IN THE INTERNATIONAL

Extract from the Resolution of the National Council of the C. P. of Germany.

On the Political Situation, the Tasks and Tactics of the Party.

We bring as a supplement to the articles of comrades Schneller and Lenz, appearing in our last number and dealing with the general situation in Germany and the tasks of the C. P., the following important passages from the Resolution of the National Council. Ed.

From: Our Tasks.
1. In the forefront there must be placed the outer-parliamentary struggle against the monarchist reaction and against the capitalist offensive, the rallying of the proletariat (trade union unity, factory councils’ movement, Red Front Fighters), the alliance of all the workers against the exploiters and their government and their monarchy.

2. We must fight for the democratic rights of the working class against reaction, no matter whether these appear as monarchist restoration or as legal “republican” reform of the constitution. We must show that bourgeois democracy neither renders possible the peaceful transition to Socialism, nor provides a safeguard against reaction, but, in comparison with an absolutist monarchist form of State, it renders easier the class struggle, because it permits of class questions being raised in an open and undisguised form, opens the way for broader masses to participate in political life, brings the bourgeoisie closer to their fraction struggles, and thereby strengthens the proletariat if it knows how to make use of these factors. The decisive question however is not the form of the State but the relations of power of the classes. So long as the reactionary bourgeoisie exercises the whole state power, unhindered by the class force of the proletariat, the advance of reaction and the limitation even of the most elementary bourgeois democratic rights of the working class is unavoidable. The fight against monarchist reaction can only be conducted under the leadership of the proletariat as the class struggle. We communists emphasise that we are ready to lead and to support this fight against the monarchist reaction in every form, but without however in the least giving up our principles, that is: we recognise that without the dictatorship of the proletariat and the Soviet Republic there is no stable republic and no guarantee against reaction and monarchy.

3. In order to convince the masses, who are misled by the republican swindle, of the correctness of these principles and to make them understand the necessity of independent action of the part of the proletariat against the black-white-red and the black-red-yellow groups of the bourgeoisie, and in order to show them that the “Republican” Parties will not and cannot take any serious step against the monarchist reaction, we must

a) propagate in connection with our demands against the Dawes Plan those political partial demands which contain a minimum programme for defeating the monarchist reaction and for securing the most elementary democratic rights of the working class;

b) to declare ourselves ready from time to time to cooperate with the Socialist Party of Germany and the “Republican” parties, so far as they fulfill the most elementary minimum demands, and in so doing we know from the outset that, should such co-operation come about, first, our temporary “allies” — allied by a temporary common aim (for example, in a similar case to that of the Kapp Putsch) — are always our enemies and must at a given moment unmask themselves as such, secondly, that it is not we who are going with them but they with us (compelled by the pressure and initiative of the masses), and thirdly, that at any moment they are prepared to betray us and the masses, as we declare beforehand.

As these minimum demands require for their carrying out a complete decomposition of the present state apparatus of the bourgeois republic, because this last is in the hands of the monarchists, we shall be able by such a manoeuvre to develop a concrete comprehensive propaganda for the proletarian State, and prove that the Republicans neither can nor will fight and that the Republic is lost.

From: “More Capacity to Manoeuvre”.

In the Presidential Election it was our task to show that the black-red-gold bloc cannot and will not conduct a serious struggle against the monarchist danger, that the S. P. of Germany, in spite of or precisely because of this, cling to its bourgeois allies and consciously shatters the class unity of the proletariat for the benefit of the bourgeoisie. This task would have been greatly furthered by a manoeuvre in the sense of the proposals of the German delegation and of the President of the Comintern. We should thereby have shown the working class the road to uniting upon a real fighting candidate against the monarchist reaction, a real fighting alliance on the basis of a republican minimum programme and made plain before the whole public the responsibility of the S. P. of Germany for the victory of the bourgeois reaction. It would thereby have been proved that the only real fighting alliance is the red front of all the exploited under the leadership of the C. P. of Germany. We should thereby have shown more plainly the necessity of the Communist candidature and promoted the disintegration within the S. P. of Germany.

In the Prussian question we have done too little in order to show clearly that our attitude was necessary and to destroy the swindle of the socialists that “the communists are the stirrup-holders of reaction”. We must place in the forefront the question of the government programme, and explain our opposition to the bourgeois coalition governments by their rejection of the most elementary minimum demands. We must proceed in a similar manner in the other parliaments and municipalities.

In a situation in which our Party constitutes the factor which will turn the scale between a Right and a so-called Left government, it is entirely permissible, and under certain conditions necessary to follow such a parliamentary tactic that we render possible the existence of the “Left” coalition. In so doing we must openly declare with all clearness that this is not because the revolutionary working class has anything better to expect from the Socialist Party of Germany and the “Republican Parties” than from the open monarchists, but solely for the purpose of showing to the masses who still believe in these parties that they are just as reactionary and hostile to the workers as the open reactionary parties. If the C. P. G. makes use of such a tactic in order to mobilise the masses outside of parliament against the black-red-gold parties and their government, this tactic has nothing whatever in common with a social democratic or Brandeist coalition policy. It is, however, only correct and permissible when the possibility does not yet exist of overthrowing such a government by a proletarian mass movement.

IN THE COLONIES

The Scramble for Abyssinia.

By Max Leitner.

The world political struggle among the international rival textile interests, has not come to an end. The Anglo-Egyptian conflict was only a prelude to a policy which is destined to protect the “vital questions” of English textile interests.

The “Soudan Plantation Syndicate” held not only the Soudan cotton plantations in its hands, but also the fate of the Egyptian cotton plantations. England has acquired, through the waters of the Nile, absolute influence over Egypt.

The war experience of the recent war, as it reminded her that, although the whole course of the White Nile is in English hands, the Blue Nile, which carries much more water, is not; for the source of the Blue Nile is in Abyssinia.

The more oppressive English rule in Egypt became, the clearer it was to English politicians and economists, that England’s “vital interests” can only be ensured by her obtaining absolute control over the “Blue Nile”, that is “influence” in Abyssinia.

Abyssinia, a country twice as large as Germany has, up to the present, played a comparatively small part in the struggle between the conflicting interests of the world powers, and it owes it to this circumstance alone, that it has remained the
only "independent" State in Africa. (Liberia was given an American "adviser".)

Abbyssinia was, it is true, cut off from the sea by the great powers, and thus there came into being, in a direction from North to South, Italian Eritrea and French, English and Italian Somaliland (Jubaland), which form a favourable region for assembling troops for a future attack. When however Italy once had succeeded to conquer Abyssinia, she was driven back to the coast by English guns.

In recent times however, a lively interest in Abyssinia has developed. French, Italian and English expeditions have traversed Abyssinia and special value has been attached to ethnographic and geographical study. Abyssinia has been able to report that every river and every stream in Abyssinia has been explored from source to mouth. The secrets of the Webi and the Juba have been discovered just as have those of the Blue Nile.

Abyssinia was discovered, and now the country is beginning to be included in a most striking manner in world politics.

"England then had to act rapidly, for the "Negro king" Garvey (who in the meantime had been sentenced to five years imprisonment for embezzlement) was planning, with the help of the American Government, to found a Negro colony in Abyssinia. The enterprise Garvey had in this way shown herself to be a keenly interested party."

And so England first of all looked round for allies and secondly sought an excuse for interfering in Abyssinia.

An ally was soon found in Italy, and the Anglo-Italian textile interests soon learned that the time had now come for co-operation. England did not take long in finding a pretext for discovering her civilising heart for Abyssinia.

In the "slave commission" of the League of Nations a memorandum was presented by the Government of His Majesty the King of Great Britain, according to which "scientifical investigation" had discovered that nowadays — in the 20th century — slavery and the slave trade still exist, which seriously threaten the safety of his British Majesty's subjects, especially of those in Kenya (British East Africa) and in the British Soudan, and that this slave trade was being carried on in Abyssinia.

The English Government asked for a mandate "to establish ordered conditions in Abyssinia in the interest of humanity".

The commission chose a select committee, but owing to the intrigues of French interested persons — who were backed by the Americans — the plan was wrecked, and the commission, called the attention of His Majesty's Government to the fact that the country of Italian interest, but Abyssinia were to be freed, this could be done equally well in the Indian Empire of the Emperor of India and King of Great Britain. And thus it came about that Reuter was able to report that festivities had been held in Nepal to celebrate the liberation of the slaves. The "Illustrated London News" produced photogravures of these celebrations. England no longer has slaves!

Abyssinia was then accepted into the League of Nations, promised to abolish slavery, and the Regent, Ras Tafari, undertook a journey to London, Paris and Rome.

Then began the bargaining. France promised to declare Dibouti (in French Somaliland) a free harbour for Abyssinia, Italy promised concessions, and England gave not only a royal crown (from the Victoria and Albert Museum), but also an "adviser".

Ras Tafari returned home with this adviser.

The first act of this English "adviser" was a revision of the slave question. In the semi-official "East Africa" of Jan. 22, 1923 we read:

"In March 1924, the Regent Ras Tafari issued an edict for the suppression of slavery. Special judges were authorised to draw up deeds of liberation for the slaves, it being the duty of the Provincial Governor to see that they returned to their homes. The governors and chiefs of tribes and villages were made responsible under heavy penalty for the suppression of any further slave trade. The edict was only in force for nine months as otherwise the precipitate liberation of hundreds of thousands of slaves would lead to a crisis."

An interesting document of capitalist hypocrisy. England was for the liberation of the slaves as long as she was trying to gain influence over Abyssinia. Now that the latter had its "adviser", the slave question was dropped.

Italy and England continued to negotiate uninterruptedly. The commission of the "Soudan Plantation Syndicate", the Governor General of the Soudan, held conferences with the commission of the "Societa Agricola Italo-Somala" (the president of which was the Duke of Abbazoi), the Governor of Eritrea, and thus it came about that a community of interests was established.

The "Societa Agricola" has cotton plantations in Eritrea, on the river Gash, in the tributary of the Adbara, and thus belongs to the district watered by the Nile, and in Jubaland in the district watered by the Webi-Shebeli.

Plans were developed on a large scale. Italy's demand for cotton is to be supplied by these countries. It is assumed that 400,000 hectares are needed for this purpose (in 1924, 10,000 hectares were cultivated). This will be brought about by the Encroaching Soudan river, which up to now formed the boundary between Kenya and Jubaland, with a hinter-land of 92,000 square miles.

The "Soudan Plantation Syndicate" founded a daughter concern on the Gash, where the Italian plantations are also situated, and in Eritrea the frontiers were regulated. The daughter company was founded under the name of the "Cassala Cotton Company" under the presidency of Mr. A. M. Asquith. There is of course a close community of interests with the "Societa Agricola". The company managed so to contrive matters that the so-called Cassala railway which makes a direct supply of cotton to Port Soudan possible, was built with the money of English workers.

The Anglo-Italian agreement was concluded in London on July 15, 1924. Italy received as its "sphere of interest" the district containing the sources of the Webi and Juba, i.e. South East Abyssinia, England the districts containing the sources of the Blue Nile, North West Abyssinia.

And thus it came about that Italy ventured on April 13th, 1925 to demand that Egypt should hand over the oasis Djarabub (between Egypt and Tripoli), that England promised neutrality.

THE CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT

The Fifth Congress of the Co-operative Societies of the Soviet Union.

The 5th Congress of the Zentrosoyus (Central Body of the Cooperative Association) was opened in Moscow on March 15th. Six hundred delegates from all parts of the Soviet Union and a large number of functionaries and members of the Moscow Cooperative Societies filled the large meeting hall in serried rows.

The opening words of the chairman of the Zentrosoyus were followed by a number of speeches of welcome by Comrade Andreiev (secretary of the C.C. of the C.P. of Russia), Dobrado (secretary of the All-Russian Central Trade Union Council, Brown (member of the ECCI. and representative of the C. P. of Great Britain), Kujbyschew (people's commissar for the workers' and peasants' inspection), Meschitscherjakov (Cooperative Section of the ECCI.) and finally Comrade Clara Zetkin.

Greetings had been received from more than 40 foreign cooperative centres and from the International Cooperative Alliance.

Comrade Chintchuk read the Report of the Managing Committee of the Zentrosoyus and said among other things:

On Oct. 1st. 1923 there were 16,188 Cooperative Societies with 20,120 branches. On Oct. 1st. 1924, the number of societies amounted to 20,920 with 27,478 shops. On Oct. 1st. 1923 we had in the towns 1,897 societies with 3216 shops. At the end of the year reported on, there were 3656 Cooperative Societies with 7010 shops in the towns. The predominant type of urban cooperative societies is that with several shops, whereas in the country, societies with only one shop prevail. The number of shareholders in the towns has increased from 21/2 to 41/2 millions. In recent times (October to March) the number of shareholders has been growing more rapidly in the country than in the towns. During the year in question 15 branches of the Zentrosoyus have been transformed into 6 district associations of cooperative societies.