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# THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

ORGAN OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE  
COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

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EDITED JOINTLY by G. ZINOVIEV and KARL RADEK

The following writers have contributed from time to time :

*Russia*: Bucharin, Kamenev, Lenin, Lunacharsky, Pokrovsky, Rakovsky, Riazanov, Trotsky, Rothstein. *Finland*: Kuusinen, Manner, Sirola. *Sweden*: Nérman, Ström, Hoeglund, Chilbum. *Norway*: \*Kirre Grepp, Tranmael, Friis, Scheflo. *Holland*: Wynkoop, Ravenstein, Roland-Holst, Rutgers. *Austria*: Toman, Strasse. *Germany*: Brandler, Pieck, Thalheimer, Clara Zetkin, Heckert. *England*: Gallacher, T. Quelch, Tom Mann, MacManus. *France*: Henri Barbusse, Guilbeaux, Cachin, \*Lefevre, Loriot, Monatte, Sadoul, Souvarine Rappoport, Rosmer. *Italy*: Bombacci, Bordiga, Gramsci, Fabricio, Maffi, Terracini. *Switzerland*: Herzog, Münzenberg, Platten, Humbert-Droz. *Hungary*: Alpari, Bela Kun, Varga, Rudas. *Poland*: Warsky, Marchlevsky. *Bulgaria*: Blagoev, Kabakchiev, Koraloff. *America*: \*John Reed, Charles Ruthenberg, Foster, Haywood. *Czecho-Slovakia*: Kreibich, Smeral. *Jugo-Slavia*: Markovitch. *Japan*: Sen Katayama. *China*: Chang Du Su. *India*: M. N. Roy, Evelyn Roy. *Ireland*: Jim Larkin, etc., etc.

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# THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

*Organ of Executive Committee of Communist International*

NUMBERS TWENTY-SIX AND TWENTY-SEVEN

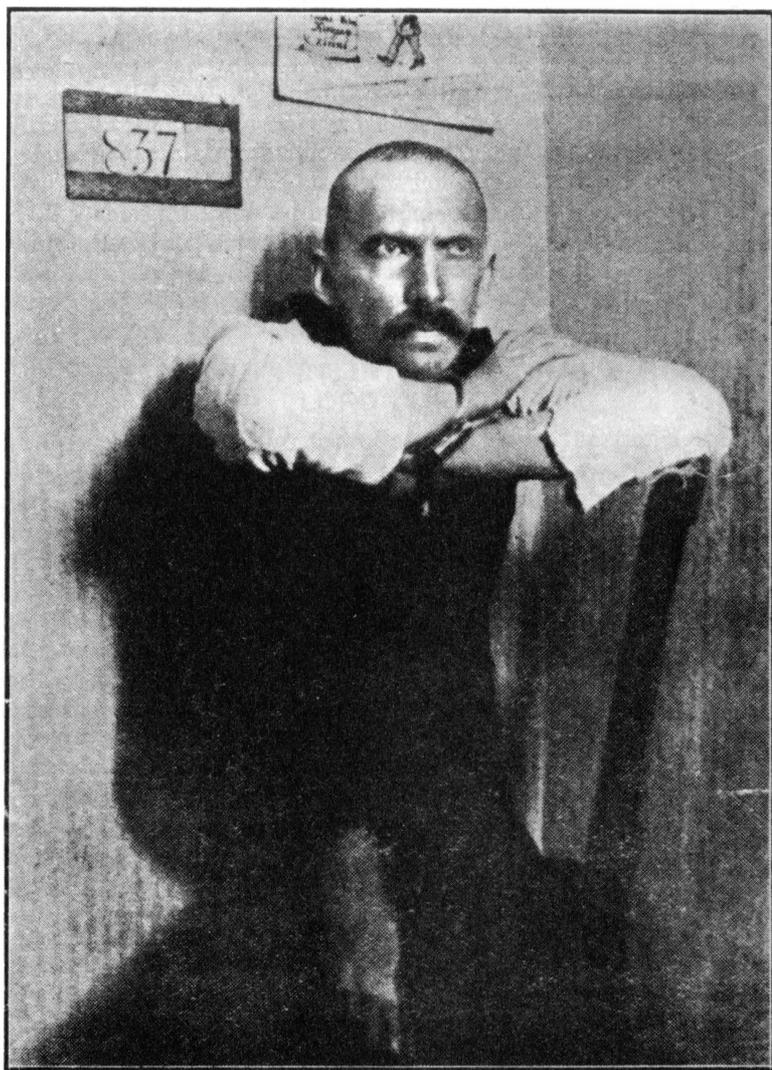
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“ In Democratic Estonia Prisoners are not Tortured.” (From the speech of Estonian Minister for the Interior, M. Einbund.)



**“ In Democratic Esthonia Prisoners are not Tortured.”**

This photograph of Comrade Victor Kingisepp, member of the Central Committee of the Esthonian Communist Party, arrested by the Esthonian Secret Police on May 3rd, 1922, in Reval, at his secret quarters, and the same day executed by Field Court Martial, was taken in the Secret Service Department at Vishgorod, Reval.

On his head the sleuths attached a poster with the inscription:—

**“ Sleuths of all Countries, Unite!  
and  
apprehend Victor Kingisepp.”**

Fearing a scandal and the exposure of the “ democracy ” of this noble Republic, M. Einbund ordered the destruction of the plate of this photograph, and with his own hands tore up this photograph.

The Secret Police said of Comrade Kingisepp: “ Well, we have never seen such a fellow before; no matter how much we tortured him, he betrayed nothing and nobody to us.”

Comrade Kingisepp was so severely beaten up at the Secret Service Department that at the “ trial ” two soldiers had to hold him to enable him to stand on his feet.

In his reply to an interpellation in Parliament, the Minister for the Interior, M. Einbund, categorically stated that in “ Esthonia no prisoners are tortured.”

# The World Political Situation

Report of Comrade Radek to the Enlarged Executive Committee at the Sixth Session on June 15th, 1923.

Comrades,—During the six months that have elapsed since the last Congress, at which I presented a written report on the liquidation of the Peace of Versailles, a number of very important world political events have occurred which considerably modify the general picture and which demand a number of tactical decisions on our part. Before, however, I enter upon a consideration of these questions, I should like to address a few words to a great patron of the Communist International, Lord Curzon. In his note to Soviet Russia he termed the Communist International a “mischievous body,” and he expressed his extreme displeasure that we should be busying ourselves with world political questions.

## 1.—THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL'S REPLY TO LORD CURZON.

Comrades, we fully appreciate the great honour Lord Curzon has conferred upon us by this apostrophe. We also know that we are not as competent to deal with world political questions as Lord Curzon. None of us have been to Eton. None of us have dreamed at the age of seven that we should become the Viceroy of India. Neither do we represent the class which, for three hundred years, has been the maker of world politics. We represent a class which hitherto has been the object of world politics. We have not studied world politics in the colleges of the English aristocracy, but in common with the working class we have studied the consequences of the policy of Lord Curzon during the world war by paying for it with our blood. These studies have been all too inadequate; otherwise Lord Curzon would not now have been in a position to conduct world politics. We are attempting to assist the working class in pursuing these studies, and it is only natural that we should occasionally make mistakes. Had not the point of view of Lord Curzon been fundamentally so different from ours, we should have been just as thankful for his criticism as for that of our opponents in the working class movement. But we do not hope that we shall ever be in a position to mollify the criticism of Lord Curzon, or to win from him a confession that our organisation is giving him pleasure. And, indeed, we are not seeking for it. But we are convinced that in occupying ourselves with world politics, we are at least serving the ends which the working class has set itself, which it is pursuing, and which it will achieve, whether Lord Curzon likes it or not.

## 2.—THE COLLAPSE OF THE WORLD POLITICAL PLAN OF LLOYD GEORGE.

Now let us come to the questions themselves. The first event that occurred after the Congress, and which created a great change in the International situation, was the Anglo-American Agreement on the payment of Britain's debts to America; the second was the

occupation of the Ruhr, and Britain's attitude towards it; the third, the Lausanne Conference; the fourth, the Anglo-Russian conflict; the fifth and last, the practical liquidation of the Washington Treaty on the Far East. These appear to be isolated and unconnected events, but in reality they are closely bound up together, and only on analysis of the relations of these five questions do we obtain a picture of the world situation and learn the tasks which we, the Communist International, have to pursue. In order to understand what a great change was made in the world political situation by the Anglo-American agreement on the debt, it is necessary to recall in a few words the preceding phase of British politics, the politics of Lloyd George, as expressed firstly at the Genoa Conference and secondly in the well-known Balfour Note on Inter-Allied indebtedness.

The plan pursued by Lloyd George in the interests of British commercial capital was this: The Allies are indebted for enormous sums to each other, and particularly to America. France is one of the greatest debtors of Britain and the United States. Britain was aiming for an agreement, which, it is true, would ameliorate the burden of France's indebtedness to the Allies, but which would have compelled France to limit its armaments and to decrease Germany's burden of reparations. If France were compelled to reduce its army, the opposition between France and Britain for the hegemony of Europe would have been lessened, and the situation of England thereby improved. If France had been compelled in return for the surrender of a portion of her debts to England and America to surrender a portion of Germany's reparations, the German bourgeoisie would again become consolidated. And as Germany played an important part in England's trade balance, the British commercial and industrial bourgeoisie would have been in a position to reduce unemployment which costs England as much annually as France is demanding of Germany in the form of reparation, namely, one hundred million pounds. The second part of Lloyd George's plan was to reach an agreement with Soviet Russia in Genoa which would not only have drawn Russia again into capitalist world traffic, but would also have made Russia a new capitalist State. Lloyd George hoped that the Soviet Government would abandon its Socialist character, i.e., the determined effort to develop its economic system step by step in the direction of Socialism; that it would not only return the enterprises of former foreign capitalists in the form of 99 years' concessions, but that Soviet Russia would be compelled to pay the debts and the so-called indemnities of the capitalists and to hand over her railways, ports, and perhaps her still undeveloped natural wealth, to international capital. According to this scheme the Russian peasant and worker were to be made to assist in the restoration of European capitalism. After the Genoa Conference, Lloyd George declared in Parliament that the leaders of the Russian Revolution were very shrewd and sober-minded men, but that they had behind them the mob which was being driven on by wild Communists such as our friend Bucharin, whom, it is true, he did not mention, but

whom he quite obviously meant, and that therefore the tasks of these sober-minded men must be facilitated. The Russian Government should be allowed to call itself a Soviet Government, the International should be allowed free play, but Russian economic life should be handed over to European capital. There is no doubt that this unanimous plan indicates that this former advocate of the British petty-bourgeoisie and later of the war profiteers, had an idea as to how the world should be best ordered. But the idea had one thing in common with the famous steed of Ariosto, it was dead. He reckoned without his host—without the United States of America and without Soviet Russia.

The necessary conditions for the success of the plan was on the one hand the consent of Soviet Russia and on the other, that pressure should be exercised by America upon France and that America should be prepared to grant Germany a loan. But America had no intention of conducting the policy of Lloyd George and Britain. When we examine the facts of the recent economic development of America, when we take into consideration her great prosperity in the year 1922-23, the fact that her steel output has doubled in comparison with pre-war years, and now amounts to 50 million tons, that her wheat area has increased from 46 million acres before the war to 98 million acres, that in spite of the Fordney Tariff, American industry is employing steadily increasing quantities of foreign raw materials, and that she is beginning to experience a shortage of labour power, we shall easily understand why America feels no necessity to fling herself into European affairs and to invest capital in the restoration of European capitalism. There are two groups which are opposed to the policy of isolation. The first consists of the farmers, but the farmers consist of only 30 per cent. of the American population, and they provide only 17 per cent. of the national income; 20 per cent. of America's agricultural output is sent abroad. The second consists of the financial interests. At the recent conference of bankers in Washington, banking circles firmly expressed themselves in favour of interfering in European affairs. They hope in this way to get European industry into their own hands. A number of bankers are interested in financing exports from Europe which can supply goods cheaper than America. This would provide great possibilities for profits, but at the expense of the American capitalists who attempted to protect themselves from competition by the Fordney Tariff. The improvement of the economic situation in America has strengthened the tendencies favouring isolation in the United States, in spite of the admonitions of Hoover that they should think of the future and carefully foster their relations with foreign Powers. If American imports have increased, it has been due to imports of raw materials from the colonial countries to which American capital is also flowing. America has not departed from her position of isolation. If she is beginning to occupy herself somewhat with world affairs, it is more with Far-Eastern and South American affairs than with European affairs.

When the question of an American loan to Germany was being discussed, the director of the Morgan Trust, Lamont, declared that it would be difficult for the banks to mobilise capital for Europe. He stated that the banks do not possess so large a capital, but must procure it from the great mass of the small middle-class. But these people see that Europe is being torn to pieces and that it is being threatened by war and revolution, and they say that unless the European bourgeoisie create order in their own house, they must not hope for aid from America. This was the main reason why America did not adopt the plan of Lloyd George. But there were other reasons. Lloyd George, politically speaking, was seeking to form an Anglo-American Coalition against France. America knows very well that the French policy in Europe is one of disruption. America is not yet prepared to bind herself finally to England. As I said in my report on the liquidation of the Versailles Peace, British policy in the Far East is not yet finally determined. England has not undertaken any definite obligations towards Japan. America is still uncertain as to whether it will not be necessary in the future war in the East to become an opponent of England. America and England are not only two great industrial Powers, competing for the world market, they are also two great naval powers. America has overtaken the British fleet and still does not know whether the necessity of war will not compel her to oppose the British on the high seas. If such a situation should arise, France will not be the enemy, and might even be an ally. The French submarines will then present the means of cutting off raw materials and foodstuffs from Britain, and the French harbours, which are distributed over the whole Atlantic and Indian Oceans, might offer supporting bases for the American fleet. And America, which is creating such a din about militarism in Europe, takes care not to insist at Washington that France should refrain from building submarines.

On the other hand, as far as Soviet Russia is concerned, the plan of Lloyd George came to grief owing to a slight error which he entertained regarding Soviet Russia. I will not deny that we have some intelligence and that we are very cool-headed, but Lloyd George was somewhat mistaken as to our intentions. He was, perhaps, the dupe of the Second International and the Mensheviks when he assumed that the New Economic Policy was a parachute whereby we meant to lower ourselves gradually to the level of capitalism. Soviet Russia declared at Genoa and later at The Hague that she was prepared to make concessions to foreign capital in return for credit. But under no circumstances will we hand over our heavy industries and our railways to foreign capitalism. So the plan of Lloyd George was also damaged in the East. He warned the Soviet Delegation during the negotiations in the Villa Albertis that if he died politically, so great a friend of ours would not come again to the fore and that our enemies would gain the upper hand. We said to ourselves, God save us from our friends—against our enemies we know how to defend ourselves. So perished the plan of Lloyd George.

### 3.—THE ANGLO-AMERICAN DEBT AGREEMENT.

When the new Conservative Cabinet was formed, it had to adopt new methods of seeking a rapprochement with America. If Mahomet will not go to the mountain, the mountain must go to Mahomet, and so the British Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Baldwin, a partner in the firm of Baldwin, Ltd., went to America and brought back with him a pact. Lloyd George expressed the impression this produced when he said that a cold shudder ran down the backs of Englishmen when it was officially reported that the British Government had definitely pledged itself to pay for sixty years, more than thirty million pounds sterling annually to the United States on behalf of the debts incurred by Britain in the name of her allies, and this without expecting to get any contribution from her debtors which would lighten the burden of the British taxpayers.

No wonder that even so powerful a capitalist country as England felt a shiver run down its back. A victorious Power was to pay its allies in the war 300 million gold roubles yearly without receiving a kopek, not only from wicked Russia, but even from its good allies like France and Italy. Of the taxes which England pays, which are greater than those of any bourgeoisie of any other country, the interest on the allied debts to England represents ten per cent. Ten per cent. of British taxation for the payment of unpaid interest of the allies to England. It is in this way that England is seeking closer relations with America. But this was not the only consequence of the bankruptcy of Lloyd George's plan. The second consequence was that England was obliged to ask herself what was going to happen next in France?

### 4.—ENGLAND AND THE RUHR.

America refrained from bringing the pressure of her dollars to bear upon France in order to compel her either to pay her debts or to declare herself ready to reduce her army, to minimise the danger of war in Europe, and to reduce the burden of reparations upon Germany. England was faced with the question as to what method she should adopt in her fight against France. There, too, she was faced with her extremely deplorable military balance-sheet. England's strength lay in the fact that she was an island. Neither the plans of invasion of Napoleon nor of Germany were realised. But England after the war was faced with the fact that she had ceased to be an island. The development of air fleets and the development of chemical warfare have done more than reveal England's Achilles' heel—they have shown that England consists entirely of Achilles' heels. If you read Major Lefebucke's book, which describes the development of chemical warfare—and Major Lefebucke was one of the leading British chemists during the war—you will be forced to the conclusion that France with her air fleet is in the position to reduce England's industrial centres to ruins. The relation of the British air fleet to that of France, which as you know was discussed in the British House of Lords on March 23, is little short of catastrophic. England possesses (April, 1923) 35 air squadrons of 529

aeroplanes, 23 of which are in the colonies, Egypt, India, Palestine, Mesopotamia, and Constantinople. France has an air programme of 2,163 aeroplanes (1923) and actually possesses 1,722 aeroplanes. In the air France is accordingly three times as powerful as England. It is one of the little ironies of history that it is the Francophile clique in England, headed by the "Morning Post," which is now leading the campaign for the enlargement of the British air fleet. In any case, Lord Grey was obliged to state in the British House of Lords that England could not risk a break with France. In such circumstances, England was faced with the question: what is going to happen next in the matter of reparations? The dollar stood at 9,000 marks and it was clear which way things were tending. The Paris Conference then took place. At the Conference England produced a programme which, as far as figures went, was no more favourable to Germany than the French proposal, but which gave France no security. France rejected this programme. The German programme was not even brought forward. Bonar Law knew as well as Poincaré that the German Foreign Minister was waiting in the anteroom with his plan, but they did not have him called in. Many people believe, and the good German public believes it to this very day, that this was a comedy of errors. The English demanded more from Germany than the French, and were even bringing matters to a break with the latter. They wished to save Germany, and although they knew that Bergmann was waiting on the mat, he was not called in.

The riddle is quite a simple one. England in Paris was pursuing a policy of provocation. She wanted France to act alone and occupy the Ruhr. The plan was obvious. Since England was not in a position to defeat French imperialism, French imperialism must be induced to break its neck against the resistance of Germany. The British Government knew that finally it would not be able to tolerate the occupation of the Ruhr by the French. If France remains in the Ruhr, she will, by the union of German coal with Lorraine ores, form the basis not only for French militarism, but for the economic domination of Europe by French capitalism at least as far as Beresina. The English know very well that this cannot be permitted. But the scheme was to allow French ambitions to be wrecked upon their very object. England knew that with the fall of the petty-bourgeois Government, the fall of Wirth, a Government representing heavy industry had come to power, and that the German Volkspartie, the party of the large industrialists, who had fought for years against the policy of paying reparations, could not come to power without attempting to offer resistance. British policy was a policy of provocation, of which few examples are to be found in history. In London neutrality was declared. In Berlin the British Ambassador, Lord D'Abernon, was the driving force spurring the German bourgeoisie to resistance. It is related that Lord D'Abernon, who was once chairman of the Dette Publique Ottomane, and who, in addition to his interest in pretty women and horses, is also a financier, is speculating on the German bourse upon the fall of the mark. We

have so great a respect for the English lords that we are convinced that they would never allow politics to be mixed with finance. But let what will be said of the noble passions of Lord D'Abernon, he is nevertheless pursuing the interests of British policy. Curzon, in London, spoke of non-intervention, while Lord D'Abernon was attempting to force Germany into a fight in which he naturally promised that Britain would come to the help of Germany at the critical moment.

Thus England speculated that Poincaré would break his neck against the resistance of the German miners, financed by the bourgeoisie, and that at the right moment the struggle would be ended by a compromise by which the iron and coal trust would indeed be formed, but with the participation of England and the United States. As the United States and England are economically stronger than France, England hoped that in the end, in connection with the financially weak but organisationally strong German bourgeoisie, she would dominate the iron and coal trusts. This plan was furthered by the partner of Lord D'Abernon, the German bourgeoisie.

Comrades, the events in the Ruhr during the past six months deserve the most careful attention of the whole international working class. They show that the international bourgeoisie is not in a position to restore capitalist economy, and that even the bourgeoisie of the individual countries are not in a position to subordinate the interests of their individual groups to their common interests. The German bourgeoisie is now nothing but a pack of hyenas fighting over every morsel of carrion. As a class it has a great world political interest in moderating the Peace of Versailles. But it is helping Poincaré, inasmuch as every clique of German capitalists is fighting for its own immediate interests. Wherein lay the problem of resistance? It was to support the German workers in the Ruhr until Poincaré realised that he was unable to break the resistance of the miners. Instead of this the German bourgeoisie, under the cry of national defence, conducted a policy which I will illustrate by a few facts. The German bourgeoisie received many milliards of paper marks from the State as "help for the Ruhr" in order to pay the workers' wages when they were not working. They received two hundred milliard paper marks for discounting their commercial bills. This was two hundred million gold marks. The German bourgeoisie received perhaps one-third of the German gold fund with which to buy cheap securities, and with these securities, cheap coal. By the end of January the dollar had reached 49,000 marks. It was forced down to 20,000 and even to 19,000. The German bourgeoisie, as our reporter on economic policy, Comrade Pavlovsky, will set forth in greater detail in a special article to the "Communist International," went to one counter of a bank, received paper marks as credit, and went to another part of the bank and there purchased dollars at less than half their price. When more than 300 million gold marks had thus been sucked out, there began a wild speculation, led by Stinnes, for covering in dollars. The results are well known.

To-day's telegrams report the dollar at 100,000 marks. The resistance of the German bourgeoisie was abandoned. They forced up prices to such an extent that the working class would be able only by a ten-fold increase of their wages to purchase what they did before the occupation of the Ruhr. But the German bourgeoisie attempted with the aid of the Government to force wages down. The Wolff Agency on March 8 declared outright that wages would now have to be reduced. In all negotiations between employers and workers the representative of the Government declared in favour of a reduction in wages. The result was that since February 8 the German workers in the occupied area have received no increases, whereas increases have been granted to the officials. There followed a spontaneous outburst of strikes, starting in the Ruhr and spreading over the whole of Germany, during which, as you know, the representative of the German Government, Doctor Lutterbeck, turned to General Degoutte with the plea of the great example of Thiers in 1871, and requested that the bill of exchange which the French bourgeoisie signed in 1871 should be honoured. In 1871 Bismarck helped to crush the Paris Commune, and Lutterbeck now demanded that the French should help to crush the uprising in the Ruhr. This document, which should be spread in every country by all the parties of the Communist International, not by the German alone, as a classic instance of the betrayal of the movement for national emancipation by the bourgeoisie, is proof that the bourgeoisie have abandoned their resistance against French imperialism. When the German Chancellor, Cuno, speaking in Münster two weeks after the letter of Doctor Lutterbeck, said, "The resistance is not at an end, we shall continue it," this was an attempt of restitution in integrum—a restoration of virginity, which, unfortunately, is not known to history. The German bourgeoisie is prepared to capitulate to Poincaré at the expense of the German proletariat. The German bourgeoisie proposed to the German Government on behalf of heavy industry, commerce, and agriculture, to supply five hundred million gold marks per annum for the payment of reparations, on condition that the eight-hour day was abandoned, and the railways delivered to the industrialists, i.e., that the capitalists would receive the right of buying up Germany wholesale and retail. Since the proletariat was not in a position to seize the securities of the bourgeoisie, the bourgeoisie is seizing the State in the true sense of the word by depriving it of all its independent economic sources and placing all the burdens upon the proletariat.

We believe that the defeat of the German bourgeoisie on the Ruhr and the victory of Poincaré have already taken place, but not yet formally declared. It is still a question, however, whether Poincaré will be able to seize the whole fruit of the victory, or whether he will be obliged to surrender part of the booty to England, which naturally is attempting to give the appearance of again saving Germany. The German bourgeoisie is not even capable of capitulation. It let loose all the dogs of nationalism against the French, and

now they are hanging at its own throat. It wished to capitulate by provoking an uprising of the Communists in the Ruhr in order then to cry that the Communists had opened the ranks to the French, to crush the Communists and to fling the Fascisti and nationalists, a part of whom might have turned against the Government, against the working class. This scheme miscarried owing to the cool-headedness of the Communist Party, and the German bourgeoisie do not know what the next steps should be. The offer is an offer for the enslavement of Germany, but the bourgeoisie wants itself to be the slavedriver. It does not give the French the possibility of itself conducting the pillage, and French imperialism fears that the guarantees will be merely paper guarantees. As the situation now appears, an agreement will be come to which will deliver Germany over to Entente imperialism; but it is possible that the situation will remain unaltered for several months. When the fight in the Ruhr began, Poincaré in a speech dealing with the German proposals for an international commission of bankers, which should determine how much Germany should pay, adopted a tone which reminds us of the notes of Chicherin. He said that France would never permit international finance to determine how much France should receive and how much she needs. This Socialist tirade of M. Poincaré against international finance was really directed against America and England. It is quite obvious then in such an international commission British and American banks would be the suppliers of credit and would therefore play a dominating role. If France should triumph in the Ruhr, it would by no means follow that American and British capital would be excluded. But since France declares that she will not leave the Ruhr until all payments have been made, it means that she, in a military sense, holds the object of exploitation in her own hands, and so reduces the influence of the dollar and the pound sterling. Whether the fight in the Ruhr will assume revolutionary forms, whether the corpse of passive resistance will pollute the atmosphere, or whether an agreement will be arrived at, one thing is clear: the six months of the Ruhr occupation have set Germany back economically for several years. The mere adaptation of wages to prices will mean a revolution in wages. The financial prospects of Germany are absolutely hopeless. The expectation the German bourgeoisie entertained of an American loan was absolutely without foundation. We knew that when we asked for a loan at Genoa, but the German bourgeoisie still believes. And then comes Keynes, the friend of Germany, who says in the London "Nation" that the German bourgeoisie at the best can hope only for a very modest loan, by way of a charitable gift, just enough to buy cigars, but not enough to ameliorate Germany's financial plight. Germany is, therefore, faced with extensive economic disruption. This for England means that she will lose for a considerable time one of her best customers. And here I come to the relation between the defeat of Britain in the Ruhr and her Russian policy.

## 4.—THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN CONFLICT.

An examination of the principal statistics of British foreign trade reveals the following:—

From 1921 to 1922 British exports to non-British countries increased from 310 million pounds to 336 million pounds.

British exports to the British colonies fell from 208 millions to 198 millions.

In general, trade between Britain and her colonies since the war increased by 2 per cent., which, when we remember what a revolution has occurred in prices and the value of the pound, is a very modest figure. It is particularly modest in view of Britain's striving to consolidate her trade with her colonies.

Exports to Germany which in 1913 amounted to 29 million pounds sterling, in 1921 were 12 million pounds and rose in 1922 to 24 million pounds. This shows that Britain's trade with Central Europe, in spite of the post-war disorganisation, grew in greater proportions than her trade with her colonies. And now we see that this market, the Central European market, the German market, has been destroyed for many a year to come by the events in the Ruhr. This is why the colonial tendency in British politics, the tendency of Lord Beaverbrook, is growing in influence, in spite of the fact that it is contradicted economically by Britain's trade balance. A section of the British bourgeoisie says that European economy is doomed to destruction, and therefore it is more and more directing its attention to the colonies.

The expression of this tendency was Curzon's note to Soviet Russia. It was delivered almost simultaneously with a note to Germany and which was conceived in the bluntest terms, and in which Curzon demanded that the German bourgeoisie should pay what France was demanding. At the first glance it seemed to be a piece of sheer folly, since Curzon addressed Russia and the German bourgeoisie almost in an identical manner. But there was method in this madness. The colonial tendency was seeking to carry into effect a policy which meant the delivery of Germany to France; Britain was to have a very small share, but in return France was to refrain from seeking a foot-hold in Russia in place of England. You will ask—Why the fight against Soviet Russia and why the change in British policy towards Soviet Russia? The reason is to be found, as I have said, partly in the collapse of the plan of Lloyd George, partly in the development within Russia, partly in the Near East.

To begin with Russia. As I stated, Lloyd George regarded the new economic policy as a bridge by which Soviet Russia was to pass over to capitalism. He hoped for the spiritual and moral collapse of the Communist Party of Russia. Lord Curzon, it is true, did not study Marxism at Eton, but there are facts which are obvious even to a British junker. These facts are very simple. Russia did not capitulate in the civil war, but on the contrary gained an armed victory. She, hereto, had suffered terrible wounds in the civil war.

Then came the famine. At Genoa the knife of famine was at our throats, and they tried to force us to capitulate. In 1922 we had an average harvest and we overcame the effects of the famine except in those regions where the difficulties of transport made it impossible. For the first time our workers are half on the way to being well-nourished, and are even better nourished than the German workers. This year we exported 23 million poods of grain. If in coming years we have good harvest we shall, and must, export from 150 to 200 million poods, so that the peasant may be able to extend the area of cultivation. The price of food is so low that the peasant will be obliged to reduce the area of cultivation if we do not export. As far as raw materials and grain are concerned, England should welcome this as an escape from the monopoly of America; but from the standpoint of British world policy, of the determination to force Soviet Russia to her knees, what do these 150 million poods signify? 150 million poods mean 150 million gold roubles. They mean that light industry will recover a little, because the peasant will buy its products; they mean that the peasant will receive gold for his grain and will have the money for the further development of industry. The Soviet State, which holds the monopoly of foreign trade, will receive money for the technical equipment of the Red Army.

More, Lloyd George welcomed the new economic policy. But the new economic policy is the basis for the consolidation of Soviet Russia in the Near East. It is nearer from Teheran to Nijni Novgorod than from Aboukhir to London. It is nearer from Kabul to Nijni Novgorod than to Calcutta and London. The Oriental peoples are accustomed to Russian goods. Before the war, the products of Russian industry were beginning to oust British products in the Near East. It is perfectly clear that even if Soviet Russia were not only prepared to renounce propaganda, but even to raise two fingers and swear that Lord Curzon was the greatest friend of the Oriental peoples, the economic changes would nevertheless strengthen the position of Soviet Russia in the Orient. It was these considerations that convinced Curzon that a menace existed to the line of policy, on which he, in accordance with the whole of his past training and upbringing, wished to concentrate, namely, the consolidation of the relations with the colonies and with India in particular. In 1910, in a speech on the role of India in the British Empire, Lord Curzon declared that Persia and Afghanistan were the military bulwarks of India. The interests of British capital demand not so much the occupation of these countries, as that Russia should not enjoy any decisive influence in them. Soviet Russia, in contradistinction to Czarism, seeks neither military nor economic domination in Persia and Afghanistan. But what Lord Curzon fears still more is that the moral influence of Soviet Russia, based upon her trade with the Orient, will raise these countries out of a position of political impotence, and will assist them to become masters in their own house. This would entail the greatest danger to British imperialism. The old Czarist armies could threaten the Indian fortress from without. If Persia and Afghanistan become free peoples, this may create an influence in

India which would strengthen the enemy of British imperialism within the Indian fortress.

Accordingly, Lord Curzon said: Either I succeed in forcing Soviet Russia to her knees now, in drawing her into the channel of British policy, and eliminating her from the list of decisive factors in the East, or I provoke a fight before Soviet Russia becomes dangerous. We know that England is very fond of conducting a war through indirect agents, the notorious telegrams of the Italian representative in Moscow, Amadory, completely unmasked the British plan. Amadory, who was a petty official without any political influence, was himself incapable of developing this plan. He reflected in the main the views of the representatives of the capitalist States. The plan of Lord Curzon was this: England and Italy would withdraw from Russia, and then would begin the pressure of the British vassals, i.e., of the Baltic and North Sea Powers. Germany would remain alone in Moscow. But German industry—so Lord Curzon presumed—was declining into ruin and had not sufficient resources to purchase grain and raw materials. Neither, after the disruption of the Ruhr, would she have sufficient resources to deliver industrial products to Russia. Amadory, in his telegrams, expressed it quite bluntly; he said that Russia would be cut off from the sources of foreign currency. In other words, this would mean the financial and economic blockade of Russia. Amadory proceeded to ask: What would be the relation of Russia to the neighbouring States? After the break passive resistance would become strengthened and pass over to active resistance. In other words, the Petlura gangs, the S.R.'s and all that galley, and the Georgian Mensheviks would receive further supplies of pound notes. They would be passed into Russia through the Rumanian and the Polish fronts. Whereupon—so speculated Curzon—we would be forced to reflect whether, instead of looking on while our crops were annihilated, it would not be better to make a raid into the west.

British policy counted upon provoking us into a war with Poland. That was why the British Commander-in-Chief, the Earl of Cavan, went direct from Rome, where he had conversed with Mussolini, to Warsaw. He said to the Polish Government: In 1920 you lost the war because you had a young army, were badly organised, and had not the support of England. Now you can count upon England's support. The plan was to force us into a war with Poland, the consequences of which Lord Curzon reckoned would be that we should have to increase the burden of taxation, the discontent of a peasantry would awaken, and through the economic strain of the new war we should, so Curzon fondly hoped, be smashed. The second hope was based upon speculations as to Lenin's illness. Comrades, we are historic materialists, but Lord Curzon, who once rode on an elephant to Delhi, is a believer in the cult of hero-worship, and is convinced that since Lenin is ill everybody here has lost their senses.

We value the role of Comrade Lenin; it is greater than a man like Curzon can comprehend. But Curzon reckoned without the

twenty-five years' history of our party. The chairman of the Executive Committee, Comrade Zinoviev, often used to tell me—and Bucharin and I denied it—that we shall be subject to new interventions and that our enemies will test with bayonets how much we are worth in the absence of Comrade Lenin. When I was abroad recently I asked a very shrewd American journalist: Why does Curzon want war? Is it that he fears we shall become too strong, or is it that he believes we are weak? He replied: Curzon fears that you may become too strong and therefore wants to test how much you weigh without Lenin. British policy counts upon the disintegration and destruction of our party by the new economic policy.

I need not here recount what pretexts Lord Curzon used to bring about a break with Soviet Russia. The tales of secret conspiracies conducted by us in the Orient fall very well from the lips of the representative of a government which during the war, while an ally of Czarist Russia, at the same time conspired in an outrageous manner against Russia. This is proved in the most indisputable fashion by the British documents which fell into the hands of German agents in Teheran in 1916, and which were published in Berlin in 1917. But at the present juncture it is far more important to examine what was the sequel to the matter.

You know what Russia's policy was. Soviet Russia declared that if Lord Curzon wanted a war he must conduct it himself. We declined it with thanks. Soviet Russia perceived a trap. We were to be so insulted that our self-respect would not permit us to avoid a break.

Comrades, we are the Government of Workers and Peasants. If within ten years we become very strong—as I hope—and with us, the whole European working class becomes strong, we shall perhaps insist upon a definite ceremonial which the Lord Curzons, if they still exist, will have to adopt. You know that when Japan severed herself from the capitalist world, she demanded that the Dutch merchants when they entered Japanese ports should make kow-tow. Perhaps we shall adopt some such ceremonial in future. But we said that now there is no question of ceremonial and prestige; the point was that Lord Curzon wanted war and we did not want war, and if they insisted in forcing war upon us, we should refuse to fight, but would wait until we could prove with the minimum of sacrifice that it was dangerous to trifle with Soviet Russia.

Lord Curzon is now letting it be trumpeted abroad that he had gained a victory. It is true that Soviet Russia had refused to recall her ambassadors, but she had paid 130,000 gold roubles and had promised that she would not carry on Communist propaganda in the British colonies, and 130,000 gold roubles were not to be despised. But Lord Curzon forgot one thing in his triumph. With the stupidity in which the scholars of Eton outshine even those of Potsdam, he had overlooked two points. The one was Russia. Lord Curzon, when he was Viceroy of India, was responsible for the Indian national movement. His policy of partitioning Bengal

advanced the revolutionary movement in India several years. In Soviet Russia, where the working class has assumed the dictatorship, national consciousness has become a part of the dictatorship. Count Mirbach and General Hoffmann were the national upbringers of the Russian people. When we foolish left Communists at that time opposed the teachings of our leader, Lenin, and refused to sign the treaty of Brest-Litovsk, Comrade Lenin said: What do you know of the Treaty of Brest? it is still a scrap of paper. **We shall have to suffer still worse defeats, and the revolutionary masses of Russia will know that in order to defend ourselves we must have the weapons and Hoffmann and Mirbach will become the national upbringers of our masses.** Lord Curzon attempted to carry this work further. We can promise him that we shall translate the things he said to the representatives of 150,000,000 people into popular Russian so that every peasant can understand them. But Lord Curzon had not yet struck the balance of the recent conflict as far as the Orient is concerned. He thinks that the Orient will say: Soviet Russia feared a war with England and therefore she cannot defend us; so the Orient must lick the shoes of Lord Curzon. Lord Curzon underestimates the situation in the East. The masses of the East will understand that the representative of Soviet Russia, Comrade Vorovsky, fell in the fight for their emancipation.

Lord Curzon wanted the break; he wanted the break even on Sunday when our last Note was already in his hands. But he could not break, although we, to the very end, firmly refused to withdraw our ambassadors. He could not break because the common-sense policy of the Soviet Government convinced not only the British Labour Party but both of the British Liberal parties that it was Lord Curzon that wanted war and not us. Lord Curzon could not force the break because the industrial elements within the British Conservative Party demanded to know where a break would lead. It is sufficient only to read Garvin's article in the "Observer" in order to realise the division within the Conservative camp. Curzon was beaten within his own party because the industrialists feared to take a leap in the dark. And from their standpoint they were right. The break would mean war all along the line, and British imperialism would feel the pressure not perhaps where it was prepared for it but throughout the whole region of the British power in Asia. The retreat of Curzon, his renouncement of the demand that Russia should recall her ambassadors from Kabul and Teheran, were due not merely to the resistance of the British industrialists, but also to the bankruptcy of his hopes on the solidarity of the Allies and the neutrals. Italy, on whom he chiefly counted, drew back. Italy needs Russia because the latter can supply her with grain in exchange for industrial products, whereas in America she would have to pay for grain with gold. France, even after the Curzon Note, allowed the Russian Red Cross Mission to enter Marseilles and sent a commercial mission to Moscow. This by no means signifies that she had finally made up her mind to steal a march on England in Moscow, but it does signify that she had not finally made up her

mind to fall in with Curzon's plans regarding Russia. Denmark, at the very moment of the Anglo-Russian conflict, signed a commercial treaty with Soviet Russia.

Lord Curzon did not gain his end. He succeeded only in profoundly wounding the national feelings of the Russian masses. The British Government, in refusing to come to terms with Soviet Russia in the Near East thereby provided the seeds of new conflicts.

Leslie Urqhart, the industrial manager of the intervention, enraged by the fact that Soviet Russia would not assist him in establishing a capitalist-feudal principality upon Russian soil, demanded afresh that the British Government should break with Soviet Russia if the latter refused to return the factories to the British capitalists and to pay her debts. He thereby revealed why a section of the British industrialists are prepared to back the Eastern colonial group of Curzon in its fight against Soviet Russia. The Soviet Government will not allow itself to be beaten to its knees; it will be prepared to let it be war if a foreign power attempts to dispute the conquests of the October Revolution. Therefore we see a grave danger-signal in the Anglo-Russian conflict and we warn the international proletariat that the danger of new interventions has not yet passed. The defeat of Curzon shows how the tendencies cross one another. The breakdown of Germany, and the domination of the colonial group, produced the Note to Russia; the British industrialists, however, were not prepared finally to renounce Europe. They still seek a method of saving their trade with Central Europe. The colonial tendency is beaten back. This, after the experiences of the world war, means that an act has come to a conclusion, but that we are, however, faced with new struggles.

The disruption of Europe and the disruption of capitalism are proceeding, and the Ruhr crisis and the events at The Hague show that the only power which knows what it wants, which will not allow itself to be provoked and which clearly sees in what direction events are tending, is the first proletarian and peasant Power, Soviet Russia. The others do not know what they have to do.

##### 5.—LAUSANNE.

Comrades, Russia is not the only danger to British imperialism. The second enemy in the East is the awakening Mohammedan world, because it finds a State concentration point in Turkey. There are only eight million inhabitants of independent Turkey, but there are sixty million Mohammedan Hindoos, and Turkey's fight for independence serves as a revolutionary factor of the first importance in India against British imperialism, the oppressor of India, because the Mohammedan Hindoos are themselves in a state of ferment. That is the reason why England is attempting to throttle Turkey and why it drove its Greek vassals against the Turks. The Turks triumphed. The fight of the Greeks against Turkey was part of the programme of Lloyd George, namely, to come to an agreement with Russia, which was to develop into a capitalist power, and to abandon its revolutionary role in the East, and following upon that, to destroy

Turkey. Lloyd George neither won Soviet Russia for capitalism, nor destroyed the Turks.

Curzon is seeking to break the revolutionary front in the East in another manner. He has adopted the policy of his old teacher, Lord Beaconsfield, namely, War with Russia! Peace with Turkey! Turkey is too weak at present to fight for Mesopotamia and Arabia, that is, to win back what England seized. According to Curzon's reckoning, it is easier to purchase eight million Turks and to hold the conquered regions with the aid of their influence, than to come to an understanding with Soviet Russia. This policy of Curzon's produced at Lausanne the most striking change of scene ever known to diplomacy.

The French came to Lausanne as the friends of Turkey and tried to play off the Turks against England. It ended by the French becoming the enemies of the Mohammedans and Curzon their prophet. This was owing to the pressure of events. France was the old creditor power of Europe. Sixty per cent. of the debts of Turkey are in the hands of the French. The French rentiers used to lend money to the exotic countries. Turkey's chief debtor was France, not England. At Lausanne, it was not the territorial questions of Arabia and Mesopotamia that were the most important, but the question of what was to be paid, how much was to be paid, and what guarantees for payments were to be given. And on this rock the diplomatic game of France came to wreck. England behaved in a very sensible manner, it fought for English causes, then made concessions, and finally "supported" France loyally in its demands. The bankruptcy of the first Lausanne Conference was due to the financial demands of France.

England sought to leap into the Angora saddle, not only to destroy the revolutionary significance of Turkey, not only to throw France out of the saddle in the Near East, but for yet another reason. Friendship with Turkey guarantees Mosul to England at the price of small economic concessions to the ruling class. Once the oil of Mosul is secure, Turkey can be turned against Baku. This plan, it seems to me, as I pointed out in my last report, is based upon a misconception of the situation in the East. Turkey, which has a population of eight million, has been at war since 1909. The situation of the Turkish peasant is such as was not equalled even in the famine region of Russia. It was only due to the great energy of the Government and the conviction of the peasants that they were fighting for the national independence that Turkey was able to win in the war with Greece. To attempt to lead these peasants into a war with any country that is not attacking Turkey is a game which will meet with the same fate as the game of Lloyd George.

Lord Curzon passes for being the best informed Englishman on Eastern questions. The "New Statesman," the organ of the Fabian Society, wrote of him that he knew everything that was to be known about the East, except what ought to be done in the East. Lord Curzon believes that Turkey still looks the same as it did in the time of Abdul Hamed. But it only requires one or two facts from the

life of Turkey to show how mistaken Curzon is. In Turkey, where the power of religion is stronger than in Europe, where the Sultanate has been bound up with the Caliphate for centuries, whereby the Sultanate learned religious methods, the Sultanate, when the British got it into their hands, was severed from the Caliphate and the Sultan was dethroned; and yet the Mullahs were unable to create an extensive popular movement against the Government on these grounds. When, at the congress at Baku, we appointed a woman to the Presidium, the Oriental Communists came to us and said it would be better if we did not do this: in the East women must not take part in the assemblies of men—and we ought to respect this superstition. When we now read that at the Economic Conference at Smyrna 300 women participated, and followed the discussions with an attention which proved they were absorbed in politics; when we remember that the Smyrna Congress, which had been organised by the Government, broke up into class divisions, in which the workers fought against the merchants, and the merchants quarrelled with the peasants, then we see that the years of war have brought about a profound social differentiation in Turkey, which makes it impossible to judge the East in the manner in which Curzon judges it, viz., that it is only necessary for the British will to express itself in sovereigns in order for it to be sovereign in Turkey.

More. Soviet Russia supported revolutionary Turkey not from faith in every Pasha who calls himself People's Commissary and sends a telegram to Lenin, but from the profound conviction that the interests of the Russian peasants ran parallel with the interests of the peasants of the East, and that on this point the interests of Soviet Russia and of the International proletariat were identical. The result of this support is that the masses in Turkey do not regard Russia as an enemy, but as the only Power which helped them in difficult times. When Lord Curzon adopts the ideas of Lord Beaconsfield, he reminds us of the Russian proverb of the man who came to a wedding singing funeral songs and to a funeral singing wedding songs. One of the best of English writers, Sidelotham, in a sketch of Lord Curzon, said he was a man with ideas of the past century. It unfortunately appears that not only had we to sweep Czarism out of Russia, and to fight the ideas of the Russian junkers of the last hundred years, but we must also sweep away the representatives and the ideas of the eighteenth century in England. This is a very difficult task. But at any rate, we are convinced that the new policy, which bases itself on the masses, will triumph over the old policy of plunder which Lord Curzon derives from his ancient times.

## 6.—LIQUIDATION OF THE WASHINGTON TREATY.

Comrades, permit me now in a few words to describe the fifth factor which marks the change in the international situation in the last few months

The Washington Agreement of January, 1922, between the great Powers interested in the Far East was to stabilise the position in

that part of the world. Russia was not invited, was not recognised as a great Power, and not regarded as interested in the Far East. Two weeks later we marched into Vladivostok. The great Powers did not come to any agreement which solved the problem of the Far East. The Eastern Asiatic question is first and foremost a question of the partition of China amongst the great Powers. They contented themselves with an agreement which stabilised the relations of armaments until such a time as they were in a position to arrive at agreement. This agreement has already been flung on to the scrap heap.

“ It now looks as though even the treaty for the limitation of naval armaments, which was negotiated by the representatives of Great Britain, the United States, France, Italy and Japan, might after all prove merely a scrap of paper.”

So writes Archibald Hurd, a foremost English writer on naval questions in the January, 1923, number of the “ Fortnightly Review.” The Washington Agreement limited the number of dreadnoughts and forbade the construction of new dreadnoughts. The relation that thereby resulted was very favourable to England and America, but Japan knew what this signified. She knew that it meant the future throttling of Japan. She submitted to the Washington Treaty, it is true, but she changed her strategic plan. This was to provoke war in the Pacific and to smash the American dreadnoughts before they could reach the Philippines. This plan was altered. The Japanese strategic plan now is, as is clear from all the military measures adopted by Japan, to allow the enemies to attack. Japan stopped constructing dreadnoughts and proceeded to build fast cruisers and submarines. In 1925 Japan will have no less than twenty-five modern ships of the line and cruisers and seventy submarines. The English naval expert, Bywater, recently published an article in which he showed that while the Washington Conference was in progress 152,000 workers were busily employed in the Japanese shipyards. Not a single worker has been discharged. 153,000 workers are still engaged in the Japanese shipyards. Japan is passing over to a policy of defence in Chinese waters where the strategic situation is such that it is easier to pass through the Dardanelles than to attack Japan through the Chinese Sea and the Tsuschimeng. By the secret fortifications of the Bonin Isles, which were carried out before the Washington Conference, Japan greatly strengthened her strategic position. The United States also did not remain idle.

“ It was said by idealists,” writes Archibald Hurd, in the above quoted article, “ that this war would end all wars; but it seems as though it had merely sown the seeds of further wars. The fact that no mean proportion of the nations are poverty stricken to the verge of bankruptcy, while some of them are so insolvent that they can never hope to pay any dividend to their debtors, appears to be without influence on the mad race in armaments which they are still pursuing. Leaders of thought and action in the United States protest that they will do nothing to help bind up the wounds

of the maimed nations of Europe until those nations show their repentance in reduced armament budgets. **But, in the meantime, in the budget which has just been presented to Congress the American people are themselves asked to devote 256,552,000 dols. to the support of the Army, and 289,881,000 dols. to the maintenance and increase of the Navy."** The United States is increasing its small cruisers, destroyers, etc., in spite of the fact that it has not to defend communications with widely distributed colonial possessions, as is the case with Great Britain.

"If accepted by the American public and endorsed by Congress, it may, indeed, prove the death-blow to the Washington Treaty," writes Hurd. . . . Great Britain for its part, is beginning the reconstruction of the world by spending nine million pounds sterling on the construction of the naval base of Singapore. This signifies not merely a complete change of England's policy in that part of the world, but even a **step towards America, a price which England is paying to America at the expense of Japan.** It signifies the concentration of the main British fleet, in the neighbourhood of the Pacific. Thus, Britain also is circumventing the Washington Treaty which forbade fortifications in the Pacific. This situation in the Far East means a **growing aggravation of American-Japanese differences.** It makes Japan to a large degree dependent upon Soviet Russia. The fight will be fought out on Chinese territory. All the internal conflicts of China are more or less the conflicts of the imperialist powers within China. Russia is a neighbour of China along an extensive frontier line. This would mean that Japan would have to fight with divided forces. Peace and friendship with Russia are absolutely essential to Japan in order to make it difficult for America to ally herself with Soviet Russia against Japan. It is these considerations that are inducing Japan to conclude peace with Soviet Russia.

These are the most important of the new factors. Allow me to draw some conclusions from them.

The first conclusion springs to the eye. The famous reconstruction of Europe has given place to what a witty Russian writer has called his novel—"The Trust for the Destruction of Europe." Taken together, the policy of all the capitalist powers is a trust for the destruction of Europe. If this had been deliberate, matters could not have been arranged differently. It means that to-day, as at the Fourth Congress, **our policy must be based upon the prospect of the further disruption of the world.** That in spite of the capitalist offensive, there are no grounds for believing in the possibility of capitalist reconstruction, but on the contrary, **we are on the threshold of an acceleration in the destruction of Europe.**

American capitalism has temporarily strengthened itself. In Britain no improvement of the economic situation is to be observed. But the old Continent, for which we are now chiefly fighting, where the greatest revolutionary factors are at work, is not moving towards peace, but towards big wars. John Kennedy Turner, the

author of an excellent book on the part of America in the war, which is better propaganda for the dictatorship of the proletariat than much of our own literature, remarks in his preface that the size of the armies and the military budgets are greater than before the war, and that therefore the danger of war is now greater than in 1914.

This is the first conclusion.

The second conclusion is that the only revolutionary power, Soviet Russia, is at present in danger. We are in danger just because we are becoming stronger and because the hopes of the capitalist for our destruction are imperilled. We ask you: Do you know that the stronghold of the proletarian world revolution, Soviet Russia, is in permanent danger, and that Lausanne and the Curzon Note are the alarm signals? Soviet Russia is strong, and will defend herself and not allow herself to be defeated; but only if she is not compelled to rely upon her own strength. It will depend upon the international proletariat whether a new attack upon Soviet Russia is to be fended off by Soviet Russia alone or whether the whole proletariat will assume a counter-defensive.

The third conclusion is that the German working class and with it the German revolution, is in the greatest peril. Zinoviev said that in Germany we are marching steadily forward—and I fully agree with him. It is a fact. The disintegration of the German bourgeoisie is increasing day by day, and thereby a new danger zone is being created. The German bourgeoisie attempted to transform the Ruhr strike into a Ruhr uprising. It attempted to crush the German working class before the working class is in a position to crush it. The German Party manoeuvred quite correctly, but the need is so great that the party cannot limit itself merely to the cry: Do not let yourself be provoked! It will have to fight. And therein lies a great danger. Germany is a colony of France, and a colony cannot be exploited if it is given over to revolution. Therefore, France has an interest in crushing the German revolution. Lutterbeck's request was rejected, but another time, when the danger is greater, it will be conceded. The German working class is between two fires: between the German bourgeoisie—Fascism—and French imperialism. We have to say to our French comrades: the French Party is still weak, it is still young, but it has great international duties to perform.

The fourth conclusion is that the revolutionary movement in the East is in danger. The day before yesterday we received the news that in Teheran the Nationalist Semi-Democratic Government has been overthrown by Anglophile elements with the help of English gold. It is clear how the matter stands in Turkey. The elements which are working for an agreement with the Entente and with England are those who wish to crush the Communist movement because it is becoming the centre of the peasants' movement. It is not sufficient to say that we, the Russian Party, will do our duty in the face of this danger. We must here appeal to

our British comrades to direct their attention to colonial matters; we must spur them on, young though they be, to assume a great part of the burden of supporting the revolutionary movement in the Orient, for thereby they will be protecting not only this movement, but also themselves. MacDonald, the leader of the Labour Party, in his speech on the Curzon Note, said that if it were true that the Soviet Government was supporting the revolutionary movement in the East, Curzon was justified in his complaints. If the workers and peasants of Persia, Turkey and India take this as the opinion of the British workers, then woe to the British working class when it comes to fight for power, when it will depend on whether the peasants of Egypt and Persia are its enemies or its friends and whether they will supply it with foodstuffs or not. We direct this appeal to the English comrades. They are Englishmen; that means that they understand world political questions better than anybody else. They can build the bridge from the European proletariat to the slowly developing working class and peasant masses of the Orient.

These are the conclusions I draw. I do not suggest that we shall immediately dethrone Lord Curzon. Neither we nor you can do that. We do not issue violent manifestos, but we direct your attention to the disintegration of the political situation, to the coming struggles, and to the great task that we, as the world party of the proletariat, fighting for its emancipation, have to perform. We have drawn your attention to the work which we have to perform, not merely at the moment of danger, but daily. In these recent months, we have witnessed a deed, the dreadful magnitude of which we hardly realise.

Before the occupation of the Ruhr, before the events that unrolled themselves before the eyes of the proletariat, the representatives of many millions of workers met at The Hague, and this assembly witnessed the danger, understood it, and yet did not raise a finger. For a second time we have lived through the year 1914. That is the great lesson. If the bourgeoisie had been determined we should have had a new war without a revolution. We were not in a position to prevent it. We were too feeble. We must at least grasp the full significance of this fact and draw the conclusion, namely, to increase a thousand-fold the attention we gave to world political questions, not as spectators, but as proletarian fighters. (Prolonged applause.)

# A Blood-reeking Document of Provocation and Shame

*The representative of the Government at Dusseldorf asks permission of General Degoutte to suppress the workers of the Ruhr. He reminds him of Bismarck's kind services in the overthrow of the Paris Commune in 1871.*

Dusseldorf, May 26th.—Lutterbeck, the representative of the Reichspräsident, has addressed to General Denvignes the following appeal:—

Since the forcible removal of the police from the cities of the industrial region, a state of growing public disorder has set in, at first marked by an alarming number of attacks on property. The hostile Communist and syndicalist elements, in their fight against the State, took advantage of the situation to form their so-called "hundreds" without let or hindrance. The first symptom of the great danger ahead was manifested in the events in the Mülheim-Ruhr district. Insurrectionary elements managed to arm themselves under the very noses of the forces of occupation to beleague and to bombard the municipal buildings and to commit heinous offences against the life and property of peaceful citizens in other parts of the town. It was thanks only to the rallying of the orderly elements of the population that the town hall was safeguarded and order was restored with the aid of the slight police force that remained.

However, the developments at Gelsenkirchen on May 23rd and 24th have demonstrated that the Communists would not rest content with the turn of events at Mülheim. At Gelsenkirchen the proletarian "hundreds" violently took possession of the city, occupying the official buildings, demolishing the police headquarters and setting fire to it after having plundered the place. The last remnants of the municipal police were disabled and scattered. In neighbouring towns there were a number of disorders, and a similar situation as that prevailing at Gelsenkirchen arose in the various parts of the industrial district.

As was the case during the disorders at Mülheim, General Degoutte on May 24th prohibited me from dispatching police forces from Duisburg and Hamborn to the scenes of disorder. But I cannot comply with this order without violating my responsibility in the gravest manner. Furthermore, I deem it my duty to express frankly my view of the situation. It seems to me that the French Supreme Command considers the disturbances at Gelsenkirchen as a passing incident. But there can be nothing more misleading than to assume that the movement in the future would confine itself merely to such small local disturbances. Successes like those at Gelsenkirchen are bound to encourage the elements hostile to the State to undertake new ventures. Thus one must foresee the

danger, which is likely to become permanent, of the disturbance of public order.

It is a dangerous game for France to believe that it will be able to restore order at the given moment with perfect ease. The industrial district has become so united that an inflammable spark thrown from one city to another may kindle a flame of revolt which no armed force could overcome, and which would extend beyond the Rhine and create trouble in the West, beyond the frontiers of Germany. This menace at the present moment threatens the whole world, and if the French supreme command can let these disturbances go unpunished, one becomes easily inclined to the suspicion that France has made up her mind to destroy German authority in the Ruhr at any cost, even if this involves a menace to European civilisation as a whole, with a possibility of the eventual establishment of **Mob Rule**.

The game now played has its dangers for France herself. The Army of Occupation is not merely an aggregation of arms, weapons, tanks, and other lifeless instruments of warfare: these are instruments wielded by men whose eyes and ears are open to the events which take place around them. They will carry home with them the seeds of such theories which would be likely to come to **dangerous fruition on French soil**. In view of such danger, I wish to point out the heavy responsibility weighing upon the French Supreme Command in tolerating this anarchical state of affairs. If it will not take measures against it itself, it is at least its duty to give a free hand to the German authorities in the fulfilment of their duties. The Minister President M. Poincaré declared the other day to Socialist Deputy Auriol that collisions were by no means inevitable during an occupation, as that during the 1871-1872, for example, there were no clashes in France. On these grounds I must recall the fact that at the time of the Communist rebellion the German Supreme Command gave every assistance to the French authorities in suppressing the revolt. The same I must demand now in order that no such dangerous events should be possible in the future. I therefore crave your consent to detail police from the cities of Dusseldorf, Duisburg, and Hamborn to the dangerous spots of the industrial district. The police in the aforesaid cities have not been disbanded by the forces of occupation like those in the industrial district, and they are doing their duty openly as they did it in the past, because the forces of occupation are convinced of the usefulness of their services. If this be the case, then it should be a matter of indifference to the Supreme Command as to where the police are active as long as they are ready to act in time in face of any danger.

The police forces are protecting Dusseldorf, Duisburg, and Hamborn, where all danger for the present has been removed. Their place just now therefore is at Gelsenkirchen, where they could render more useful services than where they are now stationed. I must



Antoine Her



therefore ask General Degoutte to leave it to my free and dutiful discrimination to decide which places it would be best to occupy in every individual case. I am prepared to acquaint him from time to time with the measures contemplated, so as to avoid any possibility of conflict between the police and the French troops.

General Degoutte, as military commander, is no doubt well aware of the fact that quick action is the best guarantee of success. The success at which we aim is the protection of order, culture, and civilisation. It is my firm conviction that upon a clear understanding of this situation, the forces of occupation will see it to their interest equally with the German authorities to bring about this success, and that the opposition would be found only among the Bolsheviks and their helpers' helpers. I believe that by this last statement I am fulfilling my responsibility and duty. If my words should fall on deaf ears, then the responsibility henceforth will rest entirely upon the forces of occupation. I therefore beg of you, General, to bring this appeal word for word to the notice of General Degoutte and to explain to him that I consider it urgently necessary to obtain his quick decision in the matter. For the purpose of receiving the reply I will send a representative on the 26th of this month at 11 a.m. to present himself at your headquarters.



# The Comite des Forges and the Occupation of the Ruhr

BY A. KER

*The article printed below was already in the hands of the compositors when we received the sad news of the death of its author, Comrade Antoine Ker. The Editors express their heartfelt condolences with the French Communist Party, which in the person of Comrade Ker loses one of the best informed Communists on the imperialist policy of the French bourgeoisie. His loss will be especially felt in the pending struggles of the German and French proletariat against imperialism, the wounds inflicted by which are so truthfully described in this article by Comrade Ker. His premature death is a great loss to our organ.*

*Our next issue will contain a biography of Comrade Ker.*

When Millerand, President of the French Republic, went to open the Chamber of Commerce of the Moselle on June 2nd last, he was received by the Chamber of Commerce of Metz, in the person of M. Humbert de Wendel, the powerful ironmaster of Hayange and of Moyeuvre, brother of M. Francis de Wendel, President of the Committee of Forges and vice-president of the Union of Metallurgical and Mineral Industries.

A dialogue, eloquent of much, piously reported by the Press, took place between the authorised representative of the industrial oligarchy and the First Magistrate of the State, the avowed agent of the sharks of finance and of the metal industry.

M. de Wendel first of all recalled the sacrifices which were patriotically consented to by the great industrial magnates of the East, and the difficulties encountered by the steel industry of Lorraine in the after-war period.

“From the 15th January to the 15th March,” he said, “the number of blast furnaces in operation in Moselle has been reduced from 40 to 13, but we bear without faltering and without reproach the sacrifices which the circumstances impose upon us.”

Then he formulated in the following manner the wishes of the industrial magnates of Lorraine:—

Firstly.—Provision should be made in order that the metal industry of the East should not be left in the precarious position in which it has existed since the armistice, notably in what concerns the supply of fuel.

Secondly.—Between the industries of the East (of France) and those of Westphalia, direct relations must be established, and the exchange of the natural resources of the two mineral basins secured.

Thirdly.—It is desirable that the temporary period during which the products of Alsace-Lorraine are admitted free into Germany should be extended beyond the date fixed by the Treaty of Versailles.

Fourthly.—Finally, the industrial magnates of Lorraine hope that the forthcoming Franco-German negotiations will offer a propitious occasion for concluding certain big projects which they have been demanding for some time, and particularly the canalisation of the Moselle.

And Daddy Millerand responds:—

“ If we had not occupied the Ruhr, the industry of Lorraine would have suffered much heavier losses than those it has already borne, and would be traversing a far graver crisis than that which it is traversing to-day.”

After such declarations, as suggestive as they are solemn, it were difficult to deny that the whole affair of the Ruhr was set in motion for the benefit of the oligarchy of ironmasters. We shall see how this operation was undertaken with the object of bringing the whole of Westphalian industry under the control of the French metal industry, even at the risk of setting Europe once more to the ravages of fire and sword.

## I.—THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE KINGS OF IRON.

At No. 7 of the Rue de Madrid, in a building partly occupied by a Jesuit Society, is also gathered together the great employers' organisations which control the most powerful private interests: Coal, iron mines, water-power companies, blast-furnaces, foundries, rolling-mills, ironworks, mechanical and naval construction, munitions of war, etc.

Here, in fact, is to be found the offices of the **Committee of Forges of France**, the **Union of Metal and Mineral Industries**, the **Syndicate of the aeroplane industry**, of automobile construction, electrical industries, war material, iron mines, motor industry, naval construction and marine engines, gas concerns and hydraulic and electrical power industries.

This group of invisible powers which hold the monopoly of national wealth and govern in secret our so-called democracy, has for its real chief, M. Robert Pinot, whose ambition it is to name himself before long Pinot-Perigord of Villechenon.

It is impossible to understand the meaning of the Press campaigns, of an internal policy of reaction and of the various international agreements which have followed the Treaty of Versailles, if one does not know how the Committees of the Rue de Madrid are able to subject Parliament, Press and Government to their will, and how the Syndicates of vested interests directed by M. Pinot subordinate the public powers to their every caprice.

### What is the Committee of Forges?

The Committee of Forges is continually confounded with the Union of Metal and Mineral Industries. This is to confound a syndicate with a federation of industries.

The Committee of Forges, reconstituted in 1888 in accordance with the Syndicate Law, is in effect a Syndicate to which belong individually the firms of the heavy industry and it is itself federated to the Union of Metal and Mineral Industries, founded in 1893, which groups at the present time 84 syndicates, national and local, containing altogether more than 7,000 metallurgical and mineral concerns as well as electrical and mechanical construction firms.

But as a matter of fact the Committee of Forges wield an incontestable supremacy in the union. The Syndicates of Engineers, Boilermakers and Foundry Masters, after a violent secession, returned to the Union submissive and repentant.

In the Committee of Forges itself, the power is wielded by a few big companies represented in the Management Committee: The groups of de Wendel, the Steel Works of Rombas (Heurteau, Th. Laurent), The Mineral and Metallurgical Society of Lorraine (Dreux, Paul Girod), The Naval Steel Works of Homecourt (Heurteaux, Th. Laurent again), The Chatillon-Commentry Ironworks Company (Darcy, Leon-Levy, Taffanel), The Commentry-Fourchambault and Decazeville Association (Picot), The Steel Works of Longwy (Dreux, Paul Labbé), The Blast Furnaces, Forges and Steel Works of Denain and Anzin (Pralon and Nervo) (I).

The Schneiders and the Creusots no longer form part of the Management Board.

It will thus be seen that the Federal apparatus of the French Metal industries is only a matter of form, and the whole organisation is in point of fact in the hands of a very select oligarchy. It might even be said that the direction of this enormous organisation of employers is concentrated entirely in the hands of M. Pinot, delegated vice-President, that is to say, Director, of the Committee of Forges, General Director of the Metallurgical and Mineral Union, General Secretary of the Committee of Forges and of the Iron Mines of the East and of France, General Director of the Syndicate of Manufacturers of Railway Material, Managing Director of the Chamber of Syndicates of Hydraulic Power, of Electro-Metallurgical and Electro-Chemical Industries, General Secretary of the Chamber of Syndicates of Manufacturers of War Material, and of the Chamber of Syndicates of Naval and Marine Engine Construction.

Le Play, in his book, "The Workers of the West," said: "The

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Note: I.—These big companies have ministers, ex-ministers and influential members of Parliament for their advocates and counsels. And these latter play the double role of legal counsel and confidential persons of the magnates and financiers within the Government and in public office. M. Viviani on June 8th last, was seized by a sudden illness when he was pleading the cause of the Steel Works of Longwy at the Palace.

iron industry has such a power from the social point of view, that its progressive development has been generally adopted as the true measure of the development of Society." Perverted pupil of Le Play, whom he sometimes affects to admire, M. Pinot is satisfied to regard the private interests of the big ironmasters as so vast as to be indistinguishable from the public interest.

The Iron Kings are not content with merely defending their interests, they have forged the doctrine which justifies putting the State in servitude to their aims. In several declarations, M. Pinot has demanded the direct control by capitalism of the wheels of Government, of high policy as well as of economics; he places the "producers" above governors, in national and international spheres—the necessities of world reconstruction having demonstrated the impotence of States for which must be substituted the great trusts and the international entente of the employers.

Industrial forces, of immeasurable power, to which a free field is given, are becoming the real State, the State chaotic, but the State omnipotent.

#### The Invisible Power.

The government of the Rue de Madrid, more solid than any Minister of State, since it makes and unmakes ministers, reigns master at the Chamber of Sharks, which counts among its 140 millionaires such figures as M. Charles Dumont, Francis and Guy de Wendel, Noblemaire, De Dion, the Rothschilds, The Provost of Launay, Loucheur, Calary de Lamazière, Bouillont-Lafont, Besson-neaux, Gounouilhon, Andre Benac, Hottingier, Plissonier, Jounart, all directly or indirectly affiliated with the Committee of Forges, without mentioning such senators as Andre Berthelot, Billiet, Coignet, Clementel, Dourner, Marsal, Gerard, Raphael, Georges-Levy, Lhopiteau, Nouleus, Perchot, Count St. Quentin, Lazar Weiller, etc.

At the service of these pontiffs of politics and finance there is a bought press, corrupt, abundantly watered from the Treasury of the Union of Industrial Interests, and by secret accounts (such as the drawing-account No. 11,145 in the Banque des Paip du Nord). This press speaks, recriminates, demands and threatens in the name of "public opinion" and the "general interest"!

An understanding of this fact lightens up all the undercurrents of national policy:—

Electoral Campaign of 1919, long-prepared by the Union of Economic Interests, with subsidies from the Union of Metal and Mineral Industries.

Campaign against the Weisbaden agreements, conducted with fury by the journal "L'Usine," the organ of the big steel firms, in order to apply to the restoration of the ruined areas a scandalously inhuman but extremely remunerative malthusianism.

Campaign against the Eight-Hour day, in support of the

demand for its abolition presented to the Minister of Labour by the Union of Metal and Mineral Industries.

Campaign to increase the Customs Tariffs, for the reduction of wages, for so-called "freedom of labour" against the proposals for social insurance, for the repeal of the law against illicit speculation, against the tax on war profits.

Campaign against the International Labour Bureau, conducted with perfect unison by the employers' press and the subsidised press, with the object of giving full play to M. Pinot's manœuvres at the Geneva Labour Conference against the extension of the eight-hour day to the agricultural labourers.

But still more than in the reactionary home policy of the Bloc Nationale (the coalition of Government parties) the servitude of the Government to the Oligarchy of Ironmasters is manifested in its foreign policy in a most incredible manner. Not content with the immense booty represented by the great metal industry of the Lorraine and the Saar Basin, the Committee of Forges demanded the transfer to Poland (where its members already possess two-thirds of the mineral and metal values) 85 per cent. of the Silesian industries; in order to safeguard the "rights" of certain French capitalists over the nationalised Russian industries, the Committee of Forges "torpedoed" the Genoa Conference, and then it conceived, prepared and launched the expedition to the Ruhr, the most formidable and menacing international event since the world war.

Behind the party of the Bloc Nationale—the Rue de Madrid.

In the Saar, in Upper Silesia, in the Ruhr, in Poland, in Russia, everywhere the Rue de Madrid! Everywhere and always the invisible government, master of our fate, sovereign master of peace and war! Everywhere and always the Moloch of Steel to whom rises up the blood-fumes of fifteen hundred thousand dead!

## THE COMMITTEE OF FORGES AND ITS WAR AIMS.

In the course of the year 1915, M. Robert Pinot in a confidential report described the disastrous consequences which might ensue for the big metal companies from the return of Lorraine to France. Speaking for the Committee of Forges, whose policy he directed, he proposed the constitution of Alsace-Lorraine into a neutral State, vassal of France, but separated from France by a Customs wall designed to protect the interests of the steel Barons of Briey, Pompey, of Creusot and of St. Etienne.

This position was very difficult to defend, and no doubt it was all tentative, for in 1917 a member of the Management Board of the Committee of Forges described as follows the programme of the manufacturers of shells and armour-plate:—

"The Treaty of Peace should give us the proprietary rights over the metalliferous basin of the annexed province of Lorraine. The return to France of the Lorraine Basin will

assure us the supremacy in minerals, reserve for the steel industry of France a brilliant future, doubling our productive capacity, and robbing Germany of the possibility of waging a war on two fronts."

As he was writing at the time when, in expectation of the victory, the ordinary Frenchman was reduced to a ration of 300 grammes of obnoxious black bread a day, the industry for which he spoke found its thought expressed in this topical metaphor:—

"When you invite a friend to your table, you ask him to bring his bread with him. In inviting the metal industry of Lorraine to take its place in the French Community, we ask it also to bring along its bread ration, that is to say, the coal of the Saar, without which it would come to us a very encumbering and unwelcome guest."

#### The Committee of Forges in the Lorraine and the Saar.

Peace came! The ironmasters, great war victors, could now look forward to have their desires satisfied in the fullest measure. While the ignorant and credulous populace celebrated with delirious enthusiasm the reconquest of the bastion of the East from the hereditary enemy, the Committee of Forges was gathering its booty from the priceless treasures of the steel works and mines of the Lorraine.

In 1871, at the time of the German annexation, there existed in Lorraine 38 blast furnaces, the annual production of which did not exceed 200,000 tons of iron. In November, 1918, the number had increased to 68 blast furnaces, nearly all modern, with an annual productive capacity of 3,800,000 tons, that is, an increase of 1,800 per cent.

It was above all important that not a single portion of this rich booty, at first placed under sequestration, should escape the grasp of the Committee of Forges.

The steel works of Anmetz, property of the German Company **Pholnix**, was allocated to the **Société Metallurgie de Knutange**, with a capital of 75,000,000 francs, founded by Le Creusot, Chatillon-Commeny, Denain Anzin, De Wendel, the Steel Combine of St. Etienne, etc.

The steel works of Thionville and the mines of Angevillers, patrimony of the **Brothers Roehling**, passed over to the **Société Lorraine Minière et Metallurgique**, founded with a capital of 50,000,000 francs by the Steel Combine of Longwy, the houses of Arbel, Hotchkins, Paul Girod, Decauville, the central association of the Banque de Province, and two Belgian companies.

The works and mines of Uckange, which belonged to the **Brothers Stumm**, were ceded to the Steel Combine known as **Les Forge et Acieries du Nord et de Lorraine**, formed by Messrs. Besson-neau and Jules Bernard with a capital of 80,000,000 francs.

The steel concerns of Marine-Homecourt, les Acieries de France, les Acieries de Miceville, the blast furnaces of Pont-a-Mousson, the Compagnie d'Alais, all these went to form a new French concern under the title of **La Societe des Mines et Usines de Redange-Dilling**, with a capital of 36,000,000 francs.

The blast furnaces and foundries of Rombas became the appanage of the **Societe Lorraine des Acieries de Rombas**, with a capital of 150,000,000 francs, where we meet again as president and managing director the names of Messrs. Emile Heurteau and Theodore Laurent, of the Marine-Homecourt.

As for the steel manufacturers, machine and automobile constructors (Benault, Berliet, Japy, Peugeot, Aries, Lemoine, etc.) they also claimed their share, in order to free themselves from the grip of the iron and steel producers. They founded, with a capital of 105,000,000 francs, "The Union of Consumers of Metal and Industrial Products," which took over the magnificent plants which Thyssen possessed in Hagondauge.

The blast furnaces and the Thomas ovens which the **Gelsenkirchen** owned in Audun-le-Tiche became the property of the **Société Minière des Terres Rouges**, presided over by M. Leon-Levy.

Other companies of lesser importance, such as the **Société Lorraine d'Etirage et de Tubes** (The Lorraine Wire and Tube Co.), **Les Forges de Strasbourg**, the **Rolling-Mill Company of Thionville**, gathered up the remaining crumbs of this royal booty.

There remained the district of the **Saar**, nominally German territory, but under the effective domination of the French State. The French Government was able to find irresistible arguments to persuade the metal companies of the Saar to cede 60 per cent. of their capital to the big French companies. By these means Messrs. Schneider, Paul Labbé, Xavier Reillé, Andre-Francois Poncet, Theodore Laurent, Mercier, Bessonneau, Jules, Bernard, installed themselves in the administrative armchairs of the Arbed (steel works of Burbach-Eich-Dudelange) of the Hadir (blast furnaces and steel works of Ditterdange, Saint-Ingbert (Rumelange) of the workshops of Dilling, de Neunkirchen, and of Hombourg, side by side with the old German proprietors, Messrs. Roechling, Konrad von Schubert, Fritz and Fred von Stumm, Richard von Kuhlmann, Mannesmann, etc.

### **Franco-Belgian Solidarity.**

At the time of partition it had been found necessary to take Belgian interests into account, and admit them into the vast consortium which had acquired the metal industry of the Saar and Lorraine.

That is why we find Belgian industrial magnates not only on the Board of Management of the Arbed and the Hadir, but also in the Lorraine companies of Terres-Rouges, of Hagondauge, and on the Board of the Mineral and Metal Association of Lorraine, on

which the two big Belgian companies, **La Chiers** and **La Providence**, are represented.

This firm basis of the Franco-Belgian solidarity—affirmed anew in the Ruhr affair in spite of certain difficulties—is concealed from the eyes of the masses by the flowers of official rhetoric and endless speeches about brotherhood in arms and the bloodshed in common in the cause of right and justice.

### The Crisis in Metal.

But the great hopes placed upon the return to France of the lost Lorraine did not materialise. Unexpected difficulties soon surged up from the peace.

Under the German regime the metallurgical industry of the Moselle formed a part of one Rhenish-Lorraine economic unity, in which the Moselle furnished principally the iron-ore, and the Ruhr furnished the coke. Once this natural economic tie was cut by the sabre of Foch, the workshops of Lorraine suffered a double blow, in the supply of fuel and in the loss of markets. It is this tie, severed since 1918, which must be again renewed in order that the steel plant of Lorraine may emerge from the paralysis which threatens to permanently grip it.

The coal of the Saar did not furnish a supply adequate for the ore of Lorraine, it is unsuitable for making coke, and of the eleven million tons of coal produced in 1922 by the mines of the Saar, only 317,000 tons were delivered to the coke ovens.

Thus, from the year 1919, as a result of the lack of coke, it became necessary to extinguish a certain number of blast furnaces, check the delivery of pig-iron and refuse orders. In the course of 1920 the situation became worse. Then when the Spa agreements made it possible to look forward to more abundant supplies of German coal, the sudden reduction of steel manufactures caused a sharp stoppage of big orders.

At the same time Germany took her place again on the foreign markets, thanks to the cheapness of the transport, of the coal and of the labour; thus, German industry was able to capture business by consenting to prices 50 per cent. lower than those of the French steel exporters.

An appreciable reduction in the price of coal took place, but it was not enough to protect the home market from German competition. Then it was seen how the railway companies—whose paid patriotism should be above such accusation—bought huge tonnages of German blooms in Belgium, thinking, or allowing it to be thought, that they were buying Belgian steel.

From that time forward, the malady of the Lorraine metal industry was quite clearly diagnosed: it was a case of a double crisis in fuel supply and in markets.

### Looking for Markets.

Before the war, France produced five million tons of iron, about sufficient for her requirements.

The addition of the Lorraine and the Saar brought France's productive capacity up to eleven million tons a year—that is to say, a surplus of six million tons over the maximum home consumption.

If this surplus cannot be sold, it must not be produced! The metal industry of France, then, is face to face with the alternative of either exporting or closing down.

Moreover, the war had introduced a triple change into French industry: improvement and increase of industrial plants, geographical redistribution of the plants; a more efficient organisation of industrial and commercial administration. And this increase in the productive forces unfortunately coincides with an enormous diminution of orders resulting from the restriction of the market in Central and Eastern Europe.

It may be averred that for the time being there are in Europe at least 100 blast furnaces too many. Shall they be damped down in Westphalia in order that they may be relighted in Lorraine? So far Lorraine had been the sufferer, because its customers were also those of the Thyssens, Roechlings and Stumms, masters of the Rhenish-Lorraine Trusts; it was therefore a German clientele, and it could not overnight change over to a Briey, Anzin and Creusot. Thyssen and Krupp had only ceded a portion of their commercial capital, they had abandoned the material and the administration, but Schneider found that it was not enough to seat himself in the director's chair of a German magnate in order to take his place in the world market.

### The Coke-Metal Exchange.

It is low prices that find the market, and it is the market that gives the prosperity to the industry.

In order to export six million tons of iron in the form of half-manufactured or finished products, they must be supplied at a price which allows them to stand foreign competition. Then we are brought up against the problem of fuel supply: in order to produce eleven million tons of pig-iron thirteen million tons of coke are necessary; now the coke ovens of France, Lorraine and the Saar, including those under construction, can supply a maximum of six million tons.

Where, then, to get the remaining seven million tons, without which the Lorraine workshops suffer from a perpetual deficiency?

There remains only one way, and that is to return to the pre-war source of supply, that is to say, Germany, or to be more exact, the Ruhr, which alone can enable the French metal industry to revive.

When the preliminaries of peace were being discussed, a coke-metal agreement, set forth in the Luxembourg minutes provided for the regular exchange of 1½ tons of Lorraine Minette for one ton

of German coke.\* The agreement was not respected by the French. Deprived of metal, the Germans turned to Australia, Sweden, Spain and Newfoundland, with such good results that in two years they were able to dispense almost completely with Lorraine iron: they consumed 26 million tons of it in 1913 and only 32,000 tons in 1922.

But the need of the French metal industry for Westphalian coke remains as great as ever.

### Towards a New Victory.

Surely, it was hardly worth while to "win the war" in order to come to such a pass.

Meanwhile, Germany was bound over after the London Conference (August, 1922), to bring her total deliveries of coal to all the Allies up to 1,900,000 tons per month. 11,710,365 tons were delivered to France alone out of 13,864,000 tons demanded in 1922, making a deficit of 15 per cent.

Up to the French invasion of the Ruhr, these payments of indemnity in the shape of coal deliveries were exacted with severity even when France and Belgium had an excess of coal, and the coal stocks accumulated round the mines, and when they even had to resell to Germany not only the coal of the Saar, but also a considerable quantity of the German reparations coal.

The explanation of this attitude, apparently so bizarre, is simple enough: The Committee of Forges, through the intermediary of the Reparations Commission, demanded superfluous deliveries of coal in order to compel Germany to increase her supplies of coke, and that is how the deliveries of metallurgical coke increased from 3,082,000 tons in 1921 to 4,302,000 in 1922.

The French Government placed on record before the Reparations Commission that the German deliveries of coal were 15 per cent. less than the quantity demanded. It is quite evident that even if the deliveries had been effected in full, the situation of the French blast furnaces would hardly have been improved, because it is a long shot between the German deficit in coal and the deficit in coke of the French metal industry.

In truth, it was not in the execution, even in full, of the German obligations that the Committee of Forges could find security in the supply of coke. New arrangements were necessary for that; as M. Pierre Peissi, head of the Secretariat of the Committee of Forges, very well expressed it, it was necessary to obtain a "new victory."

It is this "new victory" that the Iron Kings have gone to look for in the Ruhr.

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\* The unpublished document relating to this transaction was quoted by M. Chenevier in the "Progres Civique."

**The Ruhr and the European Supremacy in Iron.**

Is it possible to force the German Government to capitulate on the question of coke and of markets without killing German industry or at least reducing it to a state of servitude to a few great French ironmasters? The directors of the Committee of Forges never thought it possible, and we can believe their best accredited spokesmen.

This is how Adolphe Delemer, Editor of the "Semaine Politique, Economie et Sociale," wrote one year before the occupation of the Ruhr:—

"To-morrow, when the Ruhr is going to be occupied, just as yesterday when it was only the Rhine, it will remain extremely doubtful that Germany will yield. We know it. The matter is almost obvious. We demand of her to consent to her own ruin. If then we go forward, it is because we seek something besides these hypothetical claims. What is it then? What is the idea that impels us?

"The occupation of the Ruhr has no interest unless we are henceforward resolved to wrest from Germany her supremacy in iron. It must be a means of paralysing German industry, to assure to ourselves the supremacy in iron. Germany is to-day the most formidable of all competitors on the international market. To squeeze her out in favour of the chances at our disposal, and put ourselves in her place, that makes the occupation of the Ruhr worth attempting.

"We can then, thanks to our low exchange, compete victoriously with England, with whom Germany competes to-day. The moment would then arrive to take the premier place in the market."

The weekly review, "L'Usine," makes no more ceremony either. Why worry about that when we have the biggest army in the world:—

"Masters of the coal mines of the Ruhr and of the Saar, we would be master of a section of the European market, and I think we should be able to raise a surtax on the tonnages delivered to Germany as well as on those to the neutrals, the necessary surtax for re-establishing the balance in favour of our industry and in order to bond the necessary loan for the reconstruction of the liberated regions.

"Masters of the Ruhr, we could discuss on equal terms with the English importers and impose our conditions upon them. It is only necessary to emphasise the tone of a section of the English Press before the possibility of such an event. It is certain that the economic equilibrium would this time change in our favour.

"The great point of doubt would be the conduct of the German workers towards us, if the policy of passive resistance which is recommended to them were observed. We believe that

an amicable arrangement would be possible with them; in any event, it would be necessary, for the employees alone number half-a-million individuals."

Such categorical declarations, made a year before the expedition into the Ruhr, demonstrate in the most positive manner that within the circles chiefly interested there were no illusions held as to the object and the real meaning of the enterprise, and that the taking of securities in guarantee of reparations was only to be the pretext for a disguised annexation.

Further, for a long time Government departments had been elaborating the plans for the occupation and the organisation of the Ruhr, and since 1921 it was decided that the technical direction of the territory should be entrusted to a high commission on which figures **M. Taffanel**, director of the Forges de Chatillon-Commentry, **M. Baume**, director of the Acieries de Saint-Chamond, and **M. Ader**, one time director of the National Coal Bureau.

The German large industry, which holds the Central Government at its disposal, only had one means of escaping from the seizure of the Ruhr: namely, to admit the big concerns in the Committee of Forges into a 60 per cent. share of the mineral and metal industries of Westphalia. The German magnates refusing to capitulate, Poincaré then discovered that the German deliveries in kind for 1922 fell short of the programme by 15 per cent. in coal, besides a few thousand telegraph and mine posts.

The excuse had been found. **M. Robert Pinot** only had to pull the strings. The puppets in the Government and in the Reparations Commission became agitated, they evoked the memory of the 1,500,000 dead, the sufferings of the devastated regions, the respect due to Treaties, and the French Soldiers gloriously enter Essen!

### III.—THE RUHR AND REPARATIONS.

To effect in the Ruhr a partial confiscation similar to that which had been performed in the Saar, to obliterate the economic barrier between the iron of Lorraine and the coal of Germany, which barrier England desired to maintain at all cost, to assure to our mining and metal industry the solid base for a supremacy which would be a menace to British imperialism—the plan, indeed, did not lack for a certain grandeur. It was explained at length in the famous report drafted by **M. Dariac**, President of the Finance Committee of the Chamber of Deputies, the most illuminating of all the official documents on the question, and regarding which the Press kept a complete silence.

Our lords of mines and blast furnaces would thus become the masters, not merely of the Franco-German Steel Trust, but of the whole European Trust covering the whole heavy industry, the prodigious power of which would dominate from above the Power of States.

It might be asked, however, what relation there may exist

between this audacious piece of international brigandage and the problem of reparations which forms the pretext for it. Since it is by virtue of its reparation credits, it is in the name of the rights which it claims to hold from the Treaty of Versailles that the French Government has thrown itself into the Ruhr adventure.

### Poincaré has Violated the Treaty of Versailles.

The occupation of the Ruhr was decided upon pursuant to paragraph 18 of Annexure 11 to Chapter VIII of the Treaty of Versailles, after the Reparations Commission had notified the Allies regarding certain deficits on the part of Germany. M. Poincaré has almost succeeded in making the impression that this occupation is legally based upon the Treaty, whereas in point of fact, it is nothing of the kind. Here is the text of paragraph 18:—

“The measures which the Allied and associated powers will have the right to take in case of deliberate default by Germany, and which Germany undertakes not to regard as hostile acts, may include acts of economic and financial prohibitions and reprisals and **such other measures** as the respective Governments may consider necessitated by the circumstances.”

It would require a great deal of imagination to believe that the drafters of the Treaty meant by **such other measures** to indicate an operation like the occupation of German territory, with all the consequences which this occupation entails, namely the institution of forced labour (the railwaymen who would not work were deported); confiscation of bank funds (just as in the north of France when the towns refused to pay fines); seizure of bank notes sent by the Reichsbank; seizure of hostages, etc.

If we accept the interpretation of the French Government, we may equally admit that the expression, **such other measures**, authorises M. Poincaré to massacre the German population without Germany having the right to regard it as a hostile act.

In any case, it was not for M. Poincaré arbitrarily to decide the sense of the words, **such other measures**. Paragraph 12 of Annexure 11 of Chapter VIII of the Treaty of Versailles informs us in effect that it is the duty of the Reparations Commission to interpret the Reparations Clauses of the Treaty. Paragraph 12 runs as follows:—

“ . . . The Commission will have in general the most extended powers of control and of execution in what concerns the problem of reparations as it is provided for in the present section of the present Treaty, and it will have the power to interpret its provisions.”

Juridically, then, M. Poincaré should ask the Commission if it considers the expression, **such other measures**, as bearing the meaning which the French Government gives to it.

If, in default of France, Germany had asked the Reparations

Commission last January to interpret the expression, such other measures, in what an embarrassing position would it not have placed M. Poincaré and the Commission itself? In fact, the Treaty has provided (paragraph 15 of Annexure 11) that questions of interpretation relative to reparations should be regulated on a unanimous vote by the Commission. Assuming that the necessary unanimity to give an interpretation in the sense desired by the French Government did not exist, the Commission, in such a deadlock, would find itself obliged to refer the question to arbitration as provided for in Paragraph 13 of the Annexure.\* Of course, the French Government would have refused to submit the matter to arbitration, and Germany could then have legally claimed that France had violated the Treaty of Versailles.

If M. Poincaré believes that the occupation of the Ruhr is a legal act, it is only because he believes what he desires to believe.

Finally, let us read again the letter in which Poincaré on January 10, 1923, notified Germany of his decision to occupy the Ruhr, and see how the terms of that letter to-day achieve their full flavour. Speaking of the measure which he was obliged to take, he expressed himself thus: "They (the measures) do not bear on the part of France any idea of an operation of a military character."

And the same Poincaré declares to-day that the occupation is not intended to be a "paying" operation, but purely an act of military coercion!

### The French Policy of Reparations.

There is nothing more indefinable at the first approach than the French policy of reconstruction, for the Government has always shown itself wholly incapable of elaborating any practical plan of reparations.

What is this restoration of the devastated regions?

For the capitalists, masters of the Press and of Parliament, it is a kind of Klondike, a gold mine from which the competitors must be ruthlessly hunted off.

For the diplomats and the militarists, it is a pretext for perpetual interventions in the affairs of Germany.

Does the French Government really want to reconstruct? Public opinion in other countries is very doubtful about it, and for very excellent reasons. For the French Government, in fact, reconstruction is solely a problem of money; our ministers have often made this absurd affirmation which is the negation of all effective and rapid reconstruction.

We recall here the celebrated demonstration of Bastiat "on what is seen and what is not seen": "the ordinary mortal sees very well that the future of a private individual consists in the possession of money, but he does not see that, transferred from one nation to

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\*This is a provision added to the Treaty of Versailles according to the decision taken by the Supreme Council on August 13th, 1921.

the other, money may no longer be anything more than an illusory token."

The French Government might receive milliards without thereby speeding up reconstruction, for it is a problem of labour, materials and organisation, and not merely of money.

On the subject of the French reparation credits, M. Poincaré recently gave, before the Commission of Finance and Foreign Affairs, two important elucidations of his policy:—

1. "The German Debt, fixed by the London Agreement at 132 milliard gold marks, may not be reduced except by a compulsory reduction of the inter-Allied debts; that is to say, our Government will only allow a maximum reduction of 32 milliard gold francs."

2. "The Rhenish occupation suffices to guarantee our military security, whereas the problem of reparations must find its solution in the Ruhr, this territory remaining as security for the payment of reparations."

The desire of the Government to solve the reparations problem is evidently a lively one. But then, why was it demanded to exclude the question from the Genoa Conference? Why was the sabotage of the German deliveries in kind by the big employers tolerated, which same employers have the effrontery again to-day to denounce the sale of material seized in the Ruhr as "dangerous for the country"?

Why out of 950 millions of gold marks allocated to France during 1922 in the form of reparations in kind, have they only utilised 209 millions, of which two-thirds are represented by deliveries of coal?

Does a French plan of reparations really exist, a thought-out plan which would constitute the best response to the German offers, which offers are denounced as manœuvres, equally with the English criticism, which they stigmatise as complicity with the enemy? The absence of plan, and tactics of lying-in-wait, the negatives and refusals—may these form the basis of any useful conversations with England and Germany?

### The Ruhr as Productive Security.

M. Poincaré said in December: "In occupying the Ruhr we will seize a productive security, and we shall pay ourselves."

The Ruhr basin, constituting an essential part of the German national fortune, excites all the more the greed of the French capitalists because it lays wholly at the mercy of the Army of the Rhine. This basin, as big as half a French Department, itself produces 100 million tons of coal, that is to say, 73 per cent. of the total German production to-day; the production of pig-iron and steel represents 63 per cent. of the total German production; nearly the whole of the raw material necessary for the chemical industry,

mechanical and electrical construction, come from this corner of Westphalia.

It may thus be seen what enormous pressure may be exerted upon the German Reich by an energetic grip upon such a security. Where comes this idea of our rulers to encircle the Ruhr and exploit it? "If the blockade has no gap," they think, "if neither coal, nor coke, nor tar, nor sulphate of ammonia, nor steel bars, can get through into Germany, the resistance will be brief and all the more reduced as our occupation becomes every day more remunerative."

But disenchantment had to come. If the occupation of the Ruhr imposes immense sacrifices on Germany, it also strikes hard at our metal industry and French finances. Of course, that does not prevent M. Poincaré assuring us that the results already appear satisfactory, and that now receipts already cover the expenditure of occupation.

#### A Burdensome Security.

On the 17th May last, M. Poincaré presented to the Commissions of Finances and Foreign Affairs the following balance sheet:—

Receipts as at April 30th:—

	Francs.
1. Customs, licenses, forests, fines, etc. ....	36,000,000
2. Coal and coke .....	36,680,000
Total .....	72,680,000
Civil and military expenses .....	63,650,000

We may be permitted to believe that M. Poincaré is fooling the public, since M. de Lasteyrie, at the tribune of the Chamber of Deputies, estimated the necessary expenses of the troops and the civil missions at one hundred millions for the months of January and February alone! By what miracle have the costs of occupation, which amounted to 100 millions in six weeks, become reduced for three months and a half to the modest figure of 63 millions?

The various official figures, which have nothing in common except their falseness, do not even give an approximate idea of the total debit. In order to get at the real cost of the Ruhr expedition, we must add to Treasury disbursements the amount of the German deliveries in kind, which no longer arrive, the losses suffered by our metal industry and the incalculable repercussions of the fall of the franc.

According to the figures of the Reparations Commission, the monthly value for 1922 of the German deliveries to France reached 16,760,700 gold marks, of which 13,652,866 were in coal and coke. These were gratis deliveries, whereas the 36 millions of paper francs, of which M. Poincaré makes so much, do not even cover a minimum of the expenses of an election.

M. Poincaré should add to his too fantastic debit account these 16,760,700 gold marks, which, at the rate of exchange, amount to 63 million paper francs.

As for the depreciation of the franc, it represents an addition of 15 per cent. to our foreign debt, to freights paid abroad, and to the cost of our importations, of which the monthly average for 1922 was two milliard francs.

After a serious analysis of the elements of the debit side of the account, certain English experts have estimated it at 400 to 500 million francs per month. It is extremely difficult to arrive at an estimate even approximately exact.

### The Present Distress in the Metal Industry.

But it is above all in the French metal industry that the various results of the occupation have shown themselves most readily; the stoppage of the transport of fuel, the giddy rise in the prices of metallurgical coke, which passed from 97 francs in January to 198-310 francs in March,\* the extinguishing of a large number of blast furnaces, these were the first effects of a narrow and aggressive militarist policy.

Meanwhile ministers are lavish in their reassuring prognostications, and M. Le Trocquer dazzles the deputies with figures which justify boundless hopes; but the discrepancy is complete between the official declarations and the most reliable information concerning the supply of coke to the steel industry.

Of 116 blast furnaces which were working in December, 1922, 88 only are at present working, and these not full time; it should be remarked that for the whole of French territory the total number of blast furnaces has increased to 219.

The production of pig iron was 350,485 tons in April, whereas it was 513,000 tons in December; the production of steel also shows a marked diminution.

“L'Usine” of June 2nd comments on these figures in rather suggestive terms:—

“It is incontestable that the situation in the Ruhr has produced a very considerable deficit in the quantity of metal placed at the disposal of the market, and in spite of the most reassuring declarations, a more or less considerable deficit in production will continue so long as no agreement is reached with Germany.”

With regard to coke, the rebuttal of the official statements, appearing in such a paper, borders upon the indecent:—

“Our industrial circles were rather surprised at the figures brought to the tribune of the Chamber this week.

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\*198 francs for deliveries representing 20 per cent. of the capacity of consumption, and 310 francs for the tonnage supplied above this absurd proportion.

“ According to certain statements, it would appear that the fuel crisis is now almost at an end, or at least, greatly alleviated, and that in consequence our blast furnaces are again about to enjoy normal conditions of supply.

“ Unfortunately, this is quite untrue, and according to the information at our disposal, it is permissible to say that the situation in May is rather slightly worse than that of April. . .”

“ It is then incorrect to claim that the situation is continually improving.”

And this accredited organ of big industry is surprised that the Government should have the temerity to state that it had taken the measures necessary to set the German coke-works going; in point of fact, there are insurmountable difficulties of labour-power, supplies and transport which block such an enterprise.

As for the rest, “ L’Usine ” somewhat mordantly chaffs M. Le Trocquer for his “ robust optimism, which sometimes goes the length of denying difficulties in order to feel more sure of surmounting them”! The journal is so disrespectful as to assume that the ministerial statements are based on the idea that they prove nothing because they try to prove too much, and it says quite bluntly that the statements thrown out from the tribune in order to renew confidence had as their first effects simply to embarrass transactions and to stop contracts which were on the point of being concluded.

Thus the expedition into the Ruhr, which was to have been a “ new victory ” for the Committee of Forges, has only resulted in teaching it a sharp lesson.

And M. de Wendel, how he calls heaven to witness: “ How can they accuse me of perpetrating an operation which ruins me ? ”

It is evident that the affair has not turned out as some expected. In trying to blockade Germany, these messieurs of the rue de Madrid have only succeeded in blockading themselves. But they have not yet abandoned the hope of conquering this obstinate resistance which is so exasperating to them.

But surely, no one would ever have foreseen such a rapid and complete check to the expedition. Neither Poincaré nor de Wendel would ever have believed that at the beginning of the fifth month of occupation they would be drawing from the Ruhr altogether 5,000 tons of coke a day! It must be admitted that as a “ paying transaction,” the expedition is an abject failure, but as an instrument of political pressure it may still have its uses. And after all, is it not the French taxpayer who will have to pay the cost ?

### The Aims of French Imperialism.

If the Ruhr as guarantee of payment of reparations is only an illusory security, it has nevertheless a priceless value as a political guarantee, the possession of which would consolidate for a long time the Continental hegemony of France.

That is why nationalist and military Imperialism which seeks to

break up national frontiers by conquest and annexation is still more implacable than economic expansionism, which only looks for sources of raw material and markets.

The Committee of Forges has need of a new victory over the German steel industry, whose immense technical progress and powers of expansion it fears; the nationalists, on their part, declare that the Treaty of Versailles does not guarantee the security of the country and that without the occupation of the Ruhr we shall have inevitably a new war with Germany in the near future.

The present occasion must therefore be availed of to wrest from Germany the iron and the coal of the Ruhr, to create an independent Rhenish-Westphalian State, under the protection of France, seize the arsenal of Germany and thus render her incapable not only of making a new war of "revanche," but even of offering any resistance.

The Turkification of Germany—that is the secret but certain aim of our so-called policy of reparations. Poincaré well understands that a definite solution of the problem of reparations would rob him of every pretext for this policy of violence. "A hundred times better not to get paid and go ourselves to Germany for payment," said Jacques Bainville, one of the most prominent nationalist oracles. And Buré, one of the best friends of the Poincaré Government, declared in hardly more diplomatic terms: "While we remain Germany's creditor we have such rights over our debtor that enable us to prevent her from preparing her revanche."

Which is to say that French Imperialist aims could only have reparations as a plausible pretext, and that the French policy of reparations was bound sooner or later to be crowned by the occupation of the Ruhr. And that alone explains how the slight deficits in the deliveries in kind (partly due to the hostility of certain French timber merchants) were sufficient to cause the French Government, under pretext of protecting 40 engineers, to send into the Ruhr 120,000 troops, 12,000 railwaymen, and to separate the Rhine region from the rest of Germany.

That is why M. Poincaré is by no means in a hurry either to propose or to accept any practical plan of reparations. Without any preliminary understanding with the Allies or any discussion whatsoever, he rejected the first German offer of 30 milliard gold marks, as he has decided, or, rather, is foredoomed, to reject all German offers whatever they may be.

Germany has then no other course but to make proposals which may be adjudged acceptable by the United States, England, Italy, and even Belgium, in order that France may be forced to show her hand, which she is bound to do once a German offer serves as a basis for mediation, for then Poincaré cannot claim for himself the sole right to judge of Germany's capacity to pay.

Now, the German Reich, on the 7th of June, has just tendered a new note which expressly acknowledges "the obligation to indem-

nity" and offers as guarantee: the railways of the Reich, a certain number of Customs rights, and the whole of the industrial, agricultural and banking economy. Germany, moreover, places the offer for the decision of an international Conference.

Hardly has this note been handed in than Paris resolved to ignore it. "It is a regression on the May proposals," growled the Quai d'Orsay. "The second note is still more absurd than the first," said M. Poincaré, and these two judgments were immediately taken up and favourably commented upon by the official and the irrigated Press.

But Cuno by no means expects to obtain Poincaré's agreement. If his last note is considered by the other Entente Governments, if not as acceptable, at least as appropriate to open the discussion, then Poincaré will have to say at last why he does not wish to engage in the conversation.

#### IV.—THE RUHR AND THE CLASS STRUGGLE.

Whatever may finally issue from the Ruhr Expedition, whether the French ironmasters dictate their terms to the magnates of Essen, or whether they consent to discuss with them on a footing of equality, there is one in this adventure predestined in advance to be a victim: it is the proletariat on both sides of the Rhine.

In resuming on behalf of the Committee of Forges the policy of Continental hegemony which was that of Richelieu, Louis XIV and Napoleon, the French Government opens up new perspectives not only of further imperialist wars, but also of furious class struggles. If we regard French capitalism in the totality of its national and international policy, we see it involved in a series of audacious adventures which, among other results, will have that of wholly enslaving the proletariat of Central Europe.

It is possible and even probable that the Ruhr affair will not end without the intervention of England and America. If the railways, mines, canals, Customs rights, are to serve as security for an international loan, and if Germany takes upon its own charge the French debts to Anglo-Saxon capitalism, then the latter becomes both the banker and the principal creditor of the German Reich. In the last account, it is a question of sharing out the profits squeezed out of the German wage-slaves between the Franco-German trust and Anglo-American finance.

It is in these difficult conditions, it is in this international class struggle obscured by bitter national conflicts, that the problem of an effective proletarian solidarity presents itself.

#### The Profits of the German Oligarchy.

It is evident that the execution of reparations has no point unless it provide good business for the bourgeoisie of both countries!

The restriction of the rôle of the State and the transference of real political power to the great industrial combines are made appar-

ent with particular vividness in Germany by reason of the immense predominance which the State previously held. The decisive voice to-day no longer belongs to the "public power," but to the **Union of German Industries**, which directs, almost untrammelled, the political, economic and social life of the country. Stinnes at present resorts to every means in order to assure the participation of the co-operatives and the labour unions for the purpose of unifying the entire nation in one economic organism governed by a small oligarchy of magnates.

The coincidence is also striking between Cuno's second note to the Allied Powers and the memorandum tendered to the German Government on the 5th of May by the Union of German Industries.

In its note of the 7th of June, the German Government proposes for the execution of the definite plan of reparations the following guarantees:—

(a) The railways, with all their properties and installations, shall be separated from the remainder of the national property and transformed into a special property which, with its receipts and expenditures, shall be independent of the general financial administration, and will have its own administration.

(b) In order to assure a second annual payment of 500 million gold marks as from the first of July, 1927, the German Government places forthwith the whole of German economy—industries, banks, commerce, traffic, agriculture—as security, which shall be inscribed, for the sum of 10 milliard gold marks, as first mortgage on the movable property, industrial, urban, agricultural and forest.

(c) Certain Customs rights shall be placed as security.

Now, by the memorandum of the 25th May, accepted by the Imperial Chancellor, the Union of German Industrials offered the German Reich 40 per cent. of the 500 million gold marks which the whole German economy could guarantee every year.

But in exchange for this undertaking, the German magnates required some solid advantages:—

(1) Abolition of all organs of State control over industry and a complete demarcation of the prerogatives of the Reich and private enterprise.

(2) Reform of the present fiscal system in order to assure the preservation of capital invested in industry.

(3) Organisation of intensified production by considerable modifications of the eight-hour day.

(4) Return to private industry of the exploitation of railways and even of the posts and telegraphs.

They are in substance the same proposals which were made in 1922 to Chancellor Wirth, but without obtaining any results at that time.

Thus the German magnates, the same who in 1915 established a list of territorial conquests and economic advantages which were to give the moral sanction to the Kaiser's victories—these now them-

selves dictate to the State the amount of contribution which they wish to pay, and transform the regulation of the reparations question into an excellent scheme which places in their hands an enormous portion of the national wealth.

More and more the problem of reparations brings the big industrial combines of Germany into conflict with the working class, which is compelled to fight in defence of the eight-hour day and against the crushing increases in taxation with which it is menaced.

#### Towards a Franco-German Capitalist Agreement.

Now, M. Loucheur, in agreement with the Committee of Forges, fully admits the principle of ceding the public services to German private industry. The Loucheur-Stinnes agreement: Do the workers realise the terrible menace contained in this symbolical concord?

In France also, big industry regulates the question of reparations to the exclusive profit of the big "Sinistrés" [claimants for property destroyed in the devastated regions—Trans.], the merchants, industrial magnates and high finance; here, too, they covet the public services, from which they anticipate enormous profits.

The right of France to reparations has only served so far to legalise the brigand enterprises of the coal and iron barons, whose sordid agitations, cloaked with the flag of the national interest, throw the nations one against the other.

Is it in the name of the national interest that three-fourths of the metallurgical production of France was found grouped on the eastern frontier in 1914 right at the mercy of the first blows of the enemy?

Was it from a sentiment of pure patriotism that the concessionaires of the Meurthe-et-Moselle mines ceded to the Westphalian steel interests a large share in the concern, so that the French soldiers had to defend German interests?

Was it from patriotic anxiety that the powerful ironmasters of the East opposed the development of the Normandy Basin, which would become indispensable after the loss of the Briey Basin? The working of this basin was only begun thanks to the persistent efforts of the German Thyssen!

Need we recall the mysterious immunity enjoyed by the Briey Basin during the war, and the scandalous instance when the French industrials furnished the German metal magnates with the nickel of which they stood in need for their steel manufactures?

And now, when it is only a question, as it is alleged, of exploiting the Ruhr for the purpose of reparations, what do we see but the French industrials opposing with all their power the sale of 6,000 tons of steel products seized in the Ruhr, because such a sale, declares "L'Usine," would calculate "to throw the French market into confusion by completely falsifying the prices?"

## Against Cuno and Poincaré.

It is a spectacle full of irony and edification to see the general staffs of the French propaganda agencies in the Ruhr discovering that there is really a class struggle.

The leaflets and posters of General Degoutte vehemently denounce the avarice of the big profiteers who absorb little by little the whole wealth of the country and take possession of the economic and governmental power. The concentration of industries in a few hands, the ferocious exploitation of the working class, the subordination of national policy to the private interests of a group of industrialists and financiers—how many verities are acknowledged as incontrovertible when it is a case of Germany in the pillory!

But the worker of Essen, who knows better than General Degoutte the hard facts of the class struggle, is well aware that France also has her Stinnes and her warmongers, and he remains unmoved by the toadyism of our Imperialists, just as he has remained deaf to the appeals of Cuno to observe the union sacrée.

We shall never be able fully to appreciate the cruel test to which the internationalism of the Ruhr workers was subjected, and how splendidly the German Communists fought against the irresistible current of Jingoism when the occupation authorities, by their brutal methods, the seizure of hostages, deportations, forced labour, promoted in the most effective manner the anti-French propaganda and sowed hatred and indignation towards a neighbouring nation among a working population which had hitherto been more irritated against the enemy at home than against the invading stranger.

Thanks to the Communists, however, the true idea of the primordial conflict, which is the struggle against the bourgeoisie, has remained undimmed in the minds of the workers.

In both countries the question of reparations will bring the two classes more and more in open opposition, for the question imposes itself more and more imperatively, demanding who shall pay?

In France and in Germany the capitalists hope to-morrow to be able to draw from the exploitation of the workers the milliards which they are so recklessly squandering to-day in costs of occupation and doles to the unemployed.

In Germany this truth is no longer of a theoretical kind: it is a fact. It is on the German workers, the worst-paid in the world, that the whole burden of taxation falls, and it is for the worker of Essen and Berlin a matter of life and death to throw upon the bourgeoisie the reparation payments due by Germany.

But the French worker would cruelly deceive himself if he were to imagine that he can remain a disinterested spectator of this tragic conflict. In the struggle of classes which rages on the other side of the Rhine the French bourgeoisie take sides with Stinnes, for any

failure on the part of the German capitalists would have profound repercussions in France and would cause the whole economic and social structure of the bourgeois régime in western Europe to totter.

Opposed though they are in business matters, the bourgeoisie on both banks of the Rhine will closely unite in defence of their class interests against the proletarian menace, and when the German revolution makes its second spring forward, it is against the bayonets of the French that it will shatter itself, if the French proletariat forgets its class obligation. As for the pact which will seal the understanding between the Committee of Forges and the Union of German Industrials, it will be both a business contract and a treaty of offensive and defensive alliance against the working class.

Let not the French worker imagine that he is not immediately threatened: the distress of the German worker, his exhausting labour, and the famine wages to which he is condemned—this is the picture of misery which will be the lot of the French worker to-morrow. The enslavement of the German working class is preparing a still heavier servitude and an exploitation that knows no mercy for the workers of all nations.

That is why the call to arms of the proletariat on both sides of the Rhine must be: Down with Stinnes and de Wendel! Down with Cuno and Poincaré!

A. KER.

Paris, June 7th—10th, 1923.



# The Defeat of Germany in the Ruhr

BY E. PAVLOVSKY

Germany's resistance in the Ruhr is broken. There now only remains the form of capitulation, and still more how the German capitalists may liquidate the defeat in such a fashion that, creating an outward show of sacrifice, they may in fact throw all the burden of it upon the proletariat, as they have on every occasion so far succeeded in doing.

The history of the struggle in the Ruhr consists of a series of betrayals of the German cause by the German capitalists. The German bourgeoisie, out of sentiments of the basest cupidity, neglected the opportunity of restoring the integrity of Germany as an independent State, of holding her back from her fatal decline to the status of a colony. These German capitalists made their choice openly; they preferred to exploit the German proletariat in the quality of henchmen of France, to exploit in such a fashion that in the near future a million proletarians must die of malnutrition, than make the least sacrifices in the name of that national duty which they so loudly proclaim. The occupation of the Ruhr—this supreme trial of strength between French imperialism and the German people—this is for the German capitalists only a golden opportunity to enrich themselves in the most shameless fashion at the expense of the State and of the German proletariat.

The French Government began the occupation of the Ruhr in tentative fashion. It had no hard-and-fast plan how to break the German resistance. Only in the course of the occupation itself was a plan elaborated—to bring confusion into German economy by isolating her from occupied territory, to provoke social upheavals, and by these means to bring Germany to her knees. Before the necessities of these tasks the productive exploitation of the Ruhr fell back into second place.

The objects for which pressure was brought on Germany differed according to the various strata of French society. The enormous mass of French peasants, civil servants and petty bourgeoisie supported the occupation of the Ruhr with the simple object of forcing Germany to pay reparations. The peasants and petty bourgeoisie of France have already given the State 100 million francs for the purpose of reparations. The franc falls. The increase in taxation seems inevitable. The coal and coke supplied by Germany has gone to the benefit of French heavy industry. The French peasant and the French petty bourgeois wants to get from Germany hard cash. The primitiveness of these people does not allow them to understand that Germany is not in a position to pay either cash or credits acceptable to the world money market.

Other motives actuate French heavy industry. The latter desires to restore the link between Ruhr coal and French ore which was broken by the Treaty of Versailles, and to restore in such a manner, moreover, as to establish the domination of French heavy industry. It desires to assure for itself the control of the iron and steel industries of Europe, by participating in the German-French concerns of the Ruhr to the extent of at least 51 per cent.

French imperialism and militarism, intoxicated with its present military superiority, but viewing with alarm the constant decrease of the French population, side by side with a German population always on the increase, would like nothing better than to obtain a new victory over Germany, break her up into fragments, and reduce her to a series of small states, as she existed a hundred years ago. For French militarism "there are 20 million Germans too many in the world."

That fact, that the ruling cliques of France care less about the payment of reparations than the gradual strangling of Germany, was formally illustrated by Poincaré at the Paris Conference in his criticism of the English reparations programme. He declared the following:—

"The English programme is quite illusory; it becomes still more dangerous when we regard the concessions made by it to Germany, giving the latter the possibility in a very short period to free itself from its very slight burden of debt. At the present time Germany has no foreign debts of any kind. The progressive decline of the mark has reduced her internal debts, and these may be extinguished altogether by further falls in the German valuta. If Germany will have its reparations obligations as its sole indebtedness, and this, by virtue of the plan proposed by the British Government, through the play of the discount system, is brought to an approximate sum of 20 milliards, that is, to a sum which may be paid off in fifteen years and which represents less than a third of the French State debts—then Germany, with a growing population, will in a few years be the only country in Europe without a foreign debt."

With the bluntness of a soldier, the same thought was expressed by General Castelnau, speaking about the occupation of the Ruhr: "I am here and here I remain."

How was it possible to conduct the struggle against the French attempt to reduce Germany to subjection?

There existed two fundamental differing lines of struggle: that of the revolutionary proletariat, and that of the bourgeoisie. The revolutionary resistance was conducted by the Communist Party of Germany with the slogan of a Workers' Government, which will take upon itself the direction of passive resistance, endeavouring to split up the united front against Germany among the various classes of the French people, appealing to the working masses of France, and encouraging the petty bourgeois masses of France who

are justly irritated by the abominable enrichment and freedom from taxation of the big German capitalists, to a more friendly policy, by giving an undertaking to force these capitalists to pay reparations; such a government of the proletariat would raise the question of "national resistance" to the level of the task of the whole working people of Germany and the proletariat of the whole world.

This line of struggle was made impossible above all by the opposition of the Trade Union bureaucracy and the Social-Democratic leaders, who, instead of organising the resistance side by side with the Communists, allowed themselves to be made the tools of the bourgeoisie out of terror of the revolutionary consequence of such a line of action. The Communist Party of Germany was too weak to take upon itself the whole burden of the struggle.

The bourgeois way—on the one hand, organisation of resistance by the bourgeoisie with the object of making the French occupation of the Ruhr so unproductive and accompanied with such loss, that within France itself opposition to the occupation would develop.

On the other hand, by such means to strengthen in England and the United States the elements hostile to French imperialism and militarism, in order to force France to retreat.

#### What Prospects of Success had an Opposition Conducted with Energy and Self-reliance?

Looking at the question in an isolated way—none at all! Disarmed Germany, compared with a France armed to the teeth, seems powerless for a long time to come. But this would be an incorrect way of approaching the matter. In France there exist formidable forces hostile to the imperialist policy of the Government. In the forefront of these forces is the French proletariat.

Still more important is the fact that the international relations of France are far from favourable. The occupation of the Ruhr followed almost immediately upon the failure of the Paris Conference on reparations. This was almost equal to a breach with the Entente, and above all with England. England in the most decisive manner refused to approve of the occupation. Not from any friendly feelings for Germany, but because she feared that with the success of the expedition the predominance of France in the European Continent would be still further strengthened. Complete success threatened to place in the hands of France the whole of the Franco-Belgian-German-Luxembourg heavy industry, and thus add to France's military predominance, also an economic predominance in the European heavy industry.

On the other hand, England also feared the failure of France in the Ruhr region, for this would lead to a considerable strengthening of Germany. In general, England was against making the reparations question, which is a general Entente question, a question to be decided by single-handed action on the part of France, whether such action be successful or not. Italy herself stood aside

from the French action. The United States took up an unfriendly attitude towards it. If the German bourgeoisie had loyally carried on the struggle, brought sacrifices to the cause and firmly held on for a few months, it was by no means impossible that the French offensive might have ended a failure.

As a matter of fact, judging outwardly, the German bourgeoisie began their opposition with the greatest resolution. Passive opposition and a national united front was proclaimed. With a torrent of Nationalist catchwords it was prohibited to show the French any kind of help or service whatsoever. German railwaymen must not work on railways occupied by the French; customs employes must not take part in the collection of customs duties; German firms must not ask for the permits to export or import imposed by the French; workers must cease work in the plants occupied by the French, and so on.

But it was with cynical truth that the organ of the English ministry, "The Daily Telegraph," replied to the noisy moral indignation of the German bourgeoisie:—

"The moral indignation of the German Chancellor against the Franco-Belgian occupation of the Ruhr region comes strangely from the lips of one who represents the magnates of German industry. These were the people who pillaged the whole industry of Belgium and Northern France, and systematically destroyed it. In a few years after they shattered to atoms the French industrial apparatus, one of the instigators of the crime protests in the sacred name of justice against measures which have for their object, not to destroy any kind of mine property whatsoever, but that of obtaining from Germany such payments as the latter has herself acknowledged it her duty to pay."\*

The opposition conducted by the German bourgeoisie, however, had a fatal defect. The bourgeoisie were not inclined to make even the slightest material sacrifice for the German cause. They behaved themselves in connection with the opposition measures as to a new opportunity of enriching themselves at the expense of the State. As for the most influential section of the German big bourgeoisie, the magnates of the heavy industry, they from the very beginning desired an agreement with the French mineowners; for them in this struggle the question was only one of how much per centage they might get from the French for the joint exploitation of the Ruhr industries.†

What should the German bourgeoisie have done in order successfully to organise the opposition? The first condition for such a struggle was to see to it that the standard of living of the proletariat and employees did not grow worse in the period of resist-

\*Quoted from E. Pavlovsky's "Germany a Colony," German edition.

†In the whole course of the Ruhr struggle negotiations were conducted between German heavy industry and the French. See, e.g., "Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung," March 10; "Times," March 8; "Frankfurter Zeitung," February 9, etc., etc.

ance. It was necessary at least to arrest any further reduction in the real wages of the workers. For this purpose the bourgeoisie should have contributed from its revenues. But this the German bourgeoisie did not do. On the contrary, the whole cause of national resistance was converted by the bourgeoisie into a profitable transaction. The behaviour of the German bourgeoisie was nothing more nor less than a shameful tangle of betrayals of the cause of the national resistance which it had itself proclaimed. Let us adduce a sheaf of the most important facts.

### THE COLLAPSE OF THE OPPOSITION IN THE OCCUPIED REGION.

Within a few weeks after the occupation, the Berlin Press published the names of a series of firms which, each one independently, had broken the solemn obligation to observe the passive resistance, by submitting to the dispositions of the French, paying for permission to export, and so on. A bogus "English" company was formed in the territory occupied by the English in order to do business for German bourgeoisie. The sale of German goods to the French and Belgians was after a couple of months officially allowed, as it had already existed in fact. The deficiency in articles of first necessity caused by the occupation was exploited by the local merchants for the most shameless speculation in prices.

The bourgeoisie of the Ruhr region in its entirety drew benefit from the activities of "Ruhr Relief" and "Credit Relief"; all the loss caused to the bourgeoisie by the French, such as the seizure of coal and coke and other material, were paid for in full by the "Ruhr Relief" organisation. All the losses caused by the quartering-out of the French troops, and by the interruption of production, were paid for in full. Half of the wages coming under the heading of "Unproductive Work" was paid for, not by the capitalists, but by the "Ruhr Relief." Soon it came to the point that the capitalists themselves protested against the cessation of work in the mines occupied by the French. The coal magnates showed the strongest opposition to the demands of the Factory Councils that the coal lying about the mines should be made available to the workers at low prices, instead of allowing it to fall into the hands of the French. At the beginning of May things went so far that on certain mines, for example, Moltke I and II and Moltke III and IV, the coal was transported away by the French as soon as produced. ("Rote Fahne," May 10.) This occurred, of course, with the consent of the mineowners, who received compensation at the full price from their Government.

Those capitalists of the Ruhr region who, on account of the prohibition of exports by the French had to produce goods from stock, received through the "Credit Relief" organisation credit at the Reichbank's discount rate of interest to the amount of several thousand milliards. With an expected fall in the mark, which these same capitalists promoted by their manipulations, this credit transaction turned out for them of the most profitable kind imagin-

able, because these credits were getting wiped off by the fall of the mark to a fourth of their previous value in dollars, whereas the goods they had produced for stock were sold at the full value of the dollar.

The occupation of the Ruhr gave the bourgeoisie of the unoccupied part of Germany also a chance of turning an honest penny, mainly by means of the stabilisation of the mark.

The stabilisation of the mark should have been the core of the measures taken by the German bourgeoisie for the organisation of resistance. It should have taken measures to stop any further rise in the cost of first necessities, stabilise prices, and thus guarantee a standard of living to the German proletariat. Careful study of the events of the last few months shows that none of this was attempted, and the whole campaign for the raising of the mark was turned into an excellent business proposition by the bourgeoisie. We are presented with the following picture:—

(1) Commencing with the first part of February, and continuing to April 18, the stabilisation of the mark was availed of, to raise wholesale prices above the level of the parity existing for the dollar. The wholesale index of the "Frankfurter Zeitung" appears as follows:—

	Rate of dollar—	General index for
	4.20=1.	93 articles.
*July, 1922 .....	95	91
August .....	188	140
September .....	321	291
October .....	513	432
November .....	1,488	945
December .....	1,777	1,674
January, 1923 .....	2,045	2,054
February .....	9,524	7,159
March .....	5,381	6,770
April .....	5,024	6,427
May .....	8,869	8,237
June .....	18,155	14,639

We see from the foregoing that, whereas for the second half of 1922 the general wholesale index constantly stood below the dollar index, in the period of national resistance, especially in the months when the mark was stable, wholesale prices rose to 20 or 25 per cent. above the dollar index.

(2) The second source of private graft, giving the big industrial magnates the power of raising prices by putting away stocks into warehouse, was the exploitation of the Treasury of the State Bank. The issue of banknotes increased from the commencement of the Ruhr occupation to the end of the stabilisation of the mark by more than 4,000 milliard marks. Of these 4,000 milliards, more than 2,000 milliards were paid directly to the bourgeoisie in the form of discounting bills of exchange.†

\*Figures relate to the beginning of the respective months.

†Total sum of "commercial bills of exchange" accounted for by the State

In gold, the credits received by the bourgeoisie between February and April from the Reichsbank according to the official accounts amounted to a round two hundred million gold marks. They paid interest for this at the rate of 12 per cent. per annum, when the general bill-discounting rate of interest was about five times more, and these sums were repaid moreover in marks reduced to a fourth of their value when the loans were issued, and since then to a tenth of their value.

The State itself received from the bank of emission about 4,000 milliard marks, which were devoted to financing the resistance in the Ruhr and to cover current deficits. The results of these operations are described in the following manner by the good bourgeois, George Bernard, in the "Vossische Zeitung" of April 3:—

"In this way, for the last month alone, the floating debt of the State went up from 1,000 milliard to 9,000 milliard marks. The figures of the balance sheets of various concerns grew to many milliards, and the private wealth of a few German industrial magnates is approximately expressed in the same figures as the deficit of the German State Budget. Plus and minus are in confusion. The State gets more and more pauperised, and a few private persons no longer know what to do with their money."

When the bourgeoisie at the time of the campaign for the strengthening of the mark rushed for credits to the State Bank to the extent of 200 million gold marks, the State Bank was forced to sacrifice a considerable portion of its gold reserve, and it would appear, the whole of its fund in foreign valuta, in order to sustain the mark. In 1923 the gold reserve of the State Bank amounted in million gold marks to the following :-

	January 6.	April 30.
At home .....	955	702
Abroad .....	50	217
	1,005	919

Up to the collapse of the stabilisation campaign, the State Bank irretrievably lost approximately 86 million gold marks, and another 217 million in foreign banks which it paid for German valuta. Besides this, an unknown amount, but one that is probably quite a considerable one, standing in the State Bank in the form of instalments on account of exports, were also sacrificed for the cause of the stabilisation of the mark.

The mechanism by means of which the big bourgeoisie, and especially the heavy industry, robbed the State Bank was in the following fashion:—

The State Bank issued 12 per cent. credits to the big bourgeoisie

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Bank, that is, credits extended to private persons:—

January 15, 1923 .....	471 milliard marks
April 15, 1923 .....	2,586 milliard marks

For the period prior to the collapse of the stabilisation policy, the German bourgeoisie obtained credit at the State Bank to the extent of over 2,000 milliard marks.

by way of discounting their bills of exchange. On receipt in this way of these sums in marks, the big industrials bought at low prices the foreign valuta acquired on account of the gold fund. At the same time these big industrials acquired a portion of the foreign valuta in the hands of small holders who were economically too weak to hold on to it to the end of the period of stabilisation and had to sell it at the very beginning of the stabilisation campaign.

### Lowering Wages.

Simultaneously with the promise to reduce prices with which the stabilisation campaign was launched, the slogan of a halt in the rise in wages was issued as the workers' contribution to the cause of stabilisation. The official Government organ wrote on March 8th:—

“ If the object . . . of the stabilisation of prices . . . is to be achieved and consolidated, then it follows equally that it is imperatively necessary that the wave of rising prices shall not be again set in motion by an increase in wages. Fortunately, the conviction is spreading that the increase in paper wages does not lead . . . to an improvement of the standard of life, but rather to the contrary effect. It is the duty of all who are concerned with the regulation of wages to draw the necessary moral.”

On March 10th the Central Committee of the “ German Union of Textile Employers ” approached the German Chancellor with the following memorandum:—

“ Yesterday, March 6th, an arbitration court sat in the Ministry of Labour, called by the latter at the instance of the parties. The arbitration court was charged with the duty of fixing the wages of the textile workers of Lower Lausitzky district for the month of March. Government Adviser, Mr. Deitz, presided. In the course of the proceedings the Government Adviser, Mr. Deitz, said that instructions had been issued by the Government to the Ministry of Labour according to which no increases in wages should be allowed for March, but that the present scale be retained. There is a fall of prices on the market, and the work of stabilisation commenced by the Government is being dissipated by the raising of wages. **There is a whole series of political considerations against the raising of wages.** The raising of wages conduces to the rise in prices of commodities. All that is permissible is a slight levelling up of the particularly low grades within a district or a branch of industry in connection with the fixing of an average standard in such district or branch of industry.”

How systematically the employers carried on the process of reducing wages in the period of national resistance is to be seen from a circular of the German Union of Building Trade Employers quoted by the “ Vorvaerts.” In this circular, inter alia, we have the following:—

“ In general it may be affirmed that the German Union of Building Trade Employers held to the directions given by the

general Employers' Union, regarding the withholding of all increases in wages in the month of March, and, above all, regulating wages according to the rise in prices. It has been authentically established that in all mining industries, iron and steel industries, and most important branches of metal manufactures, in the paper industries and the production of building materials, etc., **for the month of March there was no increase in wages whatsoever.** An increase of wages was awarded to two and a half million workers by the decisions of the Arbitration Court as a measure of 'levelling up,' but these decisions were in general rejected by the employers. In many cases the Arbitration Court did not issue a decision owing to unsolved points in dispute. In consequence of this, wages for March were in numerous cases left wholly unregulated as far as a definite tariff was concerned, and payment was made on the basis of the February standard by the decision of the employers themselves.

"In order to safeguard against the 'levelling up' theory conducing eventually to the unsettling of the general wage standard, it must be more and more insisted upon in the most decisive manner that the maximum rates obtained in certain districts must not be exploited for the object of "levelling up' wages."

Refusal to increase wages means a reduction in real wages, and, although wholesale prices, as we saw, during the period of stabilisation of the mark, reveal a certain tendency to fall, **the cost of living for this period continued to rise.** We adduce further data from two sources, acknowledged to be unfriendly to the workers' side of the case: the figures of the Government Statistical Department and those of the Stinnes organ, "Trade and Industrial Journal." The figures of 1914 are taken as the unit:—

	Govt. Statistics.		Trade-Industrial Jl.	
	General Budget.	Food	General Budget.	Food.
January .....	1,120	1,366	1,343	1,623
February .....	2,643	3,183	2,528	3,398
March .....	2,854	3,315	2,809	3,500
April .....	2,954	3,500	2,993	3,931

All these figures indisputably erring on the side of the employers, show a rise in the cost of living for the period of stabilisation equal to 12 to 20 per cent. The actual increase was probably twice as much. The slogan "no wage increases because the mark is stabilised" means as a matter of fact the lowering of the real wages of the workers and the swelling of the profits of the capitalists.\*

The condition of the working class was at the same time made

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\*That these figures are not trustworthy is easily apparent from their disparity with the rise in wholesale prices. The index figures of wholesale prices for food given by the "Frankfurter Zeitung" is 50 per cent. higher than those given above for the increase in cost of food—an evident contradiction to be explained by efforts to show the increase in the cost of living as slight as possible.

worse by the sharp increase in unemployment. The number of unemployed in the Trade Unions for April reached 7 per cent., and in round figures 800,000. The number working part time reached 25 per cent.

#### Sabotage of Taxation by the Bourgeoisie.

The sabotage of the payment of taxes by the bourgeoisie, which is always one of the main causes of the fall of the mark and the bankrupt state of the Government finances, remained undiminished even in the period of the national resistance to the French occupation. The official organ, "Economy and Statistics," published the following figures of the receipts of State revenues in gold marks, partly converted to the dollar rate, and partly to the index of commodity prices. The Government revenue of the German Empire consists of:—

	In million marks.	
	Converted into dollars.	Converted into commodities index.
1922 .....	1,178.2 million marks	1,402.4 million marks
1923, Jan.	57.2   "   "	57.2   "   "
1923, Feb.	47.3   "   "	56.3   "   "
1923, Mar.	54.8   "   "	56.5   "   "
1923, April	85.8   "   "	95.6   "   "

If we compare these figures with the amount of State revenue received in France or England, then we should have to admit the justice of the accusation of systematic non-payment of taxes in Germany. In France the receipts from taxation in January, 1922, amounted to more than 20 milliard francs, which converted into dollars would represent in round figures about 7 milliard francs. Thus, in France, with a population less by a third, the taxation receipts amount to **over five times as much**. The taxation revenue of England amounted to a thousand million pounds sterling which, converted at the rate of the dollar, would represent no less than 18 milliard gold marks. However much we might plead the impoverishment of Germany, it cannot account for such a difference in the revenue from taxation. From the above table we see that whereas the revenue of the German Republic in 1922 still reached a monthly average of 99 to 118 million gold marks, in the period of national resistance it fell to **approximately half**.

The German bourgeoisie did not even consider it necessary to increase their tax payments. Here we shall only briefly demonstrate how the portion of the taxes paid by the bourgeoisie became continually less. About 90 per cent. of all the revenue from income tax at the present time consists of deductions from wages. From the general sum of the State revenue of the German Republic for

March of 506.3 milliard paper marks, the following fell on the shoulders of the working class:—

Deductions from wages .....	179.1
General Tax on Trade Receipts .....	39.2
Revenue from Passenger and Freight Traffic .....	26.5
Customs Duties and Taxes on Articles of Consumption .....	153.9
	398.7

If we suppose that all other forms of taxation are wholly paid by the propertied classes—and this hypothesis is very unlikely, because a few of the taxes not shown above fall in part on the workers—it will be seen that the general sum of taxation by the propertied classes represent no more than 20 to 25 per cent. of the total revenue.

We see that all the measures for reinforcing the value of the mark, which should have been the basis for the movement of national resistance, were seized upon by the bourgeoisie for the purpose of increasing their gains. On their side they brought no contribution whatsoever for the strengthening of the mark.

For that reason the object of the measures for the strengthening of the mark, which was to have been the assuring of the living conditions of the working class, was not achieved, and the idea of national resistance suffered complete collapse. Under such circumstances the retort offered by the "Daily Telegraph," organ of the English Foreign Minister, to the cry of the German bourgeoisie about the lot of the workers in the occupied Ruhr region, was fully deserved:—

"With astounding impudence and tactlessness the non-Socialist parties selected M. Stresemann for their spokesman in the Reichstag. Politically, he is Stinnes' confidential man, guilty in Belgium of the same actions for which the Germans now accuse Poincaré. When M. Stresemann now so loudly wails about 'the insupportable misery of the coming winter months,' the terrors of the coming winter will in no way be felt by the people to whom M. Stresemann owes his political good fortune."

#### The Failure of the Loan for Reinforcing the Mark.

The German Government, in order to avoid drawing any further on its gold reserve in the Reichsbank, attempted to continue the campaign for the raising of the value of the mark by floating a gold loan. This was issued in the modest figure of **200 million gold marks**, of which sum the bourgeoisie were to have subscribed the half. But in spite of the fact that within the country there exists according to differing estimates a floating cash reserve of from **one to three milliard gold marks**, the whole of the German bourgeoisie subscribed no more than **50 million gold marks**. For the cause of national resistance the German bourgeoisie not only did not donate even a portion of its wealth—of donating there was no question—but it even refused to put at the disposal of the Government a portion

of its ready cash for good interest, with the repayment of the principal in foreign valuta. The failure of the gold loan demonstrates clearly and definitely with what indifference the German bourgeoisie regarded the cause of national resistance.

### The Collapse of the Stabilisation Policy.

The German bourgeoisie did not confine itself, however, to merely refraining from any sacrifice in the cause of the stabilisation of the mark; it was not satisfied with drawing still huger profits in the period when measures were being taken for stabilising the mark, but in that very moment, whenever it suited its end, it took active measures against the sustaining of the mark. Already in the beginning of April the Reichsbank was forced to throw heavy sums of foreign valuta on the market in order to hold up the rate.

“Already a few weeks prior to the collapse of the stabilisation campaign, it was openly affirmed in interested circles that certain interests endeavoured to bring pressure to bear upon the Reichsbank to raise the course of the dollar to 25,000 or even 30,000 marks, in order to strengthen the exporting power of industry. It was declared that these interests took measures of self-help, after the Reichsbank refused to meet their wishes.” (Felix Zinner, “Berliner Tageblatt,” April 25.)

On April 18th the collapse took place. The dollar flew to 30,000 marks: on June 3rd 80,000 marks were paid for a dollar. Thus the mark tumbled down below the Austrian crown and the Polish mark.

Where lay the cause for this catastrophic fall of the mark? We have shown elsewhere\* that the stabilisation of the mark for a prolonged period is not possible, because Germany is not in a position to produce sufficient to cover her needs and the reparation payments. We still hold this view. But if the German bourgeoisie were inclined to make sacrifices, it is probable that for the period of the occupation of the Ruhr, when Germany would not have to pay reparations, the rate of the mark could have been held up for several months.

But in reality the catastrophe of the mark was consciously brought about by the unscrupulous manipulations of the German capitalists, in particular, the group of Stinnes. We shall adduce in proof a series of quotations from bourgeois journals.

“The chief cause must no doubt be sought for in the fact that colossal sums were without discretion and aimlessly thrown into the Ruhr, which sums had to seek repeated conversion into foreign valuta on the road through Hamburg.” (“Berliner Tageblatt,” April 25th.)

“It is affirmed that the central management of one very big branch of industry has, just when the Bourse was closed for operations, that is, removed from the connecting control of the Reichsbank, made inquiries in Berlin for big sums of ster-

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\*E. Pavlovsky: “Germany a Colony,” Chapter on Stabilisation.

ling, and thus started the decline of the mark." ("Frankfurter Zeitung," April 20th.)

"It was not without reason that the voice of indignation was heard recently at the conference with the Chancellor, complaining that certain industrial concerns in the Ruhr used the heavy credits which had been extended to them for the payment of wages, and also compensations for automobiles and other machines requisitioned by the French, for the purpose of buying foreign valuta, and thus brought such pressure to bear on the money market as to threaten a weakening of the mark. Ruhr industries, piling up in the last few months colossal stocks of goods, which may at any time be changed for foreign valuta, have no need at this time, when everything depends upon the firmness of the mark, to abuse the money exchange. But it is here that is revealed the conscious or half-conscious interest in the fall of the mark which, unfortunately, owing to unsatisfactory organisation of our credit system, is pursued and even must be pursued by large sections of the country's industry. The industrial concerns of the Ruhr have received such colossal credits that they are apprehensive whether this may not lead indirectly to Socialism, by increasing the influence of the State on their financial affairs if the mark remains at its present rate or even rises. If, on the other hand, the mark again commences to fall, then the actual amount of their debt is automatically reduced." ("Berliner Tageblatt," April 25th.)

From Press reports it is more or less established that the chief role in the collapse of the stabilisation policy was played by the Stinnes group, thanks to its enormous holdings in valuta. The President of the Reichsbank, Havenstein, affirmed the guilt of the German bourgeoisie for wrecking the measures of stabilisation in the following terms:—

"The sustaining of the rate of the mark was not achieved, because in this time of the severest trial for Germany even important industrial circles accounted it their right to 'cover' themselves with huge sums, not for the most pressing needs of the immediate future, but even for reserve or for paper which they threw on the market, not hesitating even to issue orders for heavy purchases.

"All this is quite unpermissible at the present time, for it signifies, if not an intentional, in actual fact a blow in the back of the great fighting front and the cause which the Government and the Reichsbank have in common in the interest of our national policy and economy. This struggle imperatively demands that all private interests should unreservedly recede to the second place."

### CAPITULATION.

The catastrophe of the measures taken to stabilise the mark finally decided the fate of the bourgeois resistance. Now it is only a question of the form of surrender. The surrender draws itself out

because the Germans badly understood England's diplomatic game, and especially that of Lord D'Abernon, the English ambassador in Berlin. On the other hand, the Cuno Government dare not openly surrender for fear of the German Nationalists, especially after Cuno had declared that negotiations can only start after the evacuation of the Ruhr and the restoration of the status quo ante. Economically, he proposes to pay a total sum of 30 milliard gold marks, which should be obtained by means of three international loans: 20 milliard gold marks by means of a loan to be paid up to 1927; the remaining 10 milliards, in case the International Committee of Experts establish further ability to pay by Germany, by the aid of two further international loans of 5 milliard gold marks each.

The economic absurdity conveyed in this proposal was pitilessly exposed by the pacifist Keynes, who is to a certain degree favourable to Germany, in the "Nation" of June 26th:—

"It is necessary once more to repeat that a heavy international loan is an absurdity, impossible and a foolish chimera. Germany, if it can pay at all, can only do so by means of annual payments. A loan is impossible because it is proposed in such an amount as to be far greater than the capacity of the world market to place the new paper. The proposed sum would represent one milliard pounds sterling, whereas the total sum lent out by the English capitalists to the Government of India in the course of many years, and to a considerable extent in the form of railway and other material does not amount to 200 million pounds. The total amount lent out by the English world empire to all the colonies, dominions, provincial Governments besides India in the course of many years, represent a round 500 million pounds. . . . The total amount of the loans floated on the London market by foreign Governments in the course of the two years 1921-1922, equals approximately 20 million pounds. I conclude from this that if Germany were to obtain credit on the London market for 25 million pounds at 10 per cent. she would score a great success."

Such figures he also adduces for the American money market. We bring further figures, published by the "Guarantee Trust Company," on all the capital placed abroad by English and United States finance during 1922. The total sum represented 928 million dollars, that is, about a quarter of the sum which Germany needs to receive. The flippancy and devil-may-care character of this proposal is therefore obvious!

And politically also this proposal was unsatisfactory: no kind of guarantee, no kind of bond! Cuno put the demand for the evacuation of the army from the Ruhr. But after the catastrophic fall of the mark made the victory of France quite clear, the French Government demanded full surrender. In the reply to this proposal it is shown that the real value at the present time of the amounts contained in the German proposals represents, at 6 per cent. discount, no more than 15.8 milliard gold marks, and the

reply openly declares "that the Belgian and French Governments have decided to leave the Ruhr only in the measure that the reparation payments are actually paid, and that they have no intention of changing this decision." The replies of England and Italy show that they already regard Germany as defeated in the Ruhr. The defeat of Germany is also evident now on the international scale. The German bourgeoisie are making desperate attempts to conceal their defeat, provoking big conflicts with the workers of the Ruhr region. If this plan had succeeded, they would have spread the legend abroad of a foul blow in the back, and used this as pretext for surrender, and at the same time prepared a blood bath for the workers so that they might quietly proceed to their further exploitation by the payment of reparations. But this plan was frustrated by the watchfulness of the Communist Party of Germany.

After the failure of this plan the German bourgeoisie found themselves compelled to make a concrete proposal. It declared its willingness to guarantee an annual payment of 500 million gold marks, of which the bourgeoisie would take upon itself the amount of 200 millions. But the conditions on which this offer is made brings its value to nil. It demands not only the repeal of export duties, which alone would mean a saving to the capitalists of 100 to 150 million gold marks per annum, but also the abolition of the eight-hour day, full liberty of industrial and commercial activity, that is, the removal of all State control of prices, the repeal of all demobilisation provisions, that is, full freedom to dispose of war invalids and undesirable workers, and so on.

It is in vain that the Trade Unions now try to protest against the new deal of the German capitalists. They rejected united action with the Communists. While they protest against the avarice of the German capitalists, they at the same time savagely turn upon the Communist Party, and in the most slanderous and demagogic manner accuse it of collaboration with the French. After all this their protest against the avarice of the German capitalists falls absolutely flat. The Social-Democrats and the Trade Unions are not able to start any struggle, because in the present situation such a struggle brings with it revolutionary consequences, and this is what their leaders fear more than anything. Their policy at present is directed towards a union with the wing of the bourgeoisie which represents light industry (the party of Stresemann, the German People's Party, and the Democrats), and form with them a united front against heavy industry and the Communists, an enterprise which must end in their complete defeat.

### LOOKING FORWARD.

While we are writing these lines (June 3rd), the new German proposals are not yet published. But the defeat of Germany in the struggle for the Ruhr is an accomplished fact. Full surrender must take place in the near future. The new proposals apparently will not return to the question of an international loan, and will

contain concrete proposals of annual payments. Whether this proposal will be of such a character that victorious France will accept it is not yet known. In all probability negotiations will yet drag on for a long time. The preliminary agreement will most probably be based upon the programme which was published by "The Daily Telegraph" on May 4th, in the form of the general Belgian-French Reparation plan.

"The original obligation of Germany to pay is represented by the Bonds series A and B worked out by the London plan of payment. Germany should extinguish them at the rate of 17 milliard gold marks per annum. The Bonds of series C should be distributed among the Allies, going almost in full to writing off of the deed by the international management of the railways and the mines in the demilitarised zones of the Rhine and the Ruhr. With Germany's agreement to the foregoing and cessation of all passive opposition, the French military authorities undertake to cease all interferences in the civil government. The evacuation of the army from the Ruhr will take place in three stages provided Germany accurately makes her annual payments. Economic agreement between Germany, France and Belgium providing for the exchange of raw materials and half-finished goods between the Lorraine and the Ruhr to an extent exceeding the figures of 1913."

Such an agreement would satisfy more or less all sections of French opinion—the taxpayers, thanks to the guaranteed securities for the reparation payments; the military clique and the imperialists, by further occupation of the Ruhr; the heavy industry, thanks to the supply of coal and coke. It remains to be seen whether England will agree to such a solution of the question; or whether it desires to secure for itself also a share in the West-European heavy industry. We think such a solution of the question possible. But it cannot be final, because Germany would not be in a condition to produce payments to such an extent. The German bourgeoisie undoubtedly endeavour to get the sums necessary for the payment of reparations by the most intensive exploitation of the German working class. For this it meets with the most friendly co-operation from the French militarists. Already at the time of the upheavals in the Ruhr, Lutterbeck, the German Government Commissioner, as is well known, appealed to the French military command with the actual request to take measures against the striking workers, reminding it that Communist disorders might spread over to France. That the French will not be slow to lend aid to the German capitalists as soon as Germany surrenders, is shown by the fact that on June 2nd the French gave permission to allow 200 German police to return to Bochum. In other words, after its defeat, Germany will speedily be converted into a Colony of the Entente, will be "Turkified," as the "Echo de Paris" correctly expressed it.

“ Le Temps ” of June 6th published the seven following apparently official points which Germany must accept:—

1. No proposals whatsoever by Germany will be accepted for consideration, so long as the German Government does not cease its policy of passive resistance.

2. The Ruhr region will be freed from occupation only in the measure that Germany pays reparations.

3. If France will be absolved from its debts to England and the United States, it will limit its demands to a sum equal at the present time to 26 milliard marks.

4. In the contrary case, in addition to the 26 milliard gold marks, it will further demand that portion of its claims which is necessary to meet her obligations to England and the United States.

5. In view of the fact that the French claims are indisputable, and may not be reduced, France cannot allow any discussion on this question, and least of all the fixation of Germany's ability to pay a third party.

6. As regards the means for the covering of the payments to which the German Government might have recourse, France will readily meet any reasonable proposals, but she has no intention of taking upon herself the responsibility either for the carrying out or even to recommend measures to this end which may have to be taken in the unoccupied part of Germany. France cannot allow that her claims should be compromised by the fact that this or that measure does not give satisfactory results.

7. In the occupied regions France is resolved, together with the Allies, and in their interests as well as her own, to utilise every source of revenue which appears suitable for the payment of reparations. All the measures taken by her in this region will be wholly devoid of any ulterior political object.

Germany can no longer exist as an independent State, in the form of a bourgeois State.

Only in the event of the proletariat emerging triumphant from the great social conflicts that must ensue from the attempts of the German Government to apply the terms of the Reparation Agreement, can Germany again stand as an independent State, as a Proletarian State.

E. PAVLOVSKY.

# BEFORE THE BULGARIAN COUP D'ETAT

BY CHRISTO KABAKCHIEFF

*Editor's Note.—This article by Com. Kabakchieff was written before the Coup d'Etat. It explains the point of view which led the Bulgarian Party to adopt its present attitude.*

*In the next number we shall print an article of Com. Kabakchieff written since the Coup d'Etat, and a reply thereto.*

A regular session of the Party Council of the Communist Party of Bulgaria—such as is held every three months—was held from January 19-22, 1923. This session of the Party Council concerned itself with the internal situation of the country, with the decisions of the Fourth Congress of the Communist International, as well as with those of the Fifth Conference of the Communist Balkan Federation. As far as the domestic situation is concerned, the Party Council, after ascertaining the new gains of the party at the district elections held on January 14 of the same year, points to the necessity of a numerical growth of the party and Trade Union organisation in the cities and their organisational consolidation; an increase of the preparation for struggle both of the party and of its followers among the working masses of the cities and villages; and greater penetration and extension of the influence of the party among the workers and small landowners. The Party Council also dealt with the necessity of increasing preparations for warding off the attacks of the bourgeois coalition, which is organising its forces and preparing, in spite of its defeat in the elections, to seize power by a coup d'etat; to outlaw the Communist Party, to burden the workers and small landowners with the enormous war debts and reparations, and to bolster up its weakened class-rule by an undisguised dictatorship with the support of the Entente Governments, and even with the assistance of Entente troops.

The Party Council accepted the decisions of the Fifth Conference of the Communist Balkan Federation in their entirety and issued a manifesto against the war. Moreover, the Party Council went into an exhaustive consideration of the decisions of the Fourth World Congress, which it had accepted in entirety, and in connection therewith, passed a very important resolution with reference to the question of the Workers' and Peasants' Government. The purpose of this article is to explain the spirit and the meaning of this resolution, which we quote in full at the end of this article.

The tactic of the Workers' Government in the West-European and Middle-European countries, and the Workers' and Peasants' Government in Czecho-Slovakia and the Balkans, which was recommended by the Fourth World Congress of the Communist Inter-

national, is a development and application of the tactic of the United Front. But the Communist Party of Bulgaria is forced to apply the tactic of the United Front and of the Workers' and Peasants' Government under conditions that differ greatly from those of the West-European and Middle-European countries. We must first of all go into a consideration of these conditions.

### I.—THE TACTIC OF THE UNITED FRONT IN BULGARIA.

In Bulgaria the Communist Party is the only workers' party; it is the mass party of the workers and of the landless and small peasants; it is the strongest party in the cities, and in the villages stands second only to the Peasant Party, which has governed the country for three years. The party of the betrayers of Socialism, called "broad Socialists" in our country, which with three ministers participated in the bourgeois coalition Government after the war, has entirely lost even those workers who had formerly followed it. Out of the approximately 80,000 votes it polled in 1920, it received barely 40,000 votes in the last elections (January 14, 1923); but during the same period the Communist Party, which has 40,000 members and which made its entire programme the basis for the election fight, increased its votes particularly in those villages where a furious terror reigned. The 184,000 votes it had polled in 1920 grew to 230,000 on January 14, 1923, which means that it received a quarter of the entire number of votes cast, and more than the votes of the coalition of the four old bourgeois parties. The party of "broad Socialists" is the most unimportant party in the country, having absolutely no influence among the masses.\*

The trade union movement of Bulgaria is also united into one organisation which is bound theoretically and organisationally by the closest ties with the Communist Party. It is called the General Federation of Trade Unions, and has 35,000 members. After the workers of several trade unions, which had followed the "broad Socialist" Party, joined the General Federation of Trade Unions in 1920, there remained no other trade union of industrial and professional workers. A few "neutral" professional organisations of Government officials, employees, teachers, and others exist, but these are under the influence of the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties and do not count more than 10,000 members together.

It is clear, therefore, that the conditions in our country for the application of the tactic of the United Front differ greatly from those of other countries. The parties of the betrayers of Socialism in Western and Central Europe still count hundreds of thousands of workers among their members; the trade unions led by these betrayers of Socialism have millions of organised workers; the influence and the power of these parties of the betrayers of Socialism

\*In the elections of January 14, 1923, the bourgeois coalition received 219,000 votes—that is, less than in the 1920 elections, when it received 252,000 votes; the Peasant Government was able to increase its votes by acts of violence and demagoguery by about 100,000 and received 437,000 votes in all.

are still very great; the Communist Parties of these countries, on the contrary, embrace but a very small minority of the politically organised workers, and have but a rather weak influence among the trade unions.

Under these different circumstances and conditions, the tactic of United Front with other workers' parties and trade union organisations has not the same importance in our country as in other countries. But the Communist Party and the General Federation of Trade Unions of Bulgaria are taking up the tactic of the United Front, and are applying it in practice, in spite of these conditions. How are they doing this? The professional unions of State officials and teachers affiliated with the General Federation of Trade Unions are fighting for the realisation of a United Front with all State officials and teachers and with their organised "neutral" unions. In Parliament, in the communalities, in its political actions, in meetings and demonstrations, the Communist Party supports the professional and class interests of these officials and workers. Results of this tactic are already apparent, and a wide and general movement against the State for wage increases and for an improvement of the conditions of work started among the State officials. Only a small minority of these are organised, but they number 120,000 and work under very bad conditions (their wages are less than the average wage of the industrial workers). This movement is under the influence of our professional unions of State officials and that of the Communist Party. The party of the "broad Socialists" opposed the United Front of State officials and workers, and thereby lost the little influence it had among the "neutral" unions of these employees and workers. The "broad Socialist" Party itself, which is fast disintegrating and which counts only a very unimportant number of petty-bourgeois intelligentsia and small business men among its followers, is—at least at the present moment—without any importance and without any interest to us from the standpoint of the tactic of the United Front and of attracting the masses.

The Communist Party and the General Federation of Trade Unions of Bulgaria have a good deal more to accomplish among the organised workers, as far as the penetration of the masses and uniting them against the bourgeoisie for the struggle for the defence of their immediate and their class interests is concerned, than among the "neutral" and other professional unions or other party organisations. This is because no other workers' party exists outside the Communist Party, and no other trade union organisations exist outside the General Federation of Trade Unions, whether industrial or professional.

The aims of the United Front tactic are: the union of the working masses in the struggle for the preservation of their immediate and class interests against the bourgeois offensive; the advancement of revolutionary knowledge; and the strengthening of the revolutionary struggle of the working masses. But we, in Bulgaria, can best accomplish this aim by attracting the unorganised workers,

by establishing workers' commissions in the factories and workshops (which are the beginnings of the factory committees and the factory councils), and committees of administrative employees; by organising the workers in the trade unions and in the party; and by uniting ever greater masses of unorganised workers in the struggle led by the Communist Party. The strengthening and the success of our party is due to its uninterrupted and untiring activity in attracting and uniting the unorganised working masses, and to the daily struggles for immediate interests, as well as the great political struggle for the class interests and the revolutionary tasks of the proletariat.

## II.—THE PEASANT PARTY AND THE COMMUNIST PARTY.

The question of the Workers' Government in general, and of the Workers' and Peasants' Government in particular, must also be considered in our country in relation to conditions which differ from those of West Europe and Middle Europe. In Bulgaria there is no workers' party except the Communist Party, and therefore there is absolutely no possibility, to-day, of a Workers' Government in the hands of any workers' party except the Communist. But even though the Communist Party is the only workers' party, and has no rivals among the working class, still, among the village populace, where its influence is considerable and continually increasing, it encounters the opposition of the Peasant Party, which trails the majority of the peasants behind it.

What is the relation of the Communist Party to the Peasant Party? In order to understand this relation, we must know first of all the social composition of the Peasant Party on the one hand, and the policy and action of the Peasant Government, which has ruled the land for nearly three years, on the other. The overwhelming majority of the members of the Peasant Party and its adherents are small and landless peasants. According to the report of the Party for 1921, 121,000 members were landless, 97,798 owned up to 50 dekat, 27,176 had from 50-100 dekat, and 3,839 members had over 100 dekat. The actual number of peasants who own an average or large amount of land is undoubtedly much greater and has especially increased since the Peasant Party gained control of the Government; but in spite of this, the small peasants are in the majority in the Peasant Party. According to these figures, it is apparent that the Peasant Party is a small-peasant party in its social composition. It was as a small-peasant party that it took the reins of government with a programme which made the peasant the following promises: reduction of taxes, division of land among the small and landless peasants, restriction of the exploitation of the usurer and commercial capitalist, extension of self-government for the communalities, and of political rights for the people in general, the maintenance of peace, etc. The Peasant Party began its rule with the ideology and policy of a small peasant party. Many of its "social" laws and "reforms"

are half-way measures which serve to mislead the small peasants, but actually give them little or nothing. No bourgeois party and no Government has yet been able so skilfully to use demagogy and to draw the peasant masses after it as this petty-bourgeois party, raised in the bosom of the peasantry.

Once in power, however, substantial changes took place in the Peasant Party, not only in its social make-up, but also in its policy. The middle and large peasants in the party grew richer, and in spite of the fact that they formed the minority, they were able to play an increasingly important rôle. The Peasant Party was untrue to its promise to extend the right and freedom of the people from the first moment of its rule. The party obtained power because the old bourgeois parties who conducted the war had utterly compromised themselves. These very parties pushed the Peasant Party into the foreground, facilitated its seizure of power, and hurled it against the Communist Party. The historic rôle of the Peasant Party, like that of the Broad Socialist Party, which took power from the bourgeoisie after the war, was to divert the attention of the wide active masses, to suppress their dissatisfaction, and to bolster up the faltering mastery of the bourgeoisie. The first great act of the Peasant Government was the bloody suppression of the General Transport Workers' strike, which affected 20,000 railwaymen, post and telegraph employees, and lasted fully two months (December 24, 1919, to February 25, 1920). During this strike the Peasant Government outlawed the Communist Party, arrested thousands of its members, court-martialled and sentenced thousands of strikers and Communists, and subjected them to bestial acts of violence and whippings, shot many of them, suspended the entire workers' Press, and, in a word, tried to choke the entire Labour movement in blood with the general approval of the bourgeoisie and the old bourgeois parties. But the Communist Party proved itself to be more virile and powerful than the new agrarian rulers had expected. In the month of March, 1920, at the parliamentary election which took place under a reign of rabid terror, the party, at the price of considerable sacrifices and upon its entire revolutionary programme, won 60,000 more votes than in the elections of August, 1919; it united 184,000 voters—workers and peasants—under its banner. Since, and to this very day, for a period of three years, the Peasant Party has continued the brutal reaction and bloody policy toward the Communist Party and the active workers of the cities and villages who fight for it.

But in order to determine the actual rôle of the Peasant Party, it is more important to know its taxation, land, and "social" policy, through which the Peasant Party defends the predominant interests of the village bourgeoisie, than its general reactionary policy toward the Communist Party, through which it serves the entire bourgeoisie.

#### Peasant Party's Taxation Policy.

By its Taxation Policy, the Peasant Party has raised the indirect taxes from 150 million to 2,000 million leva. The entire burden

of these taxes falls not only upon the workers of the cities, but also upon the small and landless peasants, who obtain the greatest part of their needed grain from the market; the direct taxes of the bourgeoisie have been only insignificantly increased and the increase of the property tax on the middle and large landowners is still more negligible.

In order to throw dust in the eyes of the masses of small peasants, the Peasant Party, as part of its agrarian policy, took the land from several large landowners—followers of the old bourgeois parties; it accelerated the appropriation of the estates of the communalities on the part of the rich peasants, but it did not give these lands to those peasant masses who needed it.

Bulgaria is a land of small scale production. According to the statistics of 1910, there are 705,000 independent peasants, of whom 285,000 own only up to 30 dekat of land—that is, they are small landowners; 263,000 own from 30 to 100 dekats—they are also small landowners; 82,000 own from 100 to 300 dekats of land, and the rest are large landowners. Accordingly, the overwhelming majority of the peasants are small landowners, and of these the greatest number, because of the low standard of agriculture in our country, cannot even obtain from their own land the grain they need.

Taking into consideration the primitive methods of agriculture in Bulgaria to-day and the small area of cultivation, it will be impossible to hand over sufficient land to the small and landless peasants by means of any land reform. Only by nationalising the land and by using agricultural machinery can the needs of the peasant be satisfied and the agriculture of our country progress. But the Peasant Government did not give and does not wish to give the landless peasant the little it could give; it does not wish to touch the land of the middle and large peasants; it robs and divides up the hands of ten large landowners, who are its political opponents, out of sheer demagogy.

#### Peasant Party's "Social" Policy.

In its "SOCIAL" POLICY, the Peasant Party resurrected a bloody assessment of the Middle Ages—obligatory labour—from which it allowed the city and village bourgeoisie to free themselves by buying off; it abolished the restrictions which had been imposed on the profiteers of the city and village during the war; it created a State Consortium and Syndicate for the export of agricultural products and allowed these institutions to play into the hands of the middle and large peasants of the Peasant Party; it granted the middle and large peasants of the Peasant Party millions of credit from the State Banks; it contrived to protect the village bourgeoisie which became enriched during and after the war, and which made use of the increase in prices of agricultural products and of the State and community power to heap up capital by plunder. This "social" policy, which fostered and strengthened the new village bourgeoisie, and which snatched the trade in agricultural products from the State

bourgeoisie, sharpened the antagonism between the Peasant Party and the old bourgeois parties.

In a word, by using their power to increase their property and their capital, the middle and large peasants of the Peasant Party now constitute the new-rich village bourgeoisie, which plays a powerful and leading rôle in the Peasant Party and determines the policy of the Peasant Government. That part of the village bourgeoisie which formerly belonged to the old bourgeois parties and which went over to the Peasant Party in order to make full use of its power, forms the right wing in the party and leans toward a coalition with the old bourgeois parties. At the head of this wing stands Turlakoff, Minister of Finance. The new-rich village bourgeoisie, which arose from the middle peasantry and, with Stambulinski at the head, forms the "left" wing of the party, is more numerous and stronger in the Peasant Party. This village bourgeoisie wants to use all the advantage of power for itself alone; that is why it wants to rule independently, and for this purpose it endeavours to keep its influence over the wide masses of the small and landless peasants by petty-bourgeois half-way reforms and demagoguery. To-day the Peasant Party and the Peasant Government defend the interests and the policy of the village bourgeoisie.

But the Peasant Party and the Peasant Government increase the dissatisfaction of the small and landless peasants on this very account. The peasants are already feeling the results of the double-dealing and dissembling of the agrarian leaders. They are beginning to realise that they have been led astray and deceived, and that the village bourgeois has grown richer and stronger at their cost; they are forced out of the villages to-day by a still greater exploitation by usurers and traders; they pay greater taxes; they are being forced into increasing misery. That is why the small and landless peasants, even those who are followers of the Peasant Party, are beginning to adopt the slogans of the Communist Party, viz., abolition of the taxes on the working masses of the cities and villages; taxation of the bourgeoisie; restriction of exploitation on the part of finance and trade capital; safeguarding of the livelihood of the small landowners and the landless; confiscation of a part of capital; disarming of the bourgeoisie; arming of the workers and peasants; preservation of peace; union with the Russian Soviet Republic; peace and union with the neighbouring Balkan peoples. The Communist Party is uninterruptedly increasing the number of its followers and strengthening its influence in the villages; it is uniting thousands of peasants under its banner and at the same time is throwing the small and landless peasant in the Peasant Party to the left; it is sharpening the conflict and the struggle between these peasants and the village bourgeoisie which rules in the Peasant Party; in short, it is preparing the conditions for the joint struggle of the active village masses of the Communist Party and of the Peasant Party.

The village bourgeoisie, which controls the Peasant Party, and its Government are using all means to curb the growing influence of

the Communist Party in the villages, to alienate the peasant masses from the Communist Party, and to keep them under its own influence. With this in view, it is not only terrorising the villages, where acts of violence, arrests, and even murder are being used against hundreds of our comrades and sympathisers, but also resorting to demagogy, playing to the left, promising division of the land among the poor peasants, etc. But all the exertions of the agrarian rulers and possessors of power cannot still the dissatisfaction of the small and landless peasants, cannot stop the ever-growing influence of the Communist Party in the villages, nor can they thwart the realisation of the United Front of the proletariat of the city with the wide masses of those small or landless peasants outside the Peasant Party or even those organised within it.

### III.—THE WORKERS' AND PEASANTS' GOVERNMENT.

From the foregoing it will be clear why the question of the Workers' and Peasants' Government must be considered under different conditions in Bulgaria than those in West and Middle Europe. To the foregoing must be added that, while the West and Middle European countries are industrial lands with a numerous proletariat, which in some of these countries form the greater part of the population, Bulgaria counts only 971,000 town dwellers out of a total of 4,860,000—that is, only 20 per cent. of the population is a city population; the number of industrial and transport workers amounts to 242,000, and of agricultural workers to 150,000. But even this numerically small proletariat is not concentrated in large industrial and agricultural undertakings or in great city centres. If, in those countries where the proletariat is the majority of the population, in which there is a numerous agricultural working class, in which there are workers' parties counting millions of workers in their memberships (even though they are led by the betrayers of Socialism), the working class can seize power and build up a Workers' Government, basing it at first on the neutrality of the small peasants and then gradually gaining their support. Then the working class in the Balkan, South European, and East European countries—in which industry is only weakly developed and where there is a small proletariat—countries which are still primarily agricultural lands, in which the village population forms the majority (in Bulgaria it forms three-fourths of the total population) can seize power only in conjunction with the small and landless peasantry. In these countries there can be no thought of a Workers' Government, but only of a Workers' and Peasants' Government; even the final victory of the proletarian revolution in these countries is possible only if the active peasant masses take part.

In Bulgaria, however, there is no party, or any other kind of organisation, of the small and landless peasants, with which the workers and peasants struggling under the banner of the Communist Party can form a United Front and a Workers' and Peasants' Party. The Peasant Party is no such party or organisa-

tion. In spite of the existence of a majority of small peasants with a petty-bourgeois ideology in the Peasant Party, it also contains a whole class of newly-enriched middle peasants, proceeding from both the new as well as the old village bourgeoisie—a class which plays the leading role in the Peasant Party. Judging from the policy and acts of its three years rule, the Peasant Party has set itself entirely on the side of the village bourgeoisie, protecting its interests, and putting its policy into practice. The petty-bourgeois declarations and “reforms” of the Peasant Government are simply a means the village bourgeoisie employs to lead the small and landless peasants astray and gain their support, without which it cannot retain power in its hands.

### No Possibility of United Front!

The tactic of the United Front and for the Workers' Government in the West and Middle European countries, where other parties exist besides the Communist Party, means the formation of the United Front and of the Workers' Government with certain definite existing workers' parties. In Bulgaria, where there is no workers' party except the Communist Party, not even a party or organisation of small and landless peasants, it is impossible to apply the tactic of the United Front and for the Workers' and Peasants' Government to-day by the formation of a united fighting front with other working or peasant parties, or by a coalition with one of such parties.

The idea, or possibility of a United Front or Coalition between the Communist Party and the Peasant Party is absolutely out of the question, because a United Front or Coalition between the Communist Party and the village bourgeoisie, which controls the Peasant Party and exercises its policy through the Peasant Government, is impossible.

It is true that the Peasant Party and the Communist Party struggle contemporaneously against the city bourgeoisie and its parties. But this temporary parallel action is not a United Front and does not make a coalition possible. The struggle of the Peasant Party and the Peasant Government against the bourgeois coalition is explained by the opposing interests of the city and village bourgeoisie which we have mentioned above.

The Peasant Party and the Peasant Government fight against the city bourgeoisie and its parties from entirely different reasons and for entirely different aims than those which actuate the struggle of the Communist Party against the bourgeoisie and its parties. We have already pointed out that the Peasant Government defends the interests primarily of the village bourgeoisie; that it sharpens the antagonisms, conflicts and struggles between the village and city bourgeoisie and between the Peasant Party and the old bourgeois parties, by establishing consortiums and syndicates for the export of grain by the village bourgeoisie; by using credits granted by the State Bank on behalf of the newly-rich owners of large

estates; and by its general policy of protection of the village bourgeoisie.

The Peasant Government is skilfully using the hatred of the working masses of the villages for the old bourgeois parties in its violent campaign against the latter in the name of the "Power of the People" and "Democracy"; yet, this is essentially a struggle of a clique, a struggle which aims to hold power exclusively for the ruling village bourgeoisie. The Peasant Government jealously protects its power from the ambitions of the bourgeois coalition, but it did not tax the capital of the city bourgeoisie; it did not renounce the nationalistic and reactionary policy of the old bourgeois parties; and it did not do away with the latter's leagues of officers and bands of Fascists. On the contrary, the Agrarian Government actually abolished the few laws protecting labour; increased the taxes on the workers and working masses; and finally, as soon as the growth of the Communist Party threatened the common class interests of the village and city bourgeoisie, it built up a united front with the old bourgeois parties against the Communist Party. The Peasant Government formed local coalitions with the old bourgeois parties and organised a wild, bloody terror against the Communist Party, in order to wrest the city districts from the hands of the Communist Party, that is, from the workers and working peasants (during the last few years our party has won tens of city districts and hundreds of village districts), and hand them over to the city bourgeoisie and the old bourgeois parties.

In the Peasant Party to-day no complete, enlightened and disciplined left exists with which the Communist Party could reach an understanding for common action. The existing "left" in the Peasant Party must be differentiated from the masses of small and landless peasants of the village whose dissatisfaction with the ruling bourgeoisie of the Peasant Party and with the policy of the Peasant Government strengthens from day to day. This dissatisfaction of the small and landless masses in the villages is a spontaneous and unconscious one. These masses are not yet united and organised along any special lines, with their own ideology, demands and policy; they do not yet form an actual left in the Peasant Party.

At the head of the existing "left" of the Peasant Party stands Stambulinski, for three years the leader of the Peasant Party and Prime Minister of the Peasant Government. In order to understand the rôle which this "left" plays, it is necessary to know that the village bourgeoisie of the Peasant Party originated from two sources: one section consists of those large estate holders and village usurers of the old bourgeois parties who went over to the Peasant Party in order to enjoy the advantages of its power; the other section of the village bourgeoisie, the one which is most numerous in the Peasant Party and which plays the leading rôle, consists of the newly-rich middle peasantry and village usurers who utilised the increased value of agricultural products during and after the war and the power of the Peasant Government to develop

trade and usury in agricultural products, to accumulate capital, to increase their property, and to enrich themselves. This second section is the so-called "left" which wants to rule independently in order to turn the entire power exclusively to its own account, and which is the greediest, most insolent, and most unscrupulous group in the plundering of the village masses and the heaping up of wealth. But to keep the power in its own hands, this "left" finds the support of the wide working masses of the villages necessary; and to attract these masses, it is forced to continue along the line of petty-bourgeois demagoguery and the policy of halfway "reforms" in order to conciliate the small peasantry.

The struggle between the right and the "left" in the Peasant Party is a struggle between cliques for the division of the spoils resulting from power; it is a struggle between two wings of the village bourgeoisie. This struggle finally caused a crisis in the Peasant Party, and ended with the expulsion of the right wing, led by Turlakoff, from the Peasant Government. What sort of "left" this is in the Peasant Party and what its policy is, has been made still more clear since this "purging" of the party of its right wing, for the Government of Stambulinski has instituted a still fiercer campaign of terror against the Communist Party. During the last city district elections, which took place February 11, 1923, the Government organised nightly attacks by armed police on the homes of Communists in many cities, arrested hundreds of our comrades, and practised the most brutal violence on many of them. In Warschetz, for instance, several comrades were wounded by the police. The Peasant Party created a new election law, which in reality abolished the proportional voting system, in order to separate the proletariat of the cities from the working masses of the villages, and in order to decrease the mandates of the Communist Party and build up a majority in Parliament for itself.

But even though an actual, well-formed left is lacking in the Peasant Party, growing dissatisfaction of the small and landless peasants exists in the party against the acts and the policy of the ruling village bourgeoisie. These working masses of the village are more and more following the voice of the Communist Party, the party which stands second in strength only to the Peasant Party (half the membership of the Communist Party, and two-thirds of its voting adherents are small and landless peasants). These working masses of the villages in the Peasant Party, under the influence of the Communist Party, are already beginning to set themselves against the policy of the Peasant Government. Under their pressure, the latter was forced to turn those responsible for the war over to a State tribunal, and to make certain insignificant concessions to the small and landless peasants—though these were more or less empty promises. In practice, a united front of the working peasant masses of the Communist Party and those of the Peasant Party is being spontaneously formed against the village and city bourgeoisie; these masses are beginning to free themselves from the village bourgeoisie, and during demonstrations organised by the

Peasant Party, they are raising banners with the slogans of the Communist Party.

### Possibilities Before the Peasants.

In the villages, the Communist Party is directing its struggle along two lines: firstly, to tear greater village masses away from the Peasant Party and the bourgeois parties, to absorb these masses in its own organisations, and to strengthen its influence in the villages; secondly, to force to the left the small and landless masses, which remain in the Peasant Party (those which belong to the organisation and those which vote for it) and which still constitute a large mass; to prepare and expedite the formation of a real left in the Peasant Party.

The Communist Party, by going to the working masses of the villages with its full programme, the maximum and the minimum, which contains a list of demands supporting the interests of the small and landless peasants, is rallying an ever-increasing number of these masses to its banner, is uniting the city proletariat and the working peasants for a common struggle against the city and village bourgeoisies, is forcing the working peasant masses of the Peasant Party to the left, and, in the process of the struggle itself, is accelerating the formation of the united front between the Communist Party and the left, or the future organisation of these masses. This policy of the Communist Party in the villages accomplished glorious results; the number of followers and the power of the Communist Party are substantially increasing—the dissatisfaction of the masses in the Peasant Party is growing.

It is impossible to prophesy to-day as to when the growing dissatisfaction of the village masses in the Peasant Party will develop into a left which will openly oppose the policy of the Peasant Government, will decisively break its connection with the village bourgeoisie, and form a new organisation of dissatisfied peasant masses, or how this internal struggle in the Peasant Party will develop. Three culminating points of this struggle are possible: firstly, the Peasant Party maintains itself unhurt, expels from its ranks only its leaders and the heads of the village bourgeoisie, and, as a petty-bourgeois peasant party, seeks the support of the Communist Party against the general danger of a return of the old bourgeois parties and bourgeois reaction to power; secondly, the Peasant Party splits, resulting in the formation of a new small peasant party or organisation with a clearly formulated radical programme, led by the majority of the small and landless peasants united in a left, which will continue the common struggle together with the peasant masses following the Communist Party; thirdly, large and ever-increasing groups of small and landless masses of the villages in the Peasant Party go over to the Communist Party, and the Peasant Party itself gradually transforms itself into a party of the village bourgeoisie tending more and more to the right and finally forming a coalition with the city bourgeoisie. Of these three possibilities, the first is the most improbable, because of the great corruption and the growing disintegration of the Peasant

Party. The second will take place with the normal development of the sharpening of the antagonisms between the village bourgeoisie and the working masses of the villages in the Peasant Party. The third could take place during a great revolutionary crisis, when the village bourgeoisie and the leaders of the Peasant Party submissively and entirely go over to the camp of the bourgeois counter-revolution, and the overwhelming mass of the small and landless peasants of the party join the ranks of the Communist Party on the side of the revolution.

We consider the second and especially the third as the more probable, when we take into consideration the sharp class antagonisms, and struggles in our country, the intensifying internal crisis, the increasingly brutal reactionary policy of the village bourgeoisie, and the growing influence of the Communist Party among the working peasant masses—an influence that it wins upon its entire programme, by its slogans for immediate interests as well as the revolutionary slogans for the conquest of power through the workers' and peasants' councils. But whichever possibility is realised, the Communist Party can expedite the conquest of the working peasant masses for the cause and the success of the proletarian revolution only by penetrating ever deeper into these masses, by increasing the bonds with them, by forming and enlarging a united front of the struggling working masses of the cities and villages, and by attracting ever greater groups of the small and landless peasants who follow the Peasant Party.

#### When a United Front Can be Made.

Now it is clear why the resolution of the Party Council, which we quote in full at the end of this article, speaks of a common struggle and a united front at the present moment not with a left wing in the Peasant Party, but with the small and landless peasant masses who follow the Peasant Party. Not until a left has been created and consolidated in the Peasant Party can we talk of a common struggle and a united front. But it is also clear, on the other hand, that the common struggle and the united front between the Communist Party and such a left will accelerate the split in the Peasant Party and make it inevitable. And the question of the establishment of a Workers' and Peasants' Government can be practically considered as soon as the working masses of the villages in the Peasant Party break their ties with the village bourgeoisie for a struggle against the latter and against the Peasant Party, force their leaders who remain in the Peasant Party to unite with the working masses of the Communist Party in city and village, or shut them out of the party and cause a split therein.

#### What Sort of Workers' and Peasants' Government?

The following question will be asked and must be answered fully and clearly: What sort of Workers' and Peasants' Government is meant by the Communist Party slogan—a Parliamentary Government based on the foundations of bourgeois democracy, or a

Soviet Government? The resolution of the Fourth Congress of the Communist International contemplates several possibilities: firstly, a Liberal "Labour" Government, such as exists in Australia and can be formed in England; secondly, a Social-Democratic "Labour" Government, such as exists in Germany; thirdly, a Workers' and Peasants' Government, the possibility of which exists in the Balkans, Czecho-Slovakia, and others; fourthly, a Workers' Government in which Communists take part; fifthly, a real Workers' Government, which can be realised in its true form only through the Communist Party.

The first two possibilities are absolutely out of the question in our country, for the simple reason that there exist neither the trade unions nor labour party as in Australia and England, nor the social-democratic party and trade unions as in Germany. These "labour" governments are tools in the hands of the bourgeoisie, and the Communist Party can neither support them nor take part in them. The fifth possibility is that of a Soviet Government, which establishes the dictatorship of the proletariat. The resolution of the Communist International says: "The two other types of Workers' Government (three and four), in which the Communists can take part, do not mean the dictatorship of the proletariat; they are not even a historical, inevitable transition to the dictatorship; still, where they have been established, they can serve as a starting point for the realisation of this dictatorship."

The Workers' and Peasants' Government of the Communist Party slogan is not a Government of Workers' and Peasants' Councils, is not a Soviet Government. Any Soviet Government in Bulgaria and in the Balkans will be unavoidably a Workers' and Peasants' Government, but that does not necessarily mean that every Workers' and Peasants' Government in these countries will be a Soviet Government. We are here discussing the possibility of the struggle for power of the working masses of the city and the small peasant masses of the villages resulting in a Workers' and Peasants' Government built on the foundations of bourgeois democracy—a struggle which will break the ties between these masses and the city and village bourgeoisie, and unite these masses on the basis of certain vital immediate interests. We shall see later under what conditions the Communist Party could support and take part in such a Workers' and Peasants' Government. But here we must emphasise that this is not the only possibility, and that in Bulgaria a Workers' and Peasants' Government resting on the foundations of bourgeois democracy is not a historically impossible step to a government of the Workers' and Peasants' Councils—just as in the industrial countries a labour government is not an impossible step to a government of the Workers' Councils, to the dictatorship of the proletariat.

#### **When a Workers' and Peasants' Government Can be Formed.**

It is possible that, in a great and acute revolutionary crisis such as we mentioned above, the process of disintegration within

the Peasant Party will be accelerated, that there will be no time or opportunity for either the formation of a left or the organisation of a new radical peasant party, and that the small and landless peasants of the Peasant Party and of the bourgeois parties will come over to the Communist Party en masse. Then the revolutionary proletariat and the working peasant masses who follow it can conquer political power and set up the Workers' and Peasants' Soviet Government directly. Such a crisis could occur, for example, if the bourgeoisie attempted to draw the Bulgarian people into a new war, particularly a war with Russia; such a crisis could also occur in consequence of a coup d'etat attempted by the bourgeois coalition of the old parties in the process of which civil war would be kindled in the country. If, in such a crisis, the village bourgeoisie of the Peasant Party goes over to the side of the Chauvinist and reactionary city bourgeoisie (which we take for granted), then the working peasants will leave the party en masse and go over to the camp of the workers and peasants struggling under the banner of the Communist Party.

But the total bankruptcy of the bourgeois parties and the swift disintegration of the Peasant Party necessitate the immediate advancing of the slogan of a Workers' and Peasants' Government.

The Workers' and Peasants' Government can be created only by the revolutionary struggle of the masses; that is, by an independent struggle of the city proletariat and the small and landless peasants, in which they defend not only their immediate interests, but also their class interests, and which is directed toward destroying the dependence of the masses on the bourgeoisie, toward breaking every bond with the bourgeois parties, and toward the building up of an independent power of the workers and peasants. The Workers' and Peasants' Government must take over power upon a definite programme, which unites the workers and the working peasants, separates them from the bourgeois parties, and opposes them to the bourgeoisie; only by putting this programme into practice will the Workers' and Peasants' Government be built on the one firm foundation on which it can maintain itself. The main points of this programme are: the arming of the workers and small peasants; the development of the organisation of workers and small peasants; their increasing participation in the control and management of production, as well as in the application of power. The chief lines of this programme are contained in the demands put forth by the Party Council (see the Resolution on the Workers' and Peasants' Government); this programme can be restricted or expanded according to the situation of the moment, the sharpness of the crisis, and the power of the Communist Party. On the sharpness of the revolutionary crisis and on the power of the Communist Party will depend what concessions the working masses of town and village, struggling under the banner of the Communist Party, will be forced to make to the still unconscious masses in the bourgeois democracy, to the constitutional and Parliamentary regime; and whether the Workers' and Peasants' Government will

be satisfied with universal suffrage and the proportional election system by granting woman's suffrage, lowering the voting age, denying the vote to the large capitalists, usurers, bankers, and large estate owners, legalising the Factory Councils, allowing the organisation of Workers' and Peasants' Councils and their increasing participation in the application of power, etc. It would be an empty discussion to determine to-day what sort of democratic or parliamentary character the Workers' and Peasants' Government will have. One thing can be said with certainty: through the Workers' and Peasants' Government, the masses will entirely free themselves from the illusions of bourgeois democracy.

### The Defence of the Workers' and Peasants' Government.

It is necessary to-day to emphasise that the Workers' and Peasants' Government can be established and upheld only through the revolutionary struggle of the masses; that it can lean on the support of only the organisation and the strength of the working masses of the towns and villages; and that it will inevitably inaugurate an epoch of still sharper class and revolutionary struggle. The Workers' and Peasants' Government must lean on the support of the working masses of town and village and their economic and political organisations in order to realise its programme and to ward off the attacks of the city and village bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie will not voluntarily capitulate to the Workers' and Peasants' Government; on the contrary, such a Government can conquer only in a decisive battle with the bourgeoisie, which will try every possible means to overthrow it, and in this struggle for maintaining the Workers' and Peasants' Government and for the realisation of its programme, the workers and peasants will be forced to arm themselves and disarm the bourgeoisie, and civil war will be kindled. In civil war the proletariat and the working masses of the villages will build up Workers' and Peasants' Councils as the only class organs for the building up of new revolutionary power. The Workers' and Peasants' Councils, which are indispensable to the proletariat of all lands for the seizure of power and the establishment of its dictatorship, are still more necessary to the Bulgarian proletariat. In the industrial countries the proletariat has enormous trade unions, organisations, factory committees, and other proletarian organs, to which it can look for support in its revolutionary struggle for the conquest of power, as can also the Workers' Government. In Bulgaria and in the Balkans, as well as in all industrially backward countries and in all agricultural countries in general, in which these proletarian organisations are much weaker, the Workers' and Peasants' Councils, as the only means for the conquest of power by the workers and peasants, will be so much more necessary. The Workers' and Peasants' Government which does not do away with bourgeois democracy and bourgeois parliamentarianism, but which, as a further development of the latter, grants greater rights to the masses, will inevitably open an epoch of much greater and sharper revolutionary struggle, and will be a gigantic decisive step forward in the revolutionary struggle of the

workers and peasants for the conquest of political power by the Workers' and Peasants' Councils.

The Workers' and Peasants' Government in Bulgaria, in the Balkans, and in general, in the agricultural countries where the Communist movement is strong and where the rule of the bourgeoisie is disorganised, will mean a step forward in the proletarian revolution; but only on the following three chief conditions will no danger be run of petty-bourgeois illusions and of the degeneration and defeat of the revolutionary movement: Firstly, the working peasants of to-day, or their party or organisation of to-morrow, in conjunction with which the Communist Party is ready to fight and even to seize power, must break its bonds with the village bourgeoisie. Secondly, the Communist Party and the peasant masses or their party (organisation) must unite in a common struggle and must seize power only on behalf of fixed demands expressing the actual economic and political material and class interests of the workers and small peasants. (A programme setting forth the most important of such demands is contained in the Resolution of the Party Council.) Thirdly, the Communist Party must not for one moment weaken its independent organisation as the class party of the proletariat, whether in its struggle for the united front or in the struggle for the building up and maintaining of a Workers' and Peasants' Government; on the contrary, it must steadily strengthen its organisation, must continue its independent revolutionary fight with growing energy, must further the struggle of the masses with all its strength, and guide them to their final goal—the victory of the revolution, conquest of power through the Workers' and Peasants' Councils, and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The slogan of the Workers' and Peasants' Government is of enormous agitational significance. With this slogan, the Communist Party will gather still greater masses of workers and peasants under its banner, and, at the same time, will force the masses following the Peasant Party still farther to the left, and bring nearer the moment when these masses will mingle with the general stream of the revolutionary movement. The slogan for the Workers' and Peasants' Government is a wedge by means of which the Communist Party will split the peasant masses from the village bourgeoisie in the Peasant Party. This slogan is a whip with which to lash those leaders of the Peasant Party who broke their promises to the peasant masses, and who hold their influence over these masses to-day only by violence and demagogy. This slogan is a bacillus which will accelerate the process of disintegration in the Peasant Party—a process which began the very day on which the party seized power and which strengthens itself in proportion as the real policy of the Peasant Government reveals the growing class antagonisms between the interests of the village bourgeoisie who rule in the Peasant Party, and of the working masses of the village who are dragged in its trail.

At this moment, when, on the one hand, the bourgeois bloc is

preparing to steal power by a coup d'état, and on the other, the Peasant Party is trying more firmly to establish and develop its independent government by shutting out the leaders of the so-called right in the party and by new elections for Parliament; when, in a word, the parties of the city and village bourgeoisies are struggling hard, one in order to maintain power, the other in order to seize it—at this moment, the Communist Party is turning to the city proletariat and the working masses of the villages and says to them: "Power must not be seized by the bankrupt city bourgeoisie and its branded cliques. Neither must power remain in the hands of the village bourgeoisie, which has deceived the small and landless peasants, and which may revive a united front with the reactionary city bourgeoisie any day. Power must be conquered by and must belong to the workers and peasants."

### In the Smouldering Struggle for Power.

In this approaching crisis, in this smouldering struggle for power between the bourgeois city and village cliques, the Communist Party valiantly raises high the slogan for the Workers' and Peasants' Government. And this slogan, this banner of the Communist Party in its struggle for power, will be received over the whole country with enthusiasm by the working masses of city and village. But in the ranks of our enemies, the slogan will be met with fear and distraction by the bourgeois parties and particularly by the village bourgeoisie and the leaders of the Peasant Party. The prominent victorious "left" of the Peasant Party—that is, the ruling group of newly-rich village bourgeoisie with Stambulinski at the head, replied to the hoisting of the flag by the Communist Party for the Workers' and Peasants' Government, with a frantic reactionary advance against our party: it organised Fascisti attacks of police and gendarmes on the Communist Party all over the country, disarmed the working masses of the cities, and put through a reactionary election law which annuls the proportional voting system and universal suffrage, and aims at reducing the number of votes and mandates of the Communist Party in the elections for Parliament now being prepared by the Government. But the more the village bourgeoisie and its leaders strengthen the reaction from fear of the influence of the Communist Party among the working peasant masses of the Peasant Party, the more they go toward the right, and in this way draw nearer to the bourgeois bloc and clear the way to power for a coalition of city and village bourgeoisies, so much greater becomes the dissatisfaction of the small and landless peasants of the Peasant Party, so much greater grows the disintegration of the party and the formation of a real left, and so much more is the influence of the Communist Party strengthened among the working masses of the village within and without the Peasant Party.

The struggle for the Workers' and Peasants' Government will give a mighty impetus to the common struggle of the workers and small peasants for the conquest of State power and will bring nearer the victory of the proletarian revolution.

**IV.—RESOLUTION OF THE PARTY COUNCIL ON THE WORKERS' AND PEASANTS' GOVERNMENT.**

(Adopted in its Session of January 22nd, 1923.)

**I.**

The Party Council approves and adopts the resolutions and decisions adopted by the Fourth Congress of the Communist International.

**II.**

In the application and extension of the tactic of the United Front in the struggles of the working class and the working, small land-owning peasant masses, the Communist Party of Bulgaria emphatically demands that as a necessary preliminary condition for the realisation of the united front with other worker and peasant organisations, these organisations break their ties with the city and village bourgeoisie, and undertake a common struggle against it for the defence of the immediate as well as the class interests of the workers and small peasants. The Communist Party adopts the slogan of a Workers' and Peasants' Government promulgated by the Fourth Congress of the Communist International.

The Communist Party of Bulgaria explains that the Workers' and Peasants' Government cannot be realised by a coalition of the Communist Party with the Peasant Party and the Peasant Government which springs from it.

The Peasant Party defends the interests and follows the policy of the village bourgeoisie, particularly that bourgeoisie arising from the newly-rich middle peasants, which plays the leading role in the Peasant Party and which trails after itself the great masses of landless and small peasants by means of demagogy and small conciliatory half-day measures, as well as by the power of the Government.

The Peasant Government, which has ruled the land for about three years, proved by its acts and by its general policy that it actually defends the interests of the newly-rich village bourgeoisie in spite of the demagogy and the half-way measures by means of which it conciliates the small peasant masses which follow it. It did nothing to check the exploitation to which the workers are subject by the city bourgeoisie; it became a support of monarchism and a blind tool of Entente imperialism; it was untrue to its promises and to its programme, for it increased the burdens of taxation and the exploitation and misery not only of the masses of city workers, but of those of the village; it subjected the workers and peasants, who are fighting under the banner of the Communist Party, to a mad and bloody terror; it did not disarm the bourgeoisie—on the contrary, day by day it forms still closer ties with it and is preparing a coalition with its parties which are aiming at a violent seizure of power in order totally to defeat the Communist Party and the fighting masses in the cities and the villages.

But while the Communist Party to-day spurns every coalition with the Peasant Party and the Peasant Government, and while it continues its independent fight for the uniting of the wide working and small peasant masses under its banner, it calls the working peasants, proletariat, and small landowning peasants who are organised in the village branches of the Peasant Party, who follow it, and who constitute its overwhelming majority, to a common struggle in the name of the following demands:—

1. Abolition of the Neuilly Treaty, of reparations and of State debts.
2. Popular trial for those responsible for the war.
3. Abolition of the taxes which burden the workers and small landowning masses of city and village. Abolition of obligatory labour.
4. Transfer of entire burdens of taxation on to the city and village bourgeoisie, graduated taxes on incomes, capital, and property, and graduated taxes on large inheritances.
5. State confiscation of part of large industrial, commercial and financial capital, placing them under the control of workers' organisations.
6. Restriction of exploitation by profiteer, trading, and speculative capital, by establishing cheap State credit for the small landowning peasants and small industries by developing and supporting the workers' and peasants' co-operatives, consumers', credit, and producers' co-operatives, and co-operatives engaged in exporting agricultural products—as well as by introducing a State monopoly of foreign trade.
7. Forcible seizure by the State of all primary necessities of life found in the possession of the large capitalists, property owners, merchants, and bankers, and their distribution at reasonable fixed prices among the communalities under the control of the organisations of the workers and small peasants.
8. Satisfaction of the housing needs of the homeless and the working masses of the city by the forcible seizure of the superfluous housing accommodation of the large landlords; decreasing and fixing of housing rents; sanitary rebuilding of the workers' districts; and erection of healthy and cheap homes.
9. Increase of the wages of workers and of the salaries of employees and officials of the State, provinces, and districts, in proportion to the rise in prices.
10. Legislation by workers; inspection by workers; and control of production by the factory councils and the professional workers' organisations.
11. Abolition of the monarchy; extension and guarantee of the political rights of the working people; extension of suffrage to women; and unrestricted freedom of organisation, speech, press, and assembly.

12. Disarming of the bourgeoisie as well as of their Fascist and other bands; arming of the workers and small peasants for the defence of the people against internal coup d'états and external attacks.

13. Peace with Turkey, and peace and alliance with Soviet Russia.

14. National independence of the oppressed people in Macedonia, Thrace, Dobruha, and all other Balkan countries; establishment of Soviet republics and their union into a Balkan Socialist Federal Soviet Republic.

By these demands the Communist Party will unite still greater sections of the working peasants of the Peasant Party with the workers and peasants struggling under the Communist banner; it will reveal the antagonisms that exist between the great masses of small peasants in the Peasant Party on the one hand, and the village bourgeoisie on the other—a bourgeoisie whose interests and policy are expressed in the Peasant Party and the Peasant Government; it will force the working peasant masses of the Peasant Party to the left and unite the proletariat of the city and the great working peasant masses in a struggle against the city and village bourgeoisie, in the name of their common, immediate, and political interests.

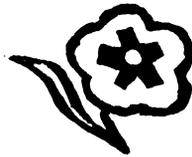
In order to accomplish the above-mentioned demands, the Communist Party is ready to seize power and establish a Workers' and Peasants' Government together with the landless and small peasants, now organised in the Peasant Party, as soon as these working peasant masses oppose themselves to the policy of the Peasant Government and break their ties with the village bourgeoisie. The Communist Party will work with all its strength for the acceleration of the coming of this moment.

In calling the landless and small peasants of the Peasant Party, as well as the entire working peasant masses to a common struggle for the realisation of these demands and to establish a Workers' and Peasants' Government for that purpose, the Communist Party openly declares to these workers and peasants, that without a revolutionary struggle against the bourgeoisie, a Workers' and Peasants' Government can neither be gained nor maintained; and that the full realisation of these demands, their maintainance and extension to a universal preservation of the class interests of the workers and peasants, and the final release of labour from the yoke of capital are possible only when the entire power passes into the hands of the Workers' and Peasants' Councils. And to that end the Communist Party will continue with the greatest energy its agitation and its revolutionary struggle for the Soviet power and for the establishment of the Workers' and Peasants' Soviet Republic.

### III.

The Party Council, emphasising the great immediate practical significance of the resolutions of the Fourth World Congress of the

Communist International on the Trade Union Movement, the Agrarian Programme, Communist education within the party, Communist propaganda among the women, and the Young Communist Movement, hereby charges the Central Committee to work out immediately concrete plans of action in the spirit of the above-mentioned resolutions, and charges all Party Organisations, Groups, and individual Comrades, as well as the Women's and Youth's Section, to work with all their strength in accordance with these plans of action.



# The Coup d'Etat in Bulgaria and the Communist Party

Report by Comrade K. Radek at the Session of the Enlarged  
Executive on June 23rd, 1923.

We are placing before you a manifesto to the Bulgarian workers and peasants. In this manifesto we make clear our attitude to the Coup d'Etat in Bulgaria and we outline in a general form the policy of the Bulgarian Party. We are of the opinion that the Bulgarian Coup d'Etat is a decisive defeat of our party. Let us hope that it will not be a crushing defeat. Nevertheless, it is the most serious defeat ever experienced by any Communist Party. It does not even bear comparison with the victory of Fascism in Italy, for the simple reason that the Italian Communist Party is young and weak, while the Bulgarian Communist Party has behind it over a quarter of the electors and is the largest and strongest mass party in Bulgaria. Thus this defeat is not only a testimony of the growing strength of counter-revolution, but it is also a positive defeat of the tactics of the Communist Party.

## The Meaning of the Bulgarian Defeat.

The reasons which induced us to define our attitudes to the situation in Bulgaria are as follows:—

1. In the first place the Coup d'Etat in Bulgaria is part of the victorious advance of world reaction. The peasant Government in Bulgaria was the only body incompatible with the bourgeois domination in the Balkans, the only Government which, notwithstanding its efforts to carry out the conditions of the Neuilly Peace Treaty, was looked upon by the bourgeois world in the light of a Government of peasants opposed to the urban bourgeoisie. The way in which the organs of Fascism, from the "Morning Post" to the Stinnes Press, welcome the fall of Stambulinski, is sufficient proof that the Balkan overthrow is to the advantage of world reaction.

2. The new Government resulting from the Coup d'Etat and alleged to be a democratic bourgeois Government, is in close contact with the Russian counter-revolution. There is no doubt whatever that Wrangel officers are playing their part in it. The interest shown by the counter-revolutionary Russian Press, headed by the "Rul" in the Bulgarian Coup d'Etat is a sign that it expects from it a strengthening of its position.

3. Looked at from the world-political viewpoint, the Coup d'Etat is an incident in the general struggle of the two powers aspiring to the hegemony in Europe—France and Great Britain. The fall of Stambulinski and the victory of the new White Government mean that the British Government has gained a point in its encircling policy in the East against Soviet Russia. The little

Entente, the tool of France, supported Stambulinski because the policy of his Government was one of fulfilling the Neuilly Peace Treaty. Even if Great Britain and Italy did not give directly material support to the Bulgarian Coup d'Etat (Italy is concerned about the Adriatic and therefore engaged in a struggle with Jugo-Slavia), there is no doubt whatever that Great Britain and Italy are favouring the victorious clique which brought about the Coup d'Etat. When the Jugo-Slavian Government wanted to take diplomatic measures against the Bulgarian Coup d'Etat, Young, the British Ambassador in Belgrade, put in his veto. We are certainly not the keepers of the Neuilly Peace Treaty, but in estimating the present world-political situation, the fact is that it is Britain which is taking up the initiative in the encirclement of Soviet Russia. Viewed in that light, this means another point gained in the encirclement of Soviet Russia. This alone is sufficient proof that we are faced with an event of great political significance to which we must pay the greatest attention.

4. It is evident that this victory of the Whites in Bulgaria will be an encouragement to the Fascisti in all countries. In three hours a handful of officers brought about the overthrow of a Government which has behind it a large majority of the peasantry. This is, of course, encouraging to the Fascist adventurers in all countries, especially in Czecho-Slovakia, Germany and Austria.

5. For the first time a big Communist Party was in the fray. It lost the battle—and what is even sadder—the Bulgarian Press of June 9—16 is to hand—it does not even realise it. Throughout the first week following the defeat, the party did not understand the causes for it, and defended its attitude as correct Communist tactics. We must confess that not a single Communist paper in Europe of its own accord said that this meant a defeat of the Communist International. A defeat which is to be ascribed not to the superior strength of the enemy, but to lack of fighting will in the Communist Party. There are even Communist papers which reprint and circulate the theory of the Bulgarian comrades. Therefore it is necessary, not because we wish to play the judges over the defeat of one of our parties, but for practical reasons that before enlightening the wide masses as to its errors, we communicate them to the leaders of all Communist Parties represented here. I repeat that this is necessary because we run the risk of the same errors being committed in Czecho-Slovakia where the situation is very similar. They might also be committed in Germany.

With your permission I will present a short survey of the events and will bring back to your memory the most important facts required for the just appreciation of the position.

#### The Social Structure of Bulgaria and the Political Groups.

In the first instance we must consider whether the Bulgarian comrades could have avoided this defeat. Is the social and political structure of Bulgaria such that it might have been possible to prevent

the Coup d'Etat of the Whites either alone or in alliance with the peasantry? Our answer is in the affirmative. The social structure of the country is such that 80 to 90 per cent. of the population are peasants. Out of 700,000 independent farms, 285,000 belong to peasants with less than 30 dekas of land. Considering the state of agriculture in Bulgaria, those are semi-proletarian peasants. 263,000 peasants farms have between 30 and 100 deka. Our Bulgarian comrades say in their report that every peasant in Bulgaria possessing less than 100 deka is a poor small peasant. This means that over 500,000 of these peasants were fit to be our social allies. The bourgeoisie in the cities is very weak, in fact a big bourgeoisie is non-existent. The town bourgeoisie consists of tradesmen, artisans, speculators, intellectuals, and bureaucrats. Thus, there is no class which can be considered strong because of the rôle it plays in production. The working class, though small, is better organised than in any other country. Considering that out of 100,000 workers, 40,000 are members of the party, we must admit that such a percentage does not exist in any other country. The last element is—militarism. Owing to the Neuilly Peace Treaty, the army is demobilised. This is a rough sketch of the social balance of power.

### The Political Situation.

The bourgeoisie and the generals who ruled for 40 years became bankrupt by the war, and were swept away by the indignant peasantry. The result of the poll at the elections is a testimony to this. In 1920 the combined bourgeois parties obtained 250,000 votes, in 1923—219,000 votes, while the Communist Party obtained in 1920—148,000 votes and in 1923—230,000 votes. Thus the Communist Party obtained more votes than all the bourgeois parties taken together. The strongest party, which as a Government Party was able to influence elections, is the Peasant Party. The Government Party had 121,000 members on its list, out of whom 115,000 were poor, or at least small peasants. Thus it was a party with which (in view of its social composition) we could enter into a coalition. You are aware that this party, because of the small clique of intellectuals which leads the peasantry, is more in sympathy with the small section of the rural bourgeoisie than with the wide masses which are behind. Because it realised that the Communist Party was the only strong party capable of competing with it as far as the peasantry are concerned, it was persecuted by the Government, which created much bitterness within the party. However, there is no doubt whatever that the Communist Party omitted to do what it should have done either to force the Stambulinski Party into the coalition or to split it.

The party has neglected propaganda among the peasantry. This is borne out by events. It has shown itself unable to expose Stambulinski to the peasantry, thus bringing disunion into the Peasant Party, in the event of Stambulinski refusing the coalition with it.

Moreover, I have not mentioned a very important political

element in the entire political situation which showed that we were also able to operate against Stambulinski.

In the recent history of Bulgaria the Macedonian question played an important role. Macedonia, which is inhabited by peasants of whom it is difficult to say whether they are Serbs or Bulgarians, has for a long time been a bone of contention between Serbia and Bulgaria. Owing to the defeat in the war, the Peasant Party and Stambulinski renounced their claim on Macedonia. This was done not only formally, for Stambulinski, in order to strengthen his position, arrived at an agreement with Jugo-Slavia at Nisch, as a result of which he initiated a sanguinary persecution of these old Macedonian organisations. Socially, these organisations are composed of small and poor peasants. They have a revolutionary past, have fought against the domination of the Turkish big landowners, have struggled against the bourgeoisie in Serbia, and preserve old, illegal, revolutionary organisations. They have for a long time sympathised with the Russian revolution. The Macedonian organisations were a social factor with which we could ally ourselves. We could ally ourselves with them against Stambulinski. They are an important military factor with big illegal, armed organisations at their disposal. Allied with them, we would have been able to bring pressure to bear on the Stambulinski Government, inducing it, even if it must carry out the conditions of the Neuilly Peace Treaty, to abstain from persecuting these organisations. Not only has the Party not done this, but what is more characteristic, the Macedonian question does not seem to play any part at all in their conception of the actual situation. Two months ago Kabaktchiev published an article on the situation in Bulgaria, which appeared in the "Inprecorr," and which I have just re-read. Throughout the article, in all his tactical computations, there is not a word about the Macedonian question.

### The National Situation in the Balkans.

In defending its policy the Party used the following argument: We are in a position to assume power, but the international situation is such that we shall be crushed. I draw the attention to this argument of these comrades (I mean especially the Czech comrades) who, in their own country, have frequently made use of similar arguments. The Bulgarian Party's view is that it can be victorious only when victory drops down from the blue, when it is easy, when it is surrounded by a sea of revolution.

The isolation of Bulgaria, which is surrounded by Serbia, Greece and Roumania, is certainly a menacing factor for the Bulgarian Revolution and was bound to have its effect on the party. This situation was, however, made easier by the Greco-Turkish war and the Greek Revolution, which gave an impetus to the revolutionary movement in the Balkans. The Bulgarian Party remained passive during the Greek Revolution, it awaited a more favourable opportunity. The counter-revolution was quick to understand that in politics it is essential to take the initiative into one's own hands.

Viewed from the international standpoint, the position of the counter-revolution, a clique of old officers and bureaucrats responsible for the Coup d'Etat, is also far from being easy. This Government, whose main support is Macedonia, is a danger for Serbia, whom it therefore fears. Nevertheless, the counter-revolution dared to act. The counter-revolution recognised what an old Communist Party failed to recognise, viz., that in a decisive moment victory is to those who dare, that there is a logic in facts accomplished and that by taking the initiative into one's own hands one makes the situation more difficult for one's opponents.

### The Cause of Defeat.

Comrades, our Bulgarian Party was defeated because it was a Social-Democratic Marxian Party, which did great things in the field of propaganda and organisation, but which showed itself unable to accomplish the transition from agitation and opposition to deeds and action in a historic moment. We are faced with the same danger in many of our other parties. The attitude of our Bulgarian comrades to the peasantry and to the national question was due to the fact that the Bulgarian Party lacked the audacity required for revolutionary struggle. Only because it dared not fight, the Bulgarian C.P., in spite of our Bulgarian comrades' correct interpretation of the Macedonian problem, was unable to set the necessary machinery into motion.

The defeat is a decisive one. It is ridiculous to assume that in a peasant country, where the masses are scattered, those who dispose of the State apparatus are unable to maintain their position for a considerable time, in spite of their social weakness. The moment when the Coup d'Etat took place in Sofia was the moment for action, for we were the only power centralised throughout the country. The railway men and the telegraph servants were on our side, we had communications in our hands, as well as the working masses on our side. Moreover, there is no doubt whatever that at the moment when the Peasant Party was fighting for its existence, we were given a historic opportunity to enter into coalition with it, regardless of everything which separated us from it. When Kornilov dared to rise against the Provisional Government we were not in a better position to Kerensky, nay, even in a worse, than the Bulgarian comrades to Stambulinsky. At that time our party brought all its energy into play in the defence against Kornilov. Moreover, after the Kornilov affair, Lenin, in his article on compromises, made a direct offer to the Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionaries.

The Bulgarian Party does not try to understand its defeat; it is, on the contrary, endeavouring to excuse it. We have before us the manifestos of the Bulgarian Party. They are the saddest part of the defeat. We have here the manifesto of the 9th and that of the 15th, and a number of articles. The attitude taken up by the party in these documents is as follows: Two cliques of the bourgeoisie are fighting; we, the working class, stand outside, and we hope and de-

mand that freedom of the Press and all other good things shall be given to us. Such are the contents of the manifesto of the 9th.

When a section of the working class, without any guidance by the party, sided with the peasants in their struggle, it was disavowed by the party. In its manifesto of the 16th (which is the most discouraging document I have ever read) the party makes the following amazing statement:—

“ Hundreds and thousands of workers and peasants are being arrested and brought to trial on the strength of the emergency law against banditism and under the pretext that they resisted the Coup d’Etat. We declare that in the confused situation which arose between the two bourgeois cliques when civil war broke out, a section of workers had to defend their lives and their families, and did not participate in the struggle for power.”

The workers were neutral, and only when in peril of being shot did they take part in the shooting, because they have wives and children. But they did not fight against the Coup d’Etat. . . .

The theory of neutrality between the two bourgeois camps, the declaration that we are the only party defending the constitution (the constitution on the strength of which King Boris conspired against Stambulinski, and for which our comrades are in prison) indicate not only to serious defeat, but also the internal dissolution of the party leadership. We should be only too glad if the party proved itself to be in a healthier state than its leaders. We want at any rate to be quite open with the comrades about these facts.

We consider it the duty of the Communist Party, in the event of struggle between the capitalist sections of society, which true to their traditions represent the interests of capitalism, and the petty-bourgeois peasant sections, not to play the role of a spectator and a neutral element, but to endeavour (if it is not strong enough to assume power) to enter into coalition with the petty-bourgeois sections of society. It is not Marxian, but just pedantry to assert that we are confronted here by two sections of the bourgeoisie which are equally hostile to us, when in fact the peasantry has not yet ruled in any country. To produce at this juncture the Third Volume of Capital and to assert that the peasantry is also a section of the bourgeoisie, amounts to the abandonment of one’s revolutionary duties.

### The Executive Committee and the Bulgarian Party.

I will now endeavour to explain how far the Executive is to blame for this affair. I will give you a few facts, which will enable you to judge for yourselves. Already as far back as the Second Congress, small groups came from Bulgaria who blamed the party for not assuming power and for being inactive when the régime of King Ferdinand collapsed. Some members of these groups represented a type of adventurers, such as Khartakov, who reprinted articles about terrorism by Kautsky and at the same time played the

part of a "left Communist." But these groups had also good proletarian elements which were rather confused in their ideas. We examined their accusations very carefully, for we knew by experience in Germany (the Kapp-Putsch) how necessary it is to pay heed to such warnings.

The Commission entrusted with the examination of these accusations found that those of a concrete nature were not justified. It was clear that the party could not assume power in 1918. Nevertheless, I must confess that we were somewhat uneasy, and the result of our suspicion that there was something rotten in the State of Denmark was—the manifesto to the Bulgarian Party Conference of May 4th, 1921.

I will read you this manifesto which is not very long:—

### THE MANIFESTO

of the Executive of the Communist International to the Congress of the Bulgarian Communist Party.

The Executive of the Communist International sends fraternal greetings to the Congress of the Bulgarian Communist Party. The Bulgarian Communist Party, the heir to the brave and consistent party of the Tjesmaki, is one of the best mass parties of the Communist International. It was one of the first to adopt without any reservations the principles of Communism. The Bulgarian Communist Party showed itself capable, as a member of the Communist International, of getting into closer contact with the oppressed working and peasant masses, of strengthening its positions and of defying the government of capitalists and village profiteers.

The Executive of the Communist International expresses the hope that the Bulgarian Communist Party will carefully examine at its Congress its organisation and its political actions, in order to ascertain if they are commensurate with the demands which history places before the Communist Party. Participation in Parliament and in the municipal and communal councils must not be in the interest of petty reformist work, but must be used for the awakening and revolutionising of the masses. Such revolutionary action demands the establishment of illegal organisations, as we must expect at any time the destruction of the legal organisations by the bourgeoisie. Revolutionary actions do not drop from the blue and the conditions for them cannot be created only by agitation and propaganda. They come into being whenever and wherever the party bravely endeavours to aggravate and extend every social conflict. It is only thus that the struggle for partial demands can be converted into a struggle for political power.

This struggle for political power is easier in the Balkans because the bourgeoisie of these countries is not as well organised as that of Western Europe. The conquest of power by the working class and the poorer peasantry in a Balkan State would

find an echo in every neighbouring State, for in the Balkans all the Governments are faced with great difficulties. Revolution in the Balkans does not mean only the emancipation of the Balkan working class from the yoke of capitalism and of the Balkan peasantry from the grip of speculators and usurers, it would also greatly accelerate the victory of the revolution in Central and Western Europe. Revolution in the agrarian countries of Southern and Eastern Europe would greatly neutralise the peril which Germany and Italy are running in the event of them being shut off from the corn supplies of America. It would bring revolution nearer to the peoples of Asia who hitherto were touched by the revolution only through Russia.

Trusting that in the knowledge of its great responsibilities the Communist Party of Bulgaria will be spurred on to greater efforts, the Executive wishes it success in its work.

Long live the Bulgarian Communist Party!

Long live the revolution in the Balkan countries!

Long live the Communist International!

Long live world revolution!

You see that we did not deem it advisable to criticise, and limited ourselves to expressing our **apprehensions** in a very definite manner. Subsequently we discussed these questions with the Bulgarian comrades at many sessions of the Executive. I wish to remind you that at the time of the Greek revolution we spent five hours in arguing with Popov and Jordanov about the necessity of an advance by the Bulgarian Party. The representative of the Executive, whom we thereupon sent to Bulgaria, discussed these questions at various sessions with the Bulgarian Party. We are justified in saying that we already realised the danger even at that time. **We are to blame for our reluctance to interfere with the internal affairs of a big, old Communist Party, for having lacked the courage to tell the truth to the party and for not having sent into the old Central Committee, whose members are very good and highly educated comrades, workers who might have introduced into it a more revolutionary policy. We are to blame for having paid too much heed to the noise made about "ukazes from Moscow."** We are aware that we deserve this blame, and we trust that the Communist Parties will not only draw general tactical lessons from this situation in Bulgaria, but that these experiences (which will probably cost the lives of hundreds and thousands of proletarians in Bulgaria, and will perhaps retard the victory of the revolution for a considerable time) will teach them that we must lay aside this reserve of ours in the present critical period. We are convinced that we must be loth to interfere in countries where the situation is far from revolutionary, but that we

must not stand back in the case of countries where the historic accomplishment of revolution is imminent.

I am absolutely convinced that after this experience, every Communist will understand if we brush all organisational scruples aside and interfere in such a situation in the name of the Communist International. Wherever there is a danger of our party being smashed without striking a blow, and of Fascism triumphing, it is our task to remind it that it is the duty of every Communist Party which is a mass party to dare to fight, even at the risk of defeat. For even if it is defeated, which, in the given situation, is by no means a foregone conclusion, it will show to the working masses that they have a fighting centre around which they can rally as soon as the offensive abates and as soon as Fascism begins to disintegrate.



# Lessons of the Bulgarian Coup d'Etat

By G. ZINOVIEV.

## I.—THE NECESSITY OF CRITICISM.

We hesitated long before deciding whether the present moment was the right one for a public criticism of the tactics of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party. It is a fact that the party is now exposed to the fire of the victorious white-Fascist bands. It is a fact that every day the bourgeois newspapers clamour that our party should be declared outside the pale of the law. Together with the Executive Committee of the Comintern, however, we have come to the conclusion that it is not right to keep silent, that silence with regard to erroneous tactics would not save the party from defeat, but would rather enhance the danger of defeat. We are of the opinion that it is necessary to detect blunders while the trail of recent events is still fresh, and to learn correct tactics from the Bulgarian lesson.

The Communist International is a unified world Communist Party. The Bulgarian example is undoubtedly of international significance. Each of the sixty parties affiliated to the Communist International is vitally concerned as to whether the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party acted rightly or wrongly during events which to-morrow may recur with one or another variation in other countries.

At the same time, the leaders of the C.C. of the Bulgarian Communist Party, with a zeal worthy of a better cause, are advocating the theory of "neutrality" in the International Communist Press. This involves two dangers. First of all wide dissemination is given to false views, which will be made capital of by our opponents of the II International. Secondly, by obstinately defending a false position, the Bulgarian comrades lose the chance of correcting their blunders, and block the way to really revolutionary tactics.

We cannot be silent. The question is too important. Precisely, our fraternal relations with the Bulgarian workers and the Bulgarian Communist Party, with whom we are bound by an especially close friendship, compel us to speak up candidly. Let our enemies exult. The Communist Parties have more than once subjected themselves to self-criticism and were made to straighten their line under the fire of the enemy. It is sufficient to mention the case of the German Communist Party after the March events of 1921. Through errors and defeats our path leads to correct tactics and victory. In spite of all, the future certainly belongs to the Bulgarian Communist Party and not the Fascists now in power, nor to the "Social-Democratic" Fascisti of the "Broad" Socialist Party.

**2.—THE ROLE OF INDEPENDENT PEASANT PARTIES.**

The recent events in Bulgaria throw an unusually bright light on certain important political problems of to-day.

First of all there is the role of the peasant parties. One of the most interesting facts of present-day political history is the attempt to organise peasant parties who claim to play an independent political role, it is alleged, both against the bourgeoisie and against the proletariat. Such attempts were made during the last few years in the Balkans, in Czecho-Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, etc.

This phenomenon is a very complex one. Its chief explanation lies in the fact that during the period of the war and the subsequent disintegration of the bourgeois "order," the town has been giving way before the country, inasmuch as the importance of the latter is growing together with its economic and social significance. On the one hand, during the first imperialist war of 1914-1918, which keenly affected the villages, a large section of the peasantry, who suffered from the war, accumulated a certain amount of political experience. When the sons of the peasants, whose millions made up the imperialist armies, returned home (if they returned home at all) they brought with them into the country a certain political animation. On the other hand, the power of the big bourgeoisie is perceptibly waning, and therefore the bourgeoisie and its assistants, the Social-Democrats, are compelled to take more notice of the peasantry and to draw them into the field of politics.

The peasant parties fail to play, and it is doubtful whether they ever will play, an independent political role. In this respect the Bulgarian example is highly instructive. The policy of a middle course in our imperialist epoch is foredoomed to failure. The peasantry has only two ways: either to follow the bourgeoisie, in which case a "Bulgar" solution of the problem, sooner or later, is inevitable, or else follow the proletariat and find therein the only possible protection for their fundamental interests. Even those contemporary peasant parties who maintain the appearance of independence are in fact nothing but political "cannon-fodder" for the bourgeoisie. It is not without reason, therefore, that the leaders of the so-called peasant parties consist in the main of priests, lawyers, and rich landowners.

Stambulinsky's attempt cannot be denied a certain breadth and scope. His biography is not a commonplace one. At one time he had the pluck to speak the truth in the face of the whole world. He was sentenced to lifelong imprisonment, and so forth. His policy had a certain breadth, notably at the beginning of his ministry.

It would seem that if a peasant party could anywhere count on playing an independent political role, it is in Bulgaria. Indeed, the peasantry of Bulgaria comprises 85-90 per cent. of the entire population. The town bourgeoisie is comparatively feeble. The two wars which swept over Bulgaria did a great deal of harm to the peasantry. Stambulinsky's dramatic past helped to make him for a time a very popular peasant leader.

And yet he ended in such an ignominious failure.

In essence, it was the first important attempt, although a demagogic one, of the anti-bourgeois policy of the peasant party. When Stambulinsky gave over to the judgment of the national vote the ex-ministers guilty of the imperialist war, when he replaced the bourgeois officers and brought the peasant militia from the country, and so forth, he was pursuing a policy which, in its initial stages, would work in his favour. Very soon, however, the "peasant" policy of Stambulinsky began to assume the tendency of a "Kulak" policy. Latterly, Stambulinsky's policy was directed not so much against the bourgeoisie as against the working class, headed by the Communist Party. The attempt to maintain the "middle" line was foredoomed. Having broken away from the masses, and lost the confidence of the whole working class, including a large part of the peasantry, Stambulinsky himself prepared the wretched fate which ultimately overtook him.

The "Peasant" Government, which was operating both against the proletariat and against the bourgeoisie, proved to be an empty and a pitiful Utopia even in a peasant country like Bulgaria. Only a **Workers' and Peasants' Government** can help the Bulgarian peasantry to extricate themselves from the clutches of the bourgeois robbers.

### 3.—TACTICS OF THE BULGARIAN COMMUNIST PARTY.

The Bulgarian Coup d'Etat deserves the most serious historical examination by the Bulgarian Communist Party. Like all crises, this crisis too was destined to show us what the old, strong, numerous Bulgarian Communist Party, which seemed to be equal to circumstances, is.

Alas, the Bulgarian Communist Party failed to stand the test. On the contrary, it justified the most pessimistic predictions.

We waited with trepidation the first tidings which would tell us what position the Bulgarian Communist Party would adopt in the opening civil war. The very first news inspired the fear that their position would be a passive one. Subsequent information surpassed our worst expectations.

"The new Government, created by the military coup, has come to substitute one military-police dictatorship, namely, the dictatorship of the rural bourgeoisie, by another, the military-police dictatorship of the town bourgeoisie and old bourgeois parties. . . ."

"The mask of legality has been torn from the face of the bourgeoisie, and now the only party which really defends the rights and liberties guaranteed (!) by the Constitution (!!) is the Communist Party. . . ."

"The working class and the peasantry will not take part in the armed struggle between the rural and town bourgeoisie because it would mean pulling the chestnuts out of the fire for others, namely, for their exploiters and oppressors. . . ."

“ We demand in the name of the working class the preservation and extension of political freedom. We demand the full liberty of speech and Press, assembly and organisation. We demand that steps be taken to curtail speculation and the high cost of living. . . .”

“ So far the new Government has made no attempt directly against the Communist Party. But the régime of the military dictatorship which has now been established is directed against the rights and liberties of the workers, and consequently against the Communist Party. While demanding the restoration of rights and liberties, and the abolition of martial law, we call upon you to rally . . .”

This is what the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party wrote in its first manifesto of June 9th, 1923.

“ The armed struggle between the followers of the deposed Government and the adherents of the new Government is not yet ended. The Communist Party and the hundreds and thousands of workers and peasants who are united beneath its banner, are taking no part in this struggle. The course of this struggle we do not know. But this struggle, which till now has not drawn in the wide masses of the people, is a fight for power between the town and rural bourgeoisie, i.e., between two wings of the capitalist class. . . .”

“ While exposing the real purpose for which the town and rural bourgeoisie are fighting, and pointing out to the workers of the town and country that this purpose has nothing in common with their interests, the Communist Party calls upon the workers and labouring peasants to rally and fight independently in defence of their own interests and in fulfilment of the slogans put forward by the Communist Party. . . .”

This is what the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party wrote in its manifesto of July 11th.

The Central Committee entrenched itself in this “ neutral ” position, and has not come out of it till now. It is none of “ our ” business. . . . Two fractions of the bourgeoisie are fighting. We “ demand ” . . . the repeal of martial law. This on the morrow of the White Coup d’Etat! We are so . . . innocent, that we demand of the Fascist Government that its declaration concerning freedom and other fine things “ be confirmed by deed ” . . .

Many Communist workers in the provinces failed to grasp this “ eminent ” statesmanlike point of view. They see that the triumphant march of Fascist reaction has begun, and have taken the field against it, endeavouring, together with separate detachments of peasants, to offer armed resistance. In Plevna and other places the Communist workers, supported by the peasants, are coming out with arms in hand. The Central Committee, however, hastens to interfere. We quote in full the text of the remarkable telegram which Comrade Lukanow, the secretary of the Central Committee, sent to Plevna:—

“ Plevna, Vasili Tabachkin, Secretary Plevna Party Organisation.—Am aware that rumours rife among you in Plevna that I am

arrested and extraordinary measures are being applied towards us here in Sofia. It is a lie. Take no notice of rumours and provocation. You will receive our manifesto and adhere unalterably to the position taken up therein. Do not participate in favour of or against any side. Greetings to Tatch, Olga, Asen and other comrades." (The last sentence was added to convince Tabatchkin that the wire was really despatched by Lukanow.)

From communications we now know that the Plevna case does not stand alone.

As is invariably the case in such circumstances, attempts are being made to attribute the blunder of the party centre to the workers. It is alleged that the Bulgarian workers displayed indifference, did not show a militant spirit, did not want to fight, etc. Thus write the members of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party.

This is sophistry. We are already aware that within a few hours of the White Coup d'Etat the Central Committee issued the terribly mistaken watchword of "neutrality," i.e., they urged the workers not to interfere in the struggles between two coteries apparently equally inimical to us. How were the workers to display their fighting spirit when their own party, in the person of the Central Committee, from the very outset told them **not to fight**?

In his article headed the "Military-Bourgeois Coup d'Etat in Bulgaria," Comrade Kabakchiev himself states that armed resistance of the peasants **began** in the districts of Radomir, Pazardjik, Plevna, Shuman, Karlovo, Popovo, Russa, Biela, Cherven-Breg, Loretsch, and Dronovo, and that the armed groups in the districts of Plevna, Shuman and Pazardjik already numbered some **hundreds** of persons.

How can we be made to believe that this movement, even if supported by the Communist Party, would, as Comrade Kabakchiev asserts, have been "surely doomed to defeat"?

Comrade Kabakchiev, however, is prepared with another reason.

"The working masses in the towns," he writes, "met the Coup d'Etat with indifference and even with a certain feeling of relief." (!!).

The article from the theoretical journal of the party, "Novoe Vremia," goes still further:—

"The masses in Sofia met the fall of the old Government with relief and obvious (!) satisfaction (!!)" (Article entitled "The Coup d'Etat and the Situation in Bulgaria.")

The masses, as everybody knows, have a broad back. Everything can be loaded on to it. But even if this were really the case in some places, the fault again is that of the leaders of the party. They are now coming down on the old Government of Stambulinsky more than on the triumphant Whites. They are giving a theoretical basis to the remarkable "thesis" that for the workers there is no difference between the two "coteries" of the bourgeoisie. They

promptly call an "independent position" conduct for which there is another name. . . .

The dogmatic doctrinaire method of appraising the various bourgeois and middle-class groups has for long been a distinguishing feature of the Bulgarian Communist Party. In this respect they forcibly reminded one of the worst sectarian sides of Guesdism (first period). As long as this was only a theoretical fancy and literary awkwardness, it was but half an evil. But when it **determined the policy** of the party at a crucial and decisive moment, it became a veritable calamity for the party.

The number of peasants with a little land in Bulgaria, as Comrade Kabakchiev himself more than once wrote, is 300,000. There is an equal number of average peasants (very poor). About 600,000 peasants in this small country are our potential allies. During the Coup d'Etat a part of them were standing at the cross-road between Stambulinsky and us. And we are asked to believe that it is merely a struggle between two equally harmful bourgeois "coteries"! . . . At the end of the above-mentioned manifesto, the Central Committee of the party, in order to clear its conscience, superficially advances the watchword of "The Workers' and Peasants' Government." In the manner here put forward, it is a political corpse, meaning nothing. This is no fight for the Workers' and Peasants' Government. This is not Marxism.

Stambulinsky is dead. The leading circles of his party have been defeated. Some of them are going over to the Whites. But the peasants remain. It is necessary to join with them in the fight against the bourgeoisie. This cannot be done unless fallacious and lifeless views are abandoned.

The leaders of the Central Committee obviously hoped that their "neutrality" would avert the blows from the party, since they lacked resolution to enter the lists. The too circumspect leaders tried to shelter themselves from the approaching storm of the civil war under the dilapidated umbrella of "neutrality."

Do not believe the "rumours" about extraordinary measures against the Communists, wires Comrade Lukanow. A few days elapse (was it so difficult to foresee?) and the "extraordinary measures" become a fact. The Fascist Government comes down with a shower of repressions on the heads of the Communists. In Plevna alone several hundred Communists were arrested, and the party is being driven underground. The whole bourgeois Press is very emphatic in connection with the "neutrality" of the Communists and is preparing new blows against them.

A more doctrinaire and more false position than that now occupied by the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party it is difficult to imagine. Certainly, Stambulinsky was an enemy of the working class. His policy of repressions against the Communists certainly called forth legitimate wrath and hatred. It is certainly true that the leading circles of Stambulinsky's Party were all the time degenerating into a "Kulak" group. Nevertheless, in the

circumstances which obtained in Bulgaria, to classify the whole of the bourgeoisie, including those who still sympathised or half-sympathised with the Stambulinsky peasant petty-bourgeoisie, as "an all-round reactionary mass" is a blatant error. When Fascists come to grips with the leading circles of the Peasant Party, it was and still is the duty of the Communists to join hands with the honest adherents of the Peasant Party in order to strike out against the Whites.

Was not Kerensky in September, 1917, an enemy of the workers? And yet the Bolsheviks joined with him against Kornilov. It was Kerensky, after all, who lost the game. This should also have been the policy in connection with Stambulinsky.

The position taken up by the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party is in fact similar to the **Social-Democratic** position.

When we say "social-democratic" we have in view the good old times of social democracy. The contemporary social democrats, of course, go further. The leaders of the Bulgarian Mensheviks ("Broad" Socialists) who belong to the Second International, participate in the Fascist Government, and assume, evidently, the worst hangmen duties in that Government. Thus, through the "Broad Socialists" the Second International merges directly into the "noble" international family of Fascism.

The "neutral" position of the Central Committee could not but lead to a political cul-de-sac. To adopt "neutrality" at such a moment signifies political **capitulation**.

The fate of the Bulgarian Communist Party is instructive. It is the oldest and strongest workers' party. The Bulgarian Communist Party has behind it at least 25 to 30 years of development. It won over the vast majority of the workers and a considerable section of the peasants in a long struggle with the "Broad" Socialists. It deprived the "broad" Press of all serious influence over the workers. In the business of agitation and propaganda the Bulgarian Communist Party accomplished a tremendous task (just as German social democracy did in its best years). At the head of the Bulgarian Communist Party is a staff of leaders consisting of educated old Marxists. And yet such a woeful blunder, such a great disappointment!

It is difficult in the extreme to pass from propaganda and agitation to revolutionary action.

Already in 1921 (in an open letter dated May 4th) the Executive Committee of the Comintern for the first time drew the attention of the Bulgarian Communist Party to its weak sides. "Remember," we wrote in that letter, "that victory is not sent from the skies. Remember, that mere agitation and propaganda are not enough, that one must be able at the decisive moment to pass over to direct militant tasks."

The second time the Executive Committee of the Comintern

called the attention of the Bulgarian Party more sharply to its weak points. This was in connection with the recent revolution in Greece. The Bulgarian Central Committee, which was at the head of the whole Balkan Federation, displayed a passivity towards the events in Greece, unprecedented in revolutionaries.

The fact of the matter is this: The Bulgarian Communist Party in the course of a quarter of a century of organisation and propaganda acquired considerable strength. The question was, would there prove to be the requisite quantity and quality when needed, would the old Bulgarian Party be able at the decisive moment to put an end to the preliminary period of propaganda and accumulation of forces so as to enter the struggle? Of this it proved to be incapable. The leaders of the Bulgarian Party during recent months thought more about preserving the volkshouses, which Stambulinsky was attacking, than about preparing for the coming Coup d'Etat, which was predicted by Kabakchiev (one of the leaders of the Central Committee) and the whole Central Committee. Just like some of the leaders of social-democracy in 1914. . . .

All the Bulgarian railway workers and postal and telegraph employees are on the side of the Communists. Everybody knows what an immense significance this was likely to have during the first days of the Coup d'Etat. But we were "neutral."

The Bulgarian Central Committee wanted a revolution "with guarantees." It did not even dare think of fighting. It feared that Roumania would march against them, etc. The Whites, however, did not fear Yugo-Slavia. And they won. By its "circumspection," the Central Committee caused a severe defeat. It is painful to say all this when the Fascist scorpions are attacking the Bulgarian worker. But not to speak is worse. The bitter lesson of the political defeat of one of the strongest parties of the Comintern should not be allowed to pass in vain for other parties. Real Communist organisations are born out of severe and painful defeats. We were entitled to expect better things from the Bulgarian Party. But the cup of experience will apparently have to be drained to the bottom. The workers learn only from their own mistakes and defeats.

There are situations under which it is worse for a revolutionary party not to fight than to fight and lose. Such a situation recently confronted our Bulgarian Communist Party. To withdraw into the shell of "neutrality" at such a time means to paralyse one's own forces. . . .

We do not for a moment doubt, however, that hundreds and thousands of intelligent workers belonging to the Bulgarian Communist Party, those whose instincts egged them on to fight and who were stopped by their leaders, will be able to save their party. By reforming their ranks, and taught by a severe lesson, they will now, under the direct fire of the enemy, be able to weld their organ-

## THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL.

isation and prepare it for the decisive battles to come. After all, the civil war in Bulgaria has only just begun. After all, the civil war can end in no way but in a victory for the Communist Party. The watchword of "Workers' and Peasants' Government" advanced by the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party is the RIGHT watchword. We do not accuse the Central Committee of fighting under a wrong watchword. We accuse it of not having fought at all. The watchword of a Workers' and Peasants' Government will take a firm foothold in the Bulgarian peasantry, who have been aroused by the civil war. Through heavy defeats and White Terror, the Bulgarian workers will attain the triumph of their watchword.

Let not the Bulgarian comrades lose heart; let them hasten to rectify the blunders they have made. And let all other Communist Parties learn from the Bulgarian lesson what not to do.

July 28th, 1923.



# DEATH PENALTY FOR COMMUNISTS

## Secret Documents of the Polish Government.

The English Bourgeois-radical paper, "Manchester Guardian," has published the following communication, which divulges the plans of the Polish Government concerning Communists. These plans exceed in brutality not only Mussolini in Italy, but even the inhuman Horthy in Hungary. In view of the interest of these documents, we give the communication of the "Manchester Guardian" correspondent in full:—

"The new Polish Government has hitherto shown more tolerance towards the parties of the Left and the National minorities than was expected of a Government so reactionary. It was feared that it would follow a policy of repression. So far these fears have not been realised, but I have now obtained the texts of two secret documents which show that there is reason for the greatest anxiety. The second of these documents is particularly sinister, and leaves no doubt that the Polish Government intends to pass legislation with the object of suppressing opposition movements, especially the Communists.

"This attitude towards the Communists is explained by the fact that whereas the last Polish Government was anti-Russian rather than specifically anti-Communist, the present Government is anti-Communist rather than anti-Russian.

"Both documents referred to are circulars marked 'confidential,' and sent by Kiernik, the Minister of the Interior, to the voyevods, or governors of provinces. The first one is dated June 5th, 1923. It opens with the words:—

"'One of the chief tasks of the Government and of the whole nation is the safeguarding of internal security. The present moment, in which a new period in the life of our State begins, demands an absolutely clear programme in this respect, so that representatives of the State may know their duties and their competence. In the near future the Government will take steps to combat by legislative means the movement directed against the State, but to-day I consider it necessary, M. Voyovod, to call your attention to the responsibility you bear for security in the province which has been entrusted to you. The upholding of this security will be regarded as a measure of your own administrative qualifications.'

"Minister Kiernik then goes on to say that in defending internal security he has only the welfare of the State in mind, irrespective of party interests. In view of the coming conflict between the State and those hostile to it he wishes (words apparently missing) authorities. Meanwhile he grants them the right to use armed military or police force to maintain order during processions, demon-

strations, or when arresting suspected persons. He also recommends the service of couriers to facilitate and co-ordinate operations both in towns and in open country.

“ Having prepared the ground by these general injunctions, Minister Kiernik circulated the second confidential memorandum to the voyevods on April 11th, 1923. The following is a complete text:—

“ ‘ In view of the exceptional importance and fundamental significance of the Bill for the protection of territory, constitution, representatives’ dignity, and the neighbourly relations of the Polish Republic, I hold it necessary before the legislative bodies finally discuss and accept this Bill (the chief aim of which is to combat attacks against the community) to obtain your views so that they may be taken into consideration in the proposals for this Bill which the Government will submit to the Judicial Commission of Sejm.

“ ‘ As I am in favour of passing this Bill unconditionally as a basis for maintaining internal order, I must remark that in the expression of your opinion attention must be paid to the fight against disruptive elements—that is, against the Communists. While I deny all idealistic motives to this movement, which receives support and uniform guidance from Moscow, and is a tool in the hands of hostile forces abroad, I would like you to support the view that persons who avow themselves to be Communists, or are in the service of the Communist Party, must be recognised as traitors by the law, traitors who organise attacks meant to overthrow the existing order, and who must be punished by death.

“ ‘ I also consider it necessary that you shall similarly stress the view that the Communist elements in the legislative bodies, in the self-governing corporations, and in the social institutions must be dissolved.

“ ‘ While the Bill is being discussed the Government will consider the suggestions sent in by the voyevods, and will put forward a demand that prosecutions for Communist activities shall take place according to summary methods and within a period to be definitely fixed.

“ ‘ Your views on the Bill must be sent in before June 25th.

“ ‘ At the same time you will give instructions that lists of persons and organisations on the territory of your voyevodstvo (province) who will come under the heading of the law after it has been passed be prepared.’

“ These circulars seem to leave little doubt that the Polish Government is preparing a White Terror. Minister Kiernik, while ostensibly asking voyevods for their opinions so that the Government may consider them when the new Bill is drawn up, in reality orders them not only to express themselves in favour of the Bill

but also to advise that it shall be as severe as possible. They are even requested to advocate summary courts and the death penalty not merely for those who commit acts of violence but also for members of the Communist Party as such.

“ From the manner of the second circular, and from hints in the first, it would seem that the position of each voyevod depends on his giving the answer desired by the Minister. It would also seem that special legislation may be directed not only against the Communists, but against every ‘ movement directed against the State,’ an elastic phrase which might be made to include Socialists as well as national minorities.

“ Poland, like several other European countries, would seem to be drifting into a kind of Fascism.”

These documents speak for themselves, and need not be enlarged upon.



# THE BLACK VICTIMS OF IMPERIALISM

By I. AMTER.

The negro problem is one of the burning problems of the day. Wherever negroes are to be found they are being kept in a state of ignorance and helplessness in order that capitalism may have an abundant supply of cheap labour. In the United States, where the most cultured section of the negro race lives, the negro suffers endless discriminations and restrictions. The victim of 3,436 lynchings in the past thirty-five years, the American negro has looked to governmental action and liberal opinion to put an end to his martyrdom. But the capitalist Government has failed him and Liberal opinion has not aided him. The Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill was shelved and lynching remains the popular sport as before.

There is no story of human exploitation and degradation more horrible than the history of the mistreatment and massacre of the black race by the whites. The slaughter of 8,000,000 natives of the Congo by the agents of King Leopold; the extermination of the Hereros by the Kaiser's government; the brutal march of French imperialism into Tunis and Morocco; of Italy into Tripoli; the invasion of South Rhodesia by the British marauders—these are a few chapters in the bloody story.

The inhuman slave hunts to provide labour for the American market, which meant the breaking up of villages and tribes, the martyring of hundreds of thousands of natives who met their death on the endless journey to the coast where they were put on vessels, manacled and sick, to be flogged, starved, and killed—forms another chapter.

The bestial treatment in America, where, despite the Civil War, the negro is still without rights; the beating, reduction to peonage, the disfranchisement of most of the race, the lynching and periodical race riots; and, finally, the subjection of the predominantly negro States of the West Indies to the rule of American imperialism, with its accompanying massacres—these are further chapters in the crucifixion of a whole race.

## Africa, Hunting-Ground of Imperialist Pirates.

Africa is the last stronghold of imperialism. Asia is already in revolt. The rebellions in India, Korea, Egypt (which is counted among the West Asiatic rather than the African nations) are eloquent testimony to the influence that the Communist International exerts in the East, and the faith that these peoples have placed in the revolutionary movement of the West. Africa is still dormant, although resistance to the encroachment of imperialism has been frequent, especially in Northern Africa.

The world population of the negro race is approximately 150,000,000, the majority of whom are in Africa. In the Western hemisphere there are about 12,000,000 negroes, their state of civilisation being far higher than that of the African negro.

With the exception of South Africa, where the rich gold mines are located and which employ a large number of natives as unskilled labourers, Africa is primarily an agricultural country. Whatever other native industry existed in the backward sections of coloured Africa has been destroyed by capitalist intrigues. The natives have been induced to devote themselves to agricultural pursuits, gathering rubber, cocoa, cloves and palm oil, and raising cotton. In some parts, they are indentured slaves, their families frequently being held as hostages to ensure continual work of the bread-earner. In South Africa, the Government took away the best land from the natives, thereby making them willing subjects for peonage. In the Congo, all land was declared State property.

In exchange for the agricultural products, Europe has furnished the African natives with cheap cotton cloth, food, gin and steel and iron manufactures. Thus a market was found for the ever-increasing European surplus. The use of gin (25,000,000 dols. worth imported) was an element in the corruption of the race. The importation of about 25,000,000 dols. worth of iron and steel products indicates that European industry is being established in Africa, with cheap native labour to be drawn upon—the labour that was robbed of its lands. Furthermore, railways are being built and ports constructed. Surely capital could not ask for cheaper “hands” than are to be obtained among this vast population of oppressed natives.

These facts indicate that the negroes are being proletarianised—which will have the effect of gradually leading them into revolutionary channels—quite contrary to the intentions of the imperialists.

In the West Indies, the negroes are also predominantly agricultural workers—on the sugar, tobacco, cocoa and coffee plantations.

In the United States 89 per cent. of the negro population live in the south, 79 per cent. of them living in rural communities. There are about 950,000 farmers, the overwhelming majority of whom are tenants; in addition, there are 2,000,000 farm labourers. Hence, of the 7,000,000 negro rural inhabitants of the United States 3,000,000 are at work. This includes a large number of children, many of whom never see the inside of a school.

The plight of the negro tenant farmer in America is tragic. Always in debt, he obtains supplies and provisions from the merchant on credit, giving him a lien on his crops in exchange. At last he becomes a peon—a serf owning neither himself nor his land. He may be arrested for debt, and then be “farmed out” by the State in payment of bail money or the debt. Once sold into peonage in this manner, he can never escape. To obtain proper work out of him the “whipping boss” beats and tortures him, and at times he dies under the flogging.

There are more than 1,000,000 negro industrial workers in the United States (of the 10,500,000 negroes in the United States, more than 50 per cent. are gainfully employed, which is a far larger proportion than among the white race—38 per cent.). Most of them are unskilled or semi-skilled workers. There are numbers of negro workers in the steel and iron, mining, packing, textile and automobile industries, and among the dock workers.

Of these workers, however, only a few are organised. This is due to the rule of most of the bodies affiliated with the American Federation of Labour, which provides for the admission of only "white workers" to the organisation. As a consequence, only about 60,000 negroes are organised in the American Federation of Labour with about 20,000 or 30,000 more in various local and independent unions. There is a purely negro organisation, the "National Brotherhood Workers of America," which arose during the war and was composed chiefly of shipbuilders.

### Race Prejudice Enemy of White and Black Workers.

Race prejudice is keeping the negroes out of the unions and as a result they scab on the white workers. Yet whenever they are given a chance to co-operate with the white workers, they are most loyal fighters. Thus in the steel strike in 1919, in the coal strike of 1922, and in the packing-house strike in 1921, they stood the test—until, in the last-named strike, the bosses, in the manner usually employed in America, circulated the rumour that the negroes were scabbing. This had the usual results—race hatred and rioting.

During the war, when there was a big demand for labour, nearly 500,000 negroes migrated from the south to the north of the United States, where they were employed in the shipbuilding, steel, food and other industries. At the end of the war, when the returning soldiers resumed their positions, the negroes went back home. The present prosperity in America has called forth another trek of negroes to the north. Hundreds of thousands again are moving northwards. Out of 1,000,000 negroes in the State of Mississippi, 100,000 have already left for the north. In one week 5,000 textile workers went from South Carolina to the textile centres of New England.

This immigration is placing before the workers of America a question that they must answer. Capitalism wants cheap labour. The doors are practically closed to European labour. The south is flooded with agents of steel, automobile and rubber industries, who are recruiting among the "8,000,000 negroes who are loyal to the government." as the dean of a negro university recently styled them. For American industry, they represent the most docile, inexpensive form of labour imaginable. They will be used to reduce the wages of the white workers, and in attempts to introduce the "open shop," just as they will furnish the strikebreakers in future labour disputes.

There is only one thing that will prevent this: the white workers, in their own interest, throw down the bars, and admit the negroes to their unions. More, in fact: they must make a special effort to overcome the justified prejudice that the negroes feel toward

them and induce them to join the unions. Otherwise, we shall have bloody repetitions of race riots, shootings, rapes and burnings at the stake—fomented on some slight pretext, but always having an economic basis.

In South Africa there is no competition between the white and the black workers. The whites are the skilled, the natives the unskilled workers, who act as helpers to the whites. There will be little opposition of the whites to the organisation of the native workers into trade unions.

### Negroes of the World Practically Helots.

The 150,000,000 negroes in the world have little voice in determining the conditions under which they live. Capitalist "democracy" pays little heed to the opinion of its coloured slaves, despite the fact that, at least in the United States, a war ostensibly was fought over this very issue.

The negroes of South Africa have no franchise. The white workers, furthermore, refuse to consider the ideas of suffrage for them, in this attitude naturally being supported by the capitalists, whose method it is to foment racialism and race antagonism. They realise that if the white and native workers get together on any issue as workers, the doom of capitalism in South Africa will have sounded.

In the French colonies, on the other hand, the natives have suffrage. French imperialism employs the natives of Senegal and Martinique for reactionary military purposes. They were the shock troops in the World War and are now being used in the Ruhr to crush the German workers. French imperialism cultivates their patriotism by giving them the franchise and otherwise treating them with effusive consideration. The coloured troops show their gratitude by their willingness to be used even against French workers.

In the United States the overwhelming majority of the negroes are disfranchised. Although amendments to the Federal Constitution "guarantee" suffrage to all citizens regardless of "race, colour, or previous condition of servitude," and of sex, the Southern States utterly disregard the law and give the negroes a vote under such conditions as to eliminate more than 90 per cent. of the voting negro population. The Federal Government does not interfere—nor do even the Northern States protest. If the capitalists had the power, they would disfranchise the whole working class; not being able to do so, they allow millions of negroes to be disfranchised. As in South Africa, the capitalists fear the rising consciousness of the negroes and are doing everything to keep the negroes in ignorance and antagonistic to the whites.

As a result of this general attitude of hostility of the capitalists, and, unfortunately, of the majority of the white workers, the negro in South Africa and the United States is subjected to every form of degradation. In South Africa he lives in squalor in the poorest of huts, often in compounds round the mines, not furnished with the

slightest conveniences. In the United States he is forced to live in the poorest sections of the city; he is allowed to frequent few public places. In the South he is compelled to ride in separate cars and railway carriages. He must heed himself when addressing a Southern "lady" or "gentleman," lest the form of address be considered an insult and he be lynched as a penalty.

Above it all rises the terrorisation and brutality of the Ku Klux Klan, which holds undisputed sway over the lives of the negroes in the South. Its actions toward the negroes are a further reason for the migration of the negroes to the North, where they hope to obtain more protection.

### **Capitalist Government of United States Enemy of Negroes.**

It is no wonder that the 400,000 negro soldiers from the United States who served in the World War declared that for the first time in their lives they were treated as human beings when in France. They were needed as cannon fodder and nothing stirred them to greater enthusiasm than the kindness they experienced. And no wonder that, when they returned and had to go back to the same indignities and segregation, to the same restriction and race contempt, a flood of rebellion filled them and burst forth as at Houston, Texas, where a regiment was stationed.

Although having a vote under certain limitations in the West Indies, the negroes of Haiti and Santo Domingo have had their island occupied by the marines of the United States Navy, who have taken permanent control and dictate law. Porto Rico, although technically a part of the United States, has no voice in the government. The Central American States are undergoing the same process: the West Indies and Central America are only colonies of American Imperialism.

The negroes of the United States have been able to obtain no help from the Capitalist Government or from the Liberals, who are loud in protestations but very gentle in their acts. Hence they have formed self-help organisations. There are several of this nature; among the tenant farmers of the South there are tenants' unions, some of them being secret.

In 1921 the negro organisations of the world held a Pan-African Congress in London, which, after a week's session, could come to no better decision than to appeal to the League of Nations to establish a special section to deal with native labour in the International Labour Bureau, and an international institute to study the negro problem.

Acting on the motive that racialism is the only thing that will save the negro, a movement started in the United States a few years ago, headed by the notorious Marcus Garvey and having as its motto, "Back to Africa." This movement assumed a mass character and might have attained a measure of success, had the organiser not engaged in various commercial ventures that proved a failure. The movement is merely a Zionist movement among the negroes and if

successful would simply add ten million negroes to the 140,000,000 in Africa under the dominion of European and American imperialism.

There is a radical negro organisation in the United States, "The African Blood Brotherhood," which is sympathetic to the Communist International and is endeavouring to organise the coloured workers for a united front with the white workers against capitalism.

Disappointment after disappointment has followed every attempt hitherto made by the negroes to help themselves. The World War opened their eyes and, although to-day they are in a passive state, there is a smouldering discontent that soon will find expression.

What is the answer of the Communist International to the negroes?

The Communist International points out to the 150,000,000 negroes of Africa and America that their problem is merely a phase of the general problem of the emancipation of the working class of the world.

#### **Negro Exploitation Phase of Working-Class Exploitation.**

Capitalism needs an unlimited supply of cheap labour for the production of raw material and for performing unskilled work in industry. The negro race is utilised to supply this labour. Capitalism needs a field for the investment of surplus capital and a market for the surplus of its industrial produce: Africa, the West Indies, and Central America are to furnish these markets in exchange for the raw material and food products they supply. Capitalism knows that it can maintain a supply of cheap labour only by keeping the races antagonistic to one another, so that by race prejudice and race hatred they will underbid one another, scab on one another and thus play into the hands of their common exploiters.

Owing to the declining French birth-rate and the fact that French workers are not reliable for military purposes, French imperialism is obliged to procure recruits for its army outside of France. The French colonies, with high human fertility, are used to furnish soldiery for imperialist purposes.

Capitalism bribes and flatters a few of the negro leaders in order to lead the whole race astray and blind it to the real issue. This is a trap that the negroes must recognise.

The 150,000,000 negroes of Africa and America must learn to understand that as a race they must combine to fight not the white workers, but the capitalist system, which exploits the white workers as well as the negroes. Although the negro problem to-day is a race problem, in the final analysis it is a class problem and can only be solved when the working class as a whole unites in the struggle for power.

#### **White Workers Must Unite with Negro Workers.**

The white worker, on the other hand, has a deep responsibility in the solution of this problem. Race prejudice, of which he allows

himself to be made a victim, does him as much harm as it does the negro. The capitalist artificially stimulates race antagonisms in order to be able to control. The white workers assist capitalists in this prejudice, helping to keep the negro on a lower plane, and thereby pulling themselves down.

The white workers of America refuse to admit the negro into their unions: the result is that the negro scabs on them. More than 500,000 negroes are migrating to the north once more. The white workers must agree to admit them into their organisations, or the negroes will turn against them and drag the white workers down to their level.

The British workers must learn that the negro worker is not a natural attachment to the British colonies to "his," the British worker's colonies, from which the Britisher expects "his" returns. African slaves are no more a "divine gift" to Great Britain than is the rule of the waves, which is assumed as a matter of course. The white workers of South Africa must be made to understand that the native is not merely a "helper," but a co-worker, with whom he must co-operate, economically and politically, against the common enemy, capitalism. The French workers must gain the confidence of the negroes, since the coloured troops are employed by French imperialism to beat down not only the German workers on the Ruhr, but the French workers as well.

### Communist International Unites Revolutionary Workers and Oppressed Peoples.

The Communist International is closing the circle of the forces destined to fight against imperialism. The peoples of the East have joined the revolutionary workers and peasants of Europe, America and Australia in the struggle for liberation. Africa, the home of the most exploited people, must be added to the battle line. The American negro, by reason of his higher education and culture and his greater aptitude for leadership, and because of the urgency of the issues in America, will furnish the leadership for the negro race.

The Negro World Congress decided upon by the Fourth Congress of the Communist International must soon be held. It will crystallise the negro sentiment and create an organisation that will be representative of the whole negro race.

The Communist International is the only international of workers that has squarely faced the issue of the coloured races and sought a solution. The Second International has always evaded the question since it has been an international of the white workers alone and has not succeeded even in uniting them in international action. At the recent Hamburg Conference, no coloured delegate or representative of the coloured races was present.

The Communist International is the organisation that alone can unite the negroes with the revolutionary workers and peasants of the world for the struggle against exploitation and for the establishment of working-class power.

# THE NEW OWENITES

Again and again one is bound to admit that a party more singular than the one which now speaks for British Labour was never born in modern times. Every party is anxious as much as possible to emphasise its difference from all the others. Even when that difference is, in substance, very small and, sometimes, even imaginary, it is laid stress on and exaggerated in order that the public may judge its existence and its opposition to the others as warranted by circumstances and doctrine, and be induced to support it in preference to its rivals. This is as it should be. A party is generally the political expression of a class or, at least, of a section of a class, and unless it can show that it differs from the others its power of attraction is lost.

Not so the British Labour Party. Ever since its inception it has been trying its hardest to prove to the world that it is "like every other party," that its distinctiveness is but verbal or far removed from actual life and that, at bottom, there is really nothing very much to choose between it and its rivals. "Why not support us?" would seem to have been its attitude all along; "we are as good as the others!" So might a shopkeeper from the same street, calling at the tradesmen's entrance, respectfully expostulate with a lower middle-class housewife who, in imitation of the rich neighbour, would insist upon obtaining her groceries from the Army and Navy Stores. In fact, the Labour Party's appeal to the working class was, from the first, based mainly on this ground of "next-door-neighbours," and on nothing else. It will be remembered that for many years it even refused to proclaim its independence of any other party, and until recently it refused to adopt any definite and distinctive programme. The working man must "in fairness" give a chance to the party run by working men, just as his wife gives a chance to the tradesman in the neighbourhood.

Since then a good deal, externally, has changed. The party has become "independent" of all other parties, it has adopted a programme and it has even set up an "object." But the more it changes, the more it remains the same thing. Though it is "independent," it worked heart and soul with the capitalist parties during the war, and though it has a programme and an "object" it has betrayed them, in retail and wholesale, on every occasion that presented itself during the recent elections. But, above all, the anxiety, in spite of all the programmes and objects, to show itself "just like everybody else," has not abated—has, if possible, even increased. Last year at Edinburgh Mr. Arthur Henderson almost talked himself hoarse to prove that he and the party were thoroughly constitutional and law-abiding and peaceful and even monarchist ("not like you, sinners and publicans—Communists, to wit"), and this year in London Mr. Sidney Webb, the outgoing chairman of the party, delivered what a very respectable Liberal journal called "a

classical exposé" of the "just-like-everybody-else" faith that liveth in the party. Every line in that address shows that in the opinion of the party leaders no greater calamity could befall the party than to be taken for something very different from the other parties, in spite of its programme, object and even "independence." As the above-mentioned journal points out, the supreme aim of the speaker was to prove "the essential reasonableness of British Socialism," as represented by the British Labour Party—reasonableness from whose point of view? Why, of course, from that of capitalist society. To be "reasonable," that is, to be respectable, constitutional, moderate—in short, to be like the other, the capitalist parties: such is the aim of the British Labour Party.

Of course, there is that programme and object which were introduced under duress in times when the party ran the risk of losing the "custom" of the working class, then seized with a strange spirit of restlessness. But no one better than Mr. Webb himself put the matter right. "Why," he asked, "because we are idealists, should we be supposed to be fools?" Which, in effect, means: why, because the Labour Party has been compelled to pose in the eyes of the working class as a party of social revolution, should it really act as such? And Mr. Webb admits: the Labour Party is not going to act as a party of social revolution, pulling down the edifice of capitalist society as soon as it obtains power. Although it may in due course obtain power, "every step towards its goal will be dependent on gaining the assent and support of at least a numerical majority"; and since no one is so foolish as to suppose that "the British electorate can ever go too fast or too far," the danger of any catastrophe to capitalist society is, indeed, remote. No wonder, as Mr. Webb himself mentioned, that while the object and programme of the party are denounced by those who are regarded as authorities on "reasonableness" as impracticable, its practical policy is acknowledged to be anything but Socialism.

Mr. Webb is, of course, a notorious Fabian, a man who is never in a hurry. In his earlier days he thought the best policy of bringing about Socialism was by way of permeating the Liberal party with it; now his pet scheme is to achieve the same object by permeating the Labour Party with Liberalism. But what shall we say of the other luminaries of the party—of Mr. Snowden, for instance, the Socialist leader of the Independent Labour Party, who from the first set out to permeate the Labour Party with Socialism? Here is Mr. Snowden setting forth his view as to what Labour should and would do if and when it came to power in a series of articles in the "Morning Post." Why the "Morning Post," of all papers?—the most reactionary sheet of all the reactionary sheets in Great Britain. It is because he, too, wants to prove the "essential reasonableness," the "common sense and moderation" of the party to "sensible and thoughtful people [these be the readers of the "Morning Post"!] who can take a broad and generous view of a comparatively young movement." And he proves it by showing to the "Morning Post" public that "a Labour Government will

pursue a constitutional course, acting always by the democratic authority of a popular mandate given by an electoral majority"; that a Labour Government "would not be a class Government," least of all a "Government merely of the manual class," but will hold "the balance justly between different sections and classes, thereby gaining public confidence in its fairness"; that the idea that "the Labour Party has no strong affection for the Empire" and that in foreign affairs it is "non-national" is "quite without substantial foundation."

That is what the old Socialist leader, Mr. Snowden, says to the readers of the "Morning Post" in order to prove to them that there is not the slightest peril to themselves and their interests (for are they not the sensible and thoughtful people who, etc.?) from the coming of the Labour Party to power! It is specially instructive to note his argument in opposing the allegation that the Labour Party is non-patriotic. He says: "The answer (to the allegation) is surely to be found in the fact that the vast majority of the Labour Party, at the outbreak of the war, forgot their internationalism when they were told (nota bene: "were told"—by whom? by the "Morning Post?") that the country was in danger, and became the most patriotic of British citizens." Need the "sensible and thoughtful people" of the "Morning Post" fear lest in any future war—be it even a war with France, against which the Labour Party protests so strongly in advance, as they did in old days against war with Germany—the Labour Party might stick to its internationalism? After Mr. Snowden's assurances they may compose their souls in peace. The "vast majority" at least of the leaders will at once forget their internationalism and will mount the recruiting platforms to send the Henry Dubbses to the trenches. Of course, there was a minority of the Labour Party which was opposed to the war. Among them, after some hesitation, also Mr. Snowden found himself. To that extent his assurances on the subject of the Labour Party's loyalty to the British capitalist interests may not seem convincing to the readers of the "Morning Post." He, therefore, hastens to explain: "And the minority which opposed the war did so because they believed that this country had been dragged into war by the cunning machinations of foreign militarists and diplomats." Nothing more: no opposition to capitalist interests being fought out by the workers, no opposition to human slaughter as such—only suspicion of wicked foreign intrigue. After this the patriots of the "Morning Post" will rest assured that "a Labour Government would be as jealous of national honour. . . . as any British Government in the past." What more could sensible and thoughtful people wish? A Labour Government as patriotic as a Government of Lloyd George or Asquith-Grey!

If we come to think of all these singular pronouncements of the leaders of the Labour Party, which make of it a mere Radical party of the humdrum bourgeois type, we shall find that they are guided mainly, if not exclusively, by considerations of electoral and parlia-

mentary success. We know how much these considerations weighed in the past even with parties who seriously regarded themselves as revolutionary and Marxist. It has, however, been left for the British Labour Party to make them the sole motive of its policy. From the very first it set out to catch the voter whoever he may be, regardless of any principles and mindful only of the condition of his mind. Instead of endeavouring to awaken the class-consciousness of the workers by a bold policy, by a bold agitation, by bold action, it avoided everything that might disturb the mind of the voter and prevent the chance of catching him. It was with this, and no other, end in view that in the first years all mention of political independence, let alone of Socialism, was avoided, that afterwards all sorts of compromises were entered into with the Liberal Party, that in our own days, all communion with the Communists is emphatically repudiated and all dangerous "isms," such as Republicanism, are denounced. After the recent elections, when the party returned to the House of Commons in great strength and became the official Opposition, it has received an additional stimulus to be "moderate" and to demonstrate its affection for constitutional methods and for the Constitution, for the Monarchy and the Empire. Said Mr. Webb himself in his address: "the Labour Party. . . must now work and speak and act under the sense of the liability at any moment to be charged with putting their plans and projects in operation, and they should not, therefore, lightly commit themselves as a party to new or additional projects or details of reforms, if these belonged more appropriately to a stage of greater freedom and less responsibility." One will not easily find anywhere another party whose mind is so entirely attuned to the chances of electoral and, generally, parliamentary success. It is what used to be called in the old days "parliamentary cretinism" in its purest culture.

And in face of such conscious subordination of policy and action entirely to this foul fetish Mr. Webb had the courage to appeal to the shade of Robert Owen and to declare that he was "the founder of British Socialism, not Marx." No doubt, the founder of Mr. Webb's and Mr. Snowden's and Mr. MacDonald's Socialism was not Marx. Marx would turn in his Highgate grave if anyone were to father this kind of British Socialism on him. But neither was Mr. Webb's, Mr. Snowden's and Mr. MacDonald's spiritual father Robert Owen, than whom nobody could have been further from Parliamentary cretinism, since he did not believe in parliamentary and political welfare, in general, at all. Nor was Robert Owen in favour of Fabian tactics, of doling out "reasonable" reforms by the teaspoon? Not a bit of it! Owen was in favour of the whole hog, and that at once, at one gulp, while the world existed such as it was. To say that Owen would have been in favour of nibbling at reform in the manner of a little mouse is entirely to misunderstand the calibre of that truly great character. But, of course, Mr. Webb would not claim relationship to this Owen. In fact, throughout his long career he has till now never mentioned even the name of Owen as being in any way responsible for his Socialism. The reason why he has now

suddenly thought of him is that "Robert Owen preached not class war, but the ancient doctrine of human brotherhood"—in other words, because Owen, who had no faith in the working class and held aloof from it, thought it possible to persuade the capitalist classes that he could realise his Utopian plans without any harm to them, and addressed himself to kings and princes in the hope that they might help him in his undertakings. If that be the trait of Owen's Socialism which has captivated Mr. Webb's sympathy to the extent of making him claim spiritual descent from him, then we agree. Mr. Webb, too, once trusted, if not in princes, then at least in earls, and to this day he carries about him the touching faith that capitalists will accept his assurances that Socialism can be carried out without any harm to them and will help him in doing so. But then, it is a libel on British Socialism to represent this cardinal weakness of the great Utopian as the seed from which it sprang.

British Socialism, if the term has any meaning at all, can claim much more legitimate descent from other men—from the men who led the fight for the Charter, from Bronterre O'Brien who set out the theory of class war even before Marx, from Feargus O'Connor who first shaped the working class into a party and led its political fight on class war lines, and from Julian Harney who made the first attempt at organising a workers' International. It is these men and their friends who led the first revolutionary proletarian fight, who can, in truth, be called the founders of British Socialism. But then they were also the precursors of Marx and of the Socialist working class movement in general. Mr. Webb has once more betrayed his absolute ignorance of the social history of his own country, but we shall not be surprised if the other leaders of the Labour Party, even more ignorant than himself, will not take up the cry and proclaim themselves neo-Owenites—they who have not got even a sparklet of that courage of thought which distinguished the author of the "New Moral World." Do not disturb, then, Owen's ashes, Mr. Webb—you are without any pedigree except such as one may find among the bankrupt politicians of all ages.

POLITICUS.



# Collapse of the World of Webb

“The Decay of Capitalist Civilisation.” By Sidney and Beatrice Webb. Longmans, Green and Co.

The world revolution, having shaken many other things, has also disturbed the peace of Webbs. With their usual quickness for the perception of facts once these are well above the surface, they have discovered in 1923 that capitalism is collapsing, that the class war which they denied is increasing in intensity, and that the reforms and programmes which they have advocated and laboured for during thirty years are being thrown aside as so much lumber by the bourgeoisie in the moment of struggle. This collapse of the whole edifice of pseudo-socialism to which they have given their life's work has shaken them so severely as to lead them to write a new kind of book.

After writing for thirty years about the “Parish and the County,” “The Manor and the Borough,” “Statutory Authorities for Special Purposes,” “The Story of the King's Highway,” “English Prisons under Local Government,” “The Relief of the Poor and the Repression of Vagrancy,” “The History of Liquor Licensing in England,” “The Consumers' Co-operative Movement,” “The History of Trade Unionism,” “Industrial Democracy,” “Problems of Modern History,” “The Works Manager To-day,” “Grants in Aid,” “English Poor Law Policy,” “The State and the Doctor,” “The Break-Up of the Poor Law,” “The Public Organisation of the Labour Market,” “Men's and Women's Wages,” and “The Prevention of Destitution”—they have now for the first time discovered and written a book about—Capitalism.

This fact is itself a revolution in the minds of the Webbs. For the first time they have tried to express their general outlook. The result is invaluable. Without this crowning book the array of their books would be incomplete. With it the ironic last chapter added by history to their work in 1914 finds expression. This book is the confession of their failure.

“For over thirty years,” they write, “our time and energy have been devoted to municipal administration, to research into the facts of social organisation, and to devising and advocating measures by which the existing profit-making system may be replaced, with the least political friction and the most considerate treatment of ‘established expectations’ by a scientific reorganisation of industry as a democratically controlled public service. . . . Before the Great War there seemed to be a substantial measure of consent that the social order had to be gradually changed in the direction of a greater equality in material income and personal freedom. . . . We thought, perhaps wrongly, that this characteristic British acquiescence on the part of a limited governing class in the rising claims of those who had found themselves excluded both from enjoyment and control,

would continue to be extended willingly or reluctantly, still further from the political into the industrial sphere; and that while progress might be slow, there would at least be no reaction." And they go on to describe the violent reaction and even "counter-revolution" they have experienced in England since the war.

Perhaps wrongly! What the revolutionary socialists demonstrated at the outset, it has taken the slaughter of the best part of a human generation, the destruction and chaos of half of the world, and the smashing and crushing of the working class in all the leading countries to awaken the Webbs to the possibility of their error. The price of their education is too expensive.

And at the end of it all what have they to say? Nine-tenths of this book is taken up with the repetition of the familiar arguments that capitalism is inefficient, wasteful and productive of vicious results. The actual argument is contained in the remaining tenth, and is a simple exposition of the bankruptcy of the last stage of reformism. The old artillery of reformism—the denial of classes, the theory of increasing happiness and progress, the belief in the super-class character of the State—are all thrown overboard under the shattering stress of facts. Only the impotent reformist conclusion remains in all its bareness, stripped of the premises that gave it support, and lingering on only as a touching, half-despairing confession of faith in the magic formula of political democracy and evolution to socialism by consent of the bourgeoisie.

They admit the division of classes—not simply as an economic classification, but as the essential living truth of capitalist society. "The division of the community into two permanent and largely hereditary castes" (page 21). "By capitalism we mean the particular stage in the development of industry and legal institutions in which the bulk of the workers find themselves divorced from the ownership of the instruments of production, in such a way as to pass into the position of wage-earners, whose subsistence, security and personal freedom seem (sic) dependent on the will of a relatively small proportion of the nation; namely, those who own, and through this legal ownership control, the organisation of the land, the machinery and the labour force of the community, and do so with the object of making for themselves individual and private gains." (p. xi.)

They admit the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie—"the peculiar kind of tyranny now exercised even in the most advanced political democracies by a relatively small class of rich men over a mass of poor men." (p. xv.) "Seeing that no individual owner recognises himself as a dictator, let it be once added that the dictatorship is a class dictatorship." (p. xiii.)

They admit the nullification of political democracy by this dictatorship. "The typical phenomenon of twentieth-century democracy, in which private wealth, concentrated as to direction in relatively few hands, is seen very largely to control, by its dominion

over the newspaper Press, the mental environment of the whole population; and by its power in this and in various other ways, even to nullify universal suffrage." (p 184.)

They admit the failure of the hopes of gradual progress and reform. "We thought, perhaps wrongly, etc." (233.) "Worse things than any citizen thought possible ten years ago have happened and are still happening daily." (222.)

They admit the increasing intensity of the class war. "The twentieth century found the feeling of a class-war—of an irreconcilable cleavage of interest between the 'Two Nations' in each land—rapidly spreading to nearly every section of the wage-earners, in practically all countries in which the capitalist system had become dominant." (212.) "To stave off this extremity of social disaster the Italian bourgeoisie are arming themselves to subjugate the proletariat by open violence. For some years past the capitalists of the United States have been waging quite extensive wars against the labourers' unions." (223.) "The class-war, if and when battle is joined in earnest, will be one of the wars of religion, and may be waged on a scale, and with a ferocity, a self-sacrifice, and a persistence which will make the religious wars of the seventeenth century seem mere riots by comparison." (225.)

And what is the conclusion from all this? In the face of the dictatorship of the capitalists, of the nullification of political democracy, of the collapse of hopes of progress, of the growing intensity of the class struggle and the growing violence of the capitalists, what is the proletariat to do? Is there any alternative but to fight or to submit? The reformist, driven into a corner by the hard stress of facts, compelled to admit the facts now visible in the eyes of all, has only one alternative to offer. To those who are accustomed to treat the Webbs as serious political writers, the conclusion may seem incredible; yet it is the correct and logical last position of reformism. The sole solution of the Webbs is—to appeal to the better nature of the capitalists!

"We therefore solemnly warn our capitalists. . . ." So set out the Webbs in their final verdict, speaking in terrible judgment and awaiting the bourgeoisie to hear and tremble.

The thunder of the revolution is turned into stage thunder for the benefit of the reformist to enable him to show the bourgeoisie why they should give him power.

And then, with a pitiful last failing of confidence, in the final sentence of all, this study of the tremendous forces of world capitalism and revolution after the war by the intellectual leaders of British Socialism concludes with a pathetic, half-hopeless appeal for—better relations between employers and employed. . . . "recognition that

there is a better way for both. In an attempt, possibly vain, to make the parties understand their problem and each other better—in the hope that it is not always inevitable that Nature should harden the hearts of those whom she intends to destroy—we offer this little work.”

This, then, is the final outcome of the whole Webbs' philosophy. This pitiful product, this little parson's offering—"possibly vain"—is the final outcome of that vast and elaborate edifice of reformism which Webb set himself out to build thirty years ago when he rejected the despised Marxism that he did not understand, and set out from the precincts of the Colonial Office and the Temple to show a new path to the working class.



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