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The Fifth Congress of the Communist International.

Circular of G. Zinoviev to all the Sections of the Comintern.

The opening of the Fifth Congress of the Communist International has been fixed for the 5th of June 1924. More than 18 months have passed since the Fourth Congress, and a number of questions are waiting for settlement.

Program. The Fifth Congress has to finally confirm the program of the Communist International. The first draft of the program was published at the time of the Fourth Congress. During the five years of its existence, a number of documents of a fundamental character have accumulated in the archives of the Comintern, such as, Lenin's Theses on dictatorship and democracy, the resolutions of the 2nd Congress and the role of the Communist Party in revolution, the resolution on the national and agrarian questions etc., which represent the chief component parts of the program. We have as it were the bricks, the task ahead is to build a symmetrical structure out of these bricks.

To draw up a document like the program of the Comintern, especially now when our chief architect Lenin is no more, is a difficult task but further postponement is impossible. The Fifth Congress must carry it out. The Congress will have to endorse the programs of the largest of the sections of the Comintern, who should hasten to finish their preparatory work.

The further Tactics of the Comintern. This question will undoubtedly be discussed in close connection with another point on the agenda: *The World Economic Situation.* The Fifth Congress must sum up the application of the tactics of the United Front during the preceding years. It is quite clear now

that these tactics will again be subject to considerable criticism. We must not close our eyes to the fact that in the practical application of these tactics, they have been more than once distorted in the direction of opportunism. Nevertheless, when the summary is made, the balance will be in our favour. The tactics of the united front remain the correct tactics for the whole epoch. It is necessary only that measures of precaution be taken to prevent their distortion and we must learn to give them the concrete form demanded by the conditions prevailing in any given country. Opportunist dangers to the right as before are the chief dangers that threaten the Comintern, but it will be possible to conduct these dangers only if we resolutely repel "Left Wing Infantilism". The Comintern is living and acting in the trough of two waves of world proletarian revolution. One wave has passed; the other wave has not yet risen. Countries like Germany, are living through a period between two revolutions. In such a period, communists are inevitably called upon to fight simultaneously against liquidatorism from the right and "left" phrasemongering which frequently is tantamount to liquidatorism from the "left".

Important Controversial Problems in Various Sections. The most important of the work of the forthcoming Congress will be to investigate controversial questions and fundamental problems which at the present moment are engaging the various sections of the Comintern. In this the chief parties of the Comintern will become closely acquainted with each other, and

in this way, a single International Communist Party will be forged. There have been many sharp discussions and controversial questions among our principal parties in the interval between the Fourth and Fifth Congresses. Sometimes these questions have been regarded as a "crisis in the Comintern". As a matter of fact there has never been any crisis. Communist parties are built up with tremendous difficulty. One might say that the most powerful section of the Comintern — the Russian Communist Party — in the course of its 25 years of existence has been in a state of one long continual crisis. As a matter of fact this "crisis" indicates the gradual hammering out of a real steel-like Communist Party. Who imagines that the building up of the Communist Party can proceed as easily as taking a drive along the broad asphalted steets of a European city? Anyone who does so shows that he completely fails to understand what a communist party is. In the main, during this period the principal sections of the Comintern have become strengthened and now represent a more homogeneous vanguard of the proletariat than was the case at the time of the Fourth Congress. The Executive Committee of the Comintern is now putting forward seven sections to be dealt with: Russia, Germany, Italy, Bulgaria, England, United States and Japan.

Russia. The Congress will here report on the present economic position of the Soviet Union and will again summarise the experiences of NEP. The Congress will also deal with the results of the discussion within the Russian Communist Party and give its decisive opinion on it.

Germany. The Congress will give its estimation on the controversies within the German Communist Party connected with the October action of the German proletariat. The Congress will undoubtedly estimate the opportunist deviations of the German Communist Party as was given by the Executive Committee of the Comintern, and will also as resolutely oppose the ultra "left" wing in the Party which, as a matter of fact, is of a non-bolshevist tendency and repel the tactical excesses from which the majority of the German Communist Party are by no means free.

Italy. The Congress will undoubtedly resolve in favour of the immediate fusion of the Communists with the Third Internationalists (Fusionists), and help the Italian Communist Party to commence a more determined fight against fascism and social-democracy.

Bulgaria. The Congress will have to give its estimation of the great events with which the Bulgarian Communist Party has had to deal. The errors committed by the majority of the Bulgarian Communist Party in June 1923, have now been admitted by that majority. The Congress will have to assist the Bulgarian Communist Party in making good its losses and carry out the historical mission imposed upon it by the progress of revolutionary events as speedily as possible.

Great Britain. For the first in the history of the British labour movement, the conditions have been created for the establishment of a mass communist party in Great Britain. In this sense, what is taking place in the British labour movement at the present time, is of even greater importance than the events in Germany. The Congress will have to do all it can to help to realise the existing possibilities and to convert the present Communist Party of Great Britain into a real mass party.

United States. The American Workers' Party is becoming a mass party. The question is confronting it now of its attitude towards the rising petty-bourgeois Third Party and its attitude towards the farmers. The Congress will give full attention to the new problems of American labour movement, and help the American Party to handle the great historical tasks which confront it.

Japan. The Japanese labour movement is only just coming to the front. The cruel persecution to which the Japanese Communists have been subjected hitherto, has prevented them from forming a mass Communist Party in Japan. With the participation of the Japanese communists, a mass workers' and peasants' party is being formed. The Congress will have to deal in detail with the question of the Japanese labour movement.

The question of the *Trade Unions*, once again occupies an important place in the work of the Fifth Congress. The more the influence of the Communists in the trade union movement grows, the more furious do the leaders of the social democracy become in their efforts to hasten the split in the trade unions. The provocative tactics of the Social Democratic leaders in certain places are very successful. Among the German left wing there is developing a wrong and extremely dangerous attitude towards the question of the future work in the reactionary trade

unions. The Fifth Congress will have to speak with all its authority and determination against the policy of leaving the Social Democratic unions, and at the same time it will have to find a practical solution to the problem of how to organise those workers whom the Social-Democratic leaders have succeeded in expelling from the trade-unions.

As hitherto, the *National Question* will be discussed with extreme attention at the forthcoming Congress. The theoretical bases of the solution of this question are contained in the reports and resolutions introduced at previous congresses by Comrade Lenin. The task of the Fifth Congress will consist in working out more concretely the application of the national policy of the Comintern in various countries. And especially in the countries of the *East* and in the *Colonies* where the struggle for national independence is developing more and more into a revolutionary movement directed against the domination of international capitalism. The proper solution of the national question will help all parties to win over the masses to their side. It is the national and agrarian questions that most of all distinguish the Comintern from its predecessors, the Second International and even the First International, which, owing to historical conditions, raised these questions only in an abstract manner. Without solving the national and agrarian questions in the spirit of Leninism, the Comintern cannot win over the majority of the toilers and without doing the latter, we cannot enter the decisive battle.

The question of *Relation to the Peasantry* will be presented to the Fifth Congress in the form of a report from the Peasant International, which is in the process of being organised (conference in Moscow 1923). The correct solution of the national question to a large extent implies also the correct solution of the peasant problem. The young organisation which began to be organised in Moscow under the name of the Peasant International undoubtedly has a great future. The European Communist Parties have not yet done one hundredth part of what is necessary in order to win over to their side those sections of the peasantry which can be attracted to the working class. The Fifth Congress must exert all effort and determination to deal with this problem.

A new question is placed on the agenda of the Fifth Congress, viz. *The Attitude of Communists towards Intelligentsia*. The term intelligentsia is used in the broad sense of the word, and includes also the technical intelligentsia. In a number of countries, the intelligentsia as a consequence of the prevailing economic conditions are in more or less sharp opposition to the existing regime. In various parts of the world — Germany, Japan, Bulgaria, France etc. — considerable sections of the intelligentsia, oppressed by poverty and feeling the effects of predatory imperialist policy, are now at the cross-roads and are not without sympathy towards the revolutionary labour movement. In this sphere the Comintern must take the initiative in its own hands. It must show in which way live, revolutionary Marxism differs the ancient lifeless presentation of the question of the intelligentsia.

The Question of Organisation will be raised at the Fifth Congress more concretely than hitherto, and on the basis of a greater accumulation of experience. The majority of the Communist Parties of the West to this very day have failed to organise on the basis of the *Factory nucleus*. To solve this problem, not merely on paper, but in actual practice, will signify a great step forward along the path towards real preparation for the proletarian revolution.

The Fifth Congress will also deal in great detail with questions of *Propaganda*. It will give the required attention to the *Youth Movement*, which is developing so well and which has so great a future before it in the work of preparing for the world revolution. The Fifth Congress will also give proper attention to the *Women's Movement*, to the *Cooperative Question*, to the *Red Relief* etc.

The agenda is long and varied. During the two months remaining, the Parties must thoroughly prepare themselves for these questions.

The near future will give us the possibility of testing the strength of the Communists at the parliamentary elections in Italy, in Germany, in France. Communists, of course, do not attach vital importance to parliamentary elections, but as a means of testing our influence among the masses, these elections are of no little importance. The recent elections in such a remote corner of Europe as Carpathian Ruthenia have shown that, when Communists take up a proper attitude towards the peasantry, the

proletarian party may win over a considerable section of the peasantry to its side.

The events in Germany have acquired tremendous importance for the activities of the Comintern. In the Autumn of 1923, events in that country developed so stormily that everyone expected a stormy revolutionary rise and a decisive rebellion. Instead of that, we suffered defeat. The German working class has been flung back for some little time. However, the question of preparing for the proletarian revolution in Germany remains as hitherto one of the most important problems confronting the Comintern as a whole, and its most important section in Europe in particular.

To win over the Majority among the most important Sections of the Working Class — this is the legacy left to us by the founder of the Comintern, Lenin, as the task of tasks of the present period. That task has not yet been fulfilled. The Fifth Congress will have to devote its greatest attention to its fulfilment.

The slogan of the Fifth Congress will be "without Lenin in the spirit of Leninism". The great leader of the Comintern is dead, but his cause lives, above all in the Comintern. The Fifth Congress will undoubtedly solve all the questions that will confront it in the spirit of genuine Leninism. The teachings of Lenin will remain the guiding star for all the sections of the Comintern.

POLITICS

The Results of the Elections in Italy.

A First Impression.

By G. Masci (Rome).

All parties declare themselves satisfied with the results of the elections, because all parties up to the eve of the poll had had no criterion, not even an approximative one, wherewith to make forecasts, and all of them felt themselves to be crushed by the Fascist terror. This statement typifies the essential feature of the Italian situation which is characterized by the disorganization of the masses, by the impossibility of holding meetings and by the feeble circulation of the papers openly in opposition to Fascism. The first results known up to now (the definite results, owing to the complication of the election law, will only be known by the 14th or 15th April) permit us to draw some very important conclusions which are indispensable for understanding the general orientation of the future political struggle in Italy:

1. The constitutional opposition (Amendola, Bonomi) has shown that it has behind it a rapidly disappearing minority of the public opinion. In Italy, even among large strata of the working class, the legend had arisen that the bourgeoisie itself, through its progressive and radical wing, would carry out an "anti-fascist revolution"; the elections have destroyed this legend, thus putting before the Turati Reformists in a decisive and emphatic manner the question of abandoning the old political scheme of the block with the bourgeois left in favour of the workers' and peasants' block.

2. The working class has revealed resistive forces exceeding all expectations. At Milan, the combined votes of the three parties: the Communist, Maximalist and Reformist, have, in 1924, surpassed those which the Socialist Party polled in 1919, i. e. in the period of the highest revolutionary development: the 56,000 votes in 1919 have grown to 66,000 in 1924. The working class has proved in a magnificent manner its historical function as champion in this sphere of opposition to Fascism; the results of the elections declare that against Fascism no other opposition is possible than revolutionary opposition. The Communist Party is the sole workers' party which has scored an electoral success: it had thirteen deputies in the last legislature, and it now has seventeen. The Reformists have sunk from 83 deputies to 25; the Maximalists from 46 to 22. In the industrial towns (except Milan), the Communist Party has polled more votes than the Maximalists, in some towns, especially in the South of Italy, it has polled more votes than the Maximalists and Reformists together. The indication is a clear one: the revolutionary proletariat is reorganizing itself around the Communist Party and is abandoning the Maximalist Party which has the majority of its sympathisers among the rural wage-earners.

3. The peasant mass has been disintegrated by Fascism. It has in a large part forsaken the banner of the Party of the

Popolari and has formed a whole series of local political groupings which presented themselves at the elections as opposition parties; the Popolari Party from 106 seats has sunk to 39.

The electoral law, supported by the state apparatus and by the Fascist organization, has manufactured a large majority for the government of Mussolini; 4,264,454 votes for the "National list" and 39,080 votes for the Fascist minority list B., with the total of 374 seats out of 535 of which, however, only 260 are officially members of the Fascist Party. To what extent these figures reflect the real state of mind of the population, can be judged by the following fact: in all towns with over 75,000 inhabitants (except Bologna), the Nationalist is in an unquestioned minority, as compared with the combined votes of the opposition. The smaller the centers and the more the Fascist pressure is able to control the votes of the individual citizens, the more the voting became plebiscites right up to 100% for the National list and for the list B.

In any case, Fascism has obtained a victory, and the Mussolini government has been strengthened by the elections both as regards at home and abroad, a fact which will have very notable consequences. The new Chamber will assume a true and proper character of a Fascist Constituent Assembly, this means, that it will legalise Fascism by reforming the National Constitution and by formally abolishing the democratic liberties which have ceased to exist in fact. It is therefore not improbable (already an allusion in this regard was contained in the program speech of Amendola) that the democratic opposition will raise the demand for new elections, in order to convoke a true and proper Constituent Assembly with the definite task of revising the Statutes, and by means of this slogan it will again seek to create a good basis for a Left Bloc.

The Communist Party which emerges politically strengthened from the elections, will therefore have a well defined task to fulfil: it must continue and intensify the campaign for the proletarian united front and for the workers' and peasants' government, to this end taking advantage of the parliamentary tribune. The peasants who have been shattered by the elections and who, in their great majority, have been compelled by means of terror to vote for Fascism, will realize more continually that from the present situation, the only way out is by revolutionary means. In the South of Italy, the Fascists have only by means of unheard of acts of violence succeeded in subordinating the peasants masses on the election day; throughout this whole area (which comprises one third of the territory of Italy) the Communist Party formerly had not even one deputy, and now it has three: one in Sicilia, one in Apulia and one in Campania. The economic situation of these populations is a terrible one: emigration has been rendered impossible by the American immigration laws, and the area of land under cultivation has for this harvest been decreased by the great land-owners. The Fascist terror can only for a short time prevent a wave of revolts, as took place in the decades from 1860—1870 and from 1890—1900. The three Communists elected in the South therefore have historic significance which can surpass all expectations.

Will the British Labour Government Stand for This?

By Evelyn Roy.

The British Government of India is perpetuating the best traditions of the late Czarist despotism. And it is backed up in its exercise of unlimited autocracy by the strength and power of the Labour Government in Britain, which through Parliament and the Secretary of State for India, exercises ultimate control over the lives and destinies of the 320,000,000 politically disabled subjects of His Majesty's Great Dependency. The latest example of governmental persecution in India (always excepting the chronic arrests, convictions and imprisonments, or imprisonment without conviction, which has become a matter of course in the daily governance of the country), is the trial now proceeding at Cawnpore against eight Indians, arrested under Section 121A of the Indian Penal Code, which reads as follows:

Section 121: "Whoever wages war against the Queen or attempts to wage such war or abet the waging of such war, shall be punished with death or transportation for life, and shall forfeit all his property.

Section 121A: Whoever, within or without British India, conspires to commit any of the offenses punishable by Sec-

tion 121, or to deprive the Queen of the sovereignty of British India or of any part thereof, or conspires to overawe, by means of criminal force or show of criminal force the Government or any local government, shall be punished with transportation for life or any shorter term, or with imprisonment of either description which may extend to ten years."

The charge, as may be seen, is a serious one, usually reserved for offenders of the first rank who have been implicated in acts of terrorism or concrete attempts to overthrow the government by force of arms. In the case of the eight persons now under trial in Cawnpore, the application of this charge is unique, in that it is based, not upon any terroristic act nor plot to use armed force, but upon the attempts of certain individuals to organize the Indian workers and peasants into a political party of their own for the improvement of their economic condition. In other words, the charge of "conspiracy against the sovereignty of the King-Emperor" is brought against eight persons who openly profess to be socialists or communists, and who have openly advanced the program of Socialism for the projected emancipation of the Indian working-class.

It is precisely as though a Magistrate's warrant were to be served upon the leading members of the Labour Party, the I. L. P., and the Communist Party for conspiracy to bring about the Social Revolution, which is included in all of their programs. The only difference lies in the fact that these organizations happen to flourish in Great Britain, while the eight accused were born under the laws of India. For these eight individuals have done nothing which lays them open to conviction, except to advocate the organization of a political mass-party of the Indian working-class under a program calling for their social, economic and political emancipation, in conjunction with the workers of other countries.

The preliminary hearings have been concluded, and the accused are committed for trial at the Sessions on April 22. In this preliminary hearing, the following accusations were lodged on behalf of the Crown by the Prosecution, with the Director of the Intelligence Department as Chief Witness:

"The accused are charged under Section 121A with conspiracy to establish a branch organization of the Communist International throughout British India with object to deprive the King Emperor of the sovereignty of British India. It is alleged on behalf of the prosecution that they decided to make use of the Association of Workers and Peasants or Peoples' Party under the leadership of the accused, for securing complete separation of India from Imperialistic Britain by violent revolution, with a economic program of such character as to attract both workers and peasants. It is further alleged that the organization was to have both a legal and an illegal basis, and attempt was to be made to secure control of the Indian National Congress. The conspiracy, (it is further alleged), was to be financed by the revolutionary organization in Russia, and an agreement constituting a conspiracy was arrived at by means of letters written by the accused to one another from various places, one of which was Cawnpore. It is also alleged that the accused introduced and circulated into British India proscribed newspapers, pamphlets and circulars of a revolutionary character."

As proof of these allegations, sixty out of eighty intercepted letters alleged to have been signed by Manabendra Nath Roy were presented, either in manuscript or photographed, by the Chief Witness for the Prosecution (the head of the Indian Secret Service), who on cross-examination submitted the following:

"Information was received by the Government that some persons whom the latter considered as Indian revolutionaries called a conference in 1921 at Moscow with a view to making arrangements for the furtherance of Bolshevik propaganda. Finally one M. N. Roy was elected as the leader of the organization. As a result of this information, Government authorized the stoppage, interception and examination of postal letters addressed to certain persons. List of such persons was added to from time to time. The Government of India ordered prohibition of certain newspapers and pamphlets under the Sea Customs Act. In course of time a number of letters, newspapers, and circulars were obtained, some originals, some copies and some photographs of originals which were produced as exhibits."

So much for the charge and the evidence, which speaks for itself as to the nature of British rule in India. What proof exists for the allegations that a Conference was called in Moscow for the object stated? On whose authority is the statement made that M. N. Roy was "elected chief of such an organization"? Without

the establishment of such facts in a court of law, by what right were the letters of certain individuals intercepted in the Indian mails? What was the nature of the newspapers, pamphlets and circulars, captured by the Government, which caused them to be prohibited in India, when the same newspapers, pamphlets and circulars were permitted free and unrestricted circulation throughout other parts of the British Empire? Granted, as alleged to be the case, that there existed an idea of "establishing a branch organization of the Communist International in India", — wherein does such an object fall within the purview of the Indian Penal Code, when branch organizations of this same Communist International exist in Great Britain and all the Self-Governing dominions, if by "branch" we mean to imply Communist Parties?

It is only in British India such a trial can be held on such a charge; that the organization of a working-class party for political and economic ends, and the international affiliation of such a party to the international proletarian movement can be made to constitute "conspiracy". The question that arises instantaneously to the mind, is this: "Will the British Labour Government, itself a working-class Party organized for political and economic ends, with the object of changing the present order, and affiliated to an international working-class movement, stand for this? Will the various working-class parties and organizations of the British Empire, whether Labour, Socialist or Communist, permit this attempt to crush the Indian movement?"

What are the facts of the case, so carefully veiled in the censorship which permits only the barest outlines of this trial to be published outside of India?

M. N. Roy is one of the founders of the Communist Party of India, established in October, 1920, as an open organization with a program which has been given to the world, and which embodies the main clauses of the Minimum Program of Socialism adapted to Indian conditions. It was this program which was presented before the 36th Indian National Congress of Ahmedabad in 1922, and which, through the agency of Reuter, was cabled out to India and published in the Indian press, with the object of terrorizing the Congress and preventing it from discussing any of the measures it proposed. He is the founder and Chief Editor of "The Vanguard", the organ of the Communist Party of India, which circulates freely in all parts of the civilized world, India excepted. He is the author of several books and pamphlets, equally prohibited in India and equally permissible elsewhere, and of widely-read articles in the European press, in which his views, his program and his tactics are openly expressed.

M. Singaravelu Chettiar is a venerable lawyer, native of Madras, who gave up his legal practice in response to the Non-Cooperation Campaign. He is a prominent Congressman, held in highest respect and esteem by his countrymen, and active in the cause of labour since the First-All-India Trade Union Congress of 1921. In the Gaya session of the Indian National Congress, he proclaimed himself as a Communist, and urged the organization of labour under the nationalist movement. He was appointed member of a Committee to organize labour on behalf of the National Congress. Since that time, he has been occupied with the publication of a weekly journal, "The Labour and Kishan Gazette", the organ of the "Labour and Kishan Party of Hindosthan", which calls for the organization of a political party of workers and peasants under an economic program, on the principle of Non-violent Non-Cooperation. He holds various other prominent public posts.

S. A. Dange of Bombay is a young man under thirty, Editor of "The Socialist", a weekly paper devoted to the propagation of Marxism and various radical ideas such as birth-control. He is one of the organizers of the Social Democratic Club of Bombay and author of several books and pamphlets, among them a brochure entitled: "Gandhi vs. Lenin". He too is a Congressman, known and respected in his province for his ability, intelligence and integrity to principle.

Of the other accused, R. L. Sharma is a political refugee from British persecution in French India, whither he sought refuge fourteen years ago on account of his political convictions; Muzaffar Ahmed and Ahmed Nalin Das Gupta are educated college students who were suddenly seized and imprisoned without trial or charge last year, and kept so until present proceedings; while Maula Bakhsh and Professor Ghulan Hossain were each condemned to long-term sentences after a hasty trial on the indefinite charge of being "Bolshevik Agents", — the former is a

college graduate, the latter a respected professor of Lahore, author of several books and ex-editor of a Socialist journal.

This in brief is the character of the accused, whose efforts on behalf of the Indian working-class it is sought to terminate on the vulgar charge of "conspiracy". For the crime of having studied, thought and written about the condition of the Indian masses and for having advocated a means for their emancipation from political and economic exploitation, these eight individuals stand in danger of receiving the maximum penalty of the law. Their case is undefended; no lawyer has come forward to defend them, — the first case of magnitude brought in in an Indian court against the leaders of the Indian working-class, which will serve as a precedent for future cases. So little is the true nature and gravity of the issue comprehended in India, as to allow such a case to go by default on evidence and charges that could not be substantiated in a court of law in any other part of the Empire.

What is the real meaning of this trial at Cawnpore, so suddenly sprung at this moment on evidence that has allowed to accumulate for several years? Why has it been reserved for a Labour Government to bear the stigma of persecution of working-class organization and propaganda in India?

The answer is very simple. First of all, it was desired to crush the steadily-growing mass movement that manifests itself in every part of India today, spontaneously and in response to imperative material conditions, and which the accused leaders but sought to guide and assist. Secondly, it is aimed to terrorize all those who, — in response to the spirit of the age, as expressed in Russia's mighty social revolution and in the national revolutions of other Eastern countries, — seek to study the ideas which made them possible and to apply the lessons to India. Thirdly, it is designed to prejudice the impending Anglo-Russian Conference by attempting to prove the existence of Russian propaganda and intrigue in British India.

Such tricks have been tried before and have failed in their despicable purpose. The Indian struggle for freedom, which owes so much and is destined to owe more to the moral and spiritual example of the mighty Russian Revolution, does not depend on the latter for its steady and inevitable growth. The true impetus is supplied by the nature of British rule itself, with the unbelievable poverty, misery and exploitation which provides a fertile soil for the growth of a revolutionary mass movement. Nor will the effort to identify this movement with the futile and sporadic terrorism of the young revolutionary nationalists, — an effort openly made by the authorities, be of use. The Communist Party of India has always repudiated and continues to do so, the use of such futile methods as bomb and the revolver against the all-powerful force of British Imperialism. The one and only path to the true emancipation of the Indian masses lies in the International Social Revolution. Till that day comes, they must learn to organize in their own defense to win such material improvements of their lot as may be open to them through the use of those tactics employed by the working-class everywhere against exploitation and oppression: **Will the British Labour Government and British Working-Class permit this struggle to be erased in blood and tears?**

The National Problem in the South-Eastern Europe.

By Karl Radek.

The rupture of the negotiations of the Soviet Union delegation with the delegation of the Roumanian boyars regarding the plebiscite in Bessarabia has more serious importance than this would seem on the first glance. It appears to be a diplomatic vanguard fight bringing forward on the order of the day a problem from which not only the Roumanian Boyars, but also the capitalist world in general will not be able to turn away: it puts on the order of the day the problem of the destinies of the nations residing in the South-East of Europe.

The victorious Entente has not solved the South-Eastern Problem, just as the war schemes of Germany were not solved, when she was at the zenith of her success. Germany and Austria-Hungary regarded the South-East as the bridge connecting them with the Near East. The single nations of the South-East they estimated as columns, on which this bridge is supporting itself, and these columns they strengthened with all means. For this purpose, Austria and Germany handed over Macedonia as a sop to Bulgaria, tried to seduce Roumania by promising her

Bessarabia, and another part of Serbia they delivered to the Austro-Hungarian imperialism. The Social Democratic herald of Austrian imperialism, Herr Renner, on the day of the defeat of the Serbians on the Cossovo Polye poured out his heart in a lyrical-historical article, by which he tried to prove to the Serbians that in the period of imperialism the loss of the national independence was not important, provided that the Serbian nation was maintained, though even in the form of cannon fodder and beasts of burden for the Austrian imperialism.

The victorious Entente, in its turn, proceeded along the steps of the Austrian and German imperialism; it remarked the columns as its columns, as its military and economical equipment, delivering considerable territories of Bulgaria as sops partly to the Serbs, partly to the Roumanians, and in its turn congratulating the Roumanian Boyars for utilizing the moment and seizing Bessarabia. As a result, Serbia has now a national problem, Roumania has now a series of national problems. Neither the one, nor the other appears to be a homogeneous national state, both appear to be a state of various nationalities. In Serbia, a small clique of Belgrad lawyers is oppressing Croats, Macedonians etc. In Roumania the Boyars are oppressing Bulgarians, Germans, Moldovians, Ukrainians, Jews etc. The masses of the peoples in these countries, awakened by the war, are raising their head and striving to tear the chains in which they are fettered. Especially in Roumania the national problem constitutes at the same time the problem of the emancipation of the peasants from the great land-owners. This problem is the problem of the peasant revolution in South-Eastern Europe.

Does this problem concern the Union of Soviet Republics? It does, not only for the reason that we are a revolutionary state, but also for the fact that this Union is not a new name for old Russia, but a Union of nations which, after having overthrown the yoke of the land-owners and of the capitalists, have thereby liquidated the privileges of Great Russia and created a fraternal community of the various nations which are living on the territory of the former empire of the Czars. The Union of Soviet Republics is not the continuation of the politics or Czarism. It recognised and recognises Lettland, Esthonia, Lithuania, Poland, in so far as they constitute states of nationalities formerly suppressed by Czarism. But which statute says that the Union of Soviet Republics must recognise the violation carried out against the Moldovans, Ukrainians etc. who were seized by the Roumanian Boyars thanks to robbery and swindle? Even when the relative strength compels us to recognise the fact of such a violation, as we did regarding Poland, which is oppressing White-Russians and Ukrainians, we do not cease to judge the struggle of the oppressed nationalities as a just one and morally and critically we are standing without restriction for them in their struggle for emancipation.

The peace negotiations with Roumania began in the moment when the military strength of Soviet Russia permitted her to pass from moral sympathy to political support. The Union of Soviet Republics is strong enough to refuse to recognise the fact of the Roumanian robbery and to put before Europe as a political act the demand of a plebiscite regarding the national problem in the South-East. The national masses of the Soviet Union, whose brethren are languishing under the national yoke of the Roumanian Boyars, had the right to demand from the Soviet government that it shall take over the protection of the Moldovians and the Ukrainians. The Soviet government did this and raised this slogan in the South-East of Europe. It showed the working masses of these countries that there is still another form of living together of the nations, besides their oppression on the part of the privileged clique of Great Powers, that such a form is the voluntary union of the nations which have thrown off the chains and fetters of imperialism and of the rule of the land-owners. Soviet Russia has pushed the problem forward which is becoming mature and which will play a formidable revolutionary role in the reconstruction of Europe on a new basis. Whether the masses of the peoples will attain this reconstruction in the immediate future or whether they are to meet with a long struggle, we do not know. Nevertheless the policy of the Soviet Union constitutes a practical revolutionary policy. Practical revolutionary policy does not consist in striving at an incidental gain of the moment, but in having established the real elements of the solution of the problem, and the driving forces of the historical process to base oneself upon them.

The Labour Government and the French Communists.

By Albert Treint.

II.

Labour Government and Soviets.

In the "Humanité" of the 29th January we read the following regarding the recognition of the Soviets:

"The real cause for the hesitation of MacDonald (to recognise the Soviets de jure) is to be sought in the 'bureaucracy'. The Prime Minister has up to now not had the courage to liquidate certain individual positions which he knows however to be a danger to his administrative control."

This good Mr. MacDonald is full of the best intentions. If he does not work better or quicker, it is due to the bureaucracy! No, we as Communists must say, this is the fault of the Labour Party and of the English working class, which has not yet realized that the proletariat cannot attain to real power by the Parliamentary game, but only by shattering the Bourgeois State in strenuous fight, in order to create the Proletarian State.

To hold the opinion, that it will be sufficient for MacDonald to liquidate certain individual positions, in order to have his hands free and to be able to act in accordance with the interests of the Russian Revolution and of the Proletariat, this means cherishing the most dangerous illusion.

Why should it not be shown that a Labour Government on a Parliamentary basis, functioning within the Constitutional and bourgeois frame-work, finds itself up against the resistance of the State apparatus which is permeated with bourgeois spirit, and that the Labour Government cannot claim to serve the working class, if it does not support itself on a strong network of proletarian institutions: Trade Unions, Co-operatives and Factory Councils permeated with the spirit of the class struggle.

On the 30th January, the "Humanité" waxed indignant over the hesitation on the part of MacDonald to recognize the Soviets.

"The Labour Party possesses the confidence of the workers who accorded it a large measure of credit at the elections. It represents something new, not yet tested. If the report which our Correspondent has transmitted is confirmed, if the Labour Government, under this or that pretext, postpones the unconditional recognition of the Soviets, it will fall into the most rapid and ignominious bankruptcy."

After having helped to maintain the illusion concerning the Labour Party regarding the English proletariat, why should the anathema be pronounced on the Government of the Labour Party regarding the recognition of the Soviets? Why should one not adopt an equally firm attitude in all spheres and declare in a similar manner: If the Labour Government does not take the necessary measures to do away with unemployment and to raise the wage, it will fall into the most rapid and ignominious bankruptcy.

If our Party were to persist in the line which it has followed hitherto, which consists of adopting a tolerant attitude towards the Labour Party in regard to the latter's domestic policy and a firm attitude regarding its policy in relation to Russia, then the danger would arise of the Party gliding into a policy which would make a distinction between the interests of the English workers and the interests of Soviet Russia. Such a policy would be against the whole tradition of the Communist International. For the rest, it is not at all the intention, either of the Soviet Government or the Russian Communist Party, to grant favours to the capitalist nations in return for their diplomatic recognition, just as this was not done in the case of the resumption of economic relations. In the speech with Zinoviev delivered at the 13th Conference of the Russian Communist Party, he emphasized that this was the moment to follow the line of conduct which Lenin traced after the Genova Conference. The longer the capitalists wait, the harder will be the conditions which Russia will impose on them.

Kamenev affirmed this very forcefully at the recent Congress of the Unions of Soviet Republics.

He declared („Humanité" of the 2nd February):

"The Soviet Government has no illusion regarding the coming to power of the Labour Party: it knows very well the policy of the leaders of the Labour Party. The English

workers, in voting for the Labour Party, have, at the same time, voted for the complete and unconditional recognition of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. But since MacDonald relies for support not only on the workers, but also on the Liberals, we are already witnessing attempts to prevent unconditional recognition."

Today, the recognition de jure is an accomplished fact. But we should be very simple, if we were to believe that this result is solely due to the Labour Party. It is because a section of the English Capitalists is in quest of markets, that the matters have been able to proceed with such expedition. Here again English capitalism works under the screen of Labourism.

The capitalists of our country do not deceive themselves in this respect.

The "Information Financière" of the 25th January writes: "... It seems on the contrary that one of his first gestures (referring to MacDonald) will be to recognize the Moscow Government and to back the admission of Russia to the League of Nations. (!) And here, the Labour Party idealism comes less into play than the realism of the business men."

For the rest the "Information Financière" of the same day objectively recognizes that the Labour Party is in reality a prisoner of the Liberals. It writes:

"The whole world is unanimous in recognizing that the activity of the Labour Party, as regards interior affairs, will be hampered owing to the votes of the Liberals as regards socialist reforms, and that it will only have a free hand as regards foreign policy."

It is quite evident that if the veto of the Liberals is not exercised in foreign affairs, this only to the extent to which MacDonald in this respect serves the interests of that fraction of British Capitalism represented by the Liberals. Soviet Russia is quite aware of this and far from making concessions in order to obtain recognition, she speaks with the greatest firmness. Here the words of Kamenev:

After having emphasized that in the East, Russia will continue to support the movement for national independence, Kamenev adds:

"Those people deceive themselves who think that the Soviet Government will pay for its recognition de jure."

We also witness the fact that the Soviets adopt a more precise and far more energetic language than our French Party does.

The exact reverse should be the case.

We know quite well that the Soviets are obliged to make concessions. But the more this is the case, the more the Communist Parties must exert their energies in their fight.

The more Revolutionary Russia finds herself compelled to a strategical retreat, the more the Communist parties must draw in their train the proletariat of the rest of the world.

In this manner the revolutionary reserves must join with the vanguard which is engaged in a retreat, in order to set a limit to the retreat and, if possible, to regain the lost territory.

It is an anomaly which runs counter to the whole tactics of the Communist International, that, while the Soviets are advancing, the French Party remains on the same spot and even enters on a retreat.

Labourism and Colonialism.

In another respect our Party limits itself to pointing out in the "Humanité" of the 6th February the disappointment in India following the speech of Lord Reading, Vice Roy of India, and the declarations of the Labour Party Ministers.

MacDonald has actually declared that India has to remain under the rule of the British Empire and that those who hoped to take advantage of the arrival of the Labour Party to power, would soon realize their error.

In this connection the "Humanité" limits itself merely to recording information while we, as Communists, ought to urge the necessity of uniting against English capitalism the struggle of the workers of the mother country and the struggles for national liberation carried on by the oppressed colonial peoples.

Communism and Labourism.

It is under these conditions that Cachin, according to the "Humanité", states:

"Today, England is ruled by one-time workers. This is a fact of enormous importance which can have far-reaching effects and whatever be the policy they conduct, we will aid them with all our forces."

Cachin declares that he never used these words. But why then are these words attributed to him in the party paper?

Why has the Party Central not intervened immediately in order to say that we Communists support the interests of the proletariat and of those who serve it and that consequently we only support another party to the extent to which it conducts a policy favourable to the workers, at the same time retaining our mistrust, justified by our experience, and keeping ourselves ready to criticize.

(Conclusion follows.)

GERMANY

Rallying for the German Election Campaign.

Over two dozen Parties.

By Peter Maslovski.

Already up to April 1st no less than twenty-five parties — an unheard of number for German conditions — have entered with lists of candidates for the elections to the German Reichstag. And one still hears of new parties, groups, and even small groups who are announcing candidates. With this, Germany has reached a record as regards the number of competing parties.

I.

The basic plan of the party formations is to be found in the chief parties of the Reichstag, from which individual oppositional groups have broken off from time to time and set themselves up as independent parties. These chief parties are 1. The German Nationalist (Deutschnational) which is monarchist and is based first of all upon the agrarian capital of the junkers, but is also supported by the middle classes, officers, officials, artisans and small shopkeepers who allege that they have been reduced to misery by the Republic. 2. The German People's Party (Deutsche Volkspartei), the party of Stinnes, of the industrial capitalists, who for the sake of profits can also place themselves upon the "hard facts" of the republic. 3. The Centre (Zentrum), a party which is less easy to define, because alongside of the Christian trade unions, officials, workers, upper and lower clergy, are to be found the great industrialists of the type of Peter Klöckner, large landowners of the type of the Westphalian counts and stock exchange jobbers like Louis Hagen, the baptised Jew from Cologne. 4. The Democratic Party, which finds its financial support in the ranks of finance and stock exchange capital, but is at the same time a party of those classes, mostly intellectuals, who after the revolution discovered that they were republicans. 5. The Social Democratic Party, which is without doubt the most conservative party in Germany today, as its whole wisdom has exhausted itself in the demand for the maintenance of the purely outward form of the republic both against right and left. 6. The Communist Party, which is the only purely proletarian and revolutionary party. In this connection, the smaller groups of the old Reichstag, such as the Bavarian People's Party, the Hanoverians, the two Independent etc. need not be considered.

II.

The German Nationalists have had to yield up their most active elements to the various kinds of fatherland, national, and Pan-German organizations, which seemed to promise more speedy success to the reactionary mass by their fascist and military methods. In these fascist antisemitic parties which, on the other hand, combat each other most furiously, often because of personal jealousy, one cannot see how things are. Here are the names of only a few of the Fascist Nationalist (völkische) parties who are participating in the election with their own candidates: German People's Freedom Party, German Social Party, German Party in Baden, (National Socialist).

In the German People's Party (Deutsche Volkspartei), in which the differences between the heavy industrialists and the industries which produce the finished articles have recently become more and more noticeable, there is a strong tendency at work on the part of Stinnes and Vögeler to form a National-Liberal union against Stresemann, thus following the tendency towards the right. At the last session of the German People's Party in Hannover, Stresemann went a long way to meet the National-Liberal group of the heavy industrialists — he knows quite well

that, if the withdrawal of the leading great industrialist wing were to take place, his party would suffer a dangerous material loss, but whether he can prevent a falling apart of the German People's Party is more than doubtful. Already in many places in Germany, National-Liberal candidates have been put up against those of the German People's Party, and the appearance of National Liberals in the election is as good as certain.

Also in the Centre, things are getting very shaky. Having regard to the presence of so many socially different groups in the Catholic Centre, one would naturally expect that several parties would break loose, but so far this is only the case with the most active elements of the Christian workers in the Rhineland and Westphalia. Under the name of the "Christian People's Fraternity (Christliche Volksgemeinschaft)", the workers of the Centre are taking up a position against the capitalist group of the Centre and are going into the election with their own candidates. It is sometimes hinted that this group is merely a safety valve which has been opportunely opened by the clericals, in order to prevent the Christian workers going over to the Communist Party. In Bavaria where the Centre goes under the name of the Bavarian People's Party (Bayrische Volkspartei), there is also a similar movement against the official policy of the Centre.

From the Democrats and the SDP., elements have broken away which promise to "defend" the republican gains of the revolution more energetically, than has so far been the case with the SDP. These constitute the Republican Party and the German Employees Party (Deutsche Arbeitnehmerpartei), both of which are formations which have naturally missed the historical opportunity, for there is need for almost anything in Germany except for new republican parties. These new organizations therefore only arise from the longing for seats by people who know quite well that there is nothing to be got from the old parties of the centre.

It is however well known that of all the parties, hell is really lost in the Social Democratic Party. The elite of the proletariat, the industrial workers, have long since left the ranks of this party, and it has long been a party of small bourgeoisie led by labour aristocrats in state service. If there are still groups of workers in it, it is thanks to the opposition of the "Left" under

Paul Levi. But in the selection of candidates, Levi and his supporters have everywhere suffered glorious shipwreck. Up to this very day Levi has nowhere found a semi-safe constituency. His friends, former Independent Socialists (USP.) and former Communist Working Fraternity (KAG.), will almost to a man not reappear in the Reichstag. The "Left" has not only not had its wishy-washy opposition knocked out of it, but has even contributed the most by its spurious radicalism to make it possible for the SDP., in spite of the huge process of decay that is going on within it to go into the election, at least outwardly, united. Then there are three other Socialist parties which are recruited chiefly out of former Independent Socialists. There is the Independent Social Democrat Party (Unabhängige Sozialdemokratische Partei), which contains the tattered remains of the old Independents; Ledebour, who was thrown out by these Independents, had to found a Socialist Alliance (Sozialistischer Bund) in order to be able to stand a candidate. Suddenly a Proletarian Party (Proletarische Partei) has announced itself whose origin is still obscure, but which has already declared that it will place its own candidates in the field.

In order to give a full list of the competing parties, one must mention the separatist Workers Party in the Rhineland (Rheinische Arbeiterpartei), the Party of the Hanoverians in Hanover, and the Bavarian Peasant Alliance (Bayrischer Bauernbund). Added to these, are the parties which are grouped in accordance with guild and economic interests principles, such as the Economic Party (Wirtschaftspartei), the House- and Landowners (Haus- und Grundbesitzer), the Land Reformers (Bodenreformer) etc.

III.

The most outstanding characteristic of the whole party system in the German elections is thus the decay of the old parties and the continual rise and disappearance of new formations. That is all, however, merely an expression of the great fluctuations of the masses, which at first but vaguely are becoming conscious of the class antagonisms and feel themselves correspondingly drawn to new parties. It is natural that the sub-consciousness of the failure of parliamentary and democratic systems which is present in the mass of the electors, also plays a great part, for

never has the dissolution of a parliament given rise to such a sense of liberation, as was the case with the ending of the existence of the old Reichstag. Clever mandate hunters are making the utmost use of this feeling of dissatisfaction, first to the founding of new parties and secondly in an attempt to renew and strengthen bourgeois parliamentarism. It is necessary to send "the right men", that is themselves, into parliament.

Opposed to this whole medley stand alone the Communist Party. Although after the October defeat, it of all parties had the greatest inner struggle for a new orientation, it still remains unexhausted and is becoming more and more a point of concentration for the proletariat which is breaking free from the democratic illusions. And herein really consists the task of the Communists, thoroughly to expose the meaning of the numerous formations of parties and the mandate hunters, and to prevent the growth of new illusions. The Communists will unmask the old parties of the Reichstag as the toadies of capitalism in the same way as they will characterise the numerous new nationalist parties as the harbingers of a bloody facism, and as they will pitilessly point out the folly of new left republican parties. In a phrase, the conditions of this year's election are especially ripe for making use of the whole election campaign for the propagation of the principles of Communism.

The results of the election will show outwardly the sharpening of the class antagonism, i. e. the development of the dictatorship with its fascist and proletarian phases. The parties of the centre, of the great coalition will suffer great losses and most of all the SDP. Even Social Democrat newspapers count upon a loss of 50% so that the SDP. will not even retain 100 of its present 180 mandates. The defeat of the Democrats will also be disastrous, and in the same way the German People's Party will have to give up large numbers to the extreme right. Even the Centre which, according to experience, is usually the best off, is bound to lose a certain number of seats. That those new democratic parties which give themselves proletarian airs which have been mentioned above, will obtain a mandate in any constituency, is practically out of question.

On the other hand the new fascist nationalist parties will be able to show great success with their social and national demagoguery, although the old German Nationalists will also show a great increase in seats. It is reckoned, there will be about fifty members of the new fascist nationalist parties. The number would be even greater, if it were not for the great splits in this fascist movement.

Parallel to the gains of the extreme right, there is the consolidation of the best part of the proletariat in the Communist Party. The sixty to eighty seats which will fall to the Communists, will be the expression of the fact that the German Communist Party has become the undisputed leader of the proletarian masses who are pressing forward, not only for the moment of the election struggle, but also for the inevitable deciding struggle between Labour and Capital.

THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

Some Facts about the Bombay Strike.

By Evelyn Roy.

150,000 mill operatives, including 30,000 women and children, have been on strike and locked-out of the textile-mills of Bombay for nearly three months. All the mills of the district, 83 in number, are closed down. The question at issue is the payment of the annual bonus to the operatives, in addition to their usual wages. In July of last year, the owners put up a notice that the usual bonus, received by the operatives during the last five years and regarded by them as a form of supplementary wages, would not be paid. The men did not heed the notice, most of them being illiterate, and it was not until the end of the year when the bonus became payable, that they realized the issue at stake. A strike was declared in the middle of January, followed immediately by a lock-out on the part of the owners, with the idea of forcing the men back to work unconditionally.

The monthly wages of Bombay mill-operatives are 35 rupees for men and 17 rupees for women, for a ten-hour day. This sum is insufficient to maintain their bodily health and strength, or to provide them with the most elementary necessities. For this reason, during the height of the post-war boom-period, when

mill-profits scored to several hundred percent, the annual bonus was granted as a form of supplementary wages. The cost of living has risen (according to official figures) 58% since 1914; profits have risen from 674 lakhs* of rupees in 1917 to 1559 lakhs in 1921, with a slight falling-off in 1922—23. The cotton-mill workers are proverbially underpaid and overworked, with the result that they are always heavily in debt to the money-lender. Their right to organize into trade-unions is not legally recognized; they have no regular labour-organizations and no union fund. Their leaders, up to the time of the present strike, were drawn from the ranks of the bourgeoisie, — lawyers, politicians, philanthropists and professional labour-leaders, who were closer in interests and sympathies to the employing class than to the workers. They sabotaged every attempt to strike on the part of the latter; they took the part of the employers in every decisive issue; they used their influence to keep the men at work and satisfied with the old conditions instead of attempting to better themselves. The Government, which affects to remain neutral in labour disputes, has never hesitated to call out armed police and military to aid the employers in guarding their property and crushing a strike.

Thus every institution and condition was against the success of the present strike, as has been the case of previous ones. Yet the textile workers of Bombay have maintained their struggle for three months in the face of all odds; they have remained peaceful and non-violent in the teeth of the most open provocation; they have repudiated their old leaders and elected new ones from their own ranks to present their demands before the government and the employers; they have endured with marvellous fortitude the sufferings of hunger and privation throughout the whole of the strike-period. They have never wavered in their demand for the payment of the bonus as a prerequisite for returning to work; they have maintained their solid front against the efforts of the employers to entice a part of them back to work, and against the sabotage of the government and the public, which has refrained from giving them any concrete help during the long and bitter dispute.

The textile-workers of Bombay are dying in the streets from starvation. Their January wages, already earned before the declaration of the strike and lock-out, have been illegally withheld by the owners. The grain-dealers and provision-shops have long ago refused them credit. They are unable to pay their rent for the miserable rooms in which they huddle by tens and dozens in the infamous Bombay Chawls (tenements). The workers have never possessed any material resources to carry them from one day to the next, nor any central fund to maintain them in time of strike. They are sticking to their demands in the face of slow starvation. Appeals to the public for material help, and to the government have met with no response. *The Charitable Associations of Bombay are all controlled by the Mill-Owners Association and have refused to give aid to the strikers.* The Legislative Councils, both national and provincial, have made no move to come to the assistance of the sufferers. The Indian National Congress, which at each of its annual sessions since 1916 has pledged its support to the cause of Indian labour, refused to sanction the granting of a sum for supplying grain or credits to the starving strikers. The All-Indian Trade Union Congress, which presumes to lead the struggle of the Indian workers against the employing class, has never so much as mentioned the Bombay strike, nor sent one of its office-holders to the scene of the struggle to investigate and guide it, nor issued a single appeal on behalf of the starving strikers. The Fourth Annual Session of the All-Indian Trade Union Congress, which was scheduled to be held on March 7th, the very day on which the workers of Bombay were being shot down by the guns of the police and military, *deferred its session indefinitely because of internal quarrels and factional disputes among its office-bearers.* When it finally met on March 14th, it broke up in a rain of abuse and all-round fisticuffs, without so much as giving one thought to the cause of the 150,000 striking mill-hands of Bombay, nor of identifying the All-India Trade Union Congress with the greatest industrial struggle that has ever been waged in India.

The British Labour Government and Labour Party, which rule the destinies of the Indian people today, have limited their interests in the fate of the starving Bombay workers on strike for a living wage, to a statement in the House of Commons that the matter "has been left to the Government of India". While in

**) a lakh equals 100,000 rupees.

Britain, the Dockers Strike, the Tram and Bus Strike, and other threatened strikes received the immediate and closest attention of the Government, — in India, an industrial dispute affecting the welfare and very lives of 150,000 workers, to which must be added their families and dependents and reaching out in its consequences to the very shores of England in its effect on the Lancashire textile-industry, has been allowed to proceed for *three months* without a motion to interfere on the part of the Labour Government, nor a gesture of sympathy or solidarity on the part of the Labour Party.

The British Labour Government and the British Labour Party have permitted the striking and locked out mill hands of Bombay to die in the streets from starvation, to be shot down by the rifles of armed police and military, without using their supreme power as head of the British Empire, to bring this strike to an end and to secure victory to the just demands of the Bombay workers.

What are the facts of this strike? In what way is it proceeding, and what will be the result of a defeat of the workers, both in India and in Great Britain?

The present struggle is more than a mere demand for payment of bonus on the part of the workers. It is an offensive on the part of Indian capitalism (which includes both Europeans and natives) against the Indian working-class, to reduce still further its already pitifully low standard of living. It was intended to follow up the refusal of the bonus with a cut in wages. The comparative lull in the textile-industry was seized upon by the owners as a favourable moment to cut into the wage-bill, which had been slightly raised during the boom period in response to the rise in the cost of living and the consequent strike wave that visited Bombay in 1919. Such an offensive had already taken place in Ahmedabad, where the workers were forced to accede. The Bombay mill-owners were prepared to close down for a short time, to force the men to submit to the new conditions. The strike of the operatives in January was promptly replied to by the declaration of a two-weeks lock-out. It was held that this period would suffice to bring the men to their knees. In spite of the opposition of their so-called leaders, who, having failed in all their efforts to prevent the strike, tried by every means to persuade them to resume work unconditionally, the workers instinctively realized that more than the bonus was at stake, — if they yielded, the next attack would be directed against their wages. Therefore they hold firm, and the lock-out had to be extended for two further successive periods of two weeks. At the close of each one, unsuccessful attempts were made by the owners to reopen the mills with black-leg labour. Signs were posted, saying that if the men would resume work, the owners guaranteed not to reduce wages, but nothing was said about the bonus. The men held out, and at the end of six weeks, the owners began to feel the effects of the complete stoppage, and division arose in their own ranks. At a meeting of the Bombay Mill-Owners Association, a strong Indian minority was for granting the demand for bonus, but a slight majority against it carried the day. *In the battle between Lancashire and Bombay, in which Lancashire textile products are protected at the expense of native industry, it is the Indian workers who must pay the difference in a lower wage-bill to permit the Indian textile industry to thrive.*

At the end of six weeks, in response to the urgent demands of the workers and the pressure of public opinion, the Governor of Bombay, Sir Leslie Wilson, who had refrained from taking any action calculated to bring the dispute to a close, appointed an Enquiry Committee with power to investigate "the customary, legal or equitable claim of the men to payment of bonus". This Committee had neither power to recommend nor to arbitrate; despite the request of the workers, no representative of labour was included among its members, appointed from the prominent capitalists and government henchmen of Bombay. It was a move to gain time, by appearing to do something, and to drag out the negotiations, until the workers would be forced to surrender. This Committee held three sittings, extending over a period of two weeks. Appointed on Feb. 29th, it published its findings on March 12th, five days after the events of March 7th, when protest meetings of the strikers were fired upon by the police, resulting in five killed, four wounded and thirteen arrests. The decision of the Committee caused no surprise, given its nature and composition; it declared that: "The mill-workers have not established any enforceable claim, customary, legal or equitable, to the payment annually of a bonus," ... and that "the results of the working of the mill industry as a whole for the year

1923 are such as to justify the contention of the mill owners that the profits do not admit of the payment of a bonus".

On March 7th, just before these findings became public, a notice was posted on all the mill premises to the effect that: "To all workers willing to resume work unconditionally, the mills will be opened for resumption of work on March 8th, and two days later, the January wages will be paid". The notice was signed by S. D. Saklatwala, Chairman of the Bombay Mill-Owners Association. The result was the tragic, and till present writing, unexplained events of March 7th, when in reply to some stone-throwing on the part of assembled groups of strikers gathered together to discuss the notice, police fire was opened without warning on the unarmed crowd, killing five and wounding four. Thirteen workers who attempted to loot a grain-shop were arrested.

This brutal massacre, which roused a stern of indignation in the Indian public mind, was brushed aside by the Bombay Government with the single statement in the Bombay Legislative Council on March 8th that "the Government desire to offer their sympathy to the victims, particularly in view of the very creditable behaviour of the men hitherto... Military patrols have been called out, but it is hoped that it will not be necessary to use them unless absolutely essential to preserve law and order". Asked by a member if there was any loss to property as a result of the acts of the strikers, the Home Member replied: "I understand there has been some window-breaking and some looting in the mills. But so far, I have no information of any serious injury to any of the mills.

The events of March 7th precipitated long-delayed action on the part of the Bombay Government, and the Mill-Owners Association was informed by His Excellency that: "January wages should be paid at once without affecting the question of bonus and irrespective of resumption of work by the men, and that the mill-owners should meet the representatives of the men to discuss the questions at issue." It should be remembered that this tardy step to effect negotiations was made two months after the beginning of the dispute, which had plunged 150,000 workers, together with their wives and families, into the direst distress, and the whole industrial life of Bombay into an abnormal state. Would a similar strike of such dimensions have been allowed to drag out its course in Lancashire without some action being taken by the Labour Government?

Yet still another month has been allowed to pass without any decisive action being taken to bring the dispute to a close. The latest reports bring news that the striking operatives, exhausted and starving, have appealed to the government for help to assist 50,000 of them with their wives and children, to be repatriated to their villages, where they hope to find some kind of work. Fifty thousand have already found their own way back to the country districts, — the remainder, three times fifty thousand at the least if we count those dependent upon them, remain in Bombay to fight it out to the end, performing casual labour, subsisting on precarious Charity, or dying outright in the streets of Bombay. The government has been asked to provide them with some form of work to enable them to survive the struggle. A few of the smaller mills are reported to have opened, to which a few thousand men had straggled back to work. But the overwhelming majority remain firm to their voluntary pledge to abstain from rejoining the mills until their original demands have been met.

The British Labour Party, in power today as the British Labour Government, has it within its means to save the Bombay workers from death by starvation, and from the lingering existence which exploitation renders worse than death. It can send material help to support the starving strikers, and it can demand arbitration of the dispute in a manner fair and just to the cause of the Indian working-class.

Upon the outcome of this strike hangs the fate, for the next few years, of the Indian textile-workers in their heroic struggle for a living wage. *And upon the payment of a living wage to the Indian textile workers depends the future well-being of the textile workers of Great Britain, whom the Indian workers are being forced, against their will, to undercut.* The Bombay strike is but another instance of the fact that the international proletariat must hang together or they will hang separately.

THE YOUTH MOVEMENT

Convocation of the Fourth Congress of the C. Y. I.

The Fourth Congress of the C. Y. I. has been called for the 21st June to Moscow. Thereby previous announcements are cancelled.

The sitting of the Bureau will not take place.

The Agenda of the Congress has been fixed as follows:

1. Political Situation, Activity of the C. I. and Tasks of the C. Y. I.
2. Report of the Executive Committee (with Sub-Commissions for the problems of National Sections).
3. The Continuation of the Reorganization on the basis of Shop Nuclei.
4. Economic and Trade Unions Work.
5. Immediate Tasks of Antimilitarist Work.
6. The Work among Peasant Young People.
7. The Program of the C. Y. I.
8. Opponents.
9. Sections:
 - a) Oriental and Colonial Countries.
 - b) Sport.

APPEALS

Defend the Bulgarian workers and peasants!

Manifesto of the E. C. C. I. to the Labour Parties, Peasants Alliances, Trade Unions and the Co-operatives of All Lands.

The Bulgarian White Guards are preparing a new crisis and new turmoils in Bulgaria with praiseworthy eagerness. In spite of the „amnesty“ by virtue of which the tools and agents of the government maltreated and still continue to maltreat the workers and are excused from all responsibility, the prisons are still overflowing with thousands of „insurgents“. Not have only the revolutionaries who fled abroad not returned, their number grows steadily. The terror of the government which is directed against the workers and peasants continues as it always was. Cruel ill-treatment and even killing are the order of the day. Meetings of workers are not allowed and are forcibly broken up. The right of organisation of the workers is walked upon most brutally. The capitalist offensive which was kept within certain bounds at the beginning of the White Guard regime is now developing with full force. Workers and clerks, peasants and artisans feel the cruel blows of the capitalist system of robbery in an equal measure. Exploitation and unemployment are continually increasing, the arbitrary acts are innumerable and the rise in the cost of living continues in the most unheard of way. The government is completely in the service of the greedy bourgeois who feel themselves to be the undisputed lords of the land.

The Communist Party and the Communist Young People were actually forced into illegality on September 12th 1923 but the deep hatred of the masses against the blood-thirsty bourgeois was strengthened thereby: the workers and peasants have merely gathered still more closely around their class organisations and quickly organised a new party — „the Party of the Useful Workers“. The bankrupt White Guards who are clinging to power are strangling all the class organisations of the working people. Not only the Communist Party (40,000 members) and the Communist Young People (30,000) had to disappear but also the Trade Unions (40,000) and the General Workers' Co-Operative (70,000) and the independent „Party of the Useful Workers“ had to be dissolved and their property, the „proletarian mite“ had to be confiscated. The government of Professor Zankov has already applied to the courts with such a demand. (In the meantime the court has „delivered judgement“ in accordance with the view of M. Zankov, Ed.) Concerning the agricultural societies the government hopes to split and weaken them with the help of the bourgeois elements that they contain.

At the same time the whole bourgeois press, with the Social Democrat press included, are preparing „public opinion“ for this

new attack upon the class organisations by a furious campaign. By a veritable torrent of disgusting lies and liberal servings of false documents and provocations, the White Guards are seeking to cover up their fright of the organised struggle of the mass of workers which is becoming more and more strong, the bourgeois are seeking to conceal their efforts to get rid of those proletarian economic organisations which are a hindrance to them in their campaign of robbery. The Social Democratic agitators are seeking to conceal their secret wish to disorganise the labour movement and to induce the despised mass of the proletariat to join their fascist ranks.

However the efforts of the professors and generals with their Social Democratic lickspittles will be in vain. Neither the white terror nor the White Guard capitalist offensive will succeed in breaking the fighting spirit of the masses. In the whole land the dissatisfaction with the tyrants of June 1923 is growing. The ground is disappearing more and more under the feet of the conspirator government. Complete decay is ruling in their midst. They are making enemies of all who were deceived by their lying promises, even of those who yesterday carried out their bloody orders. The methods which are being newly used against the organisation of the working class will not strangle their fight to organise. The masses will always find new forms to express their protest. If the White Guards in their shortsightedness bar all the ways to the legal struggle, the crisis in the land will thereby become all the sharper and so it will come all the more quickly to the only possible solution — the formation of a government of workers and peasants.

The E. C. C. I. calls upon all labour parties, peasant alliances, trade unions, and co-operatives of organised workers and peasants of all lands to defend the Bulgarian workers and the organisations of their class. Let the impudent Bulgarian White Guards who are seeking sympathy and support from the organised workers of other lands through the Bulgarian class traitors feel the fist of international solidarity upon their heads. Let the Bulgarian workers and peasants feel themselves strengthened by the aid of the whole world and crowd to their fighting organisations with still greater readiness in order to continue the struggle for a government of workers and peasants with greater energy and to end it victoriously.

Hands off from the class organisations of the Bulgarian workers and peasants!

Long live the power of the Workers and Peasants in Bulgaria!

Long live the international solidarity of all those who work!

The Executive Committee of the Communist International.

POLEMICS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Discussions in the C. P. of Germany.

I.

Propositions of the Centre Group of the C. P. of Germany for the drawing up of the Tactical Resolution and Program of Action at the Party Conference.

1. In making an estimate of the errors of the past, of the reformist remissness and danger in the CP. of Germany, and of the mistakes of the October retreat, the two left fractions have been enabled to attain unity on all essential questions by means of the Moscow agreements. The differences existing with reference to individual questions, such as for instance, the possibility of a victory in October, are not decisive for the present political discussion and the working out of a common line of tactics.

The Centre Group is above all in full agreement with what has up to now been the left opposition in believing that the October defeat was mainly due to serious opportunist deviations, which found disastrous expression in various ways since the Ruhr crisis, and especially in some of the most important formulas of the Leipzig Party conference. The united front tactics were no longer applied by the Party solely as a revolutionary method of winning over and mobilising the masses, but under the delusion that it would be possible in Germany to form a fighting alliance with at least the left German socialist party and to effectuate a transition stage between bourgeois democracy and proletarian dictatorship. This delusion showed itself with striking clearness in the politically wrong attitude adopted by the Zeigner government after the Leipzig blood

bath, in the position taken up by the Party in the question of participation in the Saxon government, and at the Chemnitz conference, where the Party permitted its actions to be made dependent on the decisions of Social Democratic functionaries. The result was that the fight was not taken up, and the retreat followed without a struggle.

These opportunist dangers are caused by the temporary retardation in the speed of international revolutionary development, and by the fact that the Party still finds it difficult, in actual daily practice, to emancipate itself completely from the residue of Social Democratic ideology. A zone of special danger is formed by the necessity of communist detail work in the trade unions, the revolutionary utilization of the state and municipal parliaments, the work in the factory councils' movement, the agitation among the hesitant strata of officials, intelligentsia, small holders, and small tradesmen and craftsmen. The Labour Party government in England, the temporary successes gained by the left bloc in France, and the attendant attempts at consolidation made by the Socialist Party in Germany, have proved that even during the present objectively extremely revolutionary period, it is still possible for temporary pacifist-democratic relapses to take place among the masses. This renders doubly necessary the revolutionary watchfulness of the German CP. Thus the chief danger at the present time is formed by the opportunist deviations, especially in view of the opportunist tendencies existing in our brother Parties.

The most important common task incumbent on the Centre Group and on the comrades of the Left is the relentless combatting of tendencies, groups and persons with a trend to the right, in the German Party and in the Communist International alike. Unless this is done, there is no possibility of real activity on the part of the Party, or of winning over the majority of the proletariat for the revolutionary struggle.

2. The attempts being made by the left opposition to combine a justifiable criticism of the manner in which the united front tactics have been applied with a uniting of the whole of the tactical lines hitherto pursued by the Party and the Communist International, and thus actually to lead the Party and the Communist International back to the propagandist period, form today the most essential point of disagreement between the two fractions. Here the Centre Group points out that the left did not openly decline the united front tactics — the most important tactics possessed by the CI. during the present period — until after the October defeat. The Centre Group, now as ever, holds to the decisions of the Enlarged Executive and of the IV. World Congress, which designate the united front tactics as the most important method for mass agitation and mobilisation at the present time. These methods of agitation, of mobilisation and organisation of the broadest masses for the proletarian revolution under the leadership of the Communists, methods which the left are not able to substitute by better ones, must be further employed in the most various forms in most sections of the CI., despite the grave errors which have been committed, and although in Germany the united front can only begin from below. The great dangers attendant on the united front tactics must be continually remembered and pointed out.

3. The first pre-requisite for a correct application of the united front tactics, everywhere and at all times, is that the Party retains its full freedom of agitation and propaganda, that it stands unequivocally and straightforwardly before the masses as the representative of communist aims and principles, that it warns the masses in every situation against the reformists, and that it separates itself from the reformists, with its own slogan of action, the moment reformist betrayal comes apparent in an attempt to retard the forward movement of the masses. If these premises are observed, such forms of united front tactics as the following are possible: application to leaders, agitative support of reforms in themselves inadequate, but appearing attainable to the masses, co-operation with even reformist leaders in common committees, issue of own slogans popularizing communist aims (the so-called transitional slogans, as labour government, etc.). Such forms of the united front tactics may even be absolutely necessary during certain phases, for the purpose of awakening broad proletarian mass movements despite a numerically weak group of communists, and in spite of the powerful influence of the socialists among the masses. But in no case can it be permitted that the united front tactics lead to the abandonment of self-initiative and action on the part of the Party, or to making the action of the Party dependent on any temporary connection with the heads of reformist

unions and parties. The most important work of the united front tactics, one which must be performed whatever the form taken by the tactics, is the formation of proletarian united front organs from below, out of the masses.

4. The Centre Group declares, in full agreement with what has hitherto been the left opposition, that today, after the revolutionary October crisis, only the united front tactics from below are possible in Germany. But this does not mean that we are to confine ourselves solely to mass agitation, and to occupying ourselves with the daily needs and daily demands of the masses. Like the whole united front tactics, the united front from below signifies a method of mobilising the masses, of awakening mass struggles, and of creating proletarian mass organs. In view of the growing German nationalist Fascism and in view of attempts at consolidation made by the SP. of Germany, the Party must regard it as its leading task to gather together the proletarian masses who are still followers of the German SP., of the Fascisti and of the Christian and other trade unions, to unite these in action with the communist workers, to free them from their reformist or petty bourgeois leaders and organizations, and to bring them under communist leadership. The growing masses of the unorganized confront the Party with the important task of saving these primitive broad strata of the proletariat from Fascist Nationalist demagoguery, of shaking them out of their indifference, of uniting them with the Party and with the active section of the proletariat by means of the united front organs. For this purpose the Party must draw up a concrete program of action and must awaken the masses to fight for this emergency program by means of further development of the factory councils' movement, of the control committees, and of the factory defence units, (hundertschafts), as also by the formation of tariff committees and committees of action in the factories and among the unemployed. The CP. of Germany has to gain the leadership of all the proletarian class organs arising out of the commencing defensive struggle of the proletariat against the capitalist offensive. Where these organs are still influenced by reformist or Fascist Nationalist functionaries, the CP. must issue warnings at once against these, and do its utmost to ensure their expulsion. The Party must use the first fresh act of treachery on the part of the reformist or yellow functionaries as an opportunity for putting forward the ultimative demand for their removal. At the factory councils elections the Party has to submit clear and revolutionary lists, which may contain, besides the names of communists, those of Social Democratic or non-party workers tried and tested in actual fighting, and recognizing the program of action of the Communists. Social Democratic functionaries must be called upon to leave the SP. of Germany. Besides this, the Party has to form organizations on the lines of the factory and unemployed councils movements for the purpose of uniting the unorganized workers with those organized in the trade unions, the unemployed with the employed.

State and municipal parliaments are no suitable ground for the united front tactics, but merely provide opportunity of disintegrating and unmasking bourgeois democracy and petty bourgeois (Fascist Nationalist and Social Democratic) parties. The chatter about "proletarian majorities" arises out of the delusion that such "majorities" are utilisable for the benefit of the workers, which delusion must be combatted with the utmost energy, for it is the expression of a trend which ends in an alliance with Social Democracy. Even on the smallest municipal council, Social Democracy and Nationalist Fascism alike must be openly treated as counter-revolutionary parties.

5. The open action of the reformist trade union leaders as willing agents and henchmen of the heavy industrialist dictatorship, and the profound depression prevailing among the masses in consequence of the economic crisis and the treachery of their former leaders, has brought about an acute crisis in the trade unions. Great masses have turned their backs on the trade unions. In the opinion of the CP. of Germany, neither abandoning the trade unions nor hastily founding new unions is the right way to overcome the yellow trade union bureaucracy or to create a broad revolutionary trade union movement. Such modes of procedure only have the effect of aiding the yellow trade union bureaucrats in their purpose of converting the trade unions into blackleg organizations in the service of capital. In spite of the treachery of their leaders, the trade unions still contain great masses who would be delivered over defenceless into the hands of the yellow bureaucrats if the communists left the unions. Therefore the communists must organize

from below the resistance against the mass expulsion of the whole opposition on the broadest basis in the trade unions, in order to prevent the transformation of the trade unions into yellow blackleg organizations. Without dallying for a moment with the idea of an offensive trade union split, they must none the less determinedly face the danger of a split on the part of the agents of capital, so that in cases where the yellow trade unions contrive to bring about the split, the broad masses of the members are already on the side of the communists. At the same time the communist factory nuclei and fractions must carry on systematic work among the masses of the unorganized, in order that these may be gathered together by the factory councils, unemployed councils, action or tariff committees, enlisted in the ranks of the proletarian fighting front, and won for the Party and for the economic fighting organizations of the proletariat.

6. Other essential errors which have been committed by the whole Party are to be found in the defective organizational and technical preparation of the Party for the struggle with the white dictatorship and for the final struggle. These errors led to a number of further mistakes in October. The CP. of Germany must always be equipped for illegality, even in times of legality and semi-legality, and must maintain a schooled apparatus. In no case must it permit the delusion to spread that the bourgeoisie is going to look calmly on at the preparations for the final struggle. These preparations must be carried on as if the fight were going to begin tomorrow, and the idea that revolutionary struggles are not likely within any calculable time must not be allowed to arise. The Party must grasp the fact that the crisis in capitalism, despite occasional and apparent improvement, is likely to be the cause of revolutionary complications and surprising turns of events, and that the momentary passivity of the proletariat may tomorrow be transformed into intensified activity. The CP. of Germany must not only be prepared for such eventualities at any moment, but must seek to accelerate them. The CP. of Germany must hammer the idea of the coming revolution into the masses.

7. The Party cannot fulfil these tasks unless it is organizationally connected with the masses in the workshops. Its organization must thus be based upon the factory nuclei. The objections raised by many comrades to this reorganization of the Party, and the attempts to retard it, signify increased difficulty and delay for revolutionary preparation. It goes without saying that this organizational re-formation of the Party must not be carried out mechanically, but during the process of work, and during the readaptation of the whole Party to its revolutionary tasks. The members must be ideologically prepared and must be taught by their own work the necessity of the reorganization, so that they themselves will wish for it. But all these preparations must not lead to a delay in accomplishing our task.

8. Up to now the Party has shown itself exceedingly weak with regard to demonstrations against the White terror, with regard to the awakening and intensification of actions of economic self-defence, and in the combination of economic action with political demands and actions. Here, too, a dangerous passivity is to be observed. Many comrades of the left have raised the most untenable objections to the demonstrations against the White terror, and derided them as playing at revolution, instead of preparing for them with the utmost energy in the factories and among the unemployed, and of combining them with economic demands. Demonstrations are a valuable accessory during a period of acute economic crisis, of capitalist offensive and of White terror, and aid the Party and the most active section of the proletariat to overcome the depression in the masses, and to reawaken them to fresh activity.

The Party must by no means permit the avoidance of collisions with home or foreign state power — even armed

power — to become a leading motive of its tactics (no tactics of "Don't let yourselves be provoked!"), especially during the present, objectively, extremely revolutionary period, and beneath the regime of White terror. There is no possibility of "Bolshevizing the Party" without its activity among the broad masses. The customary phrase of "all or nothing" is an opportunism of a specially dangerous type, for it can be used to cloak deficient preparation for the taking up of the necessary revolutionary struggle, with all forces strained to the utmost, when the moment comes. The Bolshevik core can only develop amid the daily agitation, organization and action of the Party, and it is this core which, heading the decisive section of the proletariat, — that is majority in the decisive districts and industrial groups — will fix the term at which the final struggle takes place.

9. In order to accomplish these tasks: The overcoming of the opportunist danger and the formation of a really Communist Party in Germany, a sincere and close co-operation between the former left opposition and the Centre Group is a vital necessity. As the tactical crisis in the CP. of Germany is inevitably accompanied, not only by an opportunist wing, but by tendencies to Fascism and Communist Labour Party deviations, a common struggle of the centre group and the group hitherto belonging to the left opposition is an urgent necessity for the effective combatting of these tendencies. Without making any ideological concessions to these trends of ideas, it is nevertheless necessary to make a careful study of the psychology of these confused, but generally sincere revolutionary workers. If these two fractions are to co-operate in the future, and eventually to amalgamate, it is necessary that both the fractions as they exist today clearly recognize that they are dependent upon one another, and that the leadership of the Party by one fraction alone, the other being excluded, is bound to be highly detrimental to the capacity for action, the unity and the political influence of the Party. We are thus opposed to any suppression of minorities, and to political expulsions. The Party leaders, in the districts and in the central alike, must be selected from both fractions, the majority of course taking the lead in each individual case. The fact that the Party has up to now not been able to overcome the passivity and depression in the ranks of its own members, and that it has been impossible for it to play a decisive active role among the proletariat, is greatly due to the purely fractional struggles, which place the striving for clarity of aim in the background in favour of a struggle for the majority in the Party.

10. The CP. of Germany must lend more determined support than ever before to the Executive, as the leader of the centralized Communist world Party, in its efforts to maintain discipline, in its struggle against all reformist errors, and in its endeavours towards the formation of a system of tactics capable of adaptation to concrete conditions, but none the less completely revolutionary, and having for its goal the winning over of the majority of the proletariat for the struggle for the proletarian dictatorship. In this struggle for the Bolshevization of the European parties, the CP. of Germany must not limit itself to an alliance with small groups, frequently ones with an expressly left deviation, in the Comintern. It must rather seek to support, in collaboration with the Executive, the whole of the antireformist sections of the CI., the groups striving for revolutionary tactics, and to further the ideological enlightenment of these groups. Only in this way is it possible to exterminate the reformist residue in the CI. without sacrificing the character of the proletarian mass parties, and without the necessity of renouncing the pursuance of an active communist policy calculated to rouse the masses into striving for the revolutionary conquest of power.