

# The **RED FLAG**

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## TOWARDS NEW REVOLUTIONARY ADVANCE

### What Next for the I.L.P.?

By the time this number of the *Red Flag* appears two international conferences will have been held: that of the Labour and Socialist International and that of the Independent Left Socialist Parties. Only the Communist International holds no world congress: although its own statutes rule one every two years it is now five years since the last. During those five years the international working class has passed through many experiences and in Germany has met with its heaviest post-war defeat. But the Comintern dare not draw the balance of the five years for they have been five years of heavy defeat for the revolutionary movement, years which have shown up devastatingly the hollowness of the present policy of this self-styled leadership of the world revolutionary proletariat. Instead of a congress it engages in drastic repression against those who dare to suggest that the policy which led to the victory of Hitler in Germany was not a "correct" policy. All that is left of the Communist International is a bureaucratic machine, maintained by subsidies, existing without purpose or perspective and actually to-day corrupting the advance guard of the workers' movement. But the road is slowly being cleared for the coming together on a sound Marxist basis of the true communists of every country.

The meeting of the 2nd International is a meeting of frightened petty-bourgeois trying to adjust themselves to the crushing defeat inflicted by Hitler. They cannot offer the proletariat the leadership it needs. But many thousands of workers who have broken with the Social Democracy and who are repelled by the methods of the Stalin clique will look with hope to the conference organised by the "Left" Socialists, just as in this country many see new hope in the changes now taking place within the Independent Labour Party. With the resolutions and composition of the International Conference we intend to deal fully in our next issue. Here we limit ourselves to some remarks concerning the I.L.P. and the tasks of revolutionaries of Great Britain.

#### THE WEAKNESS OF THE I.L.P.

We have said, more than once before, that the key weakness of the I.L.P. is that it is a "Centrist" organisation, politically shapeless and lacking any clear political position on the problems confronting the revolutionary movement. Experience is driving home to members of the I.L.P. the truth of this statement. Standing in the middle they are subject to the pressure, from the right by the Reformist apparatus which has already cost them a considerable number of members, and from the left by the apparatus of the Communist Party with

its daily press, its rigidity of line, its cast iron formulations and its financial superiority. Resistance to this is only possible from those who stand clearly and firmly on the basis of Marxism.

The recent declaration of the N.A.C. of the I.L.P. emphasised that the members must regard the I.L.P. as "THE party." This in itself reveals the effect of the pressure from the Party machine. But what must be understood is that declarations will not make the I.L.P. THE party any more than proclamations have given the Communist Party influence in this country. Neither declarations nor small tactical recipes can act as a substitute for a basic political line. Until this is understood the I.L.P. will remain at the mercy of the stronger political and bureaucratic forces.

Recent declarations of policy strengthen this opinion. A good example is the statement of Fenner Brockway in the *New Leader* of August 18th which is described as "A Policy for British Socialists." Beginning with the usual description of the world crisis, the poverty in the midst of plenty, the effects of labour-saving machinery, the article goes on to point to the class ownership of industry and to the need for the dispossession of the ruling class by the workers. The workers are to win power, but how, which is the main question, does not emerge very clearly. A Socialist majority is spoken of here which, encountering the resistance of the bourgeoisie, is to rely upon the rank-and-file of the forces and upon action by the workers. What is meant by a Socialist majority? A Labour majority? Or an I.L.P. majority?

Later the article says that "we must also (?) anticipate that before a Socialist majority can be obtained in Parliamentary democracy the capitalist parties will destroy Parliamentary democracy by a policy which however constitutional in form will be Fascist in essence." Here the essence of Fascism, which is the destruction of the whole system of bourgeois democracy is confused with the formal constitution of Parliament. The conclusion of the article is that the workers will need an instrument with which to carry through the struggle for power. The task of the I.L.P. is to provide that instrument: just that and no more! And the instrument is to be the workers council.

"To secure united action with a revolutionary Socialist purpose and to develop the united working-class instrument to carry out that purpose"—is this not the authentic voice of Centristism? We do not question the desire of Fenner Brockway and his comrades to achieve a revolutionary policy. But this is burking the central ques-

tion, Soviets arise under certain conditions but only under the leadership of a revolutionary party can they be effective instruments for the capture of power. This unity talk, this call for "action," serves to hide the central question of revolutionary leadership.

In a number of countries since the war a revolutionary situation has been missed or become transformed into its opposite because of the lack of a trained revolutionary leadership. Workers Councils, or Soviets cannot be the substitute for the revolutionary party. They can only be the instrument through which that Party wins the support of the majority of the working class. And on this question of the leading revolutionary party, how it is to develop, and its perspectives, the I.L.P. reveals hopeless confusion. In one statement the I.L.P. is described as being *the Party*: in another it sets *itself* the task of securing an all-in united front and in another it speaks of unity with the Communist Party.

#### THE COMMUNIST PARTY

The Communist Party of Great Britain has been in existence for 13 years. During this time the British workers have passed through many heavy engagements, have suffered heavy losses in the long period of economic depression and have had two Labour Governments, both of which have brought considerable disappointment. Yet in spite of the favourable conditions existing, in spite of the thousands of pounds spent every year in propaganda, the C.P.G.B. to-day has, at the most, three thousand active members. Many thousands of good proletarians have joined its ranks, only to pass out again and to sink into indifference and despair. The blows of capitalism and the treachery of the reformists compel many workers to the side of the Communist Party. They are disillusioned by their experiences inside and having no theoretical standpoint they drift out again and sink into indifference.

Instead of training the future cadres of the revolution the C.P.G.B. acts as an agency for the corruption of the best elements of the working class. Inside the Party there is, and there can be, no democracy. The members who stay in are taught not to think, to learn, to relate their theory, such as it is, to experience, not to fight for their opinions, not to translate those into flesh and blood but to repeat parrot-like the phrases of the *Daily Worker* and to operate the "line" which, as the united front experience has shown, can be reversed twice in a few months without the slightest murmur from the members. But if the British workers are to get power, are to break the power of the powerful British capitalists and join hands with their brothers abroad they must build a revolutionary party, a trained revolutionary leadership, disciplined and entrenched deeply in the working class.

(continued on page 4 column 3)

# RECOVERY OR CRASH ?

## British Economic Perspectives

The perspective placed by the Stalinist bureaucrats before the members and sympathisers of the C.P.G.B. is one in which almost anything is more than likely to happen—except an upward turn in the cycle, along with the potentialities it would open for revolutionary leadership, which should loom high at this time in any seriously considered perspective.

In spite of all the confusionism and revisionism exuding from the Stalinist theoreticians in relation to the Marxist position on the nature of the periodic cycle during the downward phase of capitalism (e.g., Varga, E: *Inprecorr*, 3 Dec. 1932, p. 1157), no serious revolutionary will deny the fundamental principle re-affirmed in the theses of the Third Congress of the Communist International: "The cyclical fluctuations will accompany capitalism until its downfall."

It is entirely true that the typical post-war cycle will differ in many important respects from the type of cycle that characterised the generally upward plane of capitalism in the twenty years previous to the war. The span and cut of the typical post-war crisis will in all probability be longer and deeper, and the upward swing distinctly weaker and of shorter duration. But to stretch these differences to a point where the cycle as such evaporates into nothing more than "up and downs," ripples on an ebbing tide, to confound utterly the business cycle with the general decline of post-war capitalism and the decline of Great Britain in relation to her chief rival, the U.S.A., is to fall victim to the type of thinking that treats anemia as a form of smallpox.

As a matter of fact, the Stalinists, along with the other elements in the general centrist camp, fear an upturn in industry and trade as much as the bourgeoisie yearn for it. They are both wrong. Such an upturn would serve to intensify the real crisis, raising it to a higher plane. And especially for the English bourgeoisie, who are very much in the position of the old man who said that nothing did him more harm than a sudden change—even for the better.

### TRADE DISPUTES

World capitalism is rotten ripe for the workers' revolution. But the consciousness of the workers, their leadership and organisation have not caught up with the actual situation. And in England this gap is exceptionally wide. The workers, crushed by terrific unemployment and, except for a small fraction, under the influence of the Labour Party and of their own class memories of capitalism as it was before the war, are inclined to await the "recovery." The number of "Trade Disputes" in the United Kingdom (monthly averages), which was 122 for 1912, was 36 in 1929, 25 in 1930 and again in 1931, and 33 for 1932. The number of "workpeople involved" (monthly averages), which was more than 56 thousand in 1913, was 44.5 thousand in 1929, less than 26 thousand in 1930, 41 thousand in 1931, 28 thousand in 1932, and 12.8 thousand in 1933 (monthly averages, first six months of 1933). The downward phase of the cycle brought with it in general a reduction in what the bourgeoisie call "labour trouble." It is not our purpose here to go into these figures closely, to distinguish between strikes and lockouts, different types of strikes, etc., but it is of distinct significance that the Cotton Strike of a year ago was preceded by the following figures for "Raw Cotton delivered to the mills": (monthly averages in millions of pounds): 91 for 1930, 94 for 1931, and 115 for the nine months ending June, 1932. The percentage of Insured Workers Unemployed in the cotton industry (monthly averages) was: 37 for 1930, 28.4 for 1931 (44.1 for the third quarter of 1931), and 28.5 for the nine months ending June, 1932. This particular strike was preceded by an increase, from a very low point, in both production and employment. The present strike wave in the U.S.A. shows, on a far wider scale,

the same causal relationship. The contrast between the centrist fear of, and the bourgeois longing for, an upturn illustrates at any rate an emotional difference between the centrist camp and that of the out-and-out bourgeois; but the fact that the fear and the longing flow from the same basic notion (that an upturn would mean an amelioration in the situation for the capitalists) illustrates equally well the extent to which the centrists and the Simon pure bourgeoisie share a non-Marxist basis.

The Labour party and Trade Union bureaucrats assisted by the frightful unemployment and governmental repression, have held in check the hatred for the capitalists and their system, the fierce desire to escape poverty, and the seething discontent that these years of crisis have engendered in the working class. "Wait until the recovery—then strike" has been the slogan. With the first signs of actual upturn in the cycle, the workers will strike, strike hard and bitterly—and against a capitalist system that, in spite of even a substantial cyclical upturn, will be unable to make anything like the concessions necessary to keep the labour movement under the reins of the Trade Union bureaucrats. The workers will strike for better working conditions and the capitalists will be unable to give back to the workers even the little they had before the present periodic crisis began. When the workers realise that fact by banging into it, the gap between the consciousness of the proletariat and the actual economic position of Great Britain will narrow down to the thinness of cellophane.

### SOME SIGNIFICANT FIGURES

When the Stalinist economists and theoreticians do turn to the question of perspective, they set about the task in the manner of a rank empiricist. They set forth the raw figures (e.g., *Daily Worker*, 14 Feb. 1933, p. 6) of production and trade for the past year and the previous year, compare them with the figures for 1929 and 1924, point to the obvious differences, and announce "NOT CAPITALIST 'PROSPERITY' ROUND THE CORNER'—BUT CAPITALIST STABILISATION ENDED." They can't answer the question of What Next? because they don't even get so far as to pose that question.

Their own figures, however, if they treated them properly and took into account the different years of the present crisis, would give them good reason to think more concretely, in the terms of What Next? For instance: they could take the percentage difference of 1930 on 1929, of 1931 on 1930, etc., for the main British industries. If they did so they would find that the percentage change of the Given Year on the Previous Year (the Previous Year being taken as 100 per cent.) is as follows:

	1930	1931	1932	1933 (first half)
Coal Output	— 6.5	— 10.0	— 5.0	— 4.0
Crude Steel Output	— 24.0	— 29.0	+ 1.0	+ 11.0
Pig Iron Output	— 18.0	— 39.0	— 5.0	— 1.5
Raw Cotton delivered to the Mills	— 27.0	+ 4.0	+ 8.0	— 4.5
Wool Tissues Exports	— 27.0	— 24.0	— 6.0	+ 6.0
Shipbuilding—Merchant Vessels under Construction	— 13.0	— 59.0	— 46.0	— 17.0

A comparison of the last two columns above with the first two shows, not a straight line plunge, but something roughly approaching the inner curve of a quarter of a circle—certainly to a sufficiently great extent to make an intelligent revolutionary ask What Next?, and look over the heads of the V and VI Congresses and these latter-day Plenums to the statement of the

Third Congress: "The cyclical fluctuations will accompany capitalism until its downfall"—with no exception for Great Britain indicated.

The official figures of the bourgeoisie, although they can show us the general cyclical form being assumed by this periodic crisis, will not show us the upward trend until after that trend has actually set in. Such information may suffice for historians and the Stalinists, who appear quite content with a dorsal view of events. Revolutionaries, however, cannot afford the luxury of confusing the dimming tail-lamp of a lost opportunity with the flashing headlights of an approaching one.

Fortunately, it is not necessary to wait until the definite signs of an upturn appear in the statistics of output. Other indicators are available earlier. These are the conditions preparatory to a revival, conditions that take form before output statistics give indication of a change in the industrial situation. Indicators are to be found in the field of money circulation, credit, and prices. Liquid capital has ceased to be scarce and interest rates have dropped in a relatively short period from 6 per cent. to 2 per cent., and in many places and even less. Capital is clearly "hungry." With the reduction of risk in investment brought about by the downward phase of the crisis, there has been produced also a greater willingness on the part of capital to face risks. Of late, many capital flotations have been made more than welcome. Investors' stock indices, as compared with a year ago, show a rise of about 30 per cent. for this in spite of the fact that the Bank of England (considerably more for the U.S.A.), and Coin-Bullion: ratio to Notes-in-Circulation has increased from 37 per cent. a year ago to 50 per cent. to-day, during which time note circulation has increased about 14 million Pounds to the present (9.8.33) figure of 385 million

### OUR NEED IS DESPERATE

Our paper needs your help, comrade: we are not exaggerating the position in any way when we declare that unless we get an immediate response from our readers we shall be compelled to reduce the size of the RED FLAG and economise as well in other directions in order to meet our obligations. We need every penny you can spare. Send all money to H. Dewar, 36 West Side, Clapham Common, London, S.W.4.

Pounds. With the same background in mind, it is worth noting that United Kingdom commodity prices have left the "lows" of the spring of last year clearly behind, and even in the recent critical months of March and April stayed above the level reached in July, 1932. Undeniably, Warehouse stocks of a number of important commodities continue to loom high. On the other hand, the invisible stocks, those between the raw material producer and the ultimate consumer, along with the supply of materials for repairs (railways, factories, etc.), must, after these years of falling prices, be extremely low. The picture as a whole shows a substantial groundwork for the beginning of the transformation of the downward swing of the cycle into the upward; certainly to a sufficiently great extent to demand that the possibility of an upturn in the cycle be given an important place in any serious discussion of the economic perspective.

A revolutionary party should by this time have definitely in its perspective, not only the possibility of an economic upswing, but the revolutionary potentialities that will inevitably accompany, and be great out of all proportion to, such an upturn. Here in England, the National Government, and then the Labour Party along with the remnants of Liberalism, will be placed squarely on the rack of their most recent promises to the masses. Great strikes, with the capacity of shifting rapidly from the economic to the political, will be on the order of the day. Earnest preparations for the approaching period should be begun at once. With a clear understanding of the perspective and its possibilities, with a sound trade union policy and a full comprehension of the tactic of the united front, a real revolutionary party can face the coming period with confidence.

T. F.

# FASCISM and DEMOCRATIC ILLUSIONS

By LEON TROTSKY

## 1.—IS IT TRUE THAT HITLER HAS DESTROYED "DEMOCRATIC PREJUDICES"?

The April resolution of the Praesidium of the ECCL "on the present situation in Germany" will, we believe, go down into history as the final testimonial to the bankruptcy of the Comintern of the epigones. The resolution is crowned with a prognosis in which all the vices and prejudices of the Stalinist bureaucracy reach their culmination. "The establishment of an open Fascist dictatorship,"—the resolution proclaims in bold-face type, "accelerates the tempo of the development of a proletarian revolution in Germany by destroying all democratic illusions of the masses and by freeing them from the influence of the social-democracy."

Fascism, it seems, has unexpectedly become the locomotive of History: it destroys democratic illusions, it frees the masses from the influence of the social-democracy, it accelerates the development of the proletarian revolution. The Stalinist bureaucracy assigns to Fascism the accomplishment of those basic tasks which it proved itself utterly incapable of solving.

The theoretic victory of Fascism is undoubtedly an evidence of the fact that democracy had exhausted itself; but politically, the Fascist regime preserves democratic prejudices, re-creates them, inculcates them into the youth and is even capable of imparting to them, for a short time, the greatest strength. Precisely in this consists one of the most important manifestations of the reactionary historic role of Fascism.

Doctrinaires think schematically. Masses think with facts. The working class perceives events not as experiments with this or that "thesis" but as living changes in the fate of the people. The victory of Fascism adds a million times more to the scale of political development than the prognosis for the indefinite future which flows from it. Had a proletarian state grown out of the bankruptcy of democracy, the development of society, as well as the development of mass consciousness would have taken a great leap forward. But as it was, in reality, the victory of Fascism that grew out of the bankruptcy of democracy, the consciousness of the masses is set far back,—of course only temporarily. The smashing of the Weimar democracy by Hitler can no more put an end to the democratic illusions of the masses, than Goering's setting the Reichstag on fire can burn out parliamentary cretinism.

## 2. THE EXAMPLE OF SPAIN AND ITALY.

For four years in succession we heard that democracy and Fascism do not exclude but supplement each other. How then can the victory of Fascism liquidate democracy once and for all? We would like to have some explanations on this score by Bucharin, Zinoviev, or Manuilsky "himself".

The military-police dictatorship of Primo de Rivera was declared by the Comintern to be Fascism. But if the victory of Fascism signifies the final liquidation of democratic prejudices, how can it be explained that the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera gave way to a bourgeois republic? It is true that the regime of Rivera was far from being Fascism. But it had, at all events, this much in common with Fascism: it arose as a result of the bankruptcy of the parliamentary regime. This did not prevent it, however, after its own bankruptcy was revealed, from giving way to democratic parliamentarism.

One may attempt to say that the Spanish revolution is a proletarian one in its tendencies, and that the social democracy in alliance with other republicans has succeeded in arresting its development at the stage of bourgeois parliamentarism. But this objection, correct in itself, proves only more clearly our idea that if bourgeois democracy succeeded in paralyzing the revolution of the proletariat, this was only due to the fact that under the yoke of the

"Fascist" dictatorship, the democratic illusions were not weakened but became stronger.

Have "democratic illusions" disappeared in Italy during the ten years of Mussolini's despotism? This is how Fascists themselves are inclined to picture the state of affairs. In reality, however, democratic illusions are acquiring a new force. During this period, a new generation has been raised up. Politically it has not lived in the conditions of freedom, but it knows full well what Fascism is: this is the raw material for vulgar democracy. The organization "Justice and Liberty" is distributing illegal democratic literature in Italy and not without success. The ideas of democracy are therefore finding adherents, who are ready to sacrifice themselves. Even the flabby generalisations of the liberal monarchist, Count Sforza, are spread in the form of illegal pamphlets. That's how far back has Italy been thrown during these years!

Why Fascism in Germany is called upon to play a role entirely opposite to that which it played in Italy, remains incomprehensible. Because "Germany is not Italy"? Victorious Fascism is in reality not a locomotive of history but its gigantic brake. Just as the policy of the social democracy prepared the triumph of Hitler, so the regime of National Socialism inevitably leads to the warming-up of democratic illusions.

## 3. CAN THE SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY REGENERATE ITSELF?

German comrades testify that the social democratic workers and even many of the social democratic bureaucrats are "disillusioned" with democracy. We must extract all we can out of the critical moods of the reformist workers, in the interests of their revolutionary education. But at the same time the extent of the reformists' "disillusionment" must be clearly understood. The social democratic high priests scold democracy so as to justify themselves. Unwilling to admit that they showed themselves as contemptible cowards, incapable of fighting for the democracy which they created and for their soft berths in it, these gentlemen shift the blame from themselves to the intangible democracy. As we see, this radicalism is not only cheap but also spurious through and through! Let the bourgeoisie only beckon these "disillusioned" ones with its little finger and they will run on all fours to a new coalition with it. It is true, in the mass of social-democratic workers a real disgust with the betrayals and mirages of democracy is being born. But to what extent? The greater half of the seven to eight million social democratic votes is in a state of the greatest confusion, glum passivity, and capitulation to the victors. At the same time, a new generation will be forming under the heel of Fascism, a generation to which the Weimar constitution will be an historic legend. What line then will the political crystallisation within the working class follow? This depends upon many conditions, among them, of course, also upon our policy.

Historically, the direct replacement of the Fascist regime by a workers' state is not excluded. But for the realisation of this possibility it is necessary that a powerful, illegal Communist party form itself in the process of struggle against Fascism, under the leadership of which the proletariat could seize power. However, it must be said that a creation of a revolutionary party of this sort in illegality, is not very probable, at any rate it is not assured by anything in advance. The discontentment, indignation, fermentation of the masses will, from a certain moment onward, grow much faster than the illegal formation of the party vanguard. And every lack of clarity in the consciousness of the masses will inevitably help democracy.

This does not at all mean, that after the fall of Fascism, Germany will again have to go through a long school of parliamentarism. Fa-

scism will not eradicate the past political experience, it is even less capable of changing the social structure of the nation. It would be the greatest mistake to expect a new lengthy democratic epoch in the development of Germany. But in the revolutionary awakening of the masses, democratic slogans will inevitably constitute the first chapter. Even if the further progress of the struggle should in general not permit, even for one day, the regeneration of a democratic state—and this is very possible—the struggle itself cannot develop by the circumvention of democratic slogans! A revolutionary party that would attempt to jump over this stage, would break its neck.

The question of the social-democracy is closely connected with this general perspective. Will it reappear on the stage? The old organization is irrevocably lost. But this does not at all mean that social democracy cannot be regenerated under a new historic mask. Opportunist parties which fall and decompose so easily under the blows of reaction, come back to life just as easily at the first political revival. We observed this in Russia in the example of the Mensheviks and the S.R.'s. German social democracy can not only regenerate itself, but even acquire great influence, if the revolutionary proletarian party should set up a doctrinaire "negation" of the slogan of democracy against a dialectic attitude towards them. The Praesidium of the Comintern in this field, as in so many others, remains a gratuitous assistant of reformism.

## 4. THE BRANDLERITES DEEPEN THE STALINISTS.

The confusion in the question of democratic slogans, has revealed itself most proudly in the programmatic theses of the opportunist group of Brandler-Thalheimer (on the question of the struggle against Fascism). The Communist party, the theses read, "should unite the manifestations of discontentment of all (!) classes against the Fascist dictatorship." (Gegen den Strom, page 7, the word "all" is underlined in the original). At the same time, the theses insistently warn: "The partial slogan can not be of a bourgeois-democratic nature." Between these two statements, each of which is erroneous, there is an irreconcilable contradiction. In the first place, the formula of the unification of the discontentment of "all classes" sounds absolutely incredible. The Russian Marxists did at one time abuse such a formulation in the struggle against czarism. Out of this abuse grew the Menshevik conception of the revolution, later on adopted by Stalin for China. But in Russia, at least, it was a question of the collision of the bourgeois nation with the privileged monarchy. In what sense can one speak, in a bourgeois nation, of the struggle of "all classes" against Fascism, which is the tool of the big bourgeoisie against the proletariat? It would be instructive to see how Thalheimer, the manufacturer of theoretic vulgarities, would unite the discontentment of Hugenberg,—and he is also discontented,—with the discontentment of an unemployed worker. How else can one unite a movement of "all classes" if not by putting oneself on the basis of bourgeois democracy? Verily, a classic combination of opportunism with an ultra-radicalism in words!

The movement of the proletariat against the Fascist regime will acquire an ever greater mass character to the extent that the petty bourgeoisie becomes disappointed with Fascism, isolating the possessing summits and the government apparatus. The task of a proletarian party would consist in utilizing the weakening of the yoke on the part of the petty bourgeois reaction for the purpose of arousing the activity of the proletariat on to the road of the conquest of the lower strata of the petty bourgeoisie.

It is true, the growth of the discontentment of the intermediary strata and the growth of the resistance of the workers will create a crack in the bloc of the possessing classes and will spur their "Left flank" to seek contact with the petty bourgeoisie. The task of the proletarian party with relation to the "liberal flank" of the possessors will consist, however, not in including them both in a bloc of "all classes" against Fascism, but on the contrary in immediately

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## THE CASE OF CHEN DU SIU An Open Letter to TOM MANN

We take the liberty of addressing this short letter to you believing that it is only unawareness of the plight of Comrade Chen Du Siu, leader of the Chinese Left Opposition, that has so far prevented you from joining in the demand for his release. We know and respect, along with all the present generation of revolutionaries, your great record of service in onward march of our class. And never, to our knowledge, have you failed to add your voice to demands for the release of militant workers jailed by the governments of the master class. We wish to bring to your notice the imprisonment of our comrade Chen Du Siu, a life long fighter in the cause of the oppressed masses of China.

During your visit to China in 1927 you attended the opening session of the Chinese Communist Party Congress. There, no doubt, you made the acquaintance of the leaders of the Party, including the best known and the most loyal, Chen Du Siu. It is certain too that there you met Roy who is at present serving sentence in India and about whom there has been no word of protest in the press of your party. Having met or heard of Chen Du Siu you will know of his long and magnificent record: his activities among the youth, his work in the social and cultural movement during the war, his leading part in the founding of the Chinese Communist Party and his devoted service to that Party from 1923 to 1928. Twice before have the imperialists and the Chinese bourgeoisie paid Chen the tribute of arresting him and on each occasion the workers have brought about his liberation. And this time he is sentenced to 13 years imprisonment. Arrested last October, after having been sought for by the police for many months, he made a magnificent stand at the trial and now lies in the death dungeons of Chiang Kai Shek. 55 years of age, a sentence of this kind, under the conditions existing in Chinese jails means the slow death of our comrade.

You may ask why the organisation whose special purpose it is to fight for the release of class war prisoners, the International Labour Defence, has made no effort to campaign on behalf of Chen. It is a hard thing to say but it is for one reason alone. The Labour Defence is under the direction of the Party and the International to which you belong. It keeps silent because Chen Du Siu is a member of the Left Opposition. In other words out of fractional considerations it prefers to leave this grand old fighter to his fate. Since his acceptance of the viewpoint of the Opposition about the Chinese Revolution Chen Du Siu has been denounced by your party as a "Counter-Revolutionary." How can they now admit that this "Counter-Revolutionary" has been arrested and imprisoned by the Chinese Government? The abuse loses its force in face of the facts and so, placing their own prestige above the life of our comrade and above the principles of working class solidarity, the leaders of your party keep silent. We ask you—who does this help? The workers or the government of Chiang Kai Shek?

As a member of the Communist Party, you will be, or should be, in disagreement with the policy of Chen Du Siu. But in the face of the common enemy such differences, whilst not disappearing, cannot be made to justify the attitude taken by the I.L.D. Do you ask every class war prisoner, before you demand his release or help him in any way whether he accepts the policy and leadership of the Comintern? Of course not—no revolutionary could justify such a thing for a moment. That is why we ask you to join in the demand for the release of Chen Du Siu.

We believe that to this request you will respond. Your response will speedily find an echo in the ranks of the militant workers of this and of other countries and do much to aid the liberation of our comrade. You have never before failed a class war prisoner: we are confident that you will not fail Chen Du Siu.

Yours fraternally,  
British Section, International Left Opposition.

### THE SOVIET UNION?

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declaring a decisive struggle against it for influence on the lower strata of the petty bourgeoisie.

Under what political slogans will this struggle take place? The dictatorship of Hitler grew directly out of the Weimar constitution. The representatives of the petty bourgeoisie have, with their own hands presented Hitler with the mandate for a dictatorship. If we should assume a very favorable and quick development of the Fascist crisis, then the demand for the convocation of the Reichstag with the inclusion of all the banished deputies, may, at a certain moment, unite the workers with the widest strata of the petty bourgeoisie. If the crisis should break out later and the memory of the Reichstag should have had time to obliterate itself, the slogan of new elections may acquire great popularity. It is sufficient that such a road is possible. To tie one's hands with relation to temporary democratic slogans which may be forced upon us by our petty-bourgeois allies and by the backward strata of the proletariat itself, would be fatal doctrinarism.

Brandler-Thalheimer believe, however, that we should only advocate "democratic rights for the laboring masses: the right of assembly, trade unions, freedom of press, organization and strikes." In order to emphasize their radicalism more, they add: "these demands should be strictly (!) distinguished from bourgeois democratic demands of universal democratic rights." There is no person more wretched than the opportunist who takes the knife of ultra-radicalism between his teeth!

Freedom of assembly and the press only for the laboring masses is conceivable solely under the dictatorship of the proletariat, that is, under the nationalization of buildings, printing establishments, etc. It is possible that the dictatorship of the proletariat in Germany will also have to employ exceptional laws against exploiters: that depends upon the historic moment, upon international conditions, upon the relation of internal forces. But it is not at all excluded that, having conquered power, the workers of Germany will find themselves sufficiently powerful to allow freedom of assembly and the press also to the exploiters of yesterday, of course, in accordance with their actual political influence, and not with the extent of their treasury; the treasury will have been expropriated. Thus, even for the period of the dictatorship there is in principle no basis for limiting beforehand the freedom of assembly and the press only to the laboring masses. The proletariat may be forced to such a limitation; but this is not a question of principle. It is doubly absurd to advocate such a demand under the conditions of present-day Germany, when freedom of the press and assembly exists for all but the proletariat. The arousing of the proletarian struggle against the Fascist inferno will take place, at least in the first stages, under the slogans: give also to us, workers, the right of assembly and the press. The Communists, of course, will at this stage also carry on a propaganda in favor of the Soviet regime, but they will at the same time support every real mass movement under democratic slogans, and wherever possible will take the initiative in such a movement.

Between the regime of bourgeois democracy and the regime of proletarian democracy there is no third regime, "the democracy of the laboring masses." True, the Spanish republic calls itself "the republic of the laboring" even in the text of its constitution. But this is a formula of political charlatanism. The Brandlerian formula of democracy "only for the laboring," particularly in combination with the "unity of all classes," seems to be especially designed to confuse and mislead the revolutionary vanguard in the most important question: "When and to what extent to adapt ourselves to the movement of the petty bourgeoisie and the backward strata of the working masses, what concessions to make to them in the question of the tempo of the movement and the slogans on the order of the day, so as more successfully to rally the proletariat under the banner of its own revolutionary dictatorship?"

At the 7th congress of the Russian Communist Party, in March 1918, during the discussion of the party program, Lenin carried on a

decisive struggle against Bucharin, who considered that parliamentarism is done for, once and for all, that it is historically "exhausted." "We must..." Lenin retorted, "write a new program of the Soviet power, without renouncing the use of bourgeois parliamentarism. To believe that we will not be thrown back, is Utopia... after every setback, if class forces inimical to us should push us to this old position, we shall proceed—to the Soviet power..."

Lenin objected to a doctrinary anti-parliamentarism with regard to a country which had already gained the Soviet regime: We must not tie our hands beforehand, he taught Bucharin, for we may be pushed back to the once abandoned positions. In Germany there has not been and there is no proletarian dictatorship, but there is a dictatorship of Fascism; Germany has been thrown back even from bourgeois democracy. Under these conditions, to renounce beforehand the use of democratic slogans and of bourgeois parliamentarism means to clear the field for a social democracy of a new formation.

Prinkipo,  
July 14, 1933.

L. TROTSKY.

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(continued from page 1)

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The I.L.P. can play a great part in this work, in the winning of the best workers and in the fight for a correct policy. Around the banner of Leninism have to be grouped the best revolutionary elements. On what basis? The first four congresses of the Comintern where the basic tasks of a Marxist party were laid down together with the application of these principles to the experiences of the last ten years. This will be found set out in the work of the Left Opposition which has, over this period maintained a Marxist standpoint and on the heaviest test of all Germany, put forward all the way through the one correct policy that could have defeated Hitler and made possible the German workers revolution. On this basis will be possible the grouping of the best revolutionary elements in Great Britain. The task cannot be avoided: without this the movement in this country cannot conquer. The approaching period opens up perspectives of bitter and mighty class battles especially in Great Britain: to be ready for these, to have the correct policy and to secure victory is needed the revolutionary party. The work of assembling its cadres must begin.

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