

# NOTES OF THE MONTH

*Problems of the Workers' Struggle—Discussions on Revolutionary Policy—Discussions and Realities—New Capitalist Ideology—Capitalist Practice—Socialism and the Immediate Struggle—Technical Lessons of the Crisis—Technique and Society—Political Key Problem—Capitalist Adaptation to Crisis—Social Democratic Adaptation to Crisis—"End Wrangling Over Pence"—Left Social Democracy Echoes Social Democracy—Opposition to Immediate Struggle—Reformist Assumptions Remain—Revolutionary Communism and Immediate Struggle — The Need To-day*

**A**T the present stage the problems of the workers' struggle in relation to the capitalist crisis come urgently to the front. The attacks of the capitalists on all sides are rising; the workers' resistance is rising. The intensified activity of capitalist suppression against the working class is shown, not only in the significant example of the imprisonment of Tom Mann, the outstanding leader from the beginning of the modern British working-class movement (now imprisoned by his former election agent, MacDonald), but in the wholesale unexampled sentences of the National Government in Britain (421 political sentences of workers, totalling 932 months, during 1932), and in the savage Meerut sentences in India. In the same way, the breakdown of any agreed award of the Railway National Wages Board, which up to and including 1931 had hitherto operated with success as the mechanism of social peace throughout the period of post-war stabilisation, reveals the breakdown of stabilisation before the rising struggle; the unity and determination of the workers smashed the smooth functioning of the judicial mechanism of spoliation; the conflict is forced into the open. The ferment in the working class is reflected in the new activities and manœuvres of the Labour Party and trade union leaders, who now press forward in opposition rôles, endeavour

to take up popular issues (the Tom Mann agitation, unemployment demonstrations), denounce capitalism and reforms, and call loudly for Socialism as the only policy. It is reflected no less in the new rôle of the Independent Labour Party, which breaks with the Labour Party, and announces its conversion to revolutionary policy, and similarly, like the Labour Party, denounces its reformist past and calls for a straight fight for Socialism. It is still further reflected in the process of differentiation developing within the membership of the Independent Labour Party, as of the Labour Party and trade unions, in the discussions and controversies on "revolutionary policy," in the revival of interest in Marxism, and in the closer approach of the leftward workers towards the Communist Party.

**P**ARALLEL to the deepening struggle develops a deepening discussion within the ranks of the workers. Under the spur of the crisis and of the needs of the struggle, and of the failure of the old policies, the workers are seeking their way forward. This process is reflected, though only incompletely reflected, and through a distorting mirror, in the discussions of the Independent Labour Party left membership, which have been appearing in the *LABOUR MONTHLY* and elsewhere. To the special issues of these discussions and of the Independent Labour Party we shall return in the near future. But the central issue underlying all these discussions is the question of the way forward of the workers' struggle in the conditions of the capitalist crisis. To this question revolutionary policy must provide its answer, not only in terms of principle, of the abstract path to revolution, but in terms of the present concrete situation. It is abundantly clear that the most important immediate issue raised in all these discussions of left workers, of the Independent Labour Party and of the Communist Party, the most pressing issue of practical revolutionary policy in Britain to-day, is just this question of the way forward in relation to the crisis and to our revolutionary aims, *the question of the relation of the immediate daily struggle, of the fight for bread, to the revolutionary line, to the way out of the crisis, to the fight for Socialism.*

The understanding of this is at the heart of revolutionary policy to-day, and underlies many of the differences that are still uncleared.

**I**T is impossible to survey the present situation of capitalism and the working class to-day in the fourth year of the crisis without becoming conscious of a special feature of growing contradiction which is of vital significance for the future. This is the contradiction between the ideology of all present bourgeois and social democratic discussion of the crisis on the one hand, and the realities of capitalist policy and of the class struggle on the other. In the ever-growing volume of discussion on the crisis, which has accompanied its extending course, a change in tendency has become of late increasingly noticeable. Capitalist discussion and propaganda on the crisis is making, even though tentatively, a certain change of front. The old attempts to explain the crisis in superficial terms of market fluctuations, post-war effects, debts, finance, currency, &c., begin to pass into the background under the accumulating pressure of inescapable facts. In their place the recognition is becoming universal, even in the most conservative quarters, of the existence of deeper permanent causes of the crisis, of technological causes of the crisis, which cannot be met by patching, and which raise in question the existing social-economic structure. On every side it is pointed out that the problem is a problem of plenty, of super-abundance, not merely in the sense of unused stocks, but in the sense of super-abundant forces of production, which make impossible the same volume of employment, and break against the existing social-economic forms. The questions of the machine, science and invention come to the front, as if they were "new" problems.

**T**HIS kind of analysis begins to appear widely, not merely in the socialistic press, but in the standard and semi-official capitalist press (whence it is quoted with loud applause and admiration by Social-Democracy). The organ of the City, the *Times*, in the intervals of preaching on

the necessity of economy, produces long articles on the "Economics of Glut" and the "Paradox of Plenty." The bourgeois liberal economists paint pictures of an era of unlimited abundance and leisure in the near future. The popular capitalist press in Britain and America gives streaming publicity to the distorted semi-Marxist borrowings of "technocracy." The Forty-hour Week Conference is staged at Geneva, on the initiative of the Fascist Government, for the assembled Powers—with the Forty-eight-Hour Convention unratified—to discuss solemnly the project of a universal shorter working week (effect on wages unstated) as a solution of the crisis. Social-Democracy applauds these signs of "new awakening" of capitalism (Upton Sinclair's article on technocracy, "The Machine Menace: Civilisation Awakes To It," reprinted in the *New Leader*; *Forward's* front-page and black-type reprinting of a *Times'* editorial on the same subject; Herbert Morrison's "I Welcome It" on technocracy in the *New Clarion*).

**T**HAT is one side of the picture. But it is only one side of the picture: the expression of capitalism—on paper. Turn to the other side of the picture, to the practical policy of capitalism and the realities of the class struggle, and we are faced with a very different situation. Here, then, is no more question of Plenty, and of the Economics of Plenty. On the contrary, the whole drive is for Economy. All the forces of the government and of capitalism are directed to bringing down the wages of the workers, to bringing down unemployment relief and all standards, to cutting here and cutting there, to extracting the maximum output from the diminishing numbers of workers employed for the minimum of subsistence. Thirteen million pounds further reductions of wages are officially recorded for the year 1932. 1933 opens with the railway companies' insistence that it is impossible to pay a wage of two pounds a week, and with the preparations of the Rail Pool for driving tens of thousands of railworkers into the unemployed. It opens with the imposition of the More Looms Agreement in Lancashire, resulting in wholesale

dismissals. On every side the workers are faced with constantly renewed attacks. This is the reality of the struggle. All the bourgeois economists' and social democratic theorists' talk of new technique and abundance has no meaning here.

**T**HERE is here a glaring and obvious contradiction which hits every one in the face. The understanding of this contradiction is at the root of revolutionary understanding of the crisis. We have here something deeper than a simple contradiction between capitalist propaganda and practice, like the contradiction between the propaganda of peace and the active preparation of armaments and war. There is a real contradiction between the technical economic realities of the situation, which are revolutionary in their significance, and the economic necessities of capitalism, which are counter-revolutionary and strangling production and progress. The living expression of this contradiction in action is the class struggle. The working class, in fighting the capitalist attacks, is already expressing, in the first elementary form, the revolutionary answer to the crisis, and advancing to the revolutionary conquest of the crisis. To understand the connection between the basic revolutionary tasks of the crisis and the immediate class struggle, to develop consciousness in the struggle, to develop political content, to carry it forward, is the heart of revolutionary understanding and policy. The whole rôle of Social-Democracy is to conceal and blur this connection, to keep the preaching of Socialism in the abstract, to separate the basic problems of the crisis and of social reconstruction from the realities of the class struggle, and thus to rob Socialism of all meaning and in practice hand the workers over to capitalism. Social-Democracy applauds the signs of "new awakening" of capitalism and approach of a new era of abundance, but gloses over the significance of the actual policy of wage-reductions and starvation pursued by capitalism as merely the "folly" and "short-sightedness" of individual employers and politicians, who fail to understand their true interests and the larger perspectives of the new era. Left Social-Democracy is more

critical of the "new awakening" of capitalism; but Left Social-Democracy, also, concentrates on the abstract critique of the crisis and presentation of Socialism as the alternative while maintaining a negative, doubtful and even contemptuous attitude to the immediate class struggle as incapable of yielding results in view of the facts of the crisis. From the heights of its newly-won "revolutionary" standpoint Left Reformism looks down upon the preoccupation of Communism with the immediate struggle of the workers, and with naïve effrontery condemns it as "reformist." Thus we have the striking spectacle in which capitalist propaganda, social-democracy and left social-democracy all fix the eyes of the workers on the stars, on the coming new era, while Communism alone appears to fix them on the earth. Does this mean that Communism is limited, non-revolutionary, opportunist, reformist? On the contrary, we shall have occasion to see that it means that Communism is pursuing the only serious and consistent revolutionary policy in the present conditions of the crisis.

**T**HE direct technical lessons of the crisis, the unconcealed bankruptcy of the existing organisation of production in face of the plain facts of the present world situation, the necessity of a new system of organisation if the resources of modern technique are to be utilised—all this is glaringly obvious to every thinking observer to-day, including to the majority of the bourgeoisie. As Engels wrote already half-a-century ago in his *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific* :

Their political and intellectual bankruptcy is scarcely any longer a secret to the bourgeoisie themselves.

And further :

The bourgeoisie are convicted of incapacity further to manage their own social productive forces.

If this could be said already half-a-century ago, how much more so to-day? The simple observation of the facts, and the helplessness of the modern bourgeois outlook in facing them, is typically expressed by Professor Einstein :

At a time when we are rich in consumable goods and means of production as no previous generation before us, a great part of humanity suffers severe want. Production and consumption falters

to an increasing degree, and confidence in public institutions has sunk as never before. It is as if the circulatory system of the whole economic organism were throughout fatally ill. Some pessimists ask: "Why should not our civilisation collapse through inner decay in a manner similar to that of the Roman Empire?"

This is the expression of the leading scientist of the bourgeois world. He sees the plain facts, as also any man in the street can see them. But they remain a mystery, an enigma, some fatal inner decay as of the Roman Empire. They remain a mystery, because he sees only the superficial facts of production and consumption, and not the living class realities which these express. The blockage appears as a mystery of "the circulatory system," and not as a plain blockage of class monopoly and mass impoverishment.

**S**TEP by step, after the event, as always, bourgeois economics is compelled to correct itself, to adapt itself, to pick up isolated fragments from Marxism, not through scientific understanding, but through the ugly impact of facts, and therefore inevitably getting these fragments incorrectly and in wrong perspective. Only in the fourth year of the crisis the emphasis begins to turn from the surface phenomena of markets, price-levels, currency, credit, &c., to deeper questions of technique and society, of the development of the forces of production and their relation to social organisation—the most elementary questions familiar to Marxism, but scarcely yet studied, save in the most unscientific descriptive fashion, in the empirical day-to-day calculations of bourgeois economics. Questions of the machine, of science and invention, and their effects on employment and on social-economic forms (made fully clear in the most elementary form for every worker by Marx three-quarters of a century ago), now begin to be solemnly discussed as "new" problems in capitalist quarters—"new" only in the sense that the falsity of all the previous facile bourgeois theories about "alternative occupations," &c., has now been demonstrated beyond denial by experience, and Marxism is forced to the front as the only scientific theory by facts.

**B**UT all this beginning of an approach to the technical problems of the present era, which has now become fashionable in capitalist quarters (after the awakening from the debauch of rationalisation and Fordism), is still fully empty and useless, in so far as it does not face the class realities that are the living forms through which the technical contradictions express themselves. Certainly, modern large-scale production is ever more clearly at war with existing social-economic forms, leading to ever greater crisis and deadlock. But "the contradiction between socialised production and capitalistic appropriation manifests itself as the antagonism of proletariat and bourgeoisie." Here is the crux. The problem is not a problem of technique. The problem is a problem of creating the conditions which will make possible the freeing of technique for its full use. But this means ending the class ownership of the means of production, which can only be accomplished by the conquest of power by the working class. *The problem of the present crisis is, in short, not technical, but political.* All the technicians in the world can only perform an auxiliary rôle towards this cardinal task. And for this reason all the capitalist and social democratic most "daring" schemes of reorganisation are empty nonsense, since they do not face the tasks of the working class revolution. On the basis of capitalist property, the only practical policy can and must be the actual policy of renewed attacks upon the workers, driving down standards, and increasing contradictions. But this empty character applies in fact also to the Left Social-Democratic schemes, which "recognise" the necessity of revolution "in principle," but ignore and deny the tasks of the present class struggle, out of which alone the working class advance to revolution can develop.

**C**APITALISM meets and accepts the new facts laid bare by the crisis, the world demonstration of technical advance under capitalism leading to wholesale unemployment and poverty, which in reality shatter all the previous theories and professions of capitalism—capitalism, nevertheless, accepts and adapts all these to serve its own

purposes, and prepares a new ideological front. Instead of drawing the conclusion that, if the facts are so, then capitalism stands condemned and must be got rid of, it draws the conclusion that, if the facts are so, then unemployment is inevitable and must be henceforth expected and accepted on a large-scale as chronic ("technological unemployment" is the new term now in fashion, or "scrap," as the Prime Minister and former leader of the Labour Party eloquently calls those of his fellow-citizens from whom capitalism is unable to make further profit). Second, it draws the conclusion that, if the facts are so, then capitalism has demonstrated its amazing power to solve the problem of production, and there only remains a technical problem of maladjustment and distribution to be solved by suitable machinery, encouragement of spending, sales-mechanism, facilitation of exchange and trade, creation of confidence, &c., for a new era of plenty to begin. Third, it draws the conclusion that, if the facts are so, then technical advance stands thereby condemned as having gone "too fast," and the only problem is to retard it by suitable restrictive measures in the common interest. A flood of propaganda begins to be let loose on the evils of machinery and large-scale production, and on the advantages of a return to small-scale. There could be no clearer expression of decay, and of the complete reversal of the whole rôle of capitalism. All these paths and by-paths of current capitalist ideology serve the same purpose of endeavouring to draw off attention from the plain lesson to which the crisis points.

**H**OW, then, does Social-Democracy meet the crisis, since the crisis has delivered a no less smashing blow to the whole theory of reformism and of peaceful progress that it preached? Once again there is a process of adaptation, which seeks to utilise the very facts of exposure in order to prepare a new ideological front. Capitalism in crisis, faced with diminishing profits and budget deficits, has no longer the same facility to grant crumbs of reforms from its surplus to keep the workers quiet; on the contrary, it seeks to reverse the engines, to place the burdens of the crisis

on the workers, to withdraw reforms already granted, cut down benefits, and reduce social services. Social-Democracy, which was the licensed purveyor of the crumbs of reforms to the workers, had been able on this basis to present itself as the "practical" leadership of the working class, in opposition to the revolutionary phrasemongers. To-day it has to assist the reversal of this process. Such a reversal might be thought to mean the death-blow of its authority. Not yet so fast, although the undermining process is rapidly at work (the loud complaints of the Labour Party leaders over Birkenhead and Belfast that concessions to-day are only won by the Communists). On the contrary, with a sudden change of front, the Labour Party leadership now proclaims with one voice the "End of Reformism," "Farewell to Gradualism"; henceforth the policy of the Labour Party shall be "Socialism" and nothing else. At the same time, the actual programme abandons even the previous line of nationalisation, and develops the form of the "Public Corporation," *i.e.*, the present capitalist lines of rationalisation. Thus, while the actual policy moves further and further away from the remnants of socialism and even of the old reforms towards the current needs of capitalist repression against the workers, the propaganda becomes more and more noisy in its proclamations of "Socialism" and even "Marxism" (Greenwood, Cripps) and "Revolution" (Lansbury).

**I**N this way Social-Democracy adapts itself to the line of Capitalism in the crisis, and performs its double service, at once drawing the workers away from the actual struggle as now too petty to be worthy of their attention, and at the same time meeting their rising discontent with revolutionary-sounding phrases and every kind of left manœuvre. Typical is the article of the General Council leader, Arthur Pugh, Secretary of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation, formerly the incarnation of "practical" penny-wise trade union leadership, who now comes out with a stirring appeal to iron and steel workers to think less of the pennies and more of "vision" and "the Brotherhood of Man and the Fatherhood of God."

He writes in the *New Clarion* (January 21, 1933) under the striking title :

WE MUST END THE WAGE-SLAVE MENTALITY.

WHILE WE ARE WRANGLING ABOUT PENNIES. THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION IS TAKING PLACE OVER OUR HEADS.

He gives to trade unionists the theoretically admirable advice :

Our attitude towards trade unionism and its purpose and possibilities, and our view of life in relation to the industrial system, must cease to be that of wage-slave mentality, which can conceive no other purpose in trade union organisation than to get a little more wages or to avoid losing a little.

No more "wrangling about pennies." Beware of too much pre-occupation with sordid aims "to get a little more wages or to avoid losing a little." That is the warning that goes out from the trade union leadership to-day in face of the capitalist offensive. All in the name of the fight against "wage-slavery"! Lest it should be thought that he is inciting the iron and steel workers to the immediate overthrow of capitalism, he hastens to explain :

It will not be accomplished by phrases and slogans about the capitalist system, as though all that will happen is that we shall wake up some fine morning and find the social millenium arrived, without any effort on our part or any attempt to understand the working of the system we condemn or any constructive attempt to effect the necessary changes.

"To understand the working of the system we condemn"; "constructive attempt." It is sufficiently clear to anyone familiar with the type of language used that what is here meant beneath the polished phrases is capitalist reorganisation. Thus in the name of the fight against wage-slavery, the actual lead is to capitalist reorganisation and against the immediate class struggle.

**A**ND now turn to Left Social-Democracy, to the line of the I.L.P. How does Left Social-Democracy meet the conditions created by the crisis? The immediate fact that strikes the eye is *the extremely close resemblance in practical outcome, despite all the noisy proclamations of difference, of the new line of Left Social-Democracy to*

*the new general line of Social-Democracy, i.e., of the Labour Party.* Once again we have the vigorous denunciation of Reformism, of Gradualism, of the whole past record and policy. Once again we have the calls, in still more emphatic form, for Socialism, for Nothing but Socialism, for Revolution. And once again we have, under cover of these high aims, the decrying of the immediate class struggle, of the wage struggle, of the fight for pence, as "mere reformism." It is true that the same basic line is dressed out in much more picturesque and flowery language, in much more "revolutionary" and even would-be "Marxist" language. But it remains the same basic line. It is true that the I.L.P. endeavours to make a theoretical differentiation of itself from the Labour Party with an abstract acceptance of revolution and Marxism. But this is common to all Left Social-Democracy; Austro-Marxism does it much better, with a far more skilful revolutionary-Marxist-sounding programme than the still very limited parliamentary-democratic programme of the I.L.P. It is true, finally, that there are in the membership of the I.L.P. many serious militant workers who are fighting for a real change of policy, who are drawing close to Communism, who are fighting in full unity with the Communists in the daily struggle, and who have nothing in common with this line and leadership. But we are concerned here with the official line and leadership of the I.L.P. as a party, as expressed in its organ, in its programmatic utterances, and in the declarations of its leaders. That line remains still the typical line of Left Social-Democracy, performing the same objective rôle as previously under different conditions. Just as the rôle of Social-Democracy is to echo the line of capitalism and translate it into language plausible to the workers, so the rôle of Left Social-Democracy is to echo the line of Social-Democracy and translate it into language plausible to the left workers, to the workers discontented with official Social-Democracy. This task the I.L.P. leadership is performing under conditions of extreme radicalisation of the left workers and of their approach to Communism.

**W**HAT is important is just the tendency to opposition to the immediate class struggle (denial of its possibilities or usefulness or revolutionary significance) in the name of the higher revolutionary aims. This is the hallmark of the passive abstract revolutionism of Left Social-Democracy, which places it in practice in the same camp with Social-Democracy and with capitalism. Of course, the attempt is made to base this opposition on the most "objective" and even "Marxist" grounds. Complaint is made by the I.L.P. leaders of the "apathy" and "depression" of the workers. At another time, it is pointed out, on the eve of the weavers' strike, that "we fear a reduction of wages is now inevitable." (*New Leader*, July 1, 1932.) At another time, it is pointed out, in the best capitalist propagandist manner, that the poor capitalist simply has not the means to pay any more: "to-day he has no superfluity; therefore there is an end of concessions" (*New Leader*, December 16, 1932). (The railway companies, who have had such difficulty to prove that with a miserable twenty-six millions pounds of profits last year, they are absolutely compelled to cut wages, should really employ some I.L.P. propagandists; only the I.L.P. has adequately appreciated what a "cast-iron" case they have; the railwaymen have been far less appreciative). Or again, it is pointed out with a great display of revolutionary virtue that "to concede the possibility of winning concessions under capitalism is virtually to abandon Socialism" (in which case Marx, who dealt very clearly with the rôle of the daily struggle, most signally "abandoned Socialism")—as if the winning of a success in a partial struggle actually weakened, instead of strengthening, the consciousness, organisation and aggressiveness of the working class, and the advance to revolution.

**J**UST in this line of argument the basic Reformism of the I.L.P., persisting beneath the outer dress of "Crisis-Revolution," is most revealingly laid bare. It is declared (*New Leader*, December 16, 1932):

If we are still in the era in which we can expect a steady improvement of the workers' conditions by forcing social reforms out of

super-profits, *then the whole case for gradualism is re-established.* Even if it is a slow business, it is obvious that the workers would always and rightly choose a long, steady, upward climb rather than the horrors and risks of revolution. You cannot lead an honest fight for better conditions under Capitalism unless you believe in gradualism and repudiate the Socialist contention that that avenue is now blocked. (Italics added.)

What a revelation of the "revolutionary Marxism" of the I.L.P.! Reformism, according to this teaching, was fully correct, so long as it was possible to win "social reforms out of super-profits." If it were only possible to-day to win "social reforms out of super-profits," then "the whole case for gradualism is re-established"; for Reformism would be "rightly" to be chosen, if only social reform were possible to-day, in preference to the "horrors and risks of revolution." Reformism was thus fully correct up to the crisis; it has only *become* incorrect since the crisis; and if Capitalism were again to recover, Reformism would again become correct. Such is the "revolutionary" outlook of the present I.L.P. On the contrary: Reformism was never the correct policy of the working class, never represented the permanent interests of the working class as a whole even in the period of the most flourishing, ascending capitalism, but always represented the sacrifice of the permanent interests of the whole class to the minute, temporary and insecure benefits of a small section. But the *struggle* for immediate demands as a stage in the developing struggle of the working class against capitalism, in the development of consciousness and organisation of the working class, in the advance to revolution, was always correct, also in the period of ascending capitalism, and is more than ever correct at the present point in the period of extreme capitalist crisis, when the smallest partial struggle rapidly raises fundamental class issues (the struggle for a few pence of unemployment relief turns into a direct fight against all the forces of the State, with enormous effects in carrying forward the revolutionising of the consciousness of the workers).

**T**HE Third Congress of the Communist International in 1921, in the Theses on Tactics, explained fully and explicitly the Communist outlook on "Partial Struggles and Partial Demands"; and I.L.P. workers who wish to clear their views on these questions will do well to study these. The relevant section declares :

The development of the Communist parties can only be achieved through a fighting policy. Even the smallest Communist units must not rest content with mere propaganda and agitation. In all proletarian mass organisations they must constitute the vanguard, they must teach the backward vacillating masses how to fight, by formulating practical plans for direct action, and by urging the workers to make a stand for the necessities of life. Only in this manner will Communists be able to reveal to the masses the treacherous character of all non-Communist parties. The Communists must prove that they are able to lead in the practical struggle of the proletariat, and by promoting these conflicts, the Communists will succeed in winning over great masses of the proletariat to the struggle for the dictatorship.

Does this emphasis on "practical plans," "the practical struggle," mean teaching that any lasting improvement of the workers' conditions can be achieved within capitalism? Of course not.

The entire propaganda and agitation, as well as the other work of the Communist Parties, must be based on the conception that no lasting betterment of the position of the proletariat is possible under capitalism; that the overthrow of the bourgeoisie is a prerequisite for the achievement of such betterment.

But this understanding that only the revolution can solve the problems of the workers must not mean the abandonment of the immediate struggle.

This conception, however, must not find expression in the abandonment of all participation in the proletarian struggle for actual and immediate necessities of life, until such a time as the proletariat will be able to attain them through its own dictatorship.

What is important is not what capitalist industry can pay, but what the workers need and are prepared to fight for.

What the Communist Parties have to consider is, not whether capitalist industry is able to continue to exist and compete, but rather, whether the proletariat has reached the limit of its endurance. If

these Communist demands are in accordance with the immediate needs of the great proletarian masses, and if they are convinced that they cannot exist without the realisation of these demands, the struggle for these demands will become an issue in the struggle for power. The alternative offered by the Communist International in place of the minimum programme of the reformists and centrists is : the struggle for the concrete needs of the proletariat, for demands which, in their application, undermine the power of the bourgeoisie, which organise the proletariat, and which form the transition to proletarian dictatorship, even if certain groups of the masses have not yet grasped the meaning of such proletarian dictatorship.

Here is the decisive difference between the revolutionary and the reformist attitude to reforms and immediate demands. For the reformist, the reform is the means to improve the conditions of the workers within capitalism and thereby diminish and reconcile the contradictions of the class struggle. For the revolutionary, the struggle for the immediate demand is the means to deepen and intensify the class struggle, to "undermine the power of the bourgeoisie" and "organise the proletariat." Thus the partial struggle leads to the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

As the struggle for these demands embraces ever-growing masses, and as the needs clash with the needs of capitalist society, the workers will realise that capitalism must die if they are to live. The realisation of this fact is the basis of the will to fight for the dictatorship.

**T**HE understanding of the revolutionary rôle of the present immediate partial struggles is more than ever important at the present stage. The extreme stage of the capitalist crisis, the large political issues confronting us, call urgently for revolutionary struggle, for the struggle for the proletarian dictatorship as the sole way out. But the working class, despite the ever-growing radicalising effects of the crisis, is still heavily under the influence of Social-Democracy, is not yet ready for the decisive struggle. To overthrow the influence of Social-Democracy, to prepare the consciousness and organisation of the workers, is the urgent necessity, for which the time is short. The path forward to achieve this lies through the partial struggles arising directly

out of the present crisis. Through the partial struggles the fighting front of the workers can be developed, the conflict against capitalism deepened and extended, the political consciousness of the issues awakened in wide numbers of workers, and revolutionary mass organisation built up and strengthened. But this requires the revolutionary approach to partial struggles. The partial struggle does not of itself automatically develop the revolutionary consciousness and readiness of the workers. There is a revolutionary and a reformist approach to partial struggles. The task of the revolutionary in the immediate struggle is at the same time to lead the "practical struggle," and to utilise the issues of the struggle in such a way as to deepen and extend its character and to develop political revolutionary consciousness and organisation through it. There was never more need of the correct understanding and realisation of the revolutionary rôle in the present immediate struggles. This is the decisive question at the present point; and this is the path forward to the imminent large issues and to the revolutionary struggle for power.

R. P. D.

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*[Owing to pressure of space we have been compelled to hold over various contributions to the I.L.P. "Revolutionary Policy" Discussion, etc., etc. Left I.L.P.'ers should note that the columns of THE LABOUR MONTHLY are still open to contributions to the I.L.P. discussion.]*