

# THE COMMUNIST REVIEW

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# THE COMMUNIST REVIEW

*Editor: THOS. BELL*

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## THE EDITORIAL VIEW

**W**HILE our statesmen and diplomats chatter in the language of peace, and safe labour leaders extol the virtues of the League of Nations, Europe rattles along the road to ruin. The foul Treaty of Versailles is rapidly overtaking the deadly work for which it was framed.

To-day Germany stands before the nations of the world, not only its military and naval strength broken, but its once powerful industrial machine rapidly becoming disorganised and impaired to the point of collapse. With the debacle of the mark and the consequent precarious state of public finances it would be passing strange indeed if production did not decline, bringing insecurity, starvation and misery for the masses of the people.

The fall of the Cuno Government, with its policy of passive resistance, and the advent of the Grand Coalition, i.e., the collaboration of the Social-Democrats with Stinnes, has brought to the front a new problem for capitalist Europe. Imperialist rivalry, in its mad quest for territory and plunder, can no longer afford to ignore the cries of the peoples for peace and tranquillity. It is faced to-day with open and violent class warfare, since the masses see no other way out. Indeed, that is why the Social-Democrats are brought to the front again.

But Germany is not alone in being reduced to such desperate straits. The whole of Continental Europe is hanging together in the vain hope that a way out of the present morass can be found and in some mysterious way political stability secured. At present no solution seems possible short of a cut across lots and a plunge forward into active social revolution.

It will be as well to turn for the moment from the economics of the situation and see what political lessons are to be learned from the acknowledged bankruptcy of our capitalist statesmen to deal with the problem.

Since 1919 the Communist International has in season and out of season warned the working class against the danger of tinkering with imperialism. At its first congress it denounced the Treaty of Versailles as a robbers' peace and called upon the workers in all the world to end the political rule of the capitalists in their respective countries.

Opposed to the pacifist appeals of the politicians and statesmen—in the camp of the capitalist and in the camp of the worker alike—it urged forward and taught new methods of struggle. It proclaimed, for instance, the historic necessity of violence as a means of ending violence. Already the proletariat of Russia had led the way, and who to-day, in the face of the position in Germany, will say they were mistaken?

At first the Communist call to action and the sifting of the reformist and traitorous elements in the workers' ranks led to an outburst of bitterness and hatred, particularly amongst the Social-Democrats, which still obtains in the camp of the reform opportunists everywhere. Gradually, however, as the hopes of the masses for peace and security fade away and they become disillusioned, the ignorance and prejudice against the Communists disappears. More and more large sections of the workers are turning to the Communist International for a way out of the capitalist wilderness. This was particularly evident during the recent upheaval in Germany, when thousands of workers openly left the camp of the Social-Democrats and came over to the Communist Party. That accession to the ranks of the Communists is not yet finished.

In France, in Czecho-Slovakia, in Bulgaria and the Balkan States, the Communists have considerably strengthened their influence amongst the workers. Even in Great Britain the illuminating article by Comrade Pollitt on another page of this issue on the Plymouth Congress of the Trade Unions shows the growing Communist opposition no longer a subject for laughter or ridicule. It has now an acknowledged influence. The problem of the future is how best to strengthen and organise it.

It is futile and meaningless merely to indulge in a denunciation of the crimes of the capitalist politicians and their Labour henchmen as a kind of exercise in declamation. We Communists know who are the real criminals. We also know that the mass of the workers are awakening from their stupor and coming to realise who are their real enemies. It is not enough to indulge in denunciation. Side by side with our declamation against the exploiters we must oppose to the politics of the capitalist statesmen and diplomats, as well as to the purely reformist plans of the Labourists, concrete and understandable proposals that will show the masses a way out.

An example of what we mean is the sound and sensible proposal appearing in this issue from Comrade Trotsky on a plea for **THE UNITED STATES OF EUROPE**, broadcasted for international discussion.

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With the main thesis of Comrade Trotsky we are in complete agreement. In our party manifesto on the Ruhr situation our party has declared for a United States of Europe. For us the idea goes straight to the heart of the problems facing the masses of Europe to-day. We also realise that starvation and misery is not only the lot of the industrial working class. The poorer and middle class peasantry in which Europe abounds, as well as the intellectual and professional elements in the ranks of the petty bourgeoisie, are equally drawn into the vortex. All these elements are being crushed by big industry and high finance.

Added to the deadweight and burden of reparations imposed upon the German masses, the customs barriers and artificial frontiers erected by the command of the Allied militarists render free intercourse with the peoples impossible, with the result that the economy of Central Europe is demoralised. Recognising the economic unity in aims of the proletariat the problem is: How are these customs' barriers and frontiers to be removed? How can a free exchange be established between the urban and agricultural areas? With Trotsky we say, only by the broad masses of the people deciding forcibly to throw down all such barriers as divide them at present and by the institution of Governments whose primary tasks will consist of salving the real values material for the saving of Europe from complete chaos.

But while agreeing with the main tenets of Trotsky's thesis, we think he is underestimating the possibilities of a Labour Government in this country. If we consider the industrial depression in the basic industries of Great Britain, the number of firms with a "reputation" who are going into liquidation, the consequent increasing army of unemployed and the strain upon the national finances, there is every justification for thinking that the drift in political thinking amongst the proletarian masses is bound to go towards a Labour Government. As the crisis develops in Germany this drift is certain to be quickened.

What is in Comrade Trotsky's favour is the lack of real class character in our Labour Party and industrial leadership. Their fear of the very strength of the workers' forces is now quite patent. But we think they are not going to be asked to deliberate. Four million Labour votes, over two millions unemployed with the

domestic misery attending such, and firms with a "reputation" going into liquidation, speak more eloquently than words.

Already these objective conditions are having their influence upon the Labour Party. Speaking at Newcastle, Mr. Arthur Henderson openly declared for the withdrawal of all Allied troops from the occupied areas, the cancellation of Allied indebtedness, and the "open door," i.e., the removal of all barriers to the free intercourse of the peoples. On this latter point, Henderson comes near accepting the proposition that Europe is not a geographical but an economic unit. What is happening to Henderson is a sign of the drift of political opinion in the ranks of the Labour Party.

Certainly, if Europe overthrows its imperialist exploiters, the conditions in Great Britain will become responsive in spite of our constitutional Labour leaders.

It remains for the Communists and the oppositional elements inside the Labour Party and the Trade Unions to force MacDonal, Henderson, etc., to declare for an exclusively Labour Government in Great Britain, prepared to act in common with the Governments in Federated Europe, directed by the workers and peasants, as a first step to salve Europe from complete ruin and anarchy.



# THE UNITED STATES OF EUROPE

(Is the Time Ripe for such a Slogan?)

By Leon Trotsky.

*The following article has been written by Comrade Trotsky for discussion amongst the Parties of the Communist International. We gladly reproduce it here and invite opinions from our readers.*

EDITOR.

**I** THINK that in conjunction with the slogan "A Government of Workers and Peasants," the time is appropriate for issuing the slogan "The United States of Europe." Only by uniting these two slogans shall we get a definite, systematic and progressive response to the most urgent problems of European development.

The last imperialist war was essentially a European war. The incidental participation of America and Japan did not alter its character. Having secured what she required, America withdrew her hand from the flames and returned home.

The motive power of the war consisted in the fact that the capitalist forces of production had outgrown the boundaries of the European national States. Germany had set herself the task of "organising" Europe, i.e., of uniting economically the European continent under her own control, in order then seriously to set about contending with Britain for world power. The aim of France was to break up Germany. The small population of France, her predominant agricultural character, and her economic conservatism, make it impossible for the French bourgeoisie even to consider the problem of organising Europe, which, indeed, proved to be beyond the powers of German capital, backed as it was by the military machine of the Hohenzollerns. Victorious France is now maintaining her mastery only by Balkanising Europe. Great Britain is inciting and protecting the French policy of dismembering and exhausting Europe, all the time concealing her work under her traditional mask of hypocrisy. As a result, our unfortunate continent is disintegrated and dismembered, exhausted, disorganised and bankrupt—transformed into a madhouse. The invasion of the Ruhr is a piece of violent insanity accompanied by far-sighted calculation (the final disruption of Germany)—a combination which is not unfamiliar to the psychiatrist.

Behind the war lay the need of the forces of production for a wider field of development, unhampered by Customs barriers. Similarly, in the occupation of the Ruhr so fatal to Europe and to mankind, we find a distorted expression of the need for uniting the coal of the Ruhr with the iron of Lorraine. Europe cannot develop economically within the State Customs frontiers created at Versailles. She is compelled either to remove these frontiers, or to face the prospect of complete economic decay. But the methods adopted by the ruling bourgeoisie to overcome the frontiers it itself created, are only increasing the existing chaos and accelerating the process of ruin.

### ECONOMIC UNITY OF EUROPE.

To the toiling masses of Europe it is becoming ever clearer that the bourgeoisie is incapable of solving the basic problems of European restoration. The slogan "A Workers' and Peasants' Government" is designed to meet the attempts of the workers to find an issue by their own efforts. It has now become necessary to indicate this issue more concretely, namely, to assert that only in the closest economic co-operation of the peoples of Europe lies the path to the salvation of our continent from economic destruction and enslavement to American capitalism.

America is standing aloof from Europe, patiently waiting until her economic agony has reached such a pitch that it will be easy to step in and buy up Europe—as Austria was bought up—for a mere song. But France cannot stand aloof from Germany, nor can Germany stand aloof from France. Therein lies the crux, and therein lies the solution, of the European problem. Everything else is incidental. We asserted long before the imperialist war that the Balkan States are incapable of existing and of developing except within a federation. The same is true of the various fragments of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and of the Western portions of Tsarist Russia now living outside the Soviet Union. The Appenines, the Pyrenees and Scandinavia are limbs of the European body stretched out towards the seas. They are incapable of an independent existence. The European continent in the present state of development of its productive forces is an economic unit—not a close-locked unit, of course, but one possessing profound internal ties—as was proved in the terrible catastrophe of the world war, and again revealed in the mad adventure of the Ruhr occupation. Europe is not a geographical term; it is an economic term, something incomparably more concrete—especially in the present, post-war conditions—than the world market. Just as federation was long ago recognised as essential for the Balkan Peninsula, so now the time has arrived for stating definitely and clearly that federation is essential for Balkanised Europe.

There remain to be considered the question of the Soviet Union, on the one hand, and of Great Britain, on the other. It is obvious that the Soviet Union will not be opposed either to the federative union of Europe, nor to its own adhesion to such a federation. Thereby, too, a bridge will be created between Europe and Asia.

### A TRANSITIONAL SLOGAN.

The question of Great Britain is much more uncertain; it depends on the pace at which her revolutionary development proceeds. Should the "Government of Workers and Peasants" triumph on the European mainland before British imperialism is overthrown—which is extremely probable—then the European Federation of Workers and Peasants will of necessity be directed against British capital. And, of course, the moment the latter is overthrown the British Isles will enter as a desirable member into the European Federation.

It might be asked: why a European Federation and not a World Federation? Of course, as the world develops economically and politically, it will tend to become a world economic unit, and to become more and more centralised, depending upon the level of technical development reached. But we are now concerned not with the future Socialist economy of the world, but with finding a way out of the present European impasse. We have to lay a solution before the gulled and ruined workers and peasants of Europe, quite independently of how the revolution develops in America, Australia, Asia, or Africa. Looked at from this point of view, the slogan "The United States of Europe" has its place in the same historical plan with the slogan, "A Workers' and Peasants' Government"; it is a transitional slogan, indicating a way out, a prospect of salvation, and furnishing at the same time a revolutionary impulse for the toiling masses.

### NO WAITING ON AMERICA.

It would be a mistake to measure the whole of the world revolution with the same footrule. America came out of the war not enfeebled, but strengthened. The internal stability of the American bourgeoisie is still very considerable. It is reducing its dependence upon the European market to a minimum. The revolution in America—considered apart from Europe—may thus be a matter of decades. Does that mean that the European revolution must proceed step by step with the American revolution? Certainly not. If backward Russia did not, and could not, await the revolution in Europe, all the more Europe will not, and must not, await the revolution in America. Workers' and Peasants' Europe, blockaded by capitalist America (and at first, perhaps, by Great Britain) will be

able to maintain herself and develop as a closely consolidated military and economic union.

It must not be overlooked that the very danger arising from the United States of America (which is assisting the destruction of Europe and is ready to step in subsequently as its master) furnishes a very substantial bond for uniting the mutually destructive peoples of Europe into a "European United States of Workers and Peasants." This orientation, of course, proceeds from the difference in the objective situations in the European countries and in the mighty Transatlantic Republic, and is not directed against the international solidarity of the proletariat, nor against the interests of the revolution in America. On the contrary, one of the obstacles to the development of the revolution throughout the world lies in the vain European confidence in the American uncle (Wilsonism, the charitable feeding of the worst famine districts of Europe, American "loans," etc., etc.). The sooner the masses of the nations of Europe recover the confidence in their own powers which was destroyed by the war, and the more closely they are rallied around the slogan of a "Union of the Workers' and Peasants' Republics of Europe," the more rapidly will the revolution develop on both sides of the Atlantic. For just as the triumph of the proletariat in Russia furnished a mighty impulse to the development of the Communist parties of Europe, so, and even to an incomparably greater degree, will the triumph of the revolution in Europe furnish an impulse to the revolution in America and throughout the whole world. Although, when we abstract ourselves from Europe, we are obliged to peer into the mists of years to perceive the American revolution, yet we may safely assert that by the natural sequence of historical events the triumphant revolution in Europe will serve in a very few years to shatter the power of the American bourgeoisie.

#### **AWAY WITH THE CUSTOMS BARRIERS.**

Not merely the question of the Ruhr, i.e., of European fuel and iron, but also the question of reparations is envisaged in the scheme of "The United States of Europe." The question of reparations is purely a European question, and can be solved in the near future only by European means. The Europe of Workers and Peasants will have its reparations budget—as it will have its war budget—as long as it is menaced by dangers from without. This budget will be based upon a graduated income tax, upon levies on capital, upon the confiscation of wealth plundered during wartime, etc. Its incidence will be regulated by the appropriate bodies of the European Federation of Workers and Peasants.

We shall not here indulge in prophecies as to the speed at which the union of the European republics will proceed, in what

economic and constitutional forms it will express itself, and what degree of centralisation will be obtained in the first period of the workers' and peasants' régime. All these considerations we may safely leave to the future, remembering the experience already gained by the Soviet Union constructed on the soil of the former Tsarist Russia. What is perfectly obvious is that the Customs barriers must be thrown down. The peoples of Europe must regard Europe as a field for a united, and increasingly schematic, economic life.

### FEDERATE TO FIGHT.

It might be argued that we are in reality speaking of a European Socialist Federation as part of World Federation, and that such a régime can be brought about only by the dictatorship of the proletariat. We will not stop to answer this argument, since it was refuted by the international analysis made during the consideration of the question of a "Workers' Government." "The United States of Europe" is a slogan in every respect corresponding with the slogan, "A Workers' (or Workers' and Peasants') Government." Is the realisation of a "Workers' Government" possible without the dictatorship of the proletariat? Only a conditional reply can be given to this question. In any case, we regard the "Workers' Government" as a stage towards the dictatorship of the proletariat. Therein lies the great value of the slogan. But the slogan, "The United States of Europe," has an exactly similar and parallel significance. Without this supplementary slogan and fundamental problems of Europe must remain in suspense.

But will not this slogan play into the hands of the pacifists? I do not believe that there exist such "lefts" nowadays as would consider this danger sufficient grounds for rejecting the slogan. We are living in 1923 and have learnt a little from the past. There are the same reasons, or absence of reasons, for fearing a pacifist interpretation of "The United States of Europe" as there are for fearing a democratic-S.R. interpretation of the slogan, "A Workers' and Peasants' Government." Of course, if we advance "The United States of Europe" as an independent programme, as a panacea for achieving pacification and reconstruction, and isolated from the slogans "A Workers' Government," the "United Front," and the "Class Struggle," we shall certainly end in democratised Wilsonism, i.e., in Kautskyism, or something baser (if there is anything baser than Kautskyism). But, I repeat, we live in the year 1923 and have learned a little from the past. The Communist International is now a reality, and it will not be Kautsky who will initiate and control the struggles associated with our slogans. Our method of posing the problem is in direct contrast to the Kautsky method. Pacifism is an academic programme, the object of which is to avoid

the necessity of revolutionary action. Our formulation is an impulse to fight.

### SAVE EUROPE.

To the workers of Germany, not the Communists (it is not necessary to convince them), but to the workers in general, and in the first place to the social-democratic workers, who fear the economic consequences of a fight for a Workers' Government; to the workers of France, whose minds are still obsessed by the questions of reparations and the State debts; to the workers of Germany, France and of all Europe, who fear that the establishment of the workers' régime will lead to the isolation and economic ruin of their countries, we will say: Europe, even if temporarily isolated (and with such a powerful bridge to the East as the Soviet Union she will not be easily isolated), will be able not only to maintain herself, but to consolidate and build herself up, once she has broken down the Customs barriers, and has united herself economically to the inexhaustible natural riches of Russia. "The United States of Europe—a purely revolutionary perspective—is the next stage in our general revolutionary perspective. It arises from the profound differences in the situations of Europe and America. Whoever overlooks these differences, which are of such vital significance at the present time, will, willy-nilly, reduce a true revolutionary perspective to a mere historical abstraction. Naturally, the Workers' and Peasants' Federation will not stop in its European phase. As we have said, by our Soviet Union an outlet has been obtained into Asia, and from Asia into Europe. We are, therefore, here envisaging only a stage, but a stage of great historical importance, through which we must first pass.



# OURSELVES AND THE LABOUR PARTY

**Q**UITE recently an article signed by Comrade Zinoviev appeared in "L'Humanité" entitled "The Hegemony of the Proletariat." Reading the same, one is struck with the valuable lessons and analogies it carries for our Communist Movement in Great Britain, and its peculiar applicability to the developments now going on within the British Labour Party. In addition, this remarkable article throws a brilliant flashlight upon a period of history within the revolutionary movement of Russia in which the two central characters are the old Marxist theoretician, Plechanoff, and our inimitable Communist Leader, Lenin. One wishes that some competent revolutionary writer could place before the English-speaking workers this instructive period in revolutionary polemics; it would prove a salutary corrective to reformist and leftist alike.

In these words, "The Hegemony of the Proletariat," says Zinoviev, "we have the essence of Bolshevism, the exponents being Plechanoff and Lenin." We need not trouble about the formula at this stage; we will come to that later. At present we must lead up to the formula by way of the ideological conceptions of these great Party leaders.

The idea that the working class ought to be, should be, or will be, the driving force in the Proletarian Revolution, has never been accepted by our reformists. Overweighted by bourgeois education and training, our democratic reformists have tried to appear to rise above all class bias and speak for the bourgeois abstraction called the "Community"—which "Community," it should be noted, embraces the classes.

As far back as 1889 Plechanoff had penetrated the sophistry of the capitalist democracy and caught the central idea of the hegemony of the proletariat. Already the revolutionary struggle of the period had revealed to him the role which the working class was destined to play in the Social Revolution. But in 1905 his experience was sealed in the glorious and heroic attempts to break the Czarism. Henceforth his vision is clearer. For him the interest of the revolution is the Supreme Law; "Parliamentarism and Universal Suffrage"—"all depends on circumstances."

**LENIN'S ADVICE.**

Adverting to Lenin, we find that as far back as 1894 he wrote a remarkable article on the subject and formulated for the first time with clearness and directness, the place of the working class in the hegemony of the proletariat struggling for the revolution in Russia. Since that time, says Zinoviev, the history of Bolshevism is nothing but a struggle to realise the import of this idea. And what is the kernel of this idea of the "Hegemony of the Proletariat"? It means the bourgeoisie is the class which rules, not merely in the factories and workshops, but everywhere and always. The working class represents all the exploited; i.e., also the non-possessing or landless peasants. The working class must therefore take the lead in all the battles of all the exploited, or, in other words, exercise its hegemony in the liberating struggle.

The Narodniki (the peasant Socialist Party), for example, had said, "The man of the future is the moujik." The Social Democrats had said, "The man of the future is the worker." To both these, Lenin and the Bolsheviks replied, "The man of the future is the worker who will guide the peasants." We here see that Bolshevism declares for the working class as the dynamic force in the struggle of all the exploited.

A clear understanding of this special role of the working class as the advanced guard in the struggle of all the exploited against the capitalist class is very significant for us in Great Britain. It is the crux of the problems confronting the Labour Party to-day. The Mensheviks in Russia looked upon the working class as mere tools by means of which Czardom was to be pulled down. The special task of the working class was to mount the barricades and shed its blood to dethrone Nicholas. Once that was accomplished the future power and authority of Government was to be handed over to and wielded by the Liberal bourgeoisie. For, as they thought, the revolution is the bourgeoisie.

In a similar way we have our Mensheviks in Great Britain—the Webbs, the MacDonalds, etc. These middle-class gentlemen think the sole task of the Trade Unions and the labouring class generally is merely to aid the Labour Party (this is, themselves) in capturing the offices of State. As to thoughts of a sudden transformation, perish the idea! What can the man in overalls and clogs want with high offices of State? What does or can he want to know of Foreign Policy or problems of Empire? These things are the exclusive prerogative of a specially trained class only to be found amongst the graduates and dons of the University, journalists, or trained statesmen—in a word, the petit middle-class elements with culture.

Study the speeches or writings of our middle-class leaders in the Labour Party, and what do we find? In practice they are one and all merely thinking of a Labour Party Government with the Capitalist sitting in the minority. It is here we approach one of the vital problems before the revolutionary and militant movements in Great Britain. Is the Labour Party to be allowed to continue under the fetish of Parliamentaryism with its allegiance to the standard of capitalist democracy? If not, then how are we to secure or infuse into it that definite working-class direction in Labour Party policy which will counteract the influence of our Mensheviks? This is a question of vital interest and concern to Labourists and Communists alike. To this question we must try to find an answer while there is yet time.

### LABOUR GOVERNMENT AND CAPITALIST FEARS.

The increasing alarm in capitalist circles at the growing possibilities of a Labour Government is becoming more and more manifest. Not a day passes but press, politician and captains of industry make reference to this (for them) calamity that is creeping over present-day society. They predict the end of all things should the Labour Party come to power. And, as we think, for very good reasons. It is customary on the part of many who profess Marxism to laugh at such bourgeois fears. What possible reason, it is asked, is there for apprehension in capitalist circles? And in face of the incompetency, the muddling and even open treachery of a number of Labour Leaders, there is certainly much reason for doubting. It is true there is often little to distinguish between, say, a speech by Ramsay MacDonald and Baldwin, or Sidney Webb and Sir John Simon. And if social changes depended upon the speeches of our Labourists, the ruling class could very well go to sleep, secure in the possession of their gains and privileges. But the great social changes imminent are neither likely to consult nor consider the desires of bourgeois or Labourist. Social changes are inherent in the very grain of our modern industrial system. Their class character may not always be apparent. They may be arrested for a time; they cannot be turned back.

Because of this we, who are working for the release of the forces making for social revolution, or for the removal of those obstacles which stand in the way of social change, cannot afford to under-estimate this alarm in the bourgeois camp. It would be a fatal mistake, for example, to attribute the speeches of Churchill or Lloyd George (who never fail to ring the alarm bell) to mere hysteria or demagogy. There is always a method in the madness of these apparent political harlequinades. On the other hand, encouragement in the belief that the Labour Party is either not fit to

government, or, if allowed to do so, would prove more bourgeois than the capitalists themselves, is to renounce the very fundamental basis of our working-class movement, namely, the struggle for power. Such an attitude is tantamount to supporting reaction. And we must frankly say it is a disease in some quarters of our Party. It finds its reflex especially in the doubts and fears as to the correctness of the tactic of the United Front, with special reference to the criticisms of the Labour Party.

But a recognition of political realities does not mean that all criticism of the Labour Leaders or Labour Party Policy should cease, far from it; we must never forget the experience of Kerensky in Russia, Scheidemann and Noske in Germany and Mussolini in Italy. In this country we have had our own experience, with Henderson, Barnes and Co. The memories of the Clyde deportation, the big Engineer strikes during the War, and the murder of Connolly, can never be wiped out.

It is folly to think the C.P. can ever give up its right to criticise the policy of the Labour Party or the personal conduct of the Labour Leaders in relation to fundamental working-class interest. To do that would be to yield up the political principles on which our Party is based, and that is unthinkable.

But unrelated reiteration and repetition is not criticism, and in this respect we must say we have made mistakes in the past. We must know how to estimate the political tendencies and forces that surround us, and how to throw our weight and influence on such of those movements as are making for the disintegration of capitalist power. When we can do that we shall be on the fair way to becoming a real mass party. At the moment we must acknowledge that this is something which the Party has yet to learn.

Putting aside for the moment all argument about what a Labour Government might or might not, will or will not do, we are forced to recognise that from the very nature of things, no capitalist can view with equanimity the possible advent of the Labour Party to power. We need only consider, for example, the basis of credit and the element of risk. The apologist of capitalism never tires of preaching to the working class the holy doctrine of "risks" in business, and seeks to justify possession of their gains on this element of gamble. But individual speculation in business is one thing, risk in political control is another. Cases of bankruptcy here and there are not a danger. It is otherwise with the menace of class expropriation. The fear of the ruling class is not so much a fear of what the advent of the Labour Party to power is likely to do, as the intuitive feeling that forces are sure to be released which may not be controlled within the limits of the present capitalist state.

This fear is the basis of the whole bourgeois campaign. The call to all whose interests are bound up with the capitalist state to rally to its defence, has only one meaning. It is a bourgeois campaign of preparedness against the common struggle for power. The workers' reply to this campaign of preparedness is a simple one. We must secure the early and sweeping return of the Labour Party to power.

### COMMUNISTS AND A CLASS PARTY.

Reading the political barometer aright, the capitalist class correctly senses the growth of political restlessness in the masses. That spirit of patience, negotiation and compromise, so characteristic of the working class of this country and on which our ruling class has so long relied, is becoming exhausted. In recent years, indeed, it has been grossly outraged. Despite colossal sacrifices in wages, and with Trade Unions reduced to bankruptcy through prolonged and forced stoppages of work, unemployment has not been solved or even mitigated. This fourth winter of abnormal unemployment sees things going from bad to worse. Only the most confirmed pessimist in the Labour Movement, or dull-witted bourgeois, can believe it possible for the mass of the workers to remain passive and with eyes closed to the real issues before them.

History has no record of a slave class allowing itself to be immolated without a struggle. The bourgeois knows his history. He sees the faith of the masses in present-day institutions being shattered; that is why he is preparing. If this, our reading of the drift in the present political situation is correct, then the future policy and tactics of the Communist Party are clear. We must stimulate and work for the unfolding of all those tendencies within the industrial Labour Movement, as well as the political organisations of the working class, towards the development and unification of a definite class attack upon capitalism. In other words, we must realise a workers' party with a definite class basis.

The importance of emphasising the class character, particularly of the Labour Party, cannot be overlooked. More and more as the Labour Party approaches the threshold of power, we find its middle-class leadership going out of its way to assure the capitalist class that all is well, and that there is no desire to precipitate any class conflict. It will be recalled that the first statement issued by the Labour Party after its successes at the last General Election was to assure all whom it might concern that the party intended to carry out the great traditions of radicalism, i.e., that it hoped to take the place of the decadent Liberal Party.

Only recently in reply to the Edinburgh speech of Baldwin, wherein he accused the Labour Party of seeking to transform society by violence, Ramsay MacDonald hastened to repudiate the suggestion and insisted upon the policy of reformism which is not in any way different from the proposals of progressive capitalism. During the famous Snowden Resolution in the House of Commons, we got the same thing, Socialism by Act of Parliament, with Compensation to all who may be inconvenienced!

The demoralising effect of such a policy, if left to go unchallenged, speaks for itself. It means the lack of a real proletarian fighting spirit such as characterises the organised Labour Movement to-day. Yet, without this definite working class bias and lead is developed, the Labour Party becomes as it is, and will continue to be, a mere stalking horse for the perpetuation of bourgeois power and domination.

### HOW TO GET IT.

To anyone versed in the history of the Russian Revolution, the present attitude of the Labour Party is akin to a policy of Menshevism pure and simple. We see the same elements the Bolshevik Party had to clear out of the road in 1917. For us the lesson should be plain; we must not wait for our October. Our demand that the working class should play a definite and specific role, and that the central one, in the struggles of all the proletariat, is a recognition and translation of the Marxian slogan, "The emancipation of the working class must be the act of the working class itself."

To-day the exploitation of the Industrial working class, especially in Great Britain, allied to the naked robbery of the oppressed peoples in the colonies, is the foundation of capitalism in the British Empire. The British Empire, in fact, rests upon this twin exploitation of the masses at home and in the colonies, and in this we have the basis of the class struggle for the working class throughout the whole of the British Empire. Only the successful prosecution of this class struggle, leading to the complete conquest of political power by the working class at home and the liberation of the subject peoples in the colonies, can end this exploitation. In other words, only the working class can end capitalism and bring about the Socialist Society.

Those who speak in the name of Labour or the working class, and either repudiate by speech or by action the class character of our movement, are leading the working class to defeat. Conversely every tendency to express a clear class opposition to capitalism must be encouraged. In this way, we will stimulate in a positive way,

the power of the working class in the Hegemony of the Proletariat and negate the bourgeois influences of our middle class leaders.

The immediate problem which the Communist Party must face is how best we can fight down those elements of Menshevism which deny the class struggle as the basis of our Labour Movement and how we can give the Labour Party and the Trade Union Movement as a whole a definite class character with the definite class purpose of achieving political control of the State for the workers.

The answer is: stimulate, encourage and strengthen every oppositional tendency within the working class movement against the bourgeois democracy and the bourgeois ideology of the co-operation of the classes. Only the working class fighting for the aims of all the exploited can secure the economic and political freedom of the proletariat. Only the working class can bring about the downfall of capitalism. This is the special role of the working class in the "Hegemony of the Proletariat."

T. BELL.

# Lessons of Plymouth: its challenge to our Party

**I**T is now universally agreed that the Plymouth Trades Congress represents publicly the present demoralised state of the Trade Union movement, and that the Congress marks the parting of the ways. This means for Communists serious considerations as to what is going to be our attitude towards all future Trades Congresses.

The first attempt to work in an organised manner inside the Congress was made at Southport last year. Our tiny Communist fraction then did not do badly at all. No really serious view was taken of the importance of our work, this chiefly because we were so few in number, and because the feeling was ever present in our minds that we could do so little amongst so many other delegates.

At the Plymouth Congress our numbers were slightly increased and there was a greater appreciation of the importance of our work. There was, moreover, a keener desire to participate actively in the work both of the Congress itself and inside the various trade union delegations. But we have to do much better next year; we must make more careful preparations. All members of the party who become delegates, immediately they are known to have been elected, must make the Congress proceedings, its Agenda, etc., their special task and concentrate upon it.

The "pure" revolutionist might shrug his shoulders, and say, "It's all worthless, the Trades Congress doesn't matter." That sounds very plausible until it is examined and then we find, that while the truth may be unpleasant, while it may even be a little discouraging, nevertheless, the truth is, that the delegates who do attend the Congress, and those who do get elected on the General Council of Congress, are the men and women who, whether we like it or not, are in control of the trade unions, the mass organisations of the workers, and have the directing of the movement. We cannot close our eyes to the facts however unpleasant, that such men have got the influence and following amongst the mass of the organised workers. What is more important, we must recognise that they only hold this sway because their power is never effectively challenged in an organised fashion, either inside the trade unions or inside the Trades Congress.

If the present form of Congress were abolished our party would be the first to cry out for a National Conference, and, if we got it, we would seek to mould it to our way of thinking, and try and capture its executive positions. We would seek to get our policies

and our programmes adopted. But if we would try and do this in those circumstances, why not begin to do it when the Congress is already an accepted feature, whether good or bad, of our trade union movement? But this work can only be done when we stop the hair-splitting and theory-chasing tactics; when we stop asking what we shall do when we have captured power, and all the rest of the high-sounding phrases that many of our comrades are too fond of indulging in.

We are just beginning to feel our way; we are just getting a foothold inside the organised working class movement; we are just beginning to force the official leaders to see that we mean business and that we are here to stay. Let our party have no illusions, if we don't realise the all important task of working inside the unions in an organised manner, the leaders of the unions do. Let us make the Plymouth Congress the last of its kind. Its decisions and resolutions form the basis of our immediate work.

#### WANTED—AN OPPOSITION.

We may be certain we shall never make an impression on the movement as a whole by just contenting ourselves with issuing Speakers Notes to our party members who are attending the Congress, or with one or two members making good speeches that even the *Morning Post* admits "are the best speeches of the Congress." Important as this work is, our task is to go deeper. It is so to work inside the unions during the coming months that the character of our work will be clearly stamped on the Agenda of the Congress and reflected in the nature of the resolutions to be discussed. We must ensure that the General Council of the Congress in between the Annual Congresses is compelled by our activity inside the unions, so to work and frame its own line of action, that when they present their Annual Report to the Congress our party members are prepared with reasoned criticisms of its failures and shortcomings. Our job is to show the workers that we can do the business of leading and directing the working class movement better than the people who are now in control of the movement. We are not going to do that by calling for this convention or that convention, by demanding this resolution be adopted or that rejected.

I am convinced, as a result of carefully watching working class conferences, watching the leaders, and watching the majority of the delegates, that our party, small as it is, can within the next three years play a tremendous part inside the working class movement. But this can only be done by hard flogging detail work inside the unions, and that carried out by ourselves and not by the other fellow. Now, can we do it?

It is a statement of fact to say that 75 per cent. of the delegates

don't take any real interest in the proceedings at all. They never trouble to think out points and have no fixed ideas. If we don't know this, believe me the men who are on the General Council do, and they take full advantage of this fact. The Congress is in the hands of the General Council, only because there is no organised body of delegates to challenge them. Let us take a leaf out of their book.

We must become the challenging body. Already the field is clear to us if we care to take it. Of course, if this is too commonplace for some comrades; if it is not prosecuting the class struggle; if it is not fighting for the dictatorship of the proletariat, all well and good, but for goodness sake, then, let us stop reviling this other crowd, let us all retire into our tents, learn "State and Revolution" off by heart, and then recite it to ourselves until the end comes (and the sooner it comes under these circumstances the better). I believe, however, that the party is fast shedding the above attitude, and that it is anxious and desirous of playing a great part inside the movement.

#### HOW THE CONGRESS DOES ITS WORK.

To appreciate the best lines we must go upon, and in order to make the existing position clearer, it is as well to show how the Congress does its business at the present time.

The first business of the Congress is always the adopting of the Annual Report of the General Council, this a hotch-potch thing, chaotic in form, and generally touching on anything and everything, although it has been improved somewhat during the last two years. It is not issued to the delegates until they take their seats at the Congress. When you realise that the report is over 170 pages, it is easy to understand how little the delegates know about what is contained therein. As a result of our fraction raising this question, the Report in future will be issued to the delegates seven days before Congress assembles; this means we have ample time to prepare points for all our people.

The Agenda consists of about 34 pages of resolutions on every conceivable subject, many of which have been on the Agenda for donkey's years. The speakers on each question get ten minutes to move a resolution and the seconders get five minutes. After the first two days of the Congress this is reduced to five and three minutes respectively.

The delegates representing the various trade unions are all supposed to hold special meetings before the assembly of the Congress in order to consider the Agenda, and decide how they are to vote on the resolutions, and for whom they are to vote into the various executive positions and foreign delegations in connection with the work of the Congress.

## PREPARING FOR LEADERSHIP.

Our tasks therefore appear to me to be as follows: First, every member inside a trade union must pay particular attention to the date of nominations for delegates to the Congress to represent that particular union. The Executive Committee will then decide which member out of all those nominated has the best chance of success, and who is also the most capable comrade to carry out the work required at the Congress. Secondly, all nuclei working inside this union must see that their branches endorse suitable resolutions for the Congress Agenda. Each union is allowed three resolutions, which must be endorsed by the executive of each union, and placed on the preliminary Agenda in the name of the union, **12 weeks before Congress assembles**. It will be the duty of the Central Committee of the party to draft such resolutions, but each member should begin now to draft resolutions and send them in to the Centre, so that the Industrial Committee can consider them and report to the Central Committee.

The resolutions which we must aim at getting on the Agenda must be simply worded and practical resolutions, which would afford opportunities for initiating debates that would focus the attention of the Congress on the immediate issues confronting the workers and the best way of facing them. Where possible resolutions should be got down in the name of two or three unions, on such subjects as:

Increased power for the General Council.

An immediate campaign for the six-hour day.

Affiliation of the Unemployed Organisation to the Trades Congress.

Foreign policy.

United resistance to wage reductions.

Direct rank and file representation on the General Council.

Proposals such as these would tend to give the Congress an air of reality.

Thirdly, every delegate working inside his own trade delegation tries to win the support of his union for the particular resolutions that the party fraction are supporting; and, more important still, tries to get his delegation to vote for the people agreed upon by the party fraction for the various offices in connection with the Congress. This is most important. The question of whom to vote for on the General Council, etc., is left in too many cases to the various general secretaries to wangle between them. We must learn too, how to wangle, and beat them at their own game. The "die hards" and reactionaries on the General Council will never be shifted by calling them names; **it is votes and how to use them that matters**. But, bad as the personnel of the Council is, don't let us forget that very soon objective conditions will make the Council

play a more important part in the workers' struggle. We must therefore have our people on the Council.

Fourthly, at the Congress itself, our delegates must show an example to the others. By close attention to the business of Congress, by refusal to take part in the side-shows arranged by Lord Mayors, etc., by gleaning information from other delegates, by telling other delegates that there is a little group in the Congress who are working together, and inviting them to participate in this work. By sending in individual reports to the Central Committee of your impressions of the Congress, where we made mistakes, what ought to be done next time, and generally working like a team anxious to leave a definite stamp on the Congress, so that year by year our influence grows and more and more delegates want to work and vote with us. In this way we can build up—slowly it is true, but we can do it—a really effective challenging voice inside the Congress and inside the trade delegations.

This, it seems to me, is the only way we shall forge ahead. Tiresome, detailed, and petty as it all may seem, comrades, it is the only way. Influence and leadership can only be won when we ourselves demonstrate our own capacity in these directions. If Plymouth has any lessons at all, it is this crying need for organised opposition to the old ideas, the old traditions, and the old leadership.

Are we to take the chance offered to us now, or are we again going to set off on some unattainable quest because all this work before and during the Trades Congress seems so little beside our dreams of the social revolution? If we now take up this work, this opportunity, there are indeed great times ahead of our Communist Party.

Already we have pushed open the door; we have got one foot in. A little more work, our machine getting down to business in this manner, and the Trades Congress can be made a live working-class congress where new policies in accord with the present needs of the workers can be made and worked out in a practical manner. By such work a new prospect is thus opened to our party. Are we going to take it?

HARRY POLLITT.

# THE GANG BEHIND THE STEEL TRUST\*

**O**N December 26th, 1920, speaking in the Co-operative Hall, Wishaw, with Bailie Taylor in the chair, I made the statement, heard with considerable surprise and scepticism at the time, that there was a large steel works in the burgh at the time in difficulties. At the end of the week, on the eve of New Year, the men employed at the Lanarkshire Steel Works were paid off and, for many months, that establishment was closed down. Gradually, in the interval, parts of it have been re-opened, certain furnaces have been re-lit, some of the employees have been re-engaged. Rumours have, from time to time, been current that things were looking up and that, soon, the place would again be going full blast. These rumours have, however, never materialised, and this once abundantly prosperous establishment, to be working at which was an open sesame to continuous employment, has become a monument of misfortune. Time and again I have made reference to it, knowing from my brokers how unhappy were the finances of the group to which it belongs. For the last year it has only been a matter of time watching for the crack to come. Hence, the announcement made in the financial columns of the newspapers that Workman, Clark and Co., Ltd., who "control" the Lanarkshire Steel Company and who also have the dubious credit of being the proprietors of the salubrious garden suburb of Watsonville, could no longer meet either the interest or the sinking fund on their debentures, let alone pay any dividend on their other shares, came as no surprise to me. Neither did the announcement that the Northumberland Shipbuilding Company could not at present make good its guarantee. What has happened has only been the inevitable and the precursor of a series of crashes which will in the next few months involve in catastrophe many other undertakings in this same bunch of highly inflated industrial "securities." Some eighteen months ago I undertook an investigation for a certain big trade union into the development of a number of great shipping and shipbuilding groups and in the course of this inquiry my advisers and myself unearthed a mass of very interesting facts, ranging over years, affecting, amongst many others, the three big local steel masters.

In the "boom" that followed upon the war when, for a period of two years, the shipbuilding yards of this country were making

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good the destruction of the German submarine campaign against merchant ships and, at the same time, producing other vessels for shipowners who, like all their fellow capitalists, entertained the common delusion that because they had all standing to their accounts enormous new promises to pay (which were, in reality, paper claims upon a moonshine future), all kinds of persons and companies with money to invest sought to purchase shipbuilding establishments. Particularly was this the aim of those who had been making profits out of coal export from South Wales and Durham, out of munitions and out of war insurance "risks." In addition, shipping companies directly and indirectly bought up shipyards and their shipyard subsidiaries, in addition to acquiring new yards, bought up steel works to supply themselves with their own materials and to make extra profits by general trade in iron, steel and coal. The great P. and O. Steamship Company, for instance, bought up Alex. Stephens of Linthouse and, then, this shipbuilding company, together with a number of others, bought the Steel Company of Scotland at Newton. Another case in point was the taking over by Harland and Wolff of a majority of the ordinary shares of David Colvilles' and by Swan, Hunter and Wigham Richardson—itsself largely dominated by the multi-millionaire shipowner, Ellerman—of half the shares in the Glasgow Iron and Steel Co., Ltd., of Wishaw.

#### **"THE LANARKSHIRE."**

In 1920, by a series of curious and intricate operations, the Northumberland Shipbuilding Company, possessed of an average sized shipyard opposite Jarrow-on-Tyne, and heavily backed by the Furness Withy coal, iron, steel, shipping and miscellaneous interests, began to buy up shipyards at Belfast, Govan and Sunderland and so to arrange affairs that it owned Workman Clark, and Workman Clark largely owned it. This group bought "the Lanarkshire," paying £23 or so for each £10 of shares. The Northumberland Shipbuilding Company then, having had this sequence of transactions executed for itself by a firm of investment bankers, i.e., a kind of syndicate of company promoters, called Sperling and Co., which made a whole series of small profits on each of many manipulations, proceeded to issue a bonus to its shareholders in the form of shares, valued at 1s. apiece. Such shares, of course, originally taken up by stockbrokers, investment banks and the big banks, could easily be traded to thrifty workmen and shopkeepers who, excited by prospectuses drawn up in picturesque language and in a perfectly legal manner—do not the company promoters and their relatives make the laws, enforce the laws, and interpret the laws, e.g., Rufus Isaacs, M.P., Law Officer and Lord Chief Justice?—hastened to purchase such exquisite title deeds to immeasurable prosperity.

Most people in the business would think that Sperling and Co. are the real controllers of the Northumberland-Workman Clark-Watson-Lanarkshire group of concerns. So did I, till I found a majority of the shares held by two gentlemen who, on further investigation, turned out to be holding them for yet another and infinitely more powerful group, viz., Kleinwort, Sons and Co., exchange bankers. Now, Messrs. Kleinwort, Sons and Co. buy and sell foreign currency. They are also very big cotton merchants. They are heavily interested in West Indian produce. Most instructive and informative of all, they are the London agents of the German State Bank, the Reichsbank, and they have been very heavily financing Krupp.

Consequently, one wonders whether the collapse of the Northumberland-Lanarkshire group is not in a very close manner connected with the catastrophic collapse of the German exchange, i.e., of the value of the mark. If so, what does it mean?

It means, probably, that this group has been delivering coal and other raw materials to its German clients who have promised to pay later on. They have promised to pay in sterling and now, with the collapse of the mark, cannot afford to buy sterling with marks so as to pay this group. Either the industrialists or their bankers or, probably, both have no ready money. There is, simultaneously, a catastrophic "slump" in the cotton trade. Raw cotton is dear and cotton goods will not sell.

#### **BANKRUPTCY BOOM.**

There is going to be a frightful mess in the world of finance and industry. Collapse in finance reacts on industry and industry on finance. Collapse in industry means less Government assistance to alleviate unemployment.

What is at the back of it all?

The tendency within capitalism in every country is, and has for years been, to increase the amount of production which takes the form not of articles of consumption but of new means of production or of means of transport. This is due to several causes, important amongst them being the endeavour to cheapen output by introducing labour-saving devices. This did not have such a bad effect until the war threw out of gear the markets for the ever increased production. Prior to the war it was only by means of ever increased orders for war material and a continuous endeavour to extend largely unwanted and therefore unprofitable railways in distant countries and continents that the great steel producing and engineering areas of Britain, France, Belgium and Germany were able to ward off a chronic condition of crisis in the above-named industries. During the war, instead of supply exceeding demand, the process was

reversed and demand clamoured for an ever greater supply, more especially in the coal, iron, steel and other heavy industries. In all the belligerent countries, first, and then in as many others as could hasten to make good their own temporary deficiency of vital commodities and afterwards to supply the belligerents, the coal, iron, steel, engineering and chemical industries had a hot house rise and development. The prodigious shipbuilding and engineering establishments of the Clyde, Tyne, Wear, Sheffield and Birmingham are paralleled by immense factories, steel works, blast furnaces, etc., in Lorraine, in Luxemburg, on the Ruhr. As it is here and there so is it, also, in Czecho-Slovakia, Italy, Japan and the U.S.A.

When the war was over, instead of seeking at once to write off these vast establishments as undertakings which had lost their value, their owners, on the contrary, accounted them as new capital and even spent money embodied in raw material in still further extending these establishments.

Bankers, insurance companies, shipowners, capitalists of all kinds drew their available liquid capital out of the banks where it lay, the equivalent of all kinds of embodiments, command over the purchase, transfer and making-up of every kind of raw material and labour service, and spent it in erecting new shipyards, building new ships, making all kinds of things that would not sell at a profit, would not sell to cover cost and could not be broken up or transformed into anything but "scrap." In France, in Germany, in Britain, everywhere they were doing the same thing.

#### WHAT I SAW IN LORRAINE.

I have just returned from a short holiday in Northern and Eastern France, spending a part of that time in the area lying upon the old frontier which, before the Armistice parted the Meurthe-et-Moselle provinces of France from the Lorraine province of Germany, and across the other frontier which divides both these from the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg. The week-end I spent in and around the city of Nancy, the centre of the older iron-ore and steel-producing area of the Meurthe Valley and, on the Saturday night, when the guards were off duty, I was carefully smuggled through the huge steelworks of the third armament company of France, the Chatillon-Commentry Works at Neuves Maisons. I was greatly impressed by the excellent lay-out of the plant, situated in open country, near to the mines, with a canal capable of taking very heavy barges, bringing these into a basin between the five old and the three new blast furnaces, with a big cement and slag making works and magnificent Siemens furnaces, and the most up-to-date rolling mills, all hard at work upon rails, girders and ship plates. The Sunday afternoon we went down to see the relatively old blast fur-

naces of Fould Bros. at Pompey, and observed, lacing the hill sides, emerging from the forests, great conveyors bringing iron-ore from the mines to the canal whence it can be taken away to the more immediate works of Lorraine or the more remote furnaces of the Rhineland. The following day I went by rail, winding up the hill slopes on to the high table-land of Briey, twenty miles to the west and south-west of which I saw on the sky-line the hills about Verdun and St. Mihiel. Here and, of course, well to the back of the front, already grass grown and abandoned, were the sidings in which the Germans had organised the assembly and despatch of men and munitions, by specially laid roads and railways, to the assault and bombardment of that former fortress which will, for ever, remain famous for the bloodiest expenditure of men and the most furious barrage of metal that the whole annals of warfare have hitherto recorded. But it was not Verdun or St. Mihiel, by the capture of which the Americans brought the war to a speedy conclusion, that I had come to see but Briey, the place which had given to them both such stupendous strategic significance, the area which to-day counts for so much in the relations of Britain and France.

Briey and the valleys which open out from it eastwards to Hazondange and to Thionville, and northward fall away across the Luxemburg frontier, veritably bulge with iron-ore. It is estimated—and I am sure the estimate errs in moderation—that here there are 2,000,000,000 tons of iron-ore. It is, beyond question, the richest ore-field in Europe, the richest accessible ore-field in the world. In and around it there are fully 140 gigantic blast furnaces, and I saw, at least, twenty-three steel plants as I made my way, during two days, down one valley and up another. The number of blast furnaces per establishment averages about six, but in some cases rises as high as ten. The number of men normally employed in the works of Lorraine and Luxemburg runs from 3,000 to 5,000.

I was fortunate in the references that I carried from the trade union headquarters in Paris and also in getting into conversation at a roadside cafe in Luxemburg with an employer who spoke sufficiently fluent English to enable us to go over a map I had of the area and to tick off the furnaces in and out of operation.

Of 95 furnaces whose condition he knew there were only 54 actually in blast. This was, however, a figure higher than it was before the Ruhr began to supply, at least, some coke. Prior to the occupation of the Ruhr, it seems that things had been very bad, that many of the works—now owned by syndicates of French and Belgians, sometimes in conjunction with the Germans and sometimes alone—were closing down, the companies and their banking creditors in a very unhappy plight. When the occupation of the Ruhr is lifted or alleviated, when the Germans capitulate or the

French give way—it matters not which wins—there will become available for renewed export an enormous accumulation of coal, iron and steel, raised and produced at starvation wages. This will bring closure in Lorraine and Luxemburg and catastrophe in Middlesbrough and Motherwell. These Lorraine establishments are better situated, more efficient in almost every respect and can produce much more cheaply than can those of Lanarkshire and other metal areas of Britain. They are not so big or so admirably served with machinery and cheap labour as the Ruhr but they are in advance of ours.

### RINGING THE CHANGES

When, therefore, the Ruhr capacity becomes available, when the Ruhr works pass into the control of either French and Belgian, or French, Belgian and German, or French, Belgian, British and German syndicates, the less advantageously situated, equipped and staffed plants are going to be closed down.

The collapse already beginning here is going to become more pronounced. Other and more formidable concerns are going to follow in the wake of the Workman Clark group. It matters not whether the German output is sold to the account of reparations, to that of an international syndicate, to that of French or Germans. It matters not whether it is sent to France, or Britain, to Russia or to some other part of the world. The result will be the same. It will undercut, it will spoil the market for British coal, British iron, British steel.

What Kleinworts lose on “the Lanarkshire” and what Lloyds Bank lose on their British investments in the heavy industries, they may recoup themselves at the Rheinhausen Steel Works and by dealings with Stinnes. The Hornes and Baldwins, the Pirries and Ellermans can transfer their interests, but their employees at Briton Ferry and Cwmbran, at Wishaw and Motherwell, at Middlesbrough and Sheffield cannot betake themselves to more advantageous surroundings. Some, many of them, may and will emigrate, but the “boom” in the United States will not continue. Once German production becomes normal, German steel and engineering material will inundate the markets of America, supplied as yet by materials made by higher paid labour. All the world is in the vicious circle. All the world is staggering down the road which has been taken by “the Lanarkshire.”

J. T. WALTON NEWBOLD.

# The European Crisis and British Labour

“**O**NLY a miracle can save Germany from another revolution,” announced Edo Fimmen during his remarkable speech to the Trade Union Congress at Plymouth. “If my Government falls I will be the last bourgeois chancellor. Should that happen, not only Germany but a large part of Europe will become Bolshevik,” declares Stressemann, the new German Chancellor.

Meanwhile, Mussolini scornfully snaps his fingers at the League of Nations, kicks Greece into submission, and threatens to blow up the Balkans.

Truly the political philosophy of the orthodox Labourists, making for Gradualism, is being sorely tried.

The crisis in Germany brings to a focus all the contending policies with far less excuse for misunderstandings than ever before. From the moment the Armistice was signed in 1918, the process of capitalist disintegration has been continuous and accelerated.

With the Armistice, all the antagonisms within the victorious countries, as in the defeated, were released. On one thing only was there unity and that was opposition to the Bolshevik revolution. In this campaign victor and defeated alike joined in the common attack upon the workers of Russia. But the release of “peace” has been even more fatal to internal order and development in any of the countries. The war for profit, as is now well understood, did not create the will to face obligations on the part of the profit-mongers. As a matter of fact, in every capitalist country there grew up the phenomenal revolt against the State control of property and vested interests occasioned by the war. Private property and vested interests no longer saw in the State a means of profit but only an instrument to secure payment for debts; to free private interests from taxation and to maintain social order. The first led to a policy of colonisation of Europe by the victors, the second to decontrol in regard to economic and industrial life in all countries, the third to the introduction of democratic smoke screens as cover for the vigorous prosecution of the class war.

## MANIPULATING THE DEMOCRATIC STATE

At no moment could the capitalists ignore the class war. How deeply they considered it is now openly revealed by the publication of Mr. Lloyd George’s secret memorandum to the Versailles Council,

in which we see the basis of the imperialist policy now being applied to Europe.

The victors were victors and proceeded arbitrarily to impose their war burdens upon the defeated, only, however, to intensify the determination of the capitalists in the defeated countries to refuse to face State obligations. At the same time a howl was raised against State burdens of taxation from the capitalist fraternity in the victorious countries.

The more the capitalists of the defeated countries dodged the State the more the State had to turn to the inflation of currency. The more currency declined in value the richer became the capitalists, who transferred their money into foreign currencies and paid wages and internal debts in worthless paper.

Its immediate result in the defeated countries was to weaken the Government and encourage the desire on the part of the property owners for the preservation of their property, intensify the sufferings and poverty of the working class, middle class, intellectuals and small peasantry, etc., and sharpen the class antagonisms. The reaction in the victorious countries was to undercut the market prices and produce unemployment on a large scale, especially in the industrial countries, and lead to an onslaught on wages and conditions of the masses and to an intensification of the campaign for the de-control of industry.

The logic of the process is obvious. More aggression in the policy of colonisation on the part of the victors, scrambles for economic private agreements on the part of the industrialists, the bankruptcy of the democratic States and the impoverishment of the population. So far has this process gone in Germany that the Government has practically lost control even of the currency, and the capitalists have no time for the State except as an instrument of coercion for the masses and a mouthpiece for the surrender of the people of Germany and the country as an economic colony to the Allies. Even as an instrument of coercion the democratic State is ceasing to be of value and their alternative is the armed force of the Fascisti.

### THE FOLLY OF GRADUALISM

Who says "A" in the alphabet of imperialism must say "B." It was thus not surprising to find the Labour Party and its international counterparts transfixed by the proposals of President Wilson in 1918 and 1919, and proceeding through their adapted alphabet as crisis followed crisis in the debacle of capitalism. Having accepted the "inevitability of gradualness" their fate became bound up with the preservation of capitalism.

The problems of imperialists became their problems and each section of this hybrid international became the trumpeters of the

difficulties of the respective groups of capitalists and more and more remote from the solution of the difficulties of the masses of the population. As the Governments called for "reparations" they called for "reparations." As the employers demanded "more production" they did likewise, and so on successively from "industrial peace," "arbitration," "League of Nations," to "grand coalition," all of which has postponed the creation of workers' and peasants' governments.

When the revolution of Germany swept the Kaiser from power in 1918, it was the Social-Democrats of Germany who led the popular movement and immediately assumed the responsibility for the defence of capitalism.

From the moment "order" was secured, the capitalist parties began to manœuvre the Social-Democrats from power and to carry out measures of avoiding the State obligations, at the same time manœuvring the popular feeling and securing economic agreements. Only again when the consequences produce political instability do they come back to the seats of government in 1923, in the ranks of the "grand coalition" of parties for the preservation of capitalism.

But 1923 is not 1918. In 1918 there was no Communist Party: only the voices of Liebknecht and Luxemburg, whom, be it remembered, the Social-Democrats murdered. In 1923 there is a Communist Party hundreds of thousands strong with influence amongst millions of workers. The five years between has weakened the prestige and power of the Social-Democrats. These five years present a classic example to the world of a nation struggling, with the aid of the Social-Democrats, to avoid revolution.

It was obvious from the moment the armistice was signed that the consequences of the war could only be faced by the State securing the maximum of real values in its hands. But that meant an attack on private property. In 1923 it is clear in every one of the countries, and none more so than Germany, that reparations and reconstruction, etc., ought to be met by the capitalists of all countries and by a policy of confiscation by the State of real values.

But the "grand coalition" in Germany recoils from such a course. In approved Labour Party style, this "grand coalition" introduces more stringent taxation which the capitalists politely avoid. An object lesson indeed to the British Labour Party, which proposes to purchase property by hanging the burden of debt around the necks of the population.

#### **NATIONALISM OF BRITISH LABOUR LEADERS**

British Labour leadership can present no better record than the German Social-Democracy during this period. Both went into the war with the same ideas of national defence. Both come out of it

to continue their function of stabilisation. British Labour backed, and backs to-day, the Wilsonian programme even when Wilson himself has long since abandoned it.

Officially in favour of a General Strike, it is actually opposed to it at every step. Pledged to strike if the Ruhr was invaded, it budged not an inch. At no moment has it mobilised the opinion of the workers in favour of assisting the revolution in Europe, but throughout it has consistently played the diplomacy of Imperialism. From Wilson to Baldwin sums up the achievements of British Labour in this struggle towards social revolution.

Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, leader of His Majesty's Opposition in the British Parliament, following the lead of Mr. Baldwin, on July 20th, on the reparation crisis, says, "I thought as I listened to sentence after sentence, how much more fortunate our country would have been had that policy been adopted months ago," whilst later, in the House of Commons, he said "It was as desirable to prevent Germany going into the hands of the Communists as into the hands of the German Fascisti." It only remains for us to take note of the "Daily Herald" (the official Labour organ) declaration that "the nation is behind Mr. Baldwin at this moment," and to listen to the rambling gibberish of Mr. Brailsford in the "New Leader," to understand the utter remoteness of the leadership of Labour in this country from a real working class policy.

On August 31st, 1923, Mr. Brailsford wrote in the "New Leader," "If the democratic republic collapses, the alternative is either a Monarchist or Communist Workers' and Peasants' Germany. That also I think impossible, but it might just be possible as the last and maddest invention of red strategy—some sort of alliance, however temporary, between left and right." Add to this Mr. Thomas's affirmation at the Trade Union Congress in September, that in the event of an Italian-Greco Balkan war, it would be impossible for "us" to keep out, and the complete subordination of Labour to the leadership of Imperialism along with the refusal to understand the strategy of the class war, and the picture is complete.

### **POLICY OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL**

Starting from a fundamentally different estimate both of the historic rôle of the working class and the character of the epoch ushered in by the war, the Communist International has pursued a policy in flat contradiction to this philosophy of "gradualism" so beloved of our Social Reformists. In opposition to the policy of adaptation to the war, the Communists urge its transformation into the class war as a means to end imperialism. Instead of regarding the Russian revolution as a national revolution it saw in it the beginning of the proletarian world revolution. In opposition to capitalist

reconstruction, the Communist regarded this military orgy as the epoch of capitalist collapse and social revolution, and set before the workers as the supreme task of the moment the conquest of political power.

Contrary to all assertion that the Communists believe in revolutions by what the Germans call "Putsch Methods," the policy pursued by the Communists, both through the Russian revolution and from the first days of the Communist International has been the exact opposite. It has followed a policy of successive concrete measures in keeping with the historical development of the struggle and within the grasp of the masses of the proletariat and the forces required as allies in the conquest of capitalism. The application of this policy to Europe after Versailles has been to insist upon reparation claims being placed upon the backs of the capitalists of all countries, all of whom were responsible for the war.

Applying this principle to Germany it can only be carried through by strengthening the power of the State over the capitalists, confiscating property and seizing real values. Naturally the capitalists have opposed, and it is now obvious that only a workers' and peasants' State would put such measures into operation. Any alternative policy could only result, as has actually happened, in reduced wages, increased rents, increased prices, so involving workers, peasants, middle class, intellectuals, etc., in extreme poverty and ruin. In practice this has meant strikes and political revolts against the profiteers and the Government. The Communists have no option but to support and endeavour to lead such strikes and revolts.

The middle class and peasants, intensely conservative in their resentment against degradation, become the recruiting ground of the monarchists who lure them on with the memory of what their conditions were under the Kaiser. The Communists have to reveal the illusory character of these dreams of democrats who are the real enemies of the nation. But this does not mean an alliance with the "right" as foolishly described by Brailsford, but a direct challenge within the ranks of the "right" as to the real enemies of the people, the winning of the masses from the leadership of the "right" exactly as the C.P. here has to win the masses away from middle class leadership of the Labour Party.

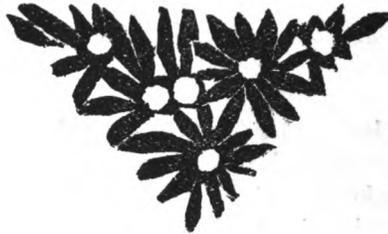
The character and direction of the policy thus being made clear, it follows that the Communist International is neither coquetting with the "right" nor amusing itself with the so-called centre when it sets before the masses of Europe the slogan of a United States of

Europe composed of workers' and peasants' Governments into whose hands alone should be concentrated all the real values and power of the countries of Europe for their reconstruction on a Socialist basis. The slogan of a workers' and peasants' Government is the only alternative to chaos and untold misery. If the British Labour Party would avoid the fate of the German Social Democrats there is still time to turn from the Baldwin policy. The starvation, misery, and anguish of the tortured workers as well as the ghosts of the murdered in Flanders and Mesopotamia demand of the British Labour Party as of the Communist Party the immediate withdrawal of British troops from the Ruhr; for all the forces of the working class to join hands in rousing and preparing the British workers to render aid to the oncoming revolution in Germany and become parties to the campaign for the Workers' and Peasants' Governments of Europe as the only way out.

But will they do it?

The Communist Party is ready.

J. T. MURPHY.





**TCHITCHERINE**  
*A LA MODE DARDANELLES*

# A Mass Party in America

**T**HE four big outstanding features of the convention which formally launched the Federated Farmer-Labour Party of America at the Chicago gathering, July 3rd—5th, were:-

- (1) The determined attitude of all representatives from labour and farmer organisations to establish a mass party of the toilers immediately.
- (2) The prominent and militant role played by the farmers.
- (3) The collapse and bankruptcy of the Farmer-Labour Party and its leadership.
- (4) The splendid tactics of the Communists and the rise to leadership of the Workers' Party.

Many other significant features of the convention could also be mentioned, but the above-mentioned undoubtedly stand out most prominently.

Political backwardness has been a characteristic of the working class movement of the United States. Hitherto the Trade Union movement on the political field has taken a neutral stand (in so far as class lines are concerned) in line with Gompers' policy of "rewarding our friends and punishing our enemies." That close cooperation between the Social-Democratic parties and Trade Unions which has existed in Europe for many years has never occurred in America. True, individual unions have at times and in turn supported the Socialist, Socialist-Labour, or Farmer-Labour Parties, etc. But the American Federation of Labour has always declared against such an attitude.

In spite of this there has been a growing sentiment for a political party of labour, a sentiment which has been especially developing during the last three or four years. Various conferences have been held to consider what could be done to unite the organised working class for political action. The last of these was held in Cleveland, Ohio, last February.

At this conference there were representatives of a large number of International Unions, notably the Railroad Brotherhoods, the International Association of Machinists (Engineers) and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers. Johnstone, of the I.A. and M., who was the spokesman at that conference, lacked the vision as well as the will to proceed with the formation of a nation-wide mass party. The Workers' Party and the Young Workers' League had sent their representatives to this gathering, but were refused admission. That, in short, was the only positive achievement of the Cleveland Conference. Many organisations, including the F.L.P., refused to be bound by the foolish and spineless decisions adopted at that time.

Strange as it may seem, the farmers of the North Central and North-West States had gone much further than their industrial brothers. The pressure of the banks, the railroads, the wholesalers, and the farm implement trust had driven them into politics. In Wisconsin, Minnesota, the Dakotas and other states they had formed their Non-Partisan Leagues or similar organisations and had won some considerable victories. But they, too, were confused on many matters. Above all, they did not possess a working program to unite the city and rural workers. Whatever the farmers succeeded in doing for themselves locally was defeated by the adverse decisions rendered by State or national bodies; or, when this could not be done, the banks and the railroads found other means of bringing such economic pressure upon the farmers as to break their resistance.

The following figures illustrate the condition that the farmer finds himself in to-day:—

\*What the farmer sells:—

	Jan., 1913.	Jan., 1923.
No. 1 Northern Spring Wheat .....	100	133
Corn .....	100	144
Cattle .....	100	119
Hogs .....	100	104

What the farmer buys:—

Clothes and Clothing .....	100	196
Metals and Metal Products .....	100	139
Building Materials .....	100	192
House Furnishings .....	100	184
Fuel and Lighting .....	100	212

The number of tenant farmers has increased by almost 100 per cent. since 1880. Last year more than 2,000,000 people left the farms for the cities; while only 800,000 left the cities for the country. Thousands of farms stand deserted. The others are rapidly passing into the hands of the capitalists. It is not to be wondered at that there is a revolt of the sons of the land.

### The Farmer-Labour Party.

The leaders of this party, which had been organised just prior to the elections of 1920, were men like Fitzpatrick, Buck, and Brown of Chicago, all of them well known to the organised labour movement. They had been disgusted with the side-stepping attitude of Johnstone and his clique at the Cleveland Conference. Their own party had not become the mass party for which they had hoped—but they did want to see a mass party created.

The Trade Union Educational League set out to feel the pulse of the Trade Union branches all over the country on the question

\*From "The Farmers Rub their Eyes" by Scott Nearing; *Am. Lab. Monthly*, July 1923.

of the immediate formation of a real Labour Party. 35,000 branches were asked to give their opinion on the matter. To be sure, all of them did not reply. There was plenty of sabotage by the reactionaries. But judging by the vast number of replies that did come in it was evident that there was a genuine desire on the part of the great majority of trade unionists to form such a party at once. This became the deciding factor for the F.L.P. to issue a call for a conference of all workers' and farmers' organisations (political, economic, fraternal, etc.), where plans could be outlined for the formation of a real mass party of the downtrodden masses.

The Workers' Party, the Young Workers' League, the Trade Union Educational League and all other organisations in which the Communists were influential threw their whole weight into an agitation for the success of this conference.

### The Conference in Action.

There were 740 delegates at the beginning. They came from all parts of the country and represented all manner of workers' and farmers' organisations with an aggregate membership of more than 600,000. The enthusiasm was great. Almost without exception the representatives were determined to form a party at once. They wanted no more dilly-dallying. But the F.L.P. leaders became frightened. They had no new and concrete programme. They were willing to form a mass party, provided that their party be that mass party, and that they be left in full control. The programme which the Communists presented was winning adherents on all sides. This could not be allowed to go on. So, following the fashion of the leaders of the Cleveland Conference, they launched into a long and bitter tirade against the Communists, calling them "dangerous Reds who would wreck any labour movement which they were allowed to take part in, or, above all, allowed to dominate."

The Communists met these arguments with telling blows. They were not out to dominate, but they did want to see a real Labour Party established. They put forward their programme. They wanted to know what were the objections to the programme; was it a correct one or not? Unity demanded that "right" as well as "left" be a part of the new party. They, the Communists, were not satisfied with many of the demands which they themselves were proposing, but so long as that was as far as the bulk of the workers were willing to go, they would work for those things, at the same time retaining their autonomy within the new party to advocate such changes as they thought necessary.

The response of the rank and file of the representatives to this debate showed clearly that the Communists had won the day. Time and again delegates from unions or farmers' organisations said that they too had been called "Reds," "undesirables," and "fanatics,"

but that didn't frighten them any more. The conditions of farmer and industrial worker alike were bad and becoming ever worse. There was need for immediate activity. Since the programme which the Communists proposed suited them they were for it.

Fitzpatrick and some of the F.L.P.-ers split from the convention, but they represented only a small fraction of the vast mass represented there. The Federated Farmer-Labour Party was officially launched, backed by 700 delegates who were voicing the desires of hundreds of thousands of workers and farmers.

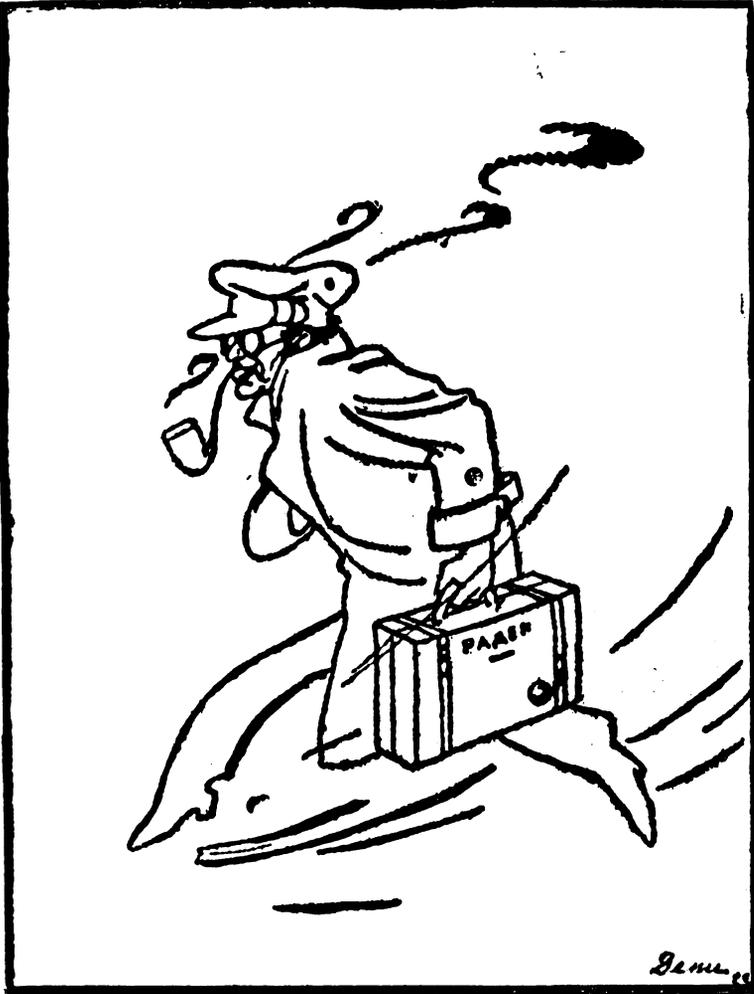
### **Tasks Ahead.**

The party has been launched. But that does not make it the party. Whether it will rise to power and prominence, rallying the exploited of shop and office and farm, remains to be seen. Nor will it take long before we shall know. True, many unions and other working class bodies have already joined it—but there still remains untold numbers who must be brought into its ranks. Elements like those of the F.L.P., which did not join, must be brought in, for though small in numbers they carry considerable influence. That the new party executive recognises these facts must be admitted. It has already addressed itself to Johnstone and the Cleveland Committee to secure a united front for the coming elections.

### **Conclusions.**

To those of us who have fought in the ranks of the Communist movement in the States since its inception, who have gone through the long and bitter years of "leftism," and inner struggles combined with a persecution on the part of the national State and local authorities against us which drove us underground; to those of us who have felt our complete isolation from the masses and the everyday struggles because of the wrangling, romanticism and sectarian outlook of our members as well as the reactionary and backward nature of the Labour movement in America—to us the achievements of our party in its work for the creation of a mass party, as well as its firm and clear line of action at the conference proper fills us with a new life, a new spirit, a new desire to fight on. We have learned something from these years of trial and tribulation. Our party, the Workers' Party, has linked itself up with the living, feeling, moving mass of America's workers. The link is still weak, but it does exist. That link is the Federated Party. The success of it will mean much to us—and even more to the masses.

O. CARLSON.



KARL RADEK  
*As the Flying Dutchman*



## Co-operatives & Trade Unions

### COMMUNIST WORK IN CO-OPERATIVES.

At the Enlarged Executive Meeting of the Comintern in June, the necessity was urged for the closest contact between the Co-operative Societies and other workers' organisations. Collaboration, it was considered, between the Communist and revolutionary elements within the Co-operatives and the Trade Unions has now passed beyond the realm of the abstract. This collaboration must more and more assume concrete forms, as, for example, has been the case in Russia.

In Soviet Russia the closest collaboration between the Co-operatives and the Trade Unions has resulted in the Trade Unions taking an active part in the application of all measures concerning the development of working-class co-operation including the agricultural, consumers' and producers' side of it. All questions of national importance are considered and decided upon by the Co-operators in conjunction with the Trade Union representatives, the latter enjoying an equality of rights in all consultations and conferences on a local scale. The Trade Union representatives are consulted on questions of co-operation in given localities, regions or towns.

Such joint work between the Communist Co-operators and revolutionary Trade Unions can, and must be, introduced in all countries which have Communist Parties and carry on propaganda within the Co-operative Movement. Moreover, one of the immediate tasks in connection with the drawing of wide masses of consumers into the active struggle for the defence of the interests of the working class is to obtain a decisive influence in the movement for the formation of Control Committees to watch over the cost of the necessities of life as is the case in Ger-

many and in the Consumers' Councils which are being formed in Czechoslovakia; in some parts of Germany and other countries.

These Control Committees properly used will be as useful to the Co-operative Movement as the Factory Committees to the Revolutionary Trade Unions. All our comrades working in the Co-operative Movement are therefore urged to follow closely the development of the Control Committee Movement and all its work and to do their utmost to induce wide masses of working class Co-operators to enter into these bodies with the object of establishing a close connection between them and the Co-operative organisations.

The following is the terms of the resolution on

### Co-operation Between Co-operatives and Trade Unions.

"The International Capitalist Offensive on the one hand and the revolutionising of the working class masses on the other, are compelling even the reformist leaders of the Amsterdam Trade Union International and the International Co-operative Alliance to take up the idea of a United Front with the proletariat. They are attempting to debase these tactics by transforming a united fighting front of the workers into a union of 'fight-shy' leaders. The bloc formed in February last between the Amsterdam International and the International Co-operative Alliance is such a union, but it is worthy of note that the Trade Union International thereby itself admitted that the principle of neutrality hitherto professed, was untenable. In spite of itself, it was obliged to acknowledge that the union of all the workers' forces of the proletariat had become a question of life and death for the Co-operatives also.

If the Co-operatives do not wish to be drawn into the general disorganisation of capitalist economy; if they do not wish to become defenceless victims of Fascism and new capitalist wars; if they do not wish to sink into a position of obedience to commercial official capital, then they must unite with the economic and political fighting organisations of the proletariat.

The bloc created in Brussels between the Amsterdam International and the International Co-operative Alliance is not, of course, an instrument of the proletariat struggle against the capitalist offensive. That is clearly shown by the fact that the reformist leaders refuse to accept into the bloc the Red International of Labour Unions which embraces millions of revolutionary workers. Secondly, the bloc of the Amsterdam International and the International Co-operative Alliance forms in reality only the bulwark of the bourgeoisie to prevent a serious and determined struggle on the part of the working class. It makes no allowance for mutual aid between the Co-operatives and the Trade Union organisations of the various countries.

Therefore, it behoves Communist Co-operators to expose the nature of this bloc to the wide proletariat and peasant masses belonging to the Co-operative Movement, and in order to counteract it, to demand the establishment of a fighting front of all co-operators and Trade Unionists. The revolutionary Trade Union organisations adhering to the Red International of Labour Unions must be drawn into this bloc.

A concrete programme of action must be elaborated at a world conference of proletarian Trade Unionists and Co-operators which must form the basis of the struggle against the ideology

and organisations of Fascism, against capitalist exploitation of the masses of the workers, reduction of the real wage, and the extension of the working day; the preparation for war and the provocation to war by the capitalist States; taxation of the working class and the Co-operatives, against all exceptional laws and regulations concerning revolutionary workers' parties and for annulment of the Versailles Peace Treaty, the liberation of imprisoned revolutionaries, arming of the proletariat and for the Workers' and Peasants' Government.

Above all, the Co-operators must establish connection between the industrial proletariat and the masses of the workers of the countryside. The Co-operatives must take an active part in all the actions of the revolutionary proletariat. The leaders of the Co-operatives and Trade Unions must be publicly invited to collaborate with the Committee of Action set up at the International Frankfurt Conference to combat the menace of war and Fascism. In the event of the leaders rejecting this invitation, the members must be called upon to organise a proletariat defensive front to protect their interests regardless of the attitude of these reactionary leaders.

In connection with the International Trade Union Congress to be held in 1924, it is essential to organise a campaign of agitation on a large scale in order to expose the 'neutrality' attitude of our opponents who ally themselves openly with the reactionaries and also in order to propagate the above-mentioned demands and to find opportunities for securing the largest possible number of Communist Co-operator delegates.

## VICTIMS OF THE CLASS WAR

(By the Information Bureau of the C.I.)

**Germany:** The lawyer, Felix-Halle, counsel for the K.P.D., states that, notwithstanding about 2,500 conditional pardons, there were still, in 1921, about 5,000 political prisoners in the German penitentiaries and prisons. The sentences imposed comprise altogether several thousand years. The most prominent events during the recent period are:—

The death of the Bavarian deputy, a member of the K.P.D., Comrade Hagemeyer in the Bavarian penitentiary. Assassination of a young Communist by the Berlin special police force (Schupe). Death sentence on Comrade Katuseit for presiding over a revolu-

tionary tribunal in the Rhine-land during the Kapp-Putsch. Persecution of Eisenberger, a Bavarian deputy and of Eberlein. A sentence to five years in a penitentiary on Schatz, Menzel, Mixdorf and Müller (K.P.D. and K.A.P.D.). Arrest of Hölleim in Paris, of Zetkin in the Rhine-land, refusal to amnesty Hölitz. Moreover, frequent suppressions of our Press. Fascist attacks on our papers, arrests of twenty young Communists in Rhine-land-Ruhr and more virulent bating of foreigners and emergency legislation.

**France:** According to Doriot's statement about 25 of the most active comrades have been sent to prison as a consequence of the Ruhr offensive.

Among them are: Comrades Cachin, Monmousseau, Treint, Maranne, Nasson, Lemare, Jacob, Laport, Péri and Pégy. The number of active and reserve soldiers undergoing disciplinary punishment cannot be ascertained. Special mention must be made of the fact that police and military are being used against strikers (in Le Havre, four killed, Marseilles).

**Italy:** About six thousand workers, among them seventy well-known Communists arrested, and also nearly all the editors of our papers. Among the arrested are: Gricco, Azario, Bordiga, Leonetti, Vigliongi, Cilla, Polano, Dozza, Serrati. The Y.C.L. is also subject to violent persecution. Two-thirds of its active members are in prison. In Turin thirty-two young Communist officials were assassinated in the course of two nights. Dissolution of trade unions, destruction of People's Palaces and newspaper offices, prevention of public elections.

**Spain:** For the last three years most abominable persecution of all revolutionary organisations. Thousands of people in the prisons. Recently three hundred more arrests, 150 already sentenced to long years of imprisonment, among them Gonzales, Vicente Calaza, Luis Portela, and a secretary of the Y.C.L. Twenty comrades accused in connection with the Dato assassination. Still many hundreds in prison owing to Morocco War.

**Belgium:** Four-five hundred prisoners; recently 17 leading Communists arrested. Among them: Van Overstraeten, Jaque-mote, De Bouk, Lesoil, Bondas, Polk and de la Fontaine. Virulent persecution of Communists owing to Ruhr propaganda.

**Lithuania:** Police terrorism, mass arrests, election terrorism, Jewish pogroms, two death sentences commuted to life-long imprisonment, one death in prison (Janushevsky). In Kovno 80 political prisoners. Party illegal.

**Latvia:** Since last election eight hundred workers arrested, two hundred of whom are still in prison. 214 exchanged into Russia. During the last six months, over one hundred youths arrested, thirty-two exchanged into Russia. Party illegal.

**Estonia:** Party illegal. Terrorism in full force. The young Communist Kreuks assassinated, Kingisepp and another comrade shot. Out of 154 Communist candidates and six deputies, only two Communist candidates free, all others in exile or prison.

**Finland:** The Government have arrested 27 of the Parliamentary representatives of the Labour Party, all the Executive members and the editors of

the Party organs. All the Party papers throughout the country have been suppressed and the printing presses confiscated. At least 200 of the leading comrades of the Party have been arrested.

**Poland:** 2,000 in prison. Between 1/12/22 and 1/4/23, prosecuted 193, sentenced 111, acquitted 82, penalties 285 years forced labour (Katorga) and incarceration in a fortress. Moreover, mass arrests amounting to thousands in all border regions, dissolution of trade unions.

### BULGARIAN TERRORISM.

Bulgaria is again figuring prominently both in the history of Balkan rivalry and revolution.

At the beginning of June of the present year, all Europe echoed the fall of Stambulinsky, the leader of the present Government of Bulgaria, and the advent of a Fascist Government which secured the collaboration of the National Liberals and Socialists. The new Government made an onslaught on the peasants and Communists alike. From that day onward civil war has continued, but more or less on guerilla lines. The national elements, especially the Macedonians, have sought to use the situation to achieve independence. All stable social relations have thus been broken. The persecuted have been driven into underground movements and over the frontiers of neighbouring States anxious for opportunities to move in against Bulgaria to settle outstanding accounts. The Yugoslavian Government, which is also a coalition Government, but which includes elements sympathetic to the peasantry, has begun to mobilise troops on the Bulgarian frontier and has delivered a "note" to the Bulgarians warning them that the crossing of the frontier by any of the bands of robbers or refugees will be considered an act of war. At any moment the Balkans may be the scene of general conflagration.

The Bulgarian Government has consequently suppressed the Macedonian papers and intensified its war upon the peasant and town workers. One hundred and thirty-two Communists were arrested in Sofia in the middle of September along with several hundreds in the provinces. From June 9th, when the bourgeoisie came to power, there has reigned one unending terror. Neither workers nor peasants are permitted to hold meetings, issue publications or form organisations. Every town and village throughout Bulgaria has its lists, running into hundreds, of killed and imprisoned workers and peasants. Trials in courts have become a mockery and courts martial the

"popular" form of "trial." By physical violence the big bourgeoisie are shattering the illusions of masses and parties.

The advent of Stambulinsky to the leadership of Bulgaria after the war was an indication of the rising importance to the peasantry who had been awakened to political activity by great poverty. Between 85 and 90 per cent. of the population are peasants. These are divided into poor and rich peasants. The city bourgeoisie are comparatively small in numbers and the town proletariat are few. It was this relation of forces which made it seem possible to Stambulinsky to carry an independent peasant policy against the bourgeoisie and without the help of the

proletariat. But broad as his programme was at the beginning, within a short period his policy became a policy in favour of the big farmers and not the peasantry as a whole. His attempt against the bourgeoisie and against the proletariat proved Utopian.

Equally fallacious were the notions of the leaders of the proletariat, even as expressed in the Bulgarian Communist Party, who saw an enemy in the peasants as in the bourgeoisie and thought they could remain neutral in the armed battle between the bourgeoisie and the peasants.

The Fascisti had no illusions on this score, with the result that the Communist Party is being subjected to a severe terrorism.

## CZECHO-SLOVAKIA

Since August 20th the miners are out in the whole country. The offensive was started not by the workers, but by their employers, who thought the time had come for the crushing of the workers' resistance and organisation. It is true that the workers suffered very greatly from unemployment and low wages, but their fighting spirit did not suffer at all, as they have proved in the present strike.

The strike has now lasted four weeks when I am writing these lines, and the solidarity of the miners is as good as on the first day, when they all left the mines at the order of their Union without a single defaulter. This is an unpleasant surprise for the capitalists who reckoned that the strike would be over in a week or two and the reduction of wages in other industries would easily follow that in the mining industry, where a reduction of 30 per cent. was proposed by the employers and answered by the workers by the present strike. So certain was the em-

ploying class of the fiasco of the strike movement, that they did not even provide sufficient stock of coal for a month. The effect of the strike is very severely felt not only in other industries but also in public services. Municipal transport services have been discontinued in many towns and in Prague itself communication and lighting is seriously endangered if the strike lasts any longer.

Now is the opportunity for the Czecho-Slovak miners to utilise their victory in securing much improved conditions of labour. The employing class is most brutal in oppressing the workers whenever they win a fight. They know no pity in dismissing thousands of workers and in reducing the wages of the others to starvation level. We hope the Czech miners will bear this in mind when coming to terms with their exploiters who have failed this time in their devilish plan against the workers.



# THE FORUM

*Under this heading readers are invited to state their personal opinion upon any question of vital importance to the working class movement.*

Dear Comrade,

You ask for readers to state their personal opinion upon any question of vital importance to the working class movement. I would like to raise the question of propaganda.

There is no doubt that Communist propaganda is having effect, Communist principles are guiding more than the party membership, but we cannot be satisfied with the present attainments of our propaganda machine. We must strive continually to make it more effective. But to do this we must become more flexible in our methods and be prepared to adapt ourselves to conditions which we have previously ignored or neglected. Wherever the workers congregate there is the field for our activity; we must not ignore any group of workers simply because we object to their surroundings.

Now I would like to suggest that good propaganda could be done in the churches, chapels, adult schools, and kindred societies, by the right people and by using wise methods. Quite a number of our party members, no doubt, were at one time members of religious institutions. If good Communists have come out of them, it is possible that others are waiting to be shown the way to Communism.

It would be possible in a good many places to get a debate on "Communism" included in the Literary and Debating Society's list, if Comrades were tactful. The locals should make it their duty to find out where lectures or discussions on social subjects are to be given in their districts, no matter under whose auspices, so that suitable Comrades could be sent to put the Communist case. No matter whether the gathering be large or small, it is an opportunity which should not be missed; and we shall need to seize every opportunity if we are to clear away the false ideas of Communism deliberately planted by the Capitalist Press.

The International urges all its sections to "be constantly on the look-out for new forms of propaganda," and this is very necessary if we are to cope with

the "stunt" press. With limited—very limited—funds at our disposal, we must devise publicity schemes at a minimum cost. Whenever possible, comrades should use the Capitalist Press. Opportunities should be made to initiate and carry on discussions therein. The greatest care should be taken to ensure that the Communist correspondent is competent.

Again, street-corner meetings should be wisely organised, and while the main thoroughfares must not be neglected, attention should be given to the back turnings, for here it is that a more intimate touch can be maintained with the workers. It would be possible in some working class streets to arrange a series of Communist lectures. We must attempt to reach those who for one reason or another do not listen to street-corner meetings, by going to or near their homes.

There is also a possibility of mass propaganda along the following lines. A series of rambles to places of interest could be well advertised in our magazines and the "Workers' Weekly." Party members, friends and sympathisers would be asked to participate in "Communist Party Rambles" to such places as, in London, the Tower, the London Museum, the Guildhall, the Abbey, and Houses of Parliament. Many other places could be suggested. A well-known comrade should act as guide, pointing the appropriate moral and lesson from the place visited. Comrade Newbold, for instance, would have a wonderful text to speak from if he conducted us to the Guildhall or the Tower. What a wonderful audience he would have, too, if we invited the unemployed to come! Properly organised, our "Communist Party Rambles" would reach such dimensions that they would be worthy of note in the Capitalist Press, but we should have compelled our critics to discuss Communism in relation to British history. The modern class struggle would then stand out in clearer relief against the class struggles of the past.

Yours fraternally,  
A. D. VERTISE.



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