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# The Labour Movement in China

## I.

**F**OURTEEN years have passed since the time of the Chinese revolution. But the main task set by the revolution—the liberation and unity of China—has not yet been fulfilled to this day. It is true the dynasty of the Manchus no longer exists; China has been proclaimed a republic, but China is neither free nor united. Up to now the financial, customs and railway managements, the foreign policy and to a certain extent the internal administration of China, still remain under the control of the imperialists. To this very day British, Japanese and other warships are still stationed in the most important Chinese ports. To this very day the Liao-Dun peninsula and the Southern Manchurian road are still in the hands of Japan, and even now Wei-hai-Wei has not yet been evacuated by the British. At present the concessions, with their regime of extra-territoriality, consular courts for foreigners and complete absence of rights for the Chinese population, still flourish in all industrial and trading centres. China is a semi-colony.

Very little has been done towards the uniting of China. On the contrary, China has become still more split up during the period of republicanism and the centrifugal forces have increased. The power of the central Peking Government is to a large extent delusive while the real power in the localities belongs to the "Dudjuns" (military governors).

The internecine strife of the Dudjuns occupies the entire recent republican history of China.

There is no need to refer in detail to the confusion and complicated history of the struggle of the various military groupings. It suffices to say that the interests of the Dudjuns and the imperialists coincided on one point which is a decisive point: both the one and the other were interested in splitting up China. The imperialists preferred to have to deal with a split-up and disorganised China, in order to rob it more easily, in order to seize larger morsels of China

with impunity and in order, while supporting a fictitious sovereignty of China, actually to maintain a colonial regime. The Dudjuns, who in words posed as the uniters of China, in reality also preferred to have to deal with a weak delusive central government, so as to be able to boss their "own" territories without control. And the endless struggle which the most influential militarists waged among themselves led to a struggle for the extension of "their own" territory: the more territory they had, the more income would they receive from the population they were plundering and the easier it was for them to levy a large army which is the mainstay of the Dudjun's power. This internecine struggle of the Dudjuns was supported by the imperialist governments, who supplied money, arms and war munitions. The supported Dudjuns in turn took up their "orientation" towards the "power" which financed them, assisting her in the struggle with competitors, asserting pressure on the Peking government, or even openly changing it in the interests of the foreign government that had financed them. And thus for the fourteen years of existence of the Chinese Republic, and depending on the weight of one or other militarist clique, a Japanophile cabinet was replaced by an Anglophile cabinet and, with a fresh change in the military situation, the latter has once more made way for a Japanophile cabinet. Only in the South, in the Kwantung province, has the national-revolutionary Party (Kuomintang) been able to maintain power with the greatest of difficulties after having suffered temporary defeats.

## II.

The difficulties lying in the path of the Chinese people in their struggle for liberation are, as we have seen, tremendous. It will be necessary to vanquish such hostile forces as world imperialism in its most concentrated form, with which very influential elements within China itself have become closely allied; these are military cliques on the one hand and the "tradesmen" bourgeoisie on the other. Whereas the militarists were an armed fist in the hands of imperialism, who ruined and split up China by military methods, the "tradesmen" bourgeoisie served the cause of imperialism by peaceful, economic but none the less actual, methods. These merchants are the numerous Chinese trading-middlemen, who before the war were the majority, who served the interests of the foreign capitalists, generally on a commission basis. Foreign firms are generally centred in large ports like Shang-

hai, Tientsin, Hong-Kong, Hankow and others. Not knowing the language, the trading customs, the market and the credit capacity, the foreign firms have recourse to the services of Chinese middlemen "traders" for the execution of their import and export operations, for the successful disposal of Chinese raw material and with a view to placing the imported goods on the Chinese market. This merchant bourgeoisie, participating in the robbery of the country and the ruin of peasants and artisans, becomes an eager servant of imperialism with which they are connected by a community of interests. The larger the role of foreign capital, the more raw material they export and goods they import, the more extensive is the field of activity for the middlemen and the more considerable the profit they draw from their activities as middlemen.

Thus it is evident the wars of the Duds and the "peaceful" work of the middlemen have equally assisted the imperialists to hold down China in suppression and slavery.

Only during the last few years have those social forces developed in China which may be opposed to the tremendous pressure of imperialism from without and the dislocation brought by the Duds and traders from within. These forces are the newly-born Chinese **industrial bourgeoisie** and the young Chinese **proletariat**.

### III.

These forces are the product of the last decade. Only during the European war of 1914-18 did the industrialisation of China proceed at an accelerated pace. Industrial centres with compact masses of the proletariat were founded which served at the same time as a basis for extensive national and Labour movements.

What was the importance of these new social forces? How did they influence the process of the struggle with colonial oppression which had commenced even under the Manchus and which had found its outstanding expression in the Boxer rising (1900) and in the overthrow of the Manchu dynasty itself (1911)?

The tremendous profits of the Chinese undertakings, which sprang up during the war, when dividends of 100 per cent. or higher were no rare occurrence, rendered nationalistic the newly-formed Chinese industrial bourgeoisie. They naturally wanted in future also, i.e., after the end of the war,

to continue exploiting their own workers and to remove as much as possible the dangerous competition of foreign capitalists. This should have made the Chinese industrial capitalists take up a new formation and become the most energetic skirmishers in the national struggle, but in reality this was not the case.

First of all this bourgeoisie is weak. In the most important branches of industry, with the exception perhaps of textiles and flour milling, Chinese capital plays a secondary and even third-rate role in comparison with foreign capital. This is the case with the railways, sea and river transport, mining (coal, iron, zinc, tin, antimony, quicksilver), metallurgy, shipbuilding and finally in banking affairs which "fertilise" the entire industry. Everywhere there is Japanese, British and American capital either in a "pure" form or, for the sake of appearance, masked under the guise of mixed Chino-Japanese or still rarer, Chino-British enterprises, in which power really belongs to foreign capital, which has undoubtedly greater weight than the national (Chinese).

But there are still two more circumstances which lessen the importance of the Chinese industrial bourgeoisie in the national liberation movement. One of these is of an economic order—the combination of trading-middlemen's activities with industrial activities—in the same hands, which is no rare occurrence in China. There are two souls in the breasts of this kind of Chinese bourgeoisie (and there are many of them); one is the middleman's which inclines towards compromise and collaboration with foreign capitalists; the other is industrial which inclines towards a struggle with them. The struggle cannot be particularly decisive if for this alone. But there was also another reason of a political nature—the early and unambiguous class actions of the young Chinese proletariat in the political arena.

#### IV.

Whereas the role of the Chinese bourgeoisie in the national-liberation movement has, for the above-mentioned reasons, been less than might have been expected, the role of the Chinese proletariat has been immeasurably greater than might have been supposed especially if we bear in mind the smallness of its numbers and its youth. If there may have been doubts about this earlier, the events of this year have proved this with dazzling clearness.

The tasks set by the 1911 revolution have remained unfulfilled because there have not been the forces which could change the social relations which have been forming throughout a period of centuries in old China and the tasks are now beginning to be executed beneath our very eyes in the only possible way—the mass movement of millions; but it is not the industrial bourgeoisie—the seemingly providential leader in the struggle against foreign imperialism—which is leading the movement, but the Chinese proletariat, which has united masses of merchants, artisans and intellectuals, a certain portion of the middle bourgeoisie, with the sympathy of extensive masses of the peasantry—a movement which in the South and in some places in the centre is acquiring organised and active forms.

It stands to reason, of course, that the Labour movement did not rise to these heights all at once. It massed its forces, closely binding itself up with the national movement, neutralising the favourable moments in the sharp struggle between the imperialists outside China and the militarists among themselves within China.

The first operations of the Chinese workers were of an economic nature. They coincided with the time of a sharp anti-Japanese struggle led by the students (1919). During this first period which covered almost three years, up to the second half of 1922, the Labour movement, which was in substance spontaneous, did not meet with any serious obstacles. In the majority of cases the workers of foreign enterprises went on strike. In defending their economic interests, the workers indirectly strengthened the position of Chinese industry and assisted the national movement, just as in India and in Egypt it is this very strike movement which flowed into the stream of the national movement and gave the latter volume and political significance. Therefore, it is not surprising that the famous strike of the Hong-Kong workers in the spring of 1922, which was directed against the British capitalists, did not only evoke a sympathetic response throughout the entire country, but also was given material support by the bourgeoisie of the South.

That situation soon changed. The strike movement extended to embrace Chinese enterprises also. The Chinese bourgeoisie changed their tactics, taking up an openly hostile position towards the Labour movement. This was already seen at the time of the strike of the Tian-Shang coal-

miners in October, 1922, which was suppressed by armed force with great severity. The united reactionary forces dealt still more savagely with the striking railwaymen of the Peking-Hankow line in February, 1923. The military dictator of that time, Wu-Pei-Fu, drowned the strike in blood.

The defeat of the railwaymen acted as a signal for a general offensive of all the forces of reaction against the workers throughout the entire country. The trade unions, which they had managed to form by that time, were dissolved; their premises were sealed and the leaders arrested. Even the workers' co-operatives, schools and clubs were closed almost everywhere. The Labour movement throughout the whole of China (with the exception of Canton) was driven underground and it was only in a very few places that semi-legal workers' organisations existed.

Such was the state of affairs until the second half of 1924. The Pacific Ocean Transport Workers' Conference, which met in June, 1924, was on the border-line of this period. The Shamin\* strike which broke out in July and which, like the Hong Kong strike of 1922, was directed against the foreign capitalists, once more showed the whole of China the importance of the offensive of the working class for the national liberation movement.

In the autumn of 1924 a coup d'état took place in Peking. The Chi-li group suffered defeat. Wu-Pei-Fu, who not long before had been omnipotent dictator, fled to the valley of the Yang-tse-Kiang, power was transferred to the Government of Djan-Tsi-Djua. Not having any considerable military forces at its own disposal, this regime was obliged to fluctuate between the hostile military groupings and Chang-Tso-Lin and Feng-Yui-Sian. At the same time this government manœuvred with the Kuomintang and thereby with the national liberation movement, which—particularly in connection with the journey of the Kuomintang leader, Sun-Yat-Sen, to Northern China—had become greatly strengthened in Peking and Shanghai within a very short period, as in general in Northern China, which up to then had been little affected by the movement.

This livening up of the political situation was also immediately reflected on the Labour movement.

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\* Shamin is a foreign concession in Canton.

The propagandist and organisational work, which had been carried on during the first period, had not been in vain, as experience has shown. The suppressed Labour movement once more showed signs of life. The railwaymen's and miners' organisations which had been driven underground became strengthened and extended, the schools which had formerly existed were opened up anew and new courses for workers were instituted. But the work was not restricted to reforming and restoring the Labour movement to its former proportions. The commencement of 1925 was marked by outstanding activities of the most numerical and hitherto backward detachments of the Labour army in China—the textile workers.

There is certainly nothing surprising that it was just this section that was the last to enter the struggle. This is to a certain extent explained by the composition of this form of labour. Women and child labour are mainly employed, comprising as they do three-quarters of the total number of workers. But once they have entered the ranks of the fighting proletariat, they immediately become attached to the Labour movement on an extensive scale. The strikes of textile workers in Tsin-Dao and Shanghai aroused the whole of Chinese public opinion and introduced clarity into the unformed struggle, which the radical intellectuals had waged against the government of Djan-T'si-Djua. The killing of workers by Japanese overseers in Tsin-Dao and Shanghai and the shooting at a peaceful demonstration on May 30th by the British police, were a prologue to the Shanghai events, which found so loud a response throughout the country and led to such unprecedented force on the wave of the national movement which swept over the whole of China. The extent of the national and Labour movements of the whole of the last decade may be summarised in this way.

## V.

The main pivots of the entire movement are the strikes in Shanghai and Hong Kong. The attention of the whole of China is drawn to them; they mobilised all forces of the revolution and the counter-revolution, not only within but also outside of China.

The Council of Shanghai Trade Unions which was formed at the very commencement of the strike, very soon became the acknowledged centre of the Labour movement.

It enjoyed immense popularity not only in Shanghai itself, but throughout the entire country. Not only did the workers' organisations and separate groups of workers go to the Council with their affairs, but all kinds of institutions entered into communication with it, the civil and military authorities entered into negotiations with it and consequently all the hatred of the imperialists was concentrated on it; they tried untiringly and by all possible measures to undermine its authority. In the United Committee (which included besides the Council of Trade Unions also the Council of Students' organisations, the Committee of Street Unions containing small traders), the Council of Trade Unions was undoubtedly the most influential organisation, which led the remaining bodies with it. It did not only develop extensive propaganda and organisational work among the strikers, but with the aid of its daily political and trade union newspaper, and a specially formed press bureau, it influenced the moulding of public opinion in a very decided manner, as also the growth of national and class consciousness of the Chinese masses. In Shanghai its authority among the workers was indisputable.

The Executive Committee of the All-China Federation of Trade Unions led the Hong Kong strike, which broke out in May of this year, with equally brilliant results.

As a result of the five months duel between this young proletarian organisation only just formed, and predatory British imperialism which had let loose all its economic, financial, diplomatic and military resources, wealthy Hong Kong was ruined and the Hong Kong strikers, led by the Canton Federation, stand as firmly and unanimously as on the first day of the strike.

The currents—national and Labour—merged in the Shanghai strike. In the combination of the far-reaching national and comparatively modest workers' demands, both sides of the strike found their expression. It is clear that at first the main current was national anti-militarist. The striking workers were an army fighting for the interests of the nation as a whole. It is not surprising that the majority of the nation supported them. With the exception of the large, mainly merchant bourgeoisie, the masses of the petty and even the middle urban bourgeoisie rallied round the working class and created an atmosphere not only of sympathy, but also of active support. Therein lies the secret



of the dimensions of this movement on the one hand and of the maintenance and length of the strike on the other.

June 13, 1925

The Hong Kong strike, which was a direct continuation of the Shanghai strike, has, however, one essential difference: it bears an exclusively political nature, being the pure expression of the national liberation struggle, waged with revolutionary methods of the proletariat.

## VI.

In the events of the past few months, the role of the working class as the leader of the national liberation movement in China has been displayed with complete clearness. The struggle of the working class has become a ruling force, whose influence has tested all the social groupings and political factors operating and crossing one another in this tremendous country. Just as a strong magnet attracts iron shavings, so does the working class rally around itself frothy, vacillating masses of the petty bourgeois in the person of tradesmen, artisans and students. These latter made a great noise, developed tremendous propaganda and agitational activity throughout the entire country (in Shanghai alone there were about 3,000 student agitators) but they completely forfeited the independent leading role which they had undisputably wielded at the time of the anti-Japanese campaign in 1919. Its slogans were issued not by them, but by the Shanghai Council of Trade Unions. In the United Committee the leading role belonged not to the students' organisations but to the same Council of Trade Unions on which all the hatred of the imperialists and merchants was concentrated and towards which the Chinese masses turned their glance. As a powerful centre, loudly emitting the voice of the fighting proletariat, it led the revolutionary masses not only of Shanghai, but also of the entire country, right up to the sources of the Yang-Tse-Kiang and heights of far Sychuan. By this activity the Shanghai Soviet of Trade Unions has many traits in common with the Petersburg Soviets of Workers' Deputies at the time of our first revolution.

Yet a further analogy. Just as during the Russian revolution in 1905 the workers returning from the towns carried the revolutionary "infection" into the countryside and aroused it to revolt, so also the still weak peasant movement in China is nevertheless under the undoubted influ-

ence of the Labour movement. It is well-known that the peasant movement is stronger than anywhere else in the Kwantung province, where under the Kuomintang Government there is an open legal development of the Labour movement. There also the peasant movement is concentrated in 22 rural districts, ("Sisni") which closely adjoin Canton, a large workers' centre.

In Central China the Henang province is the centre of the peasant movement where the role of the peasant agitator, who finds a good basis in a number of favourable conditions, is played by railwaymen who have a very strong and influential organisation in this province.

## VII.

The strikes and the extensive national movement connected therewith have strongly influenced the entire internal and foreign policy of China. Both the Peking Government and the militarist groupings were compelled to take up some kind of definite stand with regard to the national movements. Feng-Yui-Sian, chief of the First People's Army, from the very first sided with the People's Movement. In quite a number of appeals and manifestoes, he condemned the imperialists and their toadies, conducted appropriate propaganda in his army which he openly placed at the disposition of the national liberation movement. Yao-Vei-Tzyun, commander of the Second People's Army, and Sun-Yao, commander of the Third, acted more cautiously and with more restraint. Nevertheless the extent of the movement compelled them to come nearer to him to seek support in him in the coming fight with the Mukdenites. These latter in the person of Chang-Tso-Lin took up a definitely hostile position. The activities of the Mukden generals in Shanghai, Tsin-Dao, Tian-Shang, Tientsin, the murder and shooting of workers and revolutionaries, their persecution of the trade union movement, the closing down of the trade unions and arrests of the leaders showed clearly to the widest masses the real face of the Mukdenites as the hirelings of the imperialists and as the most dangerous enemies of the Chinese people. This denunciation of the role of Chang-Tso-Lin before the entire nation will have tremendous significance in the coming struggle. It will undoubtedly injure the chances of the Mukdenites and strengthen the position of the anti-Mukden forces.

The number of defeats already suffered by the army of Chang-Tso-Lin in the struggle with Sun-Chwan-Fen are to a large extent the results of the hostile attitude of the masses of the Chinese people towards the Mukden dictator and the disintegration within the ranks of the Mukdenites.

The conduct of Djan-Tsi-Djua is particularly curious. This cunning and adroit politician correctly estimated the forces of the national movement from the very commencement. Compelled to manœuvre between Feng-Yui-Sian and Chang-Tso-Lin, he was subjected to strong pressure on the part of the latter at the time of the Shanghai events. Chang left Mukden and came to Tientsin with the evident intention of moving on further to Peking, of ousting Djan and taking his place in the government. Djan hastened to look to the national movement for support, issued a number of energetic notes directed against the imperialist governments and even went so far as to send 250,000 dollars to the strikers of Shanghai and Hong Kong.

These, of course, were only chessboard moves. But this all proved the strength of the movement from which Djan, because of particular circumstances, had to find support in his struggle against the "machinations" of Chang-Tso-Lin.

Finally, the movement of the last months, and in particular the Shanghai strike, increased the contradictions within the camp of the imperialists. The movement, which commenced in Japanese enterprises, was afterwards, as everybody knows, directed against Great Britain and Japan. America and France found the moment favourable for ousting their competitors from the Chinese market. Japan, with the support of the Chinese merchant elements on the one hand and utilising the Japanophile tendencies of the Right-wing of Kuomintang on the other, endeavoured through its press (in the Chinese language) to stir up a Pan-Asiatic mood, conducted demagogic agitation against British imperialism, against the high-handed Anglo-Saxon races, and in doing so, stimulated the revolutionary movement against its own will.

The attempts of Great Britain to come to terms with Japan and America failed. Great Britain was to a large extent isolated. The Tariff Conference, now sitting in Peking, shows clearly enough how acute the contradictions among the imperialists have become.

## VIII.

The main nationalist aims set out at the commencement of the Shanghai strike have not been attained and cannot be attained, by the strike alone. It is only possible to take away from the imperialists the territory they have seized and the "concessions" by means of an armed struggle of the whole of China, as a result of a victorious war. While not rejecting a further struggle for the nationalist aims, the Shanghai Council of Trade Unions, after three months, has brought workers' demands into the forefront: recognition of the trade unions, increase of wages, reinstatement of all strikers, payment for time on strike and many other demands. In order to preserve the national front and not to lose the sympathy of the petty bourgeois and become isolated, the workers have also brought forward national demands of a local nature, such as the handing of the so-called "mixed court" over to the Chinese, equality of rights for Chinese living in the foreign quarters and certain other demands.

This complicated and difficult manœuvre, which has demanded great tact and flexibility on the part of the leaders and complete trust of the masses of strikers in their leaders, has met with success. At first the Japanese textile enterprises made partial concessions and after a time a similar agreement was made with the British. All the strikers without exception had to be reinstated. The time lost during the strike had to be paid.

A little time later (the agreement was concluded at the commencement of September) the employers, under some pretext or without any pretexts, began to violate the conditions agreed to. This led to a renewal of the strikes in a number of enterprises extending also to Chinese undertakings. But this did not change the situation. The proletarian front was firm; disintegration did not commence; the proletariat retreated in complete order, conscious of attained though not complete victory.

The dissolution of the Shanghai Council of Trade Unions by the troops of Chang-Tso-Lin and then the second attack on the trade union movement by the troops of the Chi-li militarist, Sun-Chwan-Fen, who at that time had managed to occupy Shanghai, did not smash the Labour movement. It was already sufficiently strongly organised, sufficiently well connected with the factories and with the working

masses. Illegal delegate movements maintain strong contacts and continue to lead the movement under the new conditions. The firmness of the leadership and the solidarity of the masses are adequately proved by the fact that the strike on the British ships, with which no agreement had been reached, continued without slackening until it caused tremendous losses to British shipping and absolutely paralysed the movement of the British ships in the Pacific Ocean.

## IX.

As we see, the Labour movement has not yet gained either any big class or national final achievements. The political status of China is still unchanged. The most appalling conditions of the Chinese workers remain as before. Nevertheless, in achieving during the events of this summer the culminating point of their development, both the national and class movements have risen up to heights hitherto unattained and have entered on a new stage.

For the first time the movement has become a real mass movement, in which not only thousands, but hundreds of thousands and millions are drawn in.

The Labour movement has become the central pivot of the entire national liberation movement in China. The working class has the undisputed leadership and its movement determines the correlation of the forces struggling in China.

More than any other factor, the Labour movement has helped to transform the so-called People's Army into an instrument of struggle with the Mukdenites and imperialism.

It has denounced before the masses of the people the empty national role of Chang-Tso-Lin, has branded him as an enemy of the people and at the same time weakened his chances in the struggle.

It has increased the contradictions in the camp of the imperialists, where Japan is arming against Great Britain, America is working against both, and France, while not uniting with any of them, is endeavouring to use them all. This sharpening of contradictions among the imperialists is naturally also advantageous to the national and Labour movements, and greatly facilitates their struggle.

As a counter-weight to the traditions of regionalism and federalism it has popularised the idea of unity in China, has compelled the Canton and Peking Governments to go out to meet one another for the formation of a united anti-militarist front.

Finally, however, it has pointed out not only to the advanced workers, but to the main cadres of the Chinese proletariat such as the textile workers, dockers, sailors, etc., the strength of the workers so long as they are organised and have class solidarity. The gravitation into the trade union and political organisations is perhaps the most valuable achievement of the last period. This last point brings us to the question of the role of the political parties and the trade unions in the Labour movement in China.

The Chinese proletariat has up to the present to a certain extent "got off easily." The Labour movement in China up to the present has not known the internal struggles which have been undermining the forces of the working class not only in Europe but also in Japan. The Chinese proletariat was born in stormy years, at the end of the imperialist war and the October revolution. The Communist Party in China was founded at quite an early date and the leadership of the trade union movement in such important branches as transport and mining got into the hands of the Communists from the very first, as there were not any serious competitors in the Labour movement. The entire national and international policy of the U.S.S.R. acted as a tremendous factor from without, stimulating the Chinese movement and created a favourable atmosphere for the development of the Labour movement. Contact with the international Labour movement, with the Comintern and with the R.I.L.U. has become closer and more vital than in any other country of the East. All this denotes unusual precision, clearness and revolutionary pugnacity in the activities of the Chinese workers.

Collaboration of the Chinese Communists with the Kuomintang Left, the only mass Party of the petty bourgeoisie and radical intellectuals, has already constituted a powerful bloc between the proletariat and the urban middle classes which is preparing the way for a further alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry. We have already the beginnings of such an alliance in the provinces of Kwantung and Henang.

In view of the weakness of the Chinese bourgeoisie, which up to now has not been distinguished by any formulated political Party, such a Party will in the future be the Right-wing of the Kuomintang, which is more and more departing from the national revolutionary movement into the camp of reaction. There is nothing astonishing in the fact that 2,000,000 industrial workers, firmly led by the Chinese Communist Party and the revolutionary trade unions, have become the mainstay of the entire revolutionary movement, and have acquired leadership. The vanguard of the working class evidently has appreciated the significance of revolutionary leadership. During a few months the membership of the Communist Party has been trebled; the growth of the trade unions has been still more significant. For the first time in the movement, considerable numbers of women have been attracted into the Party and unions.

Despite all these tremendous achievements, we are only at the commencement of the revolutionary struggle in China. Not a few temporary defeats and tests are still awaiting the working class on the path to victory. The events of this summer have shown that the working class of China despite its youth, is not only capable of attacking, but also of manoeuvring and of retreating in full fighting order. Therein lies the guarantee that the working class of China will preserve its leadership and fulfil the historical task which confronts it.

I. HELLER.



# National Revolutionary Movement in China and Tactics of Chinese Communist Party

**T**HE main stimulus for the National-Revolutionary Movement was the movement in Shanghai. The culminating point of this movement was in the last days of July and the commencement of August. This period is characteristic above all in that the workers' strike movement against the imperialists was surrounded by an atmosphere of sympathy on the part of all classes of the population, commencing with the small traders and students and ending with the street unions of tradesmen, the Chambers of Commerce and the local civil authorities. It is characteristic that even the troops sent by Chang-Tso-Lin to Shanghai, headed by General Sin-Shi-Ling, to suppress the people's and Labour movements, could not undertake to execute their orders and were compelled to don a mask fitting with the general mood in Shanghai. On arrival in Shanghai the commanding staff was compelled to adorn the soldiers' sleeves with an armband bearing the inscription: "We have come to defend the people." The military authorities had even to allow the students to arrange assemblies and meetings for the soldiers. The first impression was such that one could openly draw the soldiers into the movement and the students did not let this opportunity slip by. However, Sin-Shi-Ling fairly soon bethought himself and stopped the revolutionary work of the Communist students among the soldiers.

All these factors characterise the ascending wave of the national movement existing at the time.

Later, in August, a certain decline in the movement took place and the characteristic feature of this period was the extension of economic strikes. At that time the Party was faced with a big problem as to how to manœuvre the great masses in the strike struggle correctly and on the other hand how to preserve the alliance between the working class



and the numerous urban petty bourgeoisie and revolutionary intellectuals. This was not only a very difficult problem of the Party, but it was an entirely new one. Great experience and a very firm contact of the Party with the striking workers was necessary if leadership was to be preserved during the process of the dropping of the Shanghai general strike from the level of national-revolutionary slogans to the level of economic-legal demands.

Throughout August and September the Party received a tremendous practical lesson in this respect. It drew the conclusion that in a semi-colonial country like China the proletariat is not only compelled to rise to the struggle together with the petty bourgeoisie and with all oppressed sections of the people of the country, but also that it cannot manoeuvre and retreat in an isolated manner.

This was concretely illustrated as follows: When the workers fought for and defended their demands—firstly, recognition of the trade unions, secondly increase of wages, and thirdly, receipt of compensation for the period of the strike—the workers had also to put forward the demands which created a direct contact with the general national movement although they might bring forth new difficulties for the economic attainments of the workers. In Shanghai for example, the workers had to put forward demands concerning participation of the Chinese taxpayers in the municipality and the abolition of the Mixed Court—demands in which the bourgeois sections of the population were mainly interested. This shows how closely the struggle of the working class is bound up with the struggle of the national bourgeoisie, which is interested both in the independence of the country and in its democratisation. For the demands with respect to the municipality and abolition of the Mixed Court are not only nationalist demands, but also slogans of bourgeois democracy.

The alliance of the working class with the bourgeois-democratic classes of the population against imperialism, during the last strike movement, deeply reflected not only on the nature, but also on the forms of struggle of the working class. The financial support of the striking workers by the Chinese Chambers of Commerce, by the street unions of the petty bourgeoisie and the active moral support of the students naturally did not only help the struggle of the workers but also reflected on the actual form of the struggle. Despite the fact that trade unions were formed in Shanghai as

well as a General Council of Trade Unions which led the struggle of more than 200,000 organised workers, and that immediately after the events of May 30th a joint committee was formed for the struggle with the imperialists, in which the workers, students and petty bourgeoisie entered—despite all these factors, at the time the brake was put on the general strike movement, the actual intermediaries between the striking workers and the foreign factory owners were the Chinese Chambers of Commerce.

Here, of course, one can speak in the same way about the relative weakness of the workers during the time of their first extensive entry into the arena of political struggle, just as one can say that the bourgeoisie, compelled to enter into a bloc with the proletariat in the national-revolutionary movement, were also interested in the workers receiving certain economic advantages, since this weakens the economic power of foreign entrepreneurs.

The descent of the general strike from the height of national-revolutionary demands to economic-legal demands was carried out under the guidance of the Party and the trade unions, by the workers in alliance with the petty and middle bourgeoisie.

If the Party had not taken heed of this necessity at once, it would have subjected the working class to the danger of being suppressed by a direct blow from the militarists; it would have enabled Chang-Tso-Lin's military forces in Shanghai to have dealt with the workers just as they liked. In other words, having allowed the workers to become isolated from the bourgeois-democratic classes of the population, the Party would have enabled the militarists to break the backbone of the strike movement and to destroy completely the conquests of the workers, gained during the time of the spontaneous rise of the movement immediately after May 30th. These conquests were to be seen in the fact that many trade unions and a General Council of Trade Unions were formed in the most open manner—workers' organisations, for the first time in the history of China, were founded in June of this year—and also wages were raised in a number of enterprises and compensation given for the period of the strike. By the time the liquidation of the general strike had started, there also began a cooling of certain bourgeois sections of the population in their attitude to the workers' struggle on the one hand and most acute vacillations on certain sectors of the Labour front on the other hand.

Two main tendencies were to be observed here: among the most backward sections of textile workers a mood was engendered in favour of returning to the factories as soon as possible, at all costs and on any condition, while among the most revolutionary workers, influenced by the exit of a section of the bourgeoisie and the vacillation among the backward workers, a Left mood made itself apparent, which was in favour of forcing events. One should not say that this latter tendency bore witness only to the feeling among the advanced workers (who for the first time felt a proper class instinct) that the working class of China was becoming an independent social-political force and, consequently, could now compel its enemies to satisfy its demands. No, there were also moods of despair; not the will to victory, but the seeking of a "noble," "revolutionary" way out of the difficult and complicated situation created after two months of struggle.

These moods were bound to serve as a serious warning for the Chinese Communist Party. It was generally considered that any action of the workers at that time would be an isolated move and would represent a gesture of despair incapable of bringing any other results than the smashing up of the Labour movement not only in Shanghai, but throughout the entire country. Therefore, the Chinese workers had to choose another path. They had to effect a closer rapprochement with bourgeois democracy and to improve the trade union organisations of the strikers. The subsequent weeks show that the path that had been chosen was correct, that the workers of Shanghai with the workers of other towns behind them had attained economic conquests, that in the camp of the imperialists a serious cleavage had taken place between the British and Japanese owners, and that the result achieved by the economic conquests in foreign enterprises was the extension of the economic struggle to the enterprises of the Chinese capitalists.

According to the general estimation of the situation a military conflict had been warded off. A certain tranquilisation, a certain stabilisation between the opposing military forces created the soil for an offensive of militarists against the revolutionary movement in the country and against the working class. It is necessary to take these phenomena into consideration, in order to understand the role of the military groupings at the present time struggling among themselves in China. As soon as the possibility of averting a

military conflict was felt, a wave of reaction immediately swept over the country.

This same Chang-Tso-Lin's general, Sin-Shi-Ling, who in August had not succeeded in closing down the Shanghai trade unions, despite the fact that he had several times tried to do so, now smashed them up without even having recourse to any special formality. At that time his attempts consisted in quibbling over some negligible formality or other, thereby closing down two or three unions and feeling his way for a subsequent attack. But he had soon been compelled to abandon these attempts. In exactly the same way he had to reopen the joint committee which had been closed down for a few days for some insignificant articles concerning Chang-Tso-Lin.

But then things had reached such a stage that a clash between the Mukdenites and Feng-Yui-Sian was imminent; the position of Djan-Tsi-Djua was such that he had to appeal to the public opinion of the country from time to time since the disturbance of the correlation of forces between the militarists compelled him to seek support in public opinion. This was at the time when Djan-Tsi-Djua sent 100,000 dollars to the General Council of Trade Unions. But in September the General Council was smashed by Chang's troops with the formal sanction of Djan-Tsi-Djua.

However, the imperialists and military authorities in China did not attain what they wanted by smashing the Council of Trade Unions. The power of resistance of the workers proved to be stronger than might be expected. In place of the trade unions, directing delegate meetings were formed. In October these semi-legal organisations had already a Council and continued to lead the workers' movement.

These semi-legal organisations of the workers were regarded in a sympathetic manner by the bourgeois-democratic sections of the population. Instead of the formal connection which the Council of Trade Unions had maintained with the Chamber of Commerce and the democratic organisations, a contact was established which was not formal, but which directly influenced the negotiations between the foreign owners and the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, which continued to be the intermediary of the striking workers in the British enterprises.

### Further Perspectives of Struggle.

All that has been alluded to above goes to show that the line of development of the revolutionary movement is by no means taking an upward course all the time, and that at the present stage of the revolutionary movement in China it has its vacillations, rises and falls.

1925  
The October Plenum of the E.C. of the Chinese Communist Party gave a general estimation of the political situation. It confirmed the fact that the development of the national-revolutionary and workers' movements was continuing on the whole to take an upward course; it also acknowledged that the situation continued to remain revolutionary. However, the Plenum of the E.C. recorded the existence of a temporary political reaction and attributed its duration to the imminent military conflicts in the country between the Mukden and anti-Mukden military forces. The Plenum said quite plainly that the approaching conflict would take place on an extremely extensive basis as compared with former conflicts. It stated that the struggle between the Mukden and anti-Mukden forces would produce a tremendous tension of forces in the entire country and would inevitably absorb into the struggle the imperialists in one form or another. The national-revolutionary energy will thereby be let loose to such an extent, that the conflict may become the actual commencement of a movement to crown the 1911 revolution and will place the question of a revolutionary-democratic system for the country on the agenda.

A third force has now entered upon the political arena—this is Wu-Pei-Fu, whose group is undoubtedly also a considerable factor in the coming struggle.

In so far as we present the question as to the development of the movement in open and direct connection with the imminent military conflict, we must allude to the role of the militarists and of all military-national groups in the liberation movement, for the movement centres mainly around this question for the most part in Northern and Central China. In the South the question as to the relation toward the military groupings is a little less acute, for here the Communists form a bloc with the Kuomintang, which is the governmental Party.

With regard to the People's Armies, the question is a little more complicated, as the national-liberation movement

must here have contact with the army neither through a national party, nor through a revolutionary government. For the first time in the history of the revolutionary movement the Communist Party in its everyday activity has directly to settle problems as to the attitude towards the militarists, who, though undertaking repressive measures against the Communists and the workers' movement, nevertheless represent a factor of the national-liberation movement in the country.

How can one explain that in 1924-25 certain military groups have commenced to play a new role in the political life of the country and commenced gravitating towards the national-liberation movement? Firstly, this is to be explained by the general revolutionising of the masses of people in the country. There is not the slightest doubt that during the past year the revolutionary movement in China has taken a pace forward. Last year, after the defeat of the Chi-li (Wu-Pei-Fu) clique, Sun-Yat-Sen was able to come North. This fact alone had tremendous significance—this happened for the first time after the 1911 revolution. Sun-Yat-Sen, who for a period of thirteen years had been considered as a rebel by the Central Government and the Northern militarists, came to Peking where he was welcomed with honour as a national hero. Even the government of Djan-Tsi-Djua and Chang-Tso-Lin were bound outwardly to display their sympathy and good-will towards him. This journey served as a factor in the subsequent revolutionising of the intellectuals and the urban petty bourgeoisie.

Further, there is no doubt that the revolutionising of the country, particularly during the past year, was greatly assisted by Canton, which continues to maintain its position despite all the intrigues of the imperialists (including also the late MacDonald Government, which sent warships to Canton last summer) and despite the counter-revolutionary offensives of militarists such as Chang-Tso-Lin and the compradors (trading middlemen) such as Cheng-Lin-Pak, who were supported by the Hong Kong imperialists. The existence of the Canton regime, despite all these internal and external attacks, is no doubt a conquest of the revolutionary movement of the country as a result of the growth of the Labour movement and of the movement of the revolutionary intellectuals and petty bourgeoisie all over China.

Another reason is the intensification of the contradictions between the imperialists in China during the past year.

What was the situation in October of last year, when Feng, quitting Wu-Pei-Fu, brought about a coup d'état and drove Tsao-Kun out of power? How did this influence the correlation of forces between the Chinese militarists?

This meant that Japanese political influence began to prevail over American influence. Both for Great Britain and for America the coup d'état and the new correlation of forces between the militarists came as a great surprise. But the victory of Japan did not change the situation, since her political predomination did not correspond with her economic influence in the country. As a result, the contradictions between Japan and Anglo-American imperialism became more profound. Japan, during the whole of last year, exerted all her forces in order to maintain her political influence in China just as it had been built up during the autumn of last year, whereas America did everything possible in order to restore the correlation of forces which has been disturbed by the overthrow of the Chi-Li clique. These contradictions help the revolutionising of the Chinese masses. The Japanese Government and Japanese statesmen during last year helped the growth of the national movement of militarists to no small degree. Sun-Yat-Sen's journey to Japan on the way from Canton to Peking was a result of the policy of the Japanese Government which at that time was endeavouring to rely on all decisive forces in China against the Anglo-American imperialists. This made the contradictions between the Japanese on the one hand and the British-Americans on the other still more profound.

Finally, a factor which influenced and is influencing the military groups in China and which should be estimated in all its magnitude, is the formal recognition of the U.S.S.R. This recognition made it possible for the U.S.S.R. to become an incomparably greater factor than it had ever been before in the political life of China. During the past year this new influence of the U.S.S.R. was felt everywhere in China. It was left in Chinese social life, commencing with the Government, the Chambers of Commerce and ending with the Labour unions and universities.

These are the main reasons which enabled certain military forces in China to commence a new role in the country to gravitate towards the revolutionary movement and in particular towards the Kuomintang Party. These reasons explain the role of the People's Armies in the anti-imperialist movement.

What are the subsequent tendencies of the People's Armies? They depend entirely upon the development and influence of the factors enumerated.

If the revolutionary movement in the country continues to develop, as it began to do in the autumn of last year, the People's Armies will gravitate more and more towards it and will follow it; should there be a prolonged stoppage in the revolutionary movement, and if reaction is established for a definite period, the exit of the People's Armies may take place, vacillation may start in their midst and their role might change.

The contradictions between the imperialists continue now also to represent a tremendous factor in influencing the national-military groups in China. For example, the question as to the Tariff Conference now taking place, ultimately amounts to a question as to whether the imperialists will be able to stabilise Djan-Tsi-Djua, by giving him and Chang-Tso-Lin a definite amount of the customs receipts, thus balancing the Central Government on the side of Chang-Tso-Lin and the imperialists in order to counter-balance Feng. The subsequent tendencies of the People's Armies will also depend upon the outcome of this conference.

The main task of the Kuomintang and the Communists with regard to the People's Armies is to push them along the course of the national-revolutionary movement despite the contradictions between the People's Armies and the Labour movement in the country which from time to time become apparent. It is necessary to pay attention not only to how the representatives of the People's Army directly take up their stand towards the revolutionary movement in the sphere of their own influence, but also to what attitude the People's Armies have towards the general policy in the country towards the Central Government and the imperialists.

But if one cannot regard the role and significance of the People's Armies merely by one symptom, by the attitude which their representatives take up towards the Labour movement at one time or other, it stands to reason that great hopes should not be placed in the Generals of the People's Armies at a time when they take up a sympathetic attitude towards the workers' movement.

In the political theses of the Plenum of the E.C. the role and significance of the People's Armies is taken from



the viewpoint that they gravitate towards the national-revolutionary movement in proportion to the development and extension of the movement and the viewpoint that this is already one of the conquests of the liberation movement in the country.

### Party Structure.

The last six months of the revolutionary movement in the country have created a new psychology in the Chinese Communist Party. The Party is imbued with the spirit of revolution. It is felt that the comparatively small Communist Party is commencing to have a great political appetite—it wants to become a mass Party. This was also shown by the fact that at the last Plenum an estimate was made as to the political situation in the country as behoves a proletarian party when it commences to play a political role. A serious estimation of the role of the various military groups in the country and the determination of tactics towards them is also without doubt a sign of the increasing maturity of our Party.

The Party feels the demand for mass agitation, a demand directly arising from the practice of everyday work. This demand is already receiving real formulation. Popular mass literature for the town workers has recently begun to appear. A popular pamphlet has been written for the wide masses of the peasantry in which the agrarian platform of the Chinese Communist Party is expounded, and the nature of organisation of peasant unions is indicated. The Plenum also decided to begin organising wall newspapers in factories and works.

These are all symptoms that the Party has commenced talking in the language of the masses—in the language of millions.

The Party weekly "Kaid Weekly," which during the Shanghai event published 5,000 copies, has now a circulation of more than 20,000, and what is more, is reprinted in such centres as Kaifeng and Hankow.

The Party's self-confidence has also increased. There is no longer any talk among the majority of the Party's active members about our being small in numbers, as they used to say, or that we cannot do much, that we must wait until the Party's ranks are extended, as we cannot train new

members, etc. Such moods have already been outlived by the majority of Party comrades.

Another great result of the revolutionary movement during the last six months is the striving of the Party towards working masses, but also among the peasantry and the revolutionary intellectuals—an extensive strata of bourgeois democracy. Among other things the establishment of a more compact bloc with the Left-wing of the Kuomintang, the extension and strengthening of the alliance with the wide strata of democracy by means of this bloc, represents one of the organisational problems of the Party at the present period.

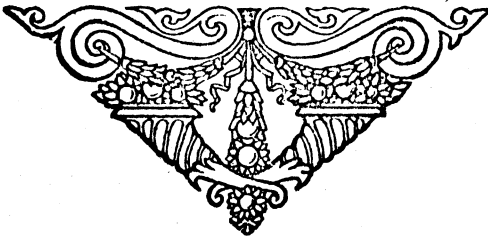
The Plenum made a number of decisions with regard to the Labour movement according to which during the next few months the Party should succeed in reinforcing its moral influence among the working masses, so that the moral leadership of the Labour movement by the Party receives an organised formulation in the form of factory nuclei, Communist fractions in various trade unions and federations, on the Boards of Clubs, etc. The last four months of struggle have shown that the Communist Party is really the leader of the Labour movement and that it has had no more or less important competitor. But organisationally the Party has not succeeded in becoming strengthened. There is a great danger in this, particularly now when civil war is entering a more acute phase. The Party has already formally taken into consideration this danger, with the correct instinct, and the question as to the organisational strengthening among the working masses was one of the main questions at the Plenum.

At no other time previously, neither at Congresses nor at Plenums has the question of the peasantry been taken so seriously as this time.

The Peasant Commission of the Plenum, having examined a considerable amount of material on the Peasant question coming from localities, arrived at the conclusion that it is time for the Party to commence popularising the idea of confiscating the land. The Plenum considered that the transitory peasant demands which the Party had put forward up to now, such as lowering of lease payments, reducing tax burdens, right of peasants to organise unions, arming of the peasants for the struggle against banditism and gentry, removal of salt monopoly from the hands of the im-

perialists and reduction of salt taxes and finally abolition of the inland customs duties—the Party considered that these partial peasant demands were too inadequate to draw the peasantry on to the side of the revolution and make them a support of the revolutionary democratic system.

Among the practical measures decided upon for drawing the peasants more into the revolutionary movement and for awakening them politically the following may be mentioned: (1) commencement of mass agitation; (2) sending of adequate forces into the villages; (3) to start organising peasant schools where Party members and young Communists will be trained for work among peasants.



# Events in Persia

**T**HE high-tide of events threatens to swamp Persia. This time the creator of the national army and the centraliser of its feudal boundaries, Riza Khan, who accomplished this task by means of fire and sword and who led the struggle with the recently deposed Shah dynasty, has himself become a pretender to that inglorious throne.

What then is the nature of this movement and what are its driving forces?

All who are acquainted with the history of colonial countries know that usually the orientation of the imperialism ruling there is towards the most backward, the most reactionary classes and groups of native society, whether the theocratic circles of Turkey and Mongolia, the feudal-khan circles of Afghanistan and Irak or the army-militarist circles of China.

In Persia the ruling imperialism built up for a number of years its might on the support of the feudal and landed aristocracy and on the weakening of the centralising connection of the Government with the borderlands of that country, even when it was headed by avowed Anglophiles—representatives of the oldest aristocratic families.

This was the substance of the policy of imperialism.

To support the borderlands against the centre, the feudals against sincere supporters of centralisation and bourgeois-democratic progress—the nationalists—such was the programme of the British.

The most effective support for such policy was, of course, feudalism with its desperate opposition to the centralisation and modernisation of the country; the best political system was the rickety constitutional Kodzhar monarchy and Persian parliamentarism which was utterly demoralised by foreign bribery and corruption.

That feudalism and the Kodzhar dynasty served the interests of imperialism is exemplified by the seizure of the oil areas of the South by the British, a seizure accomplished in spite of the constitution of Persia—without the endorsement of the concession agreements by the Medjelis (parliament), but merely by setting the border feudal lords against the centre—by means of signing agreements with individual feudal lords.

Therefore, in Persia, as in every country where imperialists are continually struggling for the possession of more and more branches of the economic financial and political life of the country, there is a continuous kaleidoscopic change of events: Government crises, parliamentary intrigues by the lackeys of imperialism unwilling to pay taxes or wishing to annoy their central Government, strikes of reactionary intriguers, "Bestas" (rebel sections of the population seeking refuge in the mountains, etc.), open feudal risings, secession of border regions, etc.

All this is, so to speak, part and parcel of the policy of the rule of the strong over the weak.

But as these events generally take place unexpectedly, breaking out like abscesses on the worn-out body of Persia, we wish to record here the most characteristic of these events during the past two years, describing the forms which this disease takes in our times and following up the most important stages of the colonial fever which for the past decade has been ravaging a country in friendly relations with the U.S.S.R.—the country of Persian tillers of the soil and shepherds.

### **1. The Struggle in Connection with the Oil Concession and Preparation of the First Government Crisis in 1924.**

It was in the summer of 1924. Persia was in the throes of a financial crisis. Its small financial resources were taxed to the utmost, taxation had almost reached breaking point. The country was resisting the imperialists—it did not want to deliver the oil concessions to the adjoining British imperialists and, choosing between two evils the lesser, it carried hurriedly a measure through the parliament (Medjelis) concerning the handing over of this concession not to the neighbouring, namely British, capitalists—but to the "neutral" American capitalists represented by the Sinclair Co. which at that time was negotiating an agreement with the

U.S.S.R. with respect to Kamchatka. Apparently this was enough to infuriate British imperialism and to make Persia, which had dared to follow its own choice, feel the full weight of its Government machine.

With the help of foreign gold a fantastic movement was started throughout Persia. Agents of British imperialism found their way into city slums and for a mere pittance incited the half-famished population to all manner of excesses. Greedy reaction, by orders coming from the same source, provoked pogroms against Persian dissenters. (How this reminds one of the Tsarist days in Russia). On this basis the situation developed. The mercenary section of the Persian clergy, controlled by the British agents in the service of a British oil company (Anglo-Persian Oil), began to discover miracles: a dissenter had become blind by using water from one of the town cisterns. With the assistance of foreign gold the clergy organised sumptuous religious processions, exciting the fanaticism of the masses to the pitch of excess and when the ground seemed sufficiently prepared the reactionaries dragged the casual victim of this colonial fever—the American Consul, citizen Imbrie—to the “miraculous” source to exact an atonement sacrifice for Anglo-American competition. The blind tool of reaction and imperialism—the fanatical crowd—killed the American Consul, giving thereby the imperialists an opportunity to proclaim throughout the world by means of the mercenary capitalist press and through their telegraph agencies the brutality of the population of Persia, the absence in that country of security for the interests of foreigners, the absence of peaceful conditions for taking over and developing the oil concession in the North and the impossibility of floating loans, etc., for Persia under such conditions.

This is how public opinion was manufactured by which capitalism endeavoured to dope the masses. Torrents of lying information swept over Europe and America—the savages of Persia were supposed to “have risen against civilisation”; the then Government of the Persian National Independence—Riza Khan’s Cabinet—was described as the leader of the rebellious slaves. It was said that this state of affairs prevented any business being done in Persia and made it impossible to float any loans for that country.

In the meantime, towards the end of the summer of 1924, the world oil lords met in conference in Paris: the Dutch-Shell, the Standard Oil, Sinclair and others. At this

conference a friendly agreement was arrived at with respect to the oil concessions of Persia. As a result of this the Sinclair Co. received a money bribe for the expenses which this company incurred during its endeavours to get an oil concession in the North of Persia and for the bloodshed incurred by the Republic of Trans-Atlantic brokers through the assassination of its consul.

Thus Persia was again in the devil's grip—with the financial lasso of its old creditor, Great Britain, around its neck.

The curtain dropped and the next act of the Persian people's drama began.

## **II. Preparation of the Second and Third Government Crises in 1924.**

As soon as it became evident that the plan to enslave Persia by means of the assassination of the American Consul and by Sinclair's refusal to negotiate a loan, the imperialists lost no time in organising the next Government crisis for the purpose of exhausting the country.

For this purpose all the reactionary forces were mobilised—the feudal lords, the aristocratic bureaucrats and the reactionary clergy. With the help of foreign gold a special opposition fraction was formed in parliament which was to carry out this plan. Its immediate task was the overthrow of the military Government plus the overthrow of the Riza Khan Cabinet, for the imperialists and feudal reactionaries were quite right in looking upon this Cabinet and upon this personality, who headed the young National Army of Persia and who had got rid of the foreign army instructors, as their irreconcilable enemies and the basis of the future complete State independence of Persia.

The struggle began . . . .

The opposition placed before parliament an interpellation, the importance of which was skilfully magnified by the press, which had been bribed by the imperialists and the feudal nobility.

The authors of the interpellation—the "black bloc" in

and outside parliament—drew up the following list of the “sins” of the national independence Government.

“We, the undersigned, ask the President of the Council of Ministers for information on the following points :

“1. Unsatisfactory internal and external policy. [The latter refers to the signing of the trade agreement with the Soviet Government.—A. Ch.]

“2. Infringement of fundamental laws and insulting the Medjelis. [This referred to the declaration of martial law throughout the country after the assassination of the American Consul.—A. Ch.]

“3. Non-delivery to the treasury of the confiscated property of the rebels. [This was intended to compromise the army which was engaged at that time in the liquidation of the feudal lords of Luristan.—A. Ch.]”

The interpellation made a strong impression on Persian society and on the Government, as everyone knew that at the back of the author—the leader of the black bloc in parliament, Mudarres—were the old enemies of that country, the imperialists.

However, it soon became evident that the interpellation was something more than the lever with the help of which the foreigners meant to overthrow the Riza Khan Cabinet. It came to light that they were prepared for a compromise—if they could only make him innocuous, and if they could only compel him to acknowledge the old Persian debts of 21 million to the British, which also include several millions distributed long ago by the imperialists in the shape of bribes and various sops thrown to the mercenary feudal-reactionary bureaucrats of Persia, if they could only compel the head of the Persian Government to relinquish the centralisation of the country, the liquidation of feudalism within it and all attempts to hand over the oil concessions in the North to “neutral” capitalism (i.e., to capitalism which is not a territorial neighbour), if they could only compel him to hand it over to the British oil company.

At that time all the sincere friends of Persia did their utmost to persuade its Government, to persuade Riza Khan not to agree to any compromise, not to be afraid of the idol with feet of clay—the black parliamentary bloc, but on the



contrary to beat it with its own weapons, exposing from the parliamentary platform this new imperialist conspiracy against the independence of Persia.

The struggle for and against the interpellation continued over a month. The Government of Persia could not for a long time make up its mind to take up this parliamentary challenge, which served as the constitutional screen for the imperialists' plan and that of the feudal lords to carry out a coup d'état, or at least to exact a compromise and to compel the Government of Persia to be the tool of the imperialists.

But this time Riza-Khan stood firm. A child of the people, a plebeian by birth, the premier felt that if he accepted compromise, if he asked the British to act as mediators, if he were to let the reins of government go out of his hands and if he were to withdraw the order for martial law—as demanded by the imperialists and feudal lords—the enemies of the country would take possession of it, giving it perhaps foreign gold as a bribe and would wring his neck as soon as they possibly could.

So the Persian Government again declined to follow the path of mediation, the path of compromise.

The day of the interpellation—August 19th, 1924 was a stormy day.

Both contending parties had thoroughly prepared “the popular masses”—thousands of people had collected outside parliament, some shouting “Long live” and others “Down.”

But the morning session was brought to nought by cleverly engineered provocation: someone in the lobbies struck Mudarres, the leader of the opposition.

This was enough to keep away the opposition, which evidently foresaw its own defeat from the evening session. When the latter was opened there was no one to bring forward and defend the interpellation and the President of the parliament was obliged to declare it withdrawn.

Indignant at this provocative farce, the Cabinet, through the Premier, demanded from parliament a vote of confidence and approval of all and especially of the recent measures of the Persian Government.

Then something happened which was hardly expected by the clever manipulators of the opposition: **all the deputies present, and there were 91 of them, recorded a unanimous vote of confidence in the Cabinet.**

This is how this new effort of the imperialists to take over into their own hands the Government of Persia, by manipulating parliament, was frustrated.

Though beaten at this game, the imperialists did not give up the struggle and would not leave Persia alone.

Hardly had the passions aroused by the interpellation died down when from all the dark nooks and corners of Teheran the cry was raised about the necessity to "renew" the Cabinet, to "rejuvenate" it and to make it more homogeneous.

Everyone knew, of course, whence this idea of national salvation originated, everyone knew what aims it pursued, in fact whom from amongst their friends the imperialists wanted to drag into the Council of Ministers.

As usual, all manner of means were used for the realisation of this new plan: financial pressure, organisation of conspiracies and mutinies in the army itself (attempted rising of the Chief-of-Staff of the Khorosan Division, formation of an anti-Government organisation among staff officers, etc.).

As a result the Premier, in spite of his recent brilliant victory, had to consent to the resignation of all his ministers and to the complete reconstruction of the Cabinet.

A fresh pretext had been created for the renewed activity of the imperialists—a regular barter for ministerial posts was in process.

The Anglophiles demanded that the portfolios of the Foreign Ministry, of the Ministry of Public Works and of the Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs be given to their supporters—most of them landowners in the South of Persia.

In the end the Anglophiles were victorious and succeeded in getting, if not all, at least some of the portfolios of the chief ministries. They would have trumpeted their victory, but as Riza Khan, the centraliser of the coun-

try, still remained at the head of the Cabinet and the army was in his hands, it was quite clear that for the imperialists this victory was far from decisive. The numerical consolidation of the Anglophile wing of the Cabinet, with the retention of its leader, was, as it were, a mockery of the high and mighty imperialist plans. This leader had all the threads of the struggle for centralisation in his hands, and with a wonderful persistence and in the teeth of enormous difficulties continued to build up the national army and to disarm the tribes.

### III. Preparations for the Rising in Arabistan.

Having failed to achieve the desired results by means of the policy of making and unmaking Cabinets, the imperialists reverted once more to their time-honoured methods of reacting on the small and subordinate people.

They began to foment a movement of the border feudal lords against the central government.

This time it was the turn of Sheik of Arabistan, Sardar Akdes, popularly known as the Sheik Feisal.

The map of the estates of this feudal lord is the exact map of the field of activity of the British concession company, the Anglo-Persian Company. Therefore, the interests of this feudal lord had become to such an extent identical with the interests of the owners of this company, that he could not, as the saying goes, even sneeze without consulting the British.

It was this "independent" feudal lord who raised the rebellion against the Persian Government.

The official version of the beginning of this movement is as follows:

The Persian Government received information about negotiations which Sardar Akdes was carrying on with the British Bank of Persia concerning the sale of land to the latter, whilst in Persia the sale of land to foreigners is prohibited. As it was also known that this feudal lord had in his possession large areas of State land, the so-called "Khalise," he was ordered from the centre to hand over to the State Treasury all the State estates in Arabistan. As an out-and-out feudal lord, who was moreover supported and en-

couraged in his attitude by foreigners, Sardar Akdes could not tolerate this, as the relinquishment of these estates meant for him loss of influence over all the tribes of Arabistan, this influence passing over to the central government. It also meant the loss of British influence.

The actions of the central government of Persia touched the British to the quick, so much so that Mr. Nichols, the Director of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, a diplomat to his finger-tips, could not conceal his annoyance in the letter he addressed to the Persian Government on September 3rd, 1924:

“The purpose of our letter of August 21st, was to draw the attention of your Excellency to the seriousness of the present political situation in Khusistan. We think that the question of the annulment of or the threat of annulment of the ‘Fermans’ of the Sheik Mikhammera is a question of paramount importance.

“We do not intend to complain to your Excellency about the actions of the Persian Government of which we have received information and which amount to a refusal to legalise the land purchases recently made by the Imperial Bank [of England—A. Ch.], and in the letter to which we refer we assert that we have not received any special communication whatever concerning the annulment of the Fermans of the Sheik, as a justification of the aforesaid refusal.

“However, we know only too well what will be the results in Khusistan if the Sheik Mikhammera realises that his Fermans are annulled or on the eve of annulment by your Government, to refrain from drawing your attention to the very serious consequences which such divergence of opinion (between the Sheik and the Persian Government) will have on the security of our property and of our employees in Khusistan.

“As to the origin of the Sheik’s Fermans we have been informed that they were granted him by Shah Musa Fer Eddin in 1903 as compensation for the relinquishment of the rights the Sheik had then to the Khusistan Customs, and that by these Fermans the Sheik and his successors and their tribes were given rights of perpetual ownership over a large section of South Khusistan, which rights they preserved on condition of yearly remittance to the Governor-General of

Khusistan of the then Custom revenue, these payments not to be increased at any future time. We have not here authentic copies of these Fermans to send you for perusal.

“We would be grateful to your Excellency if you would assure us of your desire to maintain friendly relations between the Imperial Government and ourselves, and we trust that you will find ways to place before the Persian Government our serious apprehensions with respect to the results which might arise if the present situation in Khusistan is allowed to develop results unfavourable to our mutual interests.”

Those were the covert springs of the ownership interests of the British oil kings. To defend these interests another adventure in the shape of a feudal rising in the South of Persia became necessary.

#### IV. The Rising of Sheik Feisal.

The premier, Riza Khan took no heed of the appeal of the managers of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company and its lackey—the feudal lord of this district, Sardar Akdes—Sheik Feisal, began the rising, having previously sent to all the embassies in Teheran and to the Medjelis the following telegram drawn up in the usual florid Persian style:

“Your Excellencies, Ambassadors of the Great Powers and deputies of the Medjelis are aware that immediately after the revolution of the eighth Khuta, 1300 (Persian Calendar), in view of the disinterested endeavours of Riza Khan, Sardar Sepekha (the present premier and Commander-in-Chief) to carry out fundamental reforms and to promote the happiness and well-being of the Persian nation—the Persian people responded enthusiastically to these noble patriotic endeavours and were ready to help wholeheartedly to introduce the attempts.

“However, about a year ago, as a result of the immoderate love of power of this person (Sardar Sepekha), of his usurpation of the rights of the people and particularly because of his recent acts of violence

and insults to lovers of freedom, the nationalists and representatives of the Moslem faith, attacks on our holy fundamental laws, expulsion of the spiritual leaders of the people, oppression and insults meted out to the true representatives of the nation—the deputies of the Legislative Chamber [the Anglophile opposition—A. Ch.] and finally as a result of his greed and determination to increase his personal wealth—the affairs of the State became disintegrated and the unfortunate Persian people were driven to despair.

“Therefore, we, the society of the originators of this movement called “Kigam-e-Seadet,” looking upon the premier and Commander-in-Chief of the so-called Persian army as a usurper of State power in Persia, declare him a violator and oppressor of the country and of the people, and being resolved to fight to the utmost for the liberation of our country, for the prevention of its financial ruin, for the confirmation of its fundamental laws and for the recall of our beloved ruler, His Majesty the Shah—for whom we are ready to sacrifice our souls—exiled to Europe by this violator and usurper, will not be deterred by any obstacles. We draw your enlightened attention to the contents of this our appeal in order to prevent any misunderstandings and so that our patriotic movement, directed only against the rebel and usurper, be not interpreted as rebellion and mutiny against the State power.

SARDAR AKDES (FEISAL).”

In this manner was accomplished the open rebellion of Sardar Akdes, begun in defence of his own feudal interests and in defence of British interests, paraded as “defence of the Shah, of the constitution and of freedom,” and as defence “against the encroachments of the usurper.”

The imperialists and Anglophiles having failed to bring the Persian Government to reason by money—the financial noose—decided to make it amenable to their desires by means of the big stick—the armed rising of the most influential and richest feudal lord of South Persia, Sardar Akdes, whose yearly income is estimated at 4,000,000 roubles (£500,000).

When this trouble was brewing the premier and Commander-in-Chief of Persia, Riza Khan, was not in Teheran.

Shortly before this trouble started he had gone to the so-called Lursk front where his young army had recently liquidated the last imperialist adventure—the spring rising of the Lursk feudal lords and tribes.

When in the centre of Luristan—in the town of Khurem-obade—he received a telegram about the rising of the Sheik and at the same time the request of the Council of Ministers to return immediately to Teheran where a very alarming and strained situation had arisen in connection with the ultimatum of the rebel feudal lord.

The premier returned to Teheran on September 16th, 1924. He found his Ministers literally in a panic, which the agents of the imperialist States and the entire reactionary fraternity did their utmost to maintain.

As reported, the premier had hardly entered the capital when the British descended upon him, offering to be mediators for his reconciliation with the rebel Sheik of Arabistan. In the event of peace being made they held out promises of a big reward, but in the event of a refusal to negotiate they hinted in a very remarkable manner at consequences “fateful” to the premier and to the Persian Government.

At the same time the reactionaries began to bring pressure to bear on the Government. Their minions began to come out of their nooks and corners and poisoned the atmosphere with rumours and conspiracies in relation to mutinies in the army, violation of the population by the army, etc., in fact the usual reactionary litany.

When rumour, the loquacious and sharp-tongued rumour of the streets and market places of Persia, began quite openly to connect the adventure of Arabistan’s feudal lord with the intentions of the British, the latter, so we are told, began again to besiege the premier assuring him that they had “nothing to do with this,” that the rebellion of Sheik Feisal was his own affair, that this action which caused disorder in the district of the Southern (British) oilfields is inimical to British interests, that they were prepared to cooperate with the Persian Government in the settlement of the conflict, etc.

In the meantime the reactionary and Anglophile elements drilled into the ears of the premier their “Leitmotif”:

**“Give your Consent to British Mediation—If You Don't it Will be the Worse for You.”**

Nevertheless in this case too, the premier was not willing to compromise. He was aware that support for feudal adventures is not a casual thing with the imperialists, but a system and part and parcel of their policy not only in Persia but also in Afghanistan. Therefore, in answer to their assurance of not having a share in the adventure and in answer to their proposal to mediate, he declared, as we have heard from reliable sources, that **the sheik who depends in everything on the British cannot act without their consent** and that in the event of the British not taking immediate steps to liquidate the rising of this rebel, he (Riza Khan) will assemble the Medjelis and will publicly expose the whole history of this rising and the motives for it.

This threat had a sobering effect on the peacemakers and made them give up their reticence. They came out into the open and began to talk not as high-minded witnesses, but as the interested Party, in fact they started bargaining with the Persian Government about the conditions of this reconciliation.

What then were the immediate aims of the imperialists when they encouraged the Sheik of Arabistan to rebel?

We find an answer to this question by studying the conditions which they laid before the Persian Government as soon as they were able to make use of the aforesaid pretext—the premier's demand to them to liquidate the rising of Sardar Akdes.

These demands were the embodiment of the entire programme of militant imperialism and feudalism, the latter being indispensable for the predatory purposes of the former.

Firstly, as retaliation for the crushing defeat of the feudal lords of Luristan—the work of the Western division of the Persian army—the imperialists demanded the dismissal of Akhmed Aga, the commander of this division.

Secondly, they demanded that not a single concession for railway construction in Persia be granted without the consent of the British.

Thirdly, they demanded that the concession for the Northern oil, for which they had recently paid in Paris a considerable sum to buy the goodwill of the American Sinclair, be given by Persia only to a company friendly to the British.



Fourthly, they demanded that henceforth the Persian Government should take up "a more restrained and neutral [read, hostile—A. Ch.] attitude to the U.S.S.R."

Fifthly, they demanded from the Persian Government the fulfilment of the "four points" laid before it by the British Ambassador in Persia, Lorraine, including such a serious point as the payment of all debts, etc., by Persia.

This was the price demanded by the imperialists from Persia for their abstention from supporting the adventures of the Southern feudal lords.

What was the answer of the Government of Persia to these extortionate demands?

It had to manœuvre and to adapt itself to circumstances. It could not, of course, carry on a direct struggle with the colossus of imperialism. Following the tortuous path of the imperialists and under cover of protracted negotiations, it began to prepare for the despatch of its armed forces to the South.

Ten years of diplomatic training which this country received in its dealings with the imperialists had taught their politicians how to gain time, how to resist the imperialists with their own weapons. The fact is that feudalism has within itself a number of contradictions. The feudal system consists of a number of composite elements: the chieftain of the tribes, the heads of separate branches of the tribes, the chieftains of separate clans and other degrees of the hierarchic ladder.

While carrying on diplomatic negotiations with the imperialist peacemakers about mediation, the Persian Government began to make use of all the differences between the various degrees of this ladder of feudal relations; it began to make use of the jealousy between the minor and medium heads of the tribes and the chieftains; by these methods the forces of the enemy became disintegrated to such an extent that the rebel feudal lord, Sardar Akdes, could only send one thousand out of his 10-12 thousand armed horsemen against the regiments of the Persian Government commanded by Riza Khan himself.

The result was—defeat of the forces of the rebel sheik.

Riza Khan, however, did not succeed in definitely overcoming him. The British brought pressure to bear on the premier and he accepted a compromise. Formally he pardoned the sheik, but in fact he came to an amicable arrange-

ment with him in which the high protectors of the rebel had a hand, leaving this sore to fester in the shape of fresh rebellions in Persian Arabistan whose connection with the centre was still very weak.

**V. The Government Crisis in 1925.  
Reconstruction of the Cabinet. Monarchist Movement.  
Overthrow of the Shah—the Sultan Akhmed.**

Such a result of its struggle with Riza Khan could not give satisfaction to the imperialists and in the spring of 1925 British agents renewed a fierce campaign against his Cabinet, accusing the latter of connivance with and sympathy for the Bolsheviks, of hostility to the Shah, because this pleases the Russian Bolsheviks, and of all such deadly sins.

Riza Khan resisted, as only the head of a colonial government can resist.

But as his resistance grew, the demands of the British grew also. In the spring of this year, the British mission in Teheran went so far as openly to demand from Riza Khan reconciliation with the Shah and to despatch a telegram asking him to return to Persia as soon as possible.

Under British pressure Riza Khan sent this telegram, but began at the same time to give support to the anti-Monarchist movement in Persia, a fact which the Shah, whom he had invited to return, could not ignore.

Then the British adopted other methods. Taking advantage of the financial difficulties of the Persian Government they compelled Riza Khan to make a considerable advance of money, the price of another Government crisis, as a result of which by orders of the British two more weighty and out-and-out Anglophiles were introduced into the Cabinet: Prince Foruz, one of the authors of the famous Anglo-Persian agreement of 1919 and a still more devoted servant of the British, Kovam-ed-Doule.

Having increased the number of their creatures in the Cabinet, increasing thereby their influence on the Government, the British decided to carry on an open struggle against Riza Khan under the slogan of the return of the Shah to Persia.

With this purpose in view their agents decided to make use of the famine which was threatening Persia as a result of the bad harvest.

With the help of the clergy, the masses in Teheran were

brought out into the streets with the cry: "Bread and the Shah," a cry put into their mouths by "shukuks" (agents provocateurs), as if one could feed the famished masses of a country pillaged by the imperialists with the stone of decaying Monarchism.

This time, too, the provocateurs did not succeed. Having let loose an elemental popular movement, the British could not keep it within the limits of provocation. Therefore renewed and this time real revolutionary demonstrations swept the country; the result of this was that the Kodzhar dynasty and the Shah Sultan Akhmed were overthrown and Riza Khan was proclaimed supreme ruler of the country until the convocation of the Constituent Assembly to decide on the form of Government in Persia.

But even at this juncture the British did not lose their heads. With their usual cleverness they began to push Riza Khan towards the throne of the Shah, realising that Riza Khan—President in name, closely connected with the popular movement which bestowed on him this high post—was much more dangerous to them than Shah Riza Khan, enthroned by British efforts, would be.

In the very near future the Constituent Assembly, already convened by Riza Khan, will have to be the arbiter in this fundamental dispute between the national liberation forces of the country and imperialism.

On the choice made by Riza Khan, namely on his decision **either to be put on the throne of the Shah by the British or to cast in his lot with the National-Revolutionary movement, to overthrow finally this throne and to place himself at the head of the movement in the capacity of President of the Persian Republic, will depend the victory or defeat of this movement.** On this too, will depend the ascent of Riza Khan as the promoter of bourgeois-democratic progress, or the decay of the movement, hopeless reaction and Riza Khan's silent retirement from active State activity to the lifeless park and palace of the dethroned Shah—Gulistan; with the prospect of eternal fear and expectation that the Persian people, having thrown off the imperialist yoke, or a new protégé of Great Britain, might repeat with him their experiment of the overthrow of Sultan Akhmed.

ANDREI CHERVONI.

NOTE.—Since the above article was written Riza Khan has been proclaimed Shah of Persia with the approval and patronage of Great Britain.

# Syria in the Struggle for Independence

## 1. The Motive Forces of the National Revolution in Syria.

**T**HE rising in Syria has already lasted for almost four months. Up to the present the French command has been powerless to deal with the rising, despite the fact that it is every day receiving fresh military reinforcements from the metropolis. The rising is increasing more and more, like a snowball rolling down a mountain, and is embracing new districts. All the numerous tribes of Syria have come into the movement. Whole villages are being razed to the ground by the fire of tanks and batteries. Entire quarters of the largest urban centres have been pitilessly destroyed (witness Damascus).

The partisan movement is acquiring dimensions full of dangerous portent for the occupiers. A temporary revolutionary government has already been set up at Ham, one of the largest centres of the national liberation movement. This rising, which at the commencement was a separate and partial movement of the semi-feudal and patriarchal Jebel Druse, has become a general national movement within three months. It has also affected tribes which up till now have been the mainstay of the French occupation. Where are the roots of this rising and what are the motive forces of this national revolution in a country which has altogether a population of two and a half millions?

Different from other countries of Asia Minor, Syria is most "advanced" in the sense of the development of industry and the class differentiations of the population. Neither Palestine, nor Iraq, nor any of the Arab countries as a whole can be compared with Syria in the development of capitalist relations and social classes. Of course, this should all be understood relatively. Syria is still far from being an industrial country in the European sense of the word. The main industry was and remains agricultural. Sixty-five to seventy per cent. of the population is engaged in agriculture, only 15 to 18 per cent. in town handicrafts, and 10 per cent. of the population in trade. Industry is mainly of a handicraft

nature. Only in Damascus, Aleppo and Beirut are small factories and works to be found, in which the number of workers engaged is up to 300. But such factories can be counted on one's fingers. Out of a total of 100-120 industrial enterprises existing in Syria, the majority of 80 per cent. contained not more than an average of 20-30 workers.

The national-industrial bourgeoisie in Syria is almost completely non-existent. The entire heavy industry is almost completely in the hands of Europeans, mainly French capitalists. At the end of 1924, the French "Society for the Defence of Productive Forces in Syria" invested about 380,000,000 francs in Syrian enterprises. The native bourgeoisie owns chiefly domestic handicrafts and trades. **Native capital is for the most part concentrated in the sphere of trade circulation.** This national trading capital has to meet the almost insupportable competition on the part of European capital which makes use of the regime of capitulations in force since the days of the Turkish Sultan.

In addition to a fairly numerous urban bourgeoisie, there is a very considerable stratum of large-scale agrarians in Syria, in whose hands about 60 per cent. of all lands is concentrated. Only in Northern Syria—28 per cent. of all land plots remains in the hands of the peasantry. All the remaining lands are concentrated in the hands of the "Effendi" (prince-landowners), who by means of various rights and usurped rights have seized the land from the Syrian peasants.

The system of leases is very widely developed. The Arab fellaheen are compelled to give the landowners from one-sixth to one-half of the harvest. The heavy land tax "Oshar," which has already been abolished by the Republican Government of Turkey, continues to oppress the Syrian peasantry. The Syrian villages have been greatly split up. In a report published by the French Commissary in 1922, there are fairly characteristic statistics describing the social position of the Syrian countryside. For example, it is established that throughout all Syria there are about 700,000 landless peasants, petty leaseholders and journeymen. Nearly three-quarters of a million of the population is thus comprised of petty farmers and landless peasants. In the social respect, the Syrian countryside is split up into two diametrically opposed classes, small quantities of large landowners and a tremendous stratum of landless. Between these two diametrically opposed classes a fairly thin stratum

of rich peasants is wedged. Unfortunately we have no accurate and scientifically worked-out statistics on the Syrian countryside.

But in general outlines, the picture here given corresponds with reality.

In the towns there is also a strongly differentiated population. On the one hand are the merchants who are divided up into large, middle and a numerous class of petty traders; then there is the handicraftsmen class, also very numerous, and on the other hand a fairly large class of higher industrial workers employed, domestic servants, etc.

In the town of Damascus alone, there are about 75,000 to 80,000 people engaged in home or factory industries as hired workers, semi-artisans or semi-proletarians. The exploitation of child and woman labour is widespread in Syria. Such is a brief picture of the social classification of Syrian society, which is unequalled in any other of the neighbouring countries of Asia Minor.

But, side by side with the fairly pronounced commencement of capitalism in the large urban centres, we have also districts in Syria in which the features of primitive, natural-patriarchal economy, such as in the Jebel Druse for instance, on the borders of Trans-Jordania, are still preserved in all their nakedness. Besides this, there is a nomad population of Bedouins who comprise approximately one-quarter of the entire Syrian population.

The national liberation movement in Syria is nourished by a tremendous reserve of discontent with their political and economic situation, of almost all strata of Syrian society, with the exception of certain groups of corrupted, landed aristocracy.

Of course, not all classes, oppositionally inclined to the French mandate, take equal part in the national revolution. The higher strata of the trading bourgeoisie and the Syrian nobility are not striving for revolution, but for reconciliation, contact and collaboration with French capital. Although at the present time all Party groupings of the Arab movement are putting forward simultaneous demands for the independence of Syria, nevertheless, each social group places its own class content in this slogan. The large landowners and tradesmen regard an armed struggle as the extreme meas-

ure of pressure on the French, in order to make them give for example the following concessions: (1) verbal recognition of an "independent" national government in reality subject to the French authority; (2) receipt of financial aid from French capital for building work in Syria, and (3) participation of the national government, i.e., of the large Syrian bourgeoisie, in the exploitation of concessions in the hands of the French. To this group belong the large landowners Nassib Bey Bakri and Ramadan Pasha-ibn-Shalash, who went over to the opposition and were even at the head of the national Government that was set up.

The wide masses of toilers of Syria—workers, artisans, small traders and peasants—are striving sincerely not in words, but in deeds for complete, not verbal, but actual political independence. The interests of these strata are reflected by the leaders of the Left nationalists such as Shakh Bandar, Tali, sincere revolutionaries who have understood the necessity for an armed struggle with French imperialism and have guessed at the role and aims of British imperialism which has flirted with the nationalists. In addition to these groups there are other forms of Syrian nationalists who also are in favour of a fight to a finish with French imperialism, but want the mandate to be handed over to Great Britain. This group is extensively furnished with financial assistance by British agents.

Taken as a whole, the Syrian bourgeoisie is the organiser of the national liberation movement, utilising excellently the general discontent existing in the country, to further its objects. It is true there is not yet a common language between the various political groupings; there is not yet a single generally recognised national centre, just as there is not a single leadership. At the commencement of September the leader of the Left nationalists, Dr. Shakh Bandar, who is well known for his attempt to form a "people's party" with an extensive republican-democratic programme, was successful during the first raid of the Druses on Damascus (August 25) in hiding from the persecution of the French police, getting back to the Jebel Druse and together with the leader of the Druses, Al-Atras, setting up a temporary revolutionary government. The slogans pronounced by Shakh Bandar on behalf of the revolutionary government were radical, courageous and revolutionary. The demand was put forward for complete evacuation of the French troops, declaration of Syria to be a sovereign State and the summoning of an All-Syrian Constituent Assembly.

After the second raid of the Druses on Damascus (October 18th), which brought about the senselessly and incalculably cruel bombardment of those parts of Damascus affected by the rising—a bombardment which aroused a considerable section of the population against the French and stimulated the Arabs, who had been left without a roof above their heads, to join the insurrectionary detachments—another revolutionary government was set up in Khim, with the landowners Bakri and Shalash at its head. This second government was not so radical as the first.

We thus see that the rising is still without any united leadership from one centre and that in this rising the desires of various social groups of Syrian society have found their political expression. Only in the subsequent development of revolutionary events, may one expect the merging of all the separate insurrectionary detachments into a single revolutionary army under a common command.

The national revolution in Syria contains within itself tremendous possibilities and is fraught with serious consequences for the imperialist dominators. A section of the “capitalised” landowners, trading bourgeoisie, workers, handicraftsmen and peasantry is at the present time entering into a united front against French imperialism.

The French themselves with their idiotic colonisation policy have thrown into the arms of the revolution the tribes that had been fighting among themselves, and have united them with a single sentiment of hatred for the French yoke. The French pro-consuls Gourot, Weygand and Sarrail, with efforts that are worthy of a better fate, have established in Syria a kind of rotation-crop national system which is sowing the seed of dissension and intrigue among the Syrian Arab tribes. This, in respect to the religion (formed into almost 27 sects) is now reaping its well-deserved harvest.

## **2. International Significance of the Syrian Rising.**

At the present time Syria is the object primarily of British desire. Geographically Syria is linked up with Mosul. The British have already for some time been projecting the construction of a railway which should run from Jaffa to Baghdad through the Syrian Desert. This railway pursues economic and strategical objects; on the one hand the delivery of Mosul and Persian oil to the Syrian coast of



the Mediterranean Sea, and on the other the dispatch of troops direct into the Mosul district.

The British are intriguing in Syria against the French with extreme adroitness. As far back as 1920 their puppet "king" Feisal, son of the Emir Hussein of the Hedjas, was on the throne. He belonged to the Hashimite family. It was only the French renunciation of Mosul at the San Remo Conference (24-4-1920) for the benefit of the British, which induced the latter to concede to the French the mandate over Syria. But despite the fact that formally the British conceded Syria to France, in reality they did not stop intriguing against her, utilising every set-back to the French occupational authorities with a view to bringing over the Arab nationalists on to their own side. It is already accurately established that British agents are affording certain nationalist Arab leaders financial and military assistance. The material has up till quite recently been obtained from Trans-Jordania, where the Emir Abdullah, also a British puppet, is on the throne.

The bloody events in Damascus which took place on October 18-20th, gave a section of the British press a pretext for coming out openly in favour of depriving France of her mandate over Syria and handing same over to Great Britain. For example, the journal "Near East" of Nov. 6th, in an article on "France and Syria," placed the dots on the "i's" and demanded the "amalgamation of Syria and Palestine under a united British mandate, as the only means capable of pacifying the Arabs."

It is true that this viewpoint was not shared by the entire leading British press, draped in the toga of a defender of the Arabs from the "imprudence" of General Sarrail. It is possible, that it is not particularly desirable for England to have Turkey as her direct neighbour on the North of Syria. It would rather be more advantageous for the British to have here a third Power between themselves and Turkey. But it is important for the British to weaken French influence in Syria and to create such a state of affairs there whereby Syria, sheltering British domination in the North from the Turks, would give complete freedom of economic expansion to Great Britain.

A section of the big French press, such as "Le Journal" and "Eclair," has already started a campaign for the evacuation of Syria, evidently reflecting the interests of French

capitalists, who have invested their capital in Syrian enterprises. The rising has ruined the silk and cotton plantations, and has brought tremendous losses to their owners, mainly the banks. These financial groups, which support the Left bloc, consider that with an evacuation decided upon through diplomatic channels, it might be possible to arrange compensation for capital invested in Syria.

The Herriot group, on the contrary, opposes evacuation, because the Lyons Chamber of Commerce, which represents the interests not of the silk plantation owners, but of the owners of the silk manufacturing industry, are interested in cheap raw material. The paper "L'Action Française" points out that apparently certain French military circles, including General Sarrail, deem it sufficient to preserve a naval base in the district of Beirut-Tripoli, abandoning the hinterland which has caused so much trouble.

One way or the other, the bloody events in Damascus have considerably weakened French prestige in the East and have played into the hands of Great Britain. Meanwhile, Italy also would not be loth to receive a mandate over Syria given up by France. The semi-official newspapers, organs of Mussolini, made unambiguous statements on this subject quite recently.

Turkey, on its part, would not think twice about utilizing the events in Syria in order somehow or other to get back the Northern District with the chief town of Alexandretta, which had been handed over to France, and where the Turkish population dominates.

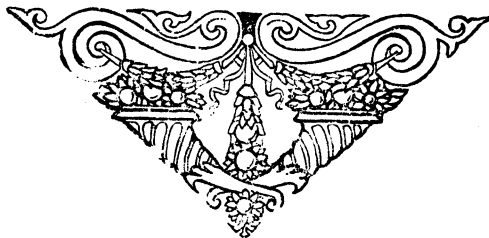
The League of Nations, which in 1923 entrusted France with a definitely formulated mandate over Syria "with the object of culturally enlightening the Syrian population which has so much trust in France," has bitten off more than it can chew and did not even want to send a Commission to investigate events in Damascus.

But all these gentlemen are reckoning without their host. The rising in Syria has its main repercussion on the entire Arabian East. The British themselves understand that they are playing with fire. They have moved up tremendous military forces towards Metulla (Trans-Jordania), so as not to allow the movement to spread to Palestine. Whether they will be successful in this is a big question.

The national bourgeois revolution in Syria is as yet in the first stage of its development.

**If military activities in Syria drag out until the spring of next year, a general upward trend of the national-liberation movement in all Mussulman countries bordering on the Mediterranean Sea is inevitable.** In Algiers, in Tunis and Tripoli, in Palestine and Egypt, the situation is growing very favourable for the liberation movement. This crisis is increasing. When it bursts forth in full force, the hour of retribution will be terrible for the imperialists.

P. KITAIGORODSKY.



# Universal Suffrage in Japan

**T**HE universal suffrage bill passed the House of Representatives on the 2nd March with 292 for and 98 against, and on the 29th of the same month the House of Peers, after much discussion against the bill and after the joint meetings of both Houses. Before giving the details of the suffrage law I shall give the past history of the movement for universal suffrage in Japan in which I took a part in the capacity of Secretary of the Universal Suffrage League in the early period of the movement.

## History of the Universal Suffrage Movement.

The revolution of 1868 had restored the sovereign power of the Mikado from the Tokugawa dynasty and established a real monarchy; but, inspired by the victory over the long established feudalism and instead of declaring an absolute monarchy, the Mikado pledged in his name a Liberal form of government. The Mikado's pledge consists of five articles considered to be the Magna Charta of modern Japan. It was made on the 14th of March, 1868, in the following meaning:

1. Generally open a conference where all State affairs shall be decided by public opinion.

2. The government and the governed should work in perfect harmony and the plan of the government shall be vigorously carried out.

3. It is necessary that civil and military affairs as well as the people's should have no distinction, but each should realise its own aim in order that the people should not be discontented.

4. Destroy all bad customs and usages. Everything should be based upon the just and equitable principles of nature.

5. Seek for knowledge in the world to carry out the intentions of the sovereign.

No doubt the framer of this document must have been inspired by the prospect of establishing in Japan a Liberal government based upon the democratic principle, but soon the real rulers of the country, as their position became secure, gradually evaded the imperial pledge and ruled the country with autocratic and oppressive hand, putting down one after another the dissatisfied and rebellious. The last of these rebels was Saigo the Great, the former Minister of War under the first revolutionary government, who was a pronounced imperialist of his day and wanted to invade Korea and take her. Saigo, the most popular hero and fighting general of the revolution of 1868 and popular to this day, dissatisfied with the government, revolted and fought with the government army of conscripted soldiers. He was beaten and committed suicide in September, 1877 after nearly eight months of severe battles. With this last revolt and its complete annihilation the country became a thoroughly controlled nation and the strong government was still stronger after the victory. But then there arose a Liberal movement conducted by Itagaki and his followers who soon formed the Liberal Party, which is the prototype of the present Seiyukai. Its demand was the opening of the parliament. There was another political party formed called the Progressive Party whose president was Okuma. The Liberal Party was then extreme-radical in principle and the Progressive Party was moderate, demanding simply a party government. All the parties and the Liberal movement claimed the fulfilment of the government promise to govern the country by public opinion.

The demand for the parliament soon became a nationwide cry and the government was compelled to concede the demand, but clever statesmen in the government adopted a very cunning policy and with a promise to open the parliament in 1890 easily pacified the people. Then in order to tame the opposition parties the government decreed and issued a severe repressive law, called "Hoanjorei" (Peace Regulations). Under this law the government issued injunction after injunction against all the politicians and political agitators and prohibited them staying in political centres, such as Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto and others. This killed the Liberal political movement in the country and the simple-minded mass was satisfied with the promise of the govern-

ment to open the parliament in 1890 just about ten years after the promise was given.

The political party movement under the severe repressive law lost its chief leaders, who either left the Party, or, like Itagaki, went abroad with money furnished by the government indirectly. Thus parties who had lost their leaders became naturally extreme radical. Finally, two big parties were dissolved. Thus the government, freed from public pressure, went on to formulate the constitution promulgated in the year 1890.

The Mikado-given constitution is no doubt nicely phrased and arranged with but one condition, namely, that things "shall be determined by the law." Thus the articles in the constitution on the freedom of speech, assembly and press are limited by the law and the constitutional rights are not realised by the people but determined by the law so that the people as a mass cannot enjoy the constitutional privileges.

But the worst of all is the limited enfranchisement of the first period in Japanese parliamentary history. By the electoral law Japan began her journey on the road of capitalism. The politics of the country, especially the legislative power, are monopolised entirely by the propertied classes. The electoral law is highly qualified, that is, limited to direct national taxpayers. One who pays an annual national tax amounting to 15 yen or more has a right to vote or to be elected to parliament. There have been electoral law reforms since, but they are always limited to property-holders. I shall give here an idea as to how the electoral rights were extended in the past.

Electoral law of year	Population in millions	Qualification		No. of M.P.'s	No. of Voters	National Budget (in yen)
		Tax(yen)	Age			
1890	42	15	25	300	500,000	106,469,000
1900	45	10	25	325	1,500,000	295,855,000
1920	57	3	25	464	2,860,000	2,000,524,000
1925	60	—	25	500	12,000,000	1,500,000,000

We see by the electoral laws that Japan has been governed by the propertied classes. Capital or property has been the measure of the political power and influence in Japan; the history of the legislation during the past 35 years shows this fact clearly. The property-holders and capitalist classes have been strenuously and carefully protected by the laws and by the government that executes the laws.

### **The First Period of the Suffrage Movement.**

The first period of the suffrage movement began in the year 1897 as one of the subjects of social reform. In May five politicians, Kono, Suzuki, (Juen) Inagaki, Tarui and Nakamura met at a restaurant to study social problems and one of the subjects was to start a movement for universal suffrage. Two years later, the Universal Suffrage League was organised in October, 1899, and next year the League presented to the House of Representatives a petition for universal suffrage, with one thousand signatures.

In 1903 the League was able to get a universal suffrage bill introduced into the House of Representatives through four M.P.'s: Y. Nakamura, Kono, Purihata and Hanai. This showed great progress of the movement, because in order to introduce a bill into either House it is necessary to get 30 M.P.'s for universal suffrage. Every M.P. who wanted to return to parliament has to look after his electors and universal suffrage would increase the number of electors and hence he would have a hard time to get elected. This was on account of election corruption. In fact, for many years votes were bought by a candidate and so whoever spent the greatest amount of cash came to be elected to the House. Thus the first opposition to the universal suffrage movement came from the parliamentary members, and yet the bill had to be handled by them. Beside these official activities of the League it tried to preach the necessity of obtaining universal suffrage. This was one of the chief topics of social propaganda and it was mostly immune from police censure and persecution in the field of propaganda. But it was very difficult to make universal suffrage propaganda successful because the voters were all against universal suffrage. They considered the voting right their own monopoly and the extension of electoral rights as an encroachment upon their rights and privileges.

In 1905 we were able to introduce the bill through the hands of a few interested M.P.'s, but it was defeated and next year it met with the same fate. In the year 1907, the League pursued a changed policy. In January the League invited all the party M.P.'s interested in the universal suffrage question to the Fujimi Hotel and a compromise electoral reform measure was adopted by the interested M.P.'s of all parties. It was decided to introduce an electoral reform bill, making the tax from 3 yen upwards the electoral qualification. This reform passed the House of Represen-

tatives, but it was killed by the peers. In the years 1908 and 1909 the universal suffrage bill was introduced and as usual it was defeated, but in 1910 it passed the committee. In the full session it was defeated only by a majority of 30.

The universal suffrage bill was again introduced into the House of Representatives on the 28th of February, 1911. Ten years after this, out of 26 who endorsed the bill, 18 claimed that universal suffrage was too premature and out of 116 who signed assent to the bill, 98 voted against universal suffrage as too early for the country. The bill passed on March 8th, 1911. Among those who voted on the bill the most conspicuous figure was the late premier Hara, who was assassinated by a young worker in 1919.

Thus universal suffrage passed the House of Representatives and was sent to the House of Peers where it was killed mercilessly. One peer said that henceforth this universal suffrage should not be sent to the peers and so a sign should be put up in the front gate of the House of Peers. The bill was voted down in the peers with all but one vote.

With the passage of the universal suffrage bill through the House of Representatives, the first period of the universal suffrage agitation closed.

The universal suffrage movement stopped until a very recent date. There are other reasons for the slackened movement. The Red Flag trial of 1908 and the world-famous anarchist trial and hanging of 12 anarchists in 1911 made the country terror-stricken over these events. Consequently all the moderate people went away from the movement for fear they might be taken as an anarchist or Socialist and so the universal suffrage stopped its movement. At this period the government was so severe as to interfere with the peaceful occupations of anarchists and even Socialists.

### **Second Period of Universal Suffrage Movement.**

The revival of the universal suffrage agitation took the same course as with the other social and Labour movements. Nearly ten years' quietness and dead silence were broken by the uprisings of 1918 as already mentioned. Although in the year 1899 the universal suffrage movement began its petition to the Parliament in February, a real earnest and spirited movement did not begin until after the great upris-



ings of 1918. At Nameragawa, Toyamaken, where the first riot of the year 1918 took place among the fishermen's wives and daughters for cheap rice, there was organised the universal suffrage association in October of the same year which made a very great impression upon the country and in 1919 the universal suffrage agitation arose in every part of the country and this time the workers and peasants were much interested in the movement. Associations were formed locally and provincially and finally they all united into one big national Universal Suffrage League. As I said already, the Labour movement took better shape in 1919 as there arose a social movement and as the result of the revolutionary movement in Russia and other European countries a cry for democracy was aroused in Japan and the labour unions came out to demand the recognition of collective bargaining, the right to strike and further the electoral right. Thus universal suffrage took a better and more earnest attitude and the movement grew to be a nation-wide affair. Universal suffrage was demanded by the proletariat of the country as a means of proletarian emancipation.

In the first period of the universal suffrage movement the Seiyukai members were very much interested in the government, although the Seiyukai as a party was committed to the movement. When the second stage was started in 1919 most of these "warmest supporters" of universal suffrage turned out to be its deadly opponents. This complete change in the attitude of the Seiyukai is, of course, the result of the Party discipline and its order to oppose the bill. Thus session after session the Seiyukai killed the universal suffrage bill. But the movement had been growing year by year steadily until it became a national demand.

The workers' organisations, students from different colleges and universities and the peasants' unions, one after another, came out for the universal suffrage movement. Everywhere they held public meetings and demonstrations for the suffrage, passed resolutions and put up the manifestoes. The Universal Suffrage Leagues of local and provincial centres were united in one national League and held a national congress at every political season and raised their cry for the suffrage reform. One feature at this period was the combination of the Labour movement and the universal suffrage movement, the labour unions being always at the head of the movement.

### **Third and Most Prosperous Period of the Universal Suffrage Movement.**

The very heated agitation of the universal suffrage movement has been carried on since the great rice riots and the year 1919 was the most important year for the movement, because hitherto it was carried on only during political seasons, that is the session of parliament; but this year the movement was carried on with redoubled force and energy; in intensity and extension it was greater and more forceful than ever before in the history of the movement. It was decided by the Universal Suffrage League, with the co-operation of all the opposition parties, that in the coming session of the Parliament they should push the universal suffrage bill through by all means and at all costs. They held local and provincial conferences and passed many stirring manifestoes and resolutions attacking the present conservative government and claiming the universal suffrage as the due fulfilment of the Mikado's pledge made in 1868. In all demonstrations and meetings the workers, under the auspices of their union or federation, joined in the undertakings and added to the influence of the movement. During the summer and autumn, up to the opening of the 42nd Parliament, the universal suffrage movement was carried on with vigour and enthusiasm throughout the country. The press of the country, represented by influential newspapers and periodicals, formed their special universal suffrage league and conducted the propaganda through their organs.

Backed by such powerful public support and agitations throughout the country for the first time the two opposition parties, the Kenseikai and the Kokuminto, should have agreed on the platform of the universal suffrage movement but they were unable to come to a compromise, so there were two different bills on the question introduced on February 14th, 1920. This weakness of the opposition was fully utilised by the government Party—the Seiyukai, which had an absolute majority in the House of Representatives and made the government dissolve Parliament on the issue of universal suffrage the very day on which the universal suffrage bill was to be discussed.

### **General Election and Attitude of Opposition Parties.**

The government saw a good chance to strengthen its position by appealing to the country on the issue of universal suffrage. As I analysed the character of the electors

and parliamentary candidates, at heart they did not want universal suffrage. It was almost certain that the government party would return a full majority and retain their position, because the government was really appealing to those who did not wish universal suffrage to be adopted, although they were styled "the country" or "the representatives of the country." The government was asking a question that it wanted to be answered with a negative and it was asking its friends and sympathisers who would surely answer as the government wished.

As was expected the government got an absolute majority of the Seiyukai in the House of Representatives as before. This was caused by the attitude of the opposition parties, which should have gone to the electors in the general election in full force with universal suffrage as their motto and tactics. Thus the opposition candidates, with the exception of a few, who raised high the universal suffrage banner when they went into the election campaign. As was expected those few were not elected; others dropped the cause of universal suffrage and competed on some other side issues. This traitorous attitude on the part of the opposition candidates caused two things; one gave to the Seiyukai and its government a complete victory in the general election and with the other the opposition lost the confidence of the proletariat in the existing political parties. As a result the workers, especially the organised workers, lost interest in universal suffrage and one union after another, and one federation after another decided to quit the universal suffrage movement, passing a resolution to that effect. There are at least two reasons for the labour organisations' sabotage against the universal suffrage movement: one is the direct or indirect influence of syndicalism, which has been very strong among the advanced workers and the labour organisations were influenced by the syndicalistic Labour leaders. The other is that moderate Labour leaders saw a danger in leading their unions into politics, which might weaken the union movement owing to the workers taking more interest in politics than in labour union matters and they feared the Labour movement and trade unions might be utilised by clever politicians and their influence might slip from their hands. These two influences combined made them step out of the universal suffrage movement.

#### **Universal Suffrage Agitation Outside Parliament.**

On account of the universal suffrage bill parliament was dissolved in Feb. 1920, and as noted before in the general

election the opposition parties that fought for the bill in parliament showed a weakened front in the election campaign. The organised workers lost interest in the universal suffrage movement, but some moderate or conservative labour unions kept up with the movement, and the people in general became more and more interested in the movement and joined the movement.

I shall give some important items of the universal suffrage movement of the year 1922. The agreement on the universal suffrage bill concluded between the two parties had very good effect upon the country and the movement; the agitation for universal suffrage became very strong in the country, while the city workers, especially the organised workers, showed coldness towards the movement. Still there were many stirring events in the movement.

The Yamamoto Ministry was formed on the 2nd September, 1923, amidst seven earthquakes and termed "Jishin Naikaku" (Earthquake Ministry). It declared its intention to introduce the universal suffrage bill in the coming session of parliament. This declaration and the entrance into the government of Takeshi Inukai, the leader of the Kakushin Club, was for the introduction and passage of the universal suffrage bill through parliament. If the Jishin Naikaku had continued longer the bill might have passed through parliament, but it soon went out on account of an attempt by a worker on the Prince Regent on December 26th on his way to the parliament.

The declaration of the Yamamoto Ministry on universal suffrage, however, made the country expect to have universal suffrage soon and the so-long silent labour unions came out to prepare for the utilisation of universal suffrage, even the syndicalistic unions declared they would put up their own candidates when universal suffrage became a fact. Thus the political movement among the labour unions and peasant union—the Nomin Kumiai—took up the question of forming a political party: since the talk about the formation of the proletarian political party had been discussed thoroughly among the labour and peasant unions and was now in the process of formation.

After the Yamamoto Ministry there was the so-called "Chukan Naikaku," that is, a transitory or intermediate ministry of Kiyoura, an old man, entirely forgotten for many decades. He was brought out of the Privy Council and

forced, it is said, by the Empress in order to let him conduct the marriage of her son, the Prince Regent. Anyway this out-of-date politician became the Premier of the most unpopular ministry Japan ever had. But the Kiyoura ministry caused a great political change in the country, that the public never expected to come so soon. The change brought about the split of the Seiyukai which branched off into a Seiyuhonto and the two got an almost equal number of members in parliament. The Seiyuhonto supported the unpopular Kiyoura government while the old Seiyukai shook hands with old enemy parties of the Kenseikai and the Kakushin Club. The bloc of these three opposition parties returned a majority and formed the Kato ministry. The three parties in bloc put up a platform of universal suffrage and the reform of the House of Peers. The universal suffrage bill was introduced and after many discussions and amendments it passed through parliament.

#### **Fourth and Last Period of the Universal Suffrage Movement.**

As a result of the recent general election victory for the three-party bloc, they formed the ministry under the premiership of Kato, the President of the Kenseikai, with four other ministers (the Seiyukai supplied two ministers and the Kakushin Club one). As they had promised the electors and the public to introduce the universal suffrage bill in Parliament the government first drafted it, sent it to the Privy Council for approval and introduced it in the House of Representatives and when passed sent it to the Peers. When it passed the Peers in amended form it was necessary to hold a joint meeting to agree on the amendments and after extending Parliament twice, it finally passed through Parliament just at the very end of the session.

The newly-passed electoral law is of a very conservative type. The original government-drafted bill itself was already a conservative one. This original was amended in the Privy Council to make it still more conservative and although some amendments were made to the original draft in the House of Representatives, the Peers amended it to a still more conservative tone and passed it. After this there were held many joint meetings to come to a compromise. So the bill was pretty well tamed to suit the reactionary rulers.

The chief points of interest discussed were centred on

the age limit of the candidate to be 25 or 30. The Peers age limit was put at 25. It was 25 in the original draft and the Privy Council raised it to 30; the House of Representatives lowered it to 25 and the Peers raised it to 30 and in the joint meeting of the two Houses the Representatives yielded to the Peers and the final form was made 30. The next point much discussed was a phrase—"One who receives public or private relief on account of poverty cannot vote." This was not in the original draft but was put by the express demand of the Privy Council. The House of Representatives struck it out and the Peers put it in a revised form—"On account of living gets public or private relief or aid"—and at the joint council it was changed to the above quoted form with the word "poverty."

All these amendments about nobility are intended to encroach upon the rights of the workers and the poor. The residential qualification of six months at the day of closing the electoral list book, lengthened to one year, directly affects the workers. A workman moves from one place to another for his work, so the one-year limit is directly in conflict with the interest of the workers. This and the other amended phrase about poverty and support from others is estimated to reduce the number of voters from 14,000,000 to 12,000,000 but then the increase from the present three millions should be considered a great step forward.

Thus universal suffrage now became a fact and although it is unsatisfactory considered from the proletarian standpoint, yet many think that the new law will bring forth great changes in the politics of the country.

The demand for universal suffrage of the people has been rather general and vague in its inner quality and there are those who should have demanded a better one. The labour unions have abandoned the movement for some time and only recently were they interested in it as I have already said, because it will be given them anyhow and it is only their business to utilise it to advance their cause of the emancipation of the working class. The advanced and class conscious workers and peasants consider universal suffrage as a means for their propaganda and nothing more. There are, of course, many workers and peasants who consider universal suffrage will better their condition. Such people will be utterly disappointed in this aspect of the suffrage law.

A by-product of universal suffrage is the Peace Preservation Law, which is expressly intended to crush the Communist movement. It is said that the Privy Council opposed universal suffrage as it would give facilities to the Communist and radical movement and in exchange for the new law the government promised to introduce the Peace Preservation Bill with which they expect to bar out the incoming Communism from the country. Universal suffrage is, no doubt, one step forward towards a Liberal tendency compared with the limited franchise with tax basis. The government, giving the universal suffrage with one hand, gives the Peace Preservation Law with the other hand to the people with the specific purpose of suppressing any form of Liberal and radical movement and especially Communism and its movement. This contradiction shows that Japan is yet governed by reactionary force in the garb of a constitutional form of government. The reactionary forces or feudal relics that are still active and are the mainstay of the government dominate the national policy. At the same time this state of things shows that the country is not entirely under the conservative and reactionary power, as the government is compelled to give way on universal suffrage although the reactionary influence is shown in the Peace Preservation Law. I shall later give the Peace Preservation bill in the form introduced to the House of Representatives on the 8th of March. It passed in the same form in spite of heated protest from the workers and peasants.

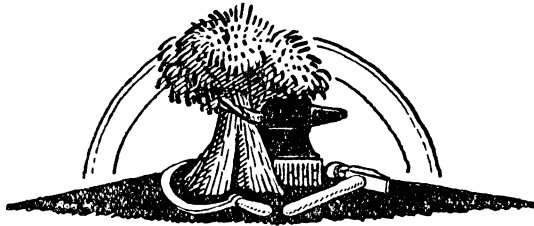
### Conclusion.

Universal suffrage is welcomed by the people at large and almost all the press of the country fought for the suffrage for the last few years whilst the Universal Suffrage League has been propagating it for the past several decades. Those who fought for the law must have felt a certain satisfaction, although it is not so satisfactory to the workers and peasants. The proletarians have to serve the country at the age of twenty-one in the army and navy. This is obligatory under the conscription act, but they are not given the right to vote until twenty-five. Then the residential qualification of one year on September 15th will deprive many workers from exercising the suffrage right. A worker or peasant who cannot earn enough to support himself and gets some aid from his son or daughter is deprived of the political right while a rich man has the right to vote, although he is supported by others, for he is rich and he gets aid from his son

or daughter not on account of poverty. Thus the present suffrage law is unjust to the proletariat.

Universal suffrage, although it is poor enough, will be utilised by the workers and peasants as much as possible and will serve as a capital means of political education for the proletarians of the country. It is gratifying to see that the Japanese organised workers and peasants are trying to organise the Proletarian Party to prepare themselves to utilise the new-gained suffrage. Some nine million people, most of them proletarians, will gain the much-coveted political right and exercise it for their own interest. The Labour and Communist movement will be in better shape with the workers having the political right. The scope of their propaganda has increased to make the workers' demand be heard by the country. Parliament will be used by the representatives of the workers and the peasants as their best platform to make their propaganda to the workers of the entire country without molestation.

SEN KATAYAMA.





# The Japanese Proletarian Party

**A**LL facts go to show that the Japanese Labour movement is entering upon a new stage. A campaign is proceeding on a national scale for the formation of a proletarian party, which was suggested by the Peasant Union (membership over 50,000). The leaders of the reformists immediately vetoed this proposal. Police conditions militate against the free development of this campaign; nevertheless the movement for the formation of a proletarian party is gradually gaining support among an increasing number of the lower workers' and peasant organisations. The first response to the appeal of the initiators came only from the so-called Left trade unions. Lately, the reformist trade unions too are beginning to ignore the strictures of their leaders. A preliminary conference was held on August 10th, at which most of the biggest Labour organisations of Japan were represented: the Japanese Federation of Labour (reformist, membership 14,000); the Urachi Dockers' Union (membership 2,000); the Tokio Tramway Workers' Union (membership 14,000); the Sailors' Union (membership 2,000); the Osaka Trade Union Federation (membership 1,500), and a number of others including the Pariah organisation and the society for the study of political sciences. According to the most recent information, 200,000 organised workers and peasants have joined the movement. The movement has taken such hold of the masses that the reformist leaders had perforce to take part in the building up of the proletarian party in order not to lose their members. Only a very insignificant number of organisations which are very much under the influence of government agents (there are still such Labour organisations in Japan) refused to participate in the preliminary conference, including such big unions as the Sailors' Union (membership up to 33,000) and the union of naval arsenal workers (membership about 50,000).

The August Conference endorsed the following declaration: "Hitherto, the politics of Japan were in the hands of the privileged classes—the bourgeoisie, hence their failure. In Japan all the existing political parties represent the bour-

geoisie, but we intend now to organise a big party of proletarians throughout Japan in order to fight on the political arena, against the capitalist class. With this aim in view we consider it necessary to form first of all a preliminary Commission for the organisation of the proletarian party in conjunction with all the workers' and peasant unions. We know that many obstacles block the way of the Japanese Proletarian Party. We hope to bring our great historical struggle to a victorious conclusion by forming a united front with all the proletarian organisations of the country and the proletarian population in general. This is in our opinion the historic mission of the Japanese proletariat at the present juncture."

The second preliminary conference of the proletarian party has been convened for November 30th, and the Constituent Congress for December 1st, 1925. There is every reason to believe that in spite of all difficulties the proletarian party will be formed in Japan in the very near future. Everything speaks for it, especially the general situation in the country which is experiencing a serious economic crisis. As a result of industrial stagnation the number of unemployed has reached two and a half million. Unemployment insurance, or any other form of State provision for the unemployed, is non-existent. Last year's bad harvest and speculation on the part of the rice merchants has considerably raised the cost of living. The reception which was recently given by the Japanese authorities to the Russian Trade Union Delegation is a graphic illustration of the obnoxiousness of the present political regime in Japan. The two existing big political parties which compete for the political leadership of the country—Seiyukai and Kenseikai—are completely bankrupt in the eyes of the masses. Not only Labour and progressive peasant elements are interested in the organisation of a new party aiming at the thorough democratisation of the State—the whole country demands this. Very characteristic are, in this respect, the articles devoted to the problem of the proletarian party which have appeared in the columns of the Japanese bourgeois newspapers. The newspaper "Asakhi" contains the following statement:

"Not one of them [of the existing political parties—B.V.] cared for the interests of the people. Therefore, it is but natural that the people gradually lost all interest in them. This gives a good opportunity to the proletarian party. Another advantage of the proletarian party is its moral qualities. The chief aim of the government should

be—care for the improvement of the people's conditions of life. If the proletarian party concentrates its attention on this its usefulness will soon be widely recognised. Of course, the existing parties are also endeavouring to satisfy the desires of the people and they are elaborating a new policy. But these parties cannot change all of a sudden as they pretend. In this respect, the Kenseikai party cannot be an exception. Instead of seeking the support of the people, it adopted the old political method—manipulation of the House of Peers. All these facts go to show that the proletarian party has many advantages."

It goes without saying that it will rest with the future proletarian party to make proper use of these advantages. And this will depend on the nature of the organisation of the proletarian party and on its programme of action.

Organisationally, the proletarian party is to be built up in accordance with its tasks and its programme. No exact and full information has as yet come to light about its programme. The August Conference did not adopt programme decisions. It is generally known that a struggle is being waged at present about this question. The Left and the reformist viewpoints are at grips with one another.

The "Japan Times," another bourgeois newspaper, gives the following description of this struggle in a leading article on August 18th:

"The Labour world in Japan has two tendencies, one represented by the Japanese Federation of Labour and the other by the Canton Trade Union Council. The question is will these two tendencies find a common language when the time to draw up the programme for the Japanese proletarian party will have come? The former believes that capitalism in Japan, in contradistinction to the countries of America and Europe, has not gone through the golden age of Liberalism, but has jumped at once from feudalism to imperialism, having in its customs and spirit preserved many relics of feudalism. Therefore, the Japanese Federation of Labour assumes that the workers, at least at present, must don the toga of Liberalism in order to fight against the relics of feudalism, after which they will declare overt war against imperialism. The Council, on the other hand, assumes that since imperialism is a fact, it is essential to fight directly against it. It accuses the federation of selling the workers to capitalism. The Council wants to hold high

the Red Banner and to begin immediately the economic revolution." (Translated from the Russian.)

The official organ of the Left trade union council, "The Labour Paper," has formulated its position in principle as follows :

"The proletariat cannot get settled properly in capitalist society. Listen for instance what Mr. Taka Hasi has to say about capitalism in Japan. According to his analysis of capitalist conditions in modern Japan the improvement of the workers' conditions must go ahead with the extension of industry and the increase of production. But workers know very well that things cannot be done as proposed by Mr. Taka Hasi, that extension of industry is impossible without lowering the level of the workers' conditions of life. As the present system of industry is based exclusively on the exploitation of labour, it is quite clear that with the present social system industry cannot exist without lowering the standard of living of the workers and creating an army of unemployed. Secondly, it is an erroneous view that the proletariat can obtain the realisation of its demands by partial reforms. As a matter of fact compromise reforms only strengthen the positions of the capitalists, for instance nationalisation of land with compensation to the landowners, or nationalisation of big industry with compensation to the industrialists. These reforms merely transform land or works and factories into a public loan—a public burden. Thirdly, it is wrong to promise the proletariat to do that which cannot be done, for instance 'reduction of armaments,' 'world peace,' etc. Reduction of armaments is impossible as long as imperialism exists."

The Communist wing of the Commission for the formation of the proletarian party formulated the same platform as follows: "The aim of the proletarian party is struggle against imperialism and the menace of imperialist wars. The slogans are: Korea's and other Colonies' right to self-determination; hands off China!; those who till the land must own it; the 8-hour day; work or full maintenance for unemployed; workers' control; universal suffrage for all citizens over the age of 18; democratic liberties; abrogation of laws directed against the Labour movement; abolition of the Upper Chamber and the Genro Council." This document puts forward the following programme of the day: new parliamentary elections on the basis of the new franchise law, its central and fundamental slogan being "The Workers' and Peasants' Government."

The Reformist Federation of Labour on its part formulated the following platform :

“ Summing up all this one can say that everything which rejects the fundamental principles of class struggle has no room in our programme. In order words, class struggle is the basis of the political party. The minimum programme must be the practical part of our programme. Our Party must be a mass party, and in order to become such a party it must concern itself with the everyday problems of the workers in factories, works, on the farms, in schools, military courts, railways, etc.

“ It is impossible to express the practical demands of the working class with abstract formulæ. Our method of expression may be for instance as follows: “ Abolition of the House of Peers,” “ Freedom for labour organisations,” “ Unemployment insurance at the expense of employers,” “ Free hospital treatment for workers,” etc. To be a programme of action the party programme must at the same time be always directed towards its final aims. Otherwise we do not know where we are going.”

It is as yet impossible to foretell which of these two tendencies will triumph at the Constituent Congress. What can and must be done is to work out the stages through which the Japanese Labour Movement will have to pass in order to give maximum advantages to the Japanese proletariat and to the whole country.

The question as to the name of the party is not of particular importance. At present there is the proposal to retain the name “ Proletarian Party,” and also another proposal to call it the workers’ and peasant, and even the people’s party. One might even agree to the adoption of the name People’s Party. The important thing is to lay down correct organisational and political lines: first, it is of great importance to attract the unions which refused to participate in the building up of the proletarian party, particularly the biggest among them—the sailors’ and arensal workers’ union. If they do not enter the Party at once, friendly relations should be maintained with them.

At present the fundamental task of the Japanese proletariat is to establish a united front against the bourgeoisie and all the relics of feudalism. This task is particularly important in Japan because of the general lack of organisa-

tion and scattered condition of the Labour movement. One is bound to admit that the conditions for the establishment of the united front in Japan are very propitious. The general situation in the country is certainly fraught with revolutionary convulsions in the making. The political movement is inevitably coming out of the narrow limits in which the reformists wanted to keep the Japanese proletariat. A graphic illustration of this is the inclination of the reformist trade unions to establish a proletarian party in spite of their leaders. On the return of their reformist leader, Su-Zuki, from the Marseilles Congress of the Second International, the Japanese reformists took all the necessary steps to save the situation: the tactic of opposition to the proletarian party was replaced by the tactic of participation in the preliminary work. Moreover, in order to consolidate themselves organisationally in the future proletarian party they began to form local organisations of the proletarian party without waiting for the Constituent Congress. These actions of the reformists show that they are fully aware of the peril threatening them and that they will not give up their position without a stubborn struggle. But this struggle against the reformists will take the form of gaining influence over the masses which, in spite of their reformist leaders, are drawn towards revolution.

Under such conditions the united workers' front, based on proletarian organisations, will be the most effective means for the revolutionary education and organisation of the masses.

This united front must have a platform which is clear and comprehensible for the masses. This platform cannot, of course, be only a workers' platform, it must also include the most important peasant demands and give expression to the fundamental demands of the general democratic sections of the population.

After a perusal of the draft programmes of action of the Left and reformists, one is struck by the similarity of the most important points of the political and economic demands. The demand for a democratic regime brought forward by the reformists as the fundamental pre-requisite of the most important social reforms must be supported by all Japanese revolutionists. The question of the manner in which this demand for the democratisation of the State is to be realised—by peaceful or by violent revolutionary means—is a question for the forthcoming discussion towards the correct solu-

tion of which the Japanese police will no doubt do their share. One is justified in saying that one of the fundamental features of the platform of the united front, the platform of the proletarian party is the demand for a comprehensive democratisation of the country, the abolition of the House of Peers, of the Genro Council, the abolition of classes, etc.

The second fundamental and decisive point of the united front is liquidation of landowners' ownership of land, State and landowners' land to be placed at the disposal of the State for distribution among the landless poor peasant population. The question of the liquidation of the ownership of land by big landowners in Japan is even discussed in Liberal circles. The reformists support the slogan of the nationalisation of land, but in their opinion the nationalisation must be accompanied by compensation. The peasant union is also for compensation in the naive belief that nationalisation with compensation is more likely to be realised than without compensation. One must set against this shortsighted reformist viewpoint the very distinct demand for nationalisation without compensation. In the event of the reformist point of view on this question triumphing at the Constituent Congress, whilst submitting to the decision of the majority, the opposition must reserve itself the right of criticism and of agitation for nationalisation without compensation.

The slogan "Hands Off China" is of great political importance. Entering upon the arena of overt political struggle, the Japanese proletariat must proclaim within the hearing of all that it is decidedly and unreservedly against the predatory policy carried on by the Japanese imperialists in the great country which is suffering and fighting for the freedom of its people.

Something must also be said about the tactics of the Japanese Communists. Until quite recently, the Japanese Communists were a small group whose connection with the workers and peasants was very unsatisfactory. The present movement for the establishment of a proletarian party is the best means for the establishment of close contact between the Japanese Communists and the mass Labour movement of Japan. For some time to come, they will have to devote all their energies to this work.

The Japanese Communists must have faith in the revolutionary mood of the masses and whilst participating in the building up of the proletarian party, they must patiently, step by step and through their every day struggle make it clear to the masses of the Japanese proletariat and peasantry that the only path leading to their liberation is the path of Communism. There is every reason to believe that the Japanese Labour movement is entering upon a new stage which promises not a few disagreeable surprises for the reformists.

Through their work within the proletarian party, the Japanese Communists will no doubt soon be able to grapple with the task of developing their ranks into a mass Leninist Party with a strictly revolutionary programme and iron discipline. But in order to contemplate the question of such a party as a practical proposition, Japanese Communists must be right in the thick of the construction of the proletarian party and skilfully apply the tactics of the united front.

B. VASILIEV.





# International Imperialism and the Communist Party of Indonesia

**A**BOUT 1900, when the differences between the interests of the big capitalist powers were just making their appearance in the East, the insignificant and weak imperialism of Holland introduced into Indonesia\* the so-called "policy of the Open Door." As a result of this in 1916 there was barely about 60 per cent. of foreign capital (native capital does not exceed 5 per cent. of the total capital) belonging to Holland. Since then the percentage of capital other than Dutch is growing continuously.

According to statistical data published in the Amsterdam "Tribune," Indonesia exports to Holland amounted in 1913 to 28.1 per cent. of the total exports, and in 1923 only to 14.9 per cent. In the same year, imports from Holland decreased from 33.3 per cent. to 20.9 per cent.

At the same time exports to Great Britain increased from 3.9 per cent. to 8.4 per cent., exports to Japan from 5.8 per cent. to 8 per cent., imports from the U.S.A. increased from 2.1 per cent. to 6.3 per cent. and imports from Japan from 1.6 per cent. to 8 per cent.

As time goes on the interests of international imperialism gain ascendancy over the interests of Holland herself.

In the first half of 1924 the revenue of the Government from Customs amounted to 44,230,423 frs. ; for the same period in 1925 this revenue amounted to 54,236,608fr. This shows that in that year the economic progress of foreign capital continues. There is no other colonial or semi-colonial country in the East which presents such an example of the rapid development of foreign capital.

The foreign trade of the chief Asiatic States in the East in 1913 and 1922 was as follows (in millions of francs) :

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\* Dutch East Indies (Polynesia) are meant here.

Year	China		India		Dutch Indies	
	Import	Export	Import	Export	Import	Export
1913	... 570	403	1,833	2,142	437	614
1922	... 945	655	2,394	2,792	691	1,136
Increase	in per cent.					
	45 p.c.	55 p.c.	35 p.c.	15 p.c.	50 p.c.	80 p.c.

During this period Indonesia does not only develop more rapidly than other countries, the relative growth of capitalism is also more considerable there.

China, with a population of 400,000,000 (eight times as large as Indonesia) had in 1922 imports two and a half times larger than those of Indonesia. India, with a population six times larger than the population of Indonesia, has a volume of imports which is only three times larger than the imports of Indonesia. At the same time, in contradistinction to China, Indonesia has favourable trade balance. This shows that Indonesia's capitalisation is making enormous strides forward.

The decisive factor in this is the enormous natural wealth of Indonesia. Its geographical situation is extremely favourable (between India and China). Labour there is cheap and enables capitalism to derive enormous revenue. In 1924 most of the enterprises had a clear profit varying between 20 per cent. and 50 per cent. In the first half of that year, the world sugar and coffee market, etc., was very favourable to the foreign capitalists in Indonesia. Rubber also rose in price. According to the compilations of the "American Geological Survey" about 15,000,000 barrels of oil were obtained in Indonesia in 1924: in India 7.5 million; in Borneo 4.5 million; in Egypt 1 million; in Japan and Formosa 1.5 million; in Soviet Russia 44 million. It is not to be wondered at that with this magnificent "sugar revenue" Dutch capitalism can afford to bribe the cream of the workers' aristocracy in Holland.

Economic development, the geographical situation of Indonesia from the strategical viewpoint, its oil wealth, etc.—all this automatically predetermines the policy of the Dutch Government in the sense of submission to the interests of powerful world imperialism.

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But the development of the interests of the bosses of the Dutch Government (British, American, Japanese, etc.), brings with it an ever-growing clash of interests. The moment is bound to come when the Dutch servants will not be able to satisfy all their bosses at the same time. This will happen on the occasion of the first war in the East.

The geographical situation and wealth in Indonesia are too good a base for military-naval operations, not to be eventually occupied by one of the big capitalist countries. The Dutch imperialists are fully aware of this and are endeavouring to make a profitable alliance with one of the big imperialist robber States, in order to protect the Dutch "possessions" from a "predatory attack" in the event of war.

In 1923 there was much talk about the establishment of a military-naval base in Riov-Tand'yung-Iriok in Indonesia which could serve as a link in the British chain between India, Singapore and Australia. Java is an excellent intermediate station between Singapore and Australia.

Holland's orientation towards an alliance with British imperialism is so self-evident that the French imperialists are already on the watch. With respect to this possible alliance the following statement appeared in the British "Daily Telegraph":

"Considerable importance is attached in Dutch and Indo-China circles to the plan concerning the establishment of a strong naval base in Singapore. This plan is viewed favourably. It is not at all out of the question that in the near future we will witness an Anglo-Dutch naval alliance, not necessarily guaranteed by a special written agreement."—(Translated from the Russian.)

Holland's position as the servant of world imperialism makes it, by this very fact, most reactionary. The Dutch Government cannot as yet make up its mind to sign a trade agreement with Soviet Russia in spite of the fact that a certain number of Dutch capitalists have trade relations with the U.S.S.R.

The Dutch capitalists are prepared to spend any amount of money to frustrate any kind of connection between the Communist Party of Indonesia and the Comintern. They do not spare either money or blood to crush the Labour movement. Dutch imperialism is lavish with its money when it comes to bribe the so-called "national" leaders of the Sarekat-Islam movement in Indonesia.

Money, violence, intrigues, deception, diplomacy, bribery, democratic phraseology—everything is set into motion by the small but clever and unscrupulous Dutch imperialism. Small wonder that one of the most popular slogans of the Communist Party of Indonesia is: "Beware **wherever you are** of Dutch Imperialism and its influence."

The existence, however, of the Communist Party of

Indonesia greatly depends on the economic and political development to which we have already referred. This factor is leading to the rapid proletarianisation of large sections of the population. If we take into consideration that at present there are in operation in Indonesia approximately four milliards of foreign private capital, about one milliard of State capital and at the same time one milliard gulden of unregistered Chinese and Arabian capital, and if we add to this that the average wage and value of land are not more than 20 per cent. of the European value, we will have to admit that the "proletarian territory" of the Indonesian imperialism is such as it would be in Europe with a capital of 30,000,000 gulden (12,000,000 American dollars). There is every reason to consider as reliable the report of the government in 1918 (Muurling) which states that 45 per cent. of all the Indonesians are workers or part-time workers on railways, plantations, in works and factories, etc. Although younger than in Holland, the working class of Indonesia is more important.

If one takes into consideration that the working class is on a higher political level than the peasantry one will realise that the movement of the Indonesian people against exploitation is directly and indirectly a proletarian class struggle against capitalism and imperialism. There is evidence of this in the successes of the Communist Party of Indonesia and in the fact that every national movement with a non-proletarian programme and tactic was bound to meet with defeat (such as Sarekat-Islam).

The fact that the exploiters of Indonesia are international imperialists is a determining factor in the attitude of the leading circles of the Indonesian people (45 per cent. workers and part-time workers and 45 per cent. small peasants) to the movement of the world proletariat. There are no more popular slogans in Indonesia than the slogans of the Russian October Revolution. The ardent desire of the best elements of the Indonesian working class is that a Soviet Indonesia might become part of the world federation of free Soviet Republics.

The Dutch capitalists and imperialists know this, and that is why they do their utmost to destroy our Communist Party. Ever since 1918 when the truly proletarian element within the Party became the driving force of the Communist movement, reaction made itself felt. But when in the middle of 1922 our Party brought into the field real proletarian leaders, reaction declared war quite openly against our Party.

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Recent events are a proof of this. The repressive measures introduced at various times are now used simultaneously against our Party. But the terror (in January-February of last year 30 people were killed, 130 were wounded, 300 were sent to prison, the victims being Communists and workers and peasants in sympathy with the Communist Party) could not crush the movement and prevent the growth of our Party and of its influence.

During May Day celebrations the police broke up many meetings (Batavia, Tana-Tinggi, Dyekdya, Ngand'ek, etc.). Many comrades were arrested and several were hurt but not seriously. Since then we read every day in our daily paper "Api" that one or other of our comrades has been arrested. Two hundred comrades, members of the Party, were arrested between May and August. Moreover tens and hundreds of our comrades are being dismissed from the factories. Between January and the end of May alone 41 people were dismissed for Communist propaganda.

The list given above was published by the Government and reproduced in the "Api" on June 18. But between June and September another hundred victims were added to the list. During that period over 200 workers were dismissed from private capitalist enterprises.

Another means of struggle against us is the formation of all kinds of strike-breaking and bandit organisations (Sarekat-Hindyu) whose members are in the pay of reaction. The aim pursued by the Sarekat-Hindyu organisation is the assassination of our leading comrades, destruction by incendiarism or otherwise of houses where members of our Party live, etc. In April and May alone 50 houses were destroyed. Comrade Vakidin in Ungaron was killed by Hindyurom who was incited to this assassination by the lackeys of capitalism. In March, comrade Alinin narrowly escaped assassination. Many more comrades have been wounded. The "Api" in its issues of March 25 and 31 gave full accounts of this organisation. Nearly every day there were reports on the actions of this terrorist organisation of the government.

Just a few words concerning intrigue and bribery. Through Salim (Salim was a government spy, then a member of the Dutch Vreetsinigen Union, after that a member of the Central Committee of Sarekat-Islam and at the same time member of the Social-Democratic Party in Indonesia), editor of the government organ "Hindya-Baroo," and Tyekro, Sarekat-Islam orator, the capitalists can "dictate" to the Suryeprandto ("national" leaders) "a moderate pro-

gramme." In July and August the capitalist press extolled these persons as the "best" leaders of the Indonesian masses, but the masses keep them out of their movement. By all sorts of intrigues attempts are made to cause "mischief" between husbands and wives in working class and peasant circles, for wives are "dismissed" if their husbands remain Communists.

Thus mischief is also made between fathers, mothers and their sons or daughters.

At the end of August telegrams in all big Dutch newspapers referred to the proclamation of meetings in the Semarang province, of the expulsion of Alinin, member of our Central Committee, of the arrest of Darson, one of our most prominent leaders who had visited Moscow in 1921, etc. Reaction is doing its worst.

At the same time the capitalist press has much to say about the increase of the 1926 budget for "national welfare." But what can one million gulden for the purchase of land from the landowners in Tangerang do? What are a few million granted for railway constructions to give "work" to the unemployed if previous to that the working class and the peasantry were robbed of about 600,000,000 gulden?

Finally, the capitalists have much to say about the forthcoming "democratic" electoral law for municipal elections which does not enfranchise more than 20 per cent. of the urban population, since most of the members must be Dutch. There is also much talk about the so-called "Indonesia less dependent politically on Holland." But extension of franchise means only more freedom of action in this country to trade capital, as a natural result of the tendencies of economic development described before. A noticeable fact is in the very near future Indonesia will have enough "freedom" to meet of itself expenditure for the next war in addition to the expenditure for its preparation.

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Six weeks after the February terror our Party organised a review of its forces on the occasion of May Day. Big meetings were held in fifty provinces in Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Celebes, Timor, etc. Thousands of workers joined our demonstrations in such industrial centres as Semarang, Batavia and Surabaya. According to descriptions in "Api" and other Indonesian organs, these demonstrations were on a larger scale than our demonstrations in 1924.

In December, 1924, the Party Conference adopted,

among others, a resolution "To work and agitate among the working class through the trade unions." Towards the end of August there were already over 35,000 R.I.L.U. members (including our nuclei in non-Communist unions) whilst previous to December there were only 25,000. At present 70 per cent. of all the young trade unions are under Communist influence. The organisation of the transport workers is entirely in the hands of Communists.

In the course of two months (according to data published in the "Api") from May 5th to July 3rd there were fifteen strikes. Although only 2,000 workers participated in these strikes they bore a decidedly aggressive character (the capitalist press persists in ascribing strikes to Communist influence). All through July small strikes took place, and in August a general dockers' strike broke out in Semarang (1,200 strikers who were subsequently joined by 400 more). A hundred policemen who had to guard the town went on strike at the same time and the same place. Thereupon the Government issued an order proclaiming all meetings, as a result of which 1,000 printers went on strike. All these strikes broke out in spite of the anti-strike law introduced in 1923.

In connection with events in China big meetings took place, all of them organised by our Party. Tens of thousands of workers and peasants participated in demonstrations to express their sympathy with China, to protest against war, etc. At one of these meetings, held in Surabaya, 1,000 francs were collected for the liberation struggle in China, although it had been strictly prohibited to collect money for the Chinese Revolution. The meeting in Toylyatyap which was held on the same day was attended by 2,500 workers, the workers of the town having declared a one-day strike. All the Chinese shops were closed on that day. A number of other demonstrations were suppressed by the police. Nevertheless all this shows what a revolutionising influence the Chinese movement had on Indonesia.

Apart from the demonstration on behalf of China our Party endeavoured to get into touch with the Chinese working class in this period of its awakening. This is continually mentioned in the Indonesian press, a fact which is making the capitalists furious.

It is not to be wondered at that in August the government took measures against the revolutionary movement, as there was every appearance of a revolutionary outbreak in Indonesia in the near future. Yet this was only a demon-

stration on our part, the aim of which was to ascertain the balance of forces between us and capitalism.

Propaganda is also penetrating into the army. At that time over twenty soldiers were cashiered in the military centres and over twenty-five soldiers were subjected to various punishments. Reasons for this: Communist propaganda. The reaction has "discovered" Communists among the armed and the municipal police (in Dyekdya, Semarang, Solo, etc.).

The fact that all through July and August the Government continued to dismiss minor employees is a sign that the Communist Party is strong enough at present to exercise influence on the "lackeys" of the Government. This "turn of affairs" is so dangerous in the eyes of the government that it sends its secret official letters through Dutch couriers and not by post. At the same time the latter is under the obligation to censor all unreliable correspondence. The explanation for this is that our organ has frequently been able to publish the secret instructions of the government.

Finally, the Communist movement is growing rapidly among the youth.

The Indonesian press has something to say every day about the successful meetings of the Sarekat-Raya. Thus our influence is growing among the peasantry. Even in the "deportation island" Timor, there is a section of our Party and of the Sarekat-Raya. The "Java Bode" of July 11th speaks of the forthcoming punishment of 80 farmers in Gengkalen who went on strike at the penal public works.

The revolutionisation of the Indonesian intelligentsia is also progressing, although here too all sorts of obstacles are put in the way of our propagandists. At present Budi-Utomo is no longer in the hands of the moderates--Dvidi-zevoyo, but has gone into the hands of the young revolutionary nationalists.

It is an interesting fact that whilst our Party and its influence have been rapidly growing, the Sarekat-Islam remains in a state of complete prostration. Our Party is working for the formation of a national anti-imperialist bloc, and just now the Mokamad-Dia, the Sarekat-Ambon and other nationalist organisations are progressing, that is to say they are becoming revolutionised and their membership is growing, although not as rapidly as our Party and the Sarekat-Raya organisation which is under Communist influence.

SEMAON.



# The Labour Movement in Turkey

**T**HE first steam engine appeared in Turkey in 1860. However, the results of this "industrial revolution," if we may so term it, only began to make themselves felt in the '80's. Handicraft industry, with its apprenticeship and hierarchy, only began to be seriously shaken towards the end of the '80's. The old handicraft corporations began to break up. The working class appears on the scene. In 1893 we observe the first attempts towards trade union organisation of the workers employed in the "Tofan" gun factory. The workers of this factory formed an "Association of Ottoman Mechanics."

However, this organisation faded away, not having had time to flourish. Abdul Hamid generally would not put up with free organisations, workers least of all. He systematically persecuted and exiled the leaders and organisers of unions of this kind. The relentless regime of the bloody Sultan cruelly suppressed the young flights of workers' organisations. The industrial workers of Turkey were scattered and lived in partial obscurity of ignorance and stagnation. Only the Young Turk coup d'état of 1908 gave a strong stimulus to the development of workers' organisations. The proclamation of a constitution in Turkey shook up Turkish society and covered the whole country with innumerable organisations. This organisational fever also affected the Turkish working class, which at that time numbered 100,000 workers employed in factories, railways, etc.

This movement of the Turkish workers was organised by Bulgarian, Armenian, Jewish and other Socialists upon whom the "Committee of Unity and Progress" vented all its wrath and all the strength of State power. The first to organise were the workers on the Oriental Railway and the workers and employees of the Constantinople tram depot. In 1909 Turkey experienced the first strike of railwaymen and tramwaymen.

The Young Turk Government became frightened at this red spectre of the workers' movement and published a stern

law on strikes, which remains in force to this very day. According to this law the workers have the right to declare a strike only after the Governmental Commissar finds the demands of the workers worthy of consideration and only on condition that the government official is unable to reconcile both sides. The workers have only the right to declare a strike two months after the examination of the questions in dispute. This penal law practically amounted to a complete prohibition of the strike movement.

With regard to the question of workers' associations, the Young Turks did not issue a special law regulating such organisations, but the workers utilised the general law on associations for forming their corporations, which subsequently received the name of "Dernek."

The law on associations, which existed during the Young Turk regime, allowed of the formation of branches in the provinces also, but strictly prohibited the formation of a federation of unions, which in practice deprived the workers of the possibility of uniting legally.

During the imperialist war the "Union and Progress Party" assisted the process of the formation of a national bourgeoisie by setting up a national industry, forming limited companies and banks, while the same Party ruling at that time organised the petty bourgeoisie and port workers. The Committee of Union and Progress organised textile workers, bakers, bootmakers (both skilled and semi-skilled tradesmen), and others into productive co-operative societies (artels). These artels received orders from the Government and also credit and machines which the Government ordered from Germany. The workers in these productive societies were exempt from military duty as they worked "for defence." At the same time the Government set up an extensive network of consumers' co-operatives, which were supplied with goods from the stores of large monopolist limited companies.

In this manner the Young Turks laid their hands on all the newly-formed organisations, which remained under the double guardianship of the Government officials.

After the Mudros amnesty of 1918, which brought a complete defeat to the Young Turkish regime, the workers of Constantinople fell under the influence of the British and French occupiers who competed between one another. Various adventurers came on the scene who tried to form workers' organisations in order to sell them to the British or the French. Among the latter kind of adventurers the ener-

getic figure of the workers' apostate, Hilmi Bey, corrupted by the British, stands out in bold relief. He was able to group around himself 7,000 workers of Constantinople in 1921 and lead the strike of tramway workers which ended successfully. (The Constantinople tramways belong to a Franco-Belgian company.) But in February, 1922, the French got the best of the British and with the aid of Turkish officials they succeeded in forming a "Society for the Defence of the Workers," exclusively of Mussulman workers. Hilmi left the scene and another swindler, Shakir Rassim, stood at the head of the Constantinople workers' organisation. He represented the Constantinople workers at Amsterdam in 1922.

However, this adventurer did not "get away with it." The strike of the tramway workers in 1922 ended in failure. The "Society for the Defence of the Workers" fell to pieces, leaving behind it dirty traces of nationalistic prejudices, which had been energetically cultivated by the corrupt leader, Shakir Rassim. It suffices to point out that it was exclusively Mussulman workers who were accepted into the "Society," that the members of this "Society" performed religious rites such as sacrificing rams at various festivals, which became the clear physiognomy of such a "Labour" organisation.

During this time, the Labour movement in Anatolia was entirely under the influence of the Kemalists. The most important group of the Anatolian working class were the railwaymen, workers in the ammunition factories and miners. Although the workers in Government enterprises were deprived of the right to form unions, the Kemalist Government did not hinder the formation of mutual aid societies and organisation of the workers in connection therewith. In addition, the Government, being interested in the normal functioning of the above-mentioned enterprises, paid high wages particularly to the railwaymen and workers in ammunition factories (three Turkish lira per day), which guaranteed and ensured them in advance from strikes and disturbance on the part of the workers. The eight-hour day was introduced for the miners, which included the time of descent and ascent. The petty bourgeois Socialist Mahmud Essad, who was at the head of the Commissariat for National Economy, prepared a project for legislation on workers' insurance, the granting of free medical aid and free education for workers' children, etc.

The Kemalists allowed the workers to form mutual aid funds, but their Liberalism did not go so far as to recognise

the workers' right of free coalition and conclusion of collective agreements.

### The Labour Movement of Turkey after the Victory of the National Revolution.

There are altogether about 200,000 urban workers in Turkey. They are distributed in the following manner according to the branch of production:

- Railwaymen: 8,200 (about 5,000 organised in unions).
- Miners: 25,000 (8,000 organised).
- Factory workers: 40,000 (12,000 organised).
- Builders: 12,000 (4,000 organised).
- Tramwaymen: 3,000 (1,500 organised).
- Seamen: 5,000 (2,000 organised).
- Dockers: 7,000 (all organised in craft unions).
- Chauffeurs and Cabmen: 10,000 (5,000 in craft unions).
- Tobacco workers: 25,000 (7,000 organised).
- Seasonal workers: 15,000 (totally unorganised).
- Printers: 1,500 (1,000 organised).
- Lightermen: 20,000 (10,000 organised).

It stands to reason that these figures are not absolutely accurate, as there are not any statistics in Turkey for the time of the war. Therefore, one has to believe in the statistics given either by the bulletins of the Commissariat of National Economy, or by the journal "L'Economiste d'Orient" or else in reports of Turkish Communists, etc.

Such, however, are the rough figures of the numerical composition of the urban workers, not counting the shop assistants (of whom there are some tens of thousands in Constantinople alone) and the State and Municipal employees (about 20,000).

We will take the liberty of giving a brief characteristic sketch of the various groups of the Turkish working class.

The workers of Constantinople, in particular the railway workers, are the **advanced** section of the Turkish proletariat. This stratum of the proletariat came from the petty bourgeoisie. They are mostly children of shop assistants, petty employees, small shopkeepers and impoverished handicraftsmen. Among the railwaymen we find a large percentage of fully educated according to the Turkish standard, while some of them have even a secondary education.

The dockers, lightermen, porters and shopmen are hedged off in their mediæval craft corporations. These are

for the most part peasant elements among whom Kurds and Lazes predominate, who come to Constantinople for a couple of years to earn a little money and then return to their villages. The pressure of taxes pushes them out of the village into the ancient Ottoman capital where they get fixed up as boatmen, lightermen, porters, etc. Owing to their state of organisation they are enabled to establish fairly high rates of wages and all governments that have been in power, from Abdul Hamid to Kemal Pasha, have had to consider the organisation of Constantinople "Hamals" (porters) as a serious force. When the Kemalists occupied Constantinople in 1923, they tried to interfere with a view to breaking their free will. The matter ended in a formal battle between the Hamals and the police, in which a few hundred porters were injured. Here the sectionalism of the Kurds, who predominate among the Hamals, played no small role. The leaders of the organisations—the "Kekhaia"—were condemned to imprisonment. The Constantinople reactionaries carried out counter-revolutionary agitation among the discontented Kurds and they even succeeded in organising an attempt on the life of Mustapha Kemal with the aid of the Kurds, but thanks to measures being taken in time, the police succeeded in averting this attempt by means of arresting all the instigators (in October, 1923).

The Zonguldak miners are composed entirely of peasants who come to work in the coal mines for periods of three to six months. The material conditions of work in the mines are absolutely intolerable and it is physically impossible to remain in them for a more prolonged period. The peasants are generally hired not directly by the mine-owners, but by a contractor, with whom the mine-owner concludes an agreement. This contractor, or senior member of a corporation—"Tshaukh"—mercilessly exploits the members of the corporation, despairing peasants, whose needs drive them to weary toil in the mines. In 1923 a few advanced workers arriving from Germany, where they had been sent to receive a skilled training, succeeded in organising the Zonguldak miners, who organised a strike for the first time to which we will refer later.

The Committee of Union and Progress had sent during the time of the imperialist war, 1,500 young workers to Germany and Austria-Hungary to become perfected in various branches of industry. These workers lived through the November Revolution in Germany and the Hungarian Soviet Revolution, in which some of them actively participated. These skilled Turkish workers, on returning to Turkey,

played an important role in the work of organising the Turkish working class. Many of them actively participated in forming the Turkish Communist Party, always acting as skirmishers for the revolutionary Labour movement.

On the whole, the Turkish working class still bears the imprint of sectionalism, craft restrictions and petty bourgeois psychology. However, the subsequent process of industrialisation of New Turkey, which is being energetically striven for by the Kemalist Government, will radicalise the Turkish proletariat and make it a class in the modern sense of the word.

### **The Smyrna Economic Conference.**

At the commencement of 1923 the Government of Ismet Pasha summoned a special conference in Smyrna devoted to economic questions and to the tasks of raising the productivity of the country's forces. The authorities allowed working class representation at this conference, but the delegates of the workers were appointed by the local authorities. The Constantinople workers, thanks to the initiative of the Communist group "Aidynlik" ("Enlightenment") succeeded in organising themselves and electing three delegates, among whom was one Communist, the pioneer of the Communist movement in Turkey, general secretary and leader of the Party, Dr. Shefkit Husin. (This comrade was recently sentenced by the Angora "Court of Independence" to 15 years penal servitude for a pamphlet on the 1st of May.)

Comrade Shefkit Husin succeeded in rallying around him the Labour delegation at the Smyrna conference. The majority of points in the programme of the confederation on the labour question were drawn up with the participation of comrade Husin. At the fraction meetings of the Labour delegation, the points that had been drawn up with regard to labour protection, the eight-hour working day and the right of coalition and collective treaties, were accepted. Although the Government promised to realise these demands, the entire Smyrna programme of labour legislation has remained a "scrap of paper" up to the present day. The Medjelis postponed the examination of legislation projects referring to the labour question from one session to another, never finding time to occupy itself with this matter.

The Smyrna conference gave a stimulus to the Turkish Labour movement, in which two wings made themselves apparent: the moderate "patriotic" wing and the Communists. The compositors of Constantinople, a section of the tramway workers and others were under the influence of the Communist group, "Aidynlik." The remainder were ensnared by the swindler Shakir Rassim, to whom we referred in the first part of this article.

The 1st of May, 1923, was used by the Ismet Pasha Government to suppress the Communist movement which had begun to develop in Constantinople. The leaders of the "Aidynlik" group, with comrade Shefkit Husin at their head, were put behind bars and a political trial was started against them, in which they were charged with treason. By these arrests, the Constantinople authorities wanted to come to the aid of their agents, Shakir Rassim and Co.

But the Constantinople workers did not allow themselves to be detracted from the path they had once chosen and the trade union movement began making still greater progress. In the middle of July, 1923, a strike movement commenced which continued sporadically for a few months. Yielding to the pressure of the working masses, who were inspired with the determination to fight for improving their economic position and for unity, the government had to close its eyes to the "unlawful" amalgamation of all "Derneks" (unions) into a general "labour union" ("Birlik") which was a kind of Federation of Labour in Constantinople.

### **The Labour Union.**

On November 26th, 1923, a Labour Conference took place in Constantinople at which 250 delegates were present. Both the representatives of the Zonguldak miners and of the Balia-Kara-Aidin districts participated in this Conference. The Conference was thereby given an all-Turkish nature. At this Conference it was decided to form an "All-Turkish Labour Union"—the Birlik—similar to the Confederation of Labour existing in capitalist countries. This Confederation of Labour embraced 19,000 organised workers of Constantinople (altogether 32 unions), 15,000 Zonguldak miners and 10,000 workers of Balia-Kara-Aidin.

This Shakir Rassim, of whom we have already spoken, stood at the head of this Confederation and used every effort to direct the activities of the Union along paths previously

indicated by the Constantinople political police. On the insistence of the latter, the Birlik excluded all Communists from the trade unions. In an interview with the representatives of the press, the worthy secret police agent, Shakir Rassim, made the following announcement: "The Birlik pursues exclusively economic aims and is a national organisation in the full sense of the word. The Birlik has nothing in common with Socialism nor with Communism. It considers it its duty to fight against the extremists."

In order to emphasise his devotion to the bourgeois Kemalist Government, Shakir Rassim proposed Refik Ismail Bey, secretary of the Constantinople organisation of the Kemalist People's Party, as candidate for vice-president of the Executive Council of the Birlik. In this manner the Kemalist guardianship over the organised Turkish working class was established.

The servility of the Executive Committee of Birlik before the government of the propertied class in power, exceeded all bounds. The sending of telegrams of true allegiance to the President of the Republic, Mustapha Kemal Pasha, the bowing and scraping, the cadging for the authorities, the loud advertising of the devotion to the "national" interests, banquets in honour of various Pashas, all these means were widely applied in the practice of the police agent, Shakir Rassim. "Ghazi" Mustapha Kemal Pasha, in reply to the expression of "true allegiance" on the part of the Birlik, himself promised to support the drafting of a law on trade unions and strikes. But this law has not seen daylight as yet.

The Birlik was not able to embrace all the organised Constantinople workers. Those remaining outside the influence of the Birlik were firstly the railwaymen, secondly the printing workers who were even in opposition to the Birlik. The Communists enjoyed great influence among the Constantinople compositors. In exactly the same way, the port workers also refused to adhere to the Birlik.

The Birlik soon lost all authority in the eyes of the workers. This can be seen, if only from the fact that by April, 1924, it had only 7,000 members whereas at the commencement it numbered 19,000 workers in Constantinople alone. The servile tactics of the Birlik, its cringing before the authorities, had the effect of turning the workers away. They had grown up sufficiently to understand that the secret



police and the bourgeois Government are not hopeful defenders of the interests of the working class.

It is characteristic that the Government nourished the Birlik only with promises, whereas in reality it did not push forward the question of free coalition a single step. The Government even looks suspiciously on such a patriotic mongrel as the most loyal Birlik. The latter soon liquidated itself.\*

### The Strike Wave.

In the summer of 1923, as we have already pointed out, the working class life of Turkey was marked by serious events. In nearly all the large working class centres of the country a strike wave took place. This wave covered a tremendous area, having a number of strikers to the extent of 32,000, unprecedented for the Turkish Labour movement. On the whole, these strikes were of clearly offensive nature. Side by side with economic demands, a number of political demands were put forward such as the right of coalition, social legislation, etc. Wherever the strike was led by Communists (Constantinople printers, the Orient Railway, etc.), the demand for the closest contact with the U.S.S.R. was also put forward.

Fifty per cent. of all the strikes ended in victory for the workers. Strikes took place in the following enterprises:

Enterprise	No. of strikers	No. of days
Bomonti Brewery, Constantinople ...	300	8
Printers' strike ... ..	100	8
Orient Railway ... ..	1,400	8
Aidin Railway ... ..	1,600	10
Partial strike of Zonguldak miners	10,000	3
General strike of Zonguldak miners from 25th July to 6th August ... ..	12,000	12
Dockers' Strike in Constantinople ...	5,000	7
Strike of Agricultural workers in the suburbs ... ..	130	2

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\* One may also recall the revolutionary trade union organisation "The International Union of Toilers of Turkey," which even had its own newspaper. But this organisation embraced only the working class elements of non-Turkish origin and could not enjoy any influence among the Turkish workers. This organisation existed three years.

These strikes marked a turning point in the history of the Turkish Labour movement. No matter how much the Government tried to put a noose around the working class, and to take the Labour movement under its guardianship, it was nevertheless powerless to stop the development of the strike movement, which at first affected several tens of thousands of workers.

In the summer of 1924 two strikes took place, one amongst the postal and telegraph employees and another among the tramway workers. The latter even had a fight with the gendarmerie, as a result of which some of the strikers were injured and 27 were arrested. This strike bore witness to the fact that the Constantinople workers had severed themselves from the "national" authorities, against whom they entered into opposition. The Constantinople workers became convinced in practice that the State "national" power is the power of the bourgeoisie, who will not stop at shooting the proletariat and acts only in the interests of the Turkish bourgeoisie and foreign capital.

In October, 1924, a strike broke out on the Orient railway (Constantinople-Andrianople). The reason for this strike was the decision of the workers to divide up among themselves the money in the Mutual Aid funds ("Passiret"). The railway company (belonging to a French firm) intervened in this affair and discharged two of the most active workers. The workers struck, demanding that the dismissed men be taken on again. The administration of the Orient Railway, as far back as 1922, had unceremoniously disposed of the Mutual Aid funds, into which it also paid a certain share. The authorities intervened in the strike, which was liquidated by force.

During the whole of 1924 strikes frequently broke out, first in one district, then in another, and in these cases the authorities always took the side of the owners (in most cases, foreigners). For instance we all know about the strike of October, 1924, at the large mills in Constantinople and that of the textile factories (governmental), where the working women also joined in the strike. A strike that is interesting to note is the one that broke out in August, 1925, among the sailors of the society "Shirket and Hairié" (Steamship ferry service). This company is in Turkish hands and rakes in tremendous profits. But the seamen receive miserable wages.

Needless to say, the police intervened in favour of the shareholders and arrested the most active strikers. Several

scores of striking seamen were sacked and replaced by strike-breakers.

In connection with this strike, which was broken up with the aid of the police, the "Djumkhuriyet" ("Republic") a Kemalist newspaper appearing in Constantinople, made the following remarks about the labour question in Turkey in its leading article of August 21 :

"A section of the 'Shirket' workers tried to organise a strike, but this attempt failed. . . The Turkish worker does not command the same qualities and the same material resources as do the European workers. The working class of Turkey is still in its infancy and the labour organisations are committing an error when they urge their members to contemplate strikes . . . It is only malicious elements who incite the naive Turkish workers on the dangerous path of the class struggle. In Turkey big capitalists do not exist. Our economic life is still inadequately developed and, therefore, there is no room for a labour problem. With us, the owners, i.e., the people of initiative, are not to be distinguished very much from the workers in the sense of their material conditions of existence (!). In spite of this we have to record the fact of extreme excitability and discontent among our workers, which excitement has a tendency to increase the antagonism between the workers and the owners. We must not neglect this excited mood of the workers. This state may become the source of a threat to our national and economic development. It is necessary to take urgent measures to avert this threat . . . Organs must be formed which will lead the working class, civilise them and perfect them."

The sense of this tirade to put it briefly means : "Let the consuls take courage!" and let those who keep in power repress the Turkish working class, holding them under their guardianship. In other words, Zubatov is alive on the shores of the Bosphorus!\*

The entire Turkish press took up arms against the strikers, who had dared to tamper with the pockets of the "poor" Turkish shipping owners. The national Turkish bourgeoisie gave vent to its wrath over the working class and set going the whole machinery of the entire State apparatus.

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\* Zubatov was a Tsarist agent provocateur who organised "loyal" trade unions.—rans.

The working class of republican Turkey is deprived of elementary political rights. The Turkish worker does not know what the eight-hour working day is. A working day of 14-15 hours is the usual thing in Turkey. The workers are forbidden to organise in modern trade unions. They are forbidden to strike, they are not allowed to form organisations which could provide for them in case of illness, old age or accident. Women's and children's labour is exploited in the most shameless manner. The bourgeois State, which has emerged from the national bourgeois revolution, doubly protects the interests of its own class and at the same time endeavours to squeeze the proletariat in the vice of police guardianship.

### **The Confederation of Labour "Teali."**

In the autumn of 1924, the Turkish Communists succeeded in cementing together a few of the Constantinople unions and forming a new Confederation of Labour, "Teali," in place of the Birlik which had been liquidated. The Communists have a leading nucleus in the central organs of some of the unions and carry on organisational work therein, supported by their own fraction into which sympathising workers were drawn.

At the head of the Teali—Trade Union Council—there was a presidium composed almost of Communists, with the exception of the President, a Kemalist. This was the same Refik Ismail Bey who figured in the Presidium of the Birlik. This President maintained permanent relations with the Government, although he was at times compelled to carry out the instructions of the Communist fraction.

The Teali existed up to May of the present year (1925) and was closed down by the Government after the arrest of the Communist leaders, 15 in all, including both intellectuals and workers.

On May 1st, 1925, the Constantinople Communists issued a pamphlet devoted to the proletarian holiday.

The Turkish Communists developed extensive work throughout the whole of last year right up to the recent arrests. The theoretical journal "Aidynlik" began to appear more frequently, and a paper "Hammer and Sickle" (Orak-Tchekitch) was published to which scores of worker corres-

pondents from Thrace and Anatolia contributed. Further about 15 various pamphlets were published on the questions of Leninism, Marxism, the Labour movement, etc.

The Government became frightened about the increasing influence of the Communists among the Turkish workers, and decided to isolate the Communists from the workers. It arrested several responsible Party workers who were sent to Angora and handed over to the "Court of Independence." The court sentenced them to a total of 159 years penal servitude. Only four comrades succeeded in slipping out of the hands of bourgeois justice. Thirteen comrades remained in the clutches of the Angora jailers. The Government closed down "Aidynlik," "Orak-Tchekitch" and "Yoldash" ("Comrade"), which appeared in Broussa; the Executive Committee of the Teali was dissolved and a reign of violence and arbitrariness was established in the country.

During the recent times the Government, owing to the strike movement of the last few months—in particular the strike which broke out in the shipping company "Shirket and Hairié"—decided to take the Labour movement completely into its own hands. It is understood that if the workers were to be left in a scattered and isolated state, the movement might acquire very dangerous forms. The Government of Ismet Pasha deemed it necessary to give the workers some appearance of an organisation "pursuing exclusively economic aims, having nothing in common with politics" as the Constantinople paper "Djumkhuriyet" put it. The Government thereby hoped to avert the discontent of the workers and to divert their attention from political questions.

On August of the present year, with the permission of the police, a meeting was held in Constantinople of the "Union of Workers' Mutual Aid of Stamboul." In place of the old Executive Committee of the "Teali" a new Executive Committee was elected, in which the well-known secretary of the Kemalist organisation in Constantinople, Dr. Refik Ismail Bey was "unanimously" appointed president. At this meeting it was decided to issue a statement in which it would be declared that **"The workers are by no means interested in political questions."** **"This was not their affair."** said the statement.

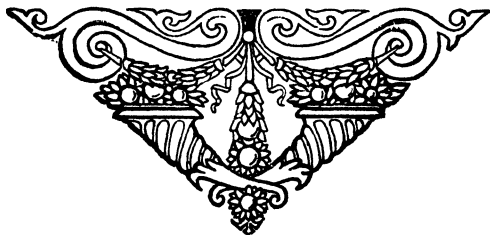
This is not the first time the Kemalist Government has tried its hand at suppressing the Labour movement. It has

driven the Communists underground, deprived the Labour movement of its leaders, shut down its newspapers and once more tried to throw dust in the eyes of the workers.

Vain endeavours! The progress of capitalism, which has been so energetically promoted by the Kemalist Government, will mercilessly destroy all the barbed wire fences separating the workers from "politics," will knock down all the houses of cards, set up by the official guardians of the secret police. The workers will all the same become mixed up in "politics"; for if you push nature out by the door it will come in through the window! The Labour movement of Turkey will wrench itself out of the clutches of the Kemalist Zubatovs and will enter the path of class development. The Kemalists will not be able to hold back the wheel of history, will not be able to avert the inevitable.

The process of industrialisation of Turkey formed an adequately extensive task for developing a mass Labour movement which will be all the more revolutionary, the tighter the Kemalist guardians try to press the class Labour movement within their vice.

P. KITAIGORODSKY.



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