THE LABOUR MONTHLY

A MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

Editor : R. PALME DUTT

Volume 8 December, 1926 Number 12

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NOTES of the MONTH

The Miners' Fight — Reformist Defeatism — "Now for the Poli ical Struggle" — New Will o' the Wisps — MacDonald's Last Phase—Snowden and Super-Capitalism— I.L.P. Lavish Promises—The Retreat from Socialism— The I.L.P. and Stability—Pre-war and The War — Evidence of Stabilisation — Qualifying Factors — Instability — Unique Present Crisis—Capitalist Inability to Solve— Illusory Remedies—International Cartels — Fordism — Rationalisation—The Future in Britain.

THE miners' overwhelming rejection of the Government's surrender terms is once again the most powerful declaration yet of the growing revolutionary will within the British working class, rising higher and higher to every development of the crisis, and showing once again the complete failure of every section of the existing leadership to voice them. It raises the most urgent question of speedy and unqualified action by the whole working class in order that such courage and determination shall not look in vain for the support to which it is justly entitled. The miners' struggle is the deepest experience of the British working class. Compared with this, all that has gone before has been no more than skirmishes and half-hearted trials. Here have been shown the real conditions of the future struggle in all their bitter and merciless realities; here have been shown the real character and policy of the British bourgeoisie, their Government and practical dictatorship; here have been shown the utter impotence and make-believe of the old working-class movement in organisation and leadership; and here have been shown the deep, inexhaustible, profoundly revolutionary strength, solidarity, and determination of the working masses in Britain, and first beginnings of a real revolutionary Left and revolutionary party in close union with the masses to grow up into the future leadership. The heavy reverses and suffering of the present day are the price of reformist leadership; they can only

be finally overcome when that is overcome. But the spirit that goes forward without flinching in the face of these reverses, that in the moment of heaviest loss is not led aside by illusory alternatives, but sets to work to build up the ranks, is the spirit of the future revolution. 1926 is the great watershed of the British working-class movement. The General Strike and the miners' struggle constitute at the same time the culmination and tragedy of the old half-and-half movement, and at the same time the triumphant beginning of the new revolutionary movement of the future, the new and serious working-class movement, which will find the way forward from the present morass, knowing that the bankruptcy of capitalism in Britain offers no way to the working class save to go forward, and will find the way forward, without hesitation or turning aside, in the face of every loss, to the overthrow of capitalism and conquest of working-class power.

TO-DAY the capitalists and their followers, the reformist leaders, who have done all in their power to defeat the miners, knowing that their own victory depended on the miners' defeat, are trying to blame the miners—like Judas blaming Christ—for the desperate situation and desperate struggle in front laid on the miners by the betrayal of the organised movement, and to argue therefrom the impossibility of the working-class fight, the necessity of surrender to capitalism, and the inevitability of a new period of capitalist revival and reorganisation in which the workers must share and co-operate. This renewed propaganda of capitalist revival is the hallmark of reformism in the moment of working-class peril. It is the inevitable sequel of defeatism and treachery, and the carrying forward of these into a new stage. It is the attempt to cover up the whole meaning of 1926, to hide the real lessons of disruption and refusal to fight, to ignore the real character revealed of the future struggle, and to veil the actual conditions of poverty and misery beyond example under facile, easy hopes of sudden change by reformist tricks and of future prosperity by co-operation with capitalism. And the watchword under which this new campaign is being conducted is the watchword of " Now for the political struggle! "

THE watchword "Now for the political struggle" *in the hands of the reformists* is a lying deception, only intended to cover their betrayal of the actual struggle. By it they do not mean the learning of the lessons of the present struggle, which has been at every stage a political struggle; they do not mean the closing of the working-class ranks, the recognition of the unity of working-class interests against the present Government attack, and the necessity of the concentration of every working-class force in order to drive back the attack and convert defeat into victory as the sole possibility of any further advance or programme of advance; they do not mean the real conquest of working-class power in order to carry through the Socialist transformation which can alone bring relief in the present situation. Instead they mean by it the abandonment of the actual struggle and the acceptance of defeat; they mean the impossibility of future struggle and the docile confinement to only those means and methods that the bourgeoisie will permit; they mean the passivity of the masses to submit to defeat and poverty and to look on at the Parliamentary comedy in the hope that plums will fall into their lap. The programme they put forward for their hypothetical Labour Government is no longer even a programme of Socialism, but an avowed programme of capitalist reconstruction, and therefore incapable of helping the workers. The ignominious retreat of the Independent Labour Party at Margate, with its proud boasts beforehand of forcing a programme of immediate Socialism on the next Labour Government and hasty collapse on the field of battle and prudent withdrawal into a humble request for an inquiry into a minimum wage, marks the dissolution amid laughter of the old "pure Socialists" in the Labour Party, who cannot see that the fight for Socialism is only contained in the actual living class struggle, and apart from that is mere children's castles in the air, leaving only the alternative of a policy of capitalism. So the whole Labour Party leadership from the extreme Right to the I.L.P. on the would-be Left is engaged in fantastic schemes of capitalist revival and mythical prosperity for the workers without the need of the Socialist struggle, at the very same time as the workers are in fact being brought down to desperate poverty through the desertion of those same leaders.

THE propaganda of capitalist revival and illusory hopes, which runs right through the whole reformist leadership from Right to Left, from MacDonald and Thomas to Wheatley and Brailsford, may take a hundred forms. Some preach industrial peace, a "new" conception of trade unionism, "scientific" wage-policies, "industrial parliaments free of party politics," &c. (Cramp, Thomas, Pugh, Hodges, Williams, &c.). Others preach the return to unadulterated parliamentarism, the abandonment of the industrial struggle as hopeless, the acceptance of capitalist continuity, and embarkation on programmes of national and imperial reconstruction (MacDonald and the Labour Party machine). Others preach the rebirth of a new scientific capitalism, technical advance, international trusts, Fordism, high wages, plenty for all through a redistribution of purchasing power, through prosperity to Socialism, &c. (Wells, Wheatley, Brailsford, &c.). Through all these forms, and the differences between the various forms and varieties of the same form, there runs the same note—the note of capitalist revival, the illusory dreams of straightening of the capitalist chaos and the softening of capitalist class antagonisms in the face of every visible fact in the whole world. And through all there runs the same reality—the reality of working-class defeatism.

TWO types of quotation may be taken from the principal leadership of the Labour Party to illustrate the current conception which in varying form runs through the whole line. The first is from MacDonald. Writing in the *Socialist Review* in November, 1926, with the miners' struggle at its most critical point, he declares:—

> What use is there in remaining blind to obvious facts? Have we come to the Samson policy of pulling down pillars? Must we be heedless of the new combinations of capital which, having the wisdom to look ahead, see that Samson may tug, but that any stone he can dislodge will fall first of all on his own head? The balcony with the philistines will not fall. If it did, what then? It will be shored up; it will be rebuilt; the workers will be weaker than ever they were, and their standards lower.

Here is expressed the complete and final defeatism of the working-class struggle. It is necessary to take this in conjunction with

a previous statement from the same writer, when, dealing with the miners' struggle, he declared that "the fight is degenerating into blind hitting out," and that it is necessary "to retreat temporarily in order to save something for a new advance."

> The time has come for a survey of the whole national position which includes not only mining but every other industry. A victory that does not lead to prosperity is a defeat; a defeat that retains the potentiality of prosperity is a victory.

Here is a complete position. Capitalism cannot be overthrown. If it could be overthrown, it would only be rebuilt. "New combinations of capital" have come into existence and are stronger than the workers; they have "wisdom" to see ahead, unlike the blind Samsons of workers. Therefore the workers must submit. The workers must accept lower wages, although the profits of the capitalists are higher than they have ever been. They must accept lower wages in the hope of future "prosperity," *i.e.*, capitalist expansion. This is the hope held out to the workers by the leader of the Labour Party in 1926.

THE second type of quotation is from Snowden. Snowden's expression of the vision of capitalist revival into a new blossoming era is by comparison more sober than that of the more fantastic gospellers of a new heaven and earth for all under capitalism, but it contains the essentials of the same outlook, and therefore is the more serviceable as a basic expression. Speaking last April, with the titanic social struggle full in front, he said:—

> He did not agree with the statement of some of their Socialist friends that the capitalist system was obviously breaking down. He believed that we were to-day in a position very much like the industrial revolution that took place about 120 years ago. Then the steam age was ushered in.
>
> Now we are entering in, he believed, the new age of electricity and an age of chemistry. Wideawake capitalists are seeing this, and they are taking steps to appropriate for private profit and private ownership the exploitation of these great forces. If they succeed in doing that, then the capitalist system will be given a new and long and more powerful lease of life. (*Daily Herald* report, 17-4-26.)

Alongside of this conception of capitalist renovation through technical development goes the conception of a new world capitalist

organisation through international combines. On this Snowden expresses the view:—

> These international combines, instead of being a hindrance to Socialism, are according to our economic theories necessary as a preliminary to Socialism, and instead of discouraging them the Socialist policy should be rather to encourage international combines. (*Daily Herald*, 21-10-26.)

Here in this conception of super-capitalist organisation, enjoying a "new and long and more powerful lease of life" through productive development, defeating all possibility of revolution, but offering to the workers the possibility of a gradual share in capitalist prosperity, and eventually even—though this is dim music of the future—a gradual peaceful advance to Socialism: here we have the foundation of the social reformist outlook in the present period.

WHAT this outlook becomes in everyday propaganda is visible in the current Independent Labour Party literature, which converts the vision of a hypothetical capitalist reconstruction into an inexhaustible and ever-varying bagful of promises of peace and plenty for all the world under capitalism, and so through prosperity to Socialism.

> What is called the Clyde group has sought in season and out of season to show that our unemployment problem can never be seriously faced so long as our customers overseas are, because of poverty, unable to purchase our goods; and Mr. Wheatley, if we interpret correctly his speech at Dumbarton the other night, has come to the conclusion that *nationalisation of this or that industry might well wait* until it has customers capable of purchasing the goods which the industry produces. And that means an assault upon poverty first. (*Forward*, 23-10-26.)

Mr. Wheatley is even more munificent. In an article on "The Way to Socialism" he explains the scheme as follows:—

> The State should be the authority in fixing wages and incomes even while industries are privately owned. To make this policy effective it is necessary to deal with prices also. . . . Another way of stating the same idea is that we should begin our Socialism by socialising the product of Labour and raising the purchasing power of the workers *before embarking on the nationalisation of the means of production.*

This is to be done "in the first session of the next Labour Government." The dazzling results are then painted in with the broadest brush of the political bagman:—

The raising of the standard of living would automatically provide a market for our super-abundant goods. . . .

Our unemployment problem would be solved. . . .

The people would be economically enfranchised. . . .

Socialisation of the means of production would then proceed smoothly as a means of improving production. Instead of our people marching through starvation to Socialism they would, as Mr. Brailsford put it very neatly at Margate, enter it through an era of prosperity. (*Forward*, 30-10-26.)

This programme of lavish promises for the future is held out at the very moment of the most desperate point of the miners' actual struggle in the present for the maintenance even of the barest subsistence wage.

THE old Socialist teaching used to say that unemployment and poverty were inseparable from capitalism, and could only be solved by Socialism. The new teaching—we will not call it Socialist, but the new Liberal teaching of the Labour Party—lays it down that unemployment and poverty will first be solved under capitalism, and then the happy community will amble peacefully into Socialism in the distant future. The old Socialist teaching used to condemn capitalism as chaotic. The new Liberal teaching proposes to organise capitalism. The old Socialist teaching used to declare that capitalism robbed the workers and must therefore be overthrown. The new Liberal teaching declares that capitalism can give wealth to the workers and must therefore be built up. What is the practical significance of this change-over? It needs very little consideration to see that the practical significance of this "new" policy, which coincides with the betrayal of the industrial fight, with the Liberalising of the Labour Party, and with the whole defeatist stream of reformism at the present low ebb, lies, not in the sudden discovery of the urgency of the problem of poverty and the supposed advance from old-fashioned doctrinaire Socialism to "practical" methods of dealing with poverty, but—*in the retreat from Socialism to capitalism, and in nothing else.* The promises of "Plenty for all" will not be, and cannot be, realised under the next Labour Government. But the promises of "Nationalisation may wait" will be.

HOW completely the current reformist policy identifies its interests with the stability of capitalism is naïvely shown in the I.L.P. comments on the Russian Communist Conference. Bucharin, in his report on the international situation and the prospects of the world revolution, has occasion to emphasise the relative stabilisation of capitalism (while dealing at the same time with the basic weaknesses of that stabilisation). At once the I.L.P. joyfully comes out:—

> Bucharin stated frankly that in his view "Capitalism in general has returned to a state of stability which is very near that which prevailed before the war." If this be the case, surely the Third International will recognise that the Russian method of revolution is not the inevitable path of development in all countries, and that the need is for a united Labour Movement which will vigorously challenge Capitalism and Imperialism by bold constructive policies of Socialism and Internationalism. (*New Leader*, 5-11-26.)

It is unnecessary to deal with the complete or assumed ignorance of Communist policy in this passage ("Russian method," &c.). What is of interest is the argument. Capitalism is strong; therefore revolution is impossible; therefore the only policy is the I.L.P. policy of verbal "challenges" and "bold constructive policies" by the dozen a month. In other words, the stronger capitalism is, the more the I.L.P. policy is justified; consequently every scrap of fact and statement in favour of capitalist strength is a treasure to the I.L.P., because it is felt to be an argument against revolution.

MORE than this. Capitalism is declared to have reached "nearly" the pre-war degree of stability. (That Bucharin goes on immediately in his next section to deal with the "Instability of Stabilisation" is ignored.) The I.L.P. innocently accepts this as the acme of stability. That the pre-war situation was precisely the situation which gave rise to the war and revolution is apparently forgotten by the I.L.P. That Pre-War gives rise to The War would seem to be a simple fact of observation, with at any rate an initial probability of repetition in its favour if the essential conditions are repeated. But the I.L.P. logic is the exact opposite. They have apparently forgotten that there existed also Bolsheviks in those halcyon pre-war days, who carried on their task of preparation, through

developing mass struggle and the building of the party, for the future inevitable revolution against exactly the same scepticism and opposition of the Mensheviks, who were convinced of the strength of the existing regime for the immediately future period, of the necessity of concentration on legal and reformist tasks, of the folly of Bolshevik ideas of revolution after the experience of 1905, &c. They have also apparently forgotten that 1914 proved the revolutionary Marxists' right and the reformists wrong. Instead they have the audacity to come out with the following logic. The present situation nearly approximates to the pre-war situation (except for being a little more unstable). The pre-war situation led to war and revolution. Therefore the present situation rules out any practical possibility of war and revolution.

WHAT is the basis in fact for this conception of stabilisation and capitalist revival which is thus the foundation of current reformist policy? Bucharin, in his analysis of the relative capitalist stabilisation, brings out three general measures by which may be gauged the approach of international capitalism to the pre-war level. First, the figures of production show an average approximation to pre-war level. Second, the figures of world trade show nearly an approach to pre-war level. Third, the currencies and foreign exchanges show a great advance towards the pre-war basis. In taking these measures, it is necessary to add some very distinct qualifications, which it did not concern Bucharin's immediate purpose to give, as he could take them for granted and was going on to deal with more important problems, but which are essential to prevent misapprehension.

FIRST, the figures of world production, which are shown to approach pre-war level, are given in absolute volumes. But in fact the power of production has increased, and the population of the world has increased. The German industrialist, Felix Deutsch, estimates the increase in the industrial capacity of the world at 40 to 50 per cent. above pre-war. This may be an exaggeration, but there is no question of the increase. Thus an equality in volume of production to pre-war represents in reality a

relative decline in functioning of the capitalist mechanism. The actual index of capitalist effective working would need to be a ratio of production to productivity, and this would still show a marked decline on pre-war, and even raise a doubt, on present available signs, of the possibility of reaching pre-war, *i.e.*, whether the capitalist world is capable of absorbing the new powers of production even to the limited extent that it utilised the powers of production before the war, and is not rather being choked by them and forced to increasing measures of artificial restriction, which are themselves an indication of decline. Second, the figures of world trade are given in millions of dollars, without allowing for the rise in prices; a reduction to 1913 values would thus show a considerable decline. Third, the re-establishment of currencies on a gold basis, so far as achieved, has an entirely peculiar character in this respect, that it is based primarily on the support of America as the world financier-creditor and holder of gold, and thus is in no way comparable to the pre-war stability of the various national currencies. Thus even the three positive evidences which Bucharin brings forward for the undoubted fact of the relative capitalist stabilisation have to be taken at a heavy discount; and when it comes to the negative evidence that he brings forward to show the instability and relative character of the stabilisation, it will be seen that these are ultimately of decisive importance.

THIS negative evidence—and what in fact makes the trick in any demonstration of totals of world production and trade as useful evidence of the world situation—is the inequality of world conditions in the present epoch, an increasing inequality which is the inevitable working out of the imperialist period. America and the new capitalist world has leapt forward. Europe as a whole has gone back. Even within Europe, France and Germany go slightly forward; England goes heavily back. A total may present a comparable figure to pre-war, and yet completely conceal the unstable top-heavy position to which the capitalist process is reaching. This was sufficiently illustrated at the Economic Session of the Imperial Conference in Mr. Bruce's report, when he showed that, not only does the post-war period as a whole reveal this striking contrast

with pre-war, but that, even in the past four years, United States manufactured exports have increased by 60 per cent, while Britain has gone backwards, and that in the past three years European trade as a whole has increased, while the British proportion has decreased. We are here far removed from the old loose talk of "post-war unsettlement" under which these questions used to be dismissed. It is clear that a stage is being reached of capitalist differentiation, not only between individuals, between firms and companies, between social strata, between imperialist and colonial countries, but between the imperialist state-systems and world-regions themselves, which is the extreme degree of capitalist differentiation, and therefore of antagonism, of concentration at one end and impoverishment at the other, of credit and debt, of ownership and exploitation, and therefore the opposite of any possibility of real stabilisation or of rational economic organisation.

THIS antagonism is the central dominant fact of the world capitalist situation which the social reformists and pacifists continually try to ignore or cover over with a mixture of illusions and aspirations. In this connection two further facts are important. The first is that the process of social differentiation accompanying capitalist development, intensified and accelerated by the war and post-war inflations and speculations, has produced mass impoverishment, both of the workers and of the petty bourgeois elements, so that unexampled accumulation and concentration of capital in a few hands at the top is confronted with world-wide diminished purchasing power. The second is the increase of productive power. These two combined, under capitalist conditions, intensify the antagonism, the competition for markets and the competition for advantages in production, for monopolist markets and for monopolist sources of raw materials, for colonial exploitation and for intensified exploitation of the workers at home, to a pitch unequalled in capitalist history. So follow the feverish imperialist intriguings, groupings, schemings and counter-schemings, and so the feverish capitalist offensive on the workers, which are the two overwhelming factors of the post-war period.

IT is obvious that the Socialist solution of this situation is to utilise the increased productive power in order to fight the poverty of the masses all over the world. So far, what the social reformists announce with all the clamour of a discovery is the A B C of Socialist propaganda since Owen and Saint-Simon. But what the social reformists actually put forward is something different. For they speak of "raising purchasing power" to solve "unemployment." In other words, they propose to apply the Socialist solution to the conditions of capitalism. And precisely here lies the fallacy. For the Socialist solution is not possible without the necessary condition of Socialism which it presupposes, *i.e.*, the unified social control of production. But within capitalism there is no unified social control, but only the conflict of interests, and even the combinations are only subordinated to wider conflicts. It might thus theoretically be in the interests of capitalism as a whole to raise the purchasing power of the masses in order to postpone its own collapse—that is, to diminish its own share and accumulation temporarily in order to ease the present strain. But there is no such thing as capitalism as a whole. So long as a section of capitalism can find even a temporary advantage by reducing labour costs, it will do so, if it can, without regard to social considerations. The price of labour-power depends on economic and class forces, and not on ideal considerations. Even the so-called higher-wages policy in America (applicable in fact only to a minority) resulted, according to the testimony of all observers, not from any conscious social policy, but from the shortage of labour through the stoppage of immigration; and already, during the past twelve months, with the increase of unemployment owing to more highly organised production, the average of real wages has begun to go down. If the social reformists want higher wages, the only way to get it is to fight for it; but this, as the miners' struggle shows, is exactly what they are failing to do. Thus, while they are dreaming of higher-wage Elysiums in the future, the capitalists of Europe are driving the workers down to lower and lower levels; and the social reformists are assisting in this work in the name of ideal future capitalist "reorganisations."

FOR the capitalist world there are only two lines of solution of the problem that they can see. One is super-organisation of production, technical development, speeding up, elimination of waste, super-exploitation of the workers, so as to cut out all rivals. This is the essence of the process spoken of as rationalisation, the term originating from Germany, where it has been most highly developed. The second is the artificial restriction of production by cartels or delimiting agreements across countries or groups of countries. This is the line of international cartels. Now both these lines contain elements which are closely bound up with the real progress of production, and will reach their full realisation in the future Socialist economy. The first contains the principle of the more scientific organisation of production, correlation of processes, elimination of waste and economy of labour. The second contains the principle of the international rationing and allocation of productive tasks, which is the foundation of the future international Socialist society. But in the hands of capitalism both these principles become completely distorted in reality, reactionary in their effects, and no solution, but only an intensification of existing problems. Rationalisation becomes the driving down of the workers at home, wholesale dismissals and unemployment, and the intensification of competition on the world market. The international cartel becomes at the best a monopolist restriction of production, and in practice a combination of one group of trusts against other groups. Both intensify antagonisms and heighten the crisis, and both are fundamentally hostile to the working class. But the social reformists, because they see the Socialist principles invovled in both, rush to welcome and help forward both as the beginning of a new dawn of capitalist revival, with the hope of prosperity for the workers, instead of seeing the attack on working-class interests involved and fighting it, and fighting at the same time for the working-class dictatorship as the sole means of effectively realising the new principles of production and organisation.

IN this way the so-called manifestations of international capitalism resolve themselves into manifestations of new groupings of antagonism and conflict. The Franco-German Steel Cartel becomes a weapon against Britain, and not the less so for the invitation to Britain to come in and be rationed; and the perplexity and hostility of the British reception is obvious. This does not mean that, even if Britain were to come in, even if America were to come in, even if the cartel were to become actually international, there would be an end of the antagonisms. It would only mean, as the *Frankfurter Zeitung* pointed out, that the antagonism would be transferred to a new plane, to the fight over the quota. As soon as a change in the balance of forces arose, with a new development of technique in one country, or other possibility of advantage, there would arise new demands and conflicts and the inevitability of rupture. So, too, the Pan-Europe movement, full of outward idealistic glamour, resolves itself into attempted European combination against America and a further pursuit of the Continental Bloc, as the proceedings at the Congress with the semi-official participation of France and Germany clearly showed—premature at present, but already an indication of future possible lines. So, again, the Bankers' Manifesto, with its high-sounding aspirations after peace and freedom, reveals itself all too clearly as the expression of Anglo-American financial and trading interests, seeking to break down the barriers to the more effective exploitation of Europe by Anglo-American finance and industry. So, finally, the League of Nations to-day becomes more and more clearly a mere bargaining ground of the European Powers against America on the one hand and the Soviet Union on the other. Every one of these manifestations has been hailed and welcomed by the social reformists and social pacifists as the dawn of the new era of international capitalism (just as the international cartels before the war were similarly proclaimed, with equal complete blindness to the real forces); and every one has shown itself, not a beginning of international unity, but only a continuation of capitalist conflict under other forms, thus demonstrating that internationalism can only be achieved along the line of Socialism—that is, along the line of the class struggle.

BUT in Europe, burdened with a deadweight of debt, tribute, restrictions, and entanglements, and with no longer the same abundance of untapped natural resources, rationalisation comes combined, not with higher wages, but with the intensest attacks on the workers' standards, as well as wholesale closing down of superfluous works, dismissals and unemployment. So, in Germany, the British commercial attaché reports the rise of the unemployed figure to even as high as three millions in 1925, and adds that, "although some may be absorbed as business revives and others may again become independent, there will remain for a very long time a permanent residue of unemployed." (*Report on Financial and Economic Conditions in Germany*, 1925-26.) And, in Britain, the combination of chronic unemployment with rising industrial profits right through 1922-26 is already familiar; while the coal war of 1926 is the beginning of the next great stage, of reorganisation and concentration of production and of intensified exploitation of the workers, so that its signals are on the one hand the demand for the eight-hour day, and on the other the preparation for the dismissal of 200,000 miners as superfluous. These 200,000 men and their wives and families are to be thrown on the social scrapheap, with no prospect and no alternative—a fitting symbol of capitalist "scientific" reorganisation. And the social reformists give all their energies to supporting and advocating this capitalist reorganisation in the phantom hope of the "potentiality of prosperity" (in MacDonald's phrase), instead of seeing plain facts and fighting tooth and nail, not the technical reorganisation and concentration which is necessary, but the attacks on the working class alongside, fighting against any lowering of the workers' standards, fighting for the retention of all the men in the industry, fighting for shorter hours in order to ensure such retention, until such time as the working-class dictatorship can carry through the real social reorganisation.

FOR this reason the miners, so far from being blind Samsons to be lectured by the superior MacDonalds and other runaways with a smattering of capitalist economic lies, represent the sole real force of social reorganisation in Britain—*i.e.*, the developing revolutionary working class. For the reorganisation

IN the same way capitalist reorganisation or rationalisation becomes, not the scientific organisation of production to meet needs, but the concentration on the maximum profit, and therefore either monopolistic restriction of production, or else reckless competitive mass-production to undercut in the international market, based on the super-exploitation of the workers and driving straight to crisis. If, by the intensification of the labour process, it is possible to pay a higher wage and still make a higher profit (*i.e.*, in reality to increase surplus value and decrease the workers' share), this may be done where it seems advantageous to do so in return for absolute servility of the workers, no trade unionism, &c., as in America; but even there it is necessary to see, not only the few higher-paid workers, but the whole body of the workers, including the twelve millions below the Federal Bureau existence minimum; it is necessary to see the wholesale dismissals and scrapping of these temporarily highly paid workers, so that the average length of service is under twelve months; the reckless waste of human material and social unconcern of these magnates, whose whole concern is for the perfect working of their own works; and alongside the steady rise in concentrated production, the steady decrease in the number of workers employed. According to the Federal Reserve Board index figures, the index of industrial production has risen 16 per cent. since 1919; the number of workers employed in industry has fallen 6.5 per cent. In capitalistic production the increase in productive power leads not to the diminution of necessary labour, but to the increasing substitution of productive workers by unproductive selling-advertising-financial parasites. Thus in America the proportion of productive workers and those engaged in selling and distribution was in 1850 80 per cent. and 20 per cent. respectively, in 1920 50 per cent. and 50 per cent. This is the real colossal waste of the American miscalled "scientific" organisation of industry. It is only the most hopeless superficial, shortsighted view of temporary conditions that fails to see that the Soviet organisation of industry is already a hundred times more genuinely scientific than the American, *i.e.*, in social organisation, and only having a tremendous backwardness of technique and apparatus to make up in order to realise this superiority eventually in material results.

which is necessary cannot be carried through under capitalism. The technical development of production, the change in the relative role of different industries, and the altered international position of Britain, as well as the dead burdens of dividend-drawers and particularist interests, demand a transformation, shifting, economising, concentration and re-adapting to altered conditions on so vast a scale as cannot be carried through within the limits of private ownership and imperatively demand a single social control of production and of productive forces, human and material. This can only be accomplished by the revolutionary working class, after the complete overthrow of the capitalist regime and of all capitalist property rights. For this reason the most important question in Britain, the sole force of future strength and revival in Britain in the midst of the general decline, is the growth of the nucleus of the future revolutionary working class. The resistance of the miners in the face of all the advice of the Labour leaders, the growth of the Communist Party to a political force in the face of all obstacles—here are the factors of the future. The revival under capitalism to which the Labour leaders look is a lying deceit for the working class. The capitalist reorganisation, because it cannot tackle the real problems (any more than the reformist labour Leaders, who have now declared themselves afraid even to tackle the National Debt), can only proceed along the lines of the most intensified attacks upon the workers, and can only attempt to introduce changes with the most colossal waste of human life and livelihood. The miners, by their stubborn resistance to the last ounce against the attack upon their standards, by their insistence on the prior claim of the workers' livelihood and therefore on the social character of the reorganisation, have got hold of the right end of the stick, and are fighting for every real force of the future. The reformist Labour leaders, who counsel surrender in the name of a deceitful capitalist reorganisation, are on the side of the decline. For the battle against the capitalist reorganisation on the backs of the workers is already the first stage in the battle for social reorganisation.

R. P. D.

THE NEW STAGE IN THE MINING STRUGGLE

By "FIREMAN"

THE last two Conferences of the Miners' Federation held in London on November 11-13 and 19-20, mark a new stage in the development of the miners' fight. On May 12 the general impression was that, while the bureaucracy of all the other unions worked together against the miners, the Miners' Federation presented a solid, united, fighting front. After the last two delegate conferences of the miners there can no longer be any doubt that the majority of the miners' leaders are made of the same stuff as the leaders of our Trade Union Movement as a whole.

It is true, of course, that this majority among the miners' leaders joined hands with the General Council mediators only after the miners' lock-out had been sabotaged by these mediators and after a big proportion of the miners had been starved into submission. In other words, while the leaders of the other unions let down the miners on the ninth day of the fight, the majority of the miners' leaders gave way only in the twenty-ninth week of the great struggle.

Nevertheless, we believe that there is something in common between the decisions of the General Council on May 12 and the decisions of the miners' conferences referred to above.

It must be borne in mind that on May 12 the miners alone refused to carry out the order of the General Council to return to work. It was then said, quite correctly, that on that historic day the miners saved the honour of the Labour Movement which was betrayed by the capitulators. While thousands of railwaymen and transport workers were forced not only to return to work on worse conditions, but also to surrender the weapon of the sympathetic strike, the miners continued their fight with courage and determination. We must now try to understand how it came about that the miners refused to follow the "lead" of the General Council

while other workers agreed—many under strong protest—to go back to work.

The miners' fight has two different aspects. Even Joynson-Hicks has to admit that it is a legitimate *industrial* dispute. The Government which did not hesitate in conjunction with the General Council to prevent financial support from the Russian workers being given to the workers who participated in the General Strike, has not dared to stop the relief from abroad on behalf of the miners.

Furthermore, the mining lock-out is an industrial dispute in which the miners are on the defensive and the owners on the offensive. On April 30 the miners of Great Britain were locked out for the simple reason that the coalowners wanted to decrease the wages of the miners and to increase the working day. The miners decided to resist this attack upon their conditions, which they had achieved at a very high price. Till to-day the miners' fight remains an industrial struggle directed against an attack by a group of employers upon the conditions of more than a million workers.

At the same time the miners' fight is undoubtedly a *political* fight. The attack of the mineowners is only part of the general offensive of British capitalism, which is bent on carrying through its programme, as was clearly formulated by Baldwin (nine months before the lock-out was declared) : " The wages of all workers must come down." The mineowners are acting only as the vanguard of British capitalism, anxious to preserve its privileges at the expense of the workers. Hence the present peculiar situation wherein all the forces of the dominant classes, all the resources of the capitalist State, are mobilised to secure the victory of the mineowners.

During the historic days of May the political aspect of the miners' conflict was plain beyond doubt. While the Baldwin Government mobilised all the forces of the State behind the mine-owners, the General Council was forced to mobilise a large part of the working class behind the miners. The miners' fight became a struggle between the two classes of present-day Britain—of the working class on the one hand, and of capitalism, with all its supporters, on the other.

The Baldwin Government was not afraid to define the situation created by the declaration of the General Strike ; it declared that

the General Strike was a challenge to the present system. And so it was. But as soon as it became clear that the mineowners' attack was only a part of the programme of the dominant classes, the General Council hastened to declare that it was prepared to defend the interests of the miners within the limits of the constitution. In other words, it said plainly that it would do as it was ordered by the guardians of the constitution—by the capitalist Government. And so the strike was called off.

Even after the General Strike was abandoned, the miners' lock-out remained, not only as an industrial fight, but also as a political fight. For the miners had to face, in addition to their own employers, the entire forces of the State machinery vested in the ruling classes.

It is quite obvious that these two aspects of the miners' fight created the illusion of a difference between the miners' leaders on the one hand, and the present leadership of the other Trade Unions and the Labour Movement as a whole on the other. The longer the lock-out continued the more clear became its political character, till finally the conflict reached such a stage when the inefficiency and inadequacy of the leadership of the miners was indisputable. The recent conferences of the Miners' Federation have shown quite convincingly that there is a great distance between the rank and file of the miners and their leaders, and that the majority of these leaders are made up of practically the same material as is the leadership of the other unions. For that reason we think that the last two conferences of the miners deserve special attention.

It is important, however, before we take up the analysis of these two conferences, to remind our readers of a few facts of the past.

During the days of the General Strike, as in the days of its betrayal, the Miners' Federation had two representatives on the General Council. We know very little about their activities in that Council of retreat and defeat. But, even from a purely industrial point of view, the miners' representatives should have used all their influence, all their powers, to prevent the isolation of the miners. If they did not do so, they should have been challenged by the subsequent conferences of the miners. We know that the miners' delegates had sufficient courage to challenge Cook for an

alleged breach of discipline, when Cook dared to advise the men to reject the outrageous terms proposed by Downing Street. We cannot remember any decision querying the conduct of Smillie and Richards, whose attitude during the betrayal of the miners in the first days of the struggle remains unexplained.

Several weeks after the betrayal of the miners, the General Council and the Miners' Executive issued a joint document in which it was announced that the Conference of Trade Union Executives called for June 25 would not take place as arranged, and that this joint agreement was reached for the sole purpose of securing victory for the miners. Had the leadership of the miners represented a new tendency within the Labour Movement, these leaders would never have agreed to sign this joint statement. For they would have realised that they could obtain the support of the working class in this country, not *through* the General Council, but *in spite of* the General Council.

Let us take another instance. At the Bournemouth Trades Union Congress the miners' leaders exerted all their influence to pacify the spontaneous indignation of the miners' delegation in order to present a united front with the General Council. The same " united front " policy was pursued in a still more complicated situation at the Margate Conference of the Labour Party. The miners' delegation at Margate decided to support the pious resolution of support to the miners which—as everyone knew—was only a screen behind which the Labour Party leaders sabotaged the miners' lock-out. The delegation changed its mind under the influence of Arthur Horner, and they voted to refer back the resolution. But after the motion of reference back was defeated, they still supported the resolution, again for the sake of a sham united front.

We have only quoted a few instances to show that the greater part of the leadership of the Miners' Federation preferred to go hand in hand with the General Council instead of fighting it. We could easily add to the number of such instances. But we think that the facts mentioned above are quite sufficient to prove that, on the general questions raised by the mining lock-out, the majority of the miners' leaders are part and parcel of the present trade union bureaucracy.

Now let us come to the last two Delegate Conferences of the M.F.G.B. The capitalist Press hailed the first of the two as the Armistice Day Conference. It was held on November 11, 12 and 13. To this conference, the Executive reported the terms of the Government's proposals, which will go down to history as the most outrageous and abominable terms ever proposed. The Executive of the Miners' Federation received the Government's proposals, according to the official version, after the trade union mediators "succeeded" in opening the door for negotiations. It does not require a vast knowledge of secret history to understand that these negotiations began on the initiative of the Government, and that the General Council mediators acted as scouts and messengers for the Government. We would like to remind our readers that even before the lock-out began, it was Baldwin who proposed that the General Council, and not the miners themselves, should negotiate on their behalf[1]. The miners were aware of this fact as well as we were. Still they entered the door opened by Thomas, and came out with the most insulting terms ever offered to a group of workers.

What should have been the simple and concrete proposals of the Executive to the Conference, and of the Conference to the men concerning these terms? Every honest trade unionist will agree that, even under the worst circumstances, it is better to have no negotiated peace at all than to accept such terms as proposed by the Government to the miners. The advantages of imposed terms are obvious, for those who are compelled to accept them are always free to prepare for a new fight when the circumstances allow it. But an agreement based on imposed terms means, if not the perpetuation, at least the prolongation of such terms. Yet the delegate conference dared to recommend the acceptance of these terms, and only by a small majority was it agreed that the lodges should be consulted as to whether they were, or were not, prepared to accept.

It may be argued that this counsel of despair was a result of the tragic situation with which the conference was confronted. Let us try to analyse the conditions then obtaining. According to the figures presented to the conference, 235,000 men were at that time

[1]See, *e.g.*, the pamphlet by A. J. Bennett: *The General Council and the General Strike*.

back at work. It is undoubtedly a big number. At the same time, in order to have a clear idea of the situation, we must bear in mind the following facts :—

(1) These 235,000 represented less than 25 per cent. of the total number of miners.
(2) This figure did not represent a number of men steadily at work ; even the mineowners have reported fluctuations every day.
(3) The breakaways have taken place mainly in those districts where the miners are scattered, and where they are at the mercy of Conservative Boards of Guardians, of reactionary shop-keepers, and of all their enemies.
(4) Even in the districts where breakaways have occurred, a certain number of miners have resisted the owners, and the breakaways were strongest either among non-unionists or among those trade-unionists who were led by leaders of the Spencer-Varley type.

The conference under discussion took place in the seventh month of the lock-out. The delegates present at the conference should have known that the strike-breakers could only produce a small part of the coal required by British industry alone, not to mention export trade. They should also have known that great pressure was being brought to bear upon the Government and the mineowners, and that there were still great possibilities of continuing the fight and of securing, if not victory, at least better terms. It must also be borne in mind that the conference was held after the Conference of Trade Union Executives at which a voluntary levy for the miners was carried.

And yet, notwithstanding all these facts, the conference dared to recommend the acceptance of Baldwin's terms. In the days of November 11, 12 and 13, it might have been argued that this recommendation reflected the feeling of exhaustion prevailing among the rank and file of the miners. The events which followed the conference have proved quite convincingly that such an argument had no foundation whatsoever. Notwithstanding the recommendation of the conference, notwithstanding the fact that the minority which was opposed to the terms was fettered by the bonds of discipline, still 460,806 votes were registered against, while only 313,200 (which includes 190,000 at work) were registered for the terms. It is impossible to believe that those present at the conference were not aware of the spirit prevailing among the men, and when they recommended acceptance they did

not reflect or encourage the feeling of the men ; their purpose was rather to break the determination and courage of the locked-out miners.

Why did the miners' delegates act in this way ?

We believe we are entitled to say that the seventh month of this great struggle has shown that there is no great difference between Hodges and Richards, between Varley and Jones. Hodges was far enough away from the miners to dare to say what Jones and Richards could not afford to say until they were sure that the miners were rather tired and exhausted. But they all belong to the same camp. They are not capable of resisting capital when every inch of the way has to be fought to the finish.

Apart from anything else, this conference of the Miners' Federation has shown that there is a difference between the interests of the bureaucracy and the interests of the men.

The miners' bureaucracy, as well as the present trade union bureaucracy, are now fighting their own battle—that is, they are defending their own interests. They realise that the time when they were able to win small concessions by means of negotiation is now at an end. British capitalism is determined to make no more concessions to the workers, but to defend its position at the expense of the workers. On the other hand, the workers, as the miners' vote has shown, are fully prepared to resist and to fight. The present bureaucracy is not capable of conducting a fight. That is why they are so anxious for peace, knowing full well that peace at the present stage means the permanent worsening of the conditions of the workers and the degradation of the working class of Great Britain.

In the days of November 11, 12 and 13, the miners' bureaucracy came out into the open, and they have shown that they have the same interests, the same views, the same principles and the same inclinations as that part of the bureaucracy which betrayed the workers' cause on May 12.

This fact was demonstrated still more clearly at the delegate conference of November 19 and 20. Every sincere worker felt and understood that the miners' vote against the Government's preposterous terms was an expression of real heroism. The miners' leaders were in duty bound to accept the verdict of the men and to continue the fight with renewed courage and greater energy.

Instead they decided to recommend the men to begin district negotiations, and they did not even have the courage to include in the guiding principles for these negotiations the question of hours.

The tragedy which began on May 12 found its culmination in the decision of the miners' delegate conference on November 20.

Before making any conclusions, we must say a few words about the small minority inside the miners' leadership.

A. J. Cook is the General Secretary of the Miners' Federation. He is the embodiment of the workers' hatred against the ruling class. He is beloved by the rank and file, and enjoys their confidence. Among all his qualities displayed during this fight stands out his untiring energy and his single-hearted devotion to the cause of the working class. Cook was, and remains all the time, a rank and file leader. He was almost alone, however, not only in the trade union bureaucracy, but among the leaders of the miners. It is as yet premature to sum up his activities. Personally, I am convinced that it will not be difficult to prove that his vacillations were mainly a result of the fact that he was always between two great powers—the power of the rank and file and the power of the bureaucracy—which last he could not but appreciate.

Then comes the President of the M.F.G.B., Herbert Smith. It is true, Herbert Smith never rose to the political issues involved in the miners' fight. He was, and he has remained, an honest trade unionist. But the fact that he had to work with the Spencers, the Jones's and the Richards, hampered to a great extent his determination and his consistency. But Herbert Smith had confidence in his men, hatred for the exploiters, and contempt for the traitors and capitulators.

We stated that during this great fight, which is not yet finished, Cook stood almost alone. But with him has stood a small, yet vigorous, group—a new leadership which has arisen out of this struggle. This new group of leaders, although in the minority, is nevertheless responsible for the fact that the Hodges, the Varleys, the Spencers, the Jones's and the Richards were powerless to deliver the miners to the Baldwin Government through the General Council mediators. We are referring to the group headed by Arthur Horner and S. O. Davies in South Wales, by W. Allen in Scotland, by Will Lawther in Durham, and by many others.

All the forces of reaction were and are at work against this young and virile group. It is interesting to note in passing that while the Government chose Will Lawther to be one of the first leaders to be thrown into prison, the bureaucrats at the Margate Conference of the Labour Party chose him as one to be excluded from the Labour Party Executive. Then again, simultaneously with the issue of a warrant for Arthur Horner in South Wales, Mr. Joseph Jones violently attacked him in the Press. Such instances are quite numerous.

In spite, however, of the mobilisation of all the forces of reaction and reformism against the new leaders in our Trade Union Movement, we believe that the greatest factor of the new stage of the miners' fight is the emergence of this new vigorous and fighting leadership which will rise to the requirements of the new epoch in our class struggle.

A good proportion, though by no means all, of this new rising group, are members of the Communist Party. And the new stage of the miners' lock-out shows that even a numerically weak party, if only it has a clear outlook and determination, can play a great part in co-ordinating, mobilising and strengthening the forces of the working class. But the rôle played by the Communist Party of Great Britain in the miners' conflict requires a special analysis.

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INDIAN NATIONALISM AND THE ELECTIONS

By CLEMENS DUTT

INDIA is a country of 300 million inhabitants which has been on the brink of a social revolution. That fact, with all its significance for the British Empire, Asia and the world, is the dominating factor for appreciating what is taking place in India to-day. It is natural, therefore, to measure the stages of development since the war from the abortive upheaval of 1920-21. The betrayal by bourgeois nationalism of the mass movement at Bardoli in February, 1922, is the starting point of a retreat which has put the revolution temporarily in the background, but which will have the effect for its delay of making the next explosion more forceful, conscious and effective. For nothing in the central features of the situation has been changed, but there has been rapid economic development, which has produced a corresponding development in class differentiation and class consciousness.

This differentiation is expressed in the stages since Bardoli through which the nationalist movement has passed. Up to the close of the present year three such stages can be distinguished. The first period from Bardoli to the Gaya session of the National Congress in December, 1922, when the Swaraj Party was launched, was the period of retreat from Gandhism and the formulation of a new policy for bourgeois nationalism. The second period was a further stage of clarification marked by the gradual modification of Swarajist policy during its experience of parliamentarism and reversion to Liberalism. It culminated in the acceptance of Government office and the resignation from the Swaraj Party in the autumn of 1925 by Mr. Tambe, the Swarajist leader in the Central Provinces (the only provinces in which the Swarajists had a majority in the Legislature), which thus opened the new period of differentiation marked by the splitting of the nationalist ranks and the formation of new parties. The imminence of this new phase was pointed out in an article in the LABOUR MONTHLY[1]

[1] "Indian Politics: An Analysis," by Clemens Dutt, LABOUR MONTHLY, Vol. VII, pp. 399–409 (1925).

in the summer of last year. The rapid developments of this phase will reach a conclusion in the results of the elections now being held and in the decisions of the forthcoming National Congress at Gauhati in Assam.

The economic characteristics of this period are a continuation of the preceding one. There has been a series of good monsoons, which has meant that harvests have been satisfactory (an all-important question in India, where the exploited mass of peasants have no reserve to fall back upon) and which, in the resulting absence of famine and consequent economic crisis, has allowed of the establishment of relative stabilisation. Economic development has proceeded rapidly and the policy of economic rapprochement and reconciliation between British imperialism and the Indian big bourgeoisie, determined upon by the former ever since it discovered in the first shock of the war that it would have to be dependent for vital iron and steel products on the Indian firm of Tata, has gone further ahead. Salient features of the recent period have been the establishment of the Indian Tariff Board and the abolition of the cotton excise duty. Nothing marks the new era of the development of Indian industries behind high tariff walls more clearly than this last step, for the whole history of the Indian National Congress has been bound up with the struggle of Indian capitalism for the removal of the cotton excise.

The results of the new economic situation are obvious in recent political history. Agrarian agitation, the centre of the previous mass movement, has been relatively quiescent. The Indian bourgeoisie, discovering that political freedom is not so indispensable for the furtherance of their immediate economic interests as they had previously imagined, are more disposed to be satisfied for the present with the existing constitution, and therefore to "work the reforms." At the same time, the Left Wing in the nationalist movement has become more articulate as it has begun to realise the direction in which the nationalist leaders are going. Moreover, in spite of the legal terrorism exercised against the Communists, the Indian Communist Party has grown in strength, and sympathetic nationalist groups, such as the Workers' and Peasants' Party in Bengal, have extended their influence. A complicating political factor, which reached its maximum intensity

during the last year, has been the unprecedented growth of communal conflict between Hindus and Moslems, resulting in religious riots in which thousands of persons have been kil'ed or injured. This communal tension is closely connected with the political differences in the nationalist ranks.

The Electoral System

All the factors above mentioned affect the present general elections to the Imperial and Provincial legislatures and go to make the situation more complex than at any time previously. The first elections, in 1920, were boycotted by all except the loyalist upper strata of the bourgeoisie. In the second general election, in 1923, the new Swaraj Party was the sole representative of the National Congress. Now the nationalist ranks are divided into a number of different warring parties or factions, each claiming to represent the nation and to speak in the name of the nationalist movement and the National Congress, and seeking seats and positions of power in the legislatures at the expense of its opponents. They quarrel and compete among themselves for the chance of getting into the councils, and they roundly denounce the Government for not giving them more power when in the councils, but they neglect to attack or even to notice the essential feature of the councils, viz., the enormously restricted franchise on which they are based, which make them something aloof from, and useless to, the vast body of the nation.

The character of the elections, and the social composition of the membership of the councils themselves, is above all determined by the nature of the electorate. The restricted franchise is based on both communal and property qualifications. There are also special constituencies for electing representatives of Europeans, big landlords and big commercial and industrial organisations.

Take, for example, the Bengal Legislative Council. First of all, out of 139 members only 113 are elected at all. The remainder are Government nominees, the remnant of the old system in which the members of the Legislative Council were all merely "advisers" appointed by the Provincial Governor. Of the 113 elected representatives, only eighty-five are elected by general, though communal, constituencies. The whole province is divided into forty-two

geographical areas forming non-Mohammedan constituencies in which no Mohammedan, even if otherwise qualified, is allowed to vote. The same province is also divided geographically into thirty-four constituencies in which only Mohammedans can vote. This separation is applied throughout practically the whole of British India, and is intended to ensure representation of the special interests of the Moslems. It, of course, considerably assists in dividing them off from the rest of the population.

The rest of the elected members, twenty-eight in number, are returned by special constituencies. Europeans, numbering less than 25,000 in a total population of 46,000,000, have five representatives. The Bengal Chamber of Commerce returns six members. The big landowners of Burdwan, Chittagong, &c., each elect a representative of their own. The Indian Jute Mills Association, the Indian Tea Association, the Indian Mining Association, Calcutta University, the Calcutta Trades Association, the Marwari Association are all reckoned as special constituencies. Most of these special representatives will be Europeans, and all will stand for big capitalist or landlord interests.

The number of voters in the special constituencies will be very small. They constitute, in this respect, something very like the "pocket" boroughs of pre-Reform England. On the other hand, the vast bulk of the workers and peasants are totally disfranchised. The property qualification for voters varies from region to region, but it is sufficiently high to exclude ninety-seven to ninety-eight per cent. of the population. Take the Bombay rural constituencies as an example. The essential qualification for an elector is payment of land revenue amounting to not less than sixteen to thirty-two rupees per annum, according to region. As the land revenue for the total assessed area in Bombay Presidency varies from half to one and a-quarter rupees per acre, it can be concluded that only cultivators of some fifteen acres or more will be entitled to a vote. Recent statistics show that three-quarters of all the Bombay holdings are below fifteen acres. All these cultivators, therefore, would be disfranchised together with the large number of landless wage-workers and agricultural labourers.

For the All-India Legislative Assembly the franchise is even more restricted. Only 104 out of 144 members are elected. All

but two or three of the general constituencies are separated on communal lines. Most of the provinces have special constituencies of Europeans and of big landholders, and special representation is given to the Indian Merchants' Chamber and Bureau, Ahmedabad Millowners' Association, Madras Indian Commerce, Bengal Marwari Association, &c.

Urban electors to the Assembly have to pay income tax (not levied on incomes below 2,000 rupees per year) or a high rate of other taxes, while the rural electors must pay land revenue of about fifty rupees or upwards. The result of the restriction is that the total electorate for all the seats in the Assembly is below a million, there being only a few thousand voters for each seat.

It must not be forgotten also that the Central Legislature includes an upper chamber, the Council of State, with sixty members, of whom thirty-four are elected. Electors to this body must be very rich or have been members of the Central Legislature or held high office in municipal government. The electorate numbers a few hundreds in each constituency. Thus, in a by-election, earlier this year, in West Bengal, the successful candidate polled seventy-eight votes ; the remaining three received fifty-eight, twenty-six, and one votes respectively.

Without taking any account, therefore, of the question of the authority of the councils, it is obvious that they are utterly unrepresentative in character and cannot be an index of the desires of the mass of the nation.

The Break-up of the Swaraj Party

Nevertheless, the attention of the nationalist movement has become more and more exclusively directed to obtaining control of these puppet legislatures. The forty-odd Swarajists that entered the Central Legislative Assembly in 1923 were very quickly deflected from their early intransigence. By the autumn of 1925 the desire of the Right Wing for a drastic modification of the programme, so as to allow of the acceptance of office and the practice of the so-called policy of "responsive co-operation" (*i.e.*, the policy of working the constitutional reforms scheme as far as possible, and only voting against the Government when British policy conflicted directly with the immediate interests of the

Indian bourgeoisie), led to a crisis in the party and the secessions began.

In November the Bombay Swarajist leaders, Jayaker and N. C. Kelkar, resigned and at the National Congress at Cawnpore in December, 1925, there was a definite bloc, led by the Mahrattas from Bombay and the Central Provinces and Berar, calling for a modification of the programme. The National Congress, however, in spite of its smaller numbers, represents a wider field than the electorate of the Assembly, and it endorsed the official Swarajist policy. Thereupon the dissidents seceded from the Swaraj Party and organised the Responsive Co-operation Party, which was definitely launched on February 2, 1926.

The Liberals were not slow in attempting to profit from the situation by forming a bloc with the Responsive Co-operationists aimed against the Swaraj Party. The new alliance, formed in March, 1926, was christened the Indian National Party, and it contained representatives of the Liberals, the Independents, the Home Rule League, led by Mrs. Besant (to all intents and purposes identical with the Liberals, but united in pushing the Commonwealth of India Bill), the non-Brahmins, the Muslim League and the Responsivists. The latter, however, only gave a qualified support to the new party, retaining their separate identity. The real difference of the Responsivists from the Liberals lay only in the fact that they were still members of the National Congress, and they were aware that if they lost their connection with the Congress they would be considered purely as Liberals, and as such less trustworthy and experienced than the old Liberal leaders.

The other groups in the National Party, with one exception, were outside the National Congress, and they based their refusal to have anything to do with the Congress on the grounds : (1) that the present Congress creed still endorses mass civil disobedience and general non-payment of taxes as a policy for which the country should make preparations ; (2) that the Congress is still dominated by the Swaraj Party, which is committed to a policy of obstruction ; (3) that they cannot agree to enter the Congress unless they get an adequate share of the Congress offices ; and, finally, (4) that wearing of khaddar (homespun cloth) is still compulsory at Congress functions (a last relic of the period of Gandhi's domination).

The only semi-Liberal leader of note who remained within the Congress was Pundit Malaviya, who even during the most revolutionary period fought the Liberal battle inside the Congress, and who has been pressing for the adoption of a Congress programme which would embrace all shades of nationalism.

Faced with the possibility of a union of the secessionists from the Swaraj Party with the Liberals, Pundit Nehru, the Swarajist leader, attempted a compromise which would break up this union, and, by practically giving in to the Responsivists, draw them back into the Swaraj Party. This compromise was formulated in the Sabarmati Pact, signed at Ahmedabad on April 21, 1926.

The Swarajist leader, however, had under-estimated the strength of the Left Wing within his party. The All-India Congress Committee, which comprises 350 members, mostly local Congress officials who are closer to the rank and file of the Congress membership and not directly interested in the question of parliamentary office, refused to ratify the pact. They showed their distrust of Nehru also in their action in defeating his resolution for a committee to inquire into Mrs. Besant's Commonwealth Bill. Since Mrs. Besant had seceded from the Congress over the non-co-operation issue and her scheme was being canvassed by various Liberals and other groups without the endorsement of the Congress, Pundit Nehru's action in attempting to raise the matter was a clear indication of his Right-Wing tendency, and the defeat of his resolution was a clear vote of no confidence in him.

The existence of a Left Wing within the National Congress and the Swaraj Party, which prevents the leadership from openly entering into co-operation with the Government, has been evident at all the larger Congress gatherings. Under the spinning franchise introduced by Gandhi the registered membership of the Congress dropped to about 14,000, and even though the four-anna subscription was re-introduced in 1925, the paying membership at the time of the Cawnpore Congress was still under 20,000. Nevertheless the rank and file, comprising mainly petty bourgeois elements, was sufficiently in evidence to compel the Swarajist leaders to adopt a revolutionary phraseology, to talk of the preparation of mass civil disobedience and to declare that the Swaraj

Party would leave the Legislative Councils if their demands were unheeded by the Government.

It was this Left Wing that called Pundit Nehru to heel. It was this Left Wing that at the Bengal Provincial Congress in May, 1926, began an agitation against Sen Gupta, the Bengal leader, because of his Right-Wing tendencies, and even moved a resolution of protest at the disparaging remarks of the president, Sasmal, concerning the ex-revolutionaries in the Bengal Congress organisation.

The latest stage in the disintegration of the Swaraj Party has followed the fiasco of the party's method of putting into practice the resolution of the Cawnpore Congress for withdrawing from the councils.

In order to make a demonstration to impress the rank and file, and to hide their bankruptcy in policy, the Swarajist members of the Assembly and of the provincial councils made a spectacular withdrawal in March, thus, incidentally, saving themselves the task of voting against the budget, which many of them were loath to do. It was not long, however, before the members in most of the councils were clamouring for permission to return in order to defend or oppose certain measures. Permission was given, for otherwise there would have been many defections from the party, and it is noteworthy that in all cases the walk back was openly for the defence of class interests. Thus, in the Punjab, the Swarajists returned to oppose the Money Lenders Bill, which threatened to curtail the power of the moneylenders: in Madras the issue was the Malabar Tenancy Bill, and in Assam a Land Revenue Assessment Bill.

Finally, it was decided that the members of the Central Legislative Assembly themselves should return in order to oppose the new Currency Bill, and then retire again, taking no further part in the last session of the Assembly. This led to the latest split in the Party, for Lajpat Rai, the veteran nationalist and deputy-leader of the party, refused to walk out again and severed his connection with the party.

This new split meant a serious weakening of the strength of the Swaraj Party. It also gave a new opportunity to Pundit Malaviya. Under his auspices the Congress leaders, like himself and Lajpat

Rai, who were in the Congress but not in either the Swaraj or Responsive Co-operation Parties, began negotiations for unity with both of the latter groups.

It was obvious that Nehru was only deterred by fear of his own rank and file from attempting to conclude a revised form of the Sabarmati Pact. Accordingly it was the Responsive Co-operationists who first joined hands with Lajpat Rai and Malaviya. Early in September they decided to form an Independent Congress Party to unite the Right-Wing members of the Congress, who were outside the Swaraj Party. They adopted a resolution declaring that, since the policy of wholesale obstruction in the councils had failed, as had also the policy of "walking-out" from the legislatures, and that no basis had been found for unity with the Swaraj Party—

> the only course left open to such members of the Congress as do not agree with the Swarajists' policy and programme is to form themselves into a separate party within the Congress. . . .
>
> The policy of the party will be to work the legislatures, defective though their constitution is, for all they are worth and use them for accelerating the establishment of full responsible government.
>
> It will be open to the party to accept office, provided the power, responsibility, and initiative necessary for the effective discharge of their duties are secured to the ministers.
>
> The party will work in full co-operation with the Responsive Co-operation Party.

Lajpat Rai was appointed the president of the new party and Pundit Malaviya its general secretary. The formation of the new party was hailed as a triumph for their principles by the Responsivists, though they generally gave as their opinion that it would have been better for Lajpat Rai and his followers to have joined the Responsivists altogether.

The Communal Conflict

The dissensions within the nationalist movement were greatly complicated by the growth of Hindu-Moslem conflict leading to a series of religious riots in all parts of the country, during which hundreds have been killed and thousands injured. The underlying causes are very complex. Apart from direct economic issues (as in Bengal and the Punjab, where Moslem peasants are to a great extent faced by Hindu landlords and moneylenders), the

conflict has been closely connected with the struggle for political influence between the riva communities. This rivalry has always been fostered by the British Government, and it has been deliberately fomented by the nationalist leaders. As long as the common national revolutionary struggle was in the forefront and Government positions were boycotted, rivalry between the communities was not acute. Now, however, communal passions have been deliberately aroused for political purposes. The leaders of each community are competing against each other for positions of influence in the councils and other bodies.

During 1925 Hindu and Moslem religious organisations developed rapidly. Most of the prominent Hindu and Moslem nationalist leaders declared it to be their object especially to defend the interests of their co-religionists. In April, 1926, Sir Abdur Rahim, a Liberal Moslem leader in Bengal, formed a Bengal Moslem Party. In May, 1926, the Khilafat Conference, which had been more or less in abeyance since the abolition of the Khilafat, enlarged its objects to embrace all the interests, temporal as well as spiritual, of Mohammedans. In June the chief Hindu organisation, the Hindu Mahasabha, countered by deciding, where necessary for support of Hindu interests, to run its own candidates at the elections. In August an Independent Muslim Party was formed through the agency of the Khilafat Committee to contest the elections on behalf of Moslem interests. It consists now largely of former Moslem Swarajists.

The Elections

From what has been said it will be clear that the candidates for election to the councils and Assembly are appearing under a great variety of labels. The differences between them are, however, not very important. All of them profess to stand on a nationalist platform, and now that the most extreme Swarajist demand has been whittled down to Dominion status or even merely an encouragement for "honourable co-operation," the Swarajists do not stand so far removed from the most right-wing moderates. The parties can be divided into three main groups, representing roughly the three sections of the Indian bourgeoisie. The big bourgeoisie dominate the Liberal and National Parties; the

Responsive Co-operationists and the Independent Congress Party stand for the middle bourgeoisie ; while the Swaraj Party is predominantly petty bourgeois in composition and outlook.

The National Party is practically indistinguishable from the Liberals. It represents merely an election bloc to prevent clashing of non-Congress candidates in some regions, notably in Bombay and Bengal. As a party it was stillborn, being killed by the mutual suspicions between those in and those outside the Congress.

The Responsivists and Independent Congress men represent the new dominant trend of bourgeois nationalist policy and, therefore, are gaining in strength. Their organisation, however, has a firm hold only in the Mahratta provinces. Both of the parties, and particularly the Independent Congress Party, are strongly pro-Hindu, and in fact, if not in profession, stand for the special interests of Hindus as against Mohammedans. They agree with the Swarajists except on the one point that they believe the national cause should be pushed by using the reforms to the full, including the acceptance of office. Naturally the Swarajists brand them as job-hunters and Liberals, and in return they retort that the Swarajist policy is bluff and make-believe and that the Swarajists are really Liberals themselves. Mr. Jayaker, the leader of the Responsivists, says:—

> The Swarajists practise nothing but responsive co-operation, but refuse to call it by that name.

In spite of being weakened by successive splits and defections, the Swaraj Party still includes the bulk of the rank and file of active nationalists. Its leaders, against their own desires, have refrained from advocating a change of policy in the hope of getting a majority in the elections. The electoral arrangements, however, between the Liberals and Responsivists, and between the Responsivists and Independent Congress candidates, have in many places prevented triangular contests, and left the elections to be fought on the clear issue of co-operation or non-co-operation. In such cases, since the bulk of the electorate consists of landlord and capitalist elements, there are bound to be many defeats suffered by the Swarajists, and their hope of a majority in the councils is rendered vain.

The great asset in their favour is their possession of the Congress machinery, and it is freely charged against them that they have

used funds collected for the Congress for their own election purposes. The latest election results appear to show that in no case can the Swarajists secure an absolute majority, that in general they have lost ground, but that they have increased their representation in some places, such as Madras, where the formerly dominant moderates have been discredited through their past actions.

The National Congress

Whatever the result of the elections, the coming session of the National Congress at Gauhati, in Assam, at the end of the year will witness a determined effort on the part of the Right Wing to commit the Congress to a policy of Liberalism under the guise of uniting all wings of the nationalist movement. Hints have been thrown out by prominent Swarajists that the Swaraj Party is only waiting for the result of the elections to modify its policy. If they do not succeed in obtaining thumping majorities, the Swarajist leaders will be ready to accept their defeat as the verdict of the country and adapt their policy accordingly. It will need a bold stand by the rank and file of the party if another Sabarmati Pact is to be avoided. The rank and file are opposed to the surrender policy of the leaders, for they are closer to the masses and themselves also have nothing to gain by the alliance with British imperialism, but they are disunited, confused by communal and other side issues and easily deceived by the pseudo-revolutionary phraseology used by the bourgeois leaders.

Nevertheless, there is no way forward unless they come out into the open with a programme of their own based on the class needs of the masses. The Left Wing can only rally itself around the demand for a free democratic republic. Thus the class issues are getting more defined. After the elections it is to be expected that the communal issue will cease to occupy such a prominent position, and the class issue become more pronounced. After the big bourgeoisie the middle bourgeoisie also is forsaking the national revolutionary struggle and finding its ally in the imperialist camp. The workers and peasants will be compelled to fight their own battle and find their own allies. The latter are especially to be found outside India, where other workers and peasants are engaged in the struggle with the same enemy.

THE RELATION OF THE WORKERS' PARTY TO RELIGION

By N. LENIN

(*This article, which is here published for the first time in English, should be of especial interest in England, where the question of religion and the working-class movement has always been very loosely handled. It was originally published in the* PROLETARII, *No.* 45, *in May*, 1909.)

THE speech of the deputy Surkov in the Duma debate on the budget of the Synod, and the discussions in our Duma fraction over the draft of his speech, have raised an extremely important and at the present moment topical question. Interest in everything connected with religion has to-day undoubtedly taken hold of considerable sections of "society," and has also made its way into the ranks of the intellectuals who stand near to the Labour Movement, and even into certain working-class circles. Social Democracy must definitely make clear its attitude to religion.

Social Democracy builds its whole world conception on scientific Socialism—that is to say, on Marxism. The philosophic basis of Marxism is, as Marx and Engels have repeatedly pointed out, dialectical materialism, which has taken over the historical traditions of eighteenth-century French materialism and of the materialism of Feuerbach in the early nineteenth century—that is, of materialism which is absolutely atheist and definitely hostile to all religion. We recall to mind that the whole of Engels' *Anti-Dühring*, which was read in manuscript by Marx, accuses the materialist and atheist Dühring of the inconsistency of his materialism, because he leaves a backdoor open for religion and religious philosophy. We would further call to mind that Engels in his work on Feuerbach brings against the latter the reproach that he fought religion not in order to annihilate it, but in order to revive it, to discover a new "elevated" religion, &c. Religion

is opium for the people—this Marxist fundamental principle is the pivot of the whole Marxist world conception in questions of religion. Marxism regards all present-day religions and churches, each and every religious organisation without exception, as instruments of bourgeois reaction, which serve as a shield for the exploitation and deception of the working class.

At the same time, however, Engels repeatedly condemned the attempts of those who wished to be "more left" or "more revolutionary" than Social Democracy and to introduce into the programme of the workers' party a direct confession of atheism in the sense of a declaration of war on religion. In 1874, in the discussion of the famous manifesto of the Commune refugees, the Blanquists, then living in exile in London, Engels treats their noisy declaration of war on religion as folly, and expresses the view that such a call to war is the best means to revive interest in religion anew and hinder the actual dying out of religion. Engels blames the Blanquists for their inability to see that only the class struggle of the working masses, which draws the widest numbers of the proletariat into a conscious and revolutionary political activity, that only this is able really to free the oppressed masses from the yoke of religion, while the declaration of war on religion as a political task of the working class is a piece of anarchist phrase-making. Also in 1877, in the *Anti-Dühring*, in which Engels flays without mercy the slightest concessions of the philosopher Dühring to idealism and religion, none the less he condemns the would-be revolutionary idea of Dühring that religion should be forbidden in the Socialist society. Such a declaration of war on religion, he declares, is "to out-Bismarck Bismarck," *i.e.*, to repeat the folly of Bismarck's "Kulturkampf" against the clericals, the fight which Bismarck in the 'seventies waged against the German Catholic Party, the "Centre," by means of police persecution of Catholicism. By this fight Bismarck only *strengthened* the militant clericalism of the Catholics, only injured the cause of real cultural advance, since he pushed into the foreground religious divisions in place of political divisions and drew away the attention of certain sections of the working class and of the democratic forces from the urgent tasks of the class struggle and revolutionary struggle into the direction of an entirely super-

ficial and deceitful bourgeois anti-clericalism. Engels accused the would-be ultra-revolutionary Dühring of wishing to repeat Bismarck's folly in another form, and he demanded of the workers' party the capacity to work patiently at the organisation and enlightenment of the proletariat—a work which leads to the dying out of religion—without throwing itself into the adventures of a political war on religion. This standpoint has entered into the very flesh and blood of German Social Democracy, which accordingly supported, for example, the freedom of the Jesuits, their permission to stay in Germany, and the removal of all police measures against this or that religion. "Declaration of religion as a private affair"—this famous point of the Erfurt Programme (1891) confirmed the above political tactics of Social Democracy.

This tactic meanwhile has become a routine and has produced a new distortion of Marxism in the opposite direction, in the sense of opportunism. The statement of the Erfurt Programme began to be interpreted in the sense that we Social Democrats and our party actually *regard* religion as a private affair, that for us as a party, for us as Social Democrats, religion is a private affair. Without entering into a direct polemic against this opportunist conception, Engels considered it necessary in the 'nineties to make a definite stand against it, not in a polemical but in a positive form. He did this in the form of a declaration—on which he deliberately laid stress—that Social Democracy regards religion as a private affair *in relation to the State*, but not at all in relation to the individual, not at all in relation to Marxism, not at all in relation to the workers' party.

This is the outward history of the views of Marx and Engels on the questions of religion. For people who handle Marxism carelessly, who cannot and will not take the trouble to think, the history is a tangle of senseless contradictions and vacillations of Marxism: a mess of "consistent" atheism and "indulgence" towards religion, an "unprincipled" vacillating between the r-r-revolutionary war on God and the cowardly wish to suit one's words to the believing workers, the fear of frightening them away, &c. In the literature of the anarchist phrase-makers many attacks on Marxism after this fashion are to be found.

But whoever is even in the least able to take Marxism seriously,

and to go more deeply into its philosophical foundations and the experiences of international Social Democracy, will easily see that the tactics of Marxism in relation to religion are completely consistent and fully thought out by Marx and Engels, and that what the dilettantes and ignoramuses consider to be vacillations are a direct and necessary conclusion of dialectical materialism. It would be a great error to believe that the apparent " moderation " of Marxism in relation to religion finds its explanation in so-called " tactical " considerations, in the sense of the wish " not to frighten away," &c. On the contrary, the political line of Marxism in this question is inseparably bound up with its philosophical foundations.

Marxism is materialism. As such it is no less hostile to religion than the materialism of the eighteenth-century Encyclopædists or of Feuerbach. This is certain. But the dialectical materialism of Marx and Engels goes further than that of the Encyclopædists and Feuerbach, in that it applies the materialist philosophy to history and to the social sciences. We must fight religion. That is the A B C of *all* materialism, consequently also of Marxism. But Marxism is not materialism that remains at its A B C. Marxism goes further. It says: we must *know how* to fight religion, and for this purpose we must explain *on materialistic lines* the origin of faith and religion to the masses. The fight against religion must not be narrowed down to an abstract ideological preaching; the question must not be brought down to the level of preaching of this character; the fight must be brought into close connection with the concrete tasks and activity of the class struggle, which is directed to the elimination of the social roots of religion. Why does religion maintain its hold in the backward strata of the town proletariat, in the strata of the semi-proletariat, and in the mass of the peasants ? Because of the ignorance of the people, answers the bourgeois progressive, the radical or bourgeois materialist. So: down with religion ; long live atheism; the spreading of atheist views is our principal task! The Marxist says: Wrong! Such a conception is a superficial, narrow bourgeois view of " spreading light and culture to the people." Such a conception does not explain deeply enough the roots of religion, does not explain it materialistically, but idealistically. In the modern capitalist countries these roots are above all *social*. The social oppression of

argue thus is the living contradiction of living life, *i.e.*, a dialectical not a verbal or artificial contradiction. To place an absolute unbridgable barrier between the theoretical propaganda of atheism—that is, the annihilation of religious belief in certain sections of the proletariat—and the success, progress and conditions of the class struggle of these elements means not to argue dialectically, but to turn what is a movable relative barrier into an absolute barrier, to separate forcibly what in living reality is inseparably bound. Let us take an example. The proletariat of a given place and industry is divided, let us suppose, into the progressive section of conscious Social Democrats, who are naturally atheists, and backward workers, who are still bound to the village and peasant traditions, who believe in God, go to church or are at any rate still under the influence of the local priest, who has, let us suppose, formed a Christian trade union. Suppose further that the economic struggle has given rise to a strike. The Marxist must unconditionally place in the foreground the success of the strike movement, must resolutely in this struggle work against any division of the workers into atheists and Christians and actively oppose any such division. In such circumstances atheist propaganda can be seen to be both superfluous and harmful, not from the point of view of the philistine who does not want to frighten off the backward sections, or to forfeit an electoral seat, but from the standpoint of the real progress of the class struggle, which under the conditions of modern capitalist society will bring the Christian workers over to Social Democracy and atheism a hundred times better than bare atheist propaganda. The preacher of atheism would at such a moment and in such conditions only be playing into the hands of the priests, who would wish nothing better than a division of the workers, not according to their participation in the strike, but according to their belief in God. The Anarchist, who preaches war on God at any price, would in reality only be helping the priests and the bourgeoisie (just as the Anarchists in their action already help the bourgeoisie). The Marxist must be a materialist—that is, an enemy of religion—but a dialetical materialist—that is, one who takes up the fight against religion, not abstractly, not on the basis of an abstract, purely theoretical, unchangeable preaching, but concretely, on the basis of the class

the working masses, their apparent absolute impotence before the blind forces of capitalism, which daily and hourly inflict upon ordinary working men and women sufferings and atrocious tortures a thousand times more frightful than all the extraordinary happenings, such as war, earthquakes, &c.—here is to be sought the deep present-day roots of religion. "Fear has created the gods." The fear before the blind power of capital—blind because its action cannot be foreseen by the mass of the people—the fear that hangs like a menace over every step of the proletarian and the small owner, and can "suddenly," "unexpectedly," by "accident," inflict upon him poverty, downfall, to be turned into a beggar, a pauper, a prostitute, hand him over to death by hunger —here is the *root* of present-day religion, which the materialist must before all and above all hold before his eyes, if he is not to remain stuck in the children's shoes of materialism. No mere books of propaganda are going to drive out religion from the masses who are ground down by the convict system of capitalist forced labour, who are at the mercy of the blind destructive forces of capitalism, so long as these masses have not themselves learnt, as a united, organised, systematic, conscious force, to fight against this *root* of religion—the *domination of capital* in all its forms.

But does it follow from this that a book of propaganda against religion is harmful or superfluous? Not at all. Something quite different follows. What follows is that the atheistic propaganda of Social Democracy must be *subordinated* to its principal task—that is, to the carrying forward of the class struggle of the exploited masses against the exploiters.

Whoever has not thought out fully the fundamental principles of dialectical materialism—that is, of the philosophy of Marx and Engels—can misunderstand this basic principle, or at least not understand it at once. How is this? Shall the propaganda of the spirit, the propagation of certain ideas, the fight against the thousands-of-years-old enemy of culture and progress—that is, the fight against religion—be subordinated to the class struggle—that is, to the fight for definite practical aims in economics and politics?

An objection of this character belongs to those customary objections to Marxism which arise from a complete ignorance of Marxist dialectic. The contradiction which troubles those who

struggle, who practically accomplishes his object and teaches the masses most widely and best. The Marxist must be able to take into consideration the whole concrete situation, must know how to find the border line between anarchism and opportunism (this border line is relative, movable, changeable; nevertheless it exists); he must neither fall into an abstract phrase-making empty "revolutionarism" of the Anarchist nor into the philistinism and opportunism of the small bourgeois or liberal intellectual, who shrinks from the fight against religion, forgets this task of his, reconciles himself with the belief in God, and lets himself be led, not by the interests of the class struggle, but by petty, miserable considerations—to cause pain to no one, to drive away no one, to frighten no one—who guides himself by the wise rule, "Live and let live," &c.

From this standpoint also must be determined the special questions which bear on the attitude of Social Democracy to religion. The question is, for example, asked whether a minister of religion can be a member of the Social Democratic Party, and this question is commonly answered, without any reserve, in the affirmative, by a reference to the experience of the West European Social Democratic Parties. This experience, however, is not a simple product of the application of Marxist doctrine to the Labour Movement, but is a consequence of particular historical conditions in West Europe, which are absent in Russia, so that an unconditional affirmative answer to this question is here incorrect. One cannot say absolutely and for all conditions that ministers of religion cannot be members of the Social Democratic Party, but neither can the opposite rule be laid down. If the minister comes to us to common political work, and fulfils his party work with understanding, without bringing himself into opposition to the party programme, then we can receive him in the ranks of Social Democracy, since the opposition between the spirit and fundamental principles of our programme and his religious convictions can only concern him and remain his personal contradiction; a political organisation cannot examine its members as to whether there is not a contradiction between their conceptions and the programme of the party. But an instance of this type could naturally only be a rare exception, even in Western Europe, and in Russia

it is still more improbable. If a minister should enter into a Social Democratic Party and then wish to take up as his principal and almost his only work an active religious propaganda in the party, the party would undoubtedly have to expel him. With regard to groups of workers who have still retained their belief in God, we must not only admit them into the party, but should energetically draw them in; we are absolutely against the slightest injuring of their religious feelings, but we win them in order to be trained in the spirit of our programme and not in order to take up an active fight against it. We allow *inside* the party freedom of opinion, but only within certain limits, which are determined by the freedom of the formation of groups; we are not obliged to go hand in hand with those who actively propagate points of view which are rejected by the majority of the party.

Another example. Should one under all circumstances condemn a member of the Social Democratic Party for the declaration, "Socialism is my religion," as one would for the propagation of points of view which correspond to that declaration? Oh, no. A deviation from Marxism, and therefore from Socialism, is very definitely here, but the meaning of this deviation, its specific gravity, as it were, can vary in different situations. It is one thing when an agitator or someone coming before the masses speaks in this way, in order to be better understood, to draw interest into his subject-matter, to express his point of view more vividly in forms which are more accessible to the undeveloped mass; it is quite another thing when a writer begins to propagate some God-construction or "God-constructing" Socialism (for example, in the spirit of our Lunacharsky and his associates). Just as in the first case censure would only be captious cavilling or an uncalled-for limitation of the freedom of the agitator, the freedom of the teacher's methods of work, so in the second case censure by the party is necessary and obligatory. The maxim, "Socialism is my religion," is for the one a form of transition *from* religion to Socialism, but for the other—from Socialism *to* religion.

Let us now consider the conditions which in Western Europe have produced an opportunist interpretation of the thesis, "Proclamation of religion as a private affair." Certainly there are also general causes here in play which at all times lead to

opportunism, as the surrender of the permanent interests of the working class for the sake of temporary advantages. The party of the proletariat demands *from the State* the proclamation of religion as a private affair, but does not regard as a private affair the question of the fight against the opium of the people, the fight against religious superstition, &c. The opportunists distort the question so as to make it as if the *Social Democratic* Party actually *regarded* religion as a private affair.

But in addition to the vicious opportunist distortion (which in the debates of our Duma fraction on the treatment of the question of religion was not at all made clear) there are also certain historical conditions which have produced the present, so to speak, excessive indifference of the Western European Social Democrats in questions of religion. These are conditions of two kinds. First, the task of the fight against religion is an historical task of the revolutionary bourgeoisie, and in the West this task has to an important extent, or at least partially, been fulfilled by the bourgeois democracy in the epoch of its revolutions against feudalism and mediævalism. Both in France and in Germany there is a tradition of the bourgeois fight against religion, which was begun long before Socialism (the Encyclopædists and Feuerbach). In Russia, in accordance with the conditions of our bourgeois democratic revolution, this task also falls almost entirely on the shoulders of the working class.

On the other hand, the tradition of the bourgeois war against religion in Europe has produced a specific bourgeois *distortion* of this war in the hands of Anarchism, which, as the Marxists have long ago and repeatedly shown, stands on the basis of a bourgeois world conception, despite all the " vehemence " of its attacks on the bourgeoisie. The Anarchists and Blanquists in the Latin countries, Most (who was a pupil of Dühring) and his associates in Germany, and the Anarchists of the 'eighties in Austria raised the revolutionary phase in the war against religion to the highest pinnacle. What wonder that the European Social Democrats to-day fall into the other extreme! This is comprehensible and even in a certain measure justified, but we Russian Social Democrats must not forget the special historical conditions of the West.

Secondly, in the West, *after* the conclusion of the national

bourgeois revolutions, *after* the introduction of more or less complete freedom of religion, the question of the democratic fight against religion was already to such an extent historically overborne by the fight of bourgeois democracy against Socialism, that the bourgeois Governments *consciously* attempted to draw the masses away from Socialism by sham-liberal crusades against clericalism. Such was the character of the "Kulturkampf" in Germany, as also of the fight of the bourgeois republicans in France against clericalism. Bourgeois anti-clericalism as a means to draw the attention of the masses away from Socialism in the West is what preceded the present "indifference" among Social Democrats towards the fight with religion. This is also comprehensible and justified, since the bourgeois and Bismarckian anti-clericalism must be held in check by the Social Democrats on the ground that the fight against religion must be *subordinated* to the fight for Socialism.

In Russia the conditions are quite different. The proletariat is the leader of our bourgeois democratic revolution. Its party must be the spiritual leader in the fight against all remains of mediævalism, including the old official religion, as also against all attempts to renovate it, or reconstruct it either on a reformed basis or on a completely new one. If Engels corrected with comparative mildness the opportunism of the German Social Democrats—who, in place of the demand of the workers' party that the *State* should declare religion a private affair, put forward the proclamation of religion as a private affair for Social Democrats themselves and the Social Democratic Party—it can be imagined how a taking over of the German distortion by the Russian opportunists would have earned a *hundred times* sharper criticism from Engels.

Our Duma fraction, in declaring that religion is opium for the people, acted entirely rightly, and has in this way established a precedent which must serve as the basis of all future acts of the Russian Social Democrats in questions of religion. Should one have gone further and set out in full detail all the atheist conclusions? We think not. This might have called forth an exaggeration of the fight against religion on the part of the political party of the proletariat, and have led to a blurring of the boundary

between the bourgeois and Socialist fight against religion. The first task which the Social Democratic fraction could do in the Black-Hundreds Duma has been honourably accomplished.

The second, almost the most important task of Social Democracy—the exposure of the class rôle of the church and the clergy in the support of the Black-Hundreds Government and of the bourgeoisie in their fight against the working class—has also been splendidly fulfilled. Certainly, there is still much to be said on this theme, and the Social Democrats will on further occasions know how to amplify the speech of Comrade Surkov; but his speech was nevertheless excellent, and it is the duty of our party to spread it among all party organisations.

Thirdly, the right sense of the thesis which is so often distorted by the German opportunists—the "proclamation of religion as a private affair"—should be explicitly made clear. This, unfortunately, Comrade Surkov did not do. This is the more to be regretted, as the fraction had already committed an oversight in this question, which the *Proletarii* at the time nailed to the counter, namely, the error of Comrade Beloussov. The debates in the fraction show that the discussion on atheism concealed the question of the right interpretation of the demand for the proclamation of religion as a private affair. We shall not lay the blame on Comrade Surkov alone for this error of the whole fraction. More, we state openly that it is the fault of the whole party, which has not sufficiently cleared up this question and has not sufficiently made Social Democrats aware of the meaning of Engels' comment concerning the German opportunists. The fraction debates show that there was an unclear approach to the question, not a deviation from Marxism, and we are convinced that this error will be put right at a later meeting of the fraction.

In broad outline the speech of Comrade Surkov is, as said, of outstanding excellence and should be circulated by all our organisations. In the handling of this speech the fraction has shown a conscientious fulfilment of its Social Democratic duty. It only remains to wish that correspondence concerning the debates in the fraction should appear more frequently in the party Press, and so build up a close ideological unity in the activity of the party and of the fraction.

WHAT IS THE A.P.R.A.?

By HAYA DELATORRE

(Leader of the "United Front" Latin America Anti-Imperialist Party)

THE struggle organised in Latin America against Yankee Imperialism, by means of an international united front of manual and intellectual workers with a programme of common action, that is the A.P.R.A., the four initial letters of the following words : Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana (Popular Revolutionary American Alliance).

Its Programme

The programme of international action of the A.P.R.A. has five general points which serve as a basis for the national sections :—

(1) Action of the countries of Latin America against Yankee Imperialism.
(2) The political unity of Latin America.
(3) The nationalisation of land and industry.
(4) The internationalisation of the Panama Canal.
(5) The solidarity of all the oppressed people and classes of the world.

Its Organisation

The A.P.R.A. is a young organisation formed by the young men of the new generation of manual and intellectual workers of Latin America. It was founded in 1924 and has organised sections in various countries in Latin America and also in Europe, where the number of anti-Imperialist Latin American students is pretty large. The principal sections of the A.P.R.A. are at present working in Mexico, Buenos Aires, Central America, Paris and other places in which for political reasons the action of these sections is not publicly allowed. A Central Executive Committee directs the action of all the sections.

The United Front

The A.P.R.A. organises the great Latin American Anti-Imperialist united front and works to include in its ranks all those who in one way or another have struggled and are still struggling against the North American danger in Latin America. Until 1923 this danger was regarded as a possible struggle of races—the Saxon and the Latin races—as a " conflict of cultures "

or as a question of nationalism. From the "Gonzalez Prada" Popular Universities of Peru a new conception of the problem has arisen : the economic conception. In 1924 the first Pan-American Anti-Imperialist League was formed in Mexico and also the Latin American Union in Buenos Aires. The Anti-Imperialist Leagues were the first endeavour of the international united front of workers, peasants and students against Yankee Imperialism. The Latin American Union was founded as the Anti-Imperialist *Frente Unico* of the Intellectuals. As a matter of fact, the Anti-Imperialist Leagues have no fixed political programme, but only that of resistance to Imperialism, and the Latin American Union has simply intellectual activity. The A.P.R.A. was founded in 1924, with a programme of revolutionary and political action, and it invites all the scattered forces to form themselves in a single great front.

The Class Struggle against Imperialism

The history of the political and economic relations between Latin America and the United States, especially the experience of the Mexican Revolution, lead to the following conclusions :—

(1) The governing classes of the Latin American countries—landowners, middle class or merchants—are allies of North American Imperialism.

(2) These classes have the political power in our countries, in exchange for a policy of concessions, of loans, of great operations which they—the capitalists, landowners or merchants and politicians of the Latin American dominant classes—share with Imperialism.

(3) As a result of this alliance the natural resources which form the riches of our countries are mortgaged or sold, and the working and agricultural classes are subjected to the most brutal servitude. Again, this alliance produces political events which result in the loss of national sovereignty : Panama, Nicaragua, Cuba, Santo Domingo, are really protectorates of the United States.

The International Struggle against Imperialism

As the problem is common to all the Latin American countries, in which the dominant classes are allies of Imperialism in joint exploitation of the working classes, it is not an isolated or national question, but is international among the twenty Latin American republics. But the governing classes encourage divisions among

petroleum industry, which to-day is still dominated by the menace of a North American invasion in defence of the interests of the Standard Oil Company (North American capital in Mexico petroleum $614,487,263). The " Enmienda Platt " of the Cuban Constitution and the cases of Santo Domingo, Panama, Nicaragua, Honduras, and Hayti prove to us that national authority is lost in proportion as investments by Imperialism are accepted. The nationalisation of land and industry under the direction of the producing classes is the sole means of maintaining the country's power, and is the correct policy for the countries of Latin America.

Latin American Political Unity pre-supposes the Internationalisation of the Panama Canal

The Panama Canal in the power of the United States Government is one danger more to the sovereignty of Latin America. The programme of the A.P.R.A. frankly proclaims the " internationalisation of Panama." Dr. Alberto Ulloa, Professor of International Law in the University of St. Marcos, Lima, Peru, writes in support of this thesis : " The Panama Canal must be internationalised. . . . It is not possible to allow to the United States the exercise of supreme rule in Panama." (Open letter to the President of the Federation of Students of Panama, June, 1926.)

Conclusion

The A.P.R.A. represents, therefore, a political organisation struggling against Imperialism and against the national governing classes which are its auxiliaries and its allies in Latin America. The A.P.R.A. is the united front of the toiling classes (workers, peasants, natives of the soil) united with students, intellectual revolutionaries, &c. The A.P.R.A. is an autonomous movement, completely Latin American, without foreign interventions or influences. It is the result of a spontaneous movement in defence of our countries in view of the experiences of Mexico, Central America, Panama and the Antilles, and the present position of Peru, Bolivia, and Venezuela, where the policy of " penetration " by Imperialism is already keenly felt. For this our watchword is to be the following : " Against Yankee Imperialism, for the unity of the peoples of Latin America, for the realisation of social justice."

(Paris, *October*, 1926.)

these republics, assisting the Imperialist plan which fears Latin American unity (covering eight millions of square miles and about ninety millions of inhabitants). The governing classes stir up national feeling and national conflicts, as in the case of Peru against Chile, Brazil against Argentina, Ecuador and Colombia against Peru, &c. Every time that the United States intervenes as an "amicable mediator" they arrange matters purposely so that no definite settlement can be arrived at which might produce a principle of unification. The recent question of Tacna and Arica between Peru and Chile is the clearest demonstration of this policy of Imperialism.

Imperialism cannot be Overthrown without the Political Unity of Latin America

The experience of history, especially that of Mexico, shows that the immense power of American Imperialism cannot be overthrown without the unity of the Latin American countries. Against this unity the national dominant classes, middle class, landowners, &c., whose political power is almost always buttressed by the agitation of nationalism or patriotism of countries hostile to their neighbours, are ranged. Consequently the overthrow of the governing classes is indispensable, political power must be captured by the workers, and Latin America must be united in a Federation of States. This is one of the great political objects of the A.P.R.A.

The Nationalisation of Land and Industries as the Sole Means of Combating Imperialism

Within the capitalist system, and in accordance with the dialectics of its historical process, Latin America would infallibly become a North American colony. The United States holdings of values in the world (The *New York Times*, June 27, 1926) are shown in the following table, exclusive of the war debts :—

United States holdings in	Asia	.. ..	$1,000,000,000
" "	Europe	.. ..	$2,000,000,000
" "	Australia	.. ..	$1,000,000,000
" "	Canada	.. ..	$2,500,000,000
" "	Latin America	..	$4,100,000,000

This introduction of capital into Latin America increases almost daily. From June to October, Imperialism has invested over $50,000,000. The conflict between the United States and Mexico shows us that Mexico has not been able to nationalise the

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TRADE UNIONISM IN THE BALKANS[1]

Bulgaria

BEFORE their dissolution in 1923, the revolutionary unions claimed 35,000 members. The so-called "neutral" unions, mainly of state employees, &c., numbered at this time 25,000, but because of their inactivity were of little importance, while the free trade unions, as the result of a split in 1921, numbered under 3,000. In the summer of 1925 the latter claimed a membership of 15,000.

The economic crisis affected Bulgaria very severely; the number of unemployed during 1925 was stated to exceed 80,000, a very large proportion. It should be stated that no effective relief is provided for unemployment. The working-class standard of living fell to 30-50 per cent. of the pre-war level, and in industry the hours of work were increased to ten or twelve as a rule, in place of the legally established six or eight hours.

A revival of activity on the part of revolutionary trade unionism began in 1924, and made steady progress. The question of unity was always kept to the fore, and in August, 1925, two conferences were held, on the invitation of some "Independent" unions, with the free trade unions, for this purpose. They broke down principally on the question of international affiliation, and when in September a further invitation was ignored, the independent unions set up their own national federation (end of October, 1925).

No further steps were taken until after the Balkan conference in April, when the free unions issued an invitation to a conference. This took place on July 21, and agreement was reached on a basis for unity, the principal points of which are:—

> Complete independence of political parties, and admission of all workers without distinction; no union to hold meetings or establish offices in premises of political parties.
>
> Preservation of freedom of opinion and criticism. Democratic centralisation.
>
> Organisation by industry, with a factory committee in every factory; all unions to belong to their appropriate Trade Secretariats.
>
> The united Federation to be directed by a committee consisting of equal numbers of the two sides, until the first congress six months from the date of agreement.
>
> Meanwhile the Federation shall enter into informative relations with the

[1] A general account of Trade Unionism in the Balkans, and of the I.F.T.U. Balkan Conference, was given in the last issue (Labour Monthly, November, 1926 pages 702-704).

I.F.T.U., the question of International affiliation to be decided by the first congress; the Federation in any case to support the Anglo-Russian Committee in its efforts to unify the two Internationals.

The national congresses of both sections took place on August 8, and instead of accepting the agreed basis, the free trade unions put forward several alterations, the most important of which was immediate affiliation to the I.F.T.U. The new basis was carried by thirty-eight votes to twenty-three, several important unions being in opposition. Unity has thus not yet been achieved.

Jugo-Slavia

The Trade Union Movement in Jugo-Slavia has, throughout its history, been more seriously divided than almost any other. In 1920, when organisation and enthusiasm were at the greatest, the most important federation, which was affiliated to the R.I.L.U., had 250,000 members. Even at that time a free, or social-democratic, federation of 10,000 members, and Croatian, Serbian, Christian and other small bodies existed. With the practical abolition, through terrorism, of the revolutionary unions in 1921 and 1922, the free unions increased in importance, and in 1925 claimed 35,000 members. The "Independent" unions, which had gradually re-established existence, numbered 16,000 members, and in all certainly less than 10 per cent. of the working class is now organised in at least seven different bodies.

In 1925 the two chief federations organised a joint May-day demonstration, and further discussions took place on the question of unification. A conference was arranged for October 10, but shortly before that date a quarrel arose over the expulsion, by the police and the free union officials, of some "Independents" from the Chamber of Labour in Belgrade, and as a consequence many of the latter did not attend the conference. It was successful in realising unification of the railwaymen, but the general question of unity was not solved.

Early in 1926 the "Independent" organisation was again subjected to severe attack, some 450 of its leading members being imprisoned and its work seriously disorganised. It sent to the Balkan conference an invitation to a unity conference in Belgrade, but no notice was taken of this or of its demand for representation, and the Jugo-Slavian representatives at the conference announced that "unification is now accomplished."

The movement for unity persists, however, and during the summer several union conferences declared for unity in principle. On the initiative of the "Autonomous" unions (mainly clerical workers) a conference was held on June 27 at Belgrade, which decided on a basis. This included independence of political parties, no international affiliation, proportional representation of the sections in the central committee, &c., and is receiving widespread support.

Unification by localities and even factories, without official sanction, is also reported.

Rumania

The split in the Trade Union Movement of Rumania dates from the famous congress at Cluj (Klausenberg) in September, 1923. The movement had already fallen on evil days. The number of members, from 2-300,000 in 1920, had sunk in 1922 to 20,000, but had again risen in 1923, so that 50-60,000 were represented at the congress. Here a conflict arose over the defeat of one of the official motions, and the President, according to the I.F.T.U. Report,

> declared the session closed, and called a new session to which only those were admitted who declared themselves to be in favour of affiliation to Amsterdam.

The excluded unions formed a Unitary Federation, and immediately proposed to the original body to discuss reunion, but the proposal was refused. Since that time both federations have continued to exist in a condition of great weakness. The policy of compromise and submission of the reformist unions is incapable of attracting the working class, while the danger of membership of a body so persecuted as a revolutionary union is such that none but the hardiest will join it. Under the pressure of the economic crisis of 1925-6 a renewed effort towards unity has been made. The conferences of both sections in January, 1926, considered the question favourably, but the reformist unions put forward the condition affiliation to the I.F.T.U. as essential. Since the Balkan conference negotiations have been reported.

In particular a local conference took place in July at Cluj, which progressed favourably for a time, and aroused much interest. It eventually broke down, however, over the questions of internal democracy and leadership, and of policy, the pursuit of the class struggle. The fundamental difference of outlook on these points could not even yet be overcome.

The national conference of the reformist unions in August, apparently feeling its position strengthened by the decisions of the Balkan conference, declared emphatically that affiliation to Amsterdam is a necessary condition of unification, and members spoke of the impossibility of unity while there remain Communists within the unions.

Greece

In Greece alone of the Balkan States has the split in the trade unions not been serious. The General Confederation of Labour has been able to keep its organisation and membership fairly intact in spite of persecution.

After the general strike in the autumn of 1923 the trade unions were allowed to continue their existence only on condition that the leadership was given into the hands of those in whom the Government had confidence. In spite of this, the movement seems to have recovered, but in 1925, under the Pangalos regime, many of the leaders were imprisoned or deported, the official organ was suppressed, and the general congress forbidden.

Two of the leaders were present at the Balkan Conference. Shortly before this a conference was reported which had decided to bring about complete unity, to affiliate to the I.F.T.U., and to break completely with the Communist Party. A further conference was to ratify these decisions, but a split seems probable if and when such a conference takes place.

JAVA

National Revolutionary Movement

THE Dutch East Indies constitute an economic and political area of great importance and of a typically colonial type. The population is roughly fifty millions, that of Java being about 70 per cent. of the total. Production is mainly agricultural, sugar, rubber, tobacco, tea, &c., being the chief exports, but is carried out under capitalist conditions. Thus, while 45 per cent. of the population is small peasantry, it is estimated that an equal number are employed as wage labourers, whole or part time, in agricultural and industrial enterprises.

Economic development has been rapid in recent years. The population increased by 40 per cent. between 1905 and 1920. Export figures give a certain indication of the rate of capitalist development. Total export figures in millions of guilders (twelve guilders=£1 at par) were :—

1913	*1920*	*1922*	*1923*
614	2,225	1,136	1,368

In 1923 sugar accounted for 37 per cent. and rubber for 13 per cent. of the total. These and other export goods are produced almost entirely by capitalist-owned, large-scale plantations. Native peasant production is mainly of rice, maize and other foods for local consumption. It is estimated that the total capital invested in the Dutch East Indies is now about £500 millions, of which probably two-thirds is foreign-owned.

The chief foreign commercial interest is Dutch. British trade is considerable and growing, but is not greater in value than that of Japan, U.S.A., China, or India. The competition among these interests, and in recent years those of Germany, is reported to be severe.

The social composition of the country has determined the nature of the nationalist movement, which has become important since the war, and is, far more than in India, and even more than in China, a predominantly working-class movement. The Sarekat Islam, a religious nationalist body, was for a time influential, but is now relatively feeble. Several nationalist organisations exist, of which the best known is the Sarekat Rayat, mainly a peasant party, but partly under working-class influence. It has lately been subjected to official persecution.

The trade-union movement is strongest in the transport industry—railway and dock strikes have become common recently—but extends to all industries, and in the case of the native workers is largely under Communist leadership. The Communist Party was founded in 1918, and since 1922 has made rapid progress. In common with the trade unions it has suffered severely from persecution. Since the railway strike of 1923 particularly, which was defeated by the forces of the Government, acts of violence against the working class, both by official forces and by unofficial armed bands, have been frequent.

The peasantry has recently begun to show greater political activity, and, to some extent owing to Communist Party work, increases in taxation have been met with widespread opposition and refusals to pay.

As everywhere in the East, the successes of the Chinese national struggle have aroused the greatest interest and enthusiasm. Many public meetings have been held and funds collected for its support.

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