

OUR PROBLEMS

The Tasks of the Fourth World Congress

By Ernst Meyer (At present in Moscow).

The Fourth World Congress has as one of the first items on the agenda, the subject "Five years of Russian Revolution and the Perspectives of the World Revolution". The 4th World Congress will not merely review the 5 years of Russian Revolution, but during the whole of the deliberations it will consider and estimate the results and experiences in Soviet Russia, and will have to draw further conclusions therefrom for the activity of the Communists. The struggle of the Russian workers to capture the power of the state was not easy. Still more difficult was it for the Russian peasants and workers to maintain the possession of the state power. The struggles have been victorious. The Soviet Power both from the military point of view and the point of view of foreign politics is more consolidated than ever. The difficulties which the proletarian state has yet to overcome on the road to pure Communism are enormous.

In Central Europe too, whose social foundations were greatly shaken during the autumn days of 1918, the revolutionary struggle has not so quickly succeeded as the Communists of all countries expected. While in the first years following the conclusion of the imperialist peace, the Communists immediately took up the fight for the ultimate aim, the conquest of the state power, the Communists of all countries which are still capitalist, have now set up the so-called proximate aims, which are intelligible to the working masses and which are calculated to gather the whole working class under the banner of Communism and the struggle for which must immediately become a struggle for the attainment of the final goal.

The Fourth World Congress will have to test and examine all these experiences in Soviet Russia and in the capitalist world. This necessity for self-understanding also finds expression in that the discussion of an international program as well as of the programs of the various sections of the Communist International has been placed upon the agenda of the World Congress. It is true, no final decision will be reached upon the international program, as the preparatory work is not sufficiently advanced. But the reports to be delivered and the work of the Program Section will form a good basis for further discussions in the Communist circles of all countries. The report of Comrade Zinoviev upon the activity of the Executive and the further tactics of the Communist International will at the same time provide the opportunity of deciding the much debated question of the transition demands or proximate aims. Although the resistance against the tactics of the united front and against the proximate demands set up by the Communist International has been reduced within the Italian and French Parties and in the smaller groups of the German Party, only the authoritative decision of a World Congress will finally close the discussion upon this topic. At the same time, every Party and every Party group will be pledged by this decision to carry out loyally and with all their energy the tactics of the united front in their own country.

The necessity for fighting with closed ranks, will have to be particularly pointed out in the reports on the offensive of capital and the struggle against the Versailles Peace in connection with the home and foreign politics. The transition demands arising out of this struggle against the capitalist offensive and the Versailles Peace can in a generalized form find a place in an international program of the Communist International. The formulation of such demands does not mean that these demands will be actually reached in the prescribed form but only that these demands must be the rallying point for the struggle of the broad masses. The struggle for one of these demands is sufficient to roll up the whole front of the class struggle and lead to the realization of the Soviet Dictatorship.

The question of the tactics of the united front which stands for discussion along with the report of the Executive is therefore immediately connected with the program question. The question of the tactic of the united front and the program question mutually complete each other as practical and theoretical sides of the same problem: by what means and under what slogans will the Communists of all countries most rapidly and most successfully arrive at their goal.—the realization of Communism.

The Second International, before, during and after the war, set reformist work and revolutionary work against each other

giving preference to successful reformist work and abandoning all revolutionary work. The practice of all the Menshevik and Social Democratic Parties show that the renunciation of revolutionary work has also hindered the improvement of the living conditions of the working class. Reform work is only successful when it is conducted in a revolutionary spirit and when it leads immediately to revolutionary struggles. How little the formulation of concrete, proximate demands has converted the Communist International into a reformist International, is shown by the ever-widening chasm between the Communist International and the Second and 2½ Internationals

The efforts of the Communist International at the Berlin Conference to form a proletarian united front and to organize a proletarian world congress were answered by the Second and 2½ Internationals with increased fury against the Communists. Nothing is more disagreeable to the Mensheviks and Social Reformists than the fact that the Communists stand up most energetically for the daily needs of the workers. Theoretical debates upon the advantages of the proletarian dictatorship or of bourgeois democracy are perhaps welcomed by them. But as soon as they are faced with concrete facts, and are summoned to a struggle against the enemies of the working class, they get into a rage and seek by means of abusive campaigns against the Communists to confuse the working class and to isolate the Communists who are forcing them into the struggle. In Germany, for example, the trade union bureaucracy, the Independents and the Social Democrats, directly after the movement following the murder of Rathenau, issued the slogan: "have nothing to do with the Communists", because the tactics of the Communists during this movement were more dangerous to the Social Democrats than if the K.P.D. had been isolated.

The campaign now being conducted in Germany by the trade union bureaucracy for the expulsion of the Communists is also a proof of how dangerous the trade union tactics of the German Communists have become to these trade union leaders who are so friendly to the employers. If the World Congress deals this time with the trade union question it will in the first place have to confirm the tactic of remaining within the trade unions and of carrying on the revolutionary work there. In so far as the trade union bureaucracy systematically excludes the Communists, the World Congress will have to discuss the appropriate measures of defence, for it is clear that the Communists cannot stand idly by and watch the systematic splitting of the trade unions; but all such measures must be calculated to unite those who have been excluded.

In addition to these most important problems, the World Congress will have to discuss a number of problems which relate to separate practical questions. Besides the oriental and colonial questions and the agrarian question, which have already been discussed at the international congresses, the World Congress will discuss the education question which occupies a special item on the agenda.

The report upon the work among the youth will not be a mere report but it will exhaustively deal with the difficulties and problems that have arisen in the youth movement as a consequence of the changing situation. The interest which the Communist International constantly has for the Women's question is shown by the fact that at this congress there will again be delivered a special report upon the position of the work amongst the women. The great importance of the Cooperative movement will also find expression in a report upon this question connected with a report upon the International Cooperative Conference. Finally the congress will bear witness to the universal interest of the working class in the proletarian famine relief for Soviet Russia in a report upon the Famine Relief for Soviet Russia.

The Communist International regards its conferences not as parades which merely have outward effects, but as days of serious work of self-examination and understanding over the future struggle. The Communist International does not shrink from openly discussing the weaknesses of individual parties. As in the past year, many of the failings of the Communist Parties were openly dealt with, so this time the World Congress will by a special item on the agenda devote itself to the question of the French Party which has revealed many critical symptoms. The Communists know no sensitiveness. They regard every pronouncement even when they lead to critical conclusions as brotherly assistance. They accept every decision of the whole International in the spirit of proletarian solidarity and discipline, both of which are indispensable in order to be able victoriously to overthrow our mighty antagonist, the bourgeoisie, and along with it, its allies, the Social Democrats.