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# THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

*Organ of the Executive Committee of the Communist  
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## C O N T E N T S

	PAGE
Farewell, Ilyitch! Farewell! <i>L. Trotsky</i> ... ..	4
The Death of Lenin and Problems of Leninism. <i>G. Zinoviev</i> .....	6
The Tactics of the Bulgarian C.P. <i>C. Kolarov</i> ...	11
John MacLean. <i>W. Gallacher</i> ... ..	45
A New Phase of Capitalist Decline in Britain. <i>C. M. Roebuck</i> .....	49
The British Labour Party and the C.P.G.B. <i>Manifesto of the E.C. of Communist International</i> .....	60
America and the Rehabilitation of Europe. <i>I. Amter</i> .....	64
Lithuania. <i>V. Mitzkevitch-Kapsukas</i> ... ..	76
Esthonia. <i>G. Pegelman</i> ... ..	94

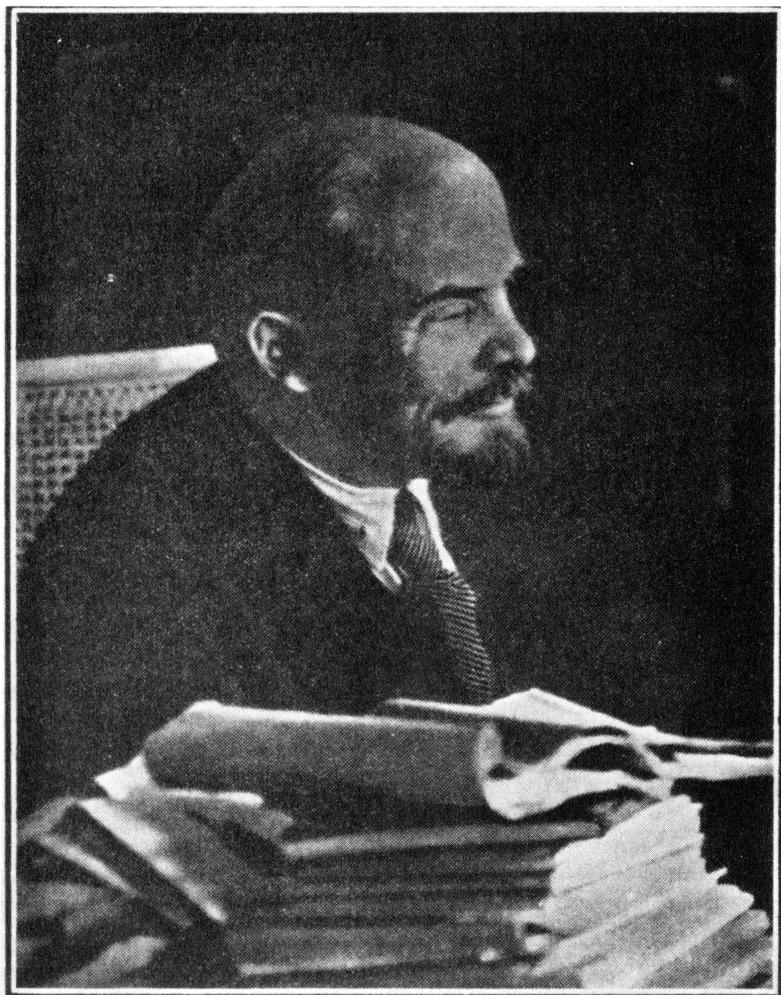
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*The sad news of our Comrade Lenin's death came as this number of "The Communist International" was in the press. The next issue No. 31 will therefore be a special number, devoted to Comrade Lenin and the Fifth Anniversary of the Communist International.*

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**Nikolai Lenin**  
VLADIMIR ILYITCH ULIANOFF  
*Born April 10th, 1870. Died January 21st, 1924.*

On January 21, at 6.50 p.m., Lenin died suddenly of paralysis of the respiratory centres. The funeral is on Saturday, 26th. The Communist International has lost its greatest leader and teacher. The international proletariat has suffered its greatest loss since the death of Marx. We bare our heads before the fresh grave of the great teacher of the working class. The international proletariat knows what it has lost in Lenin's person. The Communist International calls upon its sections to close their ranks for work in the spirit of what Lenin bequeathed us.

ZINOVIEV.

# Farewell, Ilyitch ! Farewell !

“ Lenin is no more.” These words crash upon our intelligence like a gigantic rock falling into the sea. How can we believe it, how can we admit it? The mind of the workers of the whole world will refuse to accept this fact, for their enemies are powerful and dangerous, the road before them long and painful, the task they have undertaken immense—the greatest that history has ever known, and not yet completed. Lenin is necessary to the working classes of the world as perhaps never in the history of humanity has a man been necessary.

“ The second phase of his illness, more serious than the first, had lasted for ten months. In the bitter expression of the doctors, the organs of circulation were ‘ playing ’ all the time. It was a terrible game, with the life of Ilyitch as plaything. We had a reason to expect an improvement, and even complete restoration, as much as we could a catastrophe. All of us were expecting recovery, but it was the catastrophe which supervened. The nerve centres controlling his respiration refused to serve any longer, and extinguished the flame of that titanic thought.

“ And now Ilyitch is no more. The Party is an orphan. The working class is an orphan. That is what one feels before everything else, on learning of the death of him who was our teacher and our guide. How shall we go forward along our path, comrades? Shall we not wander now that Lenin is no longer with us? No. Leninism remains. Lenin is immortal in his doctrine, his work, his method, his example, which live in us, which live in the Party he created, and in the first Workers’ State of which he was the head and the helmsman.

“ Our grief is as immense as our loss ; but let us render thanks to history for allowing us to be born as contemporaries of Lenin, and permitting us to work by his side and be his disciples. Our Party is Leninism in action ; our Party is the collective guide of the workers : every one of us contains something in him of Lenin. How shall we march forward in our path ? With the light of Leninism in our hand. Shall we find the true road ? By collective thought and the collective will we shall find it.

“ To-morrow, the day after to-morrow, next week, in a month’s time, we shall still be saying to ourselves that it is impossible that Lenin is no more. Yes, his death will for long still seem to us unbelievable, inadmissible, monstrous, arbitrary, unnatural. Let the wound which opens in the heart of every one of us, at the memory of the great man who has disappeared, recall constantly to us that our responsibility has been doubled : let us be worthy of him who taught us. In our mourning let us close our ranks and hearts for new combats. Comrades, brothers, Lenin is no longer with us. Farewell, Ilyitch. Farewell, leader.”

L. TROTSKY.



# The Death of Lenin and Problems of Leninism

**C**OULD anyone imagine the man, who, having once heard Lenin, could ever forget him? And his eloquent speech has been heard by hundreds of thousands, nay millions of people. To those whose good fortune it was to have heard Lenin, it seemed as though he had transferred part of himself. No matter where those hundreds of thousands, those millions of people may be, no matter how scattered they may be over the face of the earth, most of them will remember Lenin to-day with a feeling of thankfulness; for no other man ever struck with such unheard of power the hearts of those who struggle for a better future for humanity.

All over the world and in every language that is spoken, millions and millions of people repeat that name—LENIN. Everyone who ever knew Lenin is to-day filled with a feeling of personal thankfulness for the one who lifted the ideal of the working class to such heights, who made humanity a head higher. With still greater power does this sentiment spring up in all of us, members of that party which the genius of Lenin created, in those pupils of Vladimir Ilyitch, who, in the course of twenty years or more, worked side by side with him, together with him experiencing the bitterness of defeat and the joy of victory; learning from him and knowing him not only as the great leader, but also as the man and teacher.

On the 14th of March, 1883, on the day of the death of Marx, Engels wrote to Marx's old friend, Zarge:—

“ All phenomena, even the most dreadful ones, take place according to the laws of nature and are not without consolation, as in the present case. The art of healing might have succeeded perhaps, in prolonging by a few years a vegetating existence, a life of helplessness, it would have meant glory to the medical profession, but would have been of no benefit to a slowly dying being. Such a life would have been unbearable to Marx. To live while having a pile of unfinished works before him, to experience the miseries of a Tantalus at the thought of being unable to finish them—this would have been a thousand times harder than a peaceful death. In my opinion

there was no other way out after what he had gone through; this I know better than all doctors."

To-day, when the report of the autopsy on the body of Lenin lies before us, we must unfortunately repeat those words of Engels, applying them to Vladimir Ilyitch. Arterial sclerosis, resulting from superhuman strain and unusually hard brain work, made Vladimir Ilyitch's condition hopeless even before the last attack which overcame him and ended in catastrophe.

Lenin deprived of the possibility of speaking, of writing, of leading people in the struggle, of working and again working—can anyone imagine a greater torment for that rebel of rebels and thinker of thinkers?

But let everyone brace himself up. Let everyone shut up within himself those emotions which the death of Lenin calls forth within us. Let us try now, with the coolness and calmness with which Vladimir Ilyitch taught us, to take account of the problems facing us after his death. Up to the last moment all of us, the whole Party, never lost faith that Lenin would return to work, we thought the miracle would happen, for Lenin had tens and hundreds of times accomplished that which seemed impossible. But now all is finished. The Party will have to work without Lenin.

"The proletarian movement will go ahead on its road, but no more will there be the centre to which the French, Russians, Americans and Germans would come speeding for help in critical moments, always receiving from him clear and faithful counsel. Such counsel as only a genius, a master of his subject could give."

Thus wrote Engels on the day of the death of Marx. This feeling of orphanhood all of us are experiencing to-day.

The tasks which stood before Marxists in 1883, after the death of Marx, were hard and complicated. But how much harder and more complicated are the problems confronting us, Marxian-Leninists in 1924, now Comrade Lenin has left us?

The problems confronting Marxists after the death of Marx were mostly theoretical. The International Working Class was going through a critical period. The First International was in ruins and the Second International had not yet succeeded in establishing itself. The Labour movement in France—and not in France alone—had not yet recovered from the break-up of the Paris Commune in 1871. The International Revolutionary Labour Movement had not yet come out on the open road. The main problem was: how to make the great theoretical inheritance left by Marx the property of the broad masses of the Labour Movement.

The problems confronting the Marxian-Leninists are a great deal more complicated and serious. The International Proletarian Revolution has begun, and has attained its first victories in one of the biggest countries in the world. At the same time the difficulties of the great struggle for the realisation of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat on an international scale are yet ahead of us.

The Second International is still poisoning the Labour movement with its nostrums. The problems of the Communist International, Lenin's International, are becoming more complicated every day. The road is becoming more difficult and tortuous. The International proletariat on its way to victory will many a time yet, in single detachments, get off the track and in searching for new roads shed its blood without attaining victory.

Shattered in the first Imperialist War, scattered and deceived by false leaders of the Second International, the international proletariat has not yet freed itself from its somnambulistic stumblings. Before the Marxian-Leninists, who have to lead the international Labour movement without our incomparable leader, lies a tremendous amount of hard work of not only theoretical, but of a practical political character. The first task confronting the Leninists in Russia in the absence of Lenin, is that of strengthening the basic idea of Leninism—the union between the working class and the peasants. This, before anything else, is the radical, the basic problem before the Russian Communist Party after the death of Lenin. By our deeds we must attain that which will enable the peasants to understand *that although Lenin is dead, the Leninist Party will, on the basic question which is to determine the fate of the whole Russian Revolution, with still greater energy carry on its former policy.*

Let us attain the point where within the shortest time possible, there will not be a single man among the most active strata of the peasantry who will not understand that the Bolshevik Party will carry on with yet greater force its former policy of solidifying the bond between the working class and the peasantry.

The second task facing the Russian Communist Party is the further strengthening of the union between the Party and the labouring masses. The death of Lenin has been a hard blow, not only for the Communist worker, but also for the non-party worker. In order to fulfill the wishes of Vladimir Ilyitch we have to work so that within a short time the millions and millions of non-party workers of Russia will understand that *although Lenin died, the Party created by him will not squander the inheritance left by him, but on the contrary will*

*strengthen and solidify the union between the most advanced Communists and the whole of the non-party working masses.* It will succeed with the plough of Leninism in raising new and deeper layers; it will succeed in uplifting the non-party masses; it will do its utmost in assisting even those who have only a spark of talent; it will succeed in helping the multi-million working mass in educating itself and in raising its cultural level, in order to fit it for the work of Socialist reconstruction.

The third task confronting the Leninists is to preserve, under all circumstances, *the unity of the Party created by Vladimir Ilyitch.* The greatest thing created by the genius of Lenin is the Russian Communist Party, nursed by him, loved by him. He gave the Party the best that was in him, and welded it with the blood of his heart. Lenin thought of our Party as of one great whole, as of an organisation moulded into one solid piece that can combine in one unit *all that is best in the working class.* In this respect the inheritance left by Lenin is even more valuable than that which the Marxists inherited after the death of Marx.

The Russian Communist Party was and must remain the vanguard of the working class, its head, its collective leader. In order to perform this task the Party must remain united. Harsher than ever before will the Party counteract any attempt to break up its ranks.

Our fourth task is to remain a party of *militant* Bolshevism. Throughout the difficulties of the transitory period, while in the process of surrounding the bourgeoisie enemy, we may sometimes find it advantageous to retreat a little—only afterwards to attack with greater force—yet our Party created by Lenin shall always remain a Party of *militant* Bolshevism. Therefore we must not lose sight of the dangers connected with the period of the new economic policy; we must keep our eyes open to the existing dangers of its degenerating influences; we must fight mercilessly against any attempt at misinterpretation of Leninism and against the re-appearance of petty-bourgeois views from wherever they may come.

We still remember the first days at Smolny after the October Revolution. Hundreds of thousands of soldiers from the trenches, peasants in soldier's uniform, anxious, moving like an avalanche towards Smolny to take a glance at Lenin, to exchange a few words with him and to ask him what is going to be the fate of Russia, of all of us, in the days to come. Thousands upon thousands of such peasant soldiers would look searchingly into the eyes of Lenin, and with the keenness of true representatives of the people saw in him the

new leader of Russia. Others would quietly study him, as if asking, "Who are you? Will you be capable of leading us to victory, to a new life?" And now that merciless death has mowed down this giant, the workers and peasants of Russia are turning the same searching gaze towards the whole Party created by Lenin. The workers and peasants are asking our Party, "Will you lead us to victory now that Lenin is dead?" Let us so work that we may be justified in answering, *We shall lead you!*

The Party founded by Lenin *shall* prove to be great and strong enough to reach the height which the demands of our great historical epoch place before us.

The Russian Leninists, the Leninists of the Communist International and of the whole world are confronted by grand and important tasks. But we have inherited from our deceased leader the Union of Socialist Republics and the Communist International together with its vanguard the Russian Communist Party.

With the knowledge of the seriousness of the problems facing us, which from now on we shall have to face and settle by our own collective effort, without the sage advice of Vladimir Ilyitch, we must under all circumstances solidify our ranks into a still closer union.

The death of Comrade Lenin will be the signal for the brotherly union of all those who really deserve the name of Leninists. We shall strive to so work that, to a small extent at least, we may collectively take the place of Lenin.

Let us carry into the great task bequeathed to us by Lenin, his devotion, his care, his calmness, his love for the work and so far as we can, his wonderful foresight.

G. ZINOVIEV.

Translated by E. SCHWARTZSTEIN.



# The Tactics of the Bulgarian Communist Party

THE events which unfolded themselves recently in Bulgaria provide a suitable ground for a valuation of the tactics of the Bulgarian Communist Party, one of the oldest and best-organised sections of the Communist International. The results of such an investigation will be highly instructive, primarily, of course, to the *Bulgarian* party itself.

In the light of the sanguinary events the shortcomings of its organisation were revealed, and all its weak points and tactical errors were recognised. This affords to the Party the possibility of building its future activity on the basis of those sound and reliable elements of its tactics which stood the test of the events. It is the immediate task of the Party to eliminate the defects and weak points, to reduce to the minimum the possibility of any new errors, and to strengthen and develop its sound basis.

Secondly, the Bulgarian lesson is of great importance to all the Balkan parties which work under conditions closely resembling those of Bulgaria. The problems raised by the Bulgarian events confront them with equal acuteness. In the Bulgarian experience these parties will find many elements that are essential to a proper solution of their own respective problems. To a considerable degree, the same may be said also of other countries where the rural masses play a big part in the economic and political life of the country.

Finally, the Communist International, too, is given an opportunity to verify upon live experience the correctness of its applied tactics.

In order to render our investigation intelligible to foreign comrades, it should be preceded by a brief survey of the political forces at work in Bulgaria and by a concise narrative of the more important moments in the political life of the country during recent years.

Before the war the Bulgarian people existed under the **personal regime** of Tsar Ferdinand. To further his own personal political interests, the Tsar from time to time entrusted the government to any of the parties which he found convenient, and the party thus appointed proceeded immedi-

ately to dissolve parliament, to shuffle the whole of the administrative personnel and to employ all the means of governmental terror and repression in order to create a National Assembly that would be obedient to the government. After, some time, the same story would be repeated over again.

On the one hand, this regime was made possible by the feeble development of the Bulgarian bourgeoisie, which is as yet incapable of carrying on a united class policy, and is still divided into a multitude of political coteries that are at loggerheads with each other, and on the other hand, by the petty-economic and rural nature of the country, which enabled every political coterie to obtain the "confidence" of the people, once it had been placed at the helm.

The political parties were divided into the **ruling** and **non-ruling**. The ruling parties were those bourgeois monarchist coteries that were in turn called by Tsar Ferdinand to office. They were sub-divided into **Russophile** and **Germanophile** parties, according to the interests whose tools they were.

After the débâcle in Manchuria, when the policy of Tsarist Russia transferred its chief attention once again to Europe, and particularly to the Near East, Tsar Ferdinand called the **Russophiles** to office. It was they, who, with the aid of the Russian Tsar, prepared, declared and waged the Balkan War of 1912-13. That war terminated in a crushing defeat for Bulgaria, and the **Russophiles** were much compromised as a political party and they lost all their political prestige among the masses.

The imperialist world-war broke out at a time when the **Germanophiles** were in power. All the bourgeois parties were agreed upon the necessity to intervene in the war. Naturally, the Germanophiles pushed Bulgaria to the side of the Central Powers. The catastrophic end of that war, brought utter ruin to the country, but also to the Germanophile sentiment and to the Germanophile parties.

This double catastrophe had destroyed the dreams of the Bulgarian bourgeoisie; the confidence of the masses towards the ruling parties, which the latter managed to secure for a number of years, became transformed into implacable hatred for these parties and for their political duplicity. Thus, the turn had come for the **non-ruling** parties to become the rulers.

The non-ruling parties were the **Peasants' Party**, the **Broad Socialists** (Mensheviks), and the **Narrow Socialists** (Communists). The two first-named groups, petty-bourgeois by their composition and ideology and reformist-conciliatory by their tactics, readily responded to the appeal of the Russo-

phile bourgeois parties, with whom they were allied by Russo-phile sentiments and by many years' collaboration, to aid the latter in the rescue of the bourgeois system which was menaced by the rising wave of revolution. They formed a coalition with the bourgeoisie, joined their government, and started a war upon the revolutionary workers and peasants. On the other hand, the Narrow Socialists, who were always ardent advocates of irreconcilable class struggle, joined the Communist International, and together with the red syndicates represented the only organised revolutionary force in the country.

The first elections after the armistice (in August, 1919) gave the balance of power to the **Peasants' Party**, which was still in coalition with the bourgeois parties. It was only after the second elections (in March, 1920) that the Peasants' Party, succeeded in gaining power independently. The village exploiters, who had flocked into the Peasants' Party, turned its sharp sword against the Communist Party, while the poorer peasants, who constituted the majority of the Peasants' Party, were spoiling for a fight against the bourgeois parties. Thus, the peasants' government, compelled to fight on two fronts, leagued itself with the bourgeoisie to persecute the Communists while accepting the aid of the latter to resent the blows of the bourgeoisie. In this manner it had hoped to gain strong and permanent power for the peasants. Nevertheless, the 9th of June, 1923, was the day of doom for all the illusions of the peasants' leaders.

The **Broad Socialists** (Mensheviks) could not stand the test of the revolutionary struggle. Ousted from power, the social-reformist party began to crumble rapidly. The masses turned away from it; the syndicalists, and the **Workers' Left** of the syndicates, transferred their allegiance to the Communist Party (October, 1920). Reduced to a small handful of petty-bourgeois intellectuals and deprived of any influence among the masses (the number of its parliamentary votes was reduced from 97,000 in August, 1919, to 25,000 in April, 1923), it saved its existence only by selling out entirely to the bourgeoisie.

The stemming of the revolutionary tide after the suppression of the transport workers' general strike (December, 1919), encouraged the **Bourgeoisie** to hope that it could recapture the power. Feeling itself economically reinforced, it began to reorganise and to readjust its militant forces. The severe regime of the peasants' government and the steady growth of the Communist Party had caused the bourgeoisie to work strenuously in this direction. All the Germanophile parties united into one **National-Liberal Party**. The old Russophile parties also began to negotiate for a fusion; the

Popular and Progressive Liberal parties were fused into a new party—the **National Progressive Party**, and the latter formed a coalition with the Democratic and Radical parties, and thus was formed the so-called **Constitutional Bloc**. Soon, however, the bourgeoisie saw that it could not gain power in a legal way, and it started systematic preparation for a violent overthrow. To this end it transformed the **Unions of Reserve Officers and Non-commissioned Officers** into its militant organisations. For the control of the contemplated overthrow it created a special super-party conspirative organisation known as “**Naroden Sgovor**” (National League). Thus, on the 9th of June, 1923, in spite of a brilliant electoral victory by the Peasants’ Government, the bourgeoisie, hitherto broken up into 8 political coteries, felt itself sufficiently united and organised and strong to venture upon the overthrow.

All this while the masses of the workers were organising around the **Communist** party. This party, which during the imperialist war had a membership of only 3,000, was increased to 20,000 in the beginning of 1919, and to about 40,000 in 1922. The membership of the Workers’ Syndicalist Alliance, which marched in line with the Party, rose from 5,000 in 1918 to 35,000 towards the end of 1922. There was also great growth in the Young Communist League, which had a membership of over 15,000 towards the end of 1922. After the bankruptcy of the broad socialist party (mensheviks) the Communist Party remained the only mass-organisation of the **Proletariat**; but it gained its way also into the midst of the poorer peasants. Nuclei of the Party were formed in a majority of the villages. Along with its numerical growth it increased also its political influence. Thus, in the 1919 elections the candidates of the Party polled 118,000 votes, in 1920 they got 182,000, and in April, 1923 they got more than 220,000.

Thus, on the eve of the white-guardist *coup d’etat* there existed three great political forces in the country; the **Peasants’ Government** backed by the Peasants’ Party, the “**Naroden Sgovor**” (National League) supported by all the bourgeois parties and by the broad socialist party (mensheviks), and finally, the **Communist Party**.

We shall divide the subject-matter of our survey, in accordance with the leading events, into the following chapters:—

1. Until the rebellion at Valdai (September, 1918).
2. From the Vladai rebellion to the end of the General Strike (February, 1920).

3. From the General Strike to the *coup d'etat* (June, 1923).
4. The *Coup D'Etat*.

A special article will be dedicated to the events of September.

### §I.

## UNTIL THE VLADAI REBELLION.

(September, 1918.)

Prior to the Balkan war there were no immediate prospects for a revolutionary mass-movement in Bulgaria. The revolutionary social-democracy, working in the midst of a proletariat small in numbers and impregnated with petty-bourgeois prejudices, considered it as its main task to secure the **future** of the revolutionary movement in the country. For this reason it endeavoured to create a strong **Proletarian** organisation, and to educate a **class-conscious** working class. Declining firmly any co-operation of classes, and basing its tactics on the irreconcilable class struggle, it led the proletariat into the social and political struggle as an independent factor and endeavoured to secure for the proletariat an influence to correspond with its actual strength. Into the midst of the peasantry it penetrated with great caution. It is true that it invited the peasants into its ranks, but it was not in the name of their petty everyday interests, but in the name of their proletarian interests of *to-morrow*. It rejected any deals with the reformist social-democracy; a fusion of the two socialist parties it considered possible only "along the narrow path," *i.e.*, by individual conversion of disappointed workers from the reformist into the revolutionary party. During that period the revolutionary social-democracy was essentially a propagandist organisation.

It was only the course of the war period (1912-18) that our Party managed for the first time to get into close contact with larger masses of the people and to call them into the fight for definite **immediate** interests. On the eve of the Balkan war, without having any representation in parliament, it developed a very strong campaign outside of parliament against the bellicose politics of the bourgeoisie. During the whole course of the war, it vigorously agitated in the trenches against the war, and after its termination the Party aroused a strong national movement against the originators of the war, and in favour of an amnesty for soldiers accused of disciplinary offences. In this campaign, the Party pointed out to the masses of the people the real aims of the policy of

Tsarist Russia in the Balkans, and the annexationist nature of Bulgarian nationalism.

When the Imperialist war broke out there was danger of Bulgaria being dragged in. Intervention, either for the Central Powers or for the Entente, was urged both by Germanophiles and Russophile. The Peasants' Party and the social-reformists wavered. Our Party alone took a definite stand against any intervention whatsoever, and carried on an agitation to that effect among the masses. Our Party got into contact also with the revolutionary wing of international social-democracy (Zimmerwald, 1915). When the Germanophile government declared war on Serbia, all the Russophile parties, including the Peasants' Party and the social-reformists, joined the government in order to carry the "national cause," to a successful end. Our Party alone maintained its uncompromising position against the war, and during the whole war, on the fronts and in the rear, conducted an untiring anti-war propaganda among the masses. Its revolutionary activity was particularly increased after the February revolution in Russia. The activity of the Party contributed doubtlessly to the disintegration of the front which had been maintained by unparalleled callousness and innumerable crimes on the part of the authorities towards the soldiers and the common people. The September catastrophe, and the soldiers' revolt which followed, brought an end to Bulgarian participation in the war (September, 1918).

There is no doubt but that the behaviour of our Party during the war was fit and proper. It was one of the few parties of the Second International that remained faithful to the proletariat and to revolutionary socialism. It categorically rejected the theory of national defence and would not make common cause with the Bulgarian bourgeoisie for a single moment. It neglected no opportunity to manifest the solidarity of the Bulgarian workers with the workers of the "enemy" countries. Its behaviour met with the full approval of the large masses of the people; this was shown by the rapid growth of the Party and of its influence.

It was during this period that the Party first got into practical contact with the population at large and learned to carry on *mass-agitation*. The Party gained the experience of **illegal work** among the soldiers and the masses; it took part in **popular movements** and led the **mass struggle**; it was subjected to severe **persecution** and brought heavy **sacrifices**. Nevertheless, it failed as yet to become the leader of the **armed struggle**. There has been some criticism of the Party's attitude during the soldiers' revolt at Vladaï

(September, 1918); but the criticism was unfounded, and the Party has demonstrated its tactics to have been the correct ones. Nevertheless, during this period of its evolution from a party of **propaganda** into a party of **action** it retained some of its weak points, to wit: a lack of organisational connection with the masses, which was necessary for control of mass-actions; inability to take advantage of the antagonism and strife among the various bourgeois parties, and a lack of experience in the handling of large masses.

## §II.

### FROM THE VLADAI REBELLION TO THE END OF THE GENERAL STRIKE.

(February, 1920).

The period which extended from the soldiers' revolt at Vladai (September, 1918) to the white-guard *coup d'état* (June, 1923) was marked by the **growth and decay of the Peasants Party**, which reached the *zenith* of its power in 1920.

There is no doubt but that the military catastrophe had dealt a terrible blow to the Bulgarian national bourgeoisie, and in the first place to its Germanophile wing. The former champions of the Entente, who, now took their place at the helm, were confronted with a disturbed sea of popular passions, and their main pre-occupation was to save the thing most essential, *i.e.*, the **bourgeois domination**. To this end they first of all sacrificed Tsar Ferdinand, whom they made the scapegoat of all the sins of the bourgeoisie; in the second place, they shared their power with the peasants' party and the social-reformists. Of course, they had no intention of capitulating to the latter; they merely wished to use them during the period of danger and to kick them out as soon as there would be no further need of them.

From that moment began the **strengthening of the Peasants' Party in power**. Objectively, it was due to the fact that the large masses of the rural population, thanks to the war, had been drawn into political life and into **active intervention** in the political struggle. The advanced elements of the toiling peasantry, under the spell of the Russian revolution and of the revolutionary movement in Central Europe, adopted the programme of the Soviet regime and joined the banner of the Communist Party. But the large masses of the rural population were not yet fit at that moment to go beyond the **struggle against those guilty of the national catastrophe**, and for this reason they fell under the influence of the Peasants' Party, which had thus grown to become

the biggest political force in the country. This fact compelled the bourgeois parties to take notice of its existence. The bourgeoisie could rely politically on the Peasants' Party, because the latter was led by the wealthy, exploiting elements of the village.

What did the bourgeois parties expect from the Peasants' Party? Co-operation in the fight against the Communist peril? Who was the chief enemy of the rural bourgeoisie at the head of the Peasants' Party?—The Communist Party, which, on the one hand, threatened the domination of the bourgeoisie as a whole, and on the other hand, undermined the influence of the rural bourgeoisie among the masses of the peasantry.

Thus was brought about the united front of the bourgeois parties with the Peasants' Party, and its adjunct social-reformist party, which found its expression in the **Coalition Government** which took charge of the State until the first elections to the legislature (August, 1919).

First fiddle in the governmental coalition was naturally played by the old bourgeois parties. As yet the Peasants' Party had no points of contact with the industrial centres, which were the principal seats of the struggle, and it therefore had no influence there. On the other hand, the followers of the social-reformist party were in the cities, and they did their utmost to stem the rising tide of the workers' advance.

The Communist Party thought that towards that time the country had entered into the stage of the revolutionary struggle which was bound to terminate in the establishment of the Soviet regime. Therefore, while developing the widest propaganda to acquaint the wide masses of the urban and the rural population with the Soviet socialist programme, it at the same time organised them feverishly, taking a leading part in all the spontaneous popular movements and organising revolutionary mass-actions. It endeavoured to unite under its revolutionary banner the toilers of city and village, unmasking the treacherous conduct of the Peasants' Party, and of the social-reformists during the war, and brandmarking their alliance with the bourgeois party after the war, an alliance which pursued but one aim, to save the bourgeois domination from the indignant wrath of the masses. The participation of the social-reformists in the bourgeois bloc, and in the bloody suppression of the popular movements, had revealed to the masses of the workers their counter-revolutionary role, and they quit their party. But the Peasants' Party continued to enjoy the confidence of the rural masses. The rural masses, too, needed an object lesson

in order to conceive the real part played in the Peasants' Party by the predominant rural bourgeoisie.

The elections of August, 1919, resulted in a motley parliament in which the Peasants' Party had a relative but not absolute majority. A coalition was inevitable, either with the Right or with the Left. A coalition of peasants, mensheviks and communists could create a very strong government, but neither Stambulisky nor the communists thought of it. The mensheviks proposed an alliance with the peasants but the latter preferred a coalition with the Right *i.e.*, with the bourgeois parties.

Was a **government bloc** of peasants, broad socialists and communists realisable at that moment?

No, it was not.

The creation of such a bloc was hindered, in the first place, by circumstances of an **International** character. Bulgaria was still occupied by the troops of the Entente which would under no circumstances tolerate the participation of Bulgarian bolsheviks in the government. It was at that very moment that peace negotiations went on at Paris. Stambulisky, hoping for "leniency" from the victors, would not consent at any price to compromise himself in the eyes of the Entente by a bloc with the communists. But there were other reasons against the bloc which had to do with questions of **programme**. The rural bourgeoisie, which pulled the strings of the Peasants' Party, was scared by the communist peril no less than the urban bourgeoisie; at the same time it had no interests in common with the proletariat; on the contrary, although it considered the bourgeois parties as rivals for power, nevertheless, it felt a sense of kinship for them. It was for this reason that Stambulisky not only would not think of a coalition with the communists, but he even rejected the idea of a coalition with the social-reformists.

But if a **political** bloc was unrealisable, could not the Communist Party use the advocacy thereof as a **tactical manoeuvre**?

I have already pointed out that our Party had not yet learned to carry on political manoeuvres; it carried on a perfectly straight-forward policy, but I think that such manoeuvres at that moment would have been of no advantage to the Party. To express readiness to join a **governmental** bloc under the retention of the monarchy and the existing political order (and that was the only bloc spoken of at the time) would mean to arouse great indignation among the workers; and to suggest the formation of a **revolutionary** bloc, *i.e.*, a bloc for the abolition of the monarchy, and for the estab-

lishment of Soviets (there was, of course, no talk of such a bloc) would be tantamount to a naive proposal to the peasants' party and to the mensheviks to declare themselves communists. The moment had not yet arrived for the application of the tactics of the united front as a manoeuvre to attract the masses. It was a time of acute struggle and intense revolutionary excitement. The Communist Party maintained direct contact with the masses and its appeals were accessible to them. However, in order to revolutionise the consciousness of the **large peasant masses** it was necessary that they should have a taste of the delights of a **Peasants' Government**. No manoeuvres could take the place of such an experience.

Anyway, Stambulisky had formed the first peasants' government with the aid of the two bourgeois parties. This fact alone determined beforehand the **actual** programme of the government: to combat the revolutionary movement which was steadily increasing and which reached its highest pitch during the transport workers' general strike (from December, 25th, 1919, to February 19th, 1920).

The concrete issues of the movement were: the terms of the peace treaty, the growing cost of living, and the poverty-stricken condition of government officials.

It was to the interest of the government itself that the masses should protest against the terms of the treaty which doomed the people to economic and political bondage. Yet when the Communist Party extended the scope of the popular protest and directed the movement against the Bulgarian bourgeoisie which was responsible for the catastrophe, and which was even now unable to protect the interests of the masses of the people, *i.e.*, when it gave the movement a revolutionary tendency, under the slogan: "Down with the predatory treaty, down with the bourgeoisie and long live the Soviet regime!"—then the government lost its head and began to organise repressions. Likewise, the campaign against profiteering and high costs was assuming a revolutionary character under the guidance of the Communist Party; the masses had no faith in the reality of the governmental measures; their struggle was directed against the domination of the capitalists who had amassed vast fortunes during the war and were continuing to prey upon the resources of the people. The masses went out into the streets under the slogans: "Down with the domination of banks and profiteers, and long live the Soviets!" On that occasion the peasants' government took the profiteers under its wing and caused much bloodshed among the workers. The government officials, driven to a state of dire distress, were seeking to

improve their condition, but instead of bread the government sent them bayonets: therefore, the hatred against the bankrupt bourgeois state was growing also among the government officials, who were more and more lending their ears to the voices of the Communists.

The December crisis ensued under the following circumstances: a sanguinary demonstration on the 21st; martial law; mobilisation of the governmental orange-guards (peasant detachments); demonstrations on the 24th and on the 25th; proclamation of a general strike on the railways, posts and telegraphs on the 28th; extension of the strike into a general political strike; defeat of the movement and the calling off of the strike on the 29th of February, 1920.

In connection with the tactics pursued by the Communist Party during that crisis, two questions deserve to be examined in detail; did the communists maintain the proper attitude towards the social-reformists in the course of the strike. And was it not the duty of the Communist Party to develop the movement into an armed insurrection?

The railway workers and the post and telegraph employees were organised in three unions; communist, free and yellow. In the free union the social-reformists predominated. Already in the summer the masses had become restless and demanded a strike. To lead the struggle, a **United Committee of Action** was formed of representatives of the three unions. But at that time, the social-reformists took part in the government, while the strike was to be against the government, and consequently against themselves, and they did everything possible to postpone the struggle by exercising pressure upon the leaders of the free union. Thus the social-reformists were guilty of obstructing the committee of action, which caused the masses to lose their confidence in that committee. But in September, the mensheviks were out of the government, and they had no more party reasons to obstruct the struggle. On the eve of the strike the situation was as follows:—In the provinces, the masses were practically united under the leadership of the communists; at Sofia, however, the yellow and the free unions retained considerable influence. Finding themselves in such a situation, and fearing the underhand manoeuvres of the menshevik and yellow leaders who were capable of treason at any moment, **the Communists declined to join the common committee of action and proposed instead that two parallel committees should be at work, acting in permanent contact; only in this manner was it possible to attain a united leadership of the strike, while the communist influence predominated among**

the masses. All the while the masses displayed perfect unanimity and great courage and determination. Treason crept in, but at the last moment, and only on the part of the yellow leaders. But this was not the only cause of the defeat.

Thus, the Communist Party succeeded in bringing about the united front of the strikers and a united leadership of the struggle while holding a free hand in case of treason by the non-communist leaders. It is quite possible that the creation of a common committee of action would have brought more unanimity and a firmer leadership, it is quite possible that the fears of the communists were much exaggerated. Still, I think that on this point, the Communist Party committed no substantial tactical error.

Of rather greater importance is the second question: were not the circumstances favourable for an armed insurrection, and was not the Communist Party wrong in failing to give the signal for revolt? It happened that at that very moment some elements, discontented with the alleged insufficiency of "revolutionism," in the tactics of our Party, had formed a separate group under the name of "Spartak," and, disregarding the Party, proclaimed the slogan of armed rebellion. Yet that gesture had no other effect except a few terrorist acts, in which the line could not be drawn between revolutionary and provocative actions. Was not the conduct of this group more correct?

The lapse of time and the subsequent events enable us now to shed sufficient light on the situation of that period and to give an exhaustive answer to this question. Yes, the Communist Party acted properly in not declaring the revolutionary rising at the close of the year 1919. That tactical course was justified by reasons of both international and internal nature.

Indeed, the first wave of the proletarian revolution in Central Europe had been beaten back. The Soviet Republics of Bavaria and Hungary had been crushed. Particularly instructive was the example of Hungary, where the revolution had been crushed with the aid of foreign armies. The counter-revolution had raised its head everywhere, and was furiously attacking the main citadel of the world-revolution, Soviet Russia. The neighbour states in the Balkans were still mobilised, their armies being entirely in the hands of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie. The Balkan Communist Federation had not yet been created, and there was no connection whatever among the proletarian parties of the Balkan countries. Bulgaria herself was still occupied by Entente troops. Under such conditions could there be the

least doubt that an insurrection in Bulgaria, even if victorious over the peasants' government, was bound to be crushed by the foreign armies. The Central Committee of the Communist Party, which, as is now quite clear, had rather underestimated the forces of the peasants' government, entertained no illusions with regard to the international position of the country and rejected categorically the idea of an armed insurrection as a foolhardy adventure.

Now it is quite clear that the peasants' government disposed of sufficient force and authority to crush an armed insurrection. It is true that at that time there was rather a tense atmosphere in the cities and industrial centres; the masses were excited and the harsh measures of the government poured oil into the flames; the workers were ready for determined action. Yet the same could not be said of the peasantry. The movement in the villages was not developing at such a rapid pace. On the contrary, a considerable part of the peasantry heaved a sigh of relief at the advent of the peasants' party to power, entertaining hopes for a better future. The rural masses had as yet no reason to feel disappointed. Hence this part of the peasantry would have considered any attempt at overthrowing the peasants' government as an attempt directed against the authority of the peasants. This was the very strain in which the Peasants' Party carried on its agitation. The village exploiters resorted to demagogical descriptions of the movement in the cities as directed against the peasants, and thus they successfully fostered the animosity of the village towards the city, thus enlisting the aid of the peasants for the resistance to the eventual revolt of the workers. For this purpose they created even a special rural (orange) guard.

The peasants' government was feeling strong, and it therefore acted arrogantly and defiantly. Cocksure of its victory, it provoked the strike on the railways by discharging all the workers and employees who had taken part in demonstrations, and it exerted great efforts to provoke the Communist Party into an armed fight. Nevertheless, the masses in the cities did not resort to armed fighting, and the Communist Party was not taken in by provocation. It unfolded all its forces and rallied the whole of the proletariat to the struggle, declaring a political mass-strike and attaining great successes in this respect, but the last step it did not take and it had no armed insurrection.

In the course of the struggle it became clear that the government had large masses in the rural districts on its side. How could a proletarian revolution be successful if the peasants, far from lending their aid, could be expected to

offer armed resistance? Thanks to the peasants' party, the bourgeoisie managed on that occasion to enlist the aid of the peasantry.

The crushing of the strike, and of the whole December movement, was a double victory for the peasants' government: firstly, over the working class and the Communist Party, and secondly, in regard to the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois parties. The latter were bound to recognise unconditionally the hegemony of the Peasants' Party. The Peasants' Party had reach the zenith of its power. Stambulisky appreciated it fully, and he decided to create a pure peasants' government, and accordingly he dissolved parliament and appointed new elections (28th March, 1920). Yet the results of the elections failed to justify his hopes. He did not obtain a majority, and he had to resort to a number of knavish tricks to create such an one.

These elections were the barometer of the attitude of the masses towards the Communist Party, and the verdict of the masses upon its tactics. This verdict turned out to be quite favourable; while the social-reformists were nearly wiped out, the communists obtained a large increase of votes and gained a few new seats in parliament.

### § III.

## FROM THE GENERAL STRIKE TO THE *COUP D'ETAT*. (From February, 1920 to June, 1923).

The peasants' party began to crumble during the period of the second peasants' government. During that period of feverish reformists activity, a cleavage along class lines had set in in the Party, which brought about its internal decomposition. Along with this there was a re-grouping and a political reinforcement of the capitalist bourgeoisie on the one hand, and on the other hand the working class became united and the communist movement grew strong.

The Communist Party did not forget for a single moment that the bitter class enemy of the proletariat is the **capitalist class**, which must be overthrown in order to establish proletarian rule. For this reason the Party never allowed any concessions to the capitalist class, being guided in its relations to the latter by the sole principle of the **irreconcilable class struggle**.

While seeing quite clearly that the peasants' government cannot remain in power for a long time, that it will fall a victim to the **class antagonism** which acted as a solvent to the heterogeneous make up of the Peasants' Party; while conducting the campaign in favour of the establish-

ment of Soviets—the Communist Party could not help noticing the preparations that were made by the capitalist bourgeoisie to supercede the peasants' government.

The bourgeoisie considered the peasants' regime as a **necessary evil**. It had submitted to it for a time in order to save itself from the greater evil, the Communist revolution. Now it began to consider that possibility as rather remote, and it began to prepare busily for a struggle with the peasants' government.

Its first step in this direction was to hasten the internal decomposition of the Peasants' Party by **economic pressure**. The rural bourgeoisie, which had swamped the Party, was exploiting the government for its own enrichment, thereby increasing the discontent among the poorer peasants. The urban bourgeoisie had many points of contact with the rural bourgeoisie, and it supported the pro-capitalist policies of the latter. It did not take long for a pure **bourgeois faction** to form within the Party, which joined hands with the urban bourgeoisie in the struggle against the peasants' government. To be sure, Stambulisky succeeded in ousting the representatives of this faction from the government; nevertheless it remained in the party and contributed to its decomposition.

Secondly, it increased its force by **union and coalition** of the bourgeois parties, both in parliament and without. Retracing its past experience, it endeavoured to "persuade" the Tsar's court and "public opinion" that it was necessary to change the regime and that the natural successor to the peasants was the Constitutional bloc. When "persuasion" failed, the bourgeois parties resorted to noisy demonstrations (September, 1922). Although Stambulisky was not overthrown by these demonstrations, nevertheless the fact that the peasants' government was compelled to adopt the harshest measures was an indication of its waning power.

Thirdly, the bourgeoisie, as usual, was not loth to profit by **foreign influences**. It could clearly see the conflicting Balkan policies of France on one hand and England and Italy on the other hand. Inasmuch as Stambulisky was succumbing ever more to French influence and seeking a reconciliation with Yugo-Slavia, the bourgeois parties did their best to win the good graces of the rivals of France and Yugo-Slavia. This pro-Italian and pro-British policy of the bourgeois bloc secured valuable support to the **Macedonian revolutionary organisations** in Bulgaria.

Finally, it resorted to an **alliance with the Russian white guards**. Let us take, for instance, the Wrangel plot. Eliminating all the doubtful elements of rumour, there re-

mains the undisputable fact that the bourgeois parties were in league with the Russian white generals and expected the aid of their arms in case of a *coup d'etat*. After the arrest of the chiefs of the bourgeois opposition (September, 1922), after their being found guilty by a popular vote (November, 1922), and after the third elections (April, 1923), which gave a huge parliamentary majority to the government, there was no other way of capturing power except by a *coup d'etat*.

The main tactical questions which the Communist Party had to solve in practical fashion during this period of the capitalist offensive were the following: (1) the attitude to the Peasants' Party and to the Peasants' Government; (2) the attitude to the Socialist Party; (3) the organisation of reserve officers and non-commissioned officers; (4) the Macedonian national movement; (5) the Wrangel peril, and (6) the *coup d'etat*. We shall examine these *seriatim*.

### ***1. The Attitude to the Peasants' Party and to the Peasants' Government.***

Of course, this was one of the fundamental questions. Yet in order to be able to judge whether the Communist Party acted properly in its relations to the Peasants' Party and to the peasants' government, one has to recall the tactical slogans of the Communist International in their chronological sequence. The Third World Congress (1921), advanced the slogan of "nearer to the masses"; the enlarged plenum of the E.C. (February, 1922) formulated the tactics of the "united front"; while the Fourth Congress (November, 1922), adopted the slogan of the "workers' government" for industrial countries, and of the "Workers' and Peasants' Government" for agricultural countries. The enlarged plenum of the E.C. (June, 1923), made the slogan of the "workers' and peasants' government" general for all countries. At the same time the tactics of the united front in the year 1922 referred only to workers' organisations and parties.

Under such conditions in 1920-21 there could be no talk of a united front with the Peasants' Party. But this does not mean to say that the rural masses were then indifferent to the Communist Party, or that the latter took a low estimate of their important role. On the contrary, the Bulgarian Communist Party understood clearly **how important and necessary it was for the revolution to attract the peasants**, and this was practically expressed in the **resolution on the agrarian question** adopted by the Party conference in 1921. That resolution, after a minute analysis of the rural situation as it affects the majority of the peasants, the rural prole-

tarians, semi-proletarians and petty-farmers, stated quite definitely that "the Communist Party must do everything in its power to attract the majority of these three groups to Communism and under the Communist banner." The Party did a great deal of practical earnest work in this direction, and very valuable results were obtained. We know of no other Communist Party (save those of the Soviet Republics, of course) that accomplished so much by way of propaganda and organisation among the peasants as did the Bulgarian Communist Party. Nevertheless, its attitude to the **Peasants' Party** had two aspects. It had a negative attitude to the **village exploiters**, who actually bossed the Peasants Party. It pointed out that the policy of the Peasants' Party was run in opposition not only to the interests of the workers, but also to those of the small peasants who formed the bulk of the Party. It pointed out the close identity of interests between the urban bourgeoisie of the old bourgeois parties, and the rural bourgeoisie of the Peasants' Party, and on the other hand the solidarity of the poorer peasants who adhered to the Peasants' Party with the workers and peasants of the Communist Party. This served as the basis for its appeal to the toiling peasants to unite with the workers under the banner of the Communist Party, for the common fight against the joint offensive of the urban and rural bourgeoisie. All this was clearly stated in the resolution of the Party conference in 1922 :—

"The Communist Party will continue with ever-increasing vigour its campaign against the peasants' government which has shown itself merely as the government of the rural bourgeoisie and of political and social reaction. The Communist Party call upon all the dispossessed and poor peasants who lost their faith in the peasants government to rally under its banner, together with the workers and the poor of the city, to fight for the overthrow of the domination of the rural and urban bourgeoisie, and for the emancipation of labour from the capitalist yoke."

It is true that the same conference adopted also a resolution on the **tactics of the United Front**, but that resolution contains no hint that these tactics should be applied also to the Peasants' Party. This happened not only because the Communist International had not yet raised the question of a united front with the **Peasants'** parties, but also because the concrete circumstances in Bulgaria seemed as yet unsuitable for such tactics in regard to the Peasants' Party, although in some cases the Communist Party had occasion to co-operate with the Peasants' Party.

It was only by the resolution of the Party plenum in January, 1923 on the **Workers' and Peasants' Government** that the Party took a **step forward** in this direction. While still declining "any coalition with the Peasants' Party and its government, the Communist Party calls upon the toiling peasants, the landless and poor peasants who belong to the **local groups** of the Peasants' Party and constitute in it the overwhelming majority, to join the common fight . . . , " and so forth.

Although with caution, the Party had opened the way for **common actions** by rural groups of the Communist Party and rural groups of the Peasants' Party for definite concrete demands. Later on the Party recommended also the formation of **joint Peasant Committees**. In view of the approaching moment of closer co-operation of the peasant masses of the two organisations, the resolution of the Party plenum, while explaining the conditions for the formation of a workers' and peasants' government, emphasises at the same time the necessity of leading the poorer peasants' masses of the Peasants' Party to the Left, in order to put an end to the bossing of the rural bourgeoisie in the Peasants' Party. The Party contributed materially to the "Leftisation" of the masses of the Peasants' Party, both by its criticism as well as by its conduct during the Wrangel conspiracy and the attempted coup of the bourgeoisie. The first symptoms of this turning to the Left were shown in the arrest and indictment of the ex-ministers of the time of the Balkan war.

## *2. The Attitude to the Social-Reformists.*

The attitude of the Communist Party to the social-reformists was developed in the following manner: the mensheviks after their sad experiences of the ministerial game, in order to retain the masses who were rapidly deserting them, began to play at "Leftism." They even "condemned" the policy of collaboration with the bourgeoisie, and in order to avert their defeat at the elections (March, 1920), they proposed to the Communist Party to start negotiations for common actions and even for a fusion. The Communist Party, naturally, declined this proposal of the discredited and bankrupt chiefs of the mensheviks, but in view of the fact that there was discontent in the social-reformist ranks, and a **Communist Left** had been formed, the plenum of the C.C. in its declaration of the 29th of February, 1920, urging the great need of "uniting and welding all the forces of labour under the banner of communism, and of the Communist International" expressed the readiness of the Party to start negotiations for unity "with all the **organisations** and **groups** of

the social-reformist party which accept the programme and tactics of the Communist International." This position of the Party had its effect. It was not long afterwards that the social-reformist party was split, and its Left wing joined the Communist Party in a body. After this blow from within, the menshevik party lost nearly all its labour elements and it ceased to be a **Workers'** organisation worthy of any attention.

In 1922, in connection with the tactics of the united front, the Communist Party was once more confronted with the question of welding the forces of labour. The resolution of the conference upon this question laid in detail the terms of a united labour front in Bulgaria; but in view of the small numbers and political insignificance of the social-reformist party, the united front was rejected in regard to the latter. The Party maintained this position until the very moment of the *coup d'etat* of July. It was only after that event that the Party changed its position and offered the united front also to the mensheviks. It would not have been a mistake on its part if it had made this proposal before the *coup d'etat*. Of course, no new influx of labour forces for the defence of the toiling masses against the capitalist offensive could be expected as a result of such a step. Nevertheless, some confusion might have been caused in the ranks of the bourgeois parties, with whom the mensheviks formed a virtual bloc, using that fact as a means to increase their prestige in the eyes of the masses. It was only some time prior to the *coup d'etat* that some doubt had arisen in the Communist International as to the correctness of the tactics of the Bulgarian Communist Party in regard to the social-reformists.

### ***3. The Union of Reserve Officers and Non-commissioned Officers.***

There was natural discontent among the officers and non-commissioned officers who had been discharged from the army in consequence of the reduction of the military establishments. There was discontent with the peasants' government also, among those in active service. Among the discontented there was also a section of reserve officers and non-commissioned officers who were connected with the capitalist bourgeoisie in one way or another. Thus had arisen the respective unions of officers and non-commissioned officers, which were both hostile to the Peasants' Party. In course of time, along with the development of the political struggle, they became transformed into the **militant organs of the capitalist bourgeoisie.**

The Communist Party, having in its ranks and under its

influence a goodly number of officers and non-commissioned officers, could see from the outset the part that could be played by these unions, and it endeavoured to **paralyse** them as counter-revolutionary organisations. To this end the communists were urged to join these unions in masses. In some cities the communists turned out to be in the majority in these unions. This fact, disquietened the principal leaders, who, under the guise of political neutrality were pursuing quite definite political aims. They decided to throw off the mask and they expelled from the union the communists and those in sympathy with them. Nothing was left to the communists but to create another union of reserve officers and non-commissioned officers (1922). This union adopted a class platform and declared itself the union of that section of reserve officers and non-commissioned officers which sympathises with the **toiling people**, whom they were going to support in the social and political struggle. **This union was joined also by reserve officers who were in sympathy with the Peasants' Party. It was organised as a connecting link between the Communist Party and the Peasants' Party in their struggle against the capitalist conspiracy.** If, in spite of all this the Union failed to play its part during the *coup d'état*, it was entirely because the peasants' government, afraid of the preponderant communist influence in that organisation, had treated it all the time with mistrust and hesitated to arm its members.

#### 4. *The Macedonian Revolutionary Organisations.*

The **National question** in the Balkans played a decisive part in the history of the Balkan people. To solve that question a series of protracted and highly ruinous wars had been fought; nevertheless, the question was not solved by those wars. The national question remains as poignant as it was, and is still the source of new national movements which threaten to lead to new sanguinary conflicts.

The **Macedonian question**, which is one of these national questions, has two sides. Firstly, it consists of the movement of the **Macedonian masses** for liberty and independence. This movement, prior to the Balkan war, was directed against the Turkish sultans and rulers, and since the Balkan war, against the domination of the Serbian, Greek and Bulgarian bourgeoisie. Secondly, it embraces the aspirations of the **capitalist bourgeoisie of the various Balkan States** towards the conquest of Macedonia under the mask of national unity. In the first case it is a **National-Revolutionary** movement; in the second case it is one of **Nationalist conquest**.

The Bulgarian Communist Party drew always a clear

distinction between these two movements. To the former, which was led by the "**Macedonian Organisation**," the Party was not only sympathetic, but also took an active part in it; whereas to the latter, which was led by the "**Sofia Macedonian Committee**," and which was stimulated by the Bulgarian bourgeoisie and by the Bulgarian monarchists, the Party was hostile, because the latter was merely one of the aspects of the military and annexationist policy of the Bulgarian bourgeoisie, against which the Bulgarian Communist Party has waged a bitter struggle. The same position in the Macedonian question was maintained by the communist parties of the other Balkan countries. All the Balkan communists looked for a solution of the national question, and of the Macedonian question in particular, not in internecine Balkan wars, but in a union of all the Balkan peoples into one **Federated Balkan Republic**.

The Macedonian question was not solved by the wars; they only imposed new oppression upon the Macedonian people, and tore off the mask from the face of the Bulgarian bourgeoisie. Enlightened by cruel experience, the toiling masses of Macedonia turned their glances to the communist parties which became united into the **Balkan Communist Federation** and raised the slogan of the **Federated Balkan Soviet Republic**, which was to include a **free and independent Macedonia** as a component part.

However, after the defeat of the revolutionary movement in Central Europe, and particularly after the raiding of the Communist Party in Yugo-Slavia (1922), the Macedonian revolutionary organisations renewed their activities. It is true that the **Autonomists** as well as the **Federalists** raised the slogan of a free and independent Macedonia and made a bid for the support of the revolutionary masses of Macedonia, but the Bulgarian bourgeoisie quickly intervened and its influence was soon to be felt in the leadership of the Macedonian organisations. While the peasants' government endeavoured to gain control of the federalist organisation, the nationalist party made use of their old connections to establish their influence over the autonomist organisation. Thus the Macedonian revolutionary movement was once again faced with the danger of being transformed into a tool for aims that were alien and antagonistic to any revolutionary movement.

Under such circumstances, the duty of the Communist Party was quite clear: **on the one hand, solidarity with the Macedonian toiling masses and support in their revolutionary struggle; on the other hand, a fight against the efforts of the Bulgarian urban and rural bourgeoisie to transform the Mace-**

donian organisations into a tool of their counter-revolutionary and annexationist policies.

Having thus formulated its task, the Bulgarian Communist Party should not have clashed with any **truly revolutionary** organisation. Such, however, was not the case. The autonomists soon began to show their hostility to the Party, and this hostility grew at an even pace with the growth of the strength of the Party. Their relations became strained to such an extent that they began to kill communist leaders on various pretexts.

How is this sad fact to be explained? Why was it that while the sympathies of the **Macedonian masses** to the Communist Party in Bulgaria were growing steadily (the Party obtained here a majority of votes at elections), the hostility of the **leaders** of the revolutionary organisation was steadily increasing? This fact is explained as follows: on the one hand, the majority of the local leaders of this organisation belonged to the bourgeoisie and to the bourgeois parties, and were consequently interested in weakening the Communist Party; on the other hand, the general leadership of the organisation was becoming ever more directed towards a united front with the nationalist parties. Seeing the danger of a rupture which threatened with grave consequences to the Party and to the Macedonian revolutionary movement, the Communist Party resolved on vigorous action among the Macedonian labouring class in Bulgaria. This position of the Party was formulated in the following manner ("Rabotnitcheski Vestnik"—the Labour Herald—of the 11th of April, 1923):

"The Communist Party did support and will support any revolutionary national movement. It will lend its support also to those organisations which actually work and fight for the national independence of the oppressed. But in Bulgaria this can be done only by those organisations which will sever their connections with the nationalist annexationist policy of the bourgeoisie and will declare themselves in determined opposition to any attempt of the bourgeois parties to make use of the oppressed for internal reactionary aims and counter-revolutionary upheavals."

At the same time the Party suggested to its members and sympathisers among the Macedonian refugees to **join the common organisation of the refugees and to take part in all its manifestations**. This rapprochement between the communists and the masses of the refugees had cleared the air and opened up an outlook for mutual agreement. Unfortunately, the policy of the peasants' government upon the Mace-

donian question, as expressed in the treaty of Nish, (April, 1923), drove the autonomists entirely into the arms of the Bulgarian bourgeoisie, and the latter made use of them to accomplish the *coup d'état* in June.

### 5. *The Wrangel Conspiracy.*

The so-called **Wrangel conspiracy** gave occasion to the first rapprochement between the Communist Party and the Peasants' Party. In September, 1921, the peasants' government admitted into Bulgaria a considerable part of the white army of Baron Wrangel. What were the motives of the government for this action? Firstly, it did it under pressure of the great powers, and secondly, **in order to have at its disposal a reserve armed force against the Bulgarian communists.** The Bulgarian communists understood fully the danger of this well-trained and armed counter-revolutionary force not only to Soviet Russia, but also **to the revolutionary movement in Bulgaria,** and it raised a strong campaign in that connection. The campaign was carried on in two directions: (1) against the **Bulgarian Government and Bulgarian bourgeoisie** who were conspiring against the Russian as well as against the Bulgarian people, and (2) against **this very army,** endeavouring to break it up and demanding its disarmament and the expulsion of its staffs. The Party created a **special organisation** composed of Wrangel soldiers, who were carrying on propaganda for reconciliation with the Soviet Government and for repatriation.

The Wrangelites, under the high protection of the government and of the bourgeoisie, established themselves as in an occupied country, with all their garrisons, commanders, military courts, secret police and so on. Nevertheless, the agitation of the communists aroused the population of the towns and villages to such an extent that the government was compelled to adopt certain measures of precaution. At the same time (March, 1922) it was suddenly discovered that the Wrangel organisations were working not only against the Bulgarian communists, but also against the government and the State, and that they **had a certain agreement with the bourgeois parties that was directed both against the peasants' government and the Communist Party.** It was then that the government decided to act: it started to disarm the troops and it expelled from the country the higher commanders.

For the first time the communists and the peasants found themselves confronted with the same danger, and their **solidarity** in the struggle came into view. This incident

brought home the conviction to both sides that the capitalist bourgeoisie is their common enemy who was now thinking himself sufficiently strong to attack them. Nevertheless, the mutual mistrust between the Communist Party and the Peasants' Party was still strong, and there could be no talk of any prolonged collaboration between them. At all events, the government was forced to relax its fight against the communists, and the Communist Party began to discuss the question of eventual collaboration with the Peasants' Party in case of an attempted *coup d'état* by the bourgeoisie.

This very question was solved by the Party plenum that was held in April, 1922. The resolution that was adopted (and not intended for publication) was of historical significance, in a certain sense. It meant a **definite change** in the attitude of the Communist Party to the Peasants' Party. Its contents were somewhat as follows:—

“Every attempted *coup d'état* by the bourgeoisie, although directed primarily against the peasants' government, holds out a direct menace also to the Communist Party; the capture of power by the bourgeois parties is fraught with great danger to the revolutionary movement; therefore, the Communist Party, to protect itself and the revolutionary movement, will take up arms to resist any attempted *coup d'état* by the bourgeoisie; although no political agreement is now possible between the Communist Party and the Peasants' Party, nevertheless tactical co-operation between them is admissible.”

The sense of this resolution, as it was explained and understood by the whole Party, is quite clear: **in case of a *coup d'état*, which is bound to affect the masses in the strongest possible manner, the Communist Party will oppose it with arms; but since it does not find it possible at the present moment, for a number of reasons of internal and international nature, to raise the slogan of the establishment of a Soviet regime or to form a coalition government with the Peasants' Party, it will take a hand in the struggle and protect the peasants' government while protecting itself.** It should be noted that this decision met with no opposition either in the ranks of the Party or among the masses of the workers.

During the following month the bourgeoisie increased its preparations for the *coup d'état*. In September it tried to organise large demonstrations which were to serve as the starting point for decisive actions. During those critical days the Communist Party maintained a sharp lookout and was ready to take up arms at any moment in case of an attempted *coup d'état*. The Party plenum met again on the 3rd of

October. A resolution was adopted which outspokenly asserted the same position. The 4th paragraph of the resolution was as follows:—

“ The Communist Party, while calling the attention of the toilers of city and village to the fight of the capitalist bourgeoisie which is **ostensibly** directed against the peasants’ government, but **actually** against the toiling masses and the Communist Party, appeals to them to be on their guard and to resist every blow against them, from whichever side it came. They must increase their vigilance and preparedness, particularly after the old bourgeois parties have shown in action their readiness to make use of the Wrangel bands and to resort to a *coup d’etat* in order to capture the power of the State.”

This was followed by a series of events which foreshadowed the imminence of the *coup d’etat*, to wit, the decision to prosecute the ministers of the former Russophile cabinets; the plebiscite on the guilt of these ministers (19th of November), in which a tremendous majority of the people pronounced its verdict on the militarist cabinets, and the capture of the town of Kustendila by the Macedonian revolutionary detachments (2nd of December). At the same time the Communist Party, while maintaining a constant look-out, organised mass demonstrations throughout the country, which were in the nature of a **trial mobilisation**. They showed the strength of the Party and its decision to act.

A plenum of the C.C. was called in January, 1923, to take up the resolution of the Fourth International Congress on the workers’ and peasants’ government. As already mentioned, the Party adopted this slogan and worked out a programme for the future workers’ and peasants’ government of Bulgaria.

In what respect did this resolution modify the position of the Party in case of an attempted *coup d’etat* by the capitalist bourgeoisie?

Nothing had taken place to justify a more **conciliatory attitude** of the Communist Party to the bourgeoisie. The menace to the Communist Party and to the labour movement in case of capture of power by the bourgeoisie was considered as great as before. No one in the Party thought of relaxing in the struggle against bourgeois parties, or of contemplating with equanimity their triumph over the peasants’ government. As a matter of fact, the C.C. after that plenum, repeatedly exhorted the Party to be prepared and to meet the anticipated *coup d’etat* with arms in their hands. **The resolution on the workers’ and peasants’ government, far from weakening the struggle of the party against the bourgeoisie,**

had furnished it with a new weapon and facilitated its task. Thus, while hitherto the Party, in case of armed resistance to a *coup d'état*, would have to lend its unequivocal support to the peasants' government that was hated by the masses of the workers, the slogan of the workers' and peasants' government, would enable the Party in future emergencies to call the masses to arms in the name of the new government which would be acceptable alike to the workers and to the poorer peasants.

At that moment a severe crisis had arisen in the Peasants' Party and government. In order to maintain power, Stambulisky was constrained to dissolve parliament and to carry out the elections on a new system. In the electoral campaign there was already a **peasants' opposition** in the field. Stambulisky launched at the same time a vigorous fight on the **autonomists** and on the *communists* which was a reward to the Entente for its concessions on reparation debts.

The C.C. plenum that was called after the elections (25th April, 1923) adopted a resolution in which it was stated: (1) that the "elections of the 22nd of April have further increased the firm determination of the workers and peasants who are fighting under the banner of the Communist Party, and the Party has emerged from this severe struggle more powerful than ever"; (2) that "these elections have accentuated the differences in the Peasants' Party between the rural bourgeoisie and the toiling peasantry, and accelerated the decomposition of that organisation"; (3) that after the defeat of the bourgeois party, "which once more demonstrated the fact of their losing the confidence of the people for ever, their efforts would be increased in the direction of the violent capture of power by the aid of illegal, fascist and other organisations." The resolution concluded as follows:—

"The Communist Party calls upon the toiling masses of city and village to be on their guard, and the moment that the old parties would attempt to seize power, and the urban and city bourgeoisie would provoke civil war in the country, the masses should continue and extend and wage their own decisive fight against the urban as well as the rural bourgeoisie, for the capture of power and for the establishment of the workers' and peasants' government."

What do the terms of this resolution mean? Firstly, they mean that in the eyes of the Party the danger of a white guard *coup d'état* had become more imminent after the elections than ever before; that the resisting force of the peasants' government, in spite of its victory in the election, had been considerably reduced, and that the drawing power

of the Communist Party for the poorer peasants of the Peasants' Party had been increased. The appeal of the Party plenum was meant as a **most earnest warning to the Party to be prepared for the exertion of extreme efforts and for the decisive fight in the very near future.** The Party, while modifying its position towards the peasants' government, had no grounds whatever to modify its attitude towards the eventual *coup d'etat* on the part of the bourgeoisie.

#### §IV.

### THE WHITE GUARD *COUP D'ETAT*.

On the 9th of June the *coup d'etat* was accomplished, taking by surprise both the government and the Communist Party. All the ministers and peasants' deputies who were at Sofia were imprisoned. The government offices were occupied, the gendarmerie and the police were disarmed, and a new government was formed. The same thing happened in the provinces. The political side of the *coup d'etat* had been prepared by "Naroden Sgovor" (National League), and its military side by the secret society "Kubrat."\*) All the bourgeois parties had taken a hand in the political preparations for the coup, including also the mensheviks. Its military forces were: the federation of reserve officers and non-commissioned officers, the junkers of the military school of Sofia, a majority of the officers in active service who dragged in the army with them, and the Macedonian detachments. After the accomplishment of the *coup d'etat*, civil detachments were also formed.

The peasants' government was overthrown in the course of a few hours, almost without resistance. Why? Because, as an organised force of the State, it was already completely decomposed. The majority of the rank officers were opposed to the peasants, while the minority of the officers who were loyal to the government, were at that time engaged in the pursuit of the autonomists in the Petritch district, and thus the garrison of the capital was entirely in the hands of the conspirators. Even the War Ministry was in the plot against the government. The Secret Service, thoroughly demoralised, was engaged in anything but the safeguarding of the government; it even had no knowledge of the preparations for the *coup d'etat*; the gendarmerie, supposedly made up of loyal

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\* So named after "Tsar Kubrat," one of the first chieftains of the Bulgarian tribes, who flourished in the 7th century on the territory between the rivers Don and Volga. Popular tradition ascribes to this Tsar Kubrat the initiative of uniting and welding the scattered Bulgarian tribes into a national entity. This title was evidently adopted by the secret military organisation as a *symbol* of unity for the various bourgeois parties.—*Translator's Note.*

adherents to the government, allowed itself to be disarmed without any resistance.

Nevertheless, the new government had to confront immediately the masses of the people and their political organisations: the peasants' party and the Communist Party. How did the masses react?

The urban masses, and even a part of the peasantry, met the fall of Stambulisky **without regret**, yet there is no doubt but that a **large majority of the urban and rural workers were greatly excited by the fact that the power had fallen once again into the hands of the bourgeois party**. It was not so much the fall of the peasants' government as the **capture of power** by the bourgeoisie that created favourable conditions to arouse the masses against the *coup d'etat*. Part of them were ready to fight for Stambulisky, others were in favour of a workers' and peasants' government, and there were others who had as yet no idea as to what the future government was to be; but they were all united in their hatred of the bourgeois plotters and were ready to take up arms against them. The mood of the masses was shown by the September events (1922), by the results of the popular plebiscite (November, 1922), and by the elections (April, 1923). These early indications were fully corroborated by subsequent facts. **Wherever the signal was given for revolt, and energetic leaders were found, the masses rose**. A careful study establishes the undisputable fact that the revolt broke out in nearly one-half of the districts of the country, and in some places (Plevna, Shuna, Pasardja, Karlovo, Provady, Tyrnovo, etc.), it assumed very big dimensions. That the revolt was popular also among the communistically inclined masses was shown by the example of the districts of Karlovo, Kasanlyk and Tyrnovo, and also of the town of Plevna.

Nevertheless, it must be observed that **objective causes** suffice to arouse the revolutionary sentiment of the masses, but the **conduct of the revolutionary parties** is of decisive moment in the further development of the revolt.

The Peasants' Party had been attacked directly in the person of its government, and it accepted the fight. But apart from the fact that its prestige had greatly diminished already before the *coup d'etat*, and that the majority of its leaders had been imprisoned, it was unable to carry out its independent revolutionary task for the reason that the peasants government had long since been trying to get away from its influence, relying chiefly upon its administrative machine. For these reasons the Peasants' Party was not in a position to unite, to organise and to lead the insurgent masses of the peasantry into a decisive fight.

On the other hand, the prestige of the Communist Party had been growing steadily, and its leaders were still at large. Its participation in the struggle would have been of tremendous importance. The Communist Party with its new slogan of the workers' and peasants' government, could have aroused the masses that were disappointed in the peasants' government, it could have united the **masses in the villages** with those of the towns, it would have **organised the struggle** and given it a reliable and strong leadership, political as well as military. On the other hand, its participation in the armed struggle would have demoralised the white guard camp and broken up their forces, it would have had its effect upon the behaviour of the army, gendarmerie, etc. In a word, the effect would have been tremendous; it would probably have changed the whole course of events.

The Party masses had been repeatedly warned and prepared for such an eventuality. Immediately after the *coup d'état* the Party committees awaited the word for action and started vigorous preparations. **Their measures met with perfect response not only among the masses of the Party, but also far and wide among the workers and peasants generally.** All statements to the contrary notwithstanding, the call for action was expected at any moment, as the natural and inevitable reply to the *coup d'état*. We have several concrete cases to convince us of the fact that the masses were ready to respond with great enthusiasm to the call of the Party. Firstly, Comrade Dvorianov, a member of parliament, believing that the Party had decided to take part, organised and led into action a whole regiment of peasants in the district of Karlovo; secondly, Comrade Sarraliev, also a member of parliament, took charge of the insurgent troops of his district, who had risen in a body, and offered heroic resistance to the white guards, laying down his own life in the fight; thirdly, in the town of Plevna, the whole working population rose to the sound of the curfew and occupied nearly the whole of the city, only to surrender it again at the behest of the Party committee of the town. These cases are sufficient indication of the mood among the Party masses throughout the country, except perhaps in the capital. The great majority of them would surely have risen and led the others with them.

But the C.C. of the Party did not launch the slogan for action. Already on the 9th June, i.e., before any news could have been obtained from the provinces as to how the masses had met the *coup d'état*, a manifesto was published in "Rabotnitcheski Vestnik," in which it was declared that "the Party will not take part in the armed fight between the urban

and the rural bourgeoisie." Furthermore, a secret order was sent to all the Party committees which contained a repetition of the aforesaid declaration, with a rider to the effect that "the Party has decided to take up an independent position: it advances its own slogans, first among which is the slogan of the workers' and peasants' government, and is preparing for the further development of events." Yet to the very end of the armed fight no new instructions were issued by the C.C.

What was the sense of these directives? What did the "independent position" of the Party consist of? It was adopted at a time when the "urban and rural bourgeoisie" was strenuously mobilising its forces and arming itself, striving to enlist the support of the masses whether voluntarily or by the use of force. The bourgeoisie organised a volunteer detachment while the Peasants' Party called upon its "orange" guards and carried out a general mobilisation and requisition of armaments. The policy of non-interference by the Party in the armed struggle between the urban and rural bourgeoisie, as announced by the C.C., was quite clear. It meant, firstly, that the Party members would join neither the troops of the new government ("urban bourgeoisie"), nor those of the Peasants' Party ("rural bourgeoisie") and secondly, that a similar agitation would be carried on among the masses at large. If so, what was the meaning of the resolution on the "independent position" of the Party, and on the "slogan of the workers' and peasants' government?" Did it imply an order for the mobilisation of the Party forces, for the seizure of the arsenals and the arming of the masses, for the formation of new detachments, in view of the imminent struggle for the workers' and peasants' government? Evidently not! Any act of this kind would mean interference in the struggle against the conspirators, *i.e.*, on the side of the "rural bourgeoisie," and this was categorically forbidden. In that case, what were the **concrete** instructions to the Party after the *coup d'etat*! Nobody could answer that question. The phrase about the Party's "preparations for the further development of events" was under those circumstances **nothing but a cloak for the inactivity of the Party at the very moment of the most intense activity on the part of its enemies.**

What was the effect produced by these directives? The masses, who were under communist influence, on learning about the position of the Party, did not rise and behaved as mere spectators during the whole course of the struggle, while those who had already risen began to retreat and to pay all the consequences of defeat. The soldiers who sympathised with the Party and expressed their readiness to declare them-

selves against the *coup d'etat* were marking time while fulfilling the commands of the white guards. The railway workers, including the communists among them, calmly continued to serve the *coup d'etat*. It was patent to everyone that the so-called **waiting** policy of the Party **facilitated** the task of the white guards in suppressing the popular revolt. Apparently, the conspirators took stock of the isolation of the Peasants' Party on the part of the communists, and for this reason they meted out all their ferocity upon the peasants while treating the communists with leniency. It was only after they were through with the peasants that they opened their front on the communists.

What were the **motives** which prompted the C.C. to adopt such a position?

Firstly, they argue that this position was in accord with the resolutions of the Party plenum, but that is not true. In its decision of April, 1922, the Party plenum declared categorically that it was the duty of the Party to participate in the fight against the *coup d'etat*. The Party knew of this decision and it adhered to it until the moment of the *coup d'etat*. On various occasions and at various places, at the first news of the approach of the *coup d'etat*, the Party organisations got themselves into fighting shape. This position of the Party was not repealed either by the conference nor by the subsequent meetings. It was only **modified** after the adoption of the slogan of the workers' and peasants' government. The above-quoted subsequent decision of the Party plenum of the 22nd of April, 1923, could have **only** one meaning to a revolutionary party, *viz.* : that in case of a *coup d'etat* if it should take the form of an armed conflict, the Party would enter into a decisive struggle in order to extend the struggle and lead it on to the creation of a workers' and peasants' government. But the decision of the C.C. that the Party would not participate in the **armed struggle** between the urban and rural bourgeoisie is in direct contradiction to this decision. What is meant by an **armed struggle** between the urban and rural bourgeoisie? It means, firstly, a division of the armed forces of the State and a struggle between them; secondly, a number of different bourgeois military organisations arrayed against each other, and thirdly, a forcible mobilisation of the masses of the people by the respective orders of the different parties in the struggle. And what does all this mean if not **civil war**? The fact that the C.C. describes all this as an armed struggle between the **urban and rural bourgeoisie** does not change anything in its substance. Similarly groundless are the other motives given by the C.C.

It is true that the peasants' government was hated by the

masses of the workers as well as by a considerable portion of the poorer peasantry; it is true that it had largely lost the confidence of the wide masses of the peasantry; it is true that also the slogan of the workers' and peasants' government, raised by the Communist Party only a few months before the *coup d'état*, had not yet been sufficiently popularised among the masses. *But the deduction made therefrom, that the masses would meet with equanimity the capture of power by the hated bourgeois parties, was absolutely wrong and contradicted the fundamental and unanimous appreciation of the situation, on which the tactics of the Communist Party were based.* Not only the workers, and the peasants who were disappointed in the Peasants' Party, but also the masses that remained loyal to the latter, could see nothing but grave danger in the establishment of the capitalist dictatorship. This danger united them, and it could serve as a **basis for their joint actions against the *coup d'état*.** The difference in their ultimate aims, and the insufficient popularity of the Communist slogan, could not paralyse their joint activity against the common foe. The dastardly seizure of power by the latter could have but one effect; it could only arouse the revolutionary spirit, but in no way could it reconcile them to the capitalist domination. Foreseeing this very effect that the *coup d'état* was bound to produce upon the peasants and workers, the Communist Party could not and should not have declared itself neutral in the armed fight against the *coup d'état*, on the plea that it was a struggle between the urban and rural bourgeoisie and that the Party's interference would **arrest the development of the struggle against the menace of the dictatorship of the urban and rural bourgeoisie**; on the plea that the hour had not yet struck for the fight for a workers' and peasants' government, it was wrong to check the fighting spirit of the masses in the struggle against the armed capitalist offensive, a struggle which could lead indeed to the formation of a workers' and peasants' government.

The C.C. was afraid that the communist masses might find themselves isolated in the armed struggle, and be defeated in consequence. Of course, there is never any guarantee of victory, but the struggle must still be waged, for without a struggle there can be no victory. Caution is by no means harmful, but was it caution on the part of a revolutionary party to refuse beforehand to participate in a struggle that could **indeed** be started, on the plea that it **probably** might not be started? We could understand it if the C.C. as a matter of caution and prudence, would not raise the slogan of the armed fight **at the first moment.** But if the C.C. thought that the situation might develop into an armed fight **the very next moment,** then it was its duty to order the

mobilisation and arming of the Party masses, or at least, not to taboo beforehand any participation in the armed struggle "between the urban and rural bourgeoisie." The C.C. should have watched the manner in which the peasants of the Peasants' Party and the wide masses of the toilers would react upon the *coup d'etat*, and without tabooing their participation in the struggle, it could very soon state its final position **not on the basis of various guesses, but on the basis of the actual state of affairs.** But the directions given by the C.C. meant nothing else but the **rejection of any action.** And so it was understood by the Party as a whole.

The C.C. defined the *coup d'etat* as a **military pronunciamiento** and it spurned the idea that it might lead to civil war. Was its definition correct, and did the events justify its prognosis? At least it was rather strange to define as a "military pronunciamiento" the victorious end of a prolonged and stubborn struggle that had been waged by the capitalist bourgeoisie to regain the power that it had lost some three or four years ago. The bourgeoisie had put all its forces into the struggle, it had united under one banner and succeeded in dividing its enemies, and thus it secured the victory. Its struggle was a wide **class** struggle, its victory is a big **class** victory. During the *coup d'etat* itself it mobilised all its militant forces as a **social class**, and the fact that it succeeded in gaining also the support of the armed forces of the **state** does not in the least transform it into a military adventure.

Thus, on the 9th of June, the bourgeois declared **civil war** upon all the toiling masses of Bulgaria. I have already mentioned that in answer to this there were grand outbreaks of revolt in no less than half of the districts, and that in a number of places the revolt assumed great proportions. Thus, the town of Shumen was besieged by ten to twelve thousand peasants, and a force of no less than six thousand people gathered in the neighbourhood of the town of Plevna. If the Party had given the call for action, there is no doubt but that Plevna would have been in the hands of the insurgents; the same may safely be asserted in regard to the towns of Varna and Plovdiv, while at Viden and Burgas, notwithstanding the inactivity of the communists, the bourgeoisie dared not take power for three days at a stretch. The wide extent of the insurrection is demonstrated also by the huge number of subsequent trials in the courts. Why should the significance of the facts be hushed up or minimised? In the interests of the revolutionary movement, they should be carefully gathered and diligently studied.

It is true that the movement was crushed in a compara-

tively short space of time. But this fact does not in the least justify the inactivity of the Communist Party. On the contrary, one cannot help wondering whether the non-intervention of the Communist Party did not to some extent contribute to the failure, if it was not the chief cause of the defeat of the movement.

The guilt of the peasants' government and party in the success of the *coup d'etat* is quite clear. The policy of the peasants' government had split the front of the toilers against the capitalist bourgeoisie by arraying the peasants against the workers, and even one section of the peasantry against the other. This constitutes the greatest, one may say the organic, sin of the peasants' government. Thanks to its stupid shortsightedness, it failed to wrest from the hands of the white guard officers the army that is made up entirely of peasants and workers. The peasants' government was dominated by the rural bourgeoisie, which not only took good care to disarm the workers, but distrusted even the rural masses and for this reason had left them practically without arms, while at the same time it took no steps for the disarmament of the urban bourgeoisie which it knew to be well armed.

Nevertheless, it is no use hushing up that part of responsibility which attaches to the Communist Party. No one can positively assert that the intervention of the Communist Party would have hindered the success of the *coup d'etat*. It is safe to say, however, that its tactics have made the victory easier for the white guards. Yet not in this was its mistake. Its mistake was, firstly, in the fact that at the most critical moment, when the enemy was attacking with all his forces, the Party continued to be influenced by the **splitting policy** of the peasants' government, and instead of issuing the call for **unity of the masses in the struggle**, it prevented from participation therein the most prepared and most determined section, the Communists; it did nothing for the **restoration of the United Front of the toilers** that had been split by the Peasants' Party, at a time when unity was the thing most needful to the masses, at the moment of the sudden assault by the bourgeoisie. Furthermore, its mistake was that at a moment when it **not only seemed** that the masses would rise, but when they **had actually risen, it hesitated to take up the struggle**, and thus it isolated itself from the fighters, to the great detriment of its prestige as the vanguard of the revolutionary movement.

In the next article I propose to deal with the September events.

V. KOLAROV.

(Translated by M. L. KORTCHMAR).

# JOHN MACLEAN

**I**N the midst of an election campaign, I read the announcement in the Press, "Death of John MacLean." I could scarcely credit the evidence of my eyesight. surely it couldn't be true! Just a week or so before, I had left Glasgow for Dundee, and at that time MacLean was holding meetings all over Glasgow. But then, that was the real make of the man. His body may be broken, his physical strength might fail, but the revolutionary spirit that inspired him kept him going no matter how great the obstacles were that opposed him.

During the past two years, his rigid revolutionary integrity brought him into bitter opposition with the official Labour movement, and as a result, many smug, self-satisfied successful Parliamentary representatives are inclined to refer to him with a sneer, more or less hidden in their voice, but I, who was through all the fighting on the Clyde, fighting that has made it possible for many of these men to score their electoral victories, know that no man played a bigger part in making Glasgow and its surroundings Red, than John MacLean. It is so easy for small men to step into the lime-light and make fervent protestations of abiding devotion to the workers' cause, when the workers' cause is popular, and offers splendid opportunities for political advancement: it is so easy to fulminate against the evils of Capitalism to the accompaniment of enthusiastic plaudits from assemblies of workers, but it is also easy, and oh! so convenient, to forget that the chains that bound these workers to the policy of their masters had to be smashed, and that the smashing wasn't easy. It was not a popular task; it was a task that meant calumny, abuse, and imprisonment, and all these MacLean faced, with dauntless courage and a never failing belief in the workers to whom he carried his message of revolutionary deliverance. I came into contact with MacLean when I entered the Socialist movement 18 years ago. I joined up in the Paisley branch of the Social-Democratic Federation. MacLean was at that time a dominating figure in the heart of Scotland and very early I came under his influence.

As a Marxian teacher he was second to none, and all the young men of the movement eagerly accepted his tuition.

Very early he recognised the fact that H. M. Hyndman was an English bourgeois gentleman masquerading as an Internationalist, and that his influence in the workers' movement was all towards bringing it in behind British Imperialism.

Throughout the movement he kept up a very energetic criticism of Hyndman, and assuredly succeeded in saving the movement in Scotland from being dragged into the maelstrom of 1914.

In the years prior to the war, he was an indefatigable worker in the Socialist movement. There never was his like in any section of the workers' movement in Britain. Every night in the week he was at it and from early morning till late at night on Sunday.

Economic and industrial history classes, demonstrations, meetings of all kinds: he never had to be asked twice to give assistance if he had an hour or half-an-hour to spare. A demonstration of five thousand or a small group of five, it made no difference to him, there was a chance to sow the seed, and he sowed it well; alas, that those who now gather the harvest give so little thought to the labourer who went before. But if his activities were surprising before the war, what can one say of him when war broke out in 1914?

Surely in no country in Europe was such a tornado of energy let loose. Never for a moment was he in doubt about the war or what it meant. With the first blast of the trumpets, he was on the streets.

"To hell with the war! If the Capitalists of Europe want to fight, let them do their own fighting. While they fight the workers must seize the opportunity to get power into their own hands and expropriate the expropriators." Night after night he was at it. Accompanied by a small group of loyal comrades he carried on a terrific anti-militarist, anti-capitalist campaign. The first attempt of the authorities to get after him was on a mere technical question for which he was tried and sentenced to five days' imprisonment.

Next he was dismissed from his position as a school-teacher. But this, so far from damping his ardour, gave him greater opportunities to express it. Now, not only was he out at night, but during the day he was around the great shipbuilding area of the Clyde, addressing meal-hour meetings, vigorously exposing the capitalist interests behind the war and calling to the workers to rise in revolt against those who had so long exploited them.

The great strike which broke out on the Clyde in February, 1915, was the determining factor which sent Glas-

gow Red, despite the frenzied efforts of the "Patriots" in the Labour movement to keep it loyal and the propaganda carried on by MacLean did much to create the spirit that made such a strike possible.

A few months later, the "rent strike" broke out and its rapid development forced the Government to pass a Bill prohibiting house-owners from raising the rents of the houses. The demonstrations held during this time were wonderful. Only in Petrograd could the working-class men and women turn out in the streets as they did during these days in Glasgow. Again, the outstanding figure was MacLean inspiring all who came into contact with him with his intense revolutionary fervour. At the beginning of 1916, the Government was preparing a Conscription Act. Before they could feel safe operating it there had to be a round-up on the Clyde. A number of us were arrested and held for trial for making seditious speeches, others were arrested and deported.

MacLean was the first to be attacked. Always he held the position of being the first man the authorities arrested when they feared trouble. At his trial, in April, 1916, he defended himself and the speech he made from the dock was published in pamphlet form and widely distributed throughout the country.

"I am not the accused," he said, "but the accuser. I accuse Capitalism. Capitalism, dripping with the blood of millions of workers." The mockery of a trial was carried through and MacLean was sentenced to three years' penal servitude. The next day several more of us were sentenced to 12 months' and that ended our interest in outside affairs for a time at least. When we got out there was a strong agitation for the release of MacLean going on throughout Scotland, with the result that he was liberated when he had served 15 months of his three years' sentence.

In 1918, when things looked pretty bad for the Allies, the British Government pushed through a man-power Bill, which enabled them to call up all kinds and conditions of people from 18 years of age and upwards.

They had great difficulty operating this, especially on the Clyde, and again they got after MacLean.

Once again, he had to go through the sham of a trial after which he was sentenced to five years' penal servitude.

During this period, he was appointed Bolshevik Consul for Glasgow, an honour which he considered greater than any other that could have been conferred on him.

Again an agitation for his release was set going and we succeeded in getting him released when he had served only seven months of his five years' sentence.

At the election in November, 1918, he stood as a candidate against the Labour traitor, Geo. N. Barnes, and polled over seven thousand votes. Barnes, of course, had the backing of the Tories, Liberals, Moderate Labourites and patriots of all schools.

During all this activity his classes weren't neglected. He started them in all parts of the country. In Glasgow he had a class of 400 that met every Sunday to study and discuss the application of the Marxian theory to the passing events of the time.

Only when he was in prison could he be separated from his class work, and then other faithful workers were there to carry on the work.

One of these, Comrade C. Dougal, could best write on this side of his work, and show how after much labour, he overcame obstacles that would have daunted most men, and securely laid the foundation of the Scottish Labour College. In 1921, he was once more in the hands of the police and sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment. All this imprisonment and the conditions under which he had to serve it, played havoc with his constitution. He needed a long rest, but the call of the revolutionary movement was always there. His spirit was too strong for his body, so we find him a few days before his death out on the streets in cold winter weather carrying the message of hope to the unemployed workers of Glasgow.

With his death there passes one of the greatest fighters the movement in this country has known. But he has left the movement a heritage that is worthy of the devotion he gave the cause.

Hundreds of young men, scattered throughout the country, in the colonies and America, heard the message from MacLean, were inspired by MacLean and now continue the work that death and death alone could force him to lay aside.

WM. GALLACHER.

# A New Phase of Capitalist Decline in Great Britain

**W**E are well into the fourth winter of the existence of the Communist Party of Great Britain, and the first ordinary Congress of the Party will be meeting in a few weeks after these lines have been put into print.\* The Congress will be faced with several big tasks, of which the most important will be a survey of our past successes and defeats, the summing-up of the lessons to be learnt from that survey, and the marking-out of the road along which the Party is to move during the next twelve months. Not attempting to cover all this ground in one article, it is still possible to find much food for thought in an analysis of the present situation of the British working class, economic and political. Such an analysis together with the study of Party organisation and policy in the past, will be essential for any tentative plan of work in the immediate future.

## §1. Capital and Labour.

*Coal, iron and steel output*, which, after the depression of 1920-1922, had begun very slowly to increase in the summer of 1922, and received a temporary impetus early in 1923, owing to the dislocation in industry on the Continent produced by the French occupation of the Ruhr, fell again in the summer. During the last three months a revival has set in, but it is too early to say whether or not this revival is purely seasonal, *i.e.*, part of the general quickening of economic life which always takes place on a world scale in the autumn, for general and more or less constant reasons. *Shipbuilding* has been steadily declining, as the quarterly statistics show, ever since 1920. The export of *cotton and woollen* goods—the principal index we have of the production of these commodities—has moved along much the same track as iron and steel. The index figure of *wholesale prices*, on which large sections of the capitalist class rely as on a barometer of their profits, reached 350 (compared with a 1914 level of 100) in April, 1920 (owing to speculation on an expected trade boom) and fell to 158 by January, owing to

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\* The Congress has now been postponed.—C.M.R.

the slump which actually supervened, accompanied by the attacks on wages, *i.e.*, purchasing power). It remained practically at this level all the year, and after a brief period of increase up to 164.9 in April, 1923, under the stimulus of the Ruhr situation, fell to 154.0 in September, and since then even further. The figures for *new capital investments* one of the best tests of whether the capitalist organism is expanding or contracting, show that money is being lent in decreasing quantities for industrial purposes, either at home or abroad, and that the only big increases are in the loans to foreign and colonial governments—mainly for the purpose of covering purchases of railway and similar material, *i.e.*, as a purely financial investment.

Finally, *foreign trade*, again a good index of capitalist health—particularly for Great Britain, which as a capitalist concern, lives by its commerce—showed practically no improvement all through 1922, remaining with a big adverse balance; and, although the Ruhr events have stimulated exports considerably in 1923, they did not prevent a heavy fall in exports this summer, and again, after a short seasonal revival, in November.

Thus capitalism, as a going concern, as a method of production and circulation, remains in a chronically unhealthy state, in spite of the immense efforts made during the last two years to re-establish "normal conditions" *i.e.*, to restore the comparative British supremacy of pre-war years, mainly at the expense of the working class. Those efforts took the form of concerted attacks upon *wages and working conditions* in 1921 and 1922; but the best sign that British capitalism is mortally sick is that it cannot give the workers a respite from attack, and permit them once again to acquire their former position as the privileged aristocracy of the world's proletariat. In 1923, the process of reducing wages has steadily continued. The artificial trade revival created by the Ruhr situation, with its victimisation of both German and French workers, has considerably slowed down that process. But none the less, the first 11 months of 1923 showed net reductions of £500,000 in the weekly wage of 3 million workpeople, while 1,200,000 others received increases amounting in the aggregate to barely £170,000 a week. Again, *unemployment* figures, which increased enormously, first in the unorganised trades, after demobilisation, and then in the organised trades from the end of 1920 to the end of 1921, began to fall slowly in 1922. This process was reversed the next winter (1,413,000 in October, 1922, 1,493,000 in January, 1923): but the Ruhr events more than made up the leeway, and by July 15, the total had fallen to 1,180,000. The sum-

mer and autumn saw a new increase (to 1,250,000), owing to the season; and only the coming of the Christmas season, with increased demand, produced a fall in December back to the July level. Figures of workers receiving *poor law relief* (1,281,000 at the end of September, of whom some two-thirds receive no other benefit) tell the same tale. So do the official "*cost of living index*" statistics, even if we neglect the possibility of their being "cooked" in a sense adverse to the workers. After falling more or less steadily (with short periods of improvement) ever since November, 1920, the index has been rising (since 1921) for the unprecedentedly long period of six months to date (169 in June, 177 in December).

What is the broad lesson a Communist must draw from a review of all these characteristic features of the modern economic process? It is that British capitalism has emphatically not recovered from the profound undermining and exhaustion it underwent during the war and post-war periods. At best it is precariously struggling along, barely keeping body and soul together. Neither as a means of production and circulation, nor as a source of livelihood for the masses, has it re-established its material effectiveness or moral prestige. After winning back some ground from the workers in 1921, all its efforts in 1922 and 1923 have ended in its finding itself in much the same condition in January, 1923 as it was in January, 1922.

The workers themselves are a living proof of the truth of this. In spite of the dreadful material losses they have undergone, in spite of the catastrophic fall in trade union membership: it was sufficient for a slight improvement in their material well-being to occur, towards the end of 1922, for them to rise with renewed vigour from the stupor and apathy into which they had been plunged by their colossal defeats and the gross treachery of their most trusted leaders. The slowing down in the fall of trade union membership (autumn, 1922); the big stride forward at the General Election of 1922; the acclamation given by the workers to the activity of the newly-elected "Glasgow group" and to Newbold, in Parliament; the mighty wave of minor strikes all over the country which began in the spring of 1923; the renewed attempts at large-scale strikes in a number of unions (agriculture, jute, iron and steel, etc.), culminating in the splendidly begun rank and file strike of the dockers in the summer, the mass rally to the call of "Hands Off Russia," during the ultimatum crisis in May, and the widespread response to the watchword of "Hands Off Workers' Germany", launched though it was by the Communist Party, in

October, the revival of national programmes and fighting policies in the largest unions (miners, railwaymen, dockers); even our own Party's successes in the application of the policy of the United Front, and the increase in circulation of our Party organ—all these symptoms showed unmistakably that the proletariat still has immense reserves of vigour and fighting spirit. Those reserves it has been putting forth all through 1923, in a manner uncertain neither for friend nor for foe, and probably equally unlooked for by both: until the rally came to a head in the results of the recent General Election.

## §2. The Political Situation.

The General Election was not an historical accident, nor was it an act of madness on the part of Baldwin. Its explanation is to be found quite definitely in the economic and political facts set forth above, and more particularly in the cleavage of interests between the industrial and landowning wings of the Conservative Party which became noticeable at the end of the spring of 1923.

The first striking evidence that the great industrialists were becoming uneasy at the continuing fall in commerce and industry, and at the failure of the much-promised and long-expected "trade boom," to materialise for any period longer than two or three months, made itself felt during the Anglo-Russian crisis in May. At the historic Parliamentary session of May 17, Sir Allan Smith, the chairman of the Engineering Employers' Federation Executive, and also of the "Industrial Group" in the House of Commons, spoke up boldly from the Unionist benches, demanding peace with Russia, and greater trade facilities. The hidden dissatisfaction with the whole European and international situation, which this sally reflected, found an open vent in a letter from Sir Allan to the Premier, published on July 26. In this letter the heartrending cry of the manufacturer, enraged at the loss of markets, the senseless French adventure in the economic heart of Europe, the refusal to take advantage of Russia's potential supplies of cheap food, was expressed in an analysis of the economic situation which many a Marxist might envy—even down to the bitter complaint that the trade unions were losing their utility as "the best safeguards against industrial unrest."

By this time, the Government, too, had been driven to take some active step, and, after a whole month's preliminary propaganda by Ministers, intended to show the direct connection between bad trade and the occupation of the Ruhr (July) a carefully-worded declaration appeared on August 2, hint-

ing that strong measures might have to be taken if France did not desist. On August 13, with a great flourish of trumpets, voluminous "full correspondence" with the Allies was published, as a further earnest of the Government's intention to meet the wishes of the industrialists. At the same time, the "Morning Post," the organ of the landowning aristocracy and finance-capital, was allowed vainly to lash itself into impotent frenzy, even going so far (August 10) as openly to appeal to the Party leaders for a declaration that Baldwin was betraying the Tory cause. The sudden swirling-up of the revolutionary wave in Germany, however, frightened the rebellious "industrial Left" into temporary silence.

Only temporarily: for some penances must be sought, and this it attempted to find in inflation. No clearer sign of the desperate conditions of capitalism in Great Britain could be wished for than the serious agitation carried on for many weeks in the summer and early autumn with this watchword, on the plea that inflation would enable British manufacturers to lower their prices on the foreign market, as Germany and France were doing, and thereby to stimulate production by creating a new demand abroad. Mr. McKenna, Sir Eric Geddes, and finally the Federation of British Industries itself (in a memorandum to the Government) took part in the agitation. Inflation, however, would have benefitted only the heavy industries (coal, metal, and metal manufactures, chemicals), whose raw material is derived from Britain itself: the textile industry, (which would have had to buy its raw material abroad with the depreciated pound), the food trades, and the financiers, all joined the Liberals and the Labour Party in their opposition; and nothing came of the whole project.

The Government, in its turn, had now to cast about again for some palliative, and in succession produced its schemes for public works in relief of the unemployed, and (at the Imperial Conference) for Colonial preference on foodstuffs. But the landowning aristocracy, which cares little for the woes of the manufacturer and the industrial worker, and less for their demand for cheap food, was the dominant partner in that coalition of interests which makes up the Tory Party; and this fact sealed the fate of both these palliatives. The £50,000,000 nominally granted for relief works, as the Liberals and Labour had no difficulty in showing, had no real existence. At best they were only "guaranteed," whereas what was required was actual expenditure. The Colonial preference would in effect put up the price of important foodstuffs, without giving the industrial magnates any substantial new markets in the colonies in exchange—for perhaps ten years, if not a whole generation. Both these schemes were

speedily discounted, and the Imperial Conference, in particular, dragged out its last days unnoticed, in the dull obscurity of the back pages of the newspapers.

When all these attempts to solve the riddle of capitalist collapse has failed, there only remained two alternatives. One was to go on as before, without any settled policy, throwing sops now here, now there, under the general control of the Diehards, to end in the certain crash of industrial conflict on a scale forgotten since 1920, and in a possible split in the Conservative ranks. This at the very best would have meant bankruptcy and discrediting of the Bonar Law and Baldwin policy, the slogan of "Tranquillity, Peace, Retrenchment and Reform," on which Lloyd George was overthrown in 1922. The other alternative was to rig the cards for a desperate gamble, in the form of a General Election. To have decided on the first course would have meant preparation for a dictatorship, for Fascism, for the class struggle in its most naked form. The second form was more attractive: and the Protection issue the best possible selection under the circumstances. For it did achieve one thing: it split the anti-Baldwin Tory faction, and consolidated the Conservative ranks, like a flash of lightning. Heavy industry, which a month before was seeking protection by inflation, now remembered its old traditions, and sought protection in tariffs: at once it found a common ground with the Diehard landlords and bankers, and the more far-sighted Sir Allan Smith, vainly protesting, was ruthlessly flung out into the outer darkness, deprived both of his Industrial Group and his seat in Parliament. Light industry was hesitant: its hesitancy was typified in the qualms of the 43 Unionist M.P.s' from the textile region of Lancashire: but, with some misgivings and reservations, they submitted.

Nevertheless, although the Conservative Party was kept in being, the manoeuvres failed, and Baldwin was defeated at the elections. Partly, no doubt, without hesitation, we can attribute it to the progressing crystallisation of class-consciousness in the ranks of the proletariat; but, much more it is due to the defection of the middle class, and particularly its lower strata, melting into the ranks of the best paid workers—the old labour aristocracy." There are many signs that point to this: the immense increase (from  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to 4 millions) in the vote of the Liberal party—the traditional middle-class party—as compared with the increase in the vote of the Labour Party from  $4\frac{1}{4}$  to  $4\frac{1}{2}$  millions): the fact that the Liberal increase took place in the textile and shipping centres, (cotton, woollens, engineering), and in London, (in several districts at the expense of Labour): the fact that a

large number of the new Labour victories were won in petit-bourgeois areas *e.g.*, in North London and the south and west of England). The increased votes of the most resolute Labour champions—in Glasgow, the proletarian districts of London, etc.—show that the working class is more *intensively* self-conscious than ever: but the maintenance of Birmingham as a stronghold of black reaction (to take, of course, only the most striking of many examples) shows that *extensively* the position compared with last year is almost unaltered. But the lower middle class, which has steadily been more and more proletarianised during the last five years by high prices and low salaries, was definitely terrified into a great class stampede by the spectre of still higher prices, and has thus found itself the arbiter of society.

This social rearrangement finds political expression in the key position held in Parliament by the Liberals: and the position of unstable equilibrium which prevails amongst the Parliamentary groups—and seems likely to prevail for some time—reflects to perfection that perpetual state of unstable equilibrium, hesitation, waxing and waning determination, to which the lower middle class is condemned by history, and which was so brilliantly pilloried by Marx in “*Revolution an Counter-Revolution in Germany.*”

### §3. Our Task.

Great Britain has thus definitely entered into one of those “pockets” in the general curve of capitalist decline which Trotsky and Varga foreshadowed at the Third Congress of the Communist International, in which the middle class for a brief period holds the balance of power, until either of the main protagonists in the class struggle is sufficiently strong to upset the temporary equilibrium, and to start the capitalist order once more upon its downward path. Whether we have a short-lived Labour Government, or a voting alliance of Liberals and Labour, or a Liberal ministry supported by the Conservatives, it is the middle class whose favours are being courted on one side and being offered (at a price) to the other—so equally are bourgeois and the proletariat balanced in social power (reflected in the vote).

Our task, the task of the proletarian vanguard in the Communist Party, is to bring about, as rapidly as possible, the upsetting of that equilibrium; no matter by which side, provided that the working class is organised, class conscious, and ready to fight. Hence our demand, formulated in our election manifesto and our subsequent open letter to the Labour Party Executive, for a Labour Government with a class programme of immediate demands—demands which are

not opportunist stop-gaps, but inroads upon the capitalist right of private property, and therefore the best practical education for the workers in the art of victory over capitalist private property altogether. Hence also our demand that the Labour Party should take power at the first opportunity, without asking for Liberal support, even if it retains power only just long enough to publish broadcast its workers' programme, even if the sequel is not a new election (as some optimists think), but a re-shuffle of Party alliances in Parliament, and a Liberal-Conservative bloc. Until the working class as a whole is ready and able to move forward *outside* Parliament, and to upset the unstable social equilibrium *outside* Parliament, the fact that the middle class asserts its fleeting strength by throwing out our Parliamentary Cabinet is of minor importance. What is of importance is that the workers, first, should feel, even for a moment, what it is like to have a Government they call their own, and what it can do; secondly, that they should be rallied as never before by a programme of demands which answer to their most deep-seated and hardly-borne sufferings and burdens.

Nevertheless, our task does not stop here. If that huge mass, the twenty million wage-earners of Great Britain, are to go forward at last, they can and must go forward only under our leadership.

This again involves careful preparation on our part. So far we lack that essential statement of the goal to which we hope to lead the masses which can only be supplied by a Party programme. Even the programme of transitional demands which we are pressing on the Labour Party, although it is of more immediate interest because it answers the most immediate needs of the workers, will only be a revolutionary programme in so far as it constitutes part of and harmonises with a general Party programme, based on an analysis of the relations between the classes and the principles of Marxism. The transitional demands will open the door to the revolution: but they will require to be amended, amplified, progressively developed: and the direction of their development, the degree of their modification, will only be true when the Party has before it a general programme containing more than the immediate issues of to-day and to-morrow. The elaboration of such a programme, up to a certain point, will be the work of the next world Congress: but to take part in the discussions effectively, and to ensure that our programme will contain the necessary special treatment of British conditions, it is absolutely imperative that the British Party go forward to the World Congress with its own draft. An important responsibility will consequently lie upon the coming

Congress of the British Party, which will have before it a draft programme prepared by the Central Committee.

Further, to be effective our leadership must be expressed, not merely in programmes, but at every turn of the workers' lives. This imposes upon us the necessity of developing our work in the trade unions, trades' councils, and the workmen's clubs and co-operatives, the local authorities. But there is a problem, which has been hitherto untouched, although in reality, if we solve this problem, we solve all the others. That is the problem of forming our Party nuclei in the factories, workshops, and other places of employment. Not until our Party has changed its orientation in this respect, has reconstructed itself on a basis of *factory nuclei*, units of production, as the basic unit of the Party, instead of the present area groups or purely territorial units, shall we be able like the Russian Party in the past, like the German and American parties at the present time, at will to bore into the trade unions and trades councils, to throw up new rank and file organisations, to go underground if required. Only then shall we solve the problem of circulation for our Party organ, the "Workers' Weekly"—by bringing the Party membership into constant contact with the masses, instead of exhausting all their available energies in an attempt to *chase* the masses from door to door, and thus transforming the Communist Party outside the centre into an organisation of literature sellers. Only then will our members have time to spare for recruiting, training and discussion, as well as for thinking out and executing plans of work in the various branches of the working class movement.

The reconstruction implied, unlike the reconstructions through which the Party had to go in the first years of its existence, when it was welding together the various organisations out of which it arose in 1920, will not involve the recasting of all our painfully-constructed national and district machinery. Of its very nature, it can be carried out only by each local organisation itself, after careful consideration of the local situation, and the role of the centre will resolve itself into giving general guidance, on the basis of the sifted experience of all other localities and other parties. Corresponding to this change in organisation and orientation of the local Party organisation, the "Workers' Life" section of our Party organ would have to be changed correspondingly, and devote more of its space to workshop letters; which in turn must necessarily have its reflection upon the other sections of the paper.

One point is clear, and it has recently been reinforced by Comrade Pieck ("Pravda," December 16, 1923). This

change is not merely *one of organisation*, and of outward forms. It is a change in the spirit, the *class orientation* of the Party which, as already suggested, must affect every phase of its activity. The reason for this is not far to seek. The old political parties of the working class, modelled as they were upon the Chartist and even definitely bourgeois organisations, and based upon the principle of universal suffrage, were largely electoral organisations, and dealt with the worker as a voter (householder or lodger), not as a unit of the class struggle. The new political party of the workers—the Communist Party—has as its principal object the equipment and leadership of the workers in the class war, in which the electoral struggle falls into a subordinate and auxiliary part, while the daily struggles of the worker at the place of daily employment, where he meets the capitalist system in its most direct form acquire correspondingly predominant and supremely important part. In Russia, Lenin drove this home twenty-five years ago, as his published works testify: and the very objective conditions of illegality forced the Belshevik Party to learn the lesson, and build up its organisation on the foundation of the workshop nucleus. In 1920, the young American Party learnt the same lesson when it was forced underground, and its legal successor, the Workers' Party, has profited by it. In 1921, when the German Party had had its first prolonged experience of illegality, it attempted a compromise between the old and the new systems, combining its "tens" or area groups with a system of factory organisation. The new pressure brought to bear upon our German comrades in 1923, the approach of the final revolutionary dénouement, has revealed the futility of such a compromise: and the whole Party is being reconstructed with the factory nucleus as the primary cell of its organism.

The Communist Party of Great Britain, working in a Labour movement of unparalleled prestige and unequalled strength, and at a time of simultaneous capitalist decline, has an opportunity which no other party has had of profiting by the experience of its brother parties in other countries, and of anticipating the inevitable time when it will be driven willy-nilly to rebuild its apparatus in the very heart of the working class. No plan of work for the next year which the forthcoming Party Congress might lay down would be complete unless it gave the very first place to this most fundamental task of any party of the proletarian revolution, during a period of "peaceful opportunities" and "unstable equilibrium." There are other fields of work calling for our Party's attention—the trade unions, the trades councils, the British

colonies, the soldiers and sailors—but even these should yield precedence to the question of factory nuclei.

And, still more, quite apart from our special tasks in Great Britain, it is high time for the Communist International itself to consider this vital problem, which follows directly from the historic "Theses on the Role of the Communist Party in the Proletarian Revolution," adopted at the Second World Congress, but which deserves reviewing and special attention in the light of the experience of the last three years. In this respect the World Congress can do what would be too big an undertaking for the National congresses of individual sections: namely, to sum up the experience of the Russian Party during a whole generation, reinforced and justified by the experience of the last few years, and, as Lenin said, to translate the Theses of 1920 into the languages of Western Europe. Coming at a time when not only in Britain, but also throughout Europe and America, many countries appear to be on the verge of entering the period of "Left bloc" and unstable equilibrium, an analysis and a decision of this kind by the World Congress would mean an important step forward towards our goal, not only in the British Isles, but wherever capitalism and Labour are struggling for the mastery.

C. M. ROEBUCK.



# The British Labour Government & the C.P.G.B.

*Resolution of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, February 6th, 1924.*

**T**HE fact that the British Labour Party has formed a government is an event of the greatest importance. It shows the awakening of ever-increasing masses of workers to class consciousness, and the recognition by them of the fact that both capitalist parties are only representatives of the class interests of the property holding and exploiting minority. At the same time the policy of the Labour Government in England is the touchstone in the eyes of the working masses of the world, and of the peoples of the East as to the soundness of the principles of the Second International with regard to the road to Socialism. Therefore, the attitude of the Communist International and the Communist Party of Great Britain towards the policy of the Labour Government is of first-class importance for the development of the Communist movement. This attitude is determined by the following basic facts.

I. The Labour Government is a result of the economic and political dissolution of Britain as a consequence of the most severe shocks and burdens of the world-war. The fact that the Labour Party at the elections managed to obtain four million votes is not the result of the determined, energetic and persistent efforts of the Party to free the working class from the influence of the bourgeoisie. The mere fact that the Labour Party possesses but a single newspaper to serve the needs of the whole British proletariat shows that no such efforts were made by the Labour Party. It proves how little it succeeded in awakening the spirit of sacrifice in the working masses in the fight against the bourgeoisie. The Labour Party would not and could not oppose energetically and clearly the class interests of the bourgeoisie by the interests of the working class. A very large section of the working class still follows the Liberal and the Conservatives, and the Labour Party itself, as represented by its leaders, represents more a kind of a bourgeois faction than a Party of the proletarian class struggle. It took over the government as a party representing the minority of the population, partly with the approval of the bourgeois parties, and

partly owing to the lack of unity in the ranks of the bourgeoisie and the inability of the latter to overcome this lack of unity in the presence of the great problems and difficulties left by the war.

II. Everybody in the Communist International knows that the working class cannot free itself from economic slavery and the political yoke without defeating the bourgeoisie in revolutionary fight, without smashing the machinery of the bourgeois state and setting up its own state machinery based upon the mass organisations of the proletariat. This fact alone is sufficient reason for the Communist Party of Great Britain to entertain no hope that the British working class can secure its emancipation as the fruit of a victory at the polls, and of the parliamentary policy of the Labour Party. But such democratic illusions are still entertained by the majority of the British working class especially because the leaders of the Labour Party were spreading them among the masses. Now the régime of the Labour Government is making it possible for the British working class to test bourgeois democracy by experience.

The Labour Government is no government of proletarian class struggle, but on the contrary it strives to strengthen the structure of the bourgeois state by reforms and by class peace—as a substitute for class war. Still, it is to a certain degree dependent upon the working class and its class interests. If, as we do not expect, it should become possible to drive the Labour Government by proletarian class movements into a fight with capitalism, it would render the internal crisis in England extremely acute. But if, as is to be expected, the Labour Government betrays the interests of the proletariat, it will thus offer the best object lesson to the proletariat, enabling it to free itself from the illusions of capitalist democracy and will thereby accelerate the revolutionising of the working class.

The very composition of the Labour Government, consisting as it does of a bloc of Right wing Labour parliamentarians, trade union bureaucrats, radical intellectuals and even pseudo-radical representatives of the old state bureaucracy, leaves not the least hope that the Labour Party will pursue a fighting policy. On the contrary, it is to be feared that they will adopt a policy of compromise with the enemies of the working class, with Lloyd George and Asquith, and that their chief endeavour will be to find favour with these leaders of capitalism and to form a bloc with them against the working class.

In view of this danger it is the duty of the Communist Party to do everything in its power to secure the following :

(a) The wide masses of the British proletariat must be mobilised to exert pressure upon the Labour Government and the Labour Party in order to induce them to take up earnestly the fight against the capitalist class ;

(b) In this connection the majority of the working class must be assisted in convincing itself by experience of the utter unworthiness of the Labour leaders, of their petty-bourgeois and treacherous nature, and of the inevitability of their bankruptcy.

For this purpose the Communist Party of Great Britain has the following immediate tasks to fulfil.

1. The Communist Party should at once enter on a widespread campaign, both for the promises made by the Labour leaders as well as for other immediate slogans calculated to mobilise the class conscious section of the working class for common action. These slogans, which should be simple, clear and expressive of the most pressing demands of the revolutionary workers, should be declared in a *programme of action* of the Communist Party.

On the basis of such a programme, the British Communist Party must induce the working class to demand from the government a determined bold policy in defence of the interests of the working masses of Great Britain as well as of the interests of the peoples oppressed by British Imperialism, including the people of Ireland. Especially must it be demanded—without regard to the fact that the Government might be overthrown by a parliamentary bloc of the two capitalist fractions, the Liberals and Conservatives—that the Labour Government takes a stand for the following :—

(a) In connection with the struggle against unemployment, the government must adopt effective measures for taxing the capitalists as well as for introducing state and workers' control of factories which have been closed by the capitalists ;

(b) The government must take the initiative in the nationalisation of the railways and mines to the participation of the management of which the workers' organisations must be called ;

(c) The government must adopt energetic measures for emancipation of the workers and peasants of Ireland, India and Egypt from the yoke of British imperialism ;

(d) The government must lead in the struggle

against the danger of war in Europe, and for the conclusion of an alliance with the Union of Soviet Republics;

(e) The Labour Party must take advantage of these measures of its government in order to arouse new sections of the British proletariat and of the workers and peasants of the east(?) and to make them rise for the struggle against the British bourgeoisie.

It should further be demanded that even if the bourgeoisie cliques in Parliament should unite and overthrow the Labour Government, the Labour Party should then come forward at the elections as the defender and leader of the working class, in order to arouse the slumbering forces of the British proletariat and thus prepare them for future victory.

2. The Communist Party must maintain its ideological, tactical and organisational independence, and carry on energetic propaganda on behalf of its principle, established by history, with regard to the revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat being the only safe means to the emancipation of the working class.

The Communist Party should address itself with its slogans to all groups and organisations of the working class which are demanding from the Labour Government a determined fight against the bourgeoisie. It must propose the summoning of joint meetings, the holding of joint demonstrations, the sending of joint delegations, and so forth. The Party must endeavour to come to agreements for such and other *common action* with the "Left" political organisations, as well as with the local organisations of the Labour Party.

The Communist Party of Great Britain must remember that the objective conditions for its development into an influential revolutionary mass party are now presenting themselves. Therefore, it must do all in its power to have its organisation strike deep roots in the revolutionary masses of workers and especially in the productive plants.

*Executive Committee of the  
Communist International.*

Moscow, February 6, 1924.

# America and the Rehabilitation of Europe

**O**N October 23, 1923, in the midst of a lengthy discourse on the international situation, at the Imperial Conference in London, General Smuts made the significant remark that steps had already been undertaken to convoke an international conference to adjust the Reparation question, and that America had been approached on the subject. The same evening, Ambassador Harvey declared that "America is ready to help." On October 25th, the State Department of the United States published a Note from Lord Curzon, asking if the United States was willing to participate in an inquiry into the Reparation question. Hughes in reply affirmed "the deep interest of the United States in the economic situation of Europe, and its readiness to aid in any practicable way to promote recuperation and a re-establishment of economic stability." He stated that "present conditions make it imperative that a suitable financial plan should be evolved to prevent economic disaster in Europe, the consequences of which would be world-wide."

In accepting the invitation and pointing out the nature and scope of the projected conference, Hughes added, that the "Secretary of State notes the observation in the communication of His Majesty's Government that the European problem is of direct and vital interest to the United States, if for no other reason than that the question of inter-Allied debt is involved therein. The Government of the United States has consistently maintained the essential difference between the question of Germany's capacity to pay and of the practical methods to secure Reparation payments from Germany, and the payment by the Allies of their debts to the United States, which constitute distinct obligations."

On December 29, 1922, Hughes stated the policy of the Harding Administration, a policy that has been assumed as the official expression of the Coolidge regime. Among other recommendations, he made the following: that "men of the highest authority in finance in their respective countries—men of such prestige and experience, and honour that their

agreement upon the amount to be paid, and upon a financial plan for working out the payments, would be accepted throughout the world as the most authoritative expression obtainable. Governments need not bind themselves in advance to accept the recommendations, but they can at least make possible such an inquiry with their approval, and free the men who may represent their country in such a commission from any responsibility of Foreign Offices and from any duty to obey political instructions . . . I have no doubt that distinguished Americans would be willing to serve in such a commission."

The acceptance of the proposal by Poincaré, but with certain reservations, nearly wrecked the idea of a conference. Poincaré insisted that the commission should have no right to reduce the total Reparations bill against Germany of 132,000,000,000 gold marks; that it must adhere strictly to the letter and spirit of the Versailles Treaty, and that it must not call into question Allied seizure of German pledges. These restrictions would have rendered the commission impotent, and its work useless. After some negotiations, France yielded, and a Reparation conference was assured.

This is not the first time that America has participated in a Reparation commission on the European question. What is the reason, however, that just at this juncture, America realises the importance of co-operation in finding ways and means of settling the European problem, despite the continuous refusal to co-operate organically in the League of Nations and the World Court, which is at present an issue in the United States?

Hughes stated quite clearly that Europe faces economic disaster, "the consequence of which would be world-wide." The United States is feeling the consequence of this situation and realises that immediate steps alone will avert a collapse. The steady decline of industry during the latter half of 1923 and the exhaustion of the markets that American finance and industry has exploited during the past four years, force American capitalism to return to Europe, which is the most profitable field that it has found in the past two decades. The collapse of Germany in itself would be a serious blow to American commerce, the resultant reaction upon France and England would be mortal and would produce a chaotic condition which would challenge the stability of the capitalist world. Furthermore, the encroachments of France in the Ruhr and the Rhineland, the practical separation of Bavaria from the German State, the menacing power of the Nationalists, the disintegration of the Social-Democratic Party as

the last support of the German government among the workers, and finally the growing power of the Communist Party have sounded a danger signal which Washington is heeding.

Since the war, America has been in an anomalous position regarding the European situation. It was Wilson who laid down the notorious "Fourteen Points" on which peace was to be established. The fourteen points went the way of all good intentions, and peace or a sham-peace was ratified, which to-day threatens the world with more wars. The Versailles Treaty, work of Mr. Wilson, Mr. Lloyd George and M. Clemenceau, awarded mandates and protectorates to the European Big Powers, upon which American financial, industrial circles have frowned. But America had decided not to become "entangled" in European political intrigues and therefore paid the penalty of "splendid isolation." The Versailles Treaty was not ratified by the United States Senate who repudiated Wilson, declared a state of peace with Germany, and made a treaty with her that guaranteed "all the rights and privileges granted by the Versailles Treaty, but imposed no obligations."

In 1919, the attitude of all Europe and of America to the Russian-Polish war was one of fear and apprehension. Germany was a republic, and had at its head a Social-Democrat. The workers of Germany were suffering every sort of repression at the hands of the Social-Democratic government and were beginning to listen to the arguments of the more radical elements, especially the Spartacus Group. The capitalist world had had its experience with the Russian Revolution, and accepted the words of the German Social-Democrats, that they were the "best bulwark of Western Europe against Bolshevism." The Russian-Polish war was a warning. Would the Red Armies be victorious over Poland and pour into Germany, thus putting an end to the grand dream of Indemnity and Reparations? Then not only would these dreams be shattered, but the twilight of European capitalism would be near.

America was not the least apprehensive of the nations: even though she asked for and received no mandates or protectorates, and though, presumably she would also demand no Reparations, she insisted upon all the "privileges and rights" without any of the obligations." *These "privileges and rights" were asserted at all the subsequent conferences at which America had no official representative, but an "observer" who, at times, as at Lausanne, spoke officially*

for his government and practically presented ultimatums when the proceedings did not suit his fancy of American finance.

The Disarmament Conference in Washington in November, 1921, is not to be dissociated from the various international conferences dealing with European affairs. It merely dealt with a phase of the Versailles Peace Conference, which could not be settled there, and which was not settled in Washington. Although Germany was "out of the running," the strength of the imperialist powers was being challenged by the United States Government. The purpose of the plan was a new constellation of powers, taking the preponderance out of the hands of Great Britain and lowering France to a second-rate naval power. From a military standpoint, Germany was rendered impotent by the Versailles Treaty and yet France was raging up and down Europe, trumpeting the menace of German militarism and a war of revenge. In 1921, France had nearly 200,000 more men under arms than in 1914, despite the elimination of her "inveterate enemy." The Washington Conference ended in a farce.

The economic situation in the United States in 1921 was very serious. Prosperity had come to a sudden end, and tremendous unemployment ensued. There was a big surplus of wheat and cotton, which could not be disposed of. The farmers were beginning to grumble; their debts and mortgages were piling up to fabulous figures and there was no outlook of an improvement. In 1920, the exports amounted to more than 8,000,000,000 dollars of which amount 4,120,000,000 represented agricultural commodities in a raw state or semi-finished form. Of the agricultural exports, four products made up more than 80 per cent.: cotton to the value of 1,538,000,000; breadstuffs to the extent of 1,078,000,000 dollars; animals and animal products to the amount of 481,000,000 dollars, and tobacco to the amount of 290,000,000 dollars. In 1920, owing to the continued depression in the European market the exports dropped from 4,863,000,000 to 3,408,000,000 dollars, of which more than 2,800,000,000 came from the farms and fields of America. In the fiscal year ending June 30, 1922, the exports of Europe decreased to 2,067,000,000 dollars, the greater part of which consisted of agricultural produce. Before the war, Germany was one of the main buyers of American farm produce. Hence the economic and political situation of Germany, which reacted upon all the European countries, had a most damaging effect on American agriculture and industry.

Germany, on the other hand, realising her straitened position, and fearing that its continuance would result in a breakdown, appealed to the United States Government to present Reparation proposals to the Allies, believing that the intercession of the United States would be helpful. Hughes rejected the German proposals, on the plea that "they would be unacceptable to the Allies."

It is obvious, however, that America was greatly interested in a settlement of the German question, for diminished trade and the accumulation of gold made it necessary to find foreign fields of investment and foreign markets. The year 1921 was a sore test for the United States, and only the possession of savings and the lack of organisation of the workers prevented serious trouble in the country. The attitude of France, her blocking of an adjustment of the question was beginning to play on the nerves of American finance. France demanded security and Reparations: "Unless these two demands are recognised, France will block all Anglo-American attempts to solve the European mess to our own profit, and to the utter neglect of French interests," wrote an American correspondent.

America had another interest in the European situation. There were the war debts, amounting to more than 11,000,000,000 dollars, with none of the European debtors thinking of paying them or making an arrangement. England had consistently carried on a propaganda for a cancellation of the debts, contending that the Allies had borne the greater burden of the war and that the United States had profited before and during the war by the raised production. These arguments did not enhance the popularity of England in the United States. The American public and particularly the investor declared that without the aid of American arms and money the Allies would have lost the war; hence there could be no thought of cancelling the debts. France completely ignored the question, being interested in but one matter: the securing of Reparations, and insisting on taking any steps necessary to procure payment.

The Genoa Conference came in 1922, and interests us here only in so far as the making of a treaty between Germany and Soviet Russia at Rapallo aroused American financiers. Rumours went the round of the Conference that oil concessions had been granted to German investors, which antagonised the American delegate. This was intolerable, and would only "injure both Germany and Soviet Russia" in the eyes of the capitalist world.

In the early part of 1922, W. P. G. Harding, of the Federal Reserve Board, and Paul Warburg, the well-known Wall Street banker, made the proposal that America and England grant a large loan to Europe, meaning Germany. President Harding in May of the same year, in answer to Morgan, stated that he would favour a loan "provided only that security could be furnished for a large loan." He feared that the loan subscribed would be used for the Reparations claims, so that the United States actually would be paying the Reparations claims of France, Belgium and England.

An international Bankers' Conference was called in Paris on May 23, 1923, at which Morgan presided. The proceedings of the Conference were kept secret, in order not to "embarrass the statesmen." Morgan soon made it clear that "the idea so prevalent in America that *you can consider Europe's economic troubles in a conference of business men with politicians locked out is a dream.*" He recognised that the loan would be used in great part for Reparation payments, and that the nations, which were interested in Reparations would not allow America to put any restriction upon the use of the loan.

The Bankers' Conference met and soon met stumbling blocks. It was ready to furnish a loan—*which was to come chiefly from America*—provided France was ready to reduce the indemnity. But Poincaré refused to reduce the indemnity, and made it clear that he would not tolerate any interference in the political action of France. In fact, it was the recognition of this fact that finally led to the termination of the Conference, which accomplished nothing. At this time, as before, France was openly working for the dismemberment of the German state. As "L'Action Francaise," stated, it is "the destruction of Germany that we want." This was equally dangerous to England and America, and was an intention that would not be brooked either by American finance or by the American government whom Morgan "unofficially" represented.

During the year 1922, trade in the United States improved. South American and East Asiatic markets were being exploited to the limit. But the capacity of industry was not exhausted by these markets. The gold reserves became burdensome. There was much liquid capital looking for investment. American manufacturers perceived that if the European market were not restored, permanent prosperity for American industry was endangered.

The occupation of the Ruhr caused great anxiety in

America. Not only that the American government saw through the scheme of Poincaré, who was frank in his aim to destroy the German state, but more particularly because the union of German coal and French iron was a fearful menace to American steel production. By the acquirement of Lothringen, France came into possession of such quantities of iron ore—*which are the most important in the world*—that she now controls 53 per cent. of all iron resources. Her production of iron ore is 40 per cent. of the total European production, against 7 per cent. of the coal production. It was obvious that France wished to secure for all time and against every contingency the possession of sufficient coal to handle her tremendous ore deposits. The ruthless occupation of the Ruhr, which England could not oppose, aroused America. France was operating on a cynical, fixed plan. It was necessary to reduce the German government to such a position that either she would endeavour to keep her pledges by securing aid from abroad, or by default be forced to surrender more territory "until such time as her pledges were kept."

Such machinations were against the interests of America and England. When Stinnes endeavoured to bring the German mark to such a low level that he would be able to overthrow the regime and put through his own demands, it was in the interest of the German Government to stabilise the exchange. The German mark plunged to the bottom: disaster stared the German Government in the face. The German financiers were negotiating privately with the French Government and selling out the country. This meant either more complete domination of French imperialism or a combination of French and German capitalists. America could not regard these manipulations with equanimity. Harriman furnished millions of dollars to the German government to aid in stabilising the exchange. At the same time, Morgan helped the French government to support the franc, which was following the same course. Nothing availed in Germany: the mark continued to fall, till conditions became chaotic.

The German masses, in the meantime, were beginning to rebel. Hunger was stalking the streets. Unemployment became rampant. Clashes with the police, political demonstrations and isolated uprisings were becoming the order of the day. There was little outlook for the restoration of Germany as a producer and as a consumer of the growing surplus of American industry.

It was not perfectly clear what form the intervention of America would take. Morgan, Stinnes and Schneider of

France form a concern that is exploiting all Europe, through Austria, Czecho-Slovakia, Denmark, Italy, Spain, Turkey, Yugo-Slavia, and Rumania. Rockfeller, Krupp, Wolff and Loucheur are carrying out similar actions in the same countries. Would the competing American banking houses operate through their German partners for the control of Germany, or would America independently seek to secure control?

The British war debt settlement eliminated a serious element in bringing about an adjustment of the German problem. England has been reduced to a secondary world position through the brutal aggressiveness of Poincaré. She is too weak to oppose his plans and can only utter impotent complaints and objections. The antagonism of the United States, and the continued rivalry made it impossible for any joint action between America and England to take place.

England continued to ask for a cancellation of the war debts, framing every species of moral argument. But American finance and the American Congress remained adamant. The American public is not prepared to make this sacrifice for the European governments. To have asked it for France would be to question the intelligence of the American people. They objected strenuously to France maintaining a tremendous military establishment, and refusing even to consider the war debt. They could not moralise between the "reasonable" position of England and the "impossible" point of view of France. It was a master stroke of financial operation for Morgan, the patriot and the eternal friend of Great Britain, when he brought about a settlement of the British War Debt. As a consequence, America and England—though still enemies and rivals, are brought closer together in the German problem, and can exert more pressure in neutralising French aims.

The occupation of a larger area in the Ruhr and Rhineland, and finally the separation of the Rhineland, the Palatinate and Bavaria, has thrown a panic into the American government. The most productive sections of the German state are being cut off and are surrendering completely to French influence. There is danger not only that no Reparations will be paid—but also that the American claim of 250,000,000 dollars for the maintenance of the American troops on the Rhine, and of 500,000,000 dollars in other claims (the Lusitania, etc.,) may never be paid. Are the separated states to assume their share of the debt, or is it all to rest on the original German state? The future of American commerce also is jeopardised, for the most fertile market

is being dismembered and handed over to various influences. It was clear that in this situation, a call from England could not remain unheeded in America.

This became all the more essential since the economic boom has burst in the United States. The restitution of the Europeans—as well as the German—market, upon which all Europe depends directly and indirectly, has become the critical question of the hour. Four billion dollars in gold lie in American vaults. A vast surplus of foodstuffs and steel products lie in American storehouses. The tremendous economic and political conquests that America has made since the war do not suffice. *Europe must be cleaned up.*

In November, 1922, Clemenceau made a propaganda tour of the United States, to create a sentiment in favour of France. This would not have been such a difficult task, for despite the disgust with the militaristic bravado of France, there is considerable respect for the military prowess of French arms. The patriotic organisations, the American Legion, etc., still applaud France, but Wall Street understands the weight of French competition, especially since France has acquired such a powerful point of vantage in European economy. Hence the sabre-rattling of Clemenceau who was introduced by Wall Street bankers, met with little response. Clemenceau did France a poor service by his trip.

Lloyd George's trip in October, 1923, had a quite different effect. Through his persiflage and flippant eloquence, he brought the two rivals, America and Great Britain, closer together, merely sealing what Morgan and Baldwin had agreed. America and England will act conjointly in off-setting the power that France has gained not only over Germany, but the rest of Europe.

The settlement of the French war debt is not such a simple matter. The United States Congress insists upon some settlement being made and is in no mind either to cancel or reduce it; America, however, is in no position to force a settlement. The situation in Germany has become precarious not only owing to the disintegration of the government and the internal fight between the various capitalist and Junker groups, but to the rising rebelliousness of the German masses. Sold out by the German Social-Democracy, the masses have been driven to despair by the merciless exploitation of the German bourgeoisie. The breaking point is now approaching: it will be a fight against the German exploiters and their traitor-helpers, the Social-Democrats, and French im-

perialism. The French budget is being kept up artificially, supported on the hope of Reparations or productive pledges from the Ruhr, Rhineland, etc. The franc has sunk to a dangerous figure on the international exchange so that French finance is endangered. On December 19, 1923, the franc, nominally worth 19.30 cents was quoted at 5.18 cents. The American Government recognises that to demand payment of the war debt, would shake the stability of the already badly shaken franc. The American Government knows this, and the French Government knows it, too. Poincaré also states that France cannot be expected to pay or arrange for any settlement of the war debts until she gets Reparation from Germany. The American Government has repeated over and over again that the debt question has nothing whatever to do with the Reparation question, and that America will not allow them to be confused. The ruination of the franc would act not only on France herself, but on all the countries interested in France. Hence there will be no demands on the French Government. As a consequence on the plea of "German belligerency," France keeps up a tremendous army, and to-day is equipped with the biggest air-fleet in the world, having a force ten times as large as that of England. In recent months, she granted large loans to Rumania, Jugo-Slavia, Czecho-Slovakia and Poland, the greater part of which is to be employed in the purchase of war material manufactured in France. Thus two birds are killed with one stone: French industry is helped and the French vassals forming a ring around Germany are furnished with the latest and most powerful both to America and England—will be left till a later day. The Tremendous majority that Poincaré received in the Chamber on November 22, 1923, when his policy of remaining in the Ruhr with the support of the Allies if possible, without them if need be, was endorsed by a vote of 506 to 70, indicates that France is aware of her strength and the pitiable weakness of the other Allies, especially Great Britain.

The return of the Crown Prince to Germany was another incident that characterised the attitude of the other powers. America entered the war to put an end to "autocracy," and probably no American soldier would have been willing to lay down his arms as long as the Kaiser remained on the throne. To be sure, this was due to the broadsides of propaganda that passed through the press, so that every American child believed that the war was due to the barbarous aims of a few men ruling in Germany. Upon the announcement that the Crown Prince wished to return to Germany, Coolidge declared that he would not protest "since the American people insist upon their right to set up any kind of government they

see fit, and must also recognise that the same right must be conceded to other people," Official France could rightfully protest, that failure to protest supported the French contention "that American official opinion with which they must deal—has altered somewhat, if not radically." It has changed for the reason that moralising is trivial in face of the disaster that faces international capitalism.

The Imperial Conference in London was of further development of the European question. England recognises the seriousness of her situation. The internal economic condition and the growing power of France on the continent clearly showed the necessity of consolidating the British Empire, of opening up new avenues of economic exploitation and of unifying the fighting forces of the empire. London has become sceptical of maintaining good relations with France: France, on the other hand is equally doubtful of the permanence of the Entente. Each one of the powers is seeking the leadership and is utilising any means to secure it.

The visit of King George to Rome was another of those diplomatic voyages that have so often been undertaken by British kings, notably Edward. From it came the entente between Italy and Spain, as a consequence of which the rule of France in the Mediterranean is threatened. The weakening of the French position will be manifested in the German situation. America, too, is affected by this new rapprochement between Latin Powers. South America is to be invaded and the *economic* domination of the United States there questioned. These are clever manoeuvres on the part of England—manoeuvres arising out of England's weakness.

The growing desperation of the German masses and the anarchy in German finances are forcing the Allies to step in *now* if Germany is not completely to collapse. Now, furthermore, is the time for them to interfere and save some remnants for themselves. France has determined to hold the Ruhr, Rhineland and the Palatinate. Bavaria is to be encouraged in her separatist views. The covert alignment of Italy and Spain on the side of England and America against France will help to check France. Is Germany to be "aided"—and reduced to the status of Austria? Many signs point to this probability.

The coming Reparations Conference is the signal for the next act. For several months, appeals have been sent to America by German industrialists and the German Government for help against the famine that is arising in Germany. Cuno and Stinnes made efforts to secure a loan—100,000,000

dollars was spoken of. Coolidge expressed himself in favour of credits for more than a million tons of food: this would have been a double stroke—it would have helped the American farmer to get rid of part of his surplus, and it would have aided the German government to face the rising revolt of the workers. During this period, persistent rumours passed through Wall Street indicating that a large loan to Germany was projected. It was clear that the American Government believed that the time had come for it to take a hand—not in the “political entanglements,” but to secure economic points of vantage, which are more interesting to the bankers, while the governments take care of the rest.

A huge loan to Germany is being planned. Wall Street declares that it will “exceed any financial operations that have taken place in a long time.” The larger part of the loan to be called “Rehabilitation Loan,” must be furnished by America. It is to be secured by industrial assets. Unquestionably it will be conditional upon a supervision of Germany’s budget and customs. The German Government faced by separatism on the one hand, by the Nationalists and Junkers on the other, and by the masses of the dissatisfied workers on the third, who are losing the last meagre rights they gained through the “revolution” will be ready to accept any condition. America has appointed “unofficial experts,” two bankers, men close to Wall Street. It was decided not to send Morgan, since his presence there would give too obvious a clue to the whole transaction.

Can Germany be “rehabilitated?” Can she be reduced to a colony like Austria and thus be “stabilised?” To put her on her feet, to help her start her industries once more, means to furnish her with markets—something that the Allies have closed to her. Will the revolution which has only been postponed sweep the whole thing into the waste-basket? Or will particularly America, rebuffing all the Allies now get “securities on industrial assets,” which will put her in a position to control and dictate? Will the furnishing of a loan and food retard the revolution, or is not the situation rather too accentuated, the power of the German Government too undermined and the disunity of the Allies too great to stop the masses from revolt? The next few months will determine.

I. AMTER.

# LITHUANIA

## §1. The Epoch of Primary Accumulation.

**L**ITHUANIA is one of the small states which came into being as a result of the imperialist world war and of the Great Russian November Revolution. It has a population of about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  millions, if one excludes the Vilna District of Lithuania occupied by the Poles. Lithuania is an agricultural country, as it was before the war. Not more than 14 per cent. to 15 per cent. of the population are city dwellers. There are no big industries. According to statistics of the factory inspection of 1913, there were on the territory of the former Kovno, Vilna and Suvalki Governments 462 factories liable to inspection, employing 20,542 workers. At present their number is still smaller. If Grodno is excluded, there is at present in Lithuania not a single factory employing more than 600 workers (previous to the war there were 6, including one employing over 1,000 workers). The former larger factories were compelled to close down from lack of markets for their products. Small undertakings only, supplying the local market, are increasing in number. High tariffs protect them from the manufactured goods of the cheaper and bigger German industries.

This does not, however, mean that capitalism is not important in Lithuania. On the contrary, it dominates Lithuania in the form of finance capital, exploiting even the most backward and remote villages.

Lithuania is at present passing through a period of primary accumulation, and finance capital is playing the chief part in the process. The spirit of gain has taken possession of the entire Lithuanian bourgeoisie which has assumed power. "Enrich yourselves," the slogan of the French bourgeoisie eighty or ninety years ago, has become the slogan of the Lithuanian bourgeoisie. It is true to say that previous to the war a finance bourgeoisie did not exist in Lithuania. Its clever business men began to grow rich only during the imperialist war, by working in and around the relief com-

mittees for the victims of war. Already at that time they made a good penny out of the misery of the refugees. But their heyday came when they got access to the State Treasury of independent Lithuania.

The largest Lithuanian banks (the bank of the Catholic priest, Vailokaitis, and the Commercial and Industrial Bank of the former member of the Imperial Duma (Ichas) developed under the direct assistance of the State and at the expense of the Treasury—by government subsidies, loans without interest, government orders— and especially owing to shameless speculation. The bank of Vailokaitis benefitted by the gold received by Lithuania from Soviet Russia in accordance with the Peace Treaty. The Lithuanian banks, especially the Christian Bank of the priest Vailokaitis, were clever enough to profit by the depreciation of the Tsarist rouble, as well as out of the German “ost mark” (mark in the occupied area), and the “lit” (Lithuanian money). For short-term loans it charged truly Christian interest—160 per cent. to 200 per cent.

Industrial undertakings and agriculture cannot, of course, yield such enormous profits, and therefore the priest Vailokaitis and other speculators are not very anxious to invest their capital in them. During the first years of Lithuanian independence, banks, money exchanges and such like speculative institutions were the chief enterprises opened. But over them all tower the two above-mentioned banks, Vailokaitis and Ichas, which have spread their tentacles throughout the country. They have branches in the busiest cities of Lithuania: the Commercial and Industrial Bank of Ichas and Co. had 21 branches towards the end of 1922, and the Vailokaitis Bank 24 branches in April, 1923. All the other Christian banks are more or less dependent on these chief banks, including even the State Bank on whose board of directors one can find the principal managers of the aforementioned banks.

The Vailokaitis Bank has in this respect achieved considerable success. With the assistance of the Christian-Democratic Party, it has practically become the master of Lithuania, the economic and political life of which it is endeavouring to control. At present it is doing its utmost to monopolise the foreign trade in the most profitable articles. Through it many branches and the branches of the Christian credit banks, consumers' societies, etc., it is buying up corn, eggs, etc., for export abroad. It is also working hard for

the establishment of a monopoly on the import of oil, salt and sugar.

A dangerous competitor of the Vailokaitis Bank is the bank of Solovaichik and Co. in which Jewish capital is mainly concentrated. On the whole, the Jewish bourgeoisie is the strongest competitor of the Lithuanian bourgeoisie. As a result, Jew-baiting is becoming common, sometimes assuming the character of small fascist pogroms. But this does not prevent the Jewish bourgeoisie from co-operating with the ruling Lithuanian bourgeoisie on all important political questions.

The chief competitor of the Vailokaitis Bank is the Commercial and Industrial Bank of Ichas and Co. A considerable portion of its capital is invested in industry. But as Lithuania does not present a fruitful field for the development of industrial capital, it has been considerably out-distanced recently by the Vailokaitis Bank and no longer has influence over the government. It is endeavouring to attract foreign capital (British and American) to Lithuania, hoping with its assistance to get the better of its opponent, but the results of this policy have been hitherto insignificant. In addition to the aforesaid banks there are the peasant national banks, but they, like the class which created them, do not play a leading part in the economic life of the country.

## §2. The Bourgeois Parties.

Thus, in spite of the petty-bourgeois and the agricultural nature of Lithuania, the chief role is played by the financial bourgeoisie headed by its banks. In September of last year, it was remarked in the Lithuania Seim (Parliament), that everyone had turned banker: the Christian-Democrats had the "Ukio Bankas" (Vailokaitis and Co.), the Party of National Progress (Tautos Pazhanga), the Commercial and Industrial Bank of Ichas and Co., the People's Party the Liayudis Bankas (People's Bank), and the Social-Democrats the Co-operative Bank. The degree of influence exercised by a political party depended entirely on the importance of the banking group behind it.

As we have already seen, the Vailokaitis Bank is one of the most prominent speculative banks in Lithuania. Through the Christian-Democratic Party (one of those leaders is the priest-banker Vailokaitis), it practically governs the whole of Lithuania.

Thanks to their bank and to various electioneering tricks, the Christian-Democrats gained an absolute majority in the Seim: they polled 44 per cent. of the recorded votes, but received 51 per cent. of the seats in the Seim.

The structure of the Christian-Democratic Party is interesting. It consists of three component parts: the present Christian-Democratic Party, the Peasants' Union and the working class Federation of Labour. The task of the clever leaders of this Party is to manoeuvre skilfully between classes with such divergent interests as, for instance, bankers and peasants, kulaks (peasant speculators) and their hired labourers, and to gain the support of them all for the Party. The Catholic priests and their followers are adepts at this game. Their mode of procedure is to throw out sops (land reform and labour legislation), sometimes using bribes and sometimes threats. For instance, during the last election, Vailokaitis Bank advanced 300,000 lits for short-term loans to the peasants at an interest of 6 per cent. On other occasions they act with the assistance of the Lithuanian fascists and Christian secret police. The Christian-Democrats, and consequently the Vailokaitis Bank, control the Catholic Church, the schools and all the government machinery of compulsion. To strengthen their influence, the Jesuits have been allowed to settle again in Lithuania, and various monastic orders are being established. The ignorant nuns furnish the staffs for the "black" teaching profession. Even the universities are converted into hotbeds of Catholic reaction. And wherever these methods are not deemed sufficient, Christian fascism makes its appearance. On the strength of this the Christian Party has hitherto succeeded in keeping power in its hands. One must admit that even now their influence is predominant among the working masses of Lithuania, especially among women.

The Party which is nearest to the Christian-Democrats is the Party of National Progress (Tautos Pazhangas), but it is at the same time the most determined of its bourgeois opponents. The Party of National Progress represents the interests of the feeble industrial capital of Lithuania, in contradistinction to the stronger finance capital of the Bank of Vailokaitis and Co. The former is less pliable and less capable of adapting itself to the demands of the moment. Therefore, although the Party of Progress is by its very nature close to the reactionary Christian-Democrats (on social questions, it is even more reactionary than the Christian-Democrats), they are unable to come to an agreement, and carry on a bitter struggle among themselves.

Owing to its reactionary and uncompromising attitude and its unwieldy tactics, the influence of the Pazhangas has weakened considerably during the last few years. It has not a single representative in the Seim. It does not form part of the government, although it has prominent intellectual representatives. By the by, the first president of Lithuania, Smetoka, the first Premier and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Bol-Damaras, and Ichas are members of this Party.

The next in importance after the Christian-Democratic Party is the People's Party, which represents the rich peasants, although it has had hitherto among its following a considerable section of the middle and poor peasantry. In 1917, under the influence of the Russian Revolution it even adopted the title "Socialist" and took part in some conferences of the Second International. But, when the revolutionary movement temporarily died down, it looked upon this title as an encumbrance and threw it overboard. At present, the difference between the People's Peasant Union (of which the People's Party practically consists) and the Christian-Democratic Peasant Union is that the former is hostile to the rule of finance capital (Vailokaitis Bank) and to a "too pronounced" tutelage by the clergy. More than once it proposed to the Christian-Democratic Peasant Union to form a bloc and even to amalgamate. In the Seim, whenever it was a question of the interests of the working peasants, it voted with the Christian-Democratic Union in favour of the kulaks (rich peasants). It is now part of the Coalition government, in which the Christian-Democrats are most prominent, and supports their reactionary policy. If, under such circumstances, the People's Union is not yet united with the Christian-Democratic Union, this is chiefly due to the predominance of finance capital over the Christian-Democratic Party, against which the peasants are putting up a fight. The Narodniki (People's Party), are organising their own consumers' and producers' societies, credit banks, etc., to avoid the exploitation of finance capital in these spheres, but the latter is stronger than they.

During the last election the Narodniki polled 169,526 votes—18 per cent. of the total.

In addition to the Lithuanian bourgeois parties there are also Jewish and Polish bourgeois parties. The Jewish Zionist Organisation represents the interests of Jewish trade and finance capital, and the Polish Organisation the interests of the Polish landowners. But their influence is not limited

to these sections of society. In the name of the fight against Lithuanian nationalism and for union with Poland, the Polish landowners rally all Poles to their banner, including workers and peasants. Their list of candidates polled 63,653 votes during the last election to the Seim—7 per cent. of the total number of votes. The Jewish bloc attracted the majority of the Jewish petty-bourgeoisie and polled 100,303 votes—9.6 per cent. of the total number of votes. To defend their interests, the bourgeois national minorities created a bloc during the last election consisting of Polish National Democrats, Jewish Nationalists, Russian Black Hundreds, and others and polled altogether 19.1 per cent. of the total number of votes. They are opposed to the Lithuanian bourgeoisie which endeavours to get everything into its own hands. But when it is a question of fighting the working class, they all join hands.

### §3. Land Reform.

Previous to the war, the capitalist landowners played an important role in agriculture. According to official statistics of 1905, the landowners in the Kovno government (most of them Poles) owned over 40 per cent. of the whole land, in the Vilna government, 36 per cent, and in the Sувальки government, over 22 per cent.

Ninety-four per cent. of the farms belonged to the peasants, but as far as land is concerned, they had only about 50 per cent. of the total area, while landowners with over 100 dessiatins owning less than 2 per cent. of the farms, possessed over 40 per cent. of the total land.

The landowners' estates were worked by agricultural labourers. Their number (with their families) was as follows :—

	Of the Total Agricultural Population.	
Kovno Gov. 1913) ... ..	235,564	— 14.2 per cent.
Vilna Gov. (5 uyezds 1907) ... ..	85,980	— 13.5 „ „
Sувальки Gov. (6 uyezds 1901) ... ..	104,736	— 22.9 „ „

Under the influence of the November Revolution the agricultural labourers became the most revolutionary elements of the countryside. They were followed by the poor peasants who have not enough land to maintain themselves. There are 49,410 such farms in Kovno Lithuania, viz. : 23 per cent. of 4 hectares each, and 65,400 or 30 per cent. of 4 to 11 hectares each. Altogether they constitute more than one-half of the total number of farms. Most of them are in great need

of more land, as they have no possibility of supplementing their earnings. In the beginning of 1919, when a Soviet government was proclaimed in Lithuania, they were at first its warm supporters. They hoped to free themselves with the assistance of the government from the yoke of the landowners and kulaki, and also to obtain land. But they were soon disillusioned, for the Soviet Government in Lithuania refused to partition the nationalised estates, which it wanted to use for soviet farms.

This was taken advantage of by the enemies of the working class, and the poorest peasantry, the Christian-Democrats, who advanced a slogan on behalf of the partition of the landowners' estates whereby they drew the rural working population over to their side. During the struggle against the Red Army and Soviet Russia, they promised as an immediate measure to give land to the army volunteers, and they also promulgated the law giving land to soldiers in general. Although this law remains practically a dead letter (the land was mainly divided between the sons of well-to-do peasants), it played an important part in bringing over the soldiers to the side of the bourgeois Lithuanian Republic. When in the summer of 1920, the Red Army occupied Vilna, and was marching on Warsaw, the Christian-Democrats even committed themselves to the confiscation of landowners' estates. They quoted scripture to prove the righteousness of such an act. But when the Red Army was forced to retreat and the revolutionary wave subsided, their enthusiasm died down, too. In 1922, on the eve of the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, as the result of the great pressure put upon them, they promulgated a land law, according to which only part of the landowners' estates were sequestered, but at pre-war prices. The farm buildings, the live stock, the farm implements and 80 hectares of the best land were left to the landowners. Estates under 150 hectares were taken last. Of estates not exceeding 200 hectares, from 80 to 100 hectares were confiscated at current prices. This practically enabled also the bigger landowners to sell part of their land at current prices. Landless peasants and those who have not enough land may receive allotments of 8 to 20 hectares which they must pay for in the course of 36 years. The land reform also leads to the abolition of the system which cuts up the fields of one proprietor by strips of land belonging to other proprietors. Moreover, it prevents peasants taking over farms and liquidates the relics of feudalism.

At a cursory glance, one would imagine that a far-reaching land reform has been introduced in Lithuania. But in

reality this is not so. According to the estimate of the Department for Land Reform, at least one million hectares are required, while not more than 540,000 hectares can be secured for the land fund. Thus, with the best intentions to give land to all those who have a right to it, there is not enough land provided by the Lithuanian land reform law to go round.

Besides, it is not in the interests of the ruling Lithuanian bourgeoisie to give sufficient land to the agricultural labourers and poor peasants who are in need of it. In the liquidation of the Polish landowners' estates, the Lithuanian bourgeoisie is endeavouring to keep the lion's share for itself. Being the natural defender of the interests of private property, it is afraid to take away all the land from the landowners, and is leaving them from 80 to 150 hectares each of the best land with buildings, live stock, agricultural implements, etc. Moreover, the landowners have every opportunity of distributing the land among their relatives and of selling it at current prices which are beyond the reach of the landless and poor peasantry. The latter are given just enough land to keep them away from the revolutionary movement, and to attach them to their small plot of land. By such means cheap labour is provided for the local big landowners and farmers.

Between 1919 and 1923, the government took into the land fund 187,000 hectares of former landowners' estates, out of which only 97,302 hectares have been partitioned. Between 1919 and 1922, land has been allotted to only 5 per cent. of those needing it.

Among the recipients are many persons who do not belong at all to the afore-mentioned categories of landless and poor peasants. The land is being acquired by many well-to-do peasants, kulaks, speculators, high government officials and priests. In the meantime, some of the landless labourers are unable to maintain the land allotted to them or to pay off the instalments as they fall due, and are therefore obliged either to sell their land or to eke out a miserable existence on it.

The Department for Land Reform is already stating quite openly that henceforth land will be given not so much to those who need it and are by law entitled to it, as to those who will be able to maintain it in good order without State support. The Department will give preference to peasants and their children over agricultural labourers and the poor

peasants. Loans are also only to be given to well-established peasants and new farmers.

The land reform is not applied at all in the Memel region.

All this shows that the Lithuanian land reform cannot satisfy the wide masses of agricultural labourers and poor peasants. It is made to serve the interests of the well-to-do sections of the Lithuanian bourgeoisie, and is the cause of growing discontent among the working masses. Matters are not improved by the fact that the head of the Ministry of Agriculture is the clever leader of the Christian-Democrats, the Catholic priest, Krupavichos.

#### §4. Lithuanian Workers' Parties.

The position of agricultural labourers and poor peasants in Lithuania is worse now than in the pre-war period. Only the estate labourers are a little better off than before owing to the stubborn fight they made for better conditions. But, in view of the corruption of the leaders of the Christian Federation of Labour, the law regulating labour agreements on the estates is not enforced. An increasing number of labourers is being dismissed without due notice. They very rarely receive the land for which they were so ardently hoping. Moreover, when they do get the land they are frequently unable to secure seed, building material, or loans. As a result many of them are still obliged to live in mud huts.

The day labourers employed by the peasants constitute the largest section of agricultural labourers. They are unorganised and unprotected by legislation, and are therefore wholly at the mercy of the Lithuanian kulaks who exploit them in a most shameful manner. Owing to a surplus of labour power in the Lithuanian countryside, labourers' wages are very low, and their chances of obtaining land are even smaller than those of the State labourers. But even if they succeeded in obtaining a plot of land, their position would be even more pitiful than that of the former estate labourers, for they have neither horses, cows, seed, implements or stores of any description.

The position of the semi-proletarians, poor peasants and new farmers who cannot subsist on their plot of land and are compelled to hire themselves out to the peasants of the adjoining villages or to landowners, is even worse than that of the day labourers. They are tied to their land and have no opportunities of earning anything outside. Their miserable

huts, their semi-starved condition, the inadequate supply or total lack of implements, the high cost of manufactured goods and building material (which are sold abroad by speculators) and taxes much higher than those of the pre-war period—all these make their position intolerable.

The poor peasants who somehow manage to make both ends meet on their plots of land, and even the middle peasants who lived in comparative affluence before the war, are not much better off. They, as well as the semi-proletarians, have to bear the burden of excessive direct and indirect taxation, and are at the same time exploited by finance capital, which buys up at low prices the small surplus of their products, and sells them at exorbitant prices to the town proletariat. They are more affected even than the semi-proletarian poor peasants by the lack of credit and the high prices of manufactured articles and timber.

The only people who have profited by the land reform are the Lithuanian finance bourgeoisie, which has assumed power, and the rich peasants who emulate the capitalists, organise themselves into various companies, establish national banks, take a direct part in the administration of the country, or, with the support of their relatives who occupy high posts or of the priests, speculate, purchase big estates, etc. Only these sections of the population and the high officials (Lithuanians) and priests are satisfied with the existing order. Their chief concern is that no more concessions be made to the workers and small peasants and that the interests of the ruling bourgeoisie be firmly protected. On the other hand, the rural working masses are unanimous in saying that their present position is much worse than before the war.

Thus the clash of class interests in Lithuania, far from diminishing, is becoming more acute, especially lately, owing to the economic crisis, the growth of unemployment, and the excessive burden of taxation placed on the shoulders of the working class.\*

It is for such reasons that the discontent of the working masses is growing. The last election to the Seim showed that these masses are still under the influence of the Christian

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\* In 1922, Lithuania had a favourable balance of trade, which was however, obtained by a reckless wastage of capital (forests, land, etc.). As to the taxes imposed on the working masses, even representatives of the ruling Christian-Democratic Party acknowledged that they considerably exceeded those of the pre-war period. The largest item of expenditure is on behalf of the army, which absorbs as much as two-thirds of the entire Lithuanian budget. There is bound to be a big deficit for 1923.

Federation of Labour, and of other bourgeois parties. Most of them voted for the candidates of these parties.

The poll of the Left parties was as follows :

	Sept. 1922	Percent. of total votes	May 1923 about	Perct. of tot. votes
Federation of Labour ...	100,761	12.4	125,000	12.7
Lithuanian Social-Democrats	84,747	10.4	102,927	11.4
" Workers' Group " ... ..	52,500	6.3	34,365	2.4
Lithuanian Left Socialist- Revolutionaries* ... ..	5,326	0.7	4,428	0.1

These statistics are rather depressing if one does not take into consideration the conditions under which the struggle is being carried on in Lithuania. In the first instance, it should be borne in mind that in Lithuania the Communist Party is illegal, and that until recently the military courts passed death sentences for adherence to it. The working-class press which advocates the class struggle has been suppressed. The trade unions which, in spite of the persecutions and the efforts following the bourgeois lackeys (Social-Democrats) are still following the Bolsheviks have been crippled and depleted. Members of their administrative bodies are subjected to frequent arrests, and the all-Lithuanian Central Administration of the trade unions has been suppressed.† Therefore, it must be considered as a great achievement that under such conditions and in spite of numerous arrests and absence of agitation, the " Workers' Group," which is generally called bolshevik, polled 52,000 votes in September, 1922, and was at the top of the poll in all the more important towns of Lithuania (Kovno, Volkovishky, Shavli, Ponyevezhe). The Workers' Group returned five deputies to the Seim, but one of them (a soldier) was expelled. The next candidate on the list was detained in prison and the four remaining also found themselves behind prison walls very soon after the dissolution of the Seim. At the subsequent election (May, 1923) the ruling Christian-Democratic Party, with its Christian secret police, did its utmost to prevent the Workers' Group from bringing forward lists of candidates. Nevertheless the lists were brought forward and endorsed by the electoral commissions (only in one district were they rejected). Agitation was prohibited, but nevertheless the workers were in a determined mood. As a result, nearly all the candidates of the Workers' Group were

\* In 1922, the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries formed a bloc with the Paole-Zionists, in 1923 with the Social-Democrats.

† Only the Christian-Democratic " Federation of Labour " has a legal existence and the support of the government.

arrested on the eve of the election, and struck off the lists (many of them are still detained, and the former chairman of the Seim fraction of the Workers' Group, Kubitsky, has been deported to the Vilna District. All the hostile parties were busy spreading the rumour that the lists of the Workers' Group has been annulled. Nevertheless it obtained 34,365 votes. Under the circumstances, this is a considerable achievement. A special feature of the election is the fact that many soldiers voted for the candidates of the Workers' Group, as the influence of the extreme Left is strong among them. The Social-Democrats obtained most of the soldiers' votes, and the Workers' Group came next. It must, however, be stated that in some districts (especially in the Shavel'sk District) the number of votes recorded for the lists of the Federation of Labour increased at the expense of the votes for the Workers' Groups (in 1922).\*

As to the Social-Democratic Party in Lithuania, it was all but liquidated in the beginning of 1919, when part of Lithuania was under Soviet rule. Its Central Committee, deserted by the workers, resolved after considerable hesitation to adopt the Communist program (this was mere lip service as far as the majority was concerned) and to assume the name of the Lithuanian Communist Party (the official Lithuanian Communist Party was at that time known as the Communist Party of Lithuania and White Russia). Negotiations took place with the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Lithuania and White Russia on the question of the former Lithuanian Social-Democratic Party joining with it. The overthrow of the Soviet rule in Lithuania put a stop to these negotiations. The Lithuanian Social-Democratic leaders, Kairis and Puknis, entered the Lithuanian coalition government, which, with the assistance of Polish and German bayonets, drowned in the blood of the workers, the first attempt to establish in Lithuania a Workers' and Peasants' Soviet Government. In this the government had the assistance of the Social-Democratic leaders who, together with the leaders of the Christian-Democrats, perambulated the country and smashed up the Bolsheviks. Having thus cleared the ground for themselves, they took in hand the re-establishment of their Party. This was, of course, an easy matter as they had the legal means at their disposal. Nevertheless, the party existed for a long time only on paper. It took some time before the Kovno workers would give a hearing to the Social-Democratic leaders who in their

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\* The Lithuanian Communist Party has now resumed propoganda among soldiers. The paper "Kareiviu Tiesu," is appearing again, and is very popular among Lithuanian soldiers.

eyes were infamous traitors who had sold the working class. At Trade Union conferences and congresses they obtained but few votes. All the more class conscious workers followed the Bolsheviks, as they soon realised by their own experience, the nature of the gift they had received from "free democratic" Lithuania. They were soon made to feel what the loss of Soviet rule meant for them. All these circumstances gave an impetus to the revolutionary movement in Lithuania in the summer of 1920. But the workers and the very poor peasants in Lithuania put their faith in the Red Army rather than in their own strength. With the retreat of the Red Army their revolutionary spirit began to flag. The Lithuanian bourgeoisie, with the indirect assistance of the Social-Democrats, raised its head again and began to oppress the working class. Mass arrests, ill-treatment of the most brutal kind and shootings became the order of the day. The White Terror led to apathy and disillusionment among the working masses. Many workers left the Communist Party and even turned traitors. This was taken advantage of by the Social-Democrats and the Christian Federation of Labour and their influence grew among the masses.

There was yet another circumstance which helped to create the acute crisis within the Lithuanian Communist Party in 1921, which was not liquidated until 1923. The Lithuanian Communist Party is very young—it came into being in September, 1918. It had to work in a typically petty-bourgeois country, with hardly any big industrial centres. It lacked the traditions of a proletarian revolutionary party. Neither did it have a nucleus capable of firm and experienced leadership. Owing to this it was easy for petty-bourgeois elements to sneak into the party during the revolutionary wave, and it is precisely these elements who contributed to the disintegration of the party at the time of the revolutionary decline. Moreover, the young and inexperienced leading centre was easily influenced by the petty-bourgeois element. When the revolutionary wave was in the ascendant, it succumbed to the so-called "Left tendencies" tinged with opportunism with regard to political and organisational questions. The young central organisation of the Lithuanian Communist Party was dreaming of the sovietisation of Lithuania with the assistance of the Red Army and was becoming estranged from the masses. It did not show any interest in the workers' everyday needs; it did not attempt to lead them in their everyday struggle, or to draw them into the struggle, but rested content with passing ultra-revolutionary resolutions. By such an attitude it could not fail to alienate from itself the working masses at the time

of revolutionary depression. This was also taken advantage of by the Social-Democrats and the Federation of Labour, who made use of their legal opportunities—the platform of the Constituent Assembly, etc.—for the consolidation of their position.

This state of affairs is now a thing of the past in the Lithuanian Communist Party. The latter is endeavouring to get into close contact with the wide masses and is drawing them into the struggle under slogans designed to meet their everyday needs. For the first time since its inception, it is adopting a thoroughly Bolshevik platform. We must admit that up to quite recently it was still under the influence of the Second International on the subject of the agrarian question, in its attitude towards the peasantry and even on national and organisational questions. But the Party is now getting over these troubles. The Enlarged Executive Committee of the Lithuanian Communist Party which met in September, 1923, expressed itself, after prolonged discussion in favour of the partitioning up of the confiscated landowners' estates and for the establishment of model soviet farms on a small number of the best-managed and well-equipped estates. The Enlarged Executive recognised that "in Lithuania, too, the rural proletariat, the small land-owning and middle peasantry, can be freed from their present state of slavery and intolerable position, from the permanent menace of war due to the capitalist system, and from French depredators, Polish pans (nobles) and Lithuanian profiteers by means of a proletarian revolution." "On the other hand, the working class, especially in countries where industries are in a backward state of development, and the small peasantry predominates, as is the case in Lithuania, can throw off the yoke of the capitalists, landowners, speculators and profiteers only by winning over the poor peasantry to the side of the proletarian revolution, and by neutralising the middle peasantry." This conviction made the Lithuanian Communist Party in 1922 announce the slogan of the Workers' and Peasants' Government and pay special attention to propaganda among the peasants. The Enlarged Executive also took into consideration the national peculiarities of Lithuania and resolved to work for the solution of the national question on the basis of the theses of the Twelfth Congress of the Russian Communist Party.

Such a Bolshevik solution of the questions of most interest to the wide working masses will no doubt increase the influence of the Lithuanian Communist Party over these masses.

### §5. Relations between Lithuania and Poland.

The chief factor of the foreign policy of Lithuania is its relations with Poland. Lithuania maintains a most hostile attitude towards Poland which robbed it of its capital, Vilna, cut it off from Soviet Russia, and which constitutes a permanent menace to its independence. On the other hand, Poland has the whole-hearted support of France, which is doing its utmost to bring about a rapprochement between Lithuania and Poland. But such a rapprochement would be tantamount to the economic and political supremacy of Poland over Lithuania. Moreover, it would strengthen in Lithuania the influence of the Polish landowners and bourgeoisie who are hostile towards the young Lithuanian bourgeoisie. In view of this, the Party of "National Progress" ("Tautos Pazhangą"), which represents the point of view of the Lithuanian bourgeois, *i.e.*, is a determined opponent of a union between Lithuania and Poland, and in spite of its reactionary views, has lately declared that Lithuania must choose between two alternatives—either rapprochement with Germany or rapprochement with Soviet Russia. But, as we have already seen, the party of the industrial bourgeoisie is not the ruling party in Lithuania.

The foreign policy of Lithuania is conducted by the Christian-Democratic Party, headed by the bank of the priest Vailokaitis, supported by the speculating elements of the country. Union between Lithuania and Poland and Polish military adventures constitute no menace to Lithuanian finance capital, for such a union would offer a wider field for its operations. Moreover, although the ruling Christian-Democratic Party in its press is pandering to the patriotic feelings of its readers, and is keeping up the agitation for the restitution of Vilna, it is in reality afraid of such restitution, which would certainly put an end to its hegemony, for the Lithuanian population is not very large in the Vilna district. It is more important for this party that Lithuania should become firmly established in Memel and thereby obtain free access to the sea; in which case the question of an agreement with Poland would assume a different aspect. It was for this reason that the Christian-Democratic government of Lithuania was willing in 1921 to accept Huysman's proposal, and the People's Party (Narodniki), too weak to act independently, followed the Christian-Democrats. It was only due to the opposition of the working masses that the ruling parties laid aside this project for the time being. In the beginning of 1922, the organ of the Christian-Democrats expressed itself on this question as follows: "Our

politicians were already on the point of accepting Huysman's project for the union of Lithuania with Poland, but they did not as yet possess the machinery for influencing public opinion in the direction desired by the nationalist politicians. Huysman's project was, therefore, rejected."

After this failure the Lithuanian Christian-Democratic ministers have become so cautious, that even experienced politicians are frequently baffled in understanding their policy. Galvanovsky, a protégé of France, became the head of the Lithuanian Government and subsequently also of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In the autumn of 1922, the Lithuanian press started a campaign for a rapprochement with France, against which such stormy demonstrations of protest were held in Kovno in 1921. In the beginning of 1923, with the full knowledge and consent of France, the Memel region was occupied by Lithuania. The farce of the "uprising" of the disguised Lithuanian soldiers and sharpshooters was arranged only for the sake of appearances, as was the case of the "mutiny" of the Polish general, Zheligovsky, in 1920 who occupied Vilna. France, having brought nearly the entire bourgeois continent of Europe under her hegemony, was at last able to add Lithuania to the number of its vassals, especially as Great Britain, on which Lithuania bourgeois society at first relied, soon showed that it could do nothing for them, and was not at all inclined to imperil its friendly relations with France on account of little Lithuania. Last summer a Lithuanian military delegation went to France, and participated in the French manoeuvres. Lithuanian officers enter French and Czecho-Slovakian military academies conducted by French experts. The Lithuanian press of the ruling parties is beginning to indulge in systematic laudations of France.

All this is a clear sign that the orientation of Christian-Democratic Lithuania is undergoing a change. Moreover, facts go to prove that a formal agreement has been arrived at between Lithuania and France (Galvanovsky and Poincaré) covering both the event of France or Poland being involved in war, and the event of a revolution in Germany. The basis of this agreement is rapprochement with Poland. It goes without saying that Lithuania never ceases to protest against the attempts of the French and Poles to convert her into a Polish province. Lithuania is feverishly endeavouring to preserve her sovereignty. The Christian-Democratic government continues to parade before the Lithuanian masses as the most determined opponent of the Poland of the Pans

(nobles), but as a matter of fact, negotiations are being conducted with Poland in a roundabout way, through Paris, Reval and Riga, and plans are being elaborated for a joint seizure of Eastern Prussia. This was recently divulged by Professor Voldemarg and the former president, Smetana in "Vairas" the organ of the Party of National Progress; the former was condemned to reside in a remote part of Lithuania, and the latter was imprisoned because of his refusal to pay the fine imposed on him as the editor of the paper which has published the articles in question; their disclosures were evidently not far from the mark.

The "Vairas," by the way, published the manifesto of the "Committee of the Safety of Eastern Prussia." The manifesto urged the inhabitants of Eastern Prussia to rise in view of the catastrophic situation in Germany, and declared that "in such an event adjoining Lithuania may be depended upon to act as a strong and faithful friend." The aim of the rising was not clearly defined in the manifesto, but those who have a knowledge of the manifestoes of similar Committees of Safety in the Memel region towards the end of 1922, need not be told that it was intended to be the initial step towards seizure of Eastern Prussia. But Lithuania is not able to accomplish this alone, and therefore negotiations on this matter are being conducted with Poland via Paris, Riga and Reval. Thus, what the German press pointed out in the middle of 1923 is becoming a reality, viz. : that Lithuania, in agreement with France, is to have Tilsit and part of Eastern Prussia as compensation for Vilna and her benevolent "neutrality," with respect to the military adventures of Poland.

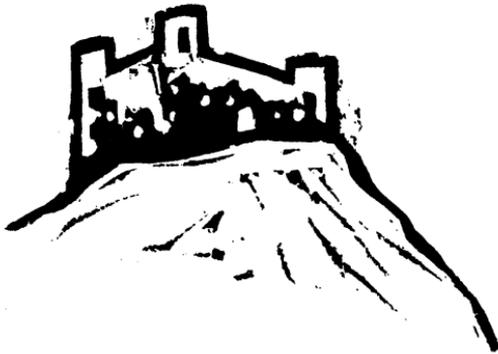
Such is the policy of the Lithuanian government, and of the Lithuanian ruling parties—the Christian-Democrats and People's Party. To ensure for itself the necessary support at the critical moment, the Christian-Democratic Party has placed at the head of the Lithuanian army, the Polish general Zhukovsky, who, at the time of the march of the Red Army on Warsaw, entered the Polish army and fought against the Bolsheviks; he was previously Commander-in-Chief of the Lithuanian army.

But, the game of the Christian-Democratic Party is extremely risky for the Christian-Democrats themselves. Already the "Groups of Lithuanian Officers" have issued a manifesto in which, among other things, they express themselves against "the higher command being in the hands of officers who are not of Lithuanian extraction, who talk

grandly about co-operation with Poles and Frenchmen in a war against Germany, and who totally forget Vilna, which, not only historically, but also economically, is still the heart of Lithuania, and without which the economic development of our country is impossible." They fully understand that Lithuania can secure Vilna only with the co-operation of Soviet Russia, and therefore their orientation is towards Soviet Russia and the German revolution, which will enfeeble Poland.

The working masses of Lithuania are watching still more carefully the Polish landowners and the Poland of the Pans (nobles). Consequently, the Christian-Democratic financiers find it so difficult to come to a definite understanding with Poland and are compelled to play a double game all the time. The Lithuanian Communist Party is doing its share in spoiling the game by conducting an energetic fight against a union between Lithuania and Poland, for it sees in this union a source of still greater oppression and enslavement for the Lithuanian working masses and the strengthening of the barrier (from the Baltic to the Black Sea) between Soviet Russia and revolutionary Germany. It is difficult to foretell whether in the face of the solid opposition of the workers the Lithuanian intelligentsia and even a section of the Lithuanian bourgeoisie, the Christian-Democratic speculators will be able to put their treacherous plans into practice, although they hold the entire State machine in their hands—the army, the schools, the church, the Christian secret police and the Christian fascisti.

#### V. MITZKEVITCH-KAPSUKAS.



# ESTHONIA

## §1. Industry and Commerce.

**T**HE fifth anniversary of the "independence" of Esthonia coincides with a serious economic crisis. As a matter of fact, the crisis has been a chronic one ever since the beginning of Esthonian "independence," but owing to various circumstances, it has only to-day assumed a threatening aspect.

It should be mentioned that, apart from slate, Esthonia has no mineral wealth, and even the slate quarries are being developed so slowly that they at present employ just over one thousand workers (in fact, 1091 in April, 1923). Attempts to attract foreign capital have so far yielded no substantial results.

Esthonian big industry is like a branch torn from its tree and doomed to certain decay. It was developed during the last decade to meet the interests and State policy of Czarist Russia; it was fed by home capital, and worked for the home market. But separated from Russia as a result of Esthonian "independence," it is undergoing natural decay, contracting and either transforming itself into a number of small and middle-sized enterprises of a local nature, which supply the local requirements of a very restricted market,\* or being entirely squeezed out by foreign competition.

The metal industry was the largest in the past, with such works as the Dvigatel, Becker, Baltic, Kroull, Volta, and a number of others, to which should be added the railroad and dockyards. At present, these enterprises employ, at the most, one-tenth of the workers they employed in 1917. The whole of the large metal industry in Esthonia to-day (counting enterprises with 20 or more workers) employ about 5,500 operatives, while in 1917 the number in Reval alone was not less than 30,000.

The number of workers engaged in the textile industry is somewhat larger (8,800 in April, 1923), although the Crenholm Mills in Narva alone are capable of employing more than ten thousand workers.

\* According to the Census of 1922, Esthonia has a population of 1,100,000.

Of the other branches of industry, none engage more than 3,000 workers, while the total number of workers in large Esthonian enterprises does not exceed 27,000.

For a year or two after the conclusion of the Peace Treaty with Russia (February 2nd, 1920), the factories and mills somehow managed to work on old stocks of raw material, semi-manufactures and fuel. Recently, however, these supplies have all been exhausted, and Esthonian large industry is confronted with utter bankruptcy. In confirmation of these we adduce the following excerpt from the "Baba Maa," (No. 202, 5/1), organ of the Esthonian Labour Party;

"Yesterday (September 4th), the Minister of Trade and Industry, Rostfeld, received a deputation from the Manufacturers' Association, representing large industry. (There follows a list of persons representing the chief branches of industry, such as metal, woodworking, textile, paper, etc.).

"The deputation reported to the Minister on the present state of large industry. The metal industry is in particularly bad straits: it has no contracts for fulfilment whatsoever. The paper mills dispose of some of their goods in Russia, but even this, taken together with the consumption of the home market, is far from absorbing the whole product. The textile industry could compete in quality with foreign commodities on the home market, but we are flooded with imported goods which are purchased, while our commodities lie in the warehouses. . . . .

"The deputation suggested that certain restrictions be imposed on imports. Since, in addition to the absence of a market, industry suffers from a great need of credits, the deputation solicited the Minister to create facilities for the extension of credits to industry."

On the following day, the Minister of Finance, I. Westel, invited the representatives of the Press with the obvious purpose of officially denying and dispelling the increasing prevalent rumours of possible complications in the industry, trade and currency of Esthonia.

In his interview with the Press representatives, the Minister discussed in detail the figures for foreign trade, in which the liabilities show a steady increase, and already by August 1st exceeded the total liabilities for the whole of the year 1922 by more than 200 per cent. (777 million Esthonian

marks in 1922, and 1,850 millions during the period 1/1-31/7). The total exports and imports are as follows :

	Imports.	Exports.	Excess of Imports over Exports.
	<i>In millions of Esthonian Marks.</i>		
1921 ... ..	4,483	2,287	2,196
1922 ... ..	5,589	4,812	777
1923 (1st half-year in round figures)	4,100	2,700	1,400

These figures show clearly the growth of imports for the first half of the current year, both in comparison with exports, and with the imports of the previous year. In order to demonstrate these figures more clearly, it is necessary to consider the field of agriculture, and to touch on some figures for exports, since the Minister, in order to calm "public opinion," pointed to the considerable growth of exports during the current year.

The first place for the export figures for 1922 was occupied by "fibrous stuffs" to the extent of 1,567 million Esthonian marks, *i.e.*, almost one-third of the total imports. Since Esthonian industry does not grow cotton, this can only mean flax. According to statistical data for three years (1920-22), the entire flax crop yielded 1,379,000 poods; exports of flax for the same period (1921-23) amounted altogether to 1,349,000 poods, *i.e.*, according to statistics almost the entire output. At the same time it is known that the home consumption of flax and articles manufactured from flax, especially among the peasants who use it in their domestic handicraft, is considerable. The explanation is very simple. Since 1921-22, large quantities of raw flax (some hundreds of thousands of poods), which figured in Esthonian export statistics as Esthonian flax, were in reality smuggled into the country from Russia. If we deduct these contraband goods, the position of Esthonian exports both last year and this year shows up far worse.

Moreover, the panic which necessitated the Minister's public announcement, was caused by the curtailment by the Esthonian Bank\* of credits to commercial and industrial enterprises, because the currency reserves had been exhausted, deposits had stopped coming in, the position of large industries did not improve, and a section of the merchants and even manufacturers used credits to a considerable degree for the importation of articles of consumption, thus undermining, and

\* From 243,400,000 Esthonian marks in March of the current year, to 132,500,000 in July.

not supporting, the industry of the country. Of course, the curtailment and, in part, even the entire cessation of credits, is not under such circumstances liable to facilitate improvement, but rather to cause further derangement in the economic life of the country, instantaneously raising the prices on the home market and disturbing the budget of the consumer.

## §2. Agriculture and Agrarian Reform.

Agriculture has always occupied the first place in the economic activities of Esthonia (of a total population of 1,100,000, about 700,000, or nearly two-thirds, are engaged in agriculture), and owing to the great decline in industry, the comparative significance of agriculture has been still more enhanced. The same cannot be said of the development of agriculture itself, the reason for which is, among others, the agrarian reform of 1919.

This reform, which consisted of the parcelling out of the large estates, had been carried through the Constituent Assembly by the bourgeois parties, the Social-Democrats indeed count it as their own offspring. Politically this measure was justified by the necessity for establishing the power of the barons, but practically it was a cheap demagogic expedient, by which each party hoped to strengthen its position and influence among the wide semi-proletarian masses of the villages, whose long-cherished, petty-bourgeois ideal was to have a hearth of their own. There ensued a vigorous competition for the support of these elements, one party outvying the other in magnanimous promises. The record was broken by the "Land League"—a party of affluent farmers, rather closely related, by the way, to the barons themselves—which promised 40,000 new farms, not mere "hearths" but "real two-horse farmsteads." The elections to the Constituent Assembly in April, 1919, was marked by demagogy. The reform, of course, had a political aspect also, and was intended to create a numerous section of the new peasantry as a pillar for the bourgeois order, and as a counter-balance to the artisans and smallholders, who constituted a permanent menace in the villages. Each party in imagination construed this new element in its own way, and made its ambitious plans accordingly.

Owing to the temper of the masses, the Left parties were victorious; the Social-Democrats (34 per cent. of the votes) the Labour and Liberal-bourgeois parties. The Cabinet consisted of 4 representatives of the Social-Democrats, 3 Labourites (also "Socialists") and 2 of the Democratic Party

(Liberal-bourgeois). Since the economic power, however, was in the hands of the reactionary Land League, which was joined by reactionaries from the camp of the bankers, manufacturers and higher bureaucracy, the reform as passed by the Constituent Assembly was not enforced in the manner the Socialists of the various shades expected it to be, but in accordance with the wishes of the reactionaries. And so, the reform which proposed to furnish land for the landless and smallholding peasants, became transformed into a "revolutionary" seizure of landowners' estates by the rich farmers, finding expression in a general pilfering of live stock and farm equipment, and only the wretched remains passed to the newly created farms.

One can imagine the economic consequences of the destruction of comparatively well-equipped and often splendidly organised large farms, which occupied more than half of the total area under cultivation in Esthonia. Seventy-five per cent. of the farms of the new settlers are in desperate straits. Possessing neither capital, equipment, manures (Esthonian soil requires a very thorough cultivation and much manuring), nor farm buildings, the farms of the settlers present a very pitiable contrast to the former well-equipped farms.

This economic failure contributed in a considerable measure to ruin the political prospects of all the parties, from reactionaries to Social-Democrats. True, the reactionaries retained possession of from 10 to 15 per cent. (of the total number in 1850) of the estates that remained undestroyed or were only nationalised; and part of the new allotments passed in one way or another also into the possession of the former owners, but the majority of the reactionaries are growing ever more indignant at the policy of the government party and are becoming dangerous to the existing order.

We conclude this economic review of present-day Esthonia by a quotation from the newspaper "Postimes" (organ of the Liberal-bourgeois Democratic Party, and its leader, the President, Tenisoff, No. 239, of September 9th), which sums up what was said above:

"It is clear to every discerning person that the country and the nation are marching towards a grave economic crisis. Unless the path of *strict economy* both in *state and public concerns* is followed, the situation promises to become a *dangerous one.*" (Italics in original.)

### §3. The Bourgeois Parties.

The position and policy of the bourgeois parties of Esthonia are determined by the economic conditions described above.

It should be said that the so-called upper bourgeoisie of Esthonia does not represent what is traditionally understood by this section of the population in the capitalist countries, where it was formed during a protracted struggle for economic and political hegemony. In Esthonia, it is rather a group of upstarts, whose origin may be traced to the imperialist war, and even to the class war which followed. Three-quarters of all the bankers, stock exchange mongers, manufacturers and other big capitalists, are of recent origin. A good many of them began their careers during recent years as officials or carpet-baggers, who in a few years managed to get on to the Board of some bank or other, become heads of commercial or industrial enterprises or owners of estates. This casual growth of the relationships is one of the causes of the policy of plunder which prevails in the large industrial enterprises, which have fallen into the hands of upstarts.

It follows that the position of the various parties is determined not so much by the interests of the sections of the population which they are supposed to represent, as by the interests of the leading party circles and cliques, aiming to share in the general plunder with the support of the groups voting for them.

The most conscious class is that of the rich peasants; it is the basis of the reactionary "Farmers" Party (formerly the "Land League"). The party, however, is headed by bankers, manufacturers, big representatives of the military clique and high dignitaries, who regard it as a strong prop for their power and for their policy of plunder. As the strongest force in the economic life of the country and by reason of its representation in Parliament (23 out of 100), it dominates in politics.

The Liberal-bourgeois Democratic Party—the cradle of all the existing bourgeois parties—which has lost its former influence and has now only eight representatives in Parliament, is supported partly by a section of these same rich peasants, and partly by the middle class commercial and industrial groups. It succeeded in getting its old leader on to the parliamentary presidium only owing to the fact that they organised a group of centre parties headed by the Democratic Party, the so-called centre bloc. (The sole purpose of this temporary amalgamation was to guarantee the parties of the

bloc more seats in the government). Virtually, the position of the Democratic Party differs from that of the reactionary Farmers' Party in that the former, in accordance with the old petty-bourgeois ideals of liberalism, equality, etc., associates the interests of the peasantry with the interests of the commercial and industrial and the middle classes, and, partly of the Labour intelligentsia; while the latter represents the interests of the upper sections of other social classes.

The Labour Party and Social-Democratic Party represent the wide sections of the intellectual and industrial petty bourgeoisie.

These two parties, who once professed the principle of Socialism, now differ only in their outward tactics. In fact, in activities they closely resemble each other, both pursuing the sole aim of seizing as much of the social pie as they can, although the Social-Democrats have not recently figured officially in the government. As a matter of fact, one of their representatives is the State Controller, and their leaders represent the republic on official and unofficial commissions abroad. Moreover, the fact of their not having been in the government is due more to the reactionaries than to themselves. The latter no longer need them, and do not wish to share the booty with them, since the Social-Democrats have lost all influence amongst the workers.

The bourgeoisie attaches greater importance to the Labour Party, which is the natural representative of the petty-bourgeois element, which every government must reckon with. The position of the Labour Party, however, is most unenviable. Participating in the government and devoting itself with it to social plunder, it is thereby harnessed to the reactionaries, a fact which is at variance with the interests and ideals of the petty-bourgeois elements that support it. Hence the wide-spread feeling of discontent with the policy of the Labour Party, and, as a consequence, the loss of its followers. Instead of the 22 seats it secured in the first parliament, it holds only 12 in the second. This internal contradiction between the interests and ideals of the rank-and-file members of the parties and the policy actually pursued by the Party leaders in the government, is the cause of continuous dissension in the government and of more than one crisis in the party.

#### §4. The Labour Movement.

The Labour movement in Esthonia marches openly under the banner of the united front of the workers, and is imbued with the ideas of Communism. It is generally called Com-

munist, although the Communist Party is strictly illegal. When occasion offers, the bourgeoisie does not hesitate to murder its leaders as was the case on March 28, 1923, with Comrade Kreuks, who was killed in an ambushade by the secret service agents. In spite of this terror—we do not speak of arrests, closing down of newspapers, etc.—the mass of the workers are marching irresistibly towards the Left and falling in with the Communist United Front.

Proof of this, by the way, is furnished by the results of the last parliamentary elections (in May, 1923). A characteristic feature of these elections was the decomposition of the Centre and the strengthening of the Left Communistic wing. Of the Centre parties, the Democrats, Labour and Social-Democratic parties lost 17 out of 50 seats, *i.e.*, 34 per cent.; the Independent Socialists lost 6 out of 11, more than half while the United Front gained an increase of from 5 to 10. It should be added that only 43,000 votes are taken into account, whereas in Reval alone 10,000 workers' votes for the United Front were cancelled. The bourgeois parties frankly admit, that had not the bourgeoisie adopted violent measures, the Communists would have received not less than 70,000 votes (17 seats).

A considerable section of the petty bourgeois masses has quitted the Centre parties, but has not yet joined the United Front of the workers. Having become disappointed with the existing parties (the Social-Democrats during the first and second elections lost 55 per cent. of the votes they received during the Constituent assembly elections; the Labour Party at the last elections alone lost more than 45 per cent.), these elements consisting mainly of small-propertied peasants, village artisans, etc., headed by the "settlers" and demobilised soldiers, are endeavouring in the meantime to improve their position through their own groups and parties in Parliament. This must, of course, end in fresh disappointment and a turn to the Left, *i.e.*, adhesion to the United Front.

Along these lines the activities of the intelligent revolutionary elements are mainly proceeding. The task of the Labour organisations at present is to win over the semi-proletarian masses, whose numbers have greatly increased as a result of the decline of big industry and the destruction of the large estates. Meanwhile, these masses, together with the civil servants, private employees, teachers and other intellectual groups, form the chief mainstay of the Labour Party and the Social-Democratic Party.

As far as the purely proletarian elements are concerned, there is not among them a more or less compact and organised group which follows the Social-Democrats. Although there are groups which have not yet adopted the path of conscious revolutionary struggle, they cannot be regarded as conscious compromisers, such as are the leading elements of the Social-Democratic Party, who have allied with the bourgeois parties against the revolutionary workers. All the efforts of the Social-Democrats to re-entrench themselves in the working class organisations or set up parallel organisations have proved abortive. The last effort in this direction was made at the Second Trade Union Congress in November, 1922. The Social-Democrats tried to break up the Congress, by quitting it and drawing along with them two-score delegates out of 200. A parallel congress was organised, but the Social-Democrats had scarcely unfolded the whole of the treacherous program, when their congress split up and dispersed, and a part of the delegates came back to the general congress, thereby emphasising more sharply than ever the treachery and destructive policy of the Social-Democrats in the eyes of the working class.

The new Independent Party, which was organised after the exclusion from the Independent Socialist Labour Party (now the Labour Party of Esthonia) of the opportunist petty bourgeois intellectual leaders, rests also mainly on the lower intelligentsia and petty employees. The relative success of this party at the last elections (it gained 5 seats in Parliament) is due to a considerable extent to the fact that in two electoral districts the lists of the Communist United Front were cancelled as a result of which the workers, as a protest, gave their votes to the Independents, who in spite of their own campaign against the United Front, never cease from advertising themselves as supporters of the Communist International, and even as "real Communists." From the outset of their activities in Parliament, however, they proved themselves to be true compromisers. Piats, the leader of the reactionaries, was right when he counted them in the counter-revolutionary group, "which advocates the recognition of the democratic order."

### **Deductions and Conclusions.**

Following on a brief period of super-patriotic intoxication during which the bourgeoisie of all shades and gradations danced frenziedly around the altar of "independence," the sobering effect of stern actuality is beginning to act as a tonic on the besotted minds. The three or four years that have elapsed since the conclusion of the Peace Treaty between

Russia and Esthonia, prove that her economic independence is still weaker than her political independence, on which the Esthonian bourgeoisie is surreptitiously ready to speculate by offering it to the English in exchange for the privilege of exploiting the Esthonian workers. The international political situation is not yet free of the nationalist confusion resulting from the shock of the war and its consequences which expressed itself in the establishment of a number of superfluous and entirely unwarranted "national independent" states. The economic "independence" of these states is precarious in the extreme. It is clear that for these states it is essential for their mere existence—leaving aside all talk of winning foreign markets—to adhere to one or another of the big units of international economic life. The only world power that is not desirous of exploiting Esthonia for its own ends is Soviet Russia, with whom Esthonia is moreover bound up by many traditional ties, and the necessity for close economic co-operation with Soviet Russia is being felt more and more.

The knowledge of this is playing an important part in determining the foreign policy of the different parties. The more economically stable one or other group feels itself to be, the more it is attracted to the imperialists of the West, that is to say, away from the soviets and towards the Russia, pictured in the imagination of the Russian White Guard emigrés with whom certain groups of the Esthonian bourgeoisie (especially the military) are on close relations. The newspapers have more than once reported how high-placed military and police officers in the company of Russian White Guards have drunk to the welfare of "Mother Russia," and sang "God save the Czar." This clique stands for a renewal of the attacks on Petrograd and consequently demands a strong permanent party. This, in general features, is the line of the foreign policy pursued by the ruling reactionary clique, though there is much disagreement over the details. Furthermore, there is a certain tendency towards co-operation with the ex-barons.

On the Left of this extreme group is to be met a hostile attitude towards Russia, but this includes a Czarist Russia as well. The representatives of this tendency are well aware of the fact that the fate of Esthonia in the end does not depend on its puny military forces, that it must rely on Western imperialists, and keep its military forces chiefly for the "internal enemy." Finally, the broad sections of the petty bourgeoisie—part of the peasants, the small and middle-class merchants and the manufacturers—are becoming ever more

imbued with the feeling and knowledge that one way or another close relations with Russia in the future are inevitable, and therefore as far as they are capable of political activity at all they are seeking with trepidation ways and means for bringing about a rapprochement, without, however, exposing their "independence" and bourgeois democracy to the dangers of bolshevism.

As to the Social-Democrats, part of their leaders, fearing the victory of the Communists, are joining the middle tendency. The masses, on the other hand, have little faith in the permanence of "independence."

Thus, with regard to the most important factor in the question of the existence of the democratic republic, *i.e.*, the attitude towards Soviet Russia, only the reactionary group is a direct and active enemy of Soviet Russia. Since this group is economically the most powerful and politically, the most active in the country, it pursues its own line in the government, despite the fact that it is, on the whole, in a considerable minority. It should, however, be stated that recently, in view of the approaching situation in Western Europe, the relations between the various tendencies have begun to assume clearer and more definite forms, and a certain animation is discernible among those who are in favour of rapprochement with Russia, which is, of course, partly a result of the imminent economic crisis. There is no doubt that if any of the foremost bourgeois parties earnestly advocated the idea of collaboration with Russia, it would meet with certain success among the broad masses of the population, and especially the workers. In the meantime, the organ of the Labourites is the only paper which advocates the idea, however timidly, although generally it was louder than any other in its abuse of Soviet Russia. The ground must indeed be crumbling beneath the feet of these time-servers to make them resolve so suddenly on a change of front, and to speak up for a "new orientation." On the whole, it is a very significant factor in the political life of Estonia, and may have important consequence.

G. PEGELMAN.

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