unorganised workers.

In view of the fact that the leading organs of the Social-Democratic parties have sabotaged any kind of unity of action, we placed the main stress in our work on the attempt to bring entire organisations of the Polish Socialist Party, the Bund, and other organisations, into the united front. In illegal conditions, this work demands the maximum of flexibility and persistence. Instead of a general scheme, a concrete estimate must be made of the difficulties, which cannot be passed over. It is equally necessary to have a differentiated approach to different Social-Democratic Parties. If in Poland itself, our Party should overcome the cunning sabotage of the united front on the part

of the Social-Democratic leaders, it encountered a pogrom attitude on the part of the Social reformists in Western Ukraine. In the beginning of this year the "Ukrainian Socialist Bloc" openly set itself the task of the armed "overthrow of Bolshevik dictatorship" in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. This bloc was composed of different groups of Social-Democrats carrying on their nefarious work in the Ukrainian S.S.R., as well as the Western Ukrainian Social-Democratic parties. The Communists are obliged, not only to bring into the united front rank and file organisations that are dissatisfied with the leaders, but also to get them to openly break with the interventionist policy of the "Bloc." The possibilities open to our work can be judged by the activities of the Left opposition against the leaders of the "Bloc" in defence of the U.S.S.R., at the last congress of the "Labour Party," and the fact that the majority of the delegates to the congress agreed with the opposition.

DURING RECENT MONTHS THE COMMUNIST PARTY HAS GONE FROM AGITATION FOR THE UNITED FRONT TO CONCLUDING AGREEMENTS ON THE QUESTION OF UNITED ACTION WITH SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC ORGANISATIONS.

Several strikes carried out by the Communist Party in a united front with the Social-Democratic, chiefly trade-union, organisations, have stimulated the confidence of the masses towards us and helped to break down the barrier set up by the leadership of the Polish Socialist Party and the Bund further. The general strikes of protest against fascist repressions and the license of the owners in Pabianicz, Vloczlawk and Zamostje, were of this nature. The Communists tried to imbue the general strike of protest of the Dombrov miners and the textile workers of the Lodz region in January, 1935, with the same character. Our proposals had the support of the meetings and delegate conferences.

The Lodz organisation correctly opposed the attempts of the Polish Socialist Party to keep the Lodz textile strike within the framework of economic action on the part of the textile workers, by putting forward the slogan for a general strike of the proletariat of Lodz and the Lodz region, directed also against the menace of fascist unification of the trade unions. Thanks to the efforts of the Communists, the metal workers, workers in the silk and other factories, also joined in the strike. A central strike committee was elected at the delegate conference, on the proposal of the trade union "Left."

The rôle of the Dombrov organisation would have been much greater had it immediately begun to create a network of strike committees in the mines and strike commissions in the trade union branches, and then proposed that the delegate con-

ference elect a central strike committee. The absence of these organs and of common united-front committees with the rank-and-file organisations of the Polish Socialist Party restricted the size of the strike. The groups of Communists and Socialists formed in a hurry on the eve and on the day of the strike, with all the activity displayed by our organisations, could not replace a broad leadership which would have overcome the sabotage of the trade-union bureaucracy.

The Communist Party must take all this experience into account in its future activities, first and foremost in its preparations toward a victorious end—for the general strike of the municipal workers, miners and textile workers, suffering the most cruel attacks of the capitalists. **IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THE NEW METHODS AND FORMS OF THE UNITED FRONT SHOULD BE COMBINED WITH THOSE FORMS OF ORGANISING THE STRUGGLE WHICH HAVE ALREADY BEEN TRIED** (committees of action, strike committees and others), that the initiative in declaring the strike be combined with preparations for and organisational leadership of, the coming battles.

This is especially necessary where the Social-Democratic parties do their utmost to sabotage the united front and smash the united action of the proletariat. It is impossible to manage without organs elected by the masses in the factories, just as it is impossible to postpone the struggle until agreement has been concluded with the Social-Democratic leadership. We must not inflict these organs upon the Social-Democratic leadership as an ultimative condition for the united front. We must be flexible in substituting one form for another or in adopting varied forms created by the masses. For example, mass delegations, initiative groups, strike commissions, strike committees, assistance commissions, or negotiating commissions. We must link up their activities with the trade unions, **FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE STRUGGLE INCREASINGLY DEPENDS UPON WHETHER THE TRADE UNIONS ARE DRAWN INTO THE STRIKE STRUGGLE.** The Lodz comrades successfully adopted this method in preparing for and conducting the general strike of the textile workers.

Comrade Thorez is quite correct when, in his article on the development of the united front in France,* he emphasised the great importance of united front committees there. This is even more important in Poland.

The chief shortcomings at present in the work to create the united front can be outlined as follow:

1. Our efforts to draw the Social-Democratic organisations into the united front of struggle, particularly after the leadership of the Polish Socialist Party and the Bund

had forbidden any negotiations to take place with the Communists, and adopted repressive measures towards those organisations which violated discipline, are still not sufficient. In the Young Communist League there is still a strong "Leftist" attitude to unity of action. The Young Communist League has not been successful in converting its agreements on the united front into broad mass action.

2. The number of united front committees is insufficient, especially in the Dombrow region, and their activities are weak, for example in Warsaw, where our organisation has not gone farther than conferences of committees, embracing mainly the small and middle industries and second-rate districts of the Polish Socialist Party, which have declared themselves in favour of a united front with the Communists. The metal workers remain in the weakest spot in our work among the industrial proletariat, although during the last year, the Warsaw organisation has strengthened its position here. In Lodz, where the decisive regional organisations of the Polish Socialist Party adopted a proposal on the united front, we have not been successful in establishing firm ties with these organisations, or developing joint actions and thus breaking down the sabotage of the Polish Socialist Party leaders in whole organisations.

Among the agricultural proletariat, the united front is still in its embryonic stage.

3. The united front campaign has not embraced the unemployed masses as yet. The struggles of the employed workers are not properly linked up with the needs of the unemployed. The work of defending the interests of the unemployed in the trade unions is badly organised. A broad network of united front committees has not yet been created. All the attention of the Party organisations is directed to the labour exchanges and the dining rooms. And yet fascism is systematically drilling the unemployed youth in various camps and clubs; they are forming philanthropic societies to assist the unemployed. In all these organisations we must create our own points of struggle. We must organise mass support on the part of the employed workers of the actions of the unemployed (joint committees of action, meetings, demonstrations demanding the six-hour working day, public works, etc.).

At moments when big strike battles are approaching, the tendency to substitute independent preparations for battles by the mechanical despatch of open letters to leaders of Social-Democracy and passively awaiting replies to them, is particularly dangerous. Actually this Right opportunist tendency is interwoven with "Leftist" ignoring of mass work in some units of the Party. Thanks to timely criticism on the part of the Central Committee, our organisations have improved. They realise more clearly that the initiative must never be separated from its actual practical expression.

Only stubborn work among the masses around our appeals, as the Central Committee has constantly stressed; only skilful organisation of the day-to-day struggle of the working class by the Communists, and only by **DRAWING THE SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC ORGANISATIONS INTO THE JOINT STRUGGLE**, can all the obstacles on the road to a wide united front be removed, and the leadership of the Polish Socialist Party and the Bund be forced to enter into a united front with the Polish Communist Party. According to Alter, a leader of the Bund, the struggle **"ON BEHALF OF THE UNITED FRONT, WHICH WAS BEGUN WITH SUCH COLOSSAL ENERGY BY THE COMMUNISTS,"** caused vacillations even in the Central Committee of the Polish Socialist Party,

* See Nos. 5 and 6, 1935.

which feared that the Polish Socialist Party organisations would create "UNITED FRONT COMMITTEES EVERYWHERE AGAINST THE WILL OF THE PARTY."

Our campaign for the united front increased the unrest in the ranks of the Polish Socialist Party and the Bund. Even the Polish Socialist Party press began to raise its voice, recognising that the "POLICY OF THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL AND THE MAJORITY OF THE SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC PARTIES WAS A POLICY OF COMPROMISE AND CONCILIATION," that "THE EVENTS IN GERMANY AND AUSTRIA HAVE KILLED ONCE AND FOR ALL THE THEORY OF THE PEACEFUL DEVELOPMENT INTO SOCIALISM," and that "LIFE ITSELF HAS POINTED TO THE NEED OF A UNITED FRONT WITH THE COMMUNISTS" (*Volya Lyudu*, October 14th, 1934.)

The rank and file of the Polish Socialist Party and the Bund are ever more noticeably swinging to the left. In addition to the "Left" leaders who manoeuvre before the masses, activists who have a truly left outlook and advocate the united front with the Communists are arising.

Whether left elements and groupings are really sincere can be judged to-day by their practical attitude to the united front. One cannot fight against reformism and at the same time join with the reformists in sabotaging the united front. "Left" phrases covered by Right actions are worth nothing.

This is how the Communists raise the question in reply to the "Left" gestures of the leaders of the Bund who sabotage the united front. The Communist Party approaches the platform of "organic unity" put forward by the leadership of the Bund to-day to distract the attention of Bund workers from the united front of struggle, with its criterion of unity of action, unity of every-day struggle. While exposing the unitarian demagoguery of the reformists, we should listen sympathetically and tactfully to Social-Democratic workers desirous of unity, explaining our Communist conception of class and organisational unity to them, stressing the point that the united front leads to unity of the forces of the proletariat for the struggle for their daily needs, against the common enemy.

The last Congress of the Bund revealed a deep process of radicalisation, not only among the rank-and-file members, but also among the activists of that party. The fact that one-third of the delegates voted in favour of leaving the Second International, is characteristic of the anti-reformist feeling in the Bund organisations which the leaders of the Bund—Alter, Erlich and others—are trying to retain in the Second International with their left phraseology. Apparently, some of the members of the Bund have ceased to believe in the possibility of the "class, revolutionary regeneration" of the Second International.

A similar process, though in a more hidden form, is ensuing in the Polish Socialist Party also, where repressive discipline prevents the left groups from spreading widely. In certain places, especially Warsaw, the Communists have been successful in establishing unity of action with opposition elements, the direct task of whom is to draw whole organisations on to the road of the united front.

It is quite clear that the united front tactics should hasten the crystallisation of the class-consciousness of the Social-Democratic masses, and their break from reformism. The break with the ideology and policy of reformism on the part of separate units of Social-Democracy is occurring more slowly in Poland than in Austria or in Germany, although objective causes are acting in the same direction (impoverishment of the masses, the contraction of the strata of labour aristocracy, their partial substitution for privileged cadres of fascism, etc.). It should be remembered that in addition to the privilege of legality, the Polish Socialist Party, the Bund and other organisations have at their disposal the "capital" created by years of opposition to fascist dictatorship. The expulsion of the Polish Socialist Party from the state apparatus glosses over the complicated mechanism of its collaboration with the bourgeoisie. The ability of the Polish Socialist Party to manoeuvre has manifested itself in the demagogic issuing of the slogan: "Dictatorship of the toilers," in its demonstrative refusal to take the reformist path, its rejection of the democratic development into Socialism under capitalism, etc.

This forced "change of signposts" took place a long time ago in the Polish Socialist Party, which also changed its tactics in the strike movement. It is more frequently trying to head inevitable strikes that break out, to ensure them a peaceful nature and keep the masses on their side; every mistake on the part of our organisations is used by the leaders of the reformist trade unions for the purpose of taking over the leadership of strikes. WEAKNESSES AND SHORTCOMINGS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY ARE UTILISED BY REFORMISM.

Skilful manoeuvring on the part of the upper strata of the Polish Socialist Party and the Bund creates the impression among the rank-and-file workers and the middle activists that these parties are re-arming in a revolutionary spirit. Consequently the Communists should expose the reformist policy of splitting the working-class, the Polish Socialist Party ideology of "a state above classes" and defence of the bourgeois fatherland all the more stubbornly. The struggle of the Polish Socialist Party against the slogan of self-determination of nations enslaved by Polish im-

perialism, the nationalism of Social-Democracy, and hostile attitude to the Soviet Union demand exposure. The more concretely must the Communists confront the masses with the problem of power and revolution, the more persistently should they put forward the revolutionary destruction of the military-bureaucratic machine of the bourgeois state instead of its renovation, the Party should popularise the Soviet Government, as the only expression of working-class democracy.

The Communists should not forget that the only guarantee of victory is for our Party to win the majority of the working-class for proletarian revolution.

Right mistakes have revealed themselves most strongly in the election campaign in the locals. In general our election tactics should provide for a united front against terror, abuses, and the methods of forgery used by fascism. At the factory-workshop committee elections, as a general rule, lists of candidates should be put forward by the united front, together with a platform of struggle for the daily demands of the workers. It also is possible to have joint lists of candidates at the municipal elections in proletarian centres where there is danger of a reactionary, fascist majority. The main condition in the election campaign is a class, anti-fascist, platform of united action. Each side maintains for itself freedom of agitation on behalf of its own slogans. The forms in which the united front tactics will be used at the coming Seim elections depend, of course, upon the political situation and the new electoral system which is not yet established. A UNITED FRONT STRUGGLE MUST BE ALREADY NOW CREATED AGAINST THE FASCIST CONSTITUTION, AGAINST DESTRUCTION OF THE RIGHTS AND GAINS OF THE TOILERS, ON BEHALF OF FREEDOM OF ORGANISATION, OF THE PRESS, ETC.

It should be taken into consideration that as the united front develops, the danger of Right mistakes grows, for the Polish Communist Party is not insured against the illusion which the manoeuvring tactics of Social Democracy create. Moreover, it is necessary to always remember that Right opportunism is interwoven in various forms with the manifestation of "Leftist" sectarianism, which undermines the confidence that the masses feel in the united front. Our activists must learn to adopt new methods of tactics consistently. They must understand fully that these methods do not consist in making demonstrative offers of a united front, with the express purpose of getting refusals from the upper strata of the Polish Socialist Party or the Bund, but in persistent efforts to create unity of action with Social-Democratic organisations, to break down the sabotage of the reformist leaders and get a united front with the Social-Democratic parties.

THE ENTIRE POLITICAL SITUATION FAVOURS OUR STRUGGLE FOR THE UNITED FRONT.

The development of the strike struggle imperatively demands that our organisations make the complete turn in trade-union work, as laid down by the Second Plenum of the Central Committee of the Polish Communist Party (1933).

The Sixth Congress of the Polish Communist Party had already decided that

"work in the reformist, Christian and other trade unions should be of prime importance, that in eradicating the hitherto neglectful attitude towards it, the Communists should increase the struggle to win the masses under the influence of these unions, and should also use every opportunity to win over separate unions and units of the trade union apparatus."

Actual, everyday practice went in quite the opposite direction for a long time. Whereas the Party formerly overestimated a certain exit of the masses from the reformist trade unions, of recent years it has underestimated the return of the masses into these unions and the possibility of struggling for elective posts inside the trade union. Our comrades frequently limited themselves to futile efforts to legalise the Left unions, while the reformist unions continued to grow in strength. The united front campaign is making the change. The work in the reformist trade unions has considerably moved ahead, although all opportunities for work have not been exploited by far.

Thanks to the campaign to unite the trade unions on a concrete platform of struggle and trade union democracy, the initiative in connection with class unity in the trade union movement and its defence from fascist unification, has now come into our hands. The Left trade unions are gaining vitality. Several reformist unions have accepted our platform of unity.

However, the recruiting campaign into the trade unions directly threatened with unification has not yet been properly developed. The success of this campaign will decide the strength of resistance of the working-class to a considerable extent. The rejection of our recruiting platform by reformist bureaucrats cannot be any reason for ceasing to recruit in individual unions for the struggle for the platform we have put forward.

Our activity both in the Left and in the reformist trade unions will be of decisive importance. The instructions of the Sixth Comintern Congress remain wholly in force, concerning the fact that Communists should carry on stubborn work inside the trade unions to win the authority of experienced organisers of the struggle on behalf of the everyday, partial demands of the working masses, the authority of the skilful leaders of strike struggles.

The experience of the strike movement has made

clear the growing importance of the reformist trade unions. On the one hand, the trade union masses and activists connected with them are being more extensively drawn into the struggle; on the other, the reformist chiefs are adopting extremely flexible tactics in the sphere of sabotage restricting the size of mass strikes, and leading these strikes to defeat. Therefore, in the tactics they adopt during strikes, the Communists and Left workers should bear the following points in mind:

(1). In developing the struggle among the organised and unorganised masses, the Communists should try to draw whole trade unions together with their executive into the struggle. The main attention should be concentrated on questions of struggle, on the demands, and on the slogans of struggle.

(2). The Communists recognise the trade union leadership in organising the struggle and assist those executives of trade unions who actually carry on the fight to the utmost. Communists consider that the most expedient form of leadership which ensures success is the method of strike committees, elected by the masses and closely connected with them. Communists always seek to create organs of this kind. These mass organs (strike committees, commissions, etc.), lead the struggle in close contact with the executive organ of the union, if it takes part in the struggle.

(3). If it has not been possible to get these forms of leadership for the strike, and if the trade union executive leads it with the help of other organs, Communists take part also in these organs, even if they are in a minority, and activate the masses and draw them into leadership of the struggle, seeking to create mass organs and striving to get the support of the majority of the workers for their own proposals and slogans.

(4). In the case of sabotage or betrayal, the Communists put organs elected by the masses in the place of the trade union executive organ, striving to ensure that the rank and file trade union organisations, the activists, and whole sections of the union take part in the mass leadership of the strike, and striving to organise a new executive.

(5). The work of the trade union Left opposition must be brought more determinedly than ever before into the reformist and other unions. Groups of the trade union Left inside the reformist and fascist trade unions should become the nuclei of a broad trade union opposition.

Our tactics towards the fascist trade unions should provide for the following four points:

(1). Communists should use all their efforts to counteract the formation and extension of the network of these unions, by organising a united front and bringing into it all the reformist trade unions. (2). Where the fascist trade unions are mass organisations, the Communists should carry on a struggle inside of them to win over the masses, on behalf of the electoral system in connection with all official positions, against all forms of compulsion and terror. (3). Where the fascist trade unions have become a predominant force, the Communists should transfer the centre of gravity of their work into these unions. (4). Any question of leaving the fascist trade unions can only be raised if the majority of the membership has joined the ranks of class opposition and the breakdown of the unions is inevitable. It is essential first and foremost to organise a mass struggle against repressions. Transfer into the corresponding Left or reformist trade union should take place in an organised fashion.

It is time that the work in every mass fascist union be properly organised. The network of fascist unions is beginning to cover all the most important branches of industry. In making preparations to bring about the fascist unification of trade unions on a national scale, the government is making somewhat successful attempts, especially in Upper Silesia, at "voluntary" unification of the trade unions where mass fascist unions exist. While making a united front with the reformist trade unions and conducting a struggle against any form of unification, we should at the same time create points of struggle in all branches of the fascist unions. The fact that the trade union Left opposition has been successful in getting possession of two branches of the fascist miners' union in Upper Silesia, shows that there are opportunities of mass revolutionary work inside the fascist trade unions. WITHOUT THE WORK BEING APPROACHED IN THIS WAY, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO ORGANISE A SUCCESSFUL STRUGGLE OF THE MASSES OF THE WORKERS IN WAR INDUSTRIES AND THE INDUSTRIES CATERING FOR WAR.

Simultaneously with the consolidation of the united proletarian front, the Polish Communist Party should not only popularise, but also create, organise, the ANTI-FASCIST NATIONAL FRONT OF THE TOILING MASSES. Through the struggle for their everyday needs, for demands which correspond to the interests of the workers, the exploited peasants, the toiling intelligentsia and the urban poor, the Communist Party should lead the masses of the people into the struggle against the government of starvation, terror and war, against the fascist constitution, for land without compensation, against national oppression, against anti-Soviet pacts with German fascism, in defence of the U.S.S.R. In the period of the most tremendous unemployment,—there should be a solid struggle of the rural and urban proletariat together with the village poor, against forced labour ("sharvarkov"). The best form of organising the struggle is that of joint committees of workers and peasants.

The government tactics are, first and foremost, to prevent the wave of big battles of the proletariat from coinciding with that of mass riots of the peasants. To successfully make new attacks against the working-class the government is trying to calm the peasant masses with all sorts of promises and even to set these masses against the proletariat with their slogan "improve the living conditions of the village at the expense of the town." By means of subtle deception, the ruling fascists are also trying to convert the masses of the peasantry into cannon fodder.

This being so, the more rapidly must we organise the anti-fascist front of toilers of town and village, under the guidance of the proletariat. We should draw the mass organisation of the "People's Party," which are swinging to the left, into the united front of struggle of the toiling peasantry by creating a network of peasant united front committees, with the participation in these committees of the poor and middle peasant activists. Our organisa-

tions are making only the first successful steps in the adoption of united front methods in the village.

The process of differentiation of the peasantry into the strata of kulaks which is growing stronger and the impoverishing millions, together with the overwhelming majority of the middle peasants, which process is deepening as a result of the agrarian crisis and the policy of fascism, should not hide the fact from us that our prop in the village is the agricultural proletariat and the village poor, that the vacillations of the middle peasants can be made use of by the landlord-kulak bloc. The more extensively we draw the ruined middle peasants into the movement, the more must we politically activate the agricultural proletariat and the village poor.

It is essential to organise a broad front of the masses of the people against national oppression, against Polish occupation, against fascism. It is necessary to get mass support for the national liberation struggle from among the Polish proletariat, who should be firmly convinced that there can be no freedom of peoples who oppress other peoples. While patiently eradicating all nationalist prejudices among the masses, we must not make any concessions whatsoever to counter revolutionary bourgeois nationalism.

Under the slogan of a united front of struggle between the working-class and the toiling masses, the Communist Party launched its May Day campaign, striving to convert the First of May into a mighty united front demonstration. Our pro-

posal to all Socialist Parties and trade unions to organise joint May Day demonstrations was of this nature. All the efforts of our organisation were directed towards making May 1 a day of militant solidarity of the proletariat who lead the national anti-fascist front.

* * *

What are the chief conclusions to be drawn from the experience of the development of the united front?

The chief conclusion is that the correct tactics in themselves do not yet guarantee that the struggle will assume the necessary dimensions. The questions is decided by the singleness of purpose and firmness of the whole of the Party, the enthusiasm and deep conviction felt in all its links that "there are no fortresses which the Bolsheviks cannot capture" (Stalin).

It is the constant duty of Communists to raise the class-consciousness of the masses, to help the Social-Democratic workers to make the transition to class positions, to the side of Communism. Only then will the united front tactic be linked up with our revolutionary strategy.

The idea of storming, which is becoming ripe in the minds of the masses, demands that the Leninist strategic plan should penetrate deeply into their consciousness, the plan that had its victorious embodiment in the Great October Revolution—the plan for the overthrow of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie by the proletariat in allegiance with the exploited peasantry and toiling masses of oppressed peoples.

For the Active Trade Unionist

FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION UNITY

Official text of proposals for United Action by Red International of Labour Unions and its rejection by Amsterdam. (I.F.T.U.)

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(a) THE QUESTION OF FASCISM AND CAPITALIST DECAY

By R. PALME DUTT.

IN a recent issue of the "Communist International" Comrade De Leeuw has raised one or two questions of fascism for discussion in connection with my book on "Fascism and Social Revolution." This contribution is very welcome, as these questions need to be more fully discussed. In particular, his contribution raises two questions of interest:

(1) The question of capitalist "decay"; the meaning of Lenin's definition of imperialism as "decaying capitalism"; the rôle of fascism as a phenomenon of an advanced stage of this process in the period of the general crisis of capitalism; and, in particular, the rôle of fascism as a retrograde factor in relation to the development of the productive forces.

(2) The question of the "inevitability" of the victory of Communism over capitalism and fascism, and the correct

understanding of this inevitability as not automatic, not mechanical, but dependent on the human factor.

Both these basic conceptions of my book are brought into question by Comrade De Leeuw.

It should be explained that the general aim of my book on fascism was to analyse fascism on the basis of the whole present stage of capitalist development, following and carrying forward Lenin's analysis of imperialism to the present stage, and showing in what sense fascism represents an extreme phenomenon of this process of capitalism in decay, whose guiding laws were already analysed by Lenin.

For this purpose it was essential to show the increasing intensity of the conflict between the pro-

ductive forces and the existing social forms of capitalism, which is characteristic of the process of decaying capitalism. The intensification of this conflict to the point of the first world war and the beginning of the world revolution since 1917 constitutes the general crisis of capitalism or the period of capitalist downfall. Within this period fascism represents the desperate attempt of the doomed capitalist class to maintain its power and overcome the contradictions by extreme violent means, and thus to maintain the existing social forms at the expense of the development of the forces of production: in particular—(1) to throttle the class-struggle by suppression of all working-class organisation; (2) to overcome the economic contradictions by active state intervention, so-called “planning,” subsidies, restrictions of production and trade, etc.; (3) to overcome the inner contradictions of the bourgeoisie by the unification of a single governmental party replacing the older political parties and divisions; (4) to overcome the international contradictions by intensified organisation for war and world conquest.

The question now arises: (1) whether it is correct to analyse fascism in this way as an expression of an extreme stage of conflict between the shackling capitalist forms and the productive forces; (2) whether it is correct on this basis to show that the prolonged rule of fascism, if this were possible, if the dialectics of development did not in fact make it impossible, would inevitably mean the downward movement of society, not only culturally, but also materially in the level of technique and production; and whether the first germs of such downward tendencies have not already begun to appear in the development of modern world capitalism, in contrast to the upward movement of the Soviet Union; (3) whether it is correct in consequence to present in the sharpest possible form the “alternatives” confronting present society between the basically downward capitalist line and the upward socialist line, and whether such a presentment of “alternatives” is incompatible with the inevitability of the ultimate victory of Communism.

These are the underlying issues involved in Comrade De Leeuw's criticism.

In order to answer these questions it is necessary to take in order the successive stages of the argument.

First, is it correct to state that the policies of fascism (both the policies of the countries of fascist dictatorship, and those policies like the Roosevelt emergency measures, etc., which we describe as “fascist” in character) are, basically and taken as a whole, retrograde in character and in conflict with the development of the productive forces, even though this basic retrograde character does not exclude particular rapid growths of production for temporary phases or in particular branches.

There can be no question that this is correct; since fascism is only a particular form of modern monopoly capitalism under certain conditions, and the whole of monopoly capitalism is in fact a **FETTER** on the development of the productive forces, such that the most general characterisation of monopoly capitalism is decaying capitalism, and **INCREASINGLY** decaying capitalism.

“The monopolist form of capital increasingly develops the elements of parasitical degeneration, decay and decline of capitalism. . . . Monopoly capital reveals a tendency to retard the development of the forces of production.” (Programme of the Communist International I.4.)

“Like all monopoly, this capitalist monopoly infallibly gives rise to a tendency to stagnation and decay.” (Lenin, “Imperialism,” ch. vii.)

“The basis of the increase in technical decay in the post-war years is the general retarding of the growth of capitalist production.” (Mendelsen, “New Material to Lenin's ‘Imperialism,’” quoted by De Leeuw.)

All this is familiar and not open to dispute.

Second, is it correct to state that the most modern policies of monopoly capitalism, expressed with especial clearness and sharpness in the policies of fascism (again taken in the widest sense, as above), reveal a **STRENGTHENING OF THESE DECAY-TENDENCIES**, of tendencies to obstruct or arrest technical progress and the development of the productive forces?

This is certainly correct in the light of the facts of modern world capitalism; and no particular examples of acceleration in this or that branch or for particular short-lived phases can contradict this general law of the dominant character of modern capitalism as being constituted by the increasing tendencies to decay, degeneration and decline, and not by the tendencies to new advance, ever greater expansion and new blooming, as in the Social-Democratic theories. Both tendencies can be traced in particular phases and situations; but **THE TENDENCIES TO DECAY, THE RETROGRADE TENDENCIES CONTINUALLY GROW STRONGER THAN BEFORE, AND THE TENDENCIES TO ADVANCE GROW WEAKER THAN BEFORE.** (“The monopolist form of capital **INCREASINGLY** develops the elements of parasitical degeneration, decay and decline of capitalism”—C.I. Programme).* And fascism is precisely a sharp and intensified expression of this process, and a direct factor in carrying it forward.

* Care should be taken to distinguish this analysis of the increasing tendencies to decay in modern capitalism from the theory of “permanent crisis” which Comrade De Leeuw incorrectly attributes to me through a misapprehension. He bases this charge on a passage, written in 1933, which, in accordance with the analysis of the international situation circulating at that time, ascribes the upward movement of 1933 to factors of war preparation, inflation and emergency state measures of a war type. But delays in publication till the summer of 1934 (which enabled certain new sections to be added without changing the other older material) led to this passage appearing at a time when Comrade Stalin's definition of the “peculiar type of depression” had given the correct analysis. This passage has, of course, been corrected in subsequent editions.

In order to see the character and significance of this process more clearly, compare the elements of "decay" noted by Lenin twenty years ago, on the basis of the facts of imperialism before the world war, and the enormous further development of these elements of decay to-day. Lenin noted as particular evidence of decay

(i) parasitism and the growth of the rentier and "rentier-State";

(ii) the beginning of "the economic possibility of slowing down technical progress," as instanced in trusts buying up inventions in order to suppress them.

Today after twenty years we are able to note as further features carrying this process forward

(i) large-scale state-organised destruction of the productive forces and restriction of production;

(ii) increased resistance to technical development and non-utilisation of inventions, except in the military sphere, developing even into a widespread ideological hostility to inventions beginning to find expression in governmental, scientific, business and economic circles;

(iii) development of the anti-scientific and anti-cultural campaign, cutting down of education, burning of books—also a form of destruction of the productive forces;

(iv) chronic large-scale mass unemployment of a type previously unknown—again a deterioration and destruction of the productive forces;

(v) devotion of an increasing proportion of the productive forces to non-productive purposes connected with war preparation.

All these phenomena of present day capitalism, which receive their sharpest expression in fascism, are of the greatest significance for the process of increasing decay that is taking place.

Against this picture of present day capitalism in increasing decay, with fascism as at once an expression of this process and an accelerating factor, Comrade De Leeuw's sole counter-argument from the world of facts—that Italian Fascism after thirteen years has not shattered Italian economy—is hardly an adequate argument or on the level of the real issues, any more than, for example, the old Social-Democratic argument of American prosperity in the nineteen-twenties "disproved" the general crisis of capitalism, or the fact that Hitler-Germany has entered its third year with a diminished unemployment "disproves" the thesis of the Communist International that Hitler is leading Germany to economic catastrophe.

Comrade De Leeuw quotes the Italian example in order to show—what is not in dispute—that fascism represents the policy of large-scale capital, that the petty-bourgeois propaganda of fascist ideology against large-scale capital is only demagoguery, contrary to the practice. This is elementary, and is already pointed out a score of times in my book, where the petty-bourgeois propaganda against large-scale capital and advanced technique is constantly referred to with sneers as "infantile propaganda," (p. 50), exploited by finance capital to "befog" the masses, and exactly contrary to the practice. Comrade De Leeuw, however, in his anxiety to expose this

"infantile propaganda," fails to see the deeper issue raised in my book, which is a more serious and difficult issue: viz., in what direction the policy of large-scale capital is developing under the conditions of increasing decay, how the ever larger-scale potential productive forces beat against the barriers of the restricted monopolist areas (example from the technical journal, the "Automobile Engineer," on the impossibility of using economically some of the most advanced high-production machinery save in the Soviet Union), how the consequent intensified conflict to enlarge the monopolist areas leads to actual increased restriction and limitation, and how in this way the policies of large-scale capital, in spite of themselves, begin to show the first signs of undermining the basis of large-scale technique, thus carrying to a still further stage the process of decay. Germs of this process—only germs so far, but very significant germs—can be traced in the example already quoted from the "Automobile Engineer" (pp. 1-3), in the gigantic organised restriction schemes without parallel in previous economic history (pp. 43-48), in the experimental anti-machine legislation in certain non-strategic industries in fascist Germany (cigar-making and glass-blowing, pp. 52-53), in the Philadelphia substitution of hand labour for machinery (only municipal, p. 52), in the American drive to subsistence agriculture, in the British unemployed centres for teaching skilled industrial workers handicraft, in the British drive to settle the surplus city workers in small-scale agriculture and the recent edict by Mussolini prohibiting the use of machinery in agriculture. All these decay-symptoms are drawn from the objective realities of the present day policies of imperialism, and not from the petty-bourgeois "infantile propaganda" which Comrade De Leeuw appears to see alone as the problem.

Certainly, the correct analysis of these symptoms within the total process of world capitalist development raises many difficulties, of which the present writer is strongly aware. If the process of capitalist decay were a simple straight line, there would be no need of Marxist science to discern the inner tendencies, which would be obvious to the empirical observer. But Comrade De Leeuw appears to overlook these new problems of interest in the most recent developments of imperialism, which require further analysis, and remains rather on the level of simply exposing the petty-bourgeois "infantile propaganda" of fascist demagoguery, a question which has already been settled and hardly requires further discussion. Lenin noted the tendencies of decay as the MAIN, decisive, DEFINING characteristic of monopoly capitalism, and added the proviso that this decay should not be misunderstood as "excluding" the "possibility of rapid growth" of particular "branches of production." "strata of the bourgeoisie"

or "individual countries." Comrade De Leeuw places in the forefront the PROVISIO with regard to the "possibility of rapid growth" within the general process of decay, but fails to give equal attention to the MAIN DEFINITION and to consider carefully the significance of Lenin's denoting the decay-tendencies as the "distinctive characteristics" of monopoly capitalism. If, then, we wish to carry forward Lenin's analysis of imperialism today on the basis of twenty years' further working out of its inner tendencies, we need to look first and foremost for the stage reached in the further working out of what Lenin designated as the "distinctive characteristics" of imperialism—the tendencies to decay.

We come now to the third question, which follows from the other two. If these signs of increasing tendencies to decay are seen in present-day capitalism, and are most strongly expressed in fascism, is it correct and permissible, for purposes of theoretical analysis, NOT AS PREDICTION, to prolong hypothetically the line of these decay-tendencies, in order to show where they would reach, if continued unbroken in a straight line, that is, if the dialectics of development and struggle did not in fact make such ultimate working out impossible?

On one condition this is not only permissible, but is of the greatest importance for our agitation and propaganda, in order to awaken realisation to the significance of these decay-tendencies and the urgent necessity of the socialist revolution. The one condition is that the real dialectics of the situation must be simultaneously shown, the real counter-forces of the increasing contradictions generated by this development, which make inevitable the real ultimate outcome to be, not the indefinite prolongation of the capitalist decay, but the victory of the socialist revolution.

Is this condition carried out in my book? Yes. In every case of the theoretical analysis of the line of the decay-tendencies, to show the meaning of that line and where it is tending, it is again and again pointed out to weariness that such an analysis is hypothetical, in order to awaken realisation of the meaning of these tendencies, and that the actual dialectical process will necessarily lead to a different outcome. This is particularly the case with the tenth chapter, on "The Essence of Fascism—the Organisation of Social Decay", which is the main chapter dealing with this analysis and which is covered with warning sentences to show the abstract hypothetical character of such an analysis and to guard against misunderstanding. These repeated warning sentences are overlooked by Comrade De Leeuw*

* It is, however, true that the expression "final alternative" on pp. 228-9 is open to misunderstanding, as Comrade De Leeuw's criticism has shown, although the context should have made the line of the thought clear (i.e., that it is the logical "final alternative" which the supporter of the existing decaying order and opponent of revolution is thereby choosing as his preference).

It is in this chapter that occurs the quotation of an imaginative picture of capitalist society falling into extreme decay and break-up, from the petty-bourgeois Socialist, Scott Nearing, whose theories are criticised elsewhere in the book. This picture is expressly declared to be undialectical and impossible of realisation; but it is quoted as a valuable stimulus to imaginative realisation of where the line of imperialist decay would ultimately reach, if it had run free, if it did not meet with resistance, and what would therefore constitute the only "alternative" to the socialist revolution (to this question of presentment of the issue in the form of "alternatives" we shall return in a moment). Comrade De Leeuw finds this use of a basically incorrect imaginative picture by a petty-bourgeois Socialist impermissible. For answer on this point, reference may be made to Lenin's use in his "Imperialism" (chapter viii.) of a basically incorrect imaginative hypothetical picture by the "Social-Liberal" Hobson, whose theories are criticised elsewhere in his book. Hobson draws in very graphic terms a hypothetical future picture of a Western Europe turned completely parasitic, after the fashion of the Riviera, with only wealthy rentiers, their professional retainers and tradesmen, personal servants and workers in light industry and transport, while all heavy industry and food production would have been transferred to the colonies;

"The main arterial industries would have disappeared, the staple foods and manufactures flowing in as tribute from Asia and Africa."

The picture is of course basically incorrect, and only of value for theoretical analysis in hypothetical form to show the significance of the tendency of parasitism, if worked out to its logical extreme. What is the comment of Lenin on this picture which he quotes at length? Does he denounce the basically false assumptions underlying this hypothetical "picture of the future" from the Social-Liberal Hobson, proclaim its impossibility, insist on the inevitability of Socialism, etc? On the contrary, he says quite simply:

"Hobson is quite right. If the forces of imperialism do not meet with resistance, they will lead to what he has described."

Finally, to come to the question of "inevitability." Since the victory of Communism is inevitable, how is it possible to present the issue confronting mankind today as if it were a question of two "alternatives", as if there were two alternative paths before society to choose from, "Either . . . Or", "Either the downward capitalist line or the upward socialist line", "Either to throttle still further the productive forces or to release them", "Either down to destruction with capitalism or forward with socialism", etc., etc.?

Here is dilemma for the formal logician to break his head on, but it ought not to cause difficulty to a dialectician.

It is the very heart of the revolutionary Marxist

understanding of inevitability that it has nothing in common with the mechanical fatalism of which our opponents incorrectly accuse us. The inevitability of revolutionary Marxism is realised in practice through living human wills under given social conditions, consciously reacting to those conditions, and consciously choosing their line between alternative possibilities seen by them within the given conditions. "Man makes his own history, but not out of the whole cloth."

We are able scientifically to predict the inevitable outcome, because we are able to analyse the social conditions governing the consciousness, and the line of development of those social conditions. We are able to analyse the growth of contradictions, and the consequent accumulation of forces generating ever greater revolutionary consciousness and will of the exploited majority, until they become strong enough to overcome all obstacles and conquer. We are able with scientific precision to lay down the certainty that every failure, every choosing of an incorrect path, can only be temporary, because the outcome can in no wise solve the contradictions generating the revolutionary consciousness and will, and these conditions only lead to renewed and intensified struggle, up to final victory. This process is inevitable. (But what of the difficulty, asks Comrade De Leeuw, that, if the ultimate working out of the process of capitalist decay to its logical—not dialectical—conclusion would mean the increasing destruction of the productive forces, then this would mean the destruction of the premises for the proletarian victory and for Communism? The answer is the same in principle as with regard to the theory of ultra-imperialism; hypothetically, logically, the extreme prolongation of the line of capitalist decay would lead to this conclusion; but in reality the increasing contradictions generated by this process will lead to the victory of the world revolution before any such stage can be reached.)

But the human consciousness of the participants in this inevitable process is not the consciousness of automatic cogs in a pre-determined mechanism.

It is the consciousness of living active human beings, revolting against intolerable evils, deliberately with thought and passion choosing an alternative, doing and daring all to achieve a new world, and ready to give their lives in the fight because of their intense desire by such action to help to make the achievement of the goal possible. This fighting revolutionary consciousness is by no means bowing to an inevitable outcome, but is most actively seeking to tip the balance and make certain by action the victory of one alternative and the defeat of another alternative. Every revolutionary worth his salt acts in every stage of the fight as if the whole future of the revolution depended on his action. And in presenting the issues of the present stage to the masses to-day we present them not at all as placid inevitabilities to contemplate like the movement of the stars, but as gigantic issues of fight with the whole future of humanity at stake, calling for the utmost determination, courage, sacrifice and invincible will to conquer.

This is the essence of the revolutionary Marxist understanding of inevitability, and is one of the central issues of division between Bolshevism and Menshevism.

It is precisely the passive Menshevik Social-Democratic view which sees the historical process as an automatic mechanical inevitability, independent of human will and action, i.e., of human conscious choice between alternatives, as itself a historical factor, which is incapable of seeing the enormous creative power of the masses in action to change the course of history, which sneers at the urgency and insistence typified in Lenin's declaration that "delay means death," and thus inevitably leads to passivity and impotence in the name of a philistine distortion of Marxism. This outlook is dangerous and needs to be actively fought. The alternative error, of too sharply presenting the alternatives in order to fight and conquer and prevent the victory of the class enemy, is by comparison less dangerous, so long as the theoretical foundations of the inevitable ultimate victory of Communism are correctly understood.

(b) THE POLITICAL BASIS FOR A LABOUR PARTY IN THE UNITED STATES

By WILLIAM Z. FOSTER.

THE Communist Party, U.S.A., has in the recent period resumed its efforts to establish a mass Labour Party in the United States. Its work is beginning under very favourable auspices. From the outset we must stress the point that the Communist Party is the only consistent proletarian party which the working class has. It is the vanguard which the working class of the U.S.A. began to bring forward immediately after the war. The working class can have only one such party. To transform it into a powerful mass Bolshevik Party is the basic condition for the liberation of the working class. Therefore when the Communists raise the question of a Labour Party they do not think of an organisation to compete with or to replace the Communist Party, but of a broad mass workers' party, established on the basis of the united front between the Communists and all other workers, who accept the policy of the class struggle for their direct interests and who therefore break with the capitalist parties.

Historical facts show that wide masses of the American working class have been until now unable to detach themselves politically from the two bourgeois parties and to form a mass party of their own. But, under the pressure of the deep and prolonged industrial crisis, occurring in the developing general crisis of capitalism, the situation is radically changing; in fact, it has already become so altered that one may correctly say the objective conditions for a mass Labour Party now exist in the United States and make such a party of profound importance for the working class.

In order to understand why the situation is at present so much more favourable to establish such a party of labour, it is necessary to first review, at least briefly, the main causes why no mass party of workers has as yet arisen in the United States.

It is a fact that mass parties of the workers first grew in those European countries where the bourgeois revolution either largely or wholly failed to give democratic rights to the workers. In such countries, notably Germany, Austria, Russia, etc., the workers, being acutely aware of their burning political grievances, early organised Socialist Parties to fight, in first line, for the democratic rights which they, the workers, so evidently lacked. In England and France, on the other hand, where the workers had more democratic rights, the mass parties of the proletariat were consequently much longer delayed in taking shape and strength.

It was in the United States, more than all

other major countries, that the working class had the most extensive bourgeois democratic rights and illusions. This is the basic reason why they did not develop class-consciousness and a workers' mass party. Possessing in some measure the formal rights of free press, free speech, free assembly, the right to vote and to hold every political office, the legal right to organise unions and to strike, as well as a theoretical social equality with all other citizens, consequently, the American workers became saturated with bourgeois democratic illusions in spite of the fact that in America, as well as in other capitalist countries, these bourgeois democratic rights were used against the workers. Unlike the workers of Russia and Germany (and even of England and France), they did not feel the necessity for having a political party of their own to fight for immediate political demands. And, of course, they felt an even lesser urge to form such a party for the purpose of ultimately overthrowing capitalism. Therefore, until very recently, the Communist Party remained a small organisation without wide mass influence.

In order to organise a separate mass political party it was necessary that they be conscious of a whole series of burning immediate political demands, but of these urgent needs they were not conscious. The grievances that pressed them most, and often these were very severe — chiefly long hours, low wages, bad working conditions—were mainly of an economic character. Hence, historically, the struggle of the American working class has almost always been limited to that for economic demands, and did not go beyond the bounds of simple trade unionism, which did not, however, prevent it from often being extremely bitter in character. And hence, also, for two generations all attempts to found a strong Socialist or Labour Party resulted in failure.

There were a number of other powerful factors that further checked and frustrated the growth of class-consciousness and the political organisation of the American working class. Among these were the presence of great tracts of government free land during several generations; the relatively higher wages and living standards of the proletariat in the United States than in European countries; the fact that during the rapid industrialisation of the country large numbers of workers became well-to-do and some even became capitalists, thereby creating widespread petty bourgeois prosperity illusions among the proletariat; the reactionary influence of

the large labour aristocracy and trade union bureaucracy, the heterogeneous composition of the working class, etc. But the decisive factor was the lack of a popular programme of concrete political demands for elementary democratic rights put forward as mass demands by the whole process of the class struggle.

It is not surprising, therefore, that during this whole period, which only now in the crisis is coming to an end, the trade unions, although they raised certain political demands, never developed a real political programme. The demands they formulated were not of such a burning and urgent character that they could serve for the foundation of a Labour Party. The centre of these demands was a defensive political struggle to prevent encroachments upon the trade unions' legal rights through court decisions on picketing, boycotts, trade restraint, etc. Aside from further scattered demands for the abolition of child labour, for factory health and safety inspection, for workmen's accident compensation and a few minor labour questions, the rest of organised labour's (A.F.L.) so-called political programme consisted mostly of a lot of haphazard petty-bourgeois measures against the trustification of industry, for currency reform, against prohibition, for immigration restriction, etc. And during this whole period the masses themselves did not develop outside the framework of the A.F.L. legislative programme any additional major political demands, nor could the Socialist Party succeed in creating a popular mass political programme that the workers would fight for, although it tried diligently for many years to do so, and the Communist Party failed likewise.

To sum up in short: The basic reason why the American working class did not organise a mass powerful Socialist or Labour Party during so many years was because it was not conscious of a set of pressing immediate political demands around which it could develop a class viewpoint, and for which it felt impelled to organise its own party and to conduct a systematic and persistent political struggle. It is clear that if the absence of such a programme or the absence of a mass movement for such a programme hindered the establishment of a mass party prior to the general crisis of capitalism, then in the recent period it prevented the Communist Party becoming transformed into a mass party.

The Promotion of a Mass Political Programme.

But the deep-going and protracted industrial crisis has fundamentally changed this situation. Suffering under years' long prostration of industry, which has brought gigantic mass unemployment, starvation wages, low farm prices, ruthless trusti-

fication of industry, etc., and produced widespread poverty and pauperisation of many millions, vast sections of the toiling masses have become conscious of a whole series of the most urgent political needs. These demands, in sum, amount to a popular political programme. As yet this developing political programme is somewhat scattered and unorganised; but it is real and vital and it undoubtedly can become a political base upon which to organise a mass Labour Party.

How did the Communist, Socialist or "progressive" elements act in past years when they tried to organise a Labour Party? They first formulated immediate demands such as they thought the masses *ought* to want, and then they tried to get the masses to support these programmes. But for many years it remained a vain task; the masses did not respond. Now, however, great masses of workers, farmers and lower petty-bourgeoisie are becoming conscious of the need to advance many such political demands, and, more, are showing their willingness to fight for them.

Many of these political demands have assumed the character of mass demands under the pressure of the crisis (such as those for social insurance, etc.). The demands for social insurance are new; while others (such as those dealing with hours, wages, status of trade unionism, etc.) were formerly considered simply as economic questions. Thus, not only is the American class struggle becoming in general more political, but hitherto economic demands of the workers (even local ones) are turning into national political questions.

Of the issues listed below, every one is a mass demand in a real sense. Literally millions of the impoverished masses are supporting each one, and often several of them together. Many of these demands were wholly or partially popularised by the A.F. of L.; several (unemployment insurance, Negro, fascism, war) by the Communist Party; one (old age pensions) by the Townsend movement, etc. All of them have become acute national questions in American political life.

Among the more burning of these demands (not arranged in the order of their relative importance) are the following:

- Unemployment insurance.
- Unemployment relief.
- Old age pensions.
- Thirty-hour week.
- Relief for poor farmers.
- Legalised national minimum wages.
- Government recognition of the trade unions. (Illegalising of company unions.)
- Against high cost of living (reduction of government fixed prices).

For government building programme (right to work).

Full union wages on government relief work.

Relief from growing tax burden.

Relief for small home owners.

Abolition of child labour.

Equal rights for Negroes.

Against fascism (defence of strike rights, free assembly, etc.).

Against imperialist war (endorsement of the U.S.S.R. peace policy).

All these demands (and more that could be added) have become deeply rooted among the great masses, who are militantly demanding them. They are serving as the basis of the sharpening present-day American political struggle. Besides the growth of this new mass political programme of immediate demands there is a general radicalisation of the workers. There is a growing feeling among the toiling masses that life for them is becoming intolerable under capitalism, that the capitalist system is doomed and must be supplanted by a new social order. On all sides there is vague but militant talk of revolution. This developing mass antagonism to capitalism itself is also quite new in American history. Very probably, therefore, the coming Labour Party, especially if it develops first in the lower organs of the trade unions, will reflect this growing radicalism, although only in general terms, by demanding the abolition of the capitalist system.

The foregoing popular immediate demands undoubtedly constitute a sufficiently solid political platform around which to build a mass Labour Party. The possibility of these demands being liquidated by an easing of the industrial crisis is excluded. Even if the United States should regain the production level of 1929, which is not likely, there would still remain huge mass unemployment and mass pauperisation of workers and farmers, and every one of the above-mentioned demands would remain a vital issue.

And it is also futile to expect that the bourgeoisie can or will satisfy the workers on these burning questions. Roosevelt is dabbling with most of them, trying to forestall more insistent demands by sops and promises. But although his government is pouring out unparalleled billions for public works, unemployment relief, etc., it clearly cannot satisfy the masses, and daily their political demands grow sharper and become the centre of more acute struggle. Despite Roosevelt's billions and his demagoguery, the radicalisation of the American working class and large masses of poor farmers is growing at a pace unheard of in the history of the United States. And, of great significance, undoubtedly the broad, impoverished masses are steadily losing hope of securing real

relief from Roosevelt or by the ending of the crisis. As a result of this, Roosevelt's influence among the masses is falling and indications of a mass breakaway from the two capitalist parties are becoming more and more obvious.

The Labour Party Will Not Automatically Develop Itself.

Thus the basic elements are fast accumulating for a broad workers' party in the United States. Most important, there is for the first time a real mass working class political programme of immediate demands taking shape; secondly, the masses, despairing of achieving this programme within the two old parties, are also developing very definite signs of splitting from these parties; and, further, the trade unions have recently strengthened themselves and are now in a much better position to serve as an organised basis for a Labour Party.

Despite these favourable developments, however, it would be the very greatest mistake to conclude that because of them a Labour Party in the United States is inevitable, and that all we have to do is to sit around with arms folded until it automatically takes shape. The formation of a Labour Party is far from being an easy task; it is safe to assume that only by the greatest struggle, especially on the part of the Communist Party, can a mass Labour Party be definitely established.

A severe struggle will be necessary because the bourgeoisie, which has no intention of granting the demands of the workers and poor farmers, will not sit idly by while they create a broad Labour Party to fight for these demands. Already, indeed, it is vigorously attempting to make use of these discontented masses so that they may be used for their own further enslavement. Fascism, supported by the big capitalist elements, is now growing with great rapidity in the United States. A whole group of well-financed fascist and semi-fascist leaders, with the wildest demagoguery and reckless promises, are working to confuse the discontented masses and to secure organised control over them. And, unfortunately, they are only too successful — undoubtedly millions of oppressed workers and farmers are already looking to them for leadership and organisation.

The great danger consists in the fact that, although the toiling masses are formulating urgent political demands and are tending to break with the two old parties, and Labour Party sentiment is growing, they are still not yet convinced that they should form a party of their own. In their political immaturity they are very susceptible to fascist demagoguery, and if the bourgeoisie realise that they can no longer control these masses in the old parties, they will, to forestall the organisation of a Labour Party, very probably, through their new fascist agents and reactionary trade union

leaders, try to mislead the growing demand of the impoverished masses for a new party into a third bourgeois party, more or less fascist in character, which will be a real menace to the whole working class. Indeed, such a semi-fascist third capitalist party is now a real probability in the United States. Preliminary conferences have been held and it may take shape in the coming Presidential elections of 1936.

The great present political importance of the Communist Party's Labour Party slogan, therefore, lies precisely in the fact that the formation of a broad mass Labour Party is the best way to prevent the discontented masses from falling under fascist control and also to organise these forces politically for effective working-class struggle. A strong Labour Party can be made a great rallying ground, become the expression of the broad united front, which unites all the forces fighting against the rising wave of fascism in the United States.

In the building of an American Labour Party the growing Communist Party confronts a huge task. It will have to do the bulk of the work. Upon it rests the chief responsibility of convincing the masses of the need to build a mass Labour Party, exploding the fascist demagogy and of overcoming the opposition to a Labour Party among the reactionary trade union leadership, of building up the necessary united front among the various labour organisations, etc. And, even more important, especially will it fall to the Communist Party to prevent the new Labour Party itself from falling under reactionary leadership and thus becoming an instrument of fascist reaction, and to make of it a force that will lead the workers along the road to revolutionary struggle. Hard tasks are these, and they will test all the Bolshevik strength and leadership of our Party. This indicates that the recent growth of the C.P. is also an important factor for the building of the Labour Party.

In this connection we must briefly remark (in so far as in this article we are only dealing with one side of the problems of the Labour Party) that the question of the Labour Party is indissolubly connected with that of the Communist Party in the period of the general crisis of capitalism. But these two questions are not identical. The resolutions of the January Plenum of the C.C. of the C.P. of the U.S.A. clearly indicated why the C.P., which is now becoming transformed into a mass party, still supports the movement for a mass

Labour Party (help for wider masses than those who can follow the Party directly, to break with the capitalist parties, to help these masses to find the revolutionary path of struggle as distinct from social reformist compromise with the bourgeoisie). The resolution also pointed out that only the Communist Party is the consistent revolutionary class party of the proletariat.

This does not mean, however, that a Labour Party can be of value to the workers only if the Communists are in complete organisational control of it. On the contrary, one of the surest means of defeating the Labour Party movement would be to build on the basis of Communist control as an imperative condition. That would surely strip the Labour Party, from the outset, of its character as a mass united front organisation. The Labour Party must be a real united front on the political field. The Labour Party must be based upon the broad mass unions, while the Communists must stimulate the unions to link up with the movement for a mass Labour Party. In the given conditions in the United States, a Labour Party will certainly take on a militant and radical aspect, and if our Communist Party acts energetically and intelligently (it can especially entrench itself in the lower organs of the Labour Party), it can acquire a very powerful and even leading influence in the new party. This will be true even though, paradoxically, it may be that if the Labour Party were formed by the A.F. of L. officially, our Party might not be permitted to formally affiliate nationally with it.

By campaigning vigorously for the Labour Party—without slackening in its strike and other activities—our Party can enormously increase its strength, prestige and leadership in the new party and in the working class generally. The situation is such that if the C.P. energetically takes up the work, local united labour tickets and Labour Parties with a real mass base and powerful Communist influence, can certainly be launched in many of the smaller but very important industrial centres, also very probably Labour Parties can be organised in several states and, so rapidly are the masses on the move, even the establishment of a national Labour Party or a national labour ticket by the time of the Presidential elections of 1936 is not out of the question. The fight for a Labour Party is the greatest single task now confronting the American Communist Party.

(c) REGARDING SOME QUESTIONS OF AGRARIAN WORK IN THE U.S.A.

By B. SHERMAN.

IN a letter which has come to our attention, Comrade Bruce Taylor, an active participant in the farmers' movement in Minnesota, raises a number of important questions regarding the work of the Party in the U.S.A. among the farmers. It is to be welcomed that such a comrade should critically examine the tactical line of the Party and its approach to the task of winning over the poor and middle farmers as allies of the proletariat. This is especially timely because the agrarian work of the Party has received altogether inadequate discussion in the Party press. Comrade Taylor, however, in correctly pointing out some of the shortcomings, weaknesses, and sectarian tendencies in the agrarian work of the Party, himself falls into a number of errors which cannot pass unnoticed. According to Comrade Taylor the reasons for our lagging behind in our work among the farmers can be reduced to the following: that the Party is pursuing "Leftist" tactics; that the Communists in the leading fraction of the United Farmers' League and other farmers' mass organisations do not understand the question of the united front, or the rôle of mass organisations and their relationship to the Communist Party; that the Farmers' National Committee for Action, a united front body, and its organ, the Farmers' National Weekly, should be "non-political" and soft-pedal its criticism of the Farmer-Labour Party.

We can well ask the question: How does it happen, that after many years of a protracted agrarian crisis in the United States, intensified by the economic crisis, the Party has only recently begun to make some headway in the task of penetrating the ranks of the poor and middle farmers. It is firstly due to the fact that the Party has until recently seriously under-estimated the importance of winning the poor farmers on the side of the proletariat. Secondly, for a long time the Party did not have a clearly differentiated approach to the various strata of the farm population. It was only at the Extraordinary Party Conference in July, 1933, that the tasks of the Party were clearly formulated in a resolution for the first time. This declared that the Party must base its work in the countryside on the agricultural labourers and the poor farmers as the most reliable, the firmest ally of the proletariat. It must win over as allies the lower strata, and neutralise the rest of the middle farmers. It must engage in uncompromising struggle against the rich farmers, the landlords, and all the other

exploiters of the village poor. It was on the basis of this correct approach that the Party were able to achieve some undoubted successes, which are, however, small in comparison with the great tasks and possibilities which the objective situation opens before us.

The Roosevelt programme has resulted in the further wholesale impoverishment of the poor farmers, as it has of the workers. The programme of "regulated" inflation, crop-reduction and livestock destruction has had a disastrous effect (further aggravated and intensified by the drought), on the most exploited sections of the rural population, while directly benefiting the rich farmers, landlords mortgage-holders insurance companies, and banks. The latest government statistics give some small indication of this; farm-tenancy has increased to nearly 50 per cent. of the farm population; the share-croppers of the South, especially the Negroes, are reduced to ever greater starvation, and are being evicted from their homes as a result of the cotton curtailment programme; the price scissors has widened. The 34 per cent. increase in food prices for the city worker, accompanied by reduction of wage earnings for the employed and of relief for the unemployed, sharply reduces the consumption of farm products. In these circumstances, the hopes and illusions of the impoverished farmers in the Roosevelt programme, nurtured by the bourgeois-reformist leaders of the farm organisations, have been seriously weakened, although not entirely overcome.

If big mass struggles of the farmers have not yet been developed to-day, even to the level of two or three years ago, it is partly to be explained by the fact that the form of the sharp capitalist offensive against the rural toilers has been modified to a certain extent, though by no means lessened. Mass resistance of the farmers threatened with the loss of their farms and the rapid spread of "penny sales" made it no longer advisable for a certain period to carry through these evictions and foreclosures, nor was it profitable for the mortgage holders to do so, when the government offered to re-finance and take over the defunct mortgages. Then the government subsidies for acreage reduction, which of course benefited mainly the rich farmers, landlords, and the banks, also had a certain influence on the upper layers of the middle farmers. For the vast majority of the poor and middle farmers, this programme meant greater impoverishment and destitution. Thus

the reformist leaders were able to some extent to divert the mass discontent on the countryside against the Roosevelt programme of monopoly capital for the time being, and strenuously worked to keep this discontent from breaking out into mass struggles; but in order to accomplish this, it was necessary to even make some concessions to the impoverished farmers, however inadequate, in the form of appropriations by the Federal Government and several state governments for drought relief, feed, seed, etc. But the ferment increases, and forces the leaders of the Farmers' Union, Farm Holiday Association, and the Farmer-Labour Party to utilise more "Left" demagoguery, and to even come out in sharp criticism of the "New Deal" policies and to flirt with the idea of a third party movement, as Roosevelt's ability to make "Left" manoeuvres becomes ever narrower.

It would be wrong to draw the conclusion that the objective factors have precluded the possibilities of developing big struggles against the Roosevelt farm programme (Agricultural Administration Act, Bankhead Act, etc.). Never were there bigger opportunities for organising a united front of struggle of the impoverished farmers for immediate relief. The Party has had some successes in developing such a united front on various issues of relief, and in support of the Farmers' Emergency Relief Bill which has been drawn up at the initiative of the Party, endorsed by a number of militant farm organisations, and introduced into Congress. But there are some serious weaknesses and shortcomings in the work of the Party and the militant farm organisations. The sectarian tendencies in our agrarian work seriously hinder the development of struggles on a broad united front basis.

Comrade Taylor, in a letter to the editor of the Farmers' National Weekly, a copy of which he sent to us, complains that the Party does not in the agrarian work

"understand the basic principles of the united front or how to properly make the approach, or the function of the U.F.L. in the united front after it has been initiated. The mass organisation, the U.F.L. and others, is one and the same thing as the Communist Party, it has no identity as a separate organisation apart from the Party, with a programme of its own and a function of its own to perform. This lack of comprehension and confusion is apparent all of the time in the Farmers' National Weekly."

We must say that although this statement is altogether too sweeping, it has a kernel of truth in it. It is only recently that some real advances have been made in developing a broader mass base for the militant farmers' movement.

If we examine the United Farmers' League, however, we see that it is still a small, narrow organisation which has not been able to penetrate the broad masses of the poor and middle farmers,

and which, in its approach to the farm masses, is very often undistinguishable from the Communist Party. At its National Convention in June 1934, an attempt was made to formulate a programme which makes clear that the United Farmers' League is a much broader organisation than the Party, but this programme was never popularised, and the approach and methods of work of the Communists in the U.F.L. remained essentially the same, thus tending to limit the organisation to only the most advanced elements among the farmers, those who are more or less in sympathy with the Communist Party.

Considering the fact that the great mass of the farmers belong to the various big farm organisations, under bourgeois-reformist leadership, the question of developing the united front acquires the greatest importance for the Party, the United Farmers' League, and other militant farm organisations.

The first beginnings of united front actions were made by the Party and the United Farmers' League in the first Farmers' National Conference at Washington, D.C., in December 1932, out of which was born the Farmers' National Committee for Action, under whose auspices was held a still broader united front conference at Chicago in November 1933. Into this united front were drawn many of the lower organisations of the Farmers' Union and the Farm Holiday Association. But unfortunately, this was not followed up enough to broaden the base for joint actions. The Farmers' National Committee for Action was not sufficiently utilised as an instrument to penetrate the reformist organisations, and to draw them into the united front of struggle for the most immediate needs of the impoverished farmers, and in fact has functioned only spasmodically, at times losing its identity. The Communists who participated in this united front movement did not always display a sufficient understanding of the difference between the rôle of the United Farmers' League, an organisation of the more advanced elements with a class struggle programme and the rôle of the Farmers' National Committee for Action, a united front body which unites for action all poor and middle farmers and their organisations, regardless of political differences, on a programme of the most vital immediate demands. This shortcoming is evident in the militant farmers' press, the Farmers' National Weekly and the Producers News. It was also evident in the confusion that existed for a long time in regard to the establishment of local farmers' committees of action; the establishment of these local organs of united struggle, on a temporary basis, to include the United Farmers' League, the reformist farm organisations, and the

unorganised farmers, was at times narrowed down so that the committees of action (or rather the most active elements in them) were transformed into locals of the United Farmers' League. The local committee of action was not sufficiently understood to be an elected body representing the broad mass of the poor and middle farmers of all tendencies, leading in united front actions around some specified issues.

Millions of exploited farmers are members of farm organisations and co-operatives under openly reactionary or reformist leadership. There is a growing gap between the militant sentiments of the rank and file of these organisation and their leaders. Even the "Left" reformists are finding it increasingly difficult to cover up their bourgeois policies with radical phraseology. What is especially important, the leading committees of the lower organisational units in townships and counties, and even to some extent in the state organisations, are often susceptible to pressure from below. Many of the honest elements leading the lower organisations can be won for a class struggle policy, for the united front. If the Party is to win the masses of poor and middle farmers who are the majority in these organisations to a policy of class struggle, and away from the treacherous policies of their leaders, it is becoming an ever more urgent necessity for the Communists and other militant elements to enter these organisations and give leadership to the mass discontent of the membership and direct it into channels of struggle against the bourgeoisie. Without this, the development of a broad united front movement cannot be accomplished. Without this, the winning of the impoverished rural masses as allies of the proletariat, fighting under the leadership of the proletariat and its revolutionary vanguard, the Communist Party, is impossible. Without this, the establishment of strong Party organisations in the countryside, which will be the firm core giving leadership to the struggles, will not be realised. This turn must be made, and at the same time continuing the task of organising the unorganised farmers under militant leadership, where this is possible and in accordance with the concrete situation. The importance of such a turn can be seen from the experiences in Nebraska in 1933, where by entering the movement when the masses were in revolt against the top Farm Holiday leaders, national and state, the militant elements under the leadership of the Farmers' National Committee for Action succeeded in taking over the leadership of the Nebraska Holiday Association, which at that time numbered nearly 30,000 members.

Without overlooking the advances made by the Party in the agrarian field in the past three years, it is necessary to say that we are seriously lagging

behind and have not yet overcome the sectarian tendencies which are hindrances in our work. We can therefore, only welcome the criticism of comrades who keenly feel these shortcomings in the course of their daily work among the masses. But Communists are not separated by a Chinese wall from the masses, and are therefore subject to becoming influenced themselves, if not vigilant, by the reformist illusions. Therefore, if the criticism of its weaknesses and shortcomings, and particularly of sectarian tendencies in the Party's agrarian work, is to have any value, it is necessary to exercise the utmost care that we do not go to the opposite, and equally dangerous, extreme, that of surrendering to Right opportunist tendencies which may lead to the camp of social-reformism. The struggle must be conducted on two fronts, against both Right and "Left" opportunism. Unless this is done, such criticism can only result in such errors as are evident in the letter of Comrade Taylor.

In his letter we find the following:

"As the Farmers' National Weekly is a united front paper, official organ of several other farm organisations which are non-political, it should not play up the C.P. except only in connection with other political parties or as a matter of reporting legitimate news. Our enemies use this to prejudice the backward groups against us by calling the U.F.L. and other organisations, 'Red,' so in many cases it is not the contents of the article so much as its obvious colour and tone, which I criticise."

He says further that the editorial policy of the Farmers' National Weekly and the leadership of the United Farmers' League

"are orientated on the programme and line of the Communist Party and follow it instead of the programme and line of the U.F.L., thereby making the F.N.W. an organ of the Communist Party rather than what it should be as the official organ of the United Farmers' League. The editors of the F.N.W. must reorientate themselves on the programme of the U.F.L. and understand that the U.F.L. is not the Party, and performs an entirely different function than the Party, and that these functions are not interchangeable."

Comrade Taylor approaches the question as though there is no connection between the struggle for immediate demands and the revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of capitalism, and he therefore sees a contradiction in Communists following the line of the Party while giving effective leadership to a broad mass organisation which fights for some immediate demands. That is why there is repeated so often in his letter the phrase "non-political" in characterising the rôle of a mass organisation. It is necessary to understand that the smallest struggle for the most elementary immediate demand is essentially a political struggle, and is the most important link in bringing the workers and farmers step by step to higher political stages, to the revolutionary struggle against capitalism. The bourgeoisie and their reformist agents raise the argument about keeping

the workers' and farmers' organisations "out of politics," but what they mean actually is to keep them from the class struggle, from working class politics, because under cover of this "non-political" approach they participate very actively in politics, in bourgeois politics, and attempt to get the support of the masses for the political parties which support capitalism. Communists cannot approach any question "without political bias"; it is a class approach, which is necessarily politically biased, and only in this way can the politically backward masses be made class conscious and their political understanding developed. There is no contradiction between following the line of the Communist Party and adopting a correct approach to leading the masses in a struggle for their economic demands; in fact, only by a correct application of the strategy and tactics of the Party can effective leadership be given in these struggles.

But this is in no way contradictory to the most urgent immediate task: to build a broad united front of struggle embracing the widest masses of rural toilers, with the Communists as the driving force. Without hiding the face of the Party and its programme, or the rôle of the Communists within the broader movement, it must be the Communists' aim not to narrow down such a movement to only Communists and its close sympathisers. That such tendencies exist, there is no doubt.

The Party must increase the struggle against these tendencies. Comrade Taylor points out that "another criticism of the F.N.W. is that the articles written by the editorial staff show a woeful unfamiliarity with farming in general which accounts for their inability to talk the language of the farmers."

Certainly the Farmers' National Weekly, although improving, has many shortcomings to overcome before it will be a popular mass organ with a wide appeal for the toiling farmers, no matter how politically backward. It does not yet speak a language which the farmers understand, it very often uses a phraseology which may be suitable for the most advanced class-conscious elements, but not for the broad masses. And it does not yet raise as a central political question the development of the united front of struggle of the impoverished farmers, as the most burning need of to-day. While developing the united front in a bold and energetic manner, it is necessary at the same time to change our methods of criticising the Roosevelt programme, the reformist leaders, and demagogues of the Coughlin and Long type, by repetition of well-known formulas,

and instead to use clear convincing arguments by which we concretely expose these leaders and their demagogy before the masses and dispel the illusions in them. But we cannot expose the reformist leaders without clearly showing the ideological platform on which they stand, and by which they are linked to the policies of the bourgeoisie.

That is why it is wrong to argue, as Comrade Taylor does, that we can criticise Gov. Olson without linking him to the petty bourgeois Farmer-Labour Party.

We must show the masses the contents of its ideological platform, and its support of the capitalist class, even though clearly differentiating it, however, from the masses in the Farmer-Labour Party who want to struggle against the bourgeoisie. This exposure must be skilful, showing the masses the contrast between their own anti-capitalist sentiments and the path their leaders are diverting them to; if we do not do this, we will only strengthen the reformist illusions of the masses and encourage the penetration of these illusions in the ranks of the Party; in fact, such opportunist tendencies have already appeared during the last election campaign in the Party in Minnesota, the state where the Farmer-Labour Party is in power, precisely because there was an insufficient ideological struggle against the platform of the Farmer-Labour Party, in contrast with the Communist platform. (The question of our tactics in relation to the Farmer-Labour Party, as part of our Labour Party tactics, will be discussed in a separate article.)

Finally, it is necessary to widely popularise the slogan of Soviet power among the poor farming masses, explaining in concrete terms what a Soviet America would mean for them, popularising the achievements of the Soviet Union, bringing forward the programme of the Communist Party before the broadest masses of the village poor who are engaged in struggle for their immediate demands to develop their political consciousness so that they fully understand that only by allying themselves with, and placing themselves under the leadership of the proletariat and its revolutionary vanguard can they hope to free themselves from the yoke of capitalism.

The questions raised by Comrade Taylor show the great need in the Party for a greater clarification of the political questions connected with our work among the farmers. It is to be hoped that the raising of these questions will stimulate the beginning of a more thorough discussion in the Party press on the problems of our agrarian work.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ENGLISH AIRCRAFT STRIKE

By TOM ROBERTS.

IN March of this year 1,300 workers, engaged in the two "Hawker" aircraft factories in England came out on strike. The basis for the dispute undoubtedly was the bad working conditions, but the spark for action was around the employment of a workman, whose conduct operated against the best interests of the men in his department. He set the pace for other workers and refused to join the trade union since they were already preparing to struggle for better working conditions and to build up their fighting organisation. The workers decided to make this the fighting issue and used it as the ground for strike action. The strike commenced in the Gloucester factory of the firm, involving over 600 workers, and within four days they were joined in sympathetic action by the workers employed at the "Kingston" factory of the same company, making a total of over 1,300.

The strike lasted two weeks. This strike was part of the campaign to secure better working conditions for workers in the aircraft industry, and was prepared by the Communist fractions and cells within the industry and unions.

Already in the London district the Communist fractions have made great headway in developing the shop stewards' movement within the industry.

According to the complaints brought before the trade union organisations the employers throughout the whole of this industry in general violate the terms of the agreements operating in the engineering industry. This violation involves the government departments as well as robbing the workers of benefits gained through organised effort, because in this industry the main market for aircraft is the government, and in all government contracts there is a clause known as "the fair wage clause," which means that all employers entering into contract with the government departments must observe strictly trade union agreements. In this industry, according to the reformist reports, there is a general ignoring of agreements, men being started to work at less than the district rate of pay, while overtime is being paid for at ordinary time rates, and bonus systems are irregular. This under-payment on the part of the employers is quite conscious.

It was these conditions and the frame of mind of the employers towards the question of trade union organisation that formed the basis for action. Further to being dissatisfied with the working conditions violating agreements the workers realised that they

were engaged in a war industry which was working very actively, showed resentment against the trade union agreements and demanded an agreement more in their favour. During the dispute and the days which followed, the aircraft workers endorsed a new programme of demands, a programme which has been endorsed by a national delegate conference of aircraft workers.

This programme provides for :—

"An immediate increase of 2d. per hour on the basic rate of pay.

"Consolidation of the war bonus into basic rates.

"The establishment of a basic minimum wage for the industry for all adult workers of 1/4d. per hour no matter which district they are working in.

"The enforcement of systems of payment by result so as to provide for 33½% above the basic rates, with limitation of overtime to 30 hours per month and statutory holidays with pay."

They have been able to set up a national aircraft council for the purpose of directing this campaign throughout the country, this council being under the leadership of the militant workers within the industry.

The Hawker strikers were able not only to stimulate this shop stewards' movement, but won the first round of the fight by compelling the worker inside the Gloucester factory to join the trade union, and accept the decisions of the shop stewards. At the same time they were able to secure 100 per cent trade union membership throughout the enterprises involved.

The Character of the Strike.

The outstanding character of this strike was its rank and file control from the beginning to the end, the rank and file holding membership of the trade unions, and holding official positions in the union, i.e., factory positions.

From the outset the officials of the unions came out openly against the strike, they took the side of the employers, doing all they could to break the strike. Representatives of the E.C.'s of the trade unions were sent down to address the strikers and to get a return to work. The strike committee, however, upon hearing of the content of their mission, took a decision to prevent the leaders from addressing the strikers. They made arrangements for a mass cordon of pickets to be placed around the entrance to the meeting in order to ensure that no leader would attend the meeting. Further the strike committee, recognising that the "Daily Herald," the official

organ of the reformist leaders, was attempting to break the strike, decided to accept the "Daily Worker," the organ of the C.P.G.B., as the official organ of the strike committee. The case of the leaders in trying to break the strike was that under the existing agreement the machinery for negotiation "provided that no dispute could take place until the machinery of negotiation had been used to the full." This machinery is known as the "York Memo," its main objective being the "avoidance of disputes." It is framed on the basis of class collaboration, but the strikers had no faith in this machinery, neither have the majority of the members of the trade unions. Last year the E.C. of the A.E.U. was instructed to take a ballot on "For or against the York Memo," but the officials knowing that the membership would turn down the "York Memo" altered the terms of the ballot to "against or for amendment." The vote given showed that the membership was dissatisfied, 14,227 for its abolition, and 30,497 for amendment.

This strike is the first strike to occur between the vote being taken and the necessary amendments. The aircraft workers rejected the "York Memo." In this fight the strikers were supported by the workers throughout the industry, and the unions. The London District Committee of the A.E.U. sent financial support, two E.C's out of 13 involved gave support, finance came to the strikers from dozens of the largest metal factories, over £40 being collected at the Rolls-Royce works alone.

The Importance of the Strike and the Fight Against War.

This industry is an important war industry, during the past 12 years it has greatly expanded, between the years 1924 and 1930 alone it trebled its output, and now, owing to the intense war situation, is likely to develop at a tremendous pace. As an industry it looks to the government for its contracts, and to a lesser degree the governments abroad. Contractors are being asked to speed up their deliveries for contracts on which they are now working, so that they may be free to tender for any new planes or equipment that the government may require. They are also being warned to undertake no new foreign or civil contracts without sanction of the government. The Liberal daily newspaper "News Chronicle," describes this letter of the Air Ministry as meaning that "the government is mobilising the Aircraft industry to its maximum output." Consequently, Hawker aircraft shares have risen during the past three weeks from 28/- to 32/6. Handley Page from 17/- to 23/3, Fairey from 25/- to 28/3½, etc. Therefore the building up of trade union organisations in such factories on the basis of the class fight is a very important step in the struggle against imperialist war. The British anti-war movement took a decision to issue an appeal for finance among the anti-war

supporters. This decision was a very practical way in which to assist, but the decision was not carried out. This failure to see in this dispute a basis for developing anti-war work needs to be noted as a very serious omission.

The strike, however, created a good basis. Within four days of the sympathetic strike at "Kingston" in the London area, an all-in London conference of aircraft shop stewards was called. Within the next week a national conference was called, and since the strike a further national conference has been called at which the previous programme was finally adopted. This movement founded in struggle, so bitterly opposed by the reformist leaders, is a mighty force in the hands of the anti-war fighters in England.

What are the Central Questions Involved in this Strike ?

The most important lesson for the Party and the working class is to be found in the correct approach to the trade union question. Comrade J. R. Campbell in his opening speech to the 13th Party Congress of the C.P.G.B. stated :

"One of the best examples is given by the engineering industry at this moment, where groups of branches are coming together through area committees, turning their faces to the factories, campaigning for recruitment to the unions, building up organisations in the factories, getting new shop stewards elected, etc. In these technical preparations we must put across our line for no compromise, no submission to the demands for arbitration, and work towards uniting all militant branches, factory committees in the industry to force concessions from the employing class."

The movement among the aircraft workers corresponds to the line laid down at the Party Congress, the existing trade union organisation being directed to the enterprises, the building up of real mass rank-and-file movements in the enterprise. This is the main central lesson.

This strike, unlike previous strikes where our Party had influence, was called and conducted by the trade-union leaders in the factory, the shop stewards, the rank-and-file leaders who represented the union in the enterprise. Our experience in recent strikes shows that this is becoming a general feature as against previous strikes, where many workers have been unorganised, and the strike was not led by the official shop stewards. This strike, however, demonstrates very clearly that by correct work in the enterprises, the workers and their stewards can be won for effective struggle, and this is important because such a strike is a challenge to the whole rôle of the reformist leadership. It means the breaking of agreements which have been concluded between them and the capitalist employer. It means victory for the workers.

We have to understand that this feature of trade union work is not something which only applies to

the metal factories, but in principle is the key to all our work irrespective of industry or union. Everywhere the workers are smarting under the lash of capitalist rationalisation, bonus swindles and so on. They are all more or less handicapped by "mondist" schemes for the "avoidance of disputes," and therefore we need to examine very closely the key problem of how to get action.

The aircraft strike provides this. The secret lay in the fact that their movement was a real rank-and-file movement, rooted among the masses, in the place where the masses work and are exploited. It was supported by the lower trade-union organisations because inside of those organisations there were Communists and those close to the Party who pressed for a sharp turn to the enterprise, and in the course of this turn secured not only trade union membership, but the election of factory stewards, representatives of the union in the enterprises, elected by the men among whom they work.

Who conducted the strike and extended the strike? It was the shop stewards.

What are the striking facts? The shop stewards with the pressure from the men called the strike. It was the shop stewards who called the all-in London conference of aircraft shop stewards who called the first national conference of aircraft workers, and who have carried through the Second National Conference. Just at a time when the aircraft sub-committee of the London district committee of the A.E.U. is forbidden to call a local conference by the reformist leaders, it was the shop stewards, backed by the men involved in struggle, who prevented the breaking of the strike. **WHAT OTHER BODY COULD HAVE DONE THIS AND GOT AWAY WITH IT?** The importance of this must be noted by every Communist worker. This is trade union work, this is building the oppositional movement. This is taking the correct steps in the fight against war and fascism.

Oft-times we have declared that the factory is the fortress, but have not understood this. The aircraft strike and the subsequent events have given us a concrete example of what is meant by this slogan.

Very frequently we think of trade-union work only as capturing positions in the unions, without any bearing on our conduct in the factory. Sometimes our trade union work ends up in holding positions in the union, but at the same time becoming a charge-hand or foreman in the factory. This lesson must be brought home to every Communist. It was not accidental that at the Party Congress we did not declare our composition on positions held in the factory. We did however, take great pride in showing the composition of our delegations as to union membership, positions held in the union, etc. This was exceedingly good, but we failed to show what positions our delegates held in the factories. Unless we understand this correctly we shall never be able to

explain why we do not build up effective oppositional movements. This is amply brought out by our comrades in the London bus industry. They have built a movement, the workers have won great concessions, the reformist leaders have been defeated time without number—but why? Because the trade union work of our London comrades is founded in the branch work, which again is founded on the depot. Undoubtedly, of all the posts in the trade unions there is none more effective than that of shop steward.

The shop steward holds a particular position in a reformist trade union. He is expected to serve two masters. In the first place, he is a representative of the trade union of which he is a member, he holds a card which has been endorsed by the union and the employers' federation, he is expected to observe strictly the conditions of his appointment, i.e. the "York Memo." For his benefit the terms of the "York Memo" are printed on his card, and he is told that he can be withdrawn from the position in the event of not carrying them out.

The second point is that he is a worker at the bench—he is selected for the post of shop steward not because he is a loyal supporter of the "mondist" policy of class collaboration, but because he is known as a fighter. He is the one who stands out because of his ability to face the management, and because of his interest in the cause of his fellow workmen. Frequently he is called upon to take action quickly, and under the pressure of the workers does things which are contrary to the wishes of the management and the reformist bureaucrats. Just recently the management of Messrs. Henry Hope and Sons, Smethwick, objected to one of the official shop stewards. This was referred to the employers' federation. The federation drew the attention of the shop stewards to this, but the men in the shop decided that he was to remain. The shop steward is therefore a very important person, his election is determined mainly by his conduct among the men. A Communist worker working in an enterprise whose work it is to mobilise the workers for struggle, stands a chance of becoming a shop steward more than anybody else. Yet how is it that we do not see this in our trade union work?

To hold these positions means the securing of leadership, this is how we were able to get a movement in very quick time in the aircraft industry; why we were able to break the betrayal policy of the reformists.

If we are to build up the rank-and-file movement with power in the metal industry or in any other industry it can only be done in this way. That is the first and most important lesson for every Communist, and for the class-conscious workers to note. This is the meaning of the decisions of the 13th Party Congress of our British Party.

Another important point for our Party is the issue upon which the strike actually commenced. It was a fight for organisation, a fight for better working conditions. There were over 150 unorganised in the factory, but there was one man, whose conduct was anti-working class, and yet he was a worker. The existence of such a man was a barrier to progress. He told the employer all that was taking place, he refused to join the union, he set the pace for other men. This is very important, for such persons are more and more being employed in the enterprises. In some enterprises men are employed who openly spy on their fellow workers and are responsible for the dismissal of many good militants before the militants have been able to secure mass support. The shop stewards' movement has been broken during the past few years and one of the factors in this has been the conduct of these "bosses" men. Our trade union branches, our Communist Party, have not come out strongly against this development, and against organisations such as the "Economic League" which declares that it is its duty to expose revolutionary elements to the management. The lesson of this dispute is that on this question we can carry the workers into struggle. It is a class question, and when we have found the man, the workers will come forward in struggle. This step is a step to strengthen the workers, give them confidence that among their own ranks the traitors are being dealt with. We have to be more vigilant in our work, this question must be raised by our Party as a class question.

The final lesson for all workers is to note the treacherous rôle of reformist leaders. The strikes show conclusively that the labour leaders at the top will take every measure possible to destroy action. The employers violated every agreement, they sought to break trade union organisations, but still retained the support of the union leaders. Although this strike was for the purpose of building organisations, eliminating the non-union elements, the officials were not prepared to support their membership.

Operating for years against the best interest of the men is the "York Memo," a memorandum which contains the clause "For the avoidance of disputes." This document, which is an agreement, aims at preventing action, the main provisions being that in the first place a worker having a grievance must try to get it put right himself with the foreman, and if he fails to get satisfaction, he then takes the case over to the shop steward, the shop steward then takes the question up with the management. If he fails, then it is passed over to the union outside the factory, passing through a series of conferences, the last of which takes place in "York," and is known as the central conference, which is a conference between the officials of the union and the employers' federation, where neither the men affected, nor the shop stewards are allowed to participate.

The result of these central conferences during the past ten years is that out of over 500 cases submitted the workers have only won 24 outright. Yet the officials are determined to maintain this scheme of negotiation. Last year, at the national conference of the A.E.U., the E.C. of the union was instructed to take the ballot 'for' and 'against' but refused to carry out the terms of the instruction.

Further on the basis of the result of the ballot, the leaders have submitted to the employers their proposed amendments to the "Memo," providing for the continuance of the "Avoidance of disputes" clause and seeking to do away with the position where the shop stewards deal directly with the issues in the factory. Since the aircraft strike these officials have issued another black circular, against unofficial strikes, in which they state—

"only in this manner can disputes be regularised and the union accept responsibility for the conduct of such disputes and the mischievous elements involved in unofficial disputes be eliminated to the general advantage of the union in particular and trade unionism in general of which the A.E.U. is not an unimportant part."

The same E.C. have placed on the agenda of the forthcoming national conference amendments to the rules of the union so as to give them more power, and to prevent Communists or those associated with them from holding any position in the union.

It is therefore clear that these higher reformist leaders are definitely against trade unions based upon the class struggle, they are fighting to preserve their contacts with the employers, seeking to compromise every issue. Since the dispute they have signed for a 2/- per week increase in the war bonus for the engineers, to apply only to the male adult workers instead of 2d per hour all round, without even calling a national conference of their membership to decide the question. It is very important that we note the rôle of these leaders, that we see their line deepening on the side of the employers against the revolutionary working class.

But while we see these factors, we must take the measures necessary to build up effective organisations that will carry the workers to victory, and the exposure of their line. The aircraft strike and the movement which is now going forward is a vindication of the correctness of the line of the Party, a line which must be applied to all industries. If this is done, we shall soon be able to build up an effective oppositional movement rooted among the masses, out of which we shall be able to build the Party, and so create a mighty united front against the attacks of capital, against fascism and war.

The Party must also overcome its weakness in its anti-war work and convince the toiling masses that the ONLY possible way to meet the war danger is to develop a strong working class movement, and in the first place, in the war and airplane industry.

SOME PROBLEMS OF THE PRESENT INTERNATIONAL SITUATION (PART II)

(Continued from No. 11)

By O. PIATNITSKY.

AT the same time the Social-Democratic Party itself did not even attempt to make use of the enormous forces at its disposal against Fascism, and thus paved the way for Fascism.

This capitulation to Fascism could not fail to cause dissatisfaction among the masses of the rank and file members not only of German Social-Democracy, but in the other parties of the Second International. The growing, immense disillusion in the policy of the Social-Democratic Parties led the masses of their rank-and-file members to begin to listen attentively to the proposals for the united front, and to raise the question of united action with the Communists in their organisations.

The United Front in France.

I have already mentioned the influence that the lessons of the German events had upon the mass movement of February 9th-12th, 1934, in France.

On February 7th-8th, the French Communist Party called upon the proletariat to reply to the Fascist demonstrations by coming out on the streets on February 9th all over France. In order to prevent the workers from participating in these demonstrations called by the Communist Party for February 9th, the Socialist Party of France appealed to the workers to "down tools" in a general strike on February 12th. Without withdrawing its call to demonstrate on February 9th, the Communist Party joined in the appeal of the Socialists to call a strike on February 12th. But unlike the Socialists, the Communists proposed that on February 12th there should be not a "down tools" strike but a strike combined with demonstrations.

On February 9th, the proletariat came out on the streets. It was the first time in France that such huge masses were set in motion by an appeal made by the Communists. Taking into account the influence of this tremendous demonstration and the strike of February 12th, in which about four million workers took part, the anti-Fascist congress which took place in Paris a short time after these events, made a proposal, at the instance of the Communists, to the congress of the French Socialist Party which was taking place at that time, to set up a united front.

The leaders of the Socialist Party rejected this proposal.

But this time there was a strong opposition at the Socialist Congress, which reflected the

pressure of the masses and demanded that the Socialist Party meet the proposal of the Communists. And although the congress declared that the Socialist Party would not make a permanent united front, it was compelled to decide that the C.C. of the Socialist Party could enter into agreement with the Communist Party on separate questions. The Communist Party of France used this decision to propose that the Socialist Party organise a joint campaign to release Thaelmann. The Socialist Party once more refused.

Then the Communist organisation in Paris put the same proposal to the Paris organisation of the Socialist Party which, in view of the moods of the Parisian proletariat, decided to enter into a united front. This decision on the part of the Paris organisation, the most important in the whole of the Socialist Party, compelled the C.C. of the Socialist Party to enter into negotiations for a united front with the French Communist Party. Thus, agreement was arrived at in France between the Communist Party and the Socialist Party for the united front of struggle against Fascism, which has brought such big results. Communists and Socialists have jointly convened big mass meetings and joint demonstrations. This has considerably increased the power of the working-class of France to resist the offensive of the Fascists, and has had a great influence upon the struggle for the united front in many other countries as well.

The United Front in Other Countries.

In England, the Labour Party (which is affiliated to the Second International) and the leaders of the trade unions are against the united front. But the Communist Party of Great Britain is not infrequently successful in getting a united front with a section of the Labour Party and trade union organisations. A short time ago events of very great importance for England took place on this basis. When the law was passed in Parliament curtailing unemployment benefit by 30-50 per cent., the Communist Party of Great Britain together with the Independent Labour Party and some of the local labour and trade union organisations called the unemployed out in mass demonstrations. The demonstrations of unemployed which took place partly as a result of this appeal and partly spontaneously, covered all the most important districts of the country

and assumed such dimensions that the government was compelled to retreat: the law is at present no longer being operated!

In several towns in POLAND: Warsaw, Lodz and others—the Communist Party of Poland has been successful in establishing the united front with local organisations of the Polish Socialist Party and the Bund (the Jewish Social-Democratic Party). Recently in Warsaw a conference of workers took place, which was convened without the Communists. The leaders of the Polish Socialist Party tried to prevent Communists from taking part in it. Nevertheless, the Communists had about sixty delegates at the conference, representatives of whom it was not possible to exclude from the governing body of the conference and in the commissions which worked on the resolutions. The conference passed a decision which contradicts the line of the Polish Socialist Party, namely in defence of the Soviet Union and against the alliance of Poland with Germany. Thus, in Poland as well, the pressure from below (from the masses) is such that it forces the leaders of the Polish Socialist Party to enter the united front in some places.

In the United States of America big strikes have been conducted on the basis of the united front.

In October, 1934, in connection with the armed fighting which had taken place in Spain, the Comintern made a proposal to the Second International for the joint organisation of assistance to the Spanish workers—victims of Spanish Fascism. The Second International refused to accept the Comintern proposal,* but their refusal caused strong dissatisfaction among the members of the reformist trade unions and the Social-Democratic Parties.

The Conference of the Second International which took place soon after also rejected the proposal of the Communist International, but at the same time was compelled to abandon its previous decision prohibiting Social-Democratic Parties in individual cases from concluding separate united front agreements with the Communists. The conference decided to grant the Social-Democratic Parties the right to conclude agreements for a united front with the Communists on their own responsibility.

At this conference the representatives of six parties, among them the French Socialist Party, the Spanish, Italian, Swiss and Austrian Social-Democratic Parties and the Polish Bund, voted in favour of joint action in defence of the Spanish workers, as proposed by the Communist International.

* See *Verbatim Report of Negotiations*, Modern Books, Ltd.

How are we to explain this increasing desire of the workers for the united front?

Since the beginning of the economic crisis, the economic conditions of the working-class have worsened considerably: wages have been cut; the productivity of labour has been increased at the expense of the workers, conditions of work in the factories have been worsened, and at the same time, the net profits of the big concerns and trusts have grown to a colossal extent. Unemployment has, in the main, not changed, and has become chronic. Unemployment insurance has been reduced in those countries where it exists at all. In the remaining countries, the insignificant assistance to the unemployed, afforded previously by benevolent societies, has been reduced or stopped entirely. In all the capitalist countries the elementary political rights of the workers are either entirely abolished (in the Fascist countries) or are being curtailed.

The worsening of their political and economic position has affected the broadest masses of workers. Consequently, of late the desire for trade union unity and the united front of struggle has increased also among the workers belonging to the Second and Amsterdam Internationals.

The Communist International made a proposal to the Socialist Labour International to celebrate May 1st jointly. The Second International rejected this proposal.

A deep crisis is taking place inside the Second International.

In several countries (France, Spain, Austria) the Social-Democratic Parties, under the influence of their members have been compelled to set up a united front with the Communist Parties.

In those countries where the Social-Democratic Parties have held the reins of power (the Labour Party in England), or are in the government (the Social-Democratic Parties of Czechoslovakia, Belgium, Norway, Denmark, Sweden), the Social-Democratic Parties are definitely against the united front of struggle, for this struggle must be directed against the governments which they are leading, or of which they are members. And these governments pursue the policy of the bourgeoisie. The Swedish, Danish and Norwegian Social-Democratic governments, besides giving big grants to factory owners, landlords and bankers, have actually abolished the right to strike and are introducing a law making the trade unions financially responsible for strikes (in Denmark, the court has already awarded costs to the extent of 20,000 Danish kronen against the seamen's union for their strike). They have reduced wages, increased the prices of foodstuffs and articles of universal consumption, reinforced

the police and increased expenditure on armaments. The Social-Democratic ministers in Belgium and Czechoslovakia are doing the same. Some of the parties of the Second International, under the pressure of their members, are in favour of the united front, the other parties of the Second International, which are in the governments are against the united front. Therefore the leaders of the Second International are not in a position to issue a decision either for or against the united front at present, without increasing the crisis inside the Second International. When, on March 5th, 1933, the Comintern advised its sections to make proposals to the Social-Democratic Parties for joint struggle against Fascism, the Second International forbade its sections to accept the proposal, giving as its motive the line that the united front must be established on an international scale. When in October, 1934, the Comintern made a proposal to the Second International to form a united front on an international scale to help the Spanish fighters, the leaders of the Second International rejected the proposal, declaring at the time that it is the business of the individual parties affiliated to the Second International.

The same reply was given by the leaders of the Second International in connection with the Comintern proposal to celebrate May 1st jointly.

Of What Importance is the United Front?

If the workers—members of the parties of the Second International—fight together with the Communists, will the working-class as a whole gain thereby?

Of course they will. If the Socialist leaders refuse to make a united front, the Communists will appeal to the national parties of the Second International, and if they refuse, then to the local organisations, and, if they in their return refuse, then to the members of the Social-Democratic organisations, and will establish the united front over the heads of the Social-Democratic leaders. This, in turn, will not fail to compel some of the obstinate Social-Democratic Party officials to give up their policy of openly breaking the united front. Thus the workers will be shown in actual practice that only the revolutionary road of struggle leads to victory. In conducting the united front, the Communists have an opportunity of drawing strata of the workers whom the reformists have been holding back, into the struggle. This is very important for the further struggle of the proletariat, and increasing the influence of the Communist Party over the masses.

Connected with the question of the united front, there is the QUESTION OF TRADE UNION UNITY. Our Red trade-unions are fighting for unity and meet-

ing with stubborn resistance on the part of the reformists. A short time ago the Profintern made a proposal to the Amsterdam International to organise a joint demonstration on May 1st, to assist in unifying the trade unions in Spain and in France, in restoring the German trade unions destroyed by Fascism, and in beginning negotiations for trade union unity on an international scale. The reply received was in the negative.* In spite of this, the question of uniting the trade unions is on the order of the day, and the Communists will urge it forward and try to get it solved quickly, because only the bourgeoisie stand to gain by the split in the trade union movement.

If the trade unions unite, the revolutionary workers will have an opportunity of fighting inside them for their own proposals. In so far as the members of the reformist trade unions undoubtedly are disillusioned in the former policy of their leaders, it will be easier for the revolutionary workers by their tireless efforts to direct the trade unions along the road of the class struggle.

Against Fascism, Against the Capitalist Offensive, Against War and in Defence of the U.S.S.R.

The development of events is proceeding along the lines laid down and foretold in the works of our leaders Lenin and Stalin, in the leading documents of the Comintern.

The special kind of depression is not solving a single one of the contradictions sharpened by the economic crisis, in the throes of which the capitalist world is grappling to-day.

The consciousness of instability, alarm as to what to-morrow will bring, is characteristic of the mood of the leading upper-strata of capitalism. The financial magnates are seizing upon the blood-stained weapon of Fascism, they are preparing a new world bloodbath, and seeking a way out in crazy, adventurist plans for attacking the U.S.S.R.

The special kind of depression does not lessen the contradictions between classes and state. "The world is closely approaching a new round of revolutions and wars" (theses of the Thirteenth E.C.C.I. Plenum). The world is on the eve of revolutionary battles against war, against Fascism, against capitalist dictatorship and for proletarian dictatorship.

And in these battles, the land that is victoriously building Socialism, the mighty Socialist fatherland of the working-class of the whole world, shines out as the guiding star of the world proletariat. Each of its achievements, every new factory, every new victory in mastering new technique, in raising the productivity of labour and in building the new Socialist culture, is of ever greater decisive international importance.

* See *For International Trade Union Unity*, Modern Books, Ltd.

THE PRESS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF FRANCE, CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND ENGLAND ON THE SOVIET-FRENCH AND SOVIET-CZECHOSLOVAKIAN TREATIES OF MUTUAL ASSISTANCE

GERMAN fascism is carrying on a violent campaign against the treaties of mutual assistance signed by the Soviet Union and two bourgeois countries, France and Czecho-Slovakia, not interested at the present time in forcing a war. The fascist press does not stop at any slander to distort the meaning of these facts and the peaceful policy of the U.S.S.R. in general. This is quite understandable, for it is this peaceful policy that exposes German fascism as the chief instigator of war and rallies all the forces in the struggle for peace together.

But even in the press of those bourgeois countries which do not support aggressive German fascism at present, even in the press of France and Czecho-Slovakia, various attempts are being made to distort the meaning of the defensive treaties of security and mutual assistance, concluded by the Soviet Union, and set these efforts of the Soviet Union in opposition to the revolutionary struggles and the proletarian united front against war and fascism.

The Social-Democratic press does its bit to help its bourgeoisie to solve this problem. It does this in different forms, depending upon the particular imperialist policy being pursued in its own country. Social-Democracy tries to hide from the workers the fact that the peaceful policy of the U.S.S.R. is imbued with the spirit of proletarian internationalism and promotes the development and consolidation of the international working-class movement.

The excerpts from the Communist press given below show how, immediately after signing of the treaties the Communist Parties came out in reply to the furious campaign of the bourgeois and Social-Democratic press. Having occupied a correct position, they formulated the tasks of the proletarian united front in the struggle for the defence of the U.S.S.R. and against the policy of their own bourgeoisie.

I.

The Treaty of Mutual Assistance and its Significance in the Struggle for Peace.

A meeting of five thousand Communists, members of the Paris district, on May 17, 1935, passed a resolution on this subject which contains the following passage:

"The Communists of Paris send their warm greetings to their great Comrade Stalin, whose wise words on the

necessity of preserving peace and security will win the approval of the common people of France."

The same resolution says, further on:

"All those present rejoice in the fact that the Soviet Union, the bulwark of international peace, has won a new victory in its struggle for peace, through the signing of the treaty of mutual assistance between France and the U.S.S.R.

"The Party is happy to record that a new obstacle has been placed on the road of Hitler's, and his French allies', fascist war policy.

"Under pressure of the masses of the people, thirsting for peace, the French government, after long hesitation and much manoeuvring, has finally decided to sign a treaty in support of peace." ("L'Humanité," May 18, 1935.)

At the same meeting, Comrade Thorez recalled the fact that:

"All the efforts of the Soviet Union directed for several years, first towards universal disarmament, and then to partial disarmament, have been in vain; unfortunately they met with no response among the bourgeoisie. Therefore, only one thing remains:

"The treaty of mutual assistance which united peoples who are desirous of peace against those who have recourse to aggression." ("L'Humanité," May 24, 1935.)

Comrade Thorez asks the question: "where is the greatest danger of war?" The Theses of the XIII E.C.C.I. Plenum which took place in December, 1933, and which every comrade should read once more, give the reply to this question. Therein we read:

"The fascist government in Germany—the chief inciter of war in Europe, is causing alarm in Danzig, Austria, the Saar, the Baltic states, etc." The events of the past eighteen months since the Plenum have shown the correctness of this appraisal given by the Communist International. The service we rendered is that we understood this first, and now the Second International also, in turn, has been forced to admit, in their May Day manifesto, that: 'AS FOR EUROPE, THE DANGER OF WAR EMANATES FROM HITLER GERMANY.'" ("L'Humanité," May 24, 1935.)

Comrade Cachin writes:

". . . it (fascism) wants war. If it is possible, we must prevent the realisation of fascism's criminal plans.

"The treaty of mutual assistance between the U.S.S.R. and of capitalist France, signed on May 2, serves no other purpose but this. Those who want to compare this treaty with the system of pre-war alliances are distorting the truth . . . the present treaty from the very beginning was proposed BY THE SOVIET UNION TO GERMANY, POLAND, CZECHO-SLOVAKIA AND THE BALTIC STATES.

". . . Fascist Germany and Poland REFUSED TO SIGN THE TREATY. The Hitlerites and their accomplices—the Polish fascists—HAVE REFUSED to help those countries which will

become the object of the aggression of third countries. It was as a result of this refusal, and also of the direct menace of peace on the part of Hitler, that the Franco-Soviet treaty was signed on May 2. However, it should be added that as hitherto the opportunity is afforded to Hitler to cease his attacks against the Soviet Union and at any moment to add his signature to the treaty, which would be met with great satisfaction." ("L'Humanité," May 24, 1935.)

The British "Daily Worker" gives the same opinion of the treaty as a means of fighting for peace :

"Already as a result of the Soviet Union's peace policy, a pact of mutual assistance has been concluded between the U.S.S.R. and France. This pact, which is absolutely devoid of anything in the nature of war-like intention, provides for the maintenance of peace, and places a strong deterrent in the way of those bellicose imperialist Powers who are striving to set all Europe in flames." ("Daily Worker," May 17, 1935.)

The Social-Democratic press of Czecho-Slovakia, even more than the press of the French Socialists, tried to stupefy the workers with the statement that the peaceful policy of the Soviet Union is in contradiction to the struggle of the Communist Party of Czecho-Slovakia for peace, and that the true defenders of the Soviet Union are not the Communists, not the toiling masses, but the Czech Social-Democratic Party itself. Moreover, the Social-Democratic press was speculating on an alleged contradiction fabricated by themselves, existing between the communiqué and the position of the Communist Party of Czecho-Slovakia. The leaders of the Czech Social-Democracy reckoned thereby to bring defeat to the Communists at the elections. These attempts encountered complete failure. At the parliamentary elections, the Communist Party of Czecho-Slovakia, like the French Communist Party at the municipal elections, which took place after the treaties had been concluded, registered considerable gains. Masses of the toilers voted in favour of the policy of the Communists, the consistent peace policy of the Soviet Union. This Social-Democratic intrigue was smashed by the Communist newspaper "Rude Pravo."

"The Czecho-Slovakian-Soviet treaty is proof of the bankruptcy of the entire anti-Soviet policy of the Czech bourgeoisie. This treaty is a serious confirmation of the correctness of our policy. It is our cause, the cause of the Communists, the cause of the government of the Soviet Union. The treaty is one of the guarantees of the struggle against Hitler counter-revolution, but it is not the only surety. Not so long ago Comrade Stalin pointed out that Hitler imperialism must be confronted with a mighty force. The Socialists in the government are using these words in their own way against us, they want to persuade the workers that there is a contradiction between good and real Communists in the Soviet Union and bad Communists here, a contradiction between Stalin and Gottwald.

"What force can be put against Hitlerism? The force of the bourgeoisie? No, only the emancipated people can stand against Hitler, only an emancipated people forms a real basis for the defence of the people against Hitler. The only fortress against the Hitler counter-revolution is the emancipated working class." ("Rude Pravo," May 26, 1935.)

II.

The Peaceful Policy of the Soviet Union Serves the Interests of the International Working Class Movement

The leadership of the English Labour Party, which the Hitler press openly greeted for its "unbiased" position (which they adopted on the question of the arming of Hitler Germany) was specially zealous, and still is, in its efforts to prove that any agreements between the Soviet Union and bourgeois countries in general, and treaties of mutual assistance in particular, "are impermissible in principle." These reformist publicists make their appeal on behalf of "orthodoxy" of "class" tactics, interpreted to suit the double game pursued by their imperialism in regard to German fascism, and waging a furious struggle on this question against Marxism-Leninism.

In the "Theses on the present political situation," written by Comrade Lenin in May, 1918, as the basis of the Decision of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party to concede to the German ultimatum and reject the treaty with the Anglo-French coalition, Lenin wrote :

"While we by no means reject in general military agreements with one of the imperialist coalitions against the other in cases where this treaty, without violating the fundamentals of the Soviet Government, might strengthen its position and paralyse the offensive against her of one particular imperialist power, at the present moment we cannot enter into a military agreement with the Anglo-French coalition." (Collected Works, Vol XXX, p. 384, Russ. Ed.)

In reply to the demagogy of the Labour Party, the "Daily Worker" writes :

"This type of cunning propaganda will not deceive the workers.

"The latter are increasingly realising that the Soviet Union, by its policy, far from weakening the workers' fight, is helping to mobilise the revolutionary forces of the working class against capitalism. The successes won by the revolutionary candidates in the recent French elections provide convincing proof of this.

"WHAT THE U.S.S.R. IS CONCERNED WITH IS NOT ANY DEFENCE OF PREDATORY INTERESTS OF FRENCH IMPERIALISM, BUT THE INTERESTS OF PEACE, THAT IS TO SAY, THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING CLASS." ("Daily Worker," May 17, 1935.)

Pointing out that capitalist contradictions must be used in the interests of the struggle for peace, the central organ of the British Communist Party correctly stated the opinion that this alone is not yet a real guarantee of peace :

"While utilising capitalist differences to the utmost, neither the Soviet Union nor any intelligent worker treats this as a permanent or real guarantee of peace or security—which remains the organised strength of the U.S.S.R. and the workers elsewhere." ("Daily Worker," May 21, 1935.)

Defence of the U.S.S.R. is actually the struggle against fascism and war, writes "L'Humanité" in its issue of May 26 :

"Our Czecho-Slovakian comrades are declaring, just as we said on the same subject in 'L'Humanité,' that in the present

international situation, the struggle of the toilers should be directed against fascism and the war it wants to let loose. Defence of the toilers goes arm-in-arm with the general struggle against Hitler's barbarity and defence of the only proletarian state in the world."

"The Soviet Union," says Thorez in his speech, "is the thing which is most valuable to the international proletariat. That is why every effort should be made to defend it. This is our profound conviction which has determined our campaign over many years to support the policy of peace of the Soviet Union. We carried on this campaign alone against everybody, at a time when the enemies of the U.S.S.R., as yet had not recognised it, but were spreading all kinds of slander against it. It is this conviction which guides us in our campaign against reactionary elements in our country, and also the campaign which we are waging and will continue to wage against Laval, against the national government. It is this that determined our struggle to ensure that the will of the French people should be manifested in the signing of the treaty of mutual assistance."

Comrade Thorez dwelt in detail upon the explanation of the need for the Soviet Union to manoeuvre, situated as it is in capitalist surroundings.

"The service rendered by the Bolsheviks," says he, "is that they prevented the coalition of the imperialists against peace."

"I want to explain this question properly by giving an excerpt from Lenin's Letter to the American Workers, in which our teacher points out that the road of revolution is not wide, nor free, nor straight."

And Comrade Thorez calls upon the French workers to ponder the words which Lenin wrote to the American workers seventeen years ago :

"To throw back the rapacious advancing Germans we made use of the equally rapacious counter-interests of the other imperialists, thereby serving the interests of the Russian and the international Socialist revolution. In this way we served the interests of the working class of Russian and other countries, we strengthened the proletariat and weakened the bourgeoisie of the whole world, we used the justified practise of manoeuvring, necessary in EVERY war, of shifting and waiting for the moment when the rapidly growing proletarian revolution in a number of advanced countries had RIPENED." (Lenin—A Letter to American Workers, p. 14.)

III.

In Existing Circumstances, What are the Tactics of the Communist Parties in the Struggle for Peace ?

This is what Cachin writes on this point :

"I understand perfectly well that some French Socialists protest against the signing of the treaty just as the Labourites in Great Britain do. The latter openly carry on a foreign policy which COVERS UP ALL THE ACTIONS OF HITLER behind a mask of pacifism. They approved of Hitler's action when he decided to introduce universal conscription. On March 26, 1935, the 'Daily Herald' wrote, saying that Germany has now once more become an armed Big power and it did not consider that this could 'serve as an excuse for any kind of panic!'

"The fact that the English Labourites defended fascist Hitlerism in this way seemed (and one must say quite justifiably) too disgraceful for the German Socialist reformists, who energetically revolted against their colleagues from the Second International. Their protest was published in the last number of the 'Revue pour le Socialisme,' which is issued in Prague. Citizen Kern (Hilferding's own pseudonym) is foaming at the mouth at the

Labour Party, 'which has never ceased to incite francophobe feelings and accepts Hitler's pacifist protests as gospel truth.' Hilferding even goes so far as to assert that the English Socialist leaders 'BEAR MUCH OF THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF EVENTS IN EUROPE.'

Let our comrades the Socialists think over Hilferding's words, let them beware of bringing grist to the mill of Hitler, the worst enemy of peace.

The heaviest accusation that can be levelled at the Labour Party is to accuse it of sympathy towards Hitler and German fascists.

The Communist press emphasises the fact that because we do not trust the bourgeoisie any more than we did before, we must refuse to support the bourgeois fatherland.

"We Communists," says Duclos, "consider that the government which connives at the intrigues of the fascists, that postponed as far as possible the signing of the treaty, that proposed combinations to Hitler about which nobody knew, through intermediaries like JEAN GOY AND SCAPINI—a government like this cannot enjoy the confidence of the masses in guaranteeing peace."

"THE COMMUNISTS HAVE NO FAITH WHATEVER IN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE BOURGEOISIE AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR A POLICY OF PEACE."

"Given the Army can be used internally against the working class, and against the colonial peoples, and against the Soviet Union, our Party unswervingly stands opposed to reintroduction of the two years' military service, and maintains its absolute refusal to vote war credits.

"Determined not to allow the sabotage of the Franco-Soviet Pact by the warmongers, the Communists call upon the working masses of France to form themselves into a vast people's front, to put a stop to the financial plans of the Government, designed to plunge the people into still greater misery, and to defend peace and liberty, and to prepare for the victory of the great cause of the working class."

"Long live the unity of the workers !

"Long live the Soviet Union, bulwark of world peace !

"Long live Soviet France !"

"TO-DAY, AS YESTERDAY, WE REPEAT THAT OUR CLASS TACTICS WERE NEVER SO NECESSARY AS TO-DAY, IN OUR STRUGGLE AGAINST FASCISM AND WAR. THE PROLETARIAT CAN PIN ITS HOPES ONLY UPON ITSELF, AND NOT ON LAVAL WHO IS CONDUCTING A DOUBLE GAME." (See Cachin's article in 'L'Humanité,' May 23, 1935. Our capitals.—Ed.)

The Communists of France are developing the struggle to drive out the fascist reactionary officers from the army :

"The French Communists and the French toilers cannot have confidence in the staff officers of the army of the French bourgeoisie. Among the officers of Weygand are many fascists, members of the 'Croix de Feu,' and French adherents of Hitler. All the activities of the French fascists, which the French government is covering up, are proof of the fact that all their sympathies are on the side of German fascism, the chief culprit in connection with the war preparations in Europe."

"The Communists and toilers of France who are waging a violent struggle against fascism know that these people are prepared to betray the Franco-Soviet treaty to unite with Hitler against the Soviet Union. The forces which France can bring forward in defence of peace will be actual only when they are harnessed to the mighty activities of the toiling masses, tirelessly fighting against fascism and

the bourgeoisie, and to drive fascist and reactionary officers out of the army." (See "L'Humanité" of May 16, 1935.)

The Communists Will Vote Against War Credits.

"This is why we fought and will continue to fight against any additional terms of service. This is why we shall not vote for war credits. This is why we refuse to support the mendacious slogan of a 'Sacred Union.' We, French Communists, are on the side of the Red Army—yes! but we are against the French big bourgeoisie, against fascism, and, together with the French soldiers are in defence of peace." (See V. Couturier's article in "L'Humanité" of May 17, 1935.)

Communists continue to confront bourgeois national defence with international class defence of the proletariat:

... But does this mean that we are revising our principle position on the question of national defence? NO!

"Shall we cease to fight against armament merchants? NO!

"Shall we cease to vote against war credits? NO!

"Shall we cease to defend soldiers from fascist cadres in the army and their counter-revolutionary demands? NO!

"The bourgeois state, the bourgeois army still remains a weapon of oppression against the people, and it must be destroyed in order to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat AND TO WIN OUR FATHERLAND FOR OURSELVES.

"Bourgeois national defence we shall continue to confront with INTERNATIONAL CLASS DEFENCE OF THE PROLETARIAT. As hitherto, we do not accept the slogan of national defence either conditionally or unconditionally." (See article by V. Couturier in "L'Humanité," of May 19, 1935.)

The "Daily Worker" develops the same thought in its issue of May 21, 1935:

"The policy of the French (and British) Communists, therefore, remains unaltered, and Stalin's declaration only points the necessity for multiplying all efforts to organise the widest mass front against the war-making imperialists."

The fight against Hitlerism can be waged only on the basis of a broad anti-fascist front, only by a struggle for power. The Czech "Rote Fahne" in its issue of May 28th, 1935, writes:

"It is essential to confront Hitler imperialism by a mighty force. But can this be the force of the Czech bourgeoisie, which through the policy it is pursuing is leading the country to national ruin and encourages the weakening of the vital forces of the people? NO! THIS FORCE WILL BE THE EMANCIPATED TOILING PEOPLE ALONE, and therefore we are fighting against the Czech bourgeoisie."

In reply to the "fears" of the Socialists that the Communists by fighting on behalf of the treaty may find themselves "drawn into preparations for war," and compelled to give their approval to the 'law for the two years' term of service, Gabriel Peri writes:

"We are not allying ourselves to any sacred alliance and we have firmly decided to fight with all our might against the law for two years' term of service and against war credits. Why? Because this law is a law of political and social reaction, a fascist law, for the training of the professional army, the French Reichswehr; because the militarisation aimed at by this law—at the insistence of the French Hitlerites—while not encouraging revolutionary defence against German Hitlerism, on the contrary, will betray the working class of France to Hitler barbarity.

"Defence against Hitlerism will be guaranteed not by a militarised and fascised nation, but by the masses of the people, rallied together in an anti-fascist front of freedom, filled with strong determination to save and to extend democratic liberties, strong enough to obtain satisfaction for the daily requirements of the working class. In fighting for power we are fighting against Hitlerism. And the fight for power is the struggle for the demands of the national front of the workers, peasants, soldiers and small traders, against the propertied ruling oligarchy and its allies, the French fascists."

Communists should demand of the government that it should actually carry out the provisions of the Franco-Soviet treaty, they should fight against its being sabotaged. In developing this idea, Comrade Duclou gave in his article a quotation from Comrade Lenin's letters to the Central Committee of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party on the tactics of Communists towards the Kerensky government during the Kornilov uprising:

"It is my conviction that those who (like Volodarsky) roll down to defensism or (like other Bolsheviks) to a BLOC with the S.R.'s, to SUPPORTING the Provisional Government, are unprincipled. This is absolutely incorrect, this is unprincipled. We shall become defensists ONLY AFTER the passing of power to the proletariat, AFTER peace has been offered, AFTER the secret treaties and connections with banks have been severed, but ONLY AFTER. Neither the fall of Riga, NOR THE FALL OF PETROGRAD will make us defensists (I would like very much to have this read by Volodarsky). Until then we stand for a proletarian revolution, we are against the war, we are NOT defensists.

"And EVEN NOW we must not support Kerensky's government. This is unprincipled. One may ask: must we not fight against Kornilov? Of course we must! But this is not the same thing; there is a dividing line here; it is being stepped over by some Bolsheviks who fall into 'conciliation,' who allow themselves to be CARRIED AWAY by the flow of events.

"We will fight, we are fighting against Kornilov, even AS KERENSKY'S TROOPS DO, but we do not support Kerensky. ON THE CONTRARY, we expose his weakness. There is a difference. It is rather a subtle difference, but it is highly essential and one must not forget it.

"Wherein, then, consists the change of our tactics after Kornilov's revolt?

"In that we are changing the FORM of our struggle against Kerensky. Without in the least relaxing our hostility towards him, without taking back a single word said against him, without renouncing the task of overthrowing Kerensky, we say: we must TAKE INTO ACCOUNT the present moment; we shall not overthrow Kerensky right now, we shall approach the task of struggling against him IN A DIFFERENT WAY, namely, we shall point out to the people (which struggles against Kornilov) the WEAKNESS and VACILLATION of Kerensky. That has been done even before. Now, however, it has become the main thing. Therein lies the change.

"The change, further, consists in this, that the main thing is now to intensify our propaganda in favour of some kind of 'partial demands' to be presented to Kerensky, demands saying: arrest Milyukov; arm the Petrograd workers, summon the Cronstadt, Vyborg and Helsingfors troops to Petrograd; disperse the State Duma; arrest Rodzyanko; legalise the transfer of the landowner's lands to the peasants; introduce workers' control over bread and factories, etc., etc. With these demands we must address ourselves not only to Kerensky, NOT SO MUCH to Kerensky, as to the workers, soldiers and peasants who have

been CARRIED AWAY by the course of the struggle against Kornilov. Keep up their enthusiasm; encourage them to beat up the generals and officers who express themselves in favour of Kornilov; urge THEM to demand the immediate transfer of the land to the peasants; give THEM the idea of the necessity of arresting Rodzyanko and Milyukov, dispersing the State Duma, shutting down the RYECH and other bourgeois papers, and instituting investigations against them. The 'Left' S.R.'s must be especially pushed on in this direction." (Collected Works, Vol. XXI, pp. 137-138.)

In each country the Communists should concretely work out the question of the struggle against war, in defence of the U.S.S.R. reckoning with and exposing the policy of their bourgeoisie in all circumstances . . . The Struggle of the Communists, writes Duclos, is directed towards realising the chief aim—the victory of Socialism—this is what determines the position of the Communists in relation to different types of war.

"We, Communists," writes Duclos, "fought for the signing of the treaty, which Laval did his utmost to postpone by manoeuvres and combinations.

"And now we shall fight against all those who in one form or another want to sabotage this pact.

"Sabotage of the treaty is of advantage to the Hitlerites and their policy of war, and he makes out that the Franco-Soviet treaty is not a peace treaty, is lying in the most shameless manner, and is trying to mislead the masses of the people. . . The Communists are fighting for peace, but if, despite all this, war nevertheless breaks out, if Hitler fascism, hurls itself against the Soviet Union, will it not be the duty of French Communists to demand that the treaty be put into force, and to refuse to allow the French Hitlerites to be successful in drawing France into an anti-Soviet war together with Hitler?

"In a situation of this kind, Communists should be guided only by the desire to guarantee the defeat of the enemies of peace who make an attack upon the U.S.S.R.

"The defeat of Hitler, the most dangerous enemy of peace, is a defeat which not only the French, but also the German Communists are striving for, for it would be not only a victory on the part of the Soviet Union, but also a victory of peace, a victory of the German people with all the consequences which follow therefrom.

"It goes without saying that if such a situation arises whereby civil war breaks out in Germany while France is fighting on the side of the U.S.S.R. against Hitler, it is extremely likely that the reactionary cliques of France will try to unite with Hitler in an anti-Communist war. . .

"In the struggle for peace the Communists should not forget that the victory of Socialism alone will destroy for ever the causes of new bloody wars." (See Duclos's article in "L'Humanité," of May 24th, 1935.)

"In the event of a counter-revolutionary war against the fatherland of Socialism," writes Thorez, "we shall support the Red Army of the Soviet Union with all our might, and shall fight for the defeat of all powers that wage war against the Soviet Union." ("L'Humanité," of May 24, 1935.)

After the signing of the treaties of mutual assistance between the U.S.S.R. and France and Czecho-Slovakia, after the elections to the Czech parliament during which the Communists increased their vote by 100,000, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czecho-Slovakia sent an open letter to the Socialist Party, proposing the establishment of a

united front in the struggle for peace, bread and work. The contents of this letter, as given by "L'Humanité"* in its issue of June 5th, are as follows:

"It (the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czecho-Slovakia) proposes the formation of AN ORGANISATION FOR SOCIALIST STRUGGLE, consisting of Communists, Social-Democrats and Czech Socialists, and that an alliance of struggle for bread, work and peace should be concluded."

The open letter contains a detailed economic programme: its aim is to lay all the burden of the crisis upon the rich.

It also contains a proposal concerning the organisation of struggle against fascist alliances and, incidentally, a demand that the whole of the state apparatus, the army and the police be cleansed of fascist elements, full political rights for all working class organisations, and preparations for a general strike in the event of attacks on the part of the fascists.

On the basis of the fact that only a struggle against the oppression of German workers in Sudeten can put reins on Hitler's demagogy, the open letter demands:

"Confiscation of the property of all German capitalists in Sudeten who give their support to the German fascist movement, the funds obtained thereby to be used to help the unemployed;

"The distribution of food tickets among the unemployed in districts populated by Germans; confiscation of large landed property of the old German gentry and squires, who support the 'German Front in Sudeten,' of the Heylein National Socialist Party, and the distribution of these lands among the small German peasantry."

In its open letter the Communist Party of Czecho-Slovakia provides for several measures in defence of peace and the independence of Czecho-Slovakia, and in defence of the Soviet Union.

In this connection the Communist Party puts forward the following proposals: the struggle to clear out fascist generals and officers from the army; the extension of electoral rights to soldiers; full freedom of anti-fascist propaganda in the army and propaganda in favour of friendly relations with the Soviet Union; soldiers to be afforded the right to elect their own trustees in the army; a struggle to bring the army closer to the toiling people; organisation of friendly connections between the soldiers of the Czecho-Slovakian army and the Red Army.

The Communist Party will continue to struggle against the participation of the Socialist Parties in the government. Nevertheless it declares that it is prepared to give the support of its votes in parliament to all proposals capable of bringing some degree of assistance to the toiling population.

* In the Czech Communist press, a whole paragraph of this letter was confiscated by the censor. We quote, therefore, from the French press.

A USEFUL PAMPHLET

K. BUZHINSKY.

ALL sincere supporters of the united front will welcome the publication—in a special pamphlet—of documents and material concerning negotiations between the Third and Second Internationals on the question of joint action in defence of the Spanish proletariat.* The fact that in a short space of time this pamphlet has been published on a mass scale in three of the most important European languages (German, French and English) is proof of the enormous interest displayed in the question of the united front by masses of the workers among whom the desire for the united front of struggle on an international scale against fascism, against the menace of war, against the offensive of capital, is ever growing.

The following documents and material have been published in the pamphlet: stenographic report of the negotiations between the delegates of the Third International (Comrades Cachin and Thores) and representatives of the Second International (E. Vandervelde and F. Adler) in Brussels on October 15th, 1934; resolution of the Executive Committee of the Second International (Paris, November, 1934) in reply to the manifesto of the Comintern concerning joint action on an international scale in defence of the Spanish workers; declaration of the so-called minority of the Executive Committee of the Second International on the same question. Finally, the pamphlet contains the leading article of the *Communist International* (No. 24): "For the United Front of Struggle of the International Proletariat." In this article, not only are the flimsy arguments, the false reasoning of the Second International against the united front of the international proletariat exposed, but the real reasons for the refusal of the Second International to accept the proposal of the Comintern, the causes of the crisis and downfall of the Second International, are revealed, a criticism is given of the position of the so-called minority of the Executive Committee of the Second International, and an outline of the tasks of further struggle of the Communist Parties on behalf of the united front of the international proletariat.

The minutes of the negotiations and the resolution of the Executive Committee of the Second International are clear proof of the fact that the Second International has not only completely rejected the concrete, practical Comintern pro-

posals, both comprehensible and acceptable to the masses of the workers, for joint extending of immediate assistance to the fighting proletariat of Spain, but has refused, on purely formal grounds, to adopt the most elementary joint action as a mark of solidarity with the Spanish workers. More than this, the delegation of the Second International refused to entertain the proposal of the Comintern delegation that joint action should be taken by representatives of the Second International and representatives of the Comintern at at least one mass meeting in France.

The material and documents published are of great political importance to-day. Indeed, the opponents of the united front from the Executive Committee of the Second International quite recently rejected the new proposal of the Comintern for joint action on May Day, 1935, and moreover in this connection referred to the resolution of the November plenary session of their Executive Committee, published in the pamphlet under review.

Unable to prohibit the united front in places where it has already been realised, the Executive Committee of the Second International is now, as before, doing its utmost to prevent the realisation of the united front on an international scale. Here again, as was the case during the negotiations in Brussels—the leaders of the Second International put forward as the basic argument against the united front of the international proletariat, that the situation in different parties affiliated to the Second International is different in accordance with the concrete situation in each country. Moreover, they refer to the position of the Social-Democratic parties of the Scandinavian countries, to the Social-Democracy of Holland and to the English Labour Party. Thus they confirm the fact that the most ardent opponents of the united front are the leaders of those Social-Democratic parties which are pursuing a policy of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie in the form of participation in bourgeois governments or in preparation for participation in them. This is yet another proof of the fact that THE POLICY OF CLASS COLLABORATION WITH THE BOURGEOISIE HAS ALWAYS BEEN AND REMAINS THE REAL REASON WHY THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL REJECTS THE UNITED FRONT. In order to camouflage this fact, Vandervelde and Adler, during the course of the negotiations (pages 11-12 of the pamphlet), pointed out that a united front was impossible in

* Verbatim Report of the Negotiations between the 2nd and 3rd Internationals. Modern Books, Ltd.

these countries in view of the extremely small numerical composition of the Communist Party. But F. Adler knows full well that there was a time when Austrian Social-Democracy, on the same pretext (the small numerical composition of the Communist Party of Austria), rejected the united front with the Communists; now tens and thousands of Austrian workers have been convinced by their own experiences that this policy of Austrian Social-Democracy has paved the way for the victory of fascism. It is not surprising that the proletarians of Austria have turned to Communism and that the small Communist Party of Austria has now become the mass party of the Austrian proletariat; the relation of forces in the working-class movement of Austria has radically changed in favour of the Communist Party. F. Adler and his friends should not forget this, for something of the kind may soon occur with other Social-Democratic parties which brag so much about their big numbers.

E. Vandervelde, who is not against speaking in favour of "collaboration between the Western-European proletariat and the Russian revolution" (page 21 of the pamphlet), also considers the united front impossible on an international scale, in view of the fact that in England, for example, the Communist Party is very small as compared with the Labour Party. But he also should not forget that in the composition of the Communist International, in addition to several mass parties in capitalist countries, there is also the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the leading section of the Comintern. It is quite clear that there can be no comparison at all between the numbers of the Labour Party, of whose greatness the leaders of the Second International boast so much, and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which led the proletariat of Russia into the victorious socialist revolution, which is at the head of proletarian dictatorship in the U.S.S.R., and under whose leadership millions of toilers of the Soviet Union are victoriously building socialism on one-sixth of the earth's surface.

In spite of the refusal of the Second International to enter into a united front, not only did joint action take place on May 1st, 1935, but the DEMONSTRATIONS WERE MUCH BROADER, OF A MUCH MORE MASS, MILITANT CHARACTER, THAN THE YEAR BEFORE. The May Day united front demonstrations this year are proof of the growing fighting spirit of the proletariat, OF THE GROWING DETERMINATION SHOWN BY THE WORKERS TO FIGHT IN A UNITED FRONT AGAINST THE MENACE OF WAR, AGAINST FASCISM AND THE OFFENSIVE OF CAPITAL. The majority of the Executive Committee of the Second International did their utmost to prevent the creation of a united front on an international scale. But the so-called

minority of the Executive Committee, who, in words, were in favour of the united front, in actual deeds does not want to do anything to bring about joint action on an international scale. But despite all these obstacles, the united front of struggle is spreading throughout the world: both in the countries of bourgeois democracy and in the countries of open fascist dictatorship. Even in fascist Poland, where the Communist Party was driven underground at its very birth, and the Social-Democratic Party is legal to this day, THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF POLAND HAS ACHIEVED CONSIDERABLE SUCCESS IN DEVELOPING A BROAD UNITED FRONT.

In France, in fascist Austria, and in Latvia, where agreements have been concluded between the Communists and the Socialist parties, the united front is developing both extensively and intensively. True, even here some of the leaders of the Social-Democratic party, like Frossard, renegades from Communism like Doriot, and counter-revolutionary Trotskyites, are working by the sweat of their brows to fabricate "reasons and arguments" for smashing the united front agreement. But even those of the leaders of Social-Democracy in France who would not be against using the services of the Frossards, Doriots and Co., are now unable to prevent the victorious, progressive development of the united front.

THE LAST MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS IN FRANCE ARE A NEW BRILLIANT VICTORY OF THE UNITED FRONT. Both in France and in other countries this victory will still further increase the desire for the united front. Particularly among the Social-Democratic workers—in spite of all disciplinary penalties and prohibitions of the leaders of the Second International—the desire is growing to go into the struggle shoulder to shoulder with the Communists, throwing aside, into the wastepaper basket of history, all the Frossards, the Doriots and Co. More than this. The success of the broad united front in capitalist countries, and first and foremost the brilliant world victories of socialism in the U.S.S.R., the tremendous popularity enjoyed by the peaceful policy of the U.S.S.R., are firmly establishing the conviction among the masses that THERE CAN BE NO PLACE INSIDE THE UNITED FRONT FOR ENEMIES OF THE U.S.S.R.—the bulwark of revolutionary struggle of the proletariat against war, against the offensive of capital, against fascism.

The documents and material published in the pamphlet will help supporters of the united front to develop the struggle for its realisation in all countries still more widely, and help to expose the overt and covert enemies of the united front.

IT IS NECESSARY TO CONTINUE AND EXTEND THIS GOOD BEGINNING—THE PUBLICATION OF DOCUMENTS AND MATERIAL ON THE UNITED FRONT IN THE FORM OF MASS PAMPHLETS. And, above all, Communists and sup-

porters of the united front should, at the earliest possible date, arrange for the publication of this pamphlet in the Spanish language and see that it is widely spread among the toilers of Spain: for this pamphlet is devoted to the struggle for the united front of the international proletariat in defence of the Spanish revolution. It would be advisable to publish in an analogous pamphlet all the correspondence between the Profintern and the Amsterdam Trade Union International on unity in the trade union movement.* It is essential to begin to publish documents and material on the united front according to individual countries, and first and foremost about those countries where

agreement has been arrived at between the Communist and Socialist parties (France, Austria, Spain, Latvia, Italy, etc.) In reply to the slanderous attacks of the opponents of the united front upon the Communist Party of Germany, which is fighting heroically in the difficult circumstances of fascist underground conditions, it is essential that the constant appeals of the Communist Party of Germany to the German Social-Democratic Party for the united front both before and after the victory of Hitler fascism, be published in full. It would also be extremely opportune to publish a special pamphlet containing all the documents on the struggle of the Communist International, under the guidance of Comrades Lenin and Stalin, on behalf of the united front of struggle of the proletariat.

* This has been done in "For International Trade Union Unity." Modern Books, Ltd.

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