then even heard at the meetings of the trade union executive organs.

In Lodz, a delegate meeting of the Textile Workers' Union was held on December 6, adopted the motion of the trade union "Left" wing to convene an extraordinary conference in order to discuss the question of calling a protest strike. At this conference, which the trade union bureaucrats had to convene and which took place on December 18, only 37 out of 500 members voted for the motion of the trade union leaders to postpone the protest strike.

The big success of December 20 in Warsaw, Lodz, and Bialystok revealed to the P.P.S. leaders the danger of their isolation from the masses. The C.P. of Poland, however, utilised this success in order to develop the fight for the immediate abolition of the anti-labour laws and decrees and to popularise the slogan of the one-day general strike.

In the Dombrova Basin, where on December 20, owing to inadequate organisational preparation, only the "Stren" chemical workers went on strike, in the first days of January the miners in five pits downed tools under the leadership of the trade union "Left" wing. In Lodz a delegate meeting, held on January 3, decided on a protest strike of 24 hours for the whole industrial district to take place on January 10. The bureaucrats were compelled to give in to this proposal. But they endeavoured to impose their leadership upon the masses in order to divert the movement into "peaceful" channels.

The working class of the Lodz district, however, upset their calculations. The strike committees, which had already been operating before December 20, and which elected a provisional central committee, extended their activity and proceeded to the organisational preparation for January 10. In their appeals and at meetings the Communists explained to the workers that the fight against the violation of the collective agreements, against the lengthening of the working week, against the cuts in social insurance benefits, against the arrears of the wage, means a fight against the Fascist Pilsudski government, and this fight requires the setting up of the proletarian united front.

The workers in the other industrial districts, in which the news of the approaching Lodz strike penetrated, organised a strike according to the Lodz example for January 10. Everywhere in Warsaw and Bialystok, in the Dombrova coal field, and in Czestochowa, the Communist Party and the trade union "Left" wing stood at the head of these movements.

In the industrial district of Lodz 120,000 workers took part in the strike. The strike was general. It was only by having every scab tram-driver guarded by two heavily armed policemen that it was possible to maintain a tramway service. Even the clerks in the newly incorporated municipal offices went on strike for an hour. How powerful the strike movements in the town and neighbourhood of Lodz was is shown by the fact that the Pajtanica papers, in which there has been no strike since 1905, this time participated splendidly in the strike.

The "law and order" which the fascists and the trade union bureaucrats hoped to maintain was disturbed by numerous street demonstrations.

The government fully realises the seriousness of the situation. General Kubicka, the Minister for Labour, wants to deceive the workers by means of a press declaration in which he maintains that the new laws will not violate the old collective agreements, that it is merely a question of legislation regulating the relations between the employers and the workers.

The workers, under the leadership of the C.P. of Poland, will not be diverted from the path of struggle against the fascist laws. December 20, 1933, and January 10, 1934, constitute a powerful prelude to a general protest strike throughout the whole of Poland.

Paul and Gertrud Rueegg Taken from Hospital Back to Prison
Shanghai, January 22.

According to a notice from Nanking, Paul and Gertrud Rueegg have been discharged from hospital and taken back to the prison "in consideration of their improved state of health."

Against Colonial Oppression

The Situation in the Belgian Congo

Statement by the League Against Imperialism

Owing to the world crisis and the difficult economic situation in the Belgian Congo, a strong insurrectional movement has been developing during the past few months, especially among the Bwaka Ngombe and Bandza tribes, and the Libenge district. According to the "African World" of December 23, a revolt has now broken out in the Nono tribe. The trouble began in the village of Duna, and it is attributed to the influxes of white doctors. In reality the revolt had nothing to do with scurvy, but is due to the discontent caused by high taxation, by the scale of unemployment, and also by the system of paying for the wood which the Congolese bring in by a system of check-vouchers instead of cash.

Troops were called out by the Belgian authorities, firearms were used and three Congolese were killed, while one African soldier was wounded.

The Belgian oppression in the Congo equals the rigorous rule of British imperialism in Nigeria and India, and of French imperialism in Madagascar and Indo-China.

The following report of Belgian cruelty and administration of justice has just reached the League Against Imperialism:

A few days ago the captain of a vessel belonging to a European company, the National Union of River Transport (Unatra), struck an African fireman working under his orders with a log of fuel wood. The fireman, frightened from loss of blood and was taken to the native hospital. On the second day lock-jaw set in and the Negro died in atrocious suffering.

The white staff of the Unatra has the wretched reputation of being "Nigger-drivers," worthy of the reign of Leopold II. On board their boats the captain and the owners of their barges are absolute masters and hold the Negroes at their mercy.

The inhabitants of the native village, and especially the black workers of the Unatra, will remember the murder of the native worker n'Oito, by a white boat owner. The circumstances of the crime must be held in order to show up clearly the state of mind of the white colonist.

After having taken on board a cargo of wood at the station of Poto Poto, near Dima, the stern wheeler tug "Wangata" continued her journey. Barge 09 was one of the string of boats which the "Wangata" was towing. A discussion regarding the ill-treatment which the captain inflicted on his men took place between the Negro steersman, n'Oito, and the barge master. The white slave-driver knocked the black worker down with a blow from a stick and stunned him with a heavy earthenware dish. He then tied him handcuffed and thrown overboard. The other workers, horrified by such a spectacle, did not dare to intervene, and the unfortunate n'Oito disappeared into the water. After which the master went off tranquilly to enjoy the charms of his own housekeeper and was picked up in the morning dead drunk.

Two days later the corpse of the poor Negro, which had escaped being devoured by the crocodiles, was found in some bushes on the edge of the river, with the handcuffs still on and the horrible wound caused by the earthenware dish visible.

The native village of Leopoldville, roused by such cruelty and cynicism, demonstrated in solemn indignation at the public port where the "Wangata" was to touch. However, under this menace, her captain deemed it more prudent to land at the dockyard of the Unatra.

The white barge master, after a brief interrogatory, was allowed his liberty, and a short time afterwards the Unatra, desiring to get rid of an embarrassing person, sent him home to Belgium. According to Corriere del Mezzogiorno he was condemned for having killed a native worker in the most cowardly manner, to one month's imprisonment, which was subsequently remitted. Such a scandalous verdict shows clearly how the whites in the Congo understand their so-called civilising role.

The Congo is a vast territory, the area being estimated at 918,000 square miles. It is especially rich in minerals. Copper is the chief export, and the Congo expects to become one of the world's greatest producers of tin. There are great diamond deposits, which are worked profitably, and this year nearly ten tons of gold will be exported from the Congo.
The high profits which are derived from the exploitation of the Congo are due to the exceedingly low cost of production, especially wages. The workers of Belgium are directly the victims of Belgian imperialism in the Congo. In Belgium to-day nearly one third of the working-class population is suffering from unemployment, the Means Test is being increasingly applied, with a view to reducing the payment of unemployment benefit. While slavery exists in the Congo there will be no possibility for the Belgian workers to free themselves from exploitation.

So little is the meaning of imperialism understood in Belgium that the funds of the Belgian Labour organisations are actually invested in business undertakings in the Congo. This investment by the workers of their own funds in the capitalist and imperialist enterprises of their own ruling class has its parallel in Britain, where some of the funds of the British railway unions are invested in British railway stock.

But the exploitation of the Congolese is not the work of Belgian imperialists alone. The vast riches of the Congo basin have long attracted the envy of international financiers (particularly British) as well. In the time of Leopold II. the first Governor-General of the Congo to be appointed was the brutal English imperialist, H. M. Stanley, and to-day British imperialists have enormously extended the profits which they derive from exploitation of the Congolese, as is exemplified in the 49 per cent. share of the British Company, Tanganikya Concessions, in the Union Miniere. This is the Union Miniere which practically monopolises the vast wealth of the Katanga region in copper, coal, radium, etc. Again, the huge British super-trust, Unilever and its subsidiaries, practically monopolise the vegetable-oil industry of the Congo, as they do of other products of Africa.

The position of the Congolese in Belgium is particularly hard. In the first place, none of them is ever permitted to return to the Congo. Many of these Congolese have been brought to Belgium as the personal servants of Belgians, who discharge them as soon as they land in Belgium. These Congolese are completely unorganised, unless it be that they are enrolled as members of a charitable organisation, under clerical direction. They eke out a precarious existence as hawkers on the streets and in the markets.

It is necessary to establish unity of organisation between the Congolese and Belgian workers with a view to securing full liberty of movement for all workers, full rights of organisation, and self-determination for the Congo, with right of complete separation from Belgium.

It is not in the Congo alone that the Africans are treated inhumanely by Western imperialists. The British are as callously cruel to the Negroes as the Belgians and the Americans.

The International Secretariat of the League Against Imperialism believes the time is now opportune for establishing a National Section of the League in Belgium, which would enable the Belgian workers to take up the fight on behalf of the Congolese, in solidarity with other fighters against imperialism throughout the world.

The Situation in Cyprus

Cyprus, an agrarian country with impoverished agricultural resources, is passing through an acute economic crisis, the terrible consequences of which are weighing heavily on the shoulders of the peasants and the working masses generally. Peasants are being driven daily into the ranks of the finance capitalists by the execution of a tremendously increasing number of distrainments on moveable and immoveable properties, issued by the court, for the recovery of debts and interest due by them to usurers, merchants, and other exploiters.

The result of this situation is that, on the one hand, peasants are expropriated of all their property, which passes into the hands of their creditors, and, on the other hand, a handful of exploiters are being developed into the class of feudal parasites, willing to hire ruined peasants to work for them on wages paid by cutting contractors.

In this desperate situation a large number of peasants with their families are compelled to leave the country and go to the towns in search of work. In the towns one often comes across the heartbreaking spectacle of peasants going about with their poorly-dressed wives and bare-footed children following them, to inquire for work from building contractors.

The bourgeois papers (the Communist organ has long been banned) every day publish news characteristic of the utter ruin of the rural masses. Every day one hears of suicides from financial causes, fainting of children in schools from hunger, ejection of families from their homes, bankruptcies, and so on.

In Cyprus there are no labour laws at all. Labour is entirely at the mercy of capital, and the workers live under the worst economic and social conditions. There is no unemployment benefit, no compensation in case of accidents nor any relief at all. The government, which consists of high-salaried officials, does nothing to relieve this unprecedented misery of the labouring classes, their sole care being how to suck wealth out of the country. (It is a fact that the salary of the British official in Cyprus is equal to the income of sixty working men.)

The employed workmen are in no better position than the unemployed. They receive starvation wages of 1s., 1s. 6d., 2s. a day for 14-18 hours' work, under the worst social conditions mentioned above.

Several attempts have been made by the workers to obtain official registration and recognition of their unions, but the government has always submitted to these attempts, alleging that the unions include Communist members. The workmen, nevertheless, have now formed secret unions which carry on their activities underground. In Cyprus, liberty of speech, of press and of combination are unknown.

The workers' indignation and resentments culminated in the strike last summer, in which 1,000 persons took part to demonstrate against the cruel exploitation to which they are subjected. The workers successfully confounded the employers which, however, were afterwards broken.

There is one party that alone struggles with all possible means against tyranny, exploitation and bourgeois rule, the Communist Party.

The masses have realised and constantly show their sympathy for the Communist Party, which is steadily increasing its membership. This has caused the government to enact more repressive laws against the Communist Party and to the Defence Orders which have been in force since October, 1931. One of these Acts contains the following provision: "Any person found in possession of any books, newspapers, documents cards or emblems which imply membership of an unlawful association, such person shall be deemed to be a member of an unlawful association and shall be guilty of a 'fealty.'"

The definition of what constitutes seditious publication covers everything exacting religious and temporal dominion in a republic. Among the most recent victims of the government's repressive measures are twelve of our comrades who have been arrested on the vague charge of conspiring for the overthrow of the existing regime. The accused have been committed for trial before the Assize Court, which will be held in February or March next, and in the meantime are being held in custody.

In spite of all these drastic measures, however, the Communist Party of Cyprus is daily increasing in strength and working more actively for the overthrow of imperialist rule.

The Fifteenth Party Conference of the Communist Party of White Russia

The Fifteenth Party Conference of the Communist Party of White Russia has been opened in Minsk. The secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of White Russia, in his opening speech, pointed out that the Fifteenth Anniversary of the founding of the C.P. and of the founding of the Soviet Republic of White Russia coincides with the Party Conference. "The Leninist nationalism policy, carried out by the Party and the Central Committee, with Comrade Stalin taking the lead, has enabled great achievements to be accomplished in White Russia. White Russia has been transformed from an economically and backward country into an industrial agrarian country, where illiteracy has been completely abolished. Innumerable tractors and machines are working in the fields of White Russia; the White Russian towns have become centres of industry, science, and culture. We are fully justified in claiming that Soviet White Russia is an impregnable bastion of the outposts of Sovietism in the West of the Soviet Union." Comrade Gorky concluded his speech with these words, amidst enthusiastic applause.

The Party Conference elected an honorary presidium, composed of members of the Political Bureau of the C.C. of the C.P.S.U. of Thaelmann, Dimitrov, and Lentsky (Communist Party of Poland). The proposal to elect Stalin to the honorary presidium, and as its chairman, was received with prolonged applause. The Party Conference was greeted by numerous delegations of workers and collective peasants of White Russia. The toilers of Minsk welcomed the Conference by an impressive demonstration.