

# THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

Vol VI. No. 5.

Workers' Library Publishers,  
35 East 125th St., New York.

10 cents

## Contents

The Curtain Raised. Editorial ... ..	129
The Anniversary of the Canton Rising. V. Lominadze ... ..	135
Stalin's Speech at the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. ... ..	143
Opportunism in Czecho-Slovakia. Paul Reimann ... ..	150

## The Curtain Raised

**T**HE summer and autumn of 1928 occupy a special and very essential place in the history of the period between two wars through which we are now passing. During this interval of time the leading imperialist powers have directed their attention to the problems of direct preparation for war with intensified energy and unusual frankness. The preparation has found expression not only in activity in military and naval construction, but also in the essential regroupings which have occurred in the imperialists' camp.

These regroupings have inevitably been accompanied by a more open manifestation of the aims and tasks which the individual capitalist States are setting themselves. The autumn saw the final crystallisation and conclusion of a new military alliance, a new "entente cordiale" between Britain and France; simultaneously the United States increased its international political activity, its economic expansion, its imperialist armaments; the European States pretending to the role of Great Powers, such as Germany, Italy and Poland, in their turn did all they could to show their

readiness to participate in the measure of their powers in the competition. Whilst Germany and Poland intensified their open war propaganda, their chauvinist attacks and their more business-like activities in this sphere, Germany demonstratively began the construction of a new war fleet with the cruiser "A," and expressed its expectations in the form of a passive protest against the restriction of its imperialist rights. For in the last resort, the German cavilling over the decline of the spirit of Locarno and the postponement of disarmament and so on, is only the obverse of its own imperialist plans, which at the moment cannot be realised.

**I**T is quite natural that the intensification of the direct preparation for war should presuppose simultaneous measures in internal policy in the direction of the bourgeois attack on the working class. One of the essential forms of that attack consisted in the active co-operation of the employers and reformists in Germany, Poland and France in conjunction with the suppression of the strike move-

ment in these countries, and the liquidation of colossal economic battles to the detriment of the proletariat. These tactics are accompanied by more open forms of class terror, such for example as the latest measures of the Berlin social-democratic police-president Zorgebel, having as their aim the prohibition of the activities of the proletarian "Red Front Fighters." However, the imperialist governments would not be faithful to their customary tactics if they did not take certain steps to hide their traces and to accompany their imperialist activities with certain pacifist gestures. The League of Nations is the predestined stage for such demonstrations, and corresponding attempts were made at the last session of the Council of the League at Lugano. Simultaneously the tendency to effect a certain "peace" diversion manifested itself outside the sessions of the League.

IT is not altogether off the cards that certain "peace" initiatives will be continued after Lugano also. Consequently one needs to establish quite clearly at this juncture what section of international policy the bourgeoisie is now proposing to wrap in a smoke-screen of pacifism. The first matter deserving of attention is the project for summoning a session of the preparatory commission for disarmament. After the discussions in Lugano the world press announced that the question of calling the commission for disarmament in February or March had been unofficially considered. According to one version the initiative came from France, according to another, from Britain. In the last resort it is of no essential importance whether it was Briand or Chamberlain who first raised the pleasant subject of arranging a session of the commission for disarmament. On this question Britain and France are faced with the common task of neutralising the dissatisfaction aroused in the United States, Germany and Italy by the conclusion of the Anglo-French compromise, which has formally been abandoned, and the Anglo-French entente, the existence of which cannot be concealed.

The aims pursued by the British and French governments in considering the question of the disarmament commission are revealed by the programme of work indicated for the commission. Judging by a number

of bourgeois newspapers' reports from Lugano, Britain and France hope to carry two decisions at the next session of the commission: the first, the rejection of the Soviet project for the restriction of armaments; the second, the acceptance of the German desires for the publication of reports concerning armaments. There is no need to discuss the results of the rejection of the U.S.S.R. project. It would connote the elimination from the agenda of the only essentially concrete proposal on the question of disarmament, and would be a final, an exhaustive, and one may say official disclosure of the pointlessness of the League of Nations' peace activities.

THE second proposed decision of the new session of the disarmament commission would make an excellent anecdote. The German demands concern the compulsory publication of information on the conditions of armaments of the separate countries in one of the League of Nations' yearbooks. There is no need to explain that absolutely no change whatever would result in the business of imperialist armaments through the League of Nations publishing tables containing the official and indubitably inaccurate statistics of armaments of one or the other capitalist country. But in pressing this plan Britain and France not unjustifiably expect that the German delegation will be afforded the possibility of representing the fact of the acceptance of their proposal as indicating progress in the work of disarmament, and so will be enabled to sanction the elimination of the Soviet proposals with great ease.

That is the essence of the most important pacifist measure mentioned for strategic purposes at Lugano.

THERE is no doubt that Britain is especially interested in seeing that the proposed peace gestures should be successful to some extent at least. The approach of the parliamentary elections is creating an increasingly nervous mood among the Conservative Cabinet. This explains a second manoeuvre, or rather a timid attempt at a second manoeuvre on the part of the British imperialists. We have in mind the peculiar demonstration of "disposition" to renew relations with the U.S.S.R., which the recent speech of Chur-

chill's parliamentary secretary, the young British politician Boothby, represents. The main feature of one speech he made in Parliament is the attempt to represent the situation as though "His Majesty's government" were making a step to meet the Soviet government. The hints at the possibility of granting credits for trade with the U.S.S.R., etc., which are scattered through the speech have the deluding effect of the British elector as their aim. In addition to his benevolent nods and winks, Boothby also put forward the familiar demands of British imperialism on the U.S.S.R.: the cessation of propaganda and the recognition of debts. Thus a gesture is made but the situation remains essentially the same.

It is to be expected that as the date of the parliamentary elections approaches, in view of the possibility of the Conservative adventurers suffering defeat the British government will attempt to make further steps with a view to demonstrate their peace-loving nature. This renders it all the more expedient to analyse the international situation betimes, especially as it appears at the present moment after the conclusion of the conference of Great Powers at Lugano. The necessity for this also arises because the tendency to veil the forces of the imperialist antagonisms is to be observed in another quarter of international politics: in the sphere of Anglo-American relations.

**T**HESSE tendencies are revealed in the attempt of the bourgeois press to diminish the importance of the Anglo-American antagonisms not only in the purely political, but in the economic sphere also. It is not a fortuitous coincidence that in the pages of the European press of recent times one finds mention of the growth in importance of the London financial market, the growth in influence of the London credit institutions, which ostensibly is affording the latter the opportunity of again raising the problem of the delimitation of spheres of influence as between the City and Wall Street. We consider it advantageous to cite certain recently published figures on the credit expansion of the United States and Britain, for this question is of cardinal importance in any analysis of the growth in Anglo-American antagonism, and consequently in the general analysis of the international situation.

The world export of capital\* was reckoned in pre-war days as approximately seven to eight milliard marks (= 1 shilling); the British export of capital constituted half of this, one to one-and-a-half milliards fell to the share of France and Germany, and the remainder to the petty European States. The situation at the present time is as follows: American capital export constitutes four to six milliard marks, and British export two to two-and-a-half milliards. It is interesting to note that if a growth in the share of European in the total of world export of capital has occurred it is through the increase of French, and by no means of British exports; the latter according to German statistics constitutes about a quarter of the pre-war export of capital. It is worth noticing in which sections of the world market the United States is supplanting Britain. The States' export of capital to Canada is twice as large as the pre-war British export and is still larger by comparison with the present British export. The processes summarised in the foregoing figures are of decisive importance to the development of inter-relationships of the two imperialist colossi of the present day. British imperialism cannot reconcile itself to such a situation so long as it is not forced completely to abdicate the role of hegemonist in the imperialist field. And for this reason it is necessary to keep these figures very much in mind at a time when attempts to veil the antagonism between the United States and Britain are to be observed.

Since this is the situation it is quite natural that one of Britain's fundamental tasks is the assembling of forces against its mighty transatlantic rival. And it is this trend of British policy that was given unmistakable expression in the recent conference at Lugano.

**W**E have already indicated that the imperialists attempted to exploit the fifty-third session of the council of the League of Nations for pacifying gestures as they had done with previous sessions. However, the international situation is so tense that they were much less successful in realising such plans at Lugano than at, for instance,

\* The figures are taken from German sources; American official statistics for the export of capital are regarded as inaccurate and understated.

the Geneva session held the previous September. As we know, the September decisions of the League of Nations were crowned with the resolution of the powers, dated September 16th, dealing with the negotiations for the evacuation of the Rhine and the reconsideration of the Dawes plan. The social-democratic Reichs-Chancellor Müller returned from Geneva with a proof of the possibilities a Social-democratic government has in regard to the pacification of Europe and the realisation of the hopes of the German people. In reality Müller's activities at Geneva only revealed yet once more with what great possibilities for veiling the actual state of affairs the social-democrats provide the bourgeoisie.

In an article devoted to the hopeless prospects of the discussions at Lugano, the German capitalist newspaper, "Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung" unmasked Müller, by pointing out that the agreement reached at Geneva in September was the result of Germany's agreement to attempt to throw a cloak over the political antagonisms that had been revealed. That attempt was unsuccessful at Lugano. On the contrary, the characteristic feature of the discussions at Lugano was the fact that it was impossible to conceal quite a number of unpleasant moments of the negotiations from the outside observers. One has but to recall the scandalous scene which occurred at the close of the conference, when Zaleski made a menacing and insulting speech on the subject of the national minorities in Poland, and Stresemann, forgetting the "rules of etiquette," answered with still more sharp words, declaring at the close the necessity of raising the question of protection to national minorities in all its ramifications as a matter of principle. As we know, when the German government entered the League of Nations it declared that in this way Germany would be afforded the possibility of defending the interests of the German minorities wrested away from Germany after the war. We also know that Germany has been able to do nothing in this direction.

**O**N studying the basic problems considered by the representatives of the "Great Powers" at Lugano—the problems of reparations and that of the evacuation of the Rhine area—one has to note that the decisions

of these problems, if they can be called decisions at all, have as their main task the reservation to Britain and France of complete freedom of action in realising their common plans. At Lugano it was decided not to carry on negotiations for the evacuation of the Rhine and reconsideration of the Dawes plan simultaneously (which Germany opposed) but to carry on these negotiations parallel. It is obvious that from the political aspect there is no difference whatever between a simultaneous and a parallel conduct of negotiations. It is quite possible to establish the connection between the reparations and the Rhine problem which France is interested in establishing during parallel, no less than during simultaneous negotiations.

Meantime, the separation of negotiations for the evacuation of the Rhine has even a particularly favourable aspect for British and French imperialism. In the first place Germany's very agreement to carry on negotiations directly on the Rhine problem connotes the German government's formal renunciation of the right to consider evacuation of the Rhine as a German demand based on indisputable German rights. Once the question comes within the bounds of negotiations it is quite obvious that any concessions made to Germany involve compensations from Germany. In all probability one of these compensations will be the acceptance of some form of military control over the present occupied zones. Germany has already indirectly agreed to the establishment of certain control institutions until 1935, until the period of occupation established by the Versailles treaty is terminated. But France of course is interested in the establishment of a general military control after 1935, when there can be no question of any military occupation. Evidently it is on this question that Germany will be disposed to make concessions, the more so as the French position has the complete support of Britain at the present time.

**H**OWEVER, the essential compensations that will be demanded from Germany in exchange for the evacuation of the Rhine lie in a different sphere. That sphere is that of the relations between Germany and the Soviet Union. On the question of the lines Britain's attempt to draw Germany into the anti-Soviet front will take, we have the authoritative state-

ment of the well-informed German bourgeois semi-official newspaper, the "Kölnische Zeitung." As we know, on the first day of the session of the League of Nations Council this newspaper stated in a very circumstantial article that Chamberlain was intending to link up the negotiations for the evacuation of the Rhine with the question of German policy in regard to the U.S.S.R. That which the Communist press has more than once indicated is now beginning to be admitted by certain influential organs of the German bourgeois press. As the "Kölnische Zeitung" now expresses it, Britain intends to "cut out of Germany the whip with which Russia is to be tamed." It is quite obvious at the same time that in the imperialists' view it is not the backs of the German capitalists, but those of the German proletarians which have to serve as hides for the provision of lashes for the U.S.S.R.

Attracted on the one hand by the possibility of trade with Britain, and on the other by the possibility of blackmail in regard to the U.S.S.R., with which economic negotiations were conducted, this German bourgeois newspaper made a number of interesting admissions. It confirmed the anti-Soviet object of the journeys of the French general Lerond, who is director of the military works of the Warsaw, Bucharest, and to-day probably also the Budapest general staffs. We may mention in passing that general Lerond was an active participant in the Polish war on the U.S.S.R. in 1920.

**T**HE "Kölnische Zeitung" was not satisfied with Chamberlain's proposal, and consequently condemned his plans. As we know, a noble indignation is the frequent companion of unsatisfied appetites. The organ of the German great bourgeoisie is indignant that Chamberlain should so frivolously demand Germany's renunciation of the essential Soviet market, whilst France and Britain are not prepared to reduce the reparation payments in return, are not disposed to pay the wages of the workers now occupied in enterprises supplying the U.S.S.R. with goods, have no intention of lowering the customs barriers which hinder the development of German exports to countries other than the U.S.S.R. The specification of these points comprises a complete programme. Logically the newspaper's attitude has to be

understood as that if Britain and France were to make concessions on the reparations question, if they were to facilitate Germany's export to other countries, and if they were to credit German industry in the event of a crisis, the German bourgeoisie would agree to the lashes being cut from the hides of the German proletariat to supply the whip which British imperialism is preparing against the U.S.S.R.

At the present moment no agreement has been reached between the powers on this question. But the separation of the Rhine problem as the subject of special independent negotiations indicates that the statement of the issue as the "Kölnische Zeitung" describes it remains in full force. The great importance of the now unmasked new British anti-Soviet plans is further added to by the attention which the German bourgeoisie now pays to London generally. Stresemann's last speech in the Reichstag was characterised by its formulation of proposals unacceptable to France and its simultaneous elucidation of disputed problems frequently in a spirit favourable to Britain.

**I**F to the above-mentioned attempts to bring pressure on Germany with a view to a rupture in her relations with the U.S.S.R. be added the strong pressure being exerted on Germany for a satisfactory settlement of her relations with Poland, one gets a very expressive picture of the struggle for Germany's participation in the anti-Soviet bloc.

In passing one has to note that a favourable ground is presented for the drawing of Germany into the anti-Soviet bloc by a slogan now being defended by the German press which at first sight would appear to reflect their dissatisfaction with the present policy of the Entente. That slogan reads: "From Versailles to Locarno, but not from Locarno to Versailles." Thus the German object is to maintain the Locarno tendencies in force. But as we know, it was the Locarno agreement which served as the starting point for the new development of anti-Soviet tendencies in international policy.

**W**E shall not stop to consider in more detail the military activities going on along the frontiers of the Soviet Union, the activities of the Rumanian and Polish mili-

tary cliques, the attraction of Hungary into the Rumano-Polish combination, which by the way is mentioned in the "Kölnische Zeitung" article we have already quoted. That theme demands special consideration, and it has already been treated more than once.

But in summarising the results of the Lugano conference it is necessary to consider one further essential circumstance which is characteristic of the activity of the resurrected Entente in strengthening its position, partially against German and particularly against the U.S.S.R. At the beginning of the Lugano conference the representative of Italy, a trusted friend of Mussolini, Grandi, would appear to have gone to meet Stresemann in the latter's attempts to cavil at the Entente. None the less at the close of the conference the matter took a completely contrary turn. In the decision of the questions discussed at Lugano Italy attached herself to the Anglo-French combination. According to certain newspapers this was bound up with an Anglo-Italian rapprochement, according to others, it was also the result of the favourable course of negotiations between Italy and France. One doubts whether much importance has to be attached to the latter circumstances, for the antagonisms dividing Italy and France in the Mediterranean are too great to regard seriously any agreement between these countries. However, there are certain questions in regard to which a unity of views as between Britain, France and Italy is possible. Among these are the problem of the struggle against the U.S.S.R., and also opposition to the expansion of the United States. Britain proposes to further an at least temporary amelioration of the Franco-Italian antagonisms, hoping thus to draw Italy into a combination, the chief object of which would be, according to the expression of the German bourgeois newspaper "Germania," "the creation of a western-European united front against the U.S.S.R., and possibly against America also."

**S**UCH is the international situation as it presents itself after the close of the session of the League of Nations council at Lugano. The attempts to throw a cloak over the international antagonisms were not successful on this occasion. The main reason for this is that the Anglo-French agreement once

for all raised the curtain behind which the political game of the imperialist governments was being played. The resurrection of the Entente is a fact which has set its imprint on the consideration of all the international problems discussed at the Lugano conference of capitalist governments. In Germany, despite the disillusionment prevailing among the bourgeois politicians, attempts are being made to diminish the importance of the Anglo-French agreement. On the other hand, the United States has made the fact of the Anglo-French agreement the central point of its diplomatic tactics and its armaments policy. Owing to the exigencies of its external political manœuvres dictated by Germany's general weakness, the German bourgeoisie finds more advantageous the "working hypothesis" according to which the Entente in the full sense of the word does not exist. On the contrary, North American imperialism is disposed in justification of its expansion to emphasise the growth of anti-American tendencies in international policy.

**T**HE international proletariat is chiefly interested in the achievement of absolute clarity in regard to the basic facts characteristic of imperialist policy. The results of the conference at Lugano permit of the following points being included among those facts: a growth of Anglo-French influence on the European continent, an intensification of the tendency to form a bloc of European capitalist powers against the United States, and first and foremost a feverishly swift development of anti-Soviet activity on the part of British and French imperialism.

All these facts witness to one further fact: the growth of activity of the imperialist governments, the intensification of the war danger. These deductions necessitate a fresh intensification of activities on the part of the Communist Parties in the struggle against the war danger, against imperialism and against the international social democracy, which is striving by all means to paralyse the vigilance of the working class, to conceal from it the criminal designs of the imperialists, and thus to disarm the proletariat at a moment when it ought to be assembling all its forces for resistance to the imminent intervention against the Soviet Republic.

# The Anniversary of the Canton Rising

By V. Lominadze

ON December 10th last, twelve months had passed since the Canton rising. The interval separating us from those great days in Canton now allows us quite objectively to estimate the importance and the character of that rising, its place in the development of the Chinese revolution, its strong and its weak sides. In its time the question of the lessons and particularly among the workers in the Chinese Communist movement, and that discussion was brought to a close only at the Sixth Congress of the Comintern. Now we possess authoritative decisions on all the basic questions bound up with the analysis of the Canton events. On the other hand, all that was or seemed to be doubtful the day after the rising has now been weighed and tested on the objective scales of history. This makes it possible for us now to make final summaries of the disputes which went on for so long inside the Comintern around the question of Canton.

It is true that even at the present day we still do not have any full and systematic materials at our disposition concerning the course of the events in Canton day by day, hour by hour. The Canton rising still awaits its historian. One may hope that the first anniversary of the Soviet revolutionary rising in Canton will serve as a reminder to the comrades studying the history of the Chinese revolution of the pressing necessity of collecting, working over, and publishing all the materials for the historic days of December 10th to 13th, 1927. Further procrastination in the fulfilment of this task is quite unpardonable. But whilst we still do not possess a full and exact historical description of the Canton events, quite sufficient material has been accumulated for their political and their final political estimation.

## LESSONS OF THE RISING

The Soviet power in Canton did not last three whole days. The rising of the revolu-

tionary workers and soldiers of Canton was suppressed by the united forces of the Chinese bourgeois-militarist reaction and the imperialists within 58 hours. But those 58 hours achieved a truly universally historical importance. They represent a higher stage and simultaneously a complete historical break in the development of the Chinese revolution. During the Canton days through the tremendous historical activity of the masses, the Chinese revolution came for the first time, by a number of intervening and transitional steps, to the new, Soviet stage of its development. After December 10th to 13th, 1927, the revolution in China can develop only as a Soviet revolution, or it will not develop further at all. After Canton the slogan of soviets has ceased to be a merely "theoretical" slogan in the Chinese revolution. For the great masses of the Chinese toiling classes, it has now become a slogan which has been tested and applied in practice. The Chinese revolution cannot now go back from Canton. It can only advance from Canton, only go further than Canton. In this above all consists the universally historical importance of the Canton rising. The events of December, 1927, confirmed the genius of the theoretical position advanced by Lenin at the Second Comintern Congress, namely that the Soviets are the basic and historically inevitable form in which alone can be accomplished the revolutionary emancipation both of the proletariat of the leading capitalist countries and of the toiling masses of the backward and imperialistically oppressed countries. The Canton rising showed that China has now grown up, has matured to the Soviet form of development, that for the hundreds of millions of the Chinese people the Soviet system is not only in the historical sense of the words the only way out from under the pressure of triple serfdom and extreme indigence, but a decisive practical necessity at the first further rise of the revolution. The Canton rising has placed the question of the Soviet power in China as the

next item on the historical agenda. It showed that in the Chinese toiling masses, there is already historically adequate strength for the resolution of this question. And now there is no power on earth which could remove that question from the agenda.

The events of December 10th to 13th, 1927 added the final touch to that period of the Chinese revolution during which the proletariat was still politically immature for independent historical action, and was not in a condition to effect its hegemony in the all-national revolutionary movement. It is true that the Chinese working class had carried on the struggle for hegemony from the very first days of the growth of the mass movement; it had carried on that struggle even during its alliance with the national bourgeoisie and after its rupture with the latter. But it is one thing to struggle for the leadership of a revolutionary movement, and another to have the mastery of that leadership. Even the final defection of the national bourgeoisie from the revolutionary camp (the Shanghai and Wuhan risings) could not of itself automatically decide the question of proletarian hegemony in China's revolutionary mass movement. History never decides such questions automatically. In order to resolve this question the Chinese working class had in practice to demonstrate their capability of independent revolutionary mass action, and an action at that sufficiently strong to shatter or break down the dominance of the bourgeois militarist reaction. The Canton rising proved to be that activity. It was a decisive historical test, in which the Chinese proletariat finally assured to itself the role of the sole leader and director of the Chinese revolution. After Canton the hegemony of the proletariat was transformed from a historical possibility into the actuality of the Chinese revolution.

#### AFTER THE RISING

But after the Canton revolution we witnessed a strong ebb in the revolutionary wave in China. The peasant risings which broke out in the winter and spring of last year quickly died down. In any case, they to-day do not have that force and that sweep which they had several months back, and the workers' movement in all the large centres of China, Canton

included, still cannot rise out of the depression. Can our estimate of the importance of the Canton events be reconciled with these indisputable facts? Has not the very revolution ceased to be a reality of the present day in China, has it not been transformed into merely one of the possibilities, and a distant possibility at that, along which the further development of China may proceed? Would it not be more sound to consider the Canton rising not as a transfer to a new stage of the Chinese revolution, but as the end of that revolution?

This conclusion, which we have deliberately set in an interrogative form, is openly insisted on by the Trotskyists. Not so very long since a letter by Trotsky on the Comintern Sixth Congress was published in the German "ultra-left" press. In this letter Trotsky pokes "fun" at the congress decisions which laid on all Communist parties the prime obligation of defending the Chinese revolution. What is there to defend, Trotsky venomously asks, when there is nothing left of the revolution? However, in a less open form this idea that the Canton rising was the last outbreak of the accomplished Chinese revolution is shared even in the ranks of the Communist movement by a certain circle of comrades. And this makes it all the more necessary to consider this question first of all. The manner of its decision will predetermine a number of further political conclusions of secondary importance.

#### THE REVOLUTION CONTINUES

At the moment no one can deny the fact that the growth in the mass revolutionary struggle was broken off sharply after the suppression of the Canton rising, that from that date began a period of protracted decline of the revolutionary struggle in China. In the conditions of a revolutionary situation one year is an extraordinarily long period. At the present moment there can be dispute only over whether the very lowest point has been reached in this process of decline in the revolutionary struggle. The actual fact of an ebb in the revolutionary wave can be disputed by no one. The greatest political mistake of a number of Chinese and non-Chinese Communists (and of the author of the present article

in the first place) consisted in their continuing for several months after the suppression of the Canton rising to regard it as the direct beginning of a new revolutionary rise throughout China, and in correspondence with this view insisting upon an orientation of the Chinese C.P. tactics around the direct organisation of an armed rising on as large a scale as possible. This profoundly inaccurate estimate of the situation arising after Canton was conditioned by indications of a growth of the elemental peasant risings in Central and Southern China. Moreover, the dimensions of the peasant insurgent movement at this stage of its development were greatly exaggerated, whilst the extent and depths of the defeat of the working class were still more underestimated.

The great service of the Ninth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. consisted in the fact that it resolutely rejected this erroneous opinion and with determination changed the tactical course of the Chinese C.P., recalling the general slogan of an immediate armed rising (in the post-Canton conditions this slogan would inevitably have condemned the Chinese Communists to hopeless adventures and complete break up) and replacing it by the slogan of the organisation of the masses and their preparation for the new, imminent revolutionary rise. The Ninth Plenum quite soundly evaluated the Canton rising as a rear-guard struggle marking the end of the first revolutionary wave in China. But, of course, this evaluation has nothing in common with the Trotskyist theory anent the end of the Chinese revolution. After Canton the period of rise was replaced by a period, and even a prolonged period, of depression. But the revolution has not come to a halt in China. The revolution is continuing. This was, and this remains the starting point for all the decisions of the Comintern on the Chinese question.

The long series of heavy defeats and failures which overtook the workers' and peasants' revolution in 1927, would undoubtedly have interrupted the development of the Chinese revolution for many years (and then it would indeed have marked the end of the revolution) if the bourgeois-militarist counter-revolution had proved capable of ensuring the country any way out whatever, whether reactionary or

reformist, from the gigantic antagonisms which engendered and which nourish the Chinese revolution. But a year has now passed since the defeat of the Canton rising—a period extraordinarily long in the conditions of a revolutionary epoch—and all the experience of this year witnesses to the fact that the bourgeois-militarist reaction has no power to resolve the problems upon the settlement of which the further development of China is bound up. Nor does the growing activity of the imperialists in China ensure such a sequel to the Chinese revolution. It was still possible to carry on theoretical discussions on these questions in 1927. But now the theoretical discussion is settled by the very development of the objective reality. Not a single step forward has been taken towards the decision of the basic social problems of China—the agrarian and social problems.\* And this signifies that the antagonisms have in this regard grown enormously. From the aspect of China's struggle for independence her international situation has not improved during the past year. The fact of America's recognition of the Nanking government, and equally Britain's recognition, does not in the least connote a weakening of China's national oppression, but on the contrary, implies a further growth of actual oppression. The fact of increased aggression of foreign capital in China in all spheres is quite indisputable. This past year has led to a further intensification of the crisis in the agriculture of China, and it now has reached the extreme limits (one of the expressions of this fact is the condemnation of not less than twenty millions of the population to famine this year). A certain animation in industry, of a purely circumstantial nature, and also the increase in foreign trade, cannot, of course, resolve the severe economic crisis through which the country is now passing. The formal union of all China under the "single" government of the Kuomintang has made no essential changes in China's political system; the struggle between the cliques of generals, the very character of the government and so on, have all remained as they were a year ago. The entire practice, and the entire experience

\* At the present time one feels even a little constraint in recalling that a year ago we still had to discuss the possibilities of realising an agrarian reform of the Stolypin type in China.

of the past year demonstrate that the conditions for a stabilisation of the bourgeois-milistarist regime in China do not exist, that at the present moment stabilisation is objectively impossible, that there are at the moment no indications of that stabilisation. Owing to this circumstance the defeat of the revolution in 1927 was not transformed and could not be transformed into the end of the revolution. Owing to this circumstance the revolution in China must inevitably continue.

#### A TRANSITION TO A HIGHER STAGE

Thus viewed, the Canton rising, despite the fact that it was immediately followed by a long period of depression in the revolutionary struggle of the Chinese toiling masses, cannot but connote a transition to a new, higher, Soviet stage of the revolution, in which the Chinese proletariat will become the leader of the whole revolutionary movement. This deduction is often objected to on the ground of the naive, abstractly schematic argument that it is impossible for it to mean a transition to a higher stage, when it is admitted that immediately after Canton a long period of triumph of reaction set in. That argument sounds convincing only at its first hearing. In reality where has it ever been proved that the transition from one stage of the revolution to another, higher stage must necessarily occur immediately without any interval in time? The rising line of revolution cannot be described as though it were geometrically straight. The Canton rising connotes a transition to a higher stage of the revolution, first and most of all owing to the form of revolutionary government which it established (the Soviet Government), then owing to the new disposition of class forces (the proletarian hegemony in the struggle of the masses against the bloc of bourgeoisie, landowners and imperialists), and finally owing to the historical initiative of the proletariat in organising a mass revolutionary struggle, which is the prototype of imminent revolutionary battles on a much greater scale than that of December 10th to 13th, 1927.

So much for the general significance of the Canton rising and its place in the development of the Chinese revolution.

#### CONDITIONS OF THE RISING

In the discussion which developed in the Comintern on the question of the lessons of the Canton events, certain of the comrades attempted to prove that the rising in Canton was untimely organised by the Chinese Communist Party. Some of them held to the thesis that the rising had been started prematurely, whilst others argued that it was historically late. The adherents of the latter view based it on the assumption that the failure of the Canton rising was predetermined by the exhaustion of the forces of the revolutionary movement before the rising; the tendency to an ebb in the revolutionary wave was quite definitely indicated long before the Canton rising. The depression in the workers' movement in China's main industrial centres (Shanghai, Wuhan) a number of heavy defeats of the peasant risings (including the rising of Ho-Lung and Wei-Tin's soldiers) on the very eve of the Canton rising predetermined the failure of any armed attack, and under such conditions the organisation of the Canton rising was a highly serious political error. "It would have been better not to take to arms." (Plekhanov, after 1905.)

It is characteristic that this viewpoint, which produced Plekhanov's estimate of the December armed rising of 1905 (Plekhanov also argued the untimeliness, the lateness of the Moscow rising) was in complete agreement with Trotsky's views on the character of the Canton rising. Trotsky declared that rising to be a putsch, a consciously hopeless adventure, previously condemned to a cruel smash owing to the very fact that the revolution in China had clearly been on the ebb long before the Canton events. This coincidence in the view of the extreme right elements of the Comintern and the "left" Trotskyist opposition on a highly important political question is, of course, no fortuitous one. It shows how closely the two extreme deviations from the Leninist line of the Comintern coincide, and on a social-democratic platform at that.

It is not necessary to go into extensive demonstrations of the extreme inaccuracy of this essentially Menshevik "theory" of the "destiny" of the Canton rising. It is, to start with, contrary to the facts. And the facts

declare that 'whilst by the date of the Canton rising the working class and peasantry of a number of Chinese provinces were actually rendered impotent by their defeats during the previous stages, in the Kwantung province, with its forty million population, and in the adjacent areas, the peasant revolution rose very swiftly during November and December, 1927. The mass revolutionary movement of the peasantry in Kwantung province itself was particularly extensively developed (the establishment of soviets in a number of Kwantung districts). In Canton itself there was a rapid growth in the revolutionary agitation of both the working masses (the demonstrations and strikes of October 14th, November 7th, and so on), and among the garrison divisions. The elemental mass movement in Kwantung was on the rise. To deny this proved and confirmed fact is now quite impossible. Under such conditions the Canton Communist Party was bound not to constrain and hinder the elemental movement, but organisedly to carry it on, forward to the decisive struggle: decisive because its result was to determine the further development of the revolutionary struggle throughout China, and its success would undoubtedly have raised the forces of the all-China revolution to an enormous degree. A struggle and only a struggle could determine the question whether a real turn in the development of the revolution had now come. Any other decision of this question would have been a fatal capitulation and the self-destruction of the Chinese Communist movement.

#### MARXISM AND REVOLUTION

"A Marxist," said Lenin, "is the first to foresee the arrival of a revolutionary epoch, and begins to arouse the people and to sound the alarm while the philistines are still sleeping the slavish sleep of the faithful. Consequently the Marxist is the first to take the road of direct revolutionary struggle, he moves towards the direct struggle, towards the revolutionary seizure of power, unmasking the reconciliatory delusions of all the social and political mediocrities. Consequently the Marxist is the last to abandon the road of direct revolutionary struggle, and abandons it only when all possibilities are exhausted, when there is not the faintest shadow of hope of a shorter

road, when the call to prepare for mass strikes, for a rising and so on has clearly lost all basis. Consequently the Marxist replies with contempt to all those innumerable renegades of the revolution who cry that 'we are more progressive than you, we gave up the revolution earlier.' "

These words of Lenin are a blow between the eyes to those opportunists and "ultra-left" Mensheviks who scream of the predetermined destiny of the Canton rising, and who are proud of the fact that they either before or after that rising considered that "it would have been better not to take to arms." In December, 1927, the working class of Canton and the Chinese Communists were, in Marx's words, faced with the following alternative: "either to accept the challenge to struggle, or to yield without struggle. In the latter case the demoralisation of the working class would be a much greater misfortune than the loss of any number of leaders."

The heroic proletariat of Canton accepted the challenge to struggle and suffered defeat. The struggle cost the Canton workers enormous sacrifices. But even the shattered Canton rising has taken on a universal historical importance and was a great achievement of the Chinese revolution. Capitulation without a battle would not in the least have protected revolutionary China from the horrors of the white terror, and would simultaneously have been the greatest misfortune for the entire revolutionary movement of China.

We shall not stop to consider in detail the arguments of those who consider the Canton rising was premature. The advocates of this view, wise after the event, start with the assumption that the Canton Communists ought to have waited a few more weeks, in order to allow the cliques of generals fighting for Canton time to fight among themselves, and only then to have raised the revolt. These "sage" politicians leave out of account "only" the fact that any postponement of the rising would have left the Canton workers without the aid of the garrison (the order for the disarmament of the revolutionary divisions was issued on December 10th, and this circumstance forced a precipitation of the Communists' attack by a day or two), i.e., it would have condemned them to defeat in the very first hours of the rising. These "strategists"

also do not realise that in a revolutionary situation the conditions of struggle change from day to day and sometimes from hour to hour, that any neglect of the favourable moment for an armed rising may prove to be fatal. Nothing can be made of the stupid view that it would have been better if the Canton Communists had waited a few weeks with their attack. The date of the rising was forced on the Canton Communists by the objective conditions (the growth in the elemental movement of the masses, the threat of disarming the revolutionary garrison for their persistence in the question of an armed rising, and so on), and, of course, the cause of the defeat of the Canton rising cannot be attributed to the choice of dates.

#### ERRORS OF THE LEADERS

In addition to the objective causes, which had enormous importance but none the less did not necessarily predetermine the unsuccessful result of the rising, the defeat of the Canton workers was conditioned by the great errors committed by the leaders of the rising. To the honour of the Chinese Communist Party it has to be said that these errors were not in the fundamental political line, which was absolutely sound during the Canton days. The slogans of a rising, the establishment of a Canton Soviet, the Soviet Government's decrees on the power, on the land, etc., the policy in relation to the imperialists, the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie, were all unimpeachably sound during the days of the rising. In this the Canton rising is an excellent example of how the Chinese Communists ought to proceed in future. The errors of the Canton Communists lie in another direction. In the first place, the political preparation of the masses for the rising was inadequate. The revolutionary work among the soldiers was developed only in the town of Canton. No attempts were made to carry it on among the divisions situated outside the town. And this mistake brought its own retribution. A still greater political error consisted in the Canton Communists continually regarding the workers united in the yellow, fascist "mechanics' union" as a "solid reactionary mass." By so doing the Communists completely isolated themselves from an albeit not numerically,

but qualitatively important part of the industrial workers of Canton, and afforded the reactionary leaders of this union the possibility of exploiting its forces in the struggle against the insurgents. The military tactics employed at the very moment of the rising were also quite unsatisfactory. Instead of concentrating all their forces and inflicting a powerful, crushing blow on the main base of reaction, the island of Honan, on which a large part of the Kuomintang forces was situated, the leaders of the rising scattered their armed forces over separate operations, which had no decisive significance, inside the town; they let pass the moment for a surprise attack and allowed the enemy to take the offensive. This is perhaps the greatest and the most fatal mistake of all that the Canton workers committed during the rising. As one had to expect, defence instead of a decisive attack connoted the end of the rising, despite all the heroism of the defenders of Soviet Canton. Such are the chief mistakes from which the Chinese ought to and will learn, so as in future to know not only how to seize, but how to retain power. And these mistakes afforded the Canton revolutionary workers no opportunity of holding out for even a few days longer, when help from the peasantry, risen at Canton's signal in a number of areas of Kwantung, could have been expected. As it was, the peasants were unable to throw forces towards the town in time to repulse the blows of the Kuomintang soldiers, who by the third day of the rising had completely surrounded Canton.

#### THE QUESTION OF SUPPORT BY THE MASSES

In all the discussions over the lessons of the Canton events the most doubtful question of all was that of the participation of the masses in the rising. This discussion was settled finally at the Comintern Sixth Congress, in whose labours the question of the Canton rising occupied no small place. The statements of a number of Chinese comrades, participants in and organisers of the rising, did not dispel the legend of the Blanquist character of the Canton rising, of a putsch, and so on. Now it has been finally demonstrated that December 10th to 13th was the

# TEN DAYS THAT SHOOK THE WORLD

by

**JOHN REED**

A vivid account of the November revolution in Russia as witnessed and recorded by that brilliant journalist and author, the late John Reed

*Cloth 4s. Post free 4s. 5d.*

*Paper 2s. „ „ 2s. 3d.*

## THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

By **N. LENIN**

In the form of a reply to Karl Kautsky, Lenin gives a very clear exposition of the Bolshevik theory of Revolution and Democracy

*Cloth 3s. Post free 3s. 5d.*

*Paper 1s. 6d. „ „ 1s. 9d.*

## REMINISCENCES OF LENIN

By **KLARA ZETKIN**

Dealing with Lenin's views on the position of women, and other questions

*Cloth 2s. Post free 2s. 4d.*

*Paper 1s. „ 1s. 3d.*

*Of all booksellers or direct from*

**MODERN ★ BOOKS ★ LIMITED**

26 BEDFORD ROW, LONDON, W.C.1

work of the masses of Canton themselves, that any talk of the non-participation of the masses in the rising has not the least basis. Of course, given a sounder political preparation of the rising it would have had more of a mass character; of course the errors of the leaders hindered the maximum mobilisation of all the revolutionary forces for the immediate armed struggle. But the discussion did not circle around this, but around the question whether the masses participated in the Canton rising at all, and whether it was not an adventurist conspiracy, organised only by an upper group of the Communists. The Sixth Comintern Congress put an end to this discussion once for all. But to what monstrous absurdities individual comrades who gave themselves over to the "criticism" of the Canton rising descended, are evident from the following passages by Comrade Reyberg:

"When we turn to a consideration of the causes of the defeat of Red Canton we have quite categorically to lay down the following position: the Canton rising suffered, and could not but suffer, defeat, in consequence of the fact that the social bases of the rising in Canton and the Kwantung province were insufficiently mature that the real inter-relationships between the military forces of the revolution and the counter-revolution were not sufficiently favourable to the rising, that the moment of the rising (i.e., the 11th December specifically) was a bad choice. . . .

"The rising was suppressed by the superior forces of the enemy. It is this circumstance plus the absence of an adequately wide mass movement both in Canton itself and especially in the peasant areas closest to the town, that was the decisive cause of the crushing of Red Canton.

"The military and organisational-technical errors committed by the leaders of the rising unquestionably also had great influence on the

result of the Canton struggle, but none the less, by comparison with the above specified objective conditions they were only of a secondary, and not of a decisive importance."

After all that we have already said, comment on these views which represent the Canton rising as a putsch (without mentioning the word, which, however, is quite unimportant) is absolutely superfluous.

The greatness of the Canton rising consists in the fact that it was a mighty revolutionary activity of the masses. This is to us Bolsheviks the clearest of all that occurred during 1927. This aspect was always given the highest estimate by Marxism in the revolutionary struggle. Concerning Marx, Lenin wrote the following penetrating words, with which we will conclude our article:

"When the masses have risen, Marx wishes to move with them, to learn together with them, in the course of the struggle, and not to read office instructions. He places highest of all the fact that the working class is heroically, devotedly, initiatively making world history. Marx looked at that history from the viewpoint of those who are making it without having the possibility of previously infallibly estimating the chances, and not from the viewpoint of an intelligent suburban, who moralises. 'it is easy to foresee . . . it would have been better not to take arms.' Marx knew how to estimate also the fact that there are moments in history when the desperate struggle of the masses even for a hopeless cause is indispensable in the name of the education of those masses and their preparation for the succeeding struggle."

The Communist International has been and remains faithful to this revolutionary spirit of Marxism. Consequently the Communist International proudly takes on itself all the responsibility for the great Canton Commune.

THE ENGLISH EDITION of the *COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL*  
(New Style) will be published twice monthly.

Subscription rates 8s. per annum in England, \$2 per annum in U.S.A.,  
post free through any bookseller.

# Stalin's Speech

at the Presidium Meeting of the E.C.C.I., held on Dec. 19, 1928

**C**OMRADES, in view of the fact that comrade Molotov has already explained the point of view of the C.P.S.U. delegation, I have only a few remarks to make. I want to touch lightly upon three points that came out in the course of the debate. These points are—the problem of capitalist stabilisation; the problem of the proletarian class struggles that arise in connection with the precariousness of stabilisation, and the problem of the Communist Party of Germany.

It is with regret that I have to say that on all these three questions comrades Humbert-Droz and Serra have fallen into the mire of pusillanimous opportunism. It is true that, so far, comrade Humbert-Droz has spoken only on formal questions. But I have in mind the speech on the question of principles he delivered at the meeting of the Politsecretariat of the E.C.C.I. at which the question of the "rights" and the conciliators in the Communist Party of Germany was discussed. I think that very speech represents the ideological foundation of the position the minority of the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. took up at that meeting. I think, therefore, that the speech on the question of principles that comrade Humbert-Droz delivered at the meeting of the Politsecretariat of the E.C.C.I. must not be ignored. I said that comrades Humbert-Droz and Serra have fallen into the mire of pusillanimous opportunism. What does that mean? It means that in addition to avowed opportunism, there is also tacit opportunism, which dares not display its real features. That is precisely the opportunism of conciliation with the right deviation. Conciliation is pusillanimous opportunism. I repeat that, to my regret, I must declare that both these comrades have fallen into the mire of pusillanimous opportunism.

Permit me to demonstrate this by a few facts.

## THE PROBLEM OF CAPITALIST STABILISATION.

The Comintern starts out with the assumption that present-day capitalist stabilisation is

a temporary, transient, precarious decaying sort of stabilisation that will break up more and more as the capitalist crisis develops. This does not in the least contradict the generally known fact about the growth of capitalist technique and rationalisation. Indeed it is on the basis of this very growth of capitalist technique and rationalisation that the internal unsoundness and decay of stabilisation is developing. What did Humbert-Droz say in his speech at the Politsecretariat of the E.C.C.I.? He flatly denied that stabilisation was precarious and transient. He bluntly stated in his speech that "the Sixth World Congress in fact condemned the loose and general description of stabilisation as—decaying, shaky, etc., stabilisation." He bluntly declared that the thesis of the Sixth Congress regarding the Third Period does not say a word about stabilisation being precarious. Can comrade Humbert-Droz' contention be regarded as correct? No, it cannot; because the Sixth Congress of the Comintern said the very opposite to what comrade Humbert-Droz said in his speech. In the paragraph on the Third Period, the Sixth Congress of the Comintern stated:

"This period [i.e., the third period.—J.S.] will inevitably lead—through the further development of the contradictions of capitalist stabilisation—to capitalist stabilisation becoming still more precarious and the severe intensification of the general crisis of capitalism."

Did you hear that? "Capitalist stabilisation becoming more precarious." What does that mean? It means that stabilisation is already precarious and transient, that it will become still more precarious as a result of the conditions prevailing in the third period. And comrade Humbert-Droz has the effrontery to sneer at everybody, including the German Party, who says that stabilisation is a precarious and decaying stabilisation, who says that the present struggle of the working class undermines and disintegrates capitalist stabilisation. Whom is comrade Humbert-Droz sneering at?

Obviously he is sneering at the decisions of the Sixth Congress.

It follows, therefore, that comrade Humbert-Droz, while ostensibly defending the decisions of the Sixth Congress of the Comintern, is actually revising them, and is thus sliding into the opportunist conception of stabilisation.

That is how the matter stands in regard to the formal side of the question. Let us now examine the material aspect of the question. If present-day stabilisation cannot be described as precarious, decaying or transient, what kind of a stabilisation is it then? The only thing that can be said about it then is that it is durable, or at all events, that it is becoming more durable. But if capitalist stabilisation, what is becoming more durable, what is the use of talking about the crisis of world capitalism becoming more acute and profound? Obviously, this leaves no room for the deepening of the capitalist crisis. Obviously, comrade Humbert-Droz has got himself entangled in his own contradictions.

To proceed, Lenin said that capitalist development under imperialism is a two-sided process: (1) the growth of capitalism in some countries, and (2) the decay of capitalism in other countries. Is this thesis correct? If it is correct, then obviously capitalist stabilisation can be nothing else but decaying stabilisation.

Finally, I want to say a few words about a number of facts that are well-known to you all. For example, the desperate struggle the imperialist groups are carrying on among one another for markets and spheres of capital. There is the frantic growth of armaments in the capitalist countries; the establishment of new military alliances and obvious preparations for new imperialist wars. There is the sharpening of the contradictions between two gigantic imperialisms, the U.S.A. and Great Britain, each of which is seeking to draw all other States into its respective orbit. Finally, there is the very existence of the Soviet Union; its growth and successes in the spheres of construction, economics, in culture and politics. The very existence of the Soviet Union, quite apart from its growth, shatters and disintegrates the foundations of world capitalism. How can Marxians, Leninists, Communists maintain, after this, that capitalist stabilisation is not a precarious and decaying

stabilisation, that it is not, year after year and day after day, being shattered by the very process of development?

Do comrades Humbert-Droz and Serra realise the mess they have got into? The principal mistakes comrades Humbert-Droz and Serra make arise from this one mistake.

#### THE PROBLEMS OF THE PROLETARIAN CLASS STRUGGLES.

Comrade Humbert-Droz also goes wrong on the question of the character and significance of the class struggles of the proletariat in capitalist countries. The conclusion to be drawn from comrade Humbert-Droz' speech delivered at the meeting of the Politsecretariat is that the struggle of the working class, its spontaneous clashes with the capitalists, are in the main of defensive battles, that the leadership of the Communist Party in this struggle must be exercised merely within the limits of the existing reformist unions. Is that conclusion right? No, it is not. To adopt this conclusion means to drag at the tail of events. Comrade Humbert-Droz forgets that the struggle of the working class is now proceeding on the basis of a precarious stabilisation, that the working class battles not infrequently are in the nature of counter-attacks; a counter-offensive to the capitalist offensive and a direct offensive against the capitalists. Comrade Humbert-Droz sees nothing new in the recent battles of the working class. He ignores the general strike in Lodz; the strikes for an improvement in conditions of labour in France, Czecho-Slovakia and Germany, the powerful mobilisation of the proletarian forces during the metal workers' lockout in Germany, etc.

What do these and similar facts signify? They signify that in capitalist countries, the conditions precedent are maturing for a fresh revival of the labour movement. This is the new element that comrades Humbert-Droz and Serra fail to see, and which of course, comrades who are in the habit of looking behind instead of ahead, can never see. What does looking behind instead of ahead mean? It means dragging at the tail of events; it means failing to see the new elements in events and being caught unawares. It means that the Communist Parties must abandon the leadership in the labour movement. This is exactly the point on which the leaders of the German

Party came to grief in the revolutionary period of 1923. Therefore, those who do not wish to repeat the mistakes of 1923, must stimulate the thoughts of the Communists and call upon them to advance; they must prepare the masses for the impending battles, must take all measures to prevent the Communist Parties from dragging at the tail of events and the working class from being caught unawares.

It is very queer that comrades Humbert-Droz and Serra forget these things.

During the Ruhr struggles, the German Communists asserted that the unorganised workers were more revolutionary than the organised workers. Comrade Humbert-Droz waxed indignant over this, and declares that this is impossible. That is queer! Why is it impossible? There are about 1,000,000 workers in the Ruhr. Only about 200,000 of these are organised. The unions are led by bureaucratic reformists who have many contacts with the capitalist class. Is it surprising that the unorganised workers proved more revolutionary than the organised? Could it be otherwise? I could relate to you facts more "surprising" from the history of the Russian revolutionary movement. It often happened in Russia that the masses were more revolutionary than some of their Communist leaders. Every Russian Bolshevik knows this perfectly well. This is exactly why Lenin said that it is not only necessary to teach the masses, but also to learn from them. These facts must not surprise us. We should rather be surprised at the fact that comrade Humbert-Droz does not understand these simple things that occur in the sphere of Bolshevik revolutionary practice.

The same thing may be said of comrade Serra. He does not approve of the German Communists acting outside the existing unions and of their having broken down those limits in the struggle to organise the locked-out metallists. He regrets this as a violation of the resolution of the Fourth Congress of the R.I.L.U. He maintains that the R.I.L.U. instructed the Communists to work only within the unions. This is nonsense, comrades! The R.I.L.U. has not suggested anything of the sort.

(Lozovsky: Hear, hear.)

To say this means to doom the Communist Party to the role of a mere passive spectator

in the class struggles of the proletariat. It is the merit of German Communists that they refused to be scared by the twaddle about "trade union limits," that they broke through those limits and organised the struggle of the unorganised in spite of trade union bureaucrats. It is the merit of the German Communists that they sought and found new forms of struggle and of organising the unorganised workers. Perhaps, in doing so they made some minor mistakes. But such things are never accomplished without mistakes. It does not at all follow that because we must work in the reformist unions if they they are really mass organisations, therefore we must confine our mass work to work in the reformist unions, that we must become slaves to the rules and regulations of those unions. If the reformist leaders are merging with capitalism (see the resolutions of the Sixth Congress of the C.I. and the Fourth Congress of the R.I.L.U.) and the working class is waging a struggle against capitalism, how can it be maintained that the working class struggle led by the Communist Party can be carried on without, to a certain extent, breaking through the limits of the existing reformist unions? Obviously, it cannot be maintained without dropping into opportunism. We can quite easily conceive of a situation in which it may be necessary to create parallel mass working class unions in spite of the trade union bosses who have sold themselves to the capitalists. We have such a situation in the United States. It is quite possible for a similar situation to arise in Germany.

#### THE PROBLEM OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF GERMANY.

Is the Communist Party of Germany to be or not to be organised and consolidated with iron discipline—that is the question, comrades? It is not merely a question of Rights or conciliators that is at stake, but the very existence of the Communist Party of Germany. The Communist Party of Germany exists. But inside the Communist Party of Germany there are two forces which are demoralising the Party from within and are endangering its very existence. First, there is the Right faction, which is organising a new anti-Leninist Party within the Communist Party, with its own Central Committee and its own press and

which day in and day out violates Party discipline. Secondly, there is the conciliatory group, which, by its vacillations, strengthens the Right faction. There is no need for me to prove here that the Right faction is breaking with Leninism and is waging a desperate struggle against the Comintern. That has been proved long ago. Nor is there any need for me to prove that the conciliatory group violates the known decision of the Sixth Congress concerning the systematic struggle against the conciliators. That also has been proved already. The situation in the German Party has reached the limit of toleration. The state of affairs in which the Rights poison the atmosphere with Social-Democratic ideological rubbish and systematically violate the elementary principles of Party discipline, while the conciliators carry grist to the mill of the Rights must no longer be tolerated, for to do so would mean to go against the Comintern and to violate the elementary demands of Leninism. A situation has arisen similar to that which we had in the C.P.S.U. (if not worse) in the last phase of the struggle against Trotskyism, when the Party and the Comintern were compelled to drive the Trotskyists out of their midst. Everyone realises this now. But comrades Humbert-Droz and Serra do not see it, or pretend they do not see it. So much the worse for them. This means that they are ready to support both the Rights and the conciliators even at the risk of utterly demoralising the Communist Party of Germany.

In arguing against the expulsion of the Rights, comrades Humbert-Droz and Serra refer to the decision of the Sixth Congress about combatting the Right tendencies by ideological means. Yes, the Fourth Congress did pass such a decision. But these comrades forget that the decision of the Sixth Congress does not say that the struggle of the Communist Parties against the Right danger must be conducted by ideological means. Nothing of the kind! With reference to the measures for combatting deviations from the Leninist line by ideological means, the Sixth Congress of the Comintern in its resolution on comrade Bukharin's report declared that:

"This does not imply that discipline is to be relaxed; on the contrary, it implies the general tightening up of iron internal discipline, the absolute subordination of the minority to the

majority, the absolute subordination of the minor organisations, as well as all the other Party organisations (parliamentary fractions, trade union fractions, the press, etc.) to the leading party centres."

Strange that comrades Humbert-Droz and Serra forget this thesis in the resolution of the Sixth Congress of the Comintern. It is very strange that all conciliators, those who regard themselves as conciliators as well as those who shun that name, systematically forget this important thesis in their references to the resolution of the Sixth Congress of the Communist International.

What are we to do if, instead of a general tightening up of iron discipline in the German Party, we get crying facts of deliberate violation of discipline, by the Rights and partly also by some of the conciliators? Can such a situation be tolerated any longer?

What are we to do if, instead of absolute subordination of the minor organisations, the trade union fractions and the Party press to the Central Committee, we get in the Communist Party of Germany crying facts of the gross violation of decisions of the Sixth Congress of the Comintern by the Rights and partly also by some of the conciliators? Can such a situation be tolerated any longer?

You know the conditions of acceptance to the Comintern adopted at the Second Congress. I have in mind the 21 conditions. Point 1 in those conditions lays it down that: "the periodical and non-periodical press and all Party publishing offices must be completely subordinated to the Central Committee of the Party, irrespective as to whether the Party as a whole at the time is legal or illegal." You know that the Right faction has two newspapers. You know that these papers refuse absolutely to submit to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany. The question is: can such an outrage be tolerated any longer?

Point 12 of the 21 conditions stipulates that the Party must "be organised in the most centralised fashion," that "iron discipline bordering on military discipline must prevail." You know that the Rights in the German Party refuse to recognise any kind of discipline, iron or any other, except their own factional discipline. The question is: can such an outrage be tolerated any longer?

Or you will say perhaps that the stipulations

of the Second Congress of the Comintern are not binding on the Rights?

Comrades Humbert-Droz and Serra cry out against alleged violation of the decisions of the Communist International. In the Rights we have real (and not alleged) violators of the fundamental principles of the Communist International. Why do they remain silent? Is it because they, while ostensibly defending the decisions of the Comintern, want to defend the Rights and to have these decisions revised?

The statement comrade Serra made is particularly interesting. He swears by his faith that he is against the Rights, against the conciliators, etc. But what conclusions does he draw from that? To fight the Rights and the conciliators? Not at all. He draws the extremely strange conclusion that the Politbureau of the C.C. of the German Party must be reorganised! Try and think this out: the Politbureau of the C.C. C.P.G. is waging a determined struggle against the Right danger and the vacillations of the conciliators; comrade Serra is in favour of combatting the Rights and the conciliators; therefore, comrade Serra proposes that the Rights and the conciliators be not interfered with, that the struggle against the Rights and conciliators be slackened and that the composition of the Politbureau of the C.C. C.P.G. be changed to suit the wishes of the conciliators. And this is called a "logical conclusion." I hope comrade Serra will excuse me if I say that his arguments reminds one of a provincial lawyer trying to prove that black is white. His line of argument is precisely what we call a lawyer's defence of opportunist elements.

Comrade Serra proposes to reorganise the Politbureau of the C.C. C.P.G., e.g., to remove some members and to replace them by others. Why does not comrade Serra say clearly and frankly who these substitutes should be?

(Serra: Those whom the Sixth Congress of the Comintern desired.)

But the Sixth Congress did not propose that the conciliators be rehabilitated. On the contrary, it instructed us to wage a systematic struggle against the conciliators. And precisely because the conciliators failed to carry out this instruction, the Presidium of the E.C.C.I., on Oct. 6, 1928, i.e., after the Sixth Congress, passed the well-known decision on the Rights

and the conciliators. Comrade Serra wants to pose as the sole interpreter of the decisions of the Sixth Congress. He has not by any means proved his claim to this. The interpreter of the decisions of the Sixth Congress is the Executive Committee of the Comintern and its Presidium. I observe that comrade Serra does not agree with the decision of the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. of Oct. 6, although he has not stated so frankly. So much the worse for him.

What is the conclusion? There is but one conclusion—the attitude of comrades Humbert-Droz and Serra on the question of the German Party is that of a pusillanimous lawyer's defence of the Rights against the C.P.G. and against the Comintern.

#### THE RIGHTS IN THE C.P.G. AND IN THE C.P.S.U.

I learned to-day from several speeches delivered here that some German conciliators refer to the speech I delivered at the November Plenum of the C.C. of the C.P.S.U. on the question of the methods of combatting the right elements as a justification of their position. As you know I said in my speech (it has been published), that in the present phase of development of the struggle against the right danger in the C.P.S.U., the principal method to be applied is that of an ideological struggle, which however does not preclude the application of organisational measures in individual cases. I substantiated my thesis by saying that the rights in the C.P.S.U. have not yet become crystallised, that they do not constitute a group or a faction and have not yet violated, or failed to carry out, any of the decisions of the C.P.S.U. I said that if the right resort to factional fighting and will commence to violate the decisions of the C.C. C.P.S.U., they will be treated in the same way as the Trotskyists were treated in 1927. This, I think, is clear. Is it not silly after this to refer to my speech as an argument in favour of the rights in Germany, where they have already commenced to employ factional methods of struggle and where they systematically violate the decisions of the C.C. C.P.G., or as an argument in favour of the conciliators in Germany, where they have not yet dissociated themselves from the right faction and where, it seems, they do not intend to do so? I think that anything sillier than

this would be difficult to find. Only those who have abandoned dialectical thinking can fail to understand the full depth of the difference that exists between the position of the rights in the C.P.S.U. and the position of those in the C.P.G.

After all, the rights in the C.P.S.U. are not a faction and it is an inconvertible fact that they loyally carry out the decisions of the C.C. of the C.P.S.U. The German rights, on the contrary, already have a faction, with a factional centre at its head, and systematically trample under foot the decisions of the C.C. of the C.P.S.U. Is it not clear that the methods of combatting the rights at the present moment cannot be the same in these two Parties?

Furthermore, here in the U.S.S.R. we have not a strong, well organised social democracy as an organised and serious force to foster and stimulate the right danger in the C.P.S.U. In Germany, on the contrary, there is side by side with the Communist Party, a more powerful and a fairly well organised Social-Democratic Party which fosters the right danger in the Communist Party of Germany and which utilises that danger as an objective channel through which to permeate our Party. Only the blind can fail to see the difference between the situation in the U.S.S.R. and that in Germany.

One more point. Our Party grew and became consolidated in desperate struggles against the Mensheviks, which struggles took the form of direct civil war against the Mensheviks which lasted for several years. Do not forget that in November, 1917, we Bolsheviks overthrew the Mensheviks and S.R.'s as the left wing of the counter-revolutionary imperialist bourgeoisie. That, by the way, explains the strong traditions of hostility to avowed opportunism in the C.P.S.U., traditions that are not found in any other Communist Party in the world. It is sufficient to recall the case of the Moscow organisation, especially of the Moscow Committee, where certain conciliatory vacillations took place, it is sufficient to recall the fact that the Party workers in Moscow in a period of not more than two months, at one blow, as it were, straightened out the line of the Moscow Committee, it is sufficient to recall this to be able to understand how strong the traditions of hostility towards avowed opportunism are in

our Party. Can we say the same of the German Party?

Probably you will agree with me that, much as we may regret it, we cannot say it. More than that, we cannot deny that the Communist Party of Germany has not yet by a long way freed itself from its social-democratic traditions which foster the right danger in the C.P.G.

These then are the conditions in Germany and the conditions in the U.S.S.R. The conditions are different in each case and necessitate different methods of struggle against the right danger.

Only those who have lost the elementary understanding of Marxism can fail to understand this simple fact.

In the Commission of the November Plenum of the C.C. of the C.P.S.U. charged with the drafting of the resolution, a group of comrades moved to extend the application of the fundamental points of the resolution to the other sections of the Comintern, including the German section. We rejected that motion, and declared that the conditions of the struggle against the right danger in the C.P.G. were cardinally different from the conditions of the struggle in the C.P.S.U.

#### THE DRAFTS OF THE OPEN AND PRIVATE LETTERS

Two words concerning the draft resolutions submitted by the commissions of the E.C.C.I. Comrade Serra thinks that these draft resolutions are provincial in character. Why? Because, it appears, the draft of the Open Letter does not contain an analysis of the political situation that gave rise to the right danger. This is ridiculous, comrades. We have such an analysis in the resolutions of the Sixth Congress. Is it necessary to repeat it? I think there is no need for repetition. Properly speaking, we could limit ourselves to a short resolution on the rights who systematically violate the decisions of the Sixth Congress, and who, therefore, are liable to expulsion, and on the conciliators who refrain from combatting the rights and therefore deserve a severe caution. The reason we did not limit ourselves to a short resolution, is because we want to explain to the workers the essence of the right tendency, to expose to them the real features of Brandler and Thalheimer, what

they were in the past and what they are now, to show how long the Comintern and the C.P.S.U. had spared them in the hope that they would mend their ways, to show how long they have been tolerated in the ranks of the Communists and why such people can no longer be tolerated in the ranks of the Comintern. That is why the draft resolution is longer than might have been at first expected.

Comrade Molotov has already stated that the delegation of the C.P.S.U. is fully and wholeheartedly in favour of these draft resolutions. I can but repeat comrade Molotov's statement. I would like to make only a few minor amendments.

(Comrade Stalin reads the amendments and hands them to the Presidium.)

## REVOLUTION IN LATIN AMERICA

By BERTRAM D. WOLFE . . . . . 5 cents.

## AMERICA PREPARES THE NEXT WAR

By JAY LOVESTONE . . . . . 10 cents.

## AMERICAN NEGRO PROBLEMS

By JOHN PEPPER . . . . . 10 cents.

Order From . . .

**WORKERS LIBRARY PUBLISHERS**

35 East 125th Street . . . . . New York

# Opportunism in Czecho-Slovakia

Paul Reimann

**T**HE crisis which has developed in the Czech Party as a result of the defeat on "The Red Day" has intensified considerably since the publication of the Open Letter of the E.C.C.I. Although the "Red Day" defeat was the immediate cause, we must not overlook the fact that its roots go much deeper. To-day, in the whole Communist International, there is a strong attack of right wing elements on the Communist policy, and the recent events in Germany particularly, indicate that this right wing struggle has here and there already grown into direct rebellion against the policy of the Communist Parties and the International. The cause of this increasing right danger is principally the intensification of class contradictions resulting from capitalist stabilisation and the growing danger of a new imperialist war.

Just as in the Czech Party, the attack of the right elements in the German Party against the policy of the Sixth World Congress is more and more assuming the character of an unchecked fractional attack. Since the Sixth World Congress the right wing danger has grown more rapidly in the Czecho-Slovakian Party than in any other section of the C.I., because the whole historical development of the Party in the Czecho-Slovakian Republic created a background favourable to the development of opportunist tendencies. The degree of this danger is however at the moment determined by another factor also. In recent years a considerable extension in the basis of opportunist dangers can be observed in Czecho-Slovakia. The right danger is not confined to that group in the Party which, like the Brandler group in Germany, fought the decisions of the Comintern after the Fifth World Congress. After the first crisis which developed in the Czech Party in 1924-25 had been settled, the new leadership which was formed contained a majority of representatives of the left. To this new left leadership was added Comrade Jilek's group, which had formerly opposed the leadership of Smeral, and whose ideas lacked clarity and tended

towards anarchist-syndicalism. The basis of the new leadership, in which the left elements and the Jilek group had a majority, was a block with the Smeral group, and the task of this group was to destroy the openly liquidationist grouping within the Party in order to carry out the Bolshevisation of the Party. In the early part of its existence the block carried this task out well. But from the time of the Fourth Party Congress, and due partly to the attacks of Trotskyist elements on the Party policy, the struggle against the right grew much weaker. At first the Party leadership slipped into an attitude of tolerance towards the right danger and later on itself became an adherent and exponent of an opportunist policy which the Open Letter of the Comintern called "opportunist passivity." During the course of the recent internal Party struggles in other sections of the Comintern a strong Bolshevik leadership emerged, but in Czecho-Slovakia the policy of the majority in the Party leadership has itself become a source of right wing danger. This has greatly extended the basis of the right danger in the Czech Party and it also explains the particular intensity of the present crisis.

The present discussion in the Party is being carried on, because of the events briefly sketched above, on the basis of the struggle of those left elements who are unwilling to put up with a continuation of the policy of opportunist passivity, on the part of the majority of the C.C. of the C.P. of Czecho-Slovakia, a policy which still calls itself left, but is in reality opportunist, against the group which has up to the present had the lead in Party leadership, whose exponent and most outstanding figure is Jilek. Since the Sixth World Congress, and the publication of the Open Letter of the E.C.C.I., this struggle has become more intense because the majority of the Party leadership, following the opportunist policy, have already put forward their own opportunist platform as against the policy of the Comintern.

The putting forward of this opportunist platform, which openly runs quite counter to the Sixth World Congress, is the unmistakable sign of growing acuteness in the internal Party crisis since the publication of the Open Letter, and it must therefore be one of our principal tasks to expose the opportunist character of this platform. The actual state of affairs is not altered in the least by the fact that the Jilek group is trying to hide the existence of its opportunist platform by agreeing officially to the decisions of the Comintern and to the Open Letter, or that it persists in calling its policy a left policy; for the political documents which this group has published are of so unambiguous a nature that there can be no doubt of the existence of a political platform. We shall therefore, leaving out of consideration all petty details and fractional manoeuvres, examine the ideological weapons of the majority in the Czech Party in order to demonstrate the existence of an independent opportunist platform as against the policy of the Sixth World Congress.

\* \* \* \*

The starting point in an explanation of the nature of the opportunist platform of the Jilek group is the question of the analysis of the objective situation. In the final analysis all differences can be traced back to this question. The opportunist groups in Czecho-Slovakia, like the opportunists in all sections of the Comintern, begin with an inflexible and mechanical idea of capitalist stabilisation which was expressed in a document published before the appearance of the Open Letter, entitled "The Attitude of the District Committee of District One in Czecho-Slovakia towards the attitude of the Party Officials of Prague with regard to Party Policy after the failure of Action on Red Day." This classic document of opportunism contains the following description of the prospects of stabilisation:

"Briefly it can be said that in the last few years the bourgeoisie have taken successful steps towards stabilising the situation and rationalising production. But these successes of the bourgeoisie have had their influence on the masses, and as stabilisation proceeds successfully, there appear among the masses tendencies towards an opportunist summing

up of the situation. Comrade Bukharin, in his report, dealt with the fact in a detached and interesting manner, most instructive for our opportunism. Comrade Bukharin dealt very thoroughly with the development of capitalism, the influence of stabilisation on the working class, the passivity of the masses, the lack of international action, etc. . . . Considered objectively, is the leftward movement of the means of an offensive or defensive character? And here, again referring to Comrade Bukharin's report, we may say that the spirit of the masses is not offensive, that, although the masses are going to the left, this leftward movement is of a defensive nature. It is true that the masses are determined to defend themselves everywhere against the bourgeoisie, but they are not determined to carry out an attack on the bourgeoisie. . . . If we judge the situation correctly, we cannot as Marxists speak to-day of any 'determination of the masses for great struggles,' unless we wished to use such an argument for the purpose of discrediting an odious Party leadership."

Excellent Marxism! When political and theoretical ignorance march under the banner of Marx and Bukharin you get a freak like this "attitude of the Prague District Committee." This is truly a fine idea, of the masses being "purely defensive" without being "determined on great struggles" although they are developing "leftward." Such a left development bears an unmistakable resemblance to a triangle with three right angles. It can be seen from the style of the document that every emphasis is laid on the passivity of the masses, and none on their swing to the left. To do this is to ignore one of the most profound aspects of capitalist stabilisation, the intensification of class contradictions, that is to take up a rigid, un-Marxist attitude which sees the bourgeoisie's success in stabilisation, but overlooks the development of the class struggle to a higher stage.

The document from which we have quoted is now acknowledged to be liquidatory by the very group which originated this theory of passive left development or leftward development of passivity. To discuss the honesty or dishonesty of that acknowledgement will not help matters. But it does clear matters up to realise that the same group in the Party

which put forward this new theory of passivity, Jilek's group, is still putting forward the theory which it condemned, only with a change in its terminology. What is the new, second, improved edition of the passivity theory? At the conference of the Reichenburg district of the Czecho-Slovakian Communist Party, Comrade Jilek explained the new "redeeming" wisdom to the astonished audience.

"It is quite correct, as Reimann maintains, that the objective conditions for a successful struggle of the working class are present. That is true, but the objective conditions are not everything.

"We have already lived through a period which objectively was revolutionary. We had the possibility of overthrowing capitalist rule. Why didn't we do it? Why weren't we successful, as in Russia? For one simple reason: because the necessary subjective conditions were not fulfilled.

"Everywhere, in all capitalist countries, and in Germany too, successful struggles were fought. Why didn't we carry on successful struggles? Because the subjective conditions for successful action were lacking.

"We can argue now and discuss the question of responsibility. The presence of objective conditions is not sufficient for victory, subjective conditions must also be fulfilled. That is essential if the proletariat is to attain what it desires to attain.

"As to why the subjective conditions were not present here in Czecho-Slovakia, there are different opinions among the Party membership."

We shall for the moment disregard the fact that in these remarks Comrade Yilek has badly confused two different questions: that of subjective conditions in general and that of the role of the Party. But what is the real heart of this argument? Before, it was: the masses are passive. Now, it is: the subjective conditions for successful activity are lacking. Are they not the same? Don't these two statements belong to each other like the white and yellow of an egg? But Comrade Jilek has succeeded in condemning the theory of the masses' passivity as liquidatory, while at the same time putting it forward as the theory of the absence of subjective conditions.

That we are not dealing with accidental de-

viation on the part of individuals in the matter of the development of this opportunist theory, is proved by the fact that statements expressing a complete lack of understanding of the conditions of capitalist stabilisation recur continually in all the literary output of the opportunist group. For example, the following passage occurs in a resolution of the Ostrau District Committee, which is in sympathy with the ideas of Jilek's group:

"Reconstruction (of imperialism) which was accompanied by excellent market conditions, resulted on one hand in the activation of the masses who, remembering the defeats suffered in the preceding period, began to lose their passivity."

And again:

"In consequence of the false analysis of the international and Czecho-Slovakian economic situation, and particularly of the incorrect but constantly repeated prophecy of the end of the Central European and Czecho-Slovakian market, the Party was, from its very beginning, misled into laying insufficient emphasis on local action, etc."

What is the essential point in these quotations? The leftward swing of the masses is "recognised," but explained only as a result of market conditions. Not increasing international contradictions, not the intensification of class contradictions in capitalist countries, but market conditions are put forward as the cause of the leftward movement. It is true that there is something different verbally, but actually it is an idea which fits exactly into the passivity theory. For whoever attempts to explain the leftward swing of the working class as the result of a temporary phenomenon of capitalist stabilisation, of market conditions, has not the least understanding of the nature and character of the intensification of the class struggle which is now proceeding.

The theory of the passivity of the masses, the theory of the absence of subjective conditions, and the theory of market conditions as the cause of a leftward development, are all of a similar nature: in all its three editions this theory proves that those elements which are grouped around the majority in the leadership of the Czecho-Slovakian Party, have separated themselves from the Party and from the Comintern's policy by a false idea of capitalist stabilisation, from which all further mistakes

and opportunist policy follow logically.

This false idea of stabilisation becomes more peculiar because of a completely false conception of the character of Czecho-Slovakian capitalism. On this subject the Ostrau resolution declares:

"We must never overlook the fact Czecho-Slovakia is economically becoming more and more a colony of West European imperialism."

At a time when Czecho-Slovakian imperialism is growing stronger in every respect, when all the elements of imperialism are developing, the theory of the colonisation of Czecho-Slovakia is put forward in addition to the incorrect idea of stabilisation. And the reason given is as thoughtful as the theory itself.

"The capitalist economy of Czecho-Slovakia is bound by innumerable threads to foreign trusts and companies, to England, France, and recently also to Germany. The influence of foreign capital in Czecho-Slovakian economy is increasing from year to year."

In this, the dependence of the lesser imperialist robbers on the greater is confused with the relation of a capitalist state to a colonial country. Such confusion on the most important theoretical questions cannot give rise to a clear policy, but only to an opportunist platform against the policy of the Comintern!

\* \* \* \*

So as not to overburden this description of the Party discussion, we shall forbear to deal with a number of important questions (including the Trade Union question), in which this incorrect opportunist policy finds concrete expression; and shall turn our attention to the development of the struggle within the Party.

In the discussion on the Open Letter, which referred to the right danger as the chief danger in the C.P. of Czecho-Slovakia, the resolution of the C.C., passed by a small majority, stated the question of the location of the right danger as follows:

"The Central Committee declares that the right danger in the Party is not limited to the so-called historical right, but is to be found among leading comrades who, because of their ideology, are a source of serious right danger."

This paragraph, which located more or less explicitly the right danger in the Party, was rejected as "fractional!" by the adherents of

the old majority, while the same comrades declared their agreement with the rest of the Open Letter and of the Resolution of the C.C.

This way of putting the question on the part of the old opportunist Party majority was intended to convey to the Party members that the only subject of discussion was "Who are the dangerous right members in the Party?" and in objective political matters there was not the slightest difference between the ideas of the old Party majority and the left opposition. The opposition was represented by being fractional because it called the Jilek group the source of right wing danger while in actual fact there were also many right elements in the opposition, while the Jilek group was developing its opportunist platform, whose contents we have already summed up. It accused the opposition of uniting with the right elements in order to fight the old Party majority. For example, the Iglau District Committee passed a resolution containing the following:

"We repudiate the struggle of these few elements who, instead of concentrating all forces upon overcoming the Party crisis, increase it, and whose opportunist platform does not serve to settle the crisis, but is a part of struggle for power in the Party. There is a certain formal similarity between the present opposition in the C.P. of Czecho-Slovakia, and the Trotskyist opposition in the C.P.S.U. There, too, those elements struggling for power rallied round an opposition platform—opportunist and ultra-left. The opposition in the Party here extends from the so-called historical right to its ultra-left followers."

The opposition which opposes the opportunist platform of the old Party majority, is thus accused of association with right elements, or of Trotskyism, according to the exigency of the moment.

The same argument is put forward, though more primitively, in a resolution of the Ostrau District Committee, in which it is admitted that there are opportunist persons within the Party majority, but which adds that there are also right wingers in the ranks of the opposition. Comrade Jilek, in his speech against Comrade Reimann at the Reichenburg District Conference, expressed himself somewhat similarly.

"If we are to accept what Comrade Reimann has accepted, that there are two parts in the Party, the opposition and the Jilek group, then I maintain that there are right wing, opportunist, liquidatory elements on both sides.

"We are not Bolshevik enough, but nobody can assert that the Bolshevik elements are to be found only on the side of the opposition, that there are none among the majority of the Party leadership."

This conception of the question must be thoroughly understood. What does the Jilek group mean by right elements? The Jilek group simply identifies the right danger with that right wing group which was formed during the Party crisis of 1924-25, and calls all those comrades who at that time took up a right standpoint in the Party crisis, exponents of the right wing danger. The present opposition does not deny that this group, which, in the history of the Party, was a right wing group, is still the source of right wing danger (although it is also true that the right group as it is to-day is not identical in personnel with the right group which showed hostility to the policy of the Comintern after the Fifth World Congress). But the question is not whether this group, or its individual exponents, is still the source of right wing danger to the Party (a question which the opposition would answer in the affirmative); the principal question, on which the opinions of the opposition and the Jilek group are divided is this, that the right danger to-day is no longer limited to the old right group, but that recently the basis of the right danger in the Party has extended greatly; this means that whoever identifies this right danger with the former right group in the Party, and so ignores all other right wing tendencies, is seriously under-estimating the extent of the right wing danger. The opposition, on the other hand, believes that besides the old "historical" right, which has long ceased to be historic, there has grown up a second right group, represented by the majority in the Party leadership.

Secondly, the Jilek group's method of stating the question is a purely personal one. It adduces as proof of the correctness of its ideas the fact that "there are right elements on both sides." This is a completely false and

purely personal statement of the question. The subject of Party discussion is not whether Peter Zapfel from Dünschendorf, who is now on the side of the opposition, was or is, personally, an opportunist, or whether Comrade Shvabinsky, an adherent of the opposition, made an opportunist speech at a public meeting in Tovel—it is, quite obviously, to define the political standpoint of the two groups in the Party discussion. Jilek's group is not opportunist because it contains some opportunist elements, but because the standpoint it has developed throughout the Party discussion is an opportunist one. Similarly, the opposition cannot be accused of being a right danger in the Party because certain elements in it once represented the opportunist standpoint within the Party, or because, by agreeing with the political standpoint of the opposition, some in it are only seeking an opportunity to continue their opportunist policy. The opposition can be accused of being a right wing danger in the Party only if it can be proved that the political platform of the opposition contradicts the policy of the Comintern and is of an opportunist character. Such proof has certainly not yet been adduced in the course of the Party discussion. The nature of the arguments brought forward by the Jilek group being personal instead of political, has kept the basis and the political content of the Party discussion within very narrow limits; in certain districts the old Party majority have even succeeded in giving the impression that the whole struggle within the Party is concerned merely with whether this or that individual of group can, because of their individual opinions, be called "right" or not. In this way the Jilek group is trying to degrade the political struggle in the Party into a struggle on personal questions. This has resulted in insufficient emphasis being laid on political questions in the Party discussions.

\* \* \* \* \*

Although the opposition is to-day mainly concerned with exposing to the Party the opportunist character of the Jilek group's political platform, it is well aware that the struggle against the opportunist tendency does not exhaust the struggle against opportunism in the Party generally. That there are other factors strengthening opportunist tendencies in the Party is proved, on the one hand, by

the former Trotskyist group in the Party, led by Comrade Neurath in the German speaking areas, again making its appearance, and, on the other, by the developments within the Red Trade Unions, where the elements in the old "historical" right are concentrated.

The Trade Union question, particularly, will in the near future be the occasion for extremely serious discussion within the Party. On the one hand the old leadership in the Trade Unions, which is strongest in the chemical section of the International Workers' Union, is trying to disintegrate the Red Trade Unions into their original component parts and to make the chemical section independent of the whole federation. On the other hand it is clear that the new collective leadership, led by Comrade Zapotocky, was not able to carry out the decisions of the Fourth R. I. L. U. Congress in a correct way. The latest industrial struggles conducted by the Red Trade Unions in Czecho-Slovakia indicate that the Red Trade Unions have not yet adopted the policy of the Fourth World Congress of the R.I.L.U. in industrial struggles, that the decisions of the Fourth R.I.L.U. Congress, which are directed chiefly towards intensifying the struggle against social-democracy, were ignored by the Red Unions, while, on the other hand, and particularly in the Kladno Miners' strike, the tendency to carry on industrial struggles on the basis of "unity from above" with the reformist Trade Unions was most apparent. The reorganisation of the International Workers' Union, which should be carried out along the lines of creating industrial unions, was not combined with the political tasks of the Red Trade Unions, and consequently the members were of the opinion that the matter was only one of an organisational change in the structure of the Red Unions, and not, in addition, of a new direction in Trade Union policy. In this respect, too, the opportunist inadequacy of the Jilek group is particularly obvious. In the Ostrau resolution from which we have already quoted, the mistakes and tasks of the Trade Unions are described as follows: firstly, that there is insufficient fraction work; secondly, that the decisions of the R.I.L.U. Congress should not remain merely verbal decisions; and, thirdly, that Trade Union work still bears the character of

departmental work, and not that of the work of the whole Party. While, therefore, it is clear that the old opportunist system in the Trade Unions has not been destroyed by the new collective leadership, the Jilek group, like the Union leadership, is trying to reduce the Trade Union question to one of organisation only. We see that the question of a revolutionary Trade Union policy is dealt with in a purely opportunist manner both by the Jilek group and by the leaders of the I.W.U., so that the political aspect of the Trade Union problem has scarcely been touched upon in the Party discussion. It is therefore of vital importance to the Party for the Trade Union question to be dealt with politically, and one of the chief tasks of the opposition consists in bringing forward, in the clearest and fullest manner, the political problems of the Red Trade Union movement into the Party discussion. There is no doubt that this would shed light upon the right danger in the Czecho-Slovakian C.P. to a much greater extent than has so far been possible with the inadequate development of the Party discussion in its political aspects.

The second question to be discussed in the analysis of opportunist tendencies within the Czech Party is that of the present position of the former Trotskyist opposition, in so far as its members are still within the Party. Comrade Neurath, the leader of that group declared at Reichenburg District Conference, his agreement with the present opposition. In doing so he repeated his former declaration that he recognised the incorrectness of the ideas of the Trotskyist opposition. Comrade Neurath, however, omitted to give his attitude towards fractional work carried on by the Trotskyist elements, and by himself, in Czecho-Slovakia. His declaration was exclusively one of dissociation from the international Trotskyist opposition, but not one of dissociation from the Trotskyist fraction work carried on in Czecho-Slovakia by Comrade Neurath himself. That this was no accidental sin of omission was shown in articles contributed to the discussion by various other comrades, who are in sympathy with the ideas of Comrade Neurath. Comrade Grünwald, in his article, stated that Trotskyism in the Communist Party of Czecho-Slovakia was a "necessary reagent" to the opportunist mis-

takes of the Party leadership, while Comrade Wettengel even went so far as to say that the struggle against Trotskyism by the opportunist Party leadership of Jilek-Stern had only been carried on to mask the opportunist mistakes of that leadership. There never was a Trotskyist danger, but only the question of confusion on the part of some Party officials in the Asch district, due principally to the opportunist mistakes of the Party leaders. It is easy to see through the manoeuvre of the former Trotskyist opposition members. They are now trying to give the impression that they were a left opposition to the opportunism of the Czech Party leadership, and roundly deny that such a thing as a Trotskyist opposition ever existed in the Communist Party of Czecho-Slovakia. This is nothing but an attempt to prove that their Trotskyist criticism was correct. From this it is easy to judge the honesty of their dissociation from their Trotskyist past and their agreement with the standpoint of the opposition.

The Trotskyist group, while still maintaining their old incorrect political ideas, now represent also openly opportunist tendencies. Comrade Neurath, in the report drawn up by him for the local elections of December 2nd, shows a thoroughly opportunist attitude towards the social-democrats. A few quotations from this report will serve to illustrate Comrade Neurath's present attitude. The section dealing with the Social-democrats opens as follows:

"In the following pages we shall first of all show that the Social-democratic parties have not in the least changed their basic attitude since 1914; that in all questions of the revolutionary class struggle they were and are allies of the bourgeoisie, that, at first directly, and now indirectly, they were on the side of the bourgeoisie when the latter, in defending their economic or political interests, whether in the sphere of legislation or public administration, took any measures against the working class."

Comrade Neurath therefore is of the opinion that Social-democracy has not changed since 1914. He completely ignores the tremendous change in the role of Social-democracy which has come about in the present period of the partial stabilisation of capitalism. For him Social-democracy in 1914 is identical with Social-democracy in 1928; indeed, he even

maintains that formerly Social-democracy supported the bourgeoisie directly, whereas it does so now only indirectly; so that this analysis of Social-democracy finally resolves itself into the assertion that Social-democracy in recent years has not strengthened, but weakened its counter-revolutionary tendency.

A second and equally significant quotation:

" . . . If the Social-democratic leaders still try to present themselves as non-participants in the reactionaries' struggle against the C.P. of Czecho-Slovakia, they will exert themselves in vain to try and hide or excuse the fact that in proletarian industrial struggles they are openly on the side of the exploiters against the Communist movement."

In the further development of this false idea we are told that, politically, Social-democracy plays or tries to play a "neutral" role, and that it only supports the exploiters openly in the economic sphere. This description utterly contradicts the facts, which are that politically too, there exists in the Czecho-Slovakian Republic a block between the bourgeoisie and the Social-democrats. This was made clear on various occasions, including the pact of the Social-democratic leaders with the bourgeoisie on the question of social insurance, and the attitude of the Social-democrats on October 28th, when Communist speakers at various mass demonstrations were attacked and prevented from speaking by the Social-democratic Guards of Order. In general, the whole tendency of this report attempts to show that the Social-democrats are carrying on a real struggle as a parliamentary opposition, and that they are only mistaken in not supporting their parliamentary opposition by mass struggles outside Parliament. The actively counter-revolutionary role of Social-democracy at the present time, its direct participation in the bourgeoisie's machinery of power, its change to a policy of industrial peace which has been carried out in Czecho-Slovakia, is completely ignored. This shows that the attitude of Comrade Neurath, as representative of the former Trotskyist opposition, towards the question of Social-democracy is throughout imbued with the spirit of opportunism, and that the rest of the Trotskyist opposition remaining within the Party—an opposition which, following the international collapse of Trotskyism, has also collapsed in Czecho-

# **THE VI WORLD CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL**

*The following books dealing  
with the Sixth World Congress*

**THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT  
IN THE COLONIES . . . . Price 9d.**

**COMMUNISM AND THE  
INTERNATIONAL SITUATION „ 6d.**

*may be obtained from the*

**WORKERS' BOOKSHOP LTD.  
16 KING STREET, W.C.2**

*or*

**WORKERS LIBRARY PUBLISHERS  
35 EAST 125TH STREET, NEW YORK**

Slovakia—is now becoming an extreme right group within the Communist Party of Czecho-Slovakia.

\* \* \* \*

So much for the crisis within the Party as it has so far developed. The description indicates the extraordinary growth of the right danger in the Party; it shows that there are now a large number of right groups, at the moment still separate, but ideologically united, in opposition to the policy of the Sixth World Congress, and that consequently the C.P. of Czecho-Slovakia is exposed to sharp attack from right wing elements. This state of affairs imposes great tasks on the opposition, which alone represents the policy of the Comintern and the Sixth World Congress. Up to the present the strength of the Party membership has not been sufficiently well mobilised for the struggle against the right danger. At the moment discussion still bears the character of discussion among Party leaders. The members have been roused to take part in only a section of the districts. It is, therefore, abso-

lutely necessary to extend the discussion and to mobilise the membership, in spite of all attempts at sabotage, for the struggle against the right danger. It is also true that the discussion is still too narrow in its content, that the struggle of the opposition is at the moment limited to exposing the opportunist platform of the old Party majority only. This is certainly one of the main points of discussion, but it is now necessary to go a step further and to expose the other opportunist tendencies, particularly those in the Red Trade Unions and in the opportunist attitude of the former Trotskyist opposition. This will give the necessary breadth to Party discussion, and help to bring clarity to the basic problems of Party policy. The course of the discussion up to the present has shown where the opportunist dangers in the Czech Party lie, and what is the nature of the political platform put forward by the opportunists against the policy of the Sixth World Congress. The next step must be to mobilise the whole Party against the attacks of opportunism and to defeat it along the whole line.

# Martin Lawrence Limited

## announce

for publication the following books:

\*ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION, Vol. II.  
Demy 4to., 10s. Postage 9d.

\*CEMENT. A Novel by F. GLADKOV. Demy 8vo., Library edition 7s. 6d.,  
postage 6d. Popular edition, paper boards, 3s. 6d., postage 6d.

This is the famous Russian novel dealing with life in Russia in the period of  
transition to the New Economic Policy.

\*LENIN'S COLLECTED WORKS, Vol. XX., in two parts. The Russian  
Revolution of 1917. Price later.

\*SELECTIONS FROM LENIN, Vol. I. Price about 2s. 6d., paper covers.  
This is the first of a series of four volumes, containing the most important of  
Lenin's writings.

\*RUSSIAN POETRY. A selection of lyrics. Cloth 6s.  
This includes the full text of Blok's world famous poem, "The Twelve."

Martin Lawrence Limited  
26 Bedford Row, W.C. 1

---

PRINTED BY DORRIT PRESS (T.U.),  
68-70, LANT STREET, S.E.1, ENGLAND.

---