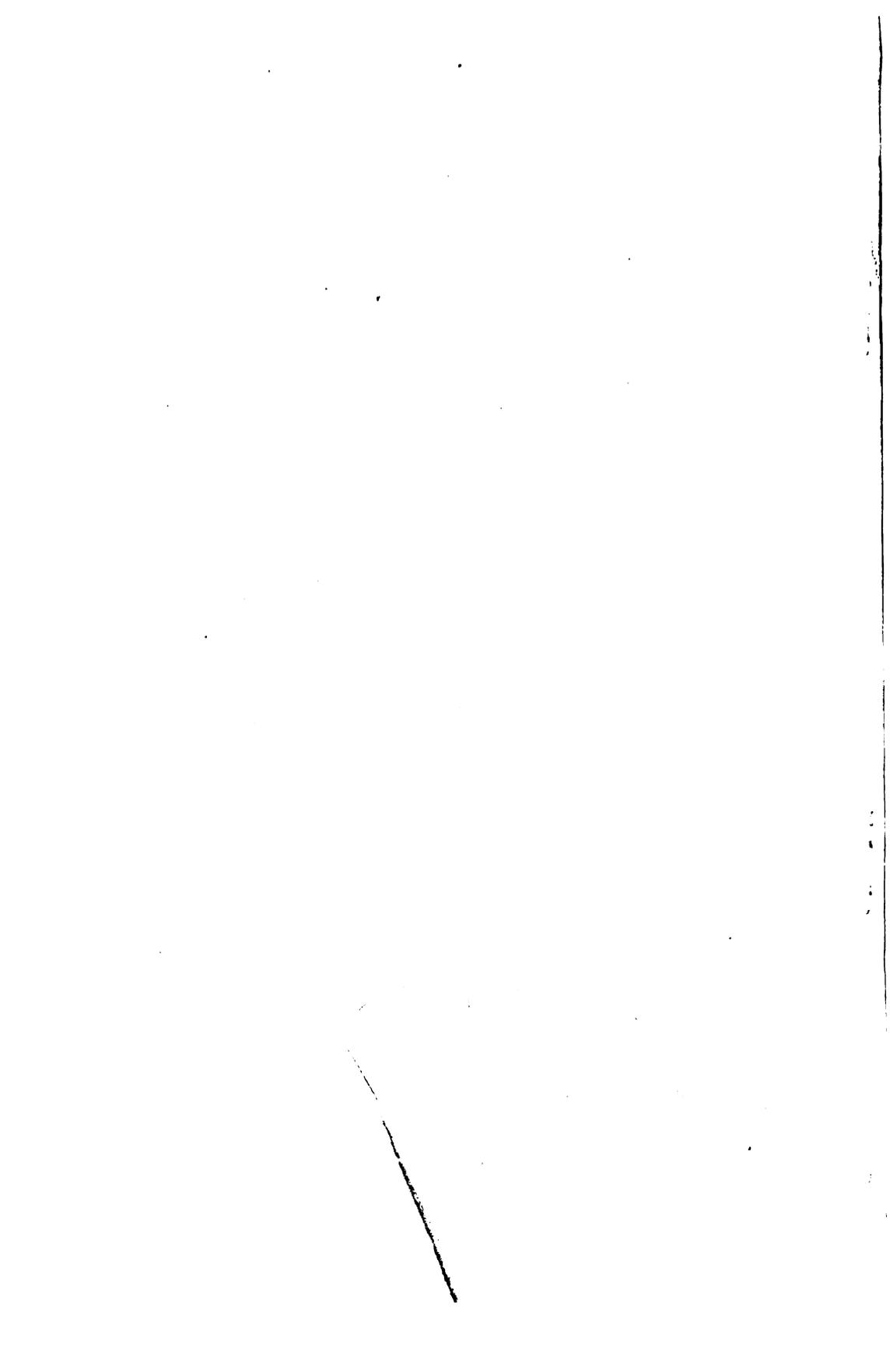


**THE
COMMUNIST REVIEW**



THE COMMUNIST REVIEW

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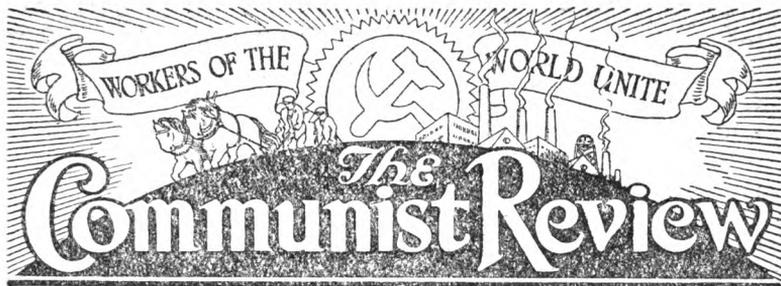
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THE EDITORIAL VIEW

THE two most important questions dealt with by the session of the Enlarged Executive of the Communist International in March of this year were, first the world situation with special reference to the "stabilisation" of capitalism, and, second, the problem of "how to 'bolshevise' the sections of the Party." Our Party Congress in Glasgow during Whitsuntide had to follow a similar line, and to resolve these questions in the light of their application to the C.P.G.B.

Did the Party Congress select correctly the most important problems facing the Party? Did it deal adequately with them? If we can answer these questions in the affirmative, it means that our Party Congress was a congress of Bolshevisation, *i.e.*, that it moved the Party on towards the masses, and pointed out to the Party the best way, in the present circumstances, of leading the masses a step further towards the overthrow of capitalism.

Let us try to answer these questions.

Dealing with the economic and political situation, the Congress said that the capitalist class had succeeded, thanks to the help of their lieutenants in the ranks of Labour, in creating a *temporary* stabilisation in Europe. But, it declared, since there are so many antagonisms in the capitalist world, *e.g.*, between Britain and America; since the workers and peasants of the world have had such a deep education in revolution; and, moreover, since the antagonism between the capitalist states and the Soviet Union is so fundamental, stabilisation is only a phase. British capitalism in particular, the Congress declared, owing to the decline of its industry, the successful rivalry of American Imperialism, and the growing revolt of its colonies, may be said to be becoming "destabilised" rather than stabilised.

* * * * *

Barely a month has gone by, and already events are justifying this analysis up to the hilt. In Germany, the Stinnes trust tried to emancipate itself from rule by finance-

capital, and to solve the reparations problem by a direct alliance with French capitalism, but the British-American bankers said "No." The German bankers have now followed suit, and, to-day, the Stinnes trust is cracking and tottering, involving in its downfall scores of other industries. Germany is faced with a new industrial crisis, which can only be solved by a new attack on wages and hours of the workers, and a strengthening of reaction. After barely nine months of "stability," Germany is once more faced with renewed economic disruption and decay.

This in itself would be sufficient to place the whole Dawes Plan in jeopardy, since it depends upon the success of the reformist Labour leaders in keeping the workers from struggle. But events in France are also showing how behind the gaily-painted plaster of Dawes' peace, capitalist rule is decaying, economically and politically. The cost of living continues to rise uninterruptedly: the financial condition of the French Government continues to grow more desperate: the workers and peasants, in the Army and out of it, are becoming more and more emphatic in their refusal to endorse the militarist policy of Painlevé in Morocco. These three factors alone are driving France more and more quickly towards a social and political crisis, of which the consequences, internationally no less than nationally, must be far-reaching, but again must adversely affect the Dawes Report first and foremost.

* * * * *

Finally, British industry and commerce continue to go from bad to worse, and, despite the bankers, the British capitalists are being forced to admit more and more openly that this is due mainly to the operation of the reparations policy in general, and of the Dawes Report in particular. The workers are becoming correspondingly enlightened. Yet the placemen of the bankers who constitute Baldwin's Cabinet continue to try and drive the economic reasoning of the Dawes Report to its political conclusion—the Pact. The Pact is not only the finishing touch to the Dawes Report, as an attempt to make Germany harmless and safe as a colony for Allied capitalism. It is more: it is an open step towards the extension of the Dawes Report from Germany to Russia: it makes open preparations for the military overthrow of the Soviet Government, which is necessary before Russia can be made into a colony like Germany.

The bankers hope by this means to appease the manufacturers, by diverting German reparation goods into Russia and out of the other world markets. But the manufacturers meanwhile are faced with complete collapse, unless they se-

cure some breathing space which will enable them to hold out until the auspicious day. Hence the definite steps they have taken at last to open the long-awaited offensive against the workers—in the demands made to the railwaymen, the miners, and the engineers. On the other hand, the British workers are not what they were in 1921, and the task is not likely to be so easy. Yet upon its successful completion depends the whole of the Pact plan, with which is involved the Dawes Plan, and the continuance of capitalist “stabilisation” in Europe.

These events in Germany, France and Britain alone, are sufficient to show how slender is the thread upon which capitalist “peace and quiet” depends to-day. But of the most immediate importance are the events in China, which present as in a mirror all the great difficulties under which world capitalism is labouring.

(1) The revolt of the Chinese people against Imperialist exploitation is no new thing. What is new is the fact that there now exists a fighting proletariat, which is tending more and more to assume the leadership of the national struggle, and to awaken such masses of the people to political activity that even the reactionary generals have to come into line. The fight is now definitely against foreign capitalism, and a victory in that fight would be a disaster of the first magnitude for the foreign capitalist.

(2) For British capitalism the danger is greatest of all, since a victory of the revolution in China means an enormous encouragement to the national revolt in India and the other British colonies. But a war on the Chinese revolution would mean no longer a mere punitive expedition as in 1900, it would involve a military expedition on a vast scale. And there the British working class would have the opportunity to say a word. British capitalism is thus in the grip of the most terrible contradiction.

(3) Particularly interesting is the complete divergence between Britain and America which the Chinese events have revealed. The American capitalist press, and even Government officials, plainly say that they will not intervene. Their purpose is clear: to divert the whole hatred of the Chinese people upon British capitalism, to increase the difficulties of the latter immensely, and thus to prepare the way even more completely for its final defeat.

Thus it is clear that world capitalism is not finally stabilised, but is continuing on its downward course: while

the workers are not only being driven into greater and greater activity, but are being convinced by practical evidence that they have a great and powerful ally in the revolting colonial peoples.

* * * * *

One month's events have been sufficient to show that the Congress was right in its analysis of conditions in the capitalist world at large, and in Britain in particular. In so far as that analysis itself suggested the main tasks of the Party, we can already say that they were correctly selected. Let us recall what they were: the fight for leadership of the unions, the fight against reformism in the Labour Party, the fight for solidarity with the colonial peoples, and the fight for a properly-trained and organised Party, bodily and mentally bound up with the masses, through factory groups and Leninist training.

But events since the Party Congress have also a direct bearing upon each of these questions. Take the fight for leadership of the trade unions. The struggle of the organised workers of Britain against the capitalist offensive is one of the biggest factors which will decide how the British capitalist class will succeed in solving, not only its internal problems (production and taxation), but also its external problems (the Dawes Report and the Pact). The Party Congress laid down that the Party must demonstrate its own necessity to the workers by active participation in their struggles, and must expose the policy of class collaboration, practised by the reformist leaders, not only by direct attack but also by practical example.

Events since the Party Congress have shown that this was the right and only line to take. Almost on the morrow of the Congress came the Unity Conference of June 4th, at which the majority of the delegates present were frankly opposed to a simultaneous attack on the employers, although to keep the workers quiet they subscribed to the abstract principle of "co-ordination between the unions." Since then a committee has been working to draft a constitution for an alliance, and quite possibly this too may have been approved in principle by the time these lines appear. But the reformist trade union leaders continue to ridicule or attack the idea of a joint strike of all unions, thus attacking the only real guarantee that the Alliance will come into existence. They continue to carry on this policy, notwithstanding the fact that the miners, railwaymen, engineers and textile workers are already face to face with definite demands for lowering wages and lengthening hours.

Unstable and confused elements amongst the so-called "Left-wing" leaders of the trade unions are beginning

already to drop the cry of a "Workers' Alliance," and to snatch at the panacea of a Special Trade Union Congress. This watchword, put forward by our Party, is of meaning only as a supplement to the Workers' Alliance, and if the determination to fight which is widespread amongst the workers expresses itself so definitely that the leaders are forced to put it into action. But if the reformist leaders can successfully defy the call for a Workers' Alliance, they will be all the stronger in resisting a general mobilisation of forces for action by the Trade Union Congress.

And the same applies to international trade union unity. In the long run, the success of this slogan has depended upon the resoluteness of the workers and the forced silence of the reformist leaders. But if the latter find themselves strong enough to resist the fight against the bosses at home, which is the real mainspring of the workers' determination to have world unity, they will make short work at the Trade Union Congress, not only of the slogan, but of the small group of Left-wingers who advanced it and carried it to some measure of realisation. And, during the four weeks which have passed since the Party Congress, signs have not been wanting that the reformists are making their preparations, "on spec." (J. H. Thomas canvassed for the General Council, Cramp's articles against unity with the Russian unions, etc.).

* * * * *

What do these facts show? They show the correctness of the Party Congress' view, namely, that there is no "royal road" to trade union unity, national or international: no possibility of securing a fight against capitalism by chance combinations or skilful manœuvres of "left-wing" trade union leaders: no final way, in short, to ensure the real mobilisation of the workers, except by persistent, patient and concentrated work of the Party in the trade unions, through the development of the Minority Movement. Only this will give clarity and efficiency, not only to the instinctive revolt of the workers, but also to the groups of "left-wingers" amongst the trade union officials. And the work has to be twofold, the two aspects being intimately bound up with each other—namely, putting forward concrete demands for the workers, and supporting every practical fight in a practical way, and conducting a fearless campaign of exposure of the reformists and explanation of the specially dangerous part they are playing at the present moment. In particular, the demands put forward by the Congress for the trade union movement as a whole—factory committees,

councils of action, a Workers' Alliance—have been more than justified by subsequent events.

* * * * *

With regard to the fight against reformism in the Labour Party. The Congress laid down that the first task of the Party in relation to the Labour Party was to show the workers how the reformists "make the Labour movement the instrument of Imperialism": and the second task "the consolidation of the working class elements within the Labour Party" into a working class or left-wing bloc. Events since the Congress have amply justified this decision.

If we take the principal issues facing the Labour Party which have arisen during these four weeks, we have the clearest possible illustration of how urgent is the need for a fight against reformism, how it must be fought not only in the "right," but also in the "left" wing, and how sure we are of a mass response if we make up our minds to organise the workers in a practical struggle against reformism.

We have already seen, for example, how important is the question of the Pact for the world Labour movement, and particularly for that of Great Britain. Yet where opposition to the Pact has made itself felt in the Parliamentary or leading circles of Labour Party, it has been along the same lines as that put forward by Liberals—namely, concern for the question of guarantees against French aggression on the Rhine (whereas the present domination of Anglo-American capital over Germany is far more real and deadly than a possible attack on Germany by France); and complete silence about the *real* enemy aimed at in the Pact, albeit unmentioned throughout the documents—namely, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Again, on the subject of China, notwithstanding all the sentimental writings of the Labour press, the debate in Parliament revealed one of the most shameful and nauseating capitulations to the capitalists on the part of the Labour Party group that we have seen. No sympathy with the Chinese people is genuine, unless it is accompanied by readiness to help them in practice. The practical menace facing the Chinese workers at the moment was not "Western Imperialism" in general, but British bayonets in particular. Those British bayonets had been introduced to "protect the lives and property of British subjects"—which needed protection only because Great Britain maintains an iniquitous system of foreign extra-territorial privileges, of which the right to sweat Chinese workers with impunity is only a part.

To tolerate for a single moment the presence of British forces in China, on any pretext whatsoever, means that one is doing nothing to sweep away that system, but rather help-

ing it to continue. And this means nothing less than playing the game of British capitalism, bolstering it up just at the moment when it is menaced. Yet all sections of the Parliamentary Labour Party were unanimous in declaring that "the lives and property of British subjects must be protected." That Ramsay MacDonald made the most meaningless and helpless speech of his life, was to be expected: but it is significant that Johnston, a "left-wing" leader, was equally emphatic on this point. Equally illuminating has been the attitude of the Labour Party leaders, Right and Left, on the subject of the Colonial Preference duties: but this can be left until later.

No less striking than the reformism displayed by the Labour Party leaders has been the response of the workers to the class declarations made by the Party on the subject of China, in scores of resolutions (including those passed by such bodies as the London and Manchester Trades Councils, representing tens of thousands of workers), which show not merely sentimental sympathy with the Chinese people, but understanding that their struggle against British Imperialism makes them the allies of British Labour. Thus we have had, since the Party Congress, yet one more opportunity of testing the class instinct of the masses, such as we had before the Congress in the campaigns on the Dawes Report, the anti-war week, against the bullying of Egypt, etc., and of ascertaining that amongst the workers, if not amongst the leaders, the basis exists for a genuine working class bloc.

* * * * *

But the most direct evidence that the Congress was right in its decisions is the Labour Party Executive's decision to issue a new series of resolutions for the next Labour Party Conference, which amount in effect to a re-statement of programme. Labour and the Nation, Foreign Policy, Unemployment, the Empire, Foreign Trade, Agriculture, Banking, Social Welfare—all these subjects are dealt with. And on all these questions there is a definite declaration of reformist principles, of the most unashamed opportunism, of a complete break with Socialism. So much so, indeed, that—comically enough—even the *New Leader* feels itself safe in denouncing the programme as "Imperialist"!

Why is this programme direct evidence that our Congress decisions were both correct and timely? Because it places upon our Party the direct responsibility for taking the resolutions one by one, exposing before the workers their reformist and anti-working class character, strengthening our attack by the force of contrast, *i.e.*, by providing our

own alternative resolutions, and, last, but in nowise least, for organising a definite body of resistance at the Conference, based upon the class struggle.

Why does the responsibility fall upon our Party? Because, outside our Party, there is no force which can organise such a definite resistance : in other words, because individual attempts to set up a "left-wing" apart from, in some cases even against, the Party have been and must be foredoomed to failure.

Our Party, which has its ear to the ground, listening to the workers, not concentrated on whispers and intrigues in Parliamentary lobbies or trade union offices, is the only force which is both strong enough and obliged to put forward definite counter-proposals to the workers, to expose the proposals of the reformists, to invite left-wingers in the I.L.P. and the Labour Party to join with us in a workers' bloc if they will ; to criticise them and expose their errors if they waver. Our Congress decisions have already begun to be proved correct in this respect no less than in others.

* * * * *

In the fight for solidarity with the Colonial peoples, the Party Congress laid down as the Party policy that the interests of the masses urgently demand the break-up of the British Empire. It denounced the Labour Imperialists, whose function it is to reconcile the British workers with the Empire. And it warned the workers against the imperialist prejudices which had penetrated even into the "left-wing." Was the Congress right and timely in its decision? We have seen that it was in the case of China. But the proof was still more abundant in the case of the Preference duties (on dried fruits, sugar and tobacco).

Free Trade was the doctrine of British capitalism in the days when it enjoyed the undivided monopoly of the world's markets for industrial goods. Free Trade enabled it to get cheap raw materials and sell the finished products under the most advantageous conditions. Protection was a demand which came into being when industrial competitors came into the field. During the war, which stimulated industrial development in many countries, and since the peace, which has set up the reparations system as a permanent source of competition with British manufacturers, the idea of Protection won many more powerful adherents amongst the capitalists. The workers and the middle class have always feared Protection, and the Liberal and Labour Parties in the past have always fought it, for the simple reason that Protection of home industries means a monopoly for home capitalists, *i.e.*, full freedom for trusts to raise prices. The same applied particularly to foodstuffs, which are mostly imported.

But to-day the fight for Protection has taken a new form. It is not merely that British industry is declining rapidly. It is that in the colonies a native capitalist class has grown up, out of the industry and commerce created by the investment of British capital. The native capitalists have interests of their own. Even in the white colonies (Australia, New Zealand, etc.), they want freedom to develop their own industries; they want freedom to buy in other markets than British. In the case of Canada, they even see their economic interests tending towards political union with other States.

In the case of the "slave" (black, brown and yellow) colonies, the disruptive tendencies are even stronger. Their special feature—the feature which gave British Imperialism its big start thirty years ago—was the abundance of both cheap raw materials and cheap slave labour. To-day, there is a class of native capitalists who want to exploit this natural wealth themselves, and find British Imperialism in their way. Still more, a native proletariat has been created, which is not only struggling for freedom itself, but is learning to lead the still more downtrodden peasantry (India, South Africa, West Indies) against British rule.

In other words, the British Empire is breaking up. And, to meet this desperate situation, the British capitalist class has invented a desperate expedient—the cry of "Imperial Preference." Why is it a desperate expedient? Because it will not save British industry. No markets in Australia, Canada or South Africa can possibly compensate for the loss of markets in Europe or the Far East. But it will (or the British capitalists hope it will) retain the White colonies a little longer as a field for favourable investment for British capital, and induce the British workers to agree to the continued sweating of the slave colonies.

The idea is that, under the cover of "Empire Preference," special advantages shall be given to the produce of the White colonies, in return for which they may consent to take larger quantities of British manufactured goods (ships, metal goods, textiles, etc.), which may increase employment for a section of the British workers. In the case of the slave colonies, in addition, it is hoped to interest the British workers in the continuation of British rule, by holding out the prospect of cheaper foods (not that in reality this will materialise, as the bulk of the principal foodstuffs comes and is bound to come, from outside the Empire).

* * * * *

What was the duty of every honest Socialist, *i.e.*, of every worker out for the overthrow of capitalism, when the Preference duties were introduced? Was it not to expose

the duties as an instrument for perpetuating the rule of British Imperialism, under the cloak of fine phrases about "the British Commonwealth"? Was it not to show that, if the British capitalists really wanted cheap foodstuffs and new markets, they could turn to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, with its 130 million people, as against the 15 million or so scattered throughout the White Empire (outside Britain)? Was it not to tear the mask from the hypocrisy which advertised the "fair wage" clause prevailing in Australia, and reveal the unwritten "sweated wage" law which exists for at least 85 per cent. of the peoples of the British Empire? Was it not, in short, to denounce both Liberals and Tories as equal sweaters and oppressors, and to refuse to vote for Preference, not as a gesture either for Free Trade or against Protection, but as a signal to the colonial peoples that the British workers would stand by them in their revolt? This was the duty of honest Socialists. But, as the Party Congress foretold, it was not only the open anti-Socialists of the Labour Party front bench who swelled the Preference majority. It was also a large section of the "left-wing" including the Glasgow group and the Lansbury group.

It is, perhaps, too early to say whether the left-wing voted in this way simply because they had not realised all the implications, or because they deliberately shirk the task of smashing British Imperialism, out of contempt or distrust for the colonial peoples. But that, after all, is a secondary matter: the important thing is that our Congress did not under-estimate the magnitude of the task facing our Party, or its urgency. As has been already pointed out, an attack on China or a revolt in India may raise the matter as one of life or death at any moment. But, at the same time, it is already safe to say that, if Kirkwood, Lansbury and Wheatley have not understood our Party position, thousands of workers have shown that *they* understand it.

* * * * *

On the development of Leninist training and re-organisation on the factory group basis, the Congress defined these as the "internal tasks" of bolshevisation—tasks which must be urgently begun. The four weeks since the Congress have brought sufficient illustrations of the truth of this. For Leninist training, we need take only two questions—that of the Preference duties, and that of our alternative programme for the Labour Party conference. It is easy to bring forward Free Trade arguments against Protection. But our need is to bring forward class war arguments against Empire Preference—class war arguments which are really Leninist, i.e., take into account *all* the factors in the class war (in-

cluding the colonial peasantry) not only those which we shall find within the four corners of Great Britain. And this without Leninist training is a matter of chance, as we see in the case of the "leftest" of "left-wingers."

The necessity for providing an alternative programme for the Labour Party Conference, again, raises a number of questions on which we must seek guidance in the spirit of Marx and Lenin. Is a programme of immediate demands a Communist programme? Can there be a revolutionary programme without its being a Communist programme? And then on the question of tactics. Can there be a revolutionary left wing without the participation of the Party? Is the Party something which, together with the left-wing, *contributes* to the progress of the revolution: or does it *lead* the revolution a step further by bringing together a left-wing?

These are urgent questions—questions of practical politics—which were partly answered by the Congress; but, unless we get to work ourselves along the lines laid down by the Congress, it is obvious that we cannot give the final and definite answers which events themselves are insistently pressing us to give.

* * * * *

As for the question of factory groups, several facts of a various character have already provided us with new proofs of their importance. Their primary and permanent value, as the only means of contact between the Party and the widest mass of the workers—in contrast even with the trade unions, let alone the Labour Party, in which at present only a small minority of the workers take an active part—has been specially brought home to us by the organisation of the reformist leaders to save the situation for capitalists, both at the June 4th conference and on the question of world trade union unity. Only by working from the bottom up, deeper down even than the trade union branches, can we hope to create that activity amongst the masses, that pressure from them, without which even the boldest "left-wing" trade union leaders will be held in check by the Right (even if they are bold enough to come into the Minority Movement. To take an even more familiar example, the fact that Lansbury, by using his personal influence at the Poplar Electricity Station, was able to break a political strike which enjoyed the support of all the workers of Poplar—and thousands outside—drives home its own obvious lesson.

Again, the questions of Imperial Preference and the Chinese revolt have raised issues on which experience shows that it is particularly easy to confuse and divide the British:

workers, thanks to their long unshaken position as a world aristocracy of Labour. On such issues our Party needs above all to be in daily contact with the mass of the workers, explaining and arguing.

Finally, the campaign against our Party is becoming increasingly bitter. The weekly speeches of the Home Secretary are none the less menacing because of their lies and their ignorance. The campaign of the reactionary press, openly demanding our suppression, is becoming daily more outspoken: they are both reinforced, with exactly the same arguments, by Mr. Snowden, Mr. MacDonald and others. Our Party Congress said frankly that we must expect a period of increasing reactionary pressure, as the British capitalists become more desperate. At such a moment, experience tells us that we must come still more closely into the heart of the working class, from which no repressions can tear us, but whence on the contrary (dozens of our factory groups will confirm this) we draw new and fresh forces for our Party day by day.

* * * * *

We can now answer the questions we asked ourselves at the beginning. Did the Congress draw up a correct estimate of the present situation in which the Party must work? It did. Did the Congress give the Party the right lines on which to work, in the light of the present situation? It did. Working along those lines are we able to enlist the understanding of the masses, and transform it into practical activity? We are. Does that activity carry them a step further towards the realisation of their final goal—the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of the dictatorship of the workers? It does. Then we are justified in saying that the Party Congress was an adequate Bolshevik summing up of a year's hard work, and a good Bolshevik start-off for another year; and in feeling that the bolshevisation of the Party is not something which lies far ahead, but has actually begun.

C.M.R.

The Politics of the Co-operative Congress

By J. T. MURPHY

The Southport Congress of the Co-operatives has been variously referred to as a "revolutionary congress," a "democratic congress," "a milestone in co-operative history," etc. All of these descriptions, of course, are interesting, and no doubt, the respective enthusiasts could make out a case for their particular description. But it is not our intention to dwell upon the appropriateness of any one of these descriptions. Here we are anxious to take the measure of the politics of the Congress in order to get a correct appreciation of the tasks of the workers, and our Party in particular, in relation to this great movement.

There is no need for us to belabour the dead dog of "political neutrality." Our analysis will show that this Congress was as much involved in politics as any other congress which has any relation whatever to the social and economic life of the world. Indeed, it was most politically eloquent when it was striving to be non-political, and humanly tolerant.

In this respect, probably the printed reports are more eloquent than the Congress itself. I refer in particular to the reception given to the Russian delegates; to the treatment meted out to their reports, and the political observations they offered. No doubt the applause was tremendous. But there is no evidence of any other speaker in the Congress relating the most significant features of their report to the co-operative movement of this country.

Both delegates stated that without the active assistance of the Soviet Government it would have been impossible to make the remarkable progress they had made. No one drew attention to the contrast which this makes with the position of the co-operative movement here in relation to the Government of this country. Instead it would appear that the Congress, and especially the leaders of the Congress, were patting themselves on the back for being "so tolerant," "so sportsmanlike," "such good fellows," to listen to two communists from a "foreign country," give five-minute speeches. The most ideal Christian Liberal could not beam with more unctuous self-complacency than they.

But to discuss the speeches, the practical application of communist principles to the co-operative movement, ye gods!

We have only to read the "Co-operative News" regularly to appreciate what would happen under such circumstances.

CONSERVATISM IN THE RANKS.

But this attitude of the Congress, accompanied by a boycott of information in the printed reports to the Congress, and the silence after the Congress, cannot be taken at its face value of "benevolent toleration." It means much more than that. It reveals only too clearly the political backwardness of the co-operators, and the strength of conservatism in the ranks of the co-operative movement of this country.

Apart from the speeches of the two Communist co-operators from the Soviet Union, there was hardly a speech throughout the Congress which could not have been delivered by a Tory or a Liberal, and the most radical of the speeches by a tame Labour politician.

Still more eloquent are the decisions of the Congress with regard to the relations of the co-operatives and the trade unions, nationally and internationally. Nationally, the machinery for jointly settling disputes between the co-operatives and the trade unions had broken down, while no machinery existed at all for the joint action of the co-operatives and the trade unions against capitalism. The key to the disputes which have torn the movement for years only serves to prove the domination of conservatism in the co-operatives.

More than all the differences concerning representation and machinery the demand of the co-operative union, that the Trade Board rates take precedence of trade union negotiation, has been the source of the troubles of the two bodies.

The Trade Boards, as everybody knows, were created for the regulation of wages, where the trade unions were too weak to be effective—they were intended for the protection of sweated labour. To permit these regulations to form the foundation upon which the trade unions had to build their case, and their conditions, on the plea that these conditions governed their competitors is actually to reduce the co-operative movement to the level of their competitors in the realm of exploitation. The breakdown was therefore inevitable. But if inevitable in this direction, how great is the distance between the present and the transformation which is necessary to make the co-operatives into fighting allies of the trade unions in the class war!

RETREAT FROM GHENT.

Internationally, the retreat has been equally pronounced. It will be remembered the British co-operators played a leading rôle in the Ghent Congress last year against the Alliance of

the International Co-operative Alliance with the Trade Union Internationals. The Ghent Congress, as the report to the Southport Congress shows, retreated from the projected closer co-operation of the I.C.B. with International Federation of Trade Unions. This retreat was conducted ostensibly to wait and see what turned up from the negotiations for International Trade Union Unity. Actually, the decision was taken because the revolutionary workers appeared on the horizon in the form of the Red International of Labour Unions.

The fear of contact with any body of workers who were really anxious to do battle with capitalism dominated the I.C.A., in which the British co-operatives play a leading part. The British co-operators had not yet had the experience of revolutionary struggles or a strong working-class challenge within its ranks, and, consequently, retreat from something they did not understand was easier than a direct challenge.

The Southport Congress accepted the I.C.A. report without challenge. The political retreat of the co-operative union away from the working-class struggle was thus conducted on all fronts.

It may be argued that this retreat was not so complete. It will be said that the Congress endorsed the report of the Co-operative Party, that no protest was made against this party on the grounds of "political neutrality"; that it was also agreed that the Co-operative Party should seek harmonious relations with the Labour Party and the latter's accommodation to this new development. Objectively speaking, there is something to be said for this argument, in that it certainly places co-operators in a very weak position to defend "political neutrality" when the same people organise a Co-operative Political Party. It is certainly important that the Co-operative Party seeks accommodation with the Labour Party. But in neither case does it minimise the conscious political retreat from identification with the workers' struggle. On the contrary, the Co-operative Party, and its approach to the Labour Party, may mean for some time the strengthening of the reactionary forces of the whole movement, labour and co-operative, especially if the conscious political efforts of the Co-operative Party are as reactionary as the politics of the reactionaries of the Labour movement.

In this respect we need only refer to the Congress resolution endorsing the policy of the Labour Government. This, we all know, included "the continuity of capitalism"; the change from opposition to the Versailles Treaty to its endorsement as a basis for its foreign policy; the signing of the capitalist "United Front" expressed in the Dawes Report; the continuation of Imperialist repression in the dependencies as a means of cementing the Empire; the use of military in strikes—in short, the defence of capitalism against the workers and the exploited everywhere.

CO-OPERATION AND IMPERIALISM.

The magnitude of the retreat at this Congress is evidenced in the Chairman's address, and the general conduct of the proceedings. The opening speech was the most amazing endorsement of Imperialism that could possibly come from a Co-operative Congress, or, in fact, from any Congress.

"While addressing ourselves to the subject of our relations in distant parts," the President continued, "**our hearts and eyes compel us to call to mind our kith and kin comprising the wider parts of the Empire—Canada, New Zealand, India, West Africa, etc.**" His own visit to Australia and New Zealand in 1920, in the interests of co-operative development, was an experience never to be forgotten. There is to be found in these two countries, he said, a number of excellent societies, comprising also a large number of struggling ones. It is quite obvious that their one great need is a central producing and distributing agency. At home we are well possessed in this direction, but one cannot fail to ask: "Do we value this great service in the same degree as those who are denied the advantage of it?" The President was afraid not; but this failing, he remarked, "can only be remedied by ourselves."

Trading relations with the co-operators of those lands are greatly developing. But there is another side to the picture. It is not merely that they seek to import co-operatively-produced goods from this country, they desire also a market for their own co-operative produce. The definite character of these products—butter, cheese, fruits, and the like—has been considerably advertised of late. This post-war policy the co-operators of Great Britain assisted in advocating and advertising.

The co-operative developments of Canada are an outstanding testimony to the need of a closer imperial co-operative connection. **A question filled with such immense possibilities should occasion serious reflection, and the application of additional energy in developing a policy which is of supreme interest to the whole Empire.**

"Would it not increase our knowledge of the supply and demand on both sides if some official inter-communication on the subject was established, or if a conference of representatives of the interests involved was held?" (Applause.) Look at the relation of population:—

	Population.
British Isles	390.5 per square mile.
New Zealand	12.5 ,,
Canada	2.1 ,,
Australia	1.8 ,,

On this side of the world we have a great need of supplies, but on the other side there is a greater need of securing satisfactory markets for their commodities, eliminating all unnecessary intermediaries between producer and consumer.

Within this circle, the President ventured to suggest, there

is an opportunity of alleviating the pressing problem of unemployment. At the same time, **we cannot afford in the process to send our desirables abroad, and continue to admit undesirables into this country.** Our growing co-operative interests in India and Ceylon and our enterprise on the West Coast of Africa are worthy of the best reputation of the movement, and are indicative of **the progress that has been made in forging the commercial links of the Empire, but how much more there is to do in this direction co-operatively, and indeed generally, must be apparent to all;** and the President besought the co-operation of all in this fundamental effort.

I quote this statement at length because of the immense political significance of its content and presentation in relation to the working-class movement of the whole world. This statement was applauded without a single person in the audience indicating that this whole scheme of committing the co-operative movement to Imperialism was in flat contradiction to the pacificism with which the speaker attempted to identify it. Had Mr. Baldwin given the presidential address, he could not have drawn the co-operatives more closely to Imperialism than Mr. Dudley. It was followed by a denunciation of war, oblivious to the fact that the Empire itself, which he proposes to cement, is founded on anti-co-operative principles, and is maintained by iron oppression.

Yet there was no protest. The Congress applauded. The parsons preached. The audience sang hymns. The diners toasted "the King," as if "the King" was a feature of the "Co-operative Commonwealth." And not one protested.

CEMENTING THE EMPIRE.

But the significance of this retreat from the working class is more important to us at this moment than an extended denunciation. It is of no small interest and importance that, at a time when the Co-operative Congress concentrates its attention upon Empire building, that the Labour Party Executive should place upon the agenda of the next annual Conference of the Labour Party proposals wherein the British Empire is described as "The British Commonwealth of Nations," and grandiose schemes of Labour co-operation in Empire development are outlined. Nor is it without significance that in the same period a number of "Left Wing" Parliamentary Labour Party vote for Imperial Preference. There is, indeed, a close connection between all these phenomena.

The Labour Party leadership is composed in the main of middle class leaders and trade union leaders permeated, through and through, with ideas of class collaboration typical of the middle class. Those who do not belong to the Labour aristocracy, that is, the higher paid trades by profession, have been sufficiently long in positions of petty-bourgeois bureaucrats, that their mentality is practically the same. All of them approach the problems of trade unionism and politics

from the standpoint of a bargain between bosses and workers, and not as a fight of one class against another.

They are thus profoundly concerned, when the social foundations of their policy begin to crumble, and look for ways and means to hold their traditional situation together.

It is the same with the Parliamentary Left Wing. An examination of the social composition of those who voted with Thomas and the Tory Party for Imperial Preference will show it to be composed of skilled engineers, skilled railwaymen, teachers, parsons, doctors—trade union bureaucrats, and little business men. Animated by typical craft union motives, nationalistic sentiments, and the whole outfit of the "collective bargainers," they are terrified at the state of British industry, which reveals all the features of capitalism bankrupt, and unable to maintain the old privileged position of the labour aristocracy developed on the basis of Imperialist exploitation of the colonies and dependencies. Apparently incapable of understanding why they had the higher social conditions than the "foreigner," they can only blindly resent what is happening, and attempt to stem it by catching on to the panaceas of Imperialism.

CONGRESS PASSIVITY.

The same applies to the co-operative movement. The co-operatives, as economic organisations, have reacted profoundly to the dislocation of capitalist economy. They have grown up with Imperialism, and, at this moment, when they feel again a new impulse derived from the temporary stabilisation of capitalism, they cling to their traditional line of development, which is saturated throughout with the shopkeeper outlook. Dependent upon the workers mainly for their market, they are anxious to see the workers employed and able to spend their money with the "Co-ops." Just as other shopkeepers do, who are anxious to sell their goods, they plead for social peace in the midst of a class war, and become the hangers-on of the dominant political class.

British capitalism knows that its fate is sealed, and struggles to save itself by a concentrated development of the economy within the framework and extension of its possessions. The Co-operative movement, dominated by Conservatism, reacts to this development, and, as good opportunists, tries to make good business without regard to principles, or the class interests involved.

The Co-operative Congress, therefore, feeling at one with the Labour bureaucracy and Parliamentarians, moved away from working class politics and clung to Imperialism for salvation. It refused the path of struggle, though unable to escape it. It shut its eyes to the lessons of the Russian revolution, and longed for the return of capitalism to the "normal." The politics of the Co-operative Congress and the vagaries of Labour politicians indicate the bewilderment of the middle classes and the Labour aristocracy, before the crumbling of the Empire's foundations and the intensification of the class war.

Beginnings of Communism

By JAMES CONNOLLY

This fragment from Connolly's writing is now published, we believe, for the first time. We have printed the whole MS. just as we have received it, without any kind of alteration—Ed., "Communist Review."

FOREWORD.

By Arthur Macmanus.

In reproducing the following MS., the "Communist Review" once more honours the memory of one of the best fighters and leaders in the modern proletarian movement. But the document is not merely one of historical interest, as coming from the pen of James Connolly; it contains actual valuable lessons for us to-day. Some of these are enumerated in the covering letter from the author's son, which is also published.

It is very interesting to note the commentary of Connolly on the dangers and disasters attendant on those revolts and insurrectionary movements which look for their leadership purely to those who have mechanically sprung forward in the moment of crisis. Connolly's observations, that the surer road to success would have been found by relying upon those who had, by energy and devotion, striven to make the crisis into a living thing, are a remarkable anticipation of Zinoviev's speech at the recent meeting of the Enlarged Executive Committee of the Communist International.

With all the experiences of recent years, which include actual revolutionary struggles in Russia, Germany, Italy, Hungary, and so on, at our disposal, Zinoviev felt compelled, in his thesis on Bolshevisation, to combat the still prevalent idea that a crisis will, of necessity, throw up its own leadership and that automatically such leadership is completely reliable. He indicated, without disparaging the really good elements which undoubtedly are thrown forward in a crisis, that nevertheless the surer Marxian way is to place faith in those who, by their untiring efforts and devotion in the days and years preceding the crisis—years of depression and slow development—, have helped to make such a crisis a real living thing, and who breathe its principles, its very reality. This, in itself, is a remarkable tribute to the political sagacity of Connolly and gives still more proof that he was not blind to the lessons of history.

The scope of the article—for it cannot be called more than an article—reveals diligent research work on the part of Connolly, and the publication undoubtedly brings to the notice of many of us historical events of first rate proletarian interest.

LETTER FROM CONNOLLY'S SON.

Dear Comrade,

April 25th, 1925.

In looking over some of my father's papers, I came across the enclosed fragment—a regular jewel from the vast treasure-chest of proletarian history, flashing in every direction brilliant lessons for the future proletarian revolutionists. Here we have the history of the first Communist Government in history; the oft-repeated proof of the invincibility of a movement uniting workers and peasants; the necessity of a proletarian movement relying solely on a leadership

sprung from its own ranks, and "breathing" the very principles of revolution—in fact, the necessity of forging our own leadership and rejecting that of the petty bourgeoisie; and, finally, the fate that awaits the unsuccessful attempt at revolt at the hands of the blood-thirsty villainous master-class. The tragedy is that the author himself fell a victim to the blood-thirsty vengeance of the British Imperialists, just as the same fate befell those doughty revolutionists in Germany, and particularly in Münster, 400 years ago.

The article was in rough MS., difficult to decipher in parts—on small sheets of paper. I have reproduced the fragments, only placing a (?) about those words which I could not make out clearly, and adding in () words accidentally omitted.

Yours fraternally,
RODERICK CONNOLLY.

THE CONNOLLY MS.

. . . that the revolt against social oppression was present at the birth of its opponent, and has kept even pace with its growth and development ever since.

I do not intend, to-day, to go further back in history than the Middle Ages for my facts. Not because more ancient history would not be equally fruitful in its lessons, but because the facts pertaining to the Middle Ages are more easily accessible, and therefore the statements I may make may be the more easily verified or disproved. But I may say in passing that from the break-up of tribal communism human society was continually convulsed with struggles, as one set of individuals strove to assume power and social domination over another—strove to form themselves into a ruling class. But such struggles (p. 4 . . .) are too remote from the present to be chronicled—indeed they have left no chronicle except such as can be built up by piecing together the legends and traditions of the older races. These legends exist in all countries. In Ireland even there is incorporated in an old Irish history, written in the Gaelic language by Geoffrey Keating, the rôle of a plebeian uprising about 2,000 years ago, or contemporaneous with the birth of Christ. This old Irish historian who, of course, wrote for the descendants of those who conquered the rebels he speaks of, calls it a "conspiracy formed by the common and rascally people of the kingdom, the ordinary mechanics, and the meanest of the plebeians, to dethrone the reigning monarch, and to (murder(?)) the nobility, and by that means to seize upon the government." One would almost imagine on reading that, that he was reading the account of the Paris Commune by some capitalist pressman of to-day.

(Ten pages missing).

P. 14 . . . "In those days there shall be no king or subject on the earth, and all imports and taxes shall cease; no one shall force another to do anything, for all shall be equal brothers and sisters. As in the town of (Tabor?) there is no mine or thine, but all is held in common, so shall everything be in common."

The town of Tabor was isolated from all help from outside, was attacked by five different crusades, and had to fight for its very existence against the leagues organised (against

by the Catholic and Protestant princes, yet it lasted from 1,420 to 1,456 years. It founded compulsory and universal military service, was the first to employ artillery in the field, founded schools, kept up a vigorous propaganda throughout Europe, acquired such a reputation as fighters that armies have fled at its very name, and it was only suppressed at last by a combination of half of Europe against it. Not a bad record!

P. 15 . . . Next in point of chronology came the Peasant Wars of Germany. The programmes adopted by these peasants in revolt were for the most part a curious mixture of communal and petty private ownership (ideology). They demanded as a rule the communal ownership of forestry, rivers, fields of pasturage, game, birds and fish. They strove to limit the amount of service required by the nobility, and to vest the rights of citizenship in all landowners, irrespective of how small might be their freehold. But in the stress of insurrection they often went beyond their original demands, and strove to destroy the nobility whom they had formerly served. Thus the insurgents in the diocese of Speyer declared they had united to abolish all authorities except the emperor, that the property of the nobility and clergy would be confiscated, and all tithes and custom house duties done away with. This was in 1502.

P. 16 . . . In 1486 a peasant uprising took place in Bavaria, in 1491-2 in the domains of the Prince Abbot of (—), in 1493 in Strassburg, in 1502 in Speyer, in 1513 in Boden, in 1514 in Wurtemberg; in 1517 another attempt was made in Boden. All these from 1486 to 1517 were Roman Catholic revolts. That is to say, that the nobility and the peasants in revolt were both Catholics—both sides had their priests and held the same religious beliefs. In 1524 began the Great Peasant War. It affected all Germany, and was mainly a non-Catholic insurrection. The insurgents appealed to the Bible as their inspiration, and formulated twelve articles of faith, the principal of which demanded that land should be common property, and that there should be a gradual equalisation of incomes and financial positions. This insurrection at first swept all before. The towns made common cause with the peasantry, and their united arms swept away all opposition for a time.

P. 17 . . . As their successes increased so grew their hatred of the ruling class, until at last, after a victory at Weissberg, every one booted and spurred, that is, everyone who wore the badges of aristocracy, was doomed to perish. Of course, all the aristocracy joined against the poor in revolt. This was the time of the Great Protestant Reformation, when religious animosities were at their height. Luther was at the zenith of his power, and Catholic hostility to him was at its greatest. And yet, against the peasants all the warring aristocrats of all religions united. Armies led by the Protestant reformer hastened to the aid of Catholic princes, and Lutheran and (—) stopped persecuting one

another in order to stamp out the common danger to their right to rob and rule. Luther wrote a book in which he advocated assassination of the insurgents. He said, "In the case of an insurgent, every man is both judge and executioner. Therefore whoever can should strangle and stab—such, privately or publicly, and think nothing so venomous, pernicious, and devilish as an insurgent."

P. 18 . . . What might have been the result had the insurgents been better led it is now hard to conjecture. But at the highest point of their success they committed an error very common with people in revolt; they chose as their leaders men whom the insurrection itself had swept into prominence, instead of men who had worked to make it a reality, and who, therefore, breathed its principles. These leaders were respectively, Gotz of (Berliden?) and Ulrich of Wurtemberg—the first a bandit-noble, the second a bankrupt duke. These two leaders betrayed their followers, took sides in an acute crisis of the struggle with the aristocrats to whom by birth they belonged, and the insurrection was, in consequence, lost. The failure was followed by the usual atrocities with which the ruling class avenge every rebellion against their rule. Casimir, of Brandenburg, put out in one day the eyes of fifty-seven citizens of (Nitzinginnen?), and cut off the fingers of vast numbers more.

P. 19 . . . (Autsine?), of Lorraine, slaughtered 20,000 peasants. Bishop Garz estimated that 150,000 peasants were slaughtered. Albert, of Prussia, compelled his peasants to kneel down before him, and then ordered his artillery to fire upon the kneeling people. The town of Mulhausen was sacked and 300 people were beheaded. Casimir, of Brandenburg, executed, after the fighting was over, 500 persons, and would have executed more but for his brother, who said to him, "If we exterminate all our people where shall we get other peasants to live upon?" These few instances give a faint idea of the vindictiveness of the ruling class towards those who had revolted.

As a sample of the ideas for which these peasants fought and for which they died, allow me to quote briefly from the programme drawn up by the insurrectionists in the Tyrol.

P. 20 . . . It declared that all social arrangements were to be founded on human freedom and equality, all privileges to be abolished as contrary to the word of God and Justice, no one having a right to any advantage over another. All castles and fortresses were to be destroyed. Foundries or mines belonging to nobles, foreign merchants, or trading companies to be confiscated—a superintendent being appointed to manage them in the general interest. No one would be allowed to lend at usury, for there would be no individual trading for profit. Stores would be opened at certain localities, where all things necessary would be sold at cost price, the managers or general superintendents being allowed no profits, but paid fixed salaries. A government to be elected by the people. There were also many propositions dealing with forms of religious worship,

which I have cut out as foreign to the subject we are dealing with.

P. 21 . . . It is noteworthy that the Tyrolese mining districts were all hotbeds of insurrection in this period. Class consciousness was beginning to develop even then.

The last with which I propose to deal in this paper was (is?) the Anabaptist community at Munster, Germany. The Anabaptists were a religious body—the predecessors of the Baptist religion of to-day. But, in addition to their religious teaching, they held very strong views upon the righteousness of private property, and of war. They found recruits in great numbers all over Germany and Holland, especially among the people and in the districts sympathetic to the peasants in their last insurrection. At first the Anabaptists were non-resistants, and some remained so to the last, but they suffered so much from the terrible persecutions of the time that a majority eventually appealed to the sword.

P. 22 . . . In the course of their struggles, and as a result of their propaganda, they had secured the adhesion of a majority of the citizens of the town of Munster. Most of their adherents were workmen, and as the trade guilds of that day were an integral part of the government of the city, it was easy for them to make their influence felt. After a good deal of vicissitudes in the contest the trades captured a majority in the municipal council, and immediately the aristocratic party withdrew, and appealed to the sword. This happened in February, 1534. Immediately the old story of (the) union of all sections of the aristocracy against anything in the nature of a social revolution was re-enacted. The princes and nobility of all Germany united against Munster and laid siege to the city. Two months after it fell into the hands of the people they declared a complete system of communism.

P. 23 . . . And it was maintained until the end of the siege in June, 1535. The city held out under this communist government for 16 months, and kept at bay the trained soldiers of the hereditary rulers of Germany. Various expeditions were organised for its relief from Holland and other parts of Germany, but they were all interrupted and broken up. The most terrible punishments were meted out to the sympathisers. In one case (five?) shiploads (of sympathisers) bound for Munster were scuttled and sank with all on board. In another (case), in Friesland four hundred men and women were put to death—the men beheaded, the women drowned. In about twenty cities attempts at insurrection on behalf of Munster were made, and failed. Finally, treachery delivered the city into the hands of the aristocratic party, and when it was captured everybody in it was put to death.

P. 24 . . . The insurrection in Munster was largely mixed up with religious fanaticism, and it was such fanaticism that gave to it some of the excesses which characterised its closing months, but all its enemies are united in declaring that it was its communist character and preaching which made it so formidable to the ruling powers, and so attractive to the poor.

The Blood on the Cotton

By M.H.D.

To Marxians, it is a familiar fact that the vaunted "free labour" of our modern industrial system is really *forced labour*, differing only in small degree and in the nature of the force from the labour of the serf or the slave. Liberal economists conceal this indecent fact with talk of "economic freedom" and the equality of the worker to compete with any member of society, just as the Victorian bourgeois used to avoid the indecent suggestion of a piano-leg by the use of delicate drapery. Occasionally, however, some less prudish fellow decides to dispense with this irritating drapery and shows us the bare reality beneath.

The early 19th century colonial theorist, Gibbon Wakefield, saw the true facts of wage-labour quite clearly when he pointed out that colonisation was bound to be a failure unless, in place of free land grants, a price was charged to settlers for land, in order "to prevent labourers from turning into landowners too soon." "In old countries," this bourgeois realist wrote, "combination and constancy of labour is provided for without effort or thought on the part of the capitalist, and merely by the abundance of labourers for hire. In colonies labour for hire is scarce." (*The Art of Colonisation*, 170 and 347).

Screwing the African Natives

In the same way our Imperialists, in their attempts to encourage cotton production in East Africa, where the basis of capitalism in a proletariat robbed of the land and other means of livelihood is absent, are insisting that a basis for capitalist exploitation must be created by exerting various forms of "pressure" on the natives to supply cheap labour. And from this crude uncovering of naked realities Liberals, inside and outside the Labour Party, shudderingly retreat to their draperies with cries of alarm.

Imperialism is capitalism in its final stage of concentrated monopoly, which seeks to extend its control over non-capitalist or "backward" countries, and so to acquire the monopoly profits of cheap colonial labour applied to the production of raw materials or of finished products. This is a general statement, and is apt to become a mere lifeless dogma (like so much of pre-war Anglo-American Marxism!) unless seen in relation to detailed examples. These details, however, are very clearly and abundantly supplied for us by a recent report on the condition of East Africa, presented by a Commission to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.* This Commission, appointed

* *Report of the East Africa Commission*. H.M. Stationery Office, Cmd. 2,387. Price, 3s. 6d. net.

under the Labour Government, and consisting of a Conservative, the Hon. W. Ormsby-Gore, M.P. (now Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies), a Liberal, Mr. F. C. Linfield, M.P., and a Labour Imperialist, Major A. G. Church, M.P., together with an official of the Colonial Office as secretary, has conducted a survey of conditions in the British East African colonies. These consist of Northern Rhodesia, Nyassaland, Tanganyika, Uganda and Kenya Crown Colony (formerly German East Africa).

The report, which is comprehensive and detailed, provides an excellent survey of the process of Imperialism in this type of country. In other countries, of course, conditions will be different and the methods of Imperialism will be different; but here, as elsewhere, behind the differences of form we see the facts of capitalist exploitation.

The importance of this area to British Imperialism can be estimated if one remembers that in the North it touches the Sudan and the upper reaches of the Nile and Abyssinia (to whose Sultan, Ras Tafari, British Imperialism has already given an "adviser"!), while on the West its boundaries touch the Belgian Congo, and in the South it joins with British East Africa. It is the valuable central link in Rhodes' scheme of a British hegemony from the Cape to Cairo. As yet no railway, such as Rhodes contemplated, makes a continuous line from North to South, but two railways cross the territory from the coast inland, the one from the port of Dar-es-Salaam to Lake Tanganyika, the other from Mombasa, in Kenya, up to Lake Victoria Nyanza. The value of these railways in bringing trade to British ports and British companies is seen from the fact that the country "offers unique opportunities for the further development of cotton, coffee, tobacco, groundnuts, sisal, and maize." In Uganda there is also some sugar and rubber production, as well as traces of oil. Most important of these at the moment for the needs of British capitalism is cotton. Hence British capital is sought for investment in this transport development; and . . . British capital requires security and good dividends!

To build these railways, which, as the Report urges, are so necessary to make possible the opening-up of the country, labour, of course, is needed. To work the cotton and coffee plantations, labour is also needed. Moreover, this labour is required at a "*fair market price*" according to capitalist ideas of "fairness," which means at a wage low enough to yield adequate surplus-value to the investor in railways and to the owners of the plantations. Otherwise, what profit is it for the capitalist to invest in Uganda and Kenya rather than at home?

From Free-man to Wage Slave

Now, if the native inhabitant of the territory has land of his own to cultivate, as is his customary right, what incentive is there for him to leave his tribe and his tribal

lands and work to create surplus-value for the white invader? Naturally, under such conditions of "free choice," this incentive does not exist. Accordingly, if capitalist production is to be established, some "pressure" has to be exerted upon the native to make of him a pliable and obedient proletarian, willing to sell his labour for wages to the white planter or the officials of the railway company. By such "pressure" some basis for a wage system can be laid.

Pressure on the native, to force him to work for wages, takes two forms: *First*, there is the cutting down of the native land reserves, so as to diminish the area available to them for cultivation—a movement similar to the enclosures in this country. This has been done so that some of the most fertile areas have been alienated to the British, and the natives forced to content themselves with areas of much less fertile yield. In the case of Uganda this began with an Agreement in 1900 with the native king, by which half of the land went as Crown land to the British Government and half to the natives. Since then the native reserves have been continually reduced, especially since the war, in order to provide land for a settlement scheme for British ex-officers. Indeed, the English law, which the English Courts uphold, refuses to recognise native rights in any land at all, and regards native tribes in native "reserves" as mere "tenants at will of the Crown." The result has been that "without their being previously informed or consulted, native rights in their tribal land, whether communal or individual, have 'disappeared' in law and have been superseded by the rights of the Crown."

"At every meeting we had with the natives of Kenya," say the Commissioners, "there was evidence of a feeling of insecurity as regards the tenure of their lands. The legal position appears to be that no native or native tribe has any right to land in the Colony which can be recognised by the Courts."* This, like the enclosures in the country, is nothing else but legalised robbery. **Capitalist Imperialism is based on robbery.**

Second, pressure is exerted by a "Hut Tax," levied on the natives cultivating their own or tribal land in the reserves. The Report, indeed, placed first among the reasons for the native leaving the reserves to work for wages this need to obtain money to pay their taxes. According to Dr. Norman Leys, this "Hut Tax" is equivalent to the wages of three to four months' labour of those who earn.* Its total yield is about £575,000 (levied on 430,000 adult males), of which not more than 15 per cent. is spent for the benefit of the natives in medical services, and 4 to 5 per cent. on native education. Indeed, even the Kenya Convention, representing the white planters, declared in 1922, that "the Native Hut and Poll Tax is excessive and more than can be

* *The Report*, 28-9.

* *Manchester Guardian*, May 30.

reasonably borne by the natives.”* **Imperialism relies on the thumb-screw of exorbitant taxation to supply itself with cheap labour.**

In addition to this, there are, of course, other more obvious forms of pressure. “Contract labour is usually obtained for white employers by a paid agent. The agent searches the reserves for workers, usually soliciting the aid of the local chiefs, and a contract is signed by the native before a magistrate, to engage himself to an employer whom he has never seen, on a farm about the conditions prevailing on which he can know very little, and often in a locality about which he knows nothing.”*

A Masters’ and Servants’ Act forbids a native to leave his employment before the time specified in his contract of employment; and every native has to carry a registration card, giving the reasons why he left his last employment. The Act also provides that a master shall not refuse to let a servant go after his appointed period; but, as in the case of masters’ combinations under our own Combination Act of 1800, the law is seldom enforced against the employer and is frequently “winked at.” Chiefs are often used, and district government officials, to aid in this recruitment.

In Uganda a special Labour Commission has been appointed by the government to deal with recruitment; and we have had the final announcement recently in the House of Government that this Commission is to be allowed to raise 4,000 conscripted labourers for the building of the Uganda railway! **Imperialism rests on forced and slave labour where less obvious methods of compulsion do not suffice.**

The actual interests involved, however, among the white governing class are slightly complex, and the complexity obscures a little the fundamental issues which we have just mentioned. First, there is the class of small capitalists, planters and farmers working their own land. They rely on native labour to cultivate their land for them. Some of these are ex-officers with small capital settled on the land after the war, and many are “indebted to the banks or to private moneylenders,” although many of these debts have been paid off during the prosperity of recent years. Second, there are some plantations owned by larger absentee capitalists or plantation companies. Among these are, perhaps, to be numbered the “comparatively leisured class of a few well-to-do individuals with independent incomes, who have selected Kenya as their place of residence on account of the climate, the sport, and the social amenities of Nairobi, and reside principally in or near the capital.”

Third, there are the merchant interests, who trade in the produce of East Africa—mostly English companies—and the financial interests of London who have invested capital in railway and harbour development, etc. In addition,

* *The Report*, 170 and 175.

* *Ibid*, 173.

there is a considerable class of Indian petty merchants, and also an increasing class of native landowners who run cotton plantations on their own.

Shortage of Labour !

Now, the third of these—the merchant and financial interests—are not so keenly concerned as are the first and second about the labour supply, except labour for railways and other public works. They are quite willing that the native himself in his “reserves” should be encouraged to grow cotton and other produce, relying themselves on their monopoly of trade and the absence of alternative markets for the native producer, in order to buy this produce cheap and make a profit. Indeed, it is their interest to encourage this native production in plenty ; and this brings them into conflict with the interests of the white planter, who complains that if the native can get rich by growing cotton himself, he will have no incentive to work for wages.

“There is no doubt,” say the Commissioners, “that the present difficulty in obtaining labour in Uganda for the transport of the cotton crop, for the ginneries, for railways, for handling at ports, for all public works, and for the coffee planters, is due to the high prices which the Uganda native is at present obtaining for his cotton crop.”*

Hence the present outcry from the settlers concerning shortage of labour, and the “laziness” of the natives!

Even so, however, the problem seems to be mainly one of the level of wages and employers’ treatment of workers, since evidence is “conflicting with regard to the available supply of labour. A well-known employer who has a good name among the natives finds little or no difficulty in obtaining labour. There are some settlers who can always get labour and keep it.”*

And what of the position of the natives under this systematic legalised exploitation? At their “unrest” the Commissioners were not a little perturbed, so much so as to cause them to advise an ending of the encroachment on native “reserves”, and reforms in the Masters’ and Servants’ Act. The highest wages—those in Zanzibar—are 30s. a month. In Tanganyika, on the plantations, they are 15s. to 20s. a month, without food, and in Kenya from 8s. to 12s., plus food, and 14s. on government railway work. In Uganda they are 12s. to 15s., plus food, and in Northern Rhodesia 10s. And anything up to a third of their wages, supposing them to work the full twelve months, has to go in payment of taxes!

The result is that the natives, who have to leave their homes and go many hundreds of miles to work, adopt temporary “wives” and the habits of white civilisation, and so

* 34.

* 41.

carry syphilis and spirit-drinking back to the native tribes. The result is a decline in the native birth-rate, and a high infant mortality rate, reaching in many cases, as much as 300 per 1,000! The result is that the population of many native tribes is declining fast, and tribes are dying out of the ravages of disease and poverty. So much is this the case, as to cause an agitation among the whites, in the interests of abundant labour, for increased medical attention and sanitary education, and even a relaxation of exploitation, for the natives.

In considering these facts, it must also be remembered that "on the occasion of the last famine no less than 30,000 persons died of starvation in the Eastern provinces alone"; and that 40,000 natives were forced to sacrifice their lives in the recent war in the fight for the right to be ground down by British in place of German taskmasters!

But one must not think that the Commissioners underline these facts to any extent. Their report is the usual Imperialistic eulogy: "East Africa offers unique opportunities for the profitable investment of capital"; "in bringing Western civilisation the missionaries were first in the field; without the work of the missions East Africa could not have advanced in the way it has"; "the blessings of the natives"; "the fine body of men, the settlers," etc., etc. Major Church calms his Socialist conscience by advising that the Kenya railway shall be State-owned. It is left for the Liberal, Mr. Linfield, to suggest, in dissent from his colleagues, that the natives might be better left to cultivate their own "reserves."

No doubt the Macdonaldite Liberals who rule the Labour Party (and perhaps the Tom Johnstons and Kirkwoods as well?) will take up Mr. Linfield's hint, and suggest that the bonds of slavery shall be made a little less onerous, that Imperialist exploitation shall be "reformed," that the robbery shall be rendered a little less crude and somewhat more polite. But the average Labour Imperialist, being a hypocrite, is perhaps the most disgusting exploiter of them all!

M. H. D.

The Y.C.L. Congress

[In view of the Congress of the Young Communist League, to be held in Manchester on July 11 and 12, the following brief outline of the recent activities of the League and the problems confronting the Congress will be, we feel sure, informative and instructive to our readers.—EDITOR.]

During the period since the Fourth World Congress of the Young Communist International, the Young Communist League of Great Britain has made slow but steady progress. Principally this is due, first, to the clear decisions on the next tasks of the League made by the World Congress, secondly, to the support received from the Party, particularly from the Executive Committee, and last but not least, to the change which is coming over the working class youth.

Prior to the formation of the Y.C.L., Great Britain was distinguished by the almost entire absence of working class youth organisation. Even to-day the young workers are extremely backward politically, and the work of the League is very difficult. Therefore, when the League came into existence, it had a hard struggle not only against the apathy and indifference of the young workers, but also against the misunderstanding of many members of our own Party, who failed to realise the importance of the League as the leader of the working youth and the revolutionary reserve of the Party. **We can say now that, in spite of all difficulties, we have a real young workers' organisation in existence, which closely follows the leadership of the Party and actively participates in the struggles of young workers.**

TASKS OF THE Y.C.L.

The tasks of the Y.C.L. are (a) the enrolling of the working youth in the class struggle under the banner of the Party, and their communist education, (b) the defence of the particular interests of the young workers within the general struggle of the working class. We think that an examination of the League's activity will prove that every endeavour has been made to accomplish these tasks. The re-organisation of the League on the basis of the factory groups depends upon the recruiting of young industrial workers. This was clearly understood at the League Council meeting in December 1924, which issued the slogan, "Re-organisation and Recruiting."

The League has always regarded the economic trade union work as the main plank in its activity and has consistently taken up the struggle of the young workers inside the work-shops and trade unions, as witness the Young Miners' campaign. This work is of special importance because of the intense exploitation of the young workers and the division between youth and adult. In the trade unions fractions have been formed which take up the demands of the young workers and carry on the struggle for the

organisation of all young workers in the trade unions with full rights and at lower dues payments.

The publication of the fortnightly YOUNG WORKER in newspaper form, with a circulation of 5,000, is another proof of the progress of the League. The paper, which aims at reflecting the daily struggle of the working youth and becoming a real mass organ, is endeavouring to base itself mainly on the work-shop news supplied by the young worker correspondents. Its big brother, the WORKER'S WEEKLY, is its guide and inspiration.

The children's movement, although small, is rapidly developing new forms of activity, particularly instanced by the Young Pioneers of Greenock. School groups are being formed and the children's sections will shortly be transformed into a self-governing children's League, called the Young Comrades League.

The Anti-Militarist work has assumed concrete forms and the colonial work is developing. Insufficient attention has been devoted to sport work. Further, the educational activity has been poor, due mainly to the deficiencies of the old training syllabus and the lack of a leading group of trained and efficient comrades.

The co-operation between the Party and the League has considerably improved, and the League has participated in all the campaigns of the Party, particularly in the General Election campaign.

From an examination of the past activity of the League the Glasgow Party Congress was able to draw the following main conclusions, (a) The League is pursuing a correct general line towards a mass organisation, (b) that the work of the League is, however, hampered and impeded at every turn by the small membership, and (c) that no genuine contact has been secured with the broad masses of young workers.

The Party Congress gave a clear political lead to the League and it will be the task of the Youth Congress to examine closely these decisions and apply them to the problems of the working youth. It is necessary to stress the point that **the League must fully consider the Party's political decisions in relation to the problems of the working youth**, because one of the League's failings has been a mechanical copying of the Party and the neglect of real youth activity, with the result that the League, to a certain extent, became a second edition of the Party.

BOLSHEVISING THE LEAGUE.

The Congress must be one of bolshevisation.

For the Young Communist League, bolshevisation means the winning-over of the entire proletarian youth of this epoch and the building of a strongly cemented and centralised mass organisation, with its policy and every day activities based on a clear understanding of Leninism. The factories and work-shops must be made the centre of gravity of its

work, and it must be able to adapt itself to the concrete circumstances of the struggle and always combine the final aim and revolutionary perspective with the partial, political, economic and anti-militarist demands. Further, the political line of the League must find expression in its partial demands.

The principal aspect of the bolshevisation of the British League is that of securing immediate enrolment into its ranks of the thousands of young worker sympathisers. Recruiting is essentially a political question, and unless the task set by the 11th International Day of Youth is accomplished, namely, the trebling of the membership, the League will not only be unable to fulfil its tasks, but will also be faced with grave dangers, particularly in view of the growth of reformist labour youth movement. The idea of recruiting must pervade every phase of League activity and be linked up with every-day political and economic events.

In this work the Party must play a great part, and, in fact, the League will naturally rely to a large extent on the assistance of the Party members. The Party Congress has already given forth the slogan of a LEAGUE BRANCH AND FACTORY GROUP WHEREVER A PARTY LOCAL AND FACTORY GROUP EXISTS. This slogan must be earnestly taken up in order to give the League a basis in all the important industrial centres.

LENINIST EDUCATION.

The necessity for education in the spirit of Leninism applies to the youth with great force. The Congress must clearly define the essence of Leninism and show how to utilise the teachings of Lenin for guidance on every field of activity. That is why the task of theoretical training and the combination of theoretical questions and practical work looms so large, and why the basing of the League's educational work on the factory group in relation to the concrete facts of the young workers' lives is so necessary.

The tasks in this connection are (a) Mass work based on Leninist teachings amongst the working youth, (b) Education of every member of the League (Political Minimum), (c) Education of a trained group of leading members.

The League must provide a political minimum training for every member and also special training for leading members, which can be secured through special courses, week-end schools and participation in Party schools. One of the most valuable means of mass educational work is the Press, and consequently attention must be paid to improving the YOUNG WORKER, which must more and more take on the form of a popular mass paper. Other forms of mass educational work are plays, reading circles, lectures, young workers' conferences, etc.

Industrial Work.

This work is one of the most important forms of mass work, and requires the greatest attention. There are

roughly 3,000,000 young workers employed in industry under conditions of intense exploitation. The fact that they are almost totally unorganised and neglected by the trade unions makes it imperative that the League should work strenuously in the shops for the organisation of the working youth.

This work must be allied with the struggle for International Trade Union Unity, and the Y.C.L. must make it clear that one of the essentials of Trade Union Unity is unity between young and adult workers, and the organisation of **all** young workers into the Trade Unions.

The Congress must give adequate attention to discussing ways and means of improving contact with the Minority Movement, supporting its work and securing its support for the demands of the Y.C.L. Also, the struggle on behalf of the unemployed, which has been greatly neglected, must be taken up with increased vigour and a campaign carried on for the enrolment of all young unemployed in the N.U.W.C.M.

THE Y.C.L. AND THE LABOUR YOUTH MOVEMENT.

The development of the class consciousness of the working youth is shown by the great activity of the young workers during the General Election, the sporadic youth strikes, the slow but steady growth of the Y.C.L., and the organisation of the Labour Youth Movement. Owing to the backwardness of the young workers and the strength of the reformists, this change is finding expression largely in reformist channels. The last twelve months have witnessed the formation of the I.L.P. Guild of Youth, and the Young People's Sections of the Labour Party.

These organisations were formed by the right wing of the Labour Party and I.L.P., in order to inculcate the ideas of reformism and class collaboration into the minds of the awakening young workers, and because they were alarmed at the growth of the Y.C.L. They intend to create a new reformist reserve.

It will be the task of the Congress to determine the lines to be pursued in the struggle against the reformist youth organisations, which are drawing the young workers away from the class struggle.

These, together with the colonial work, are the most important questions confronting the League Congress. Attention must also be given to the development of concrete anti-militarist work, the popularisation of the achievements of the young Russian workers and the necessity for developing a real Workers' Sports Movement.

In conclusion we can say that the League has already shed many of the errors of the past, and that it is travelling the road to becoming a mass organisation, the only leader of the working youth and the bolshevik reserve of the Communist Party.

Economic History & the Class Struggle

By JAMES McDUGALL (Scottish Labour College Tutor)

19. Misery under the Factory System.

With the rapid expansion of machine production, the factories, pits and furnaces multiplied in an extraordinary fashion, and population flowing in on all hands from the agricultural areas concentrated itself in the coalfields. Manufacturing towns and ports grew up as it were over-night, without order or plan, huge blots of jerry built slums or foul miners' rows disfiguring the fair face of nature. Black smoke poured in volumes from every factory chimney, without let or hindrance; a permanent pall settled down over the grimy industrial towns. No attention was paid to elementary sanitary rules; there was no adequate supply of pure water. What wonder that epidemics periodically devastated the inhabitants. Here the fresh and healthy country people had to settle, compelled by the terrible necessity of adapting themselves to the needs of capitalism, torn from the simple routine they could understand, and transported into a foreign land, as it were, in which every feature was unfamiliar, fated in the course of a generation or two to deteriorate, in the person, of their descendants, into a feeble and stunted race. At first this ignorant and rude populace was the helpless prey of its environment, seeking an anodyne to its ever-present sufferings in drunkenness and debauchery. In time, however, the very association forced upon the workers in the factories, taught them how to combine for their own purposes. They began to resist the tyranny of the factory owners and their foremen, refused to submit without protest to the outrageous conditions of labour and learnt by making the attempt that they could, even though at some cost to themselves, put a check upon the rapacity of capital. The workman's most dangerous competitors were now in his own home. As the element of physical strength was eliminated from labour through the use of machinery, women and even children could take the place of men. These also were preferred by the capitalist because being feebler they were more docile, and above all they were cheaper. It was the time of the triumph of Manchesterism, *laissez faire, laissez passer*, and there were no limits of any kind to exploitation. For children and

women the factories became veritable infernos, in which the life was painfully ground out of them, offered up as a sacrifice on the altar of Mammon. Mere babies were carried to the mills by their parents and there worked fifteen or eighteen hours per day. Women and children were worked in night shifts, without care either for health or morals. Moreover, this competition made immeasurably more difficult the struggle of the man for better conditions. It is not strange then that the earliest and most sustained efforts of the labour movement were concentrated upon securing legal limitation of the hours of labour in factories. In this struggle they had factory owners for their attack upon rents in the Free Trade agitation, and also of the noble Robert Owen, one of the great Utopian Socialists, which enabled them, after the inadequacy of many previous measures passed from 1802 onward had been exposed, to secure the acceptance of the famous Ten-hour Act of 1847. This law limited the hours of labour of women and young persons working in factories to ten hours per day, and formed the foundation of all later legislation.

20. The Proletariat Revolts.

In the first two or three decades of the 19th century, the movement of the British workers had a revolutionary character which it is difficult for their modern descendants to understand. The events of that period took place under the direct influence of the long war waged against revolutionary France. The effect of French ideas upon the course of the agitation was very great. Then again Robert Owen, who had many working class followers, when he had learned by experience the futility of little communal experiments, turned to the working class and imbued them with something of his own wide vision and revolutionary outlook in contemplating their problems. So that, when, after years of illegal action, persecution, imprisonment and transportation, the Combination Act of 1800 was repealed in 1824, the unions that sprang into existence by the score were soon federated into Grand Federations of the whole working class for action on a large scale. But the workers of that day were too inexperienced to avoid serious blunders in their tactics, the ruling classes too well entrenched and vigilant, and so these great combinations had only an ephemeral existence, passing away in a confused welter of strikes. But the labour movement was also bound up with the radical agitation for parliamentary reform. The workers formed the mass troops who were drawn on to the field by the industrial bourgeoisie in order to intimidate the ruling landlord faction into making concessions. The situa-

tion ripened to a crisis under the influence of the July revolution in France, and in 1832 came the Reform Act extending the franchise to the factory owners. The workers had been left in the lurch by their allies, and from their disgust as well as from their growing class consciousness they were soon to create an independent working class party, that of Chartism,* the first of its kind in the world. The actions of the new reformed parliament did nothing to heal the breach; by the harsh and brutal reform of the Poor Laws, their opposition to the Ten-Hour Bill, and their callous "economic" attitude towards the prevailing misery, they lashed the masses into fury. The two classes were soon at close grips, locked in a deadly struggle. This culminated in 1842, in a series of great strikes and partial revolts which were suppressed by the wholesale arrest and imprisonment of the leaders. From this point the movement declined. Divisions in the ranks prevented any real consolidation of the party. The London artisans with Lovett at their head withdrew from the struggle and became simply the tail of the middle class reformers. In the industrial north, where the agitation was more directly bound up with the strike action of the proletariat, the physical force section of the Chartists, led mainly by Fergus O'Connor through his paper *The Northern Star*, continued the fight. But the immaturity of the working class, the ideological confusion of their leaders, and above all the strength of the ruling class, led to deviations from the path of the struggle for power into utopian schemes of land settlement, co-operation, etc., in which the attempt was made to solve the workers' problem behind the back of the existing system. The movement did revive once more in 1848 under the influence of the February revolution in Paris, but resulted simply in a huge fiasco; this was nothing more than a last flare up before it expired. Chartism lingered on for a few years, and then became no more than a memory. The entire revolution of 1848, as Marx has shown in the "Inaugural Address," was a child of the economic crisis of 1847, and with the return of prosperity the victory of the counter-revolution all over the continent was assured. The Californian and Australian gold discoveries drained away the most active and determined leaders of Chartism; with employment and some wages concessions the masses sank back into apathy and forgot their revolutionary aspirations.

* The Chartist Party was, of course, not purely and simply a working class body in the narrow sense of the word. It embraced also petty bourgeois elements, such as small shopkeepers, handloom weavers and other small masters, and this naturally imported confusion and vacillation into the political action of the party. Nevertheless, the Chartists were the pioneers of those movements which have issued in the working class parties of to-day.

21. The Labour Movement becomes "Practical."

The introduction of steam transport by land and sea enormously accelerated the industrial expansion of Britain. As the pioneer of machine production, which the virtual monopoly of the colonial markets by Britain during the Napoleonic Wars had done so much to foster, that country easily bore down the competition of her continental neighbours and reduced them all, for the time being, to the level of mere agricultural plantations of the metropolis of capitalism. In 1846 the obsolete protective laws were abolished, and Free Trade was triumphantly established. Handicraft and manufacture in Europe, America and Asia, declined steadily in face of the competition of British machine industry, whole classes sinking into profound misery or actually, as in British India, dying of sheer hunger. Profits were being made hand over fist; the exploitation of the colonies, a complete possession of the carrying trade of the world, the toll which, as the financial centre of the world, London took from all countries, caused a flow of wealth to Britain which enabled capital to be accumulated on a huge scale. There was abundance of money for foreign investment and, by means of British capital, machine production was planted in the United States, in Europe and generally throughout the world. The steady upward tendency of production in the country, in spite of the temporary check of the decadal crisis, induced strong faith in the stability and capacity for progress of the capitalist system. The series of technical triumphs, the trans-continental railways, ocean cables, telegraph lines, canals for shipping and irrigation, the revolution in steel production, constant improvement of textile and all other machinery, as well as the magnificent advances in natural science, the collective impression produced by that constellation of great poets and novelists which arose during this period, intensified the confidence of the bourgeoisie to the highest point, dazzled the eyes of the working class, and rendered it comparatively easy for capitalist influences to penetrate into the Labour movement to reduce to insignificance the revolutionary wing, and to conduct the movement into the peaceful channels of craft unionism, co-operation and Liberal reform politics. Except upon the elementary plane of the trade union struggle, and even here only vaguely, the British proletariat forgot its existence as a class and remained for several generations a political nullity. It was during this long period that the peculiarly British, and particularly stupid, "practical spirit" grew up in the Labour movement. Here, too, of course we simply foreshadowed the course that was to be taken by the Labour movement in other

countries. Nothing was of any importance to the workers if it was far away, the only thing that mattered was their immediate material interests. Hence there arose that contempt for "theory" which, of course, consciously or unconsciously, in the masses as in the leaders, is nothing but the obverse of their complete subjection to the theory of the dominant class. The great craft unions, which with their conservatism and obsolete organisation offer such a problem to British revolutionaries, date from this period of intellectual torpor in the working class. Years were to elapse before the revolutionary banner was once more raised in this country. Not till capitalism had become firmly established abroad, till British industry had had to face serious competition on the world market, and the position not only of the masses, but of the "aristocracy of labour," had been made very much worse than before, did the stagnation come to an end with the first attempts in the 'eighties to propagate Marxism in Britain. Nearly thirty years more had to pass before, in the election of 1906, a Labour Party appeared on the political stage of this country.

(Next month comrade MacDougall begins another series of articles on Elementary Economics.)

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Gregory Zinoviev: A Brief Biography*

GREGORY EVSEIEVITCH (Zinoviev) was born in the year 1883 in the government of Kherson. During his college days, he began his activities as a revolutionary. In 1901, at Ielisevetgrad, he joined the Social-Democratic Labour Party of Russia, and from that time has devoted his entire energies in working for the party.



When, in 1903, at the Second Congress, when the Social-Democratic Party split into two fractions, Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, Zinoviev stood resolutely by Lenin. Since then he has never deviated from Bolshevism.

* From the collection of Biographical sketches of 12 Russian Militants, by Boris Voline, published by the C.P. of France.—Ed.

Prior to the revolution of 1905, Zinoviev lived abroad, in Berne (Switzerland) where he continued his studies, though never neglecting his work for the Party. In his propaganda amongst the refugees he had occasion often to fight against the Mensheviks, who then exercised considerable influence on refugee circles, and were supported by the Jewish Bund, and other nationalist parties.

Zinoviev turned up in Russia on the eve of the 1905 revolution. He began his propaganda work amongst the workers in Vassili-Ostrov quarter. The workers of St. Petersburg (as Leningrad was then known) already knew and appreciated comrade Grigori. (This was then his surname.) Thanks to his talents as an agitator and organiser, Zinoviev was not long in coming to the front, and was soon elected a member of the Petersburg Committee of the S.D.L. Party. Arrested for his activity as a revolutionary, he passed some months in prison, and subsequently emigrated.

In 1907 Zinoviev took part in the London Congress of the Party. This was the last Party congress where we had together Bolsheviki and Mensheviks. It was at this Congress that the Mensheviks suffered a complete defeat. They lost the majority on the Central Committee, on which Zinoviev amongst others, was elected.

While a refugee, Zinoviev was one of the closest companions of Lenin. He devoted his energy to journalism, and wrote many articles directed against the Mensheviks, and collaborated on the illegal foreign press of the Party.

In 1908, he returned for a short time to Russia. In March he was arrested in St. Petersburg and charged with assisting in the organisation of the *Rabotnik*. He was thrust into prison and after a time sent to Ielisavetgrad to be kept under the surveillance of the police. October, the same year, finds him once more abroad, taking part in the sessions of the Central Committee of the Party at Geneva, then at the Pan-Russian Conference at Paris.

In 1909, he became one of the editors of the central organ of the Party, *The Social-Democrat*. An indefatigable pioneer of Leninism, Zinoviev took an active part in the struggle which culminated in the Party splitting on the question "Should the proletarian movement strive for the social revolution or consent to a policy of collaboration with the bourgeoisie?" With Lenin, Zinoviev defended vigorously the position taken up by the Bolsheviki who adopted the policy of social revolution.

At this time, there began to appear in Russia the legal Bolshevik journals, the *Isvestia*, and the *Pravda*. Zinoviev contributed many articles to these papers.

Against the War.

In April, 1916, the Second Conference of the International Socialists met in the Swiss village of Kienthal, near Berne, to discuss the question of the intervention of the international proletariat against the war. At this conference, Lenin and Zinoviev represented the Central Committee of the Party. They declared emphatically against the war, and insisted that in all countries protest demonstrations be held.

After the revolution of February, Zinoviev returned to Russia, where he worked amongst the Petrograd workers in preparation for the October revolution.

After October, he was President of the Petrograd Soviet, and during the period of the civil war, was a member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the 7th Army, and president of the Committee of Defence. With Lenin, he helped to create the Communist International, the first congress of which was held in March, 1919. Since then Zinoviev has been President of the E.C.C.I.

Since the Fifth Congress of the Party he has been a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Russia.

The principal writings of comrade Zinoviev are :

- (1) The Tactics of the Communist International, 1921.
- (2) Against the Stream (Collection of articles by Zinoviev and Lenin, 549 pages).
- (3) The War and the Crisis of Socialism. (1920, 391 pages.)
- (4) The Tasks of our Party after the Death of Lenin. (1924, 64 pages.)
- (6) Towards the Proletarianisation of our Party.
- (7) The Communist International of Labour. (1923, 295 pages.)

Party Training Notes

We have received a list of questions typical of those put to party members by other workers from a large factory group in London, together with their suggested replies. These are extremely useful material, and constitute a valuable indication of the outlook of the mass of the workers. We hope that other factory groups will follow this up and let us have a similar list.

One of these questions, with the answer proposed is:

Question: "Why can't the working-class work in harmony with the boss?"

Proposed answer: "Because we want higher wages for less hours, and the boss wants us to take less wages for more hours, showing that harmony is impossible."

The reply is quite good, but does not go far enough. Any trade unionist could subscribe to it.

We take it that "boss" in this case means the employers as a whole, whose desires and policy are subservient to the limitations of the system (capitalism) which guarantees their existence. We Communists are not concerned about "working harmoniously with the boss." The boss-class are usurpers; they claim "rights" sanctified by tradition and sustained by force which inevitably enslave the workers.

In the exercise of these "rights," friction arises between themselves and the workers, who do not possess any privileges at all, but merely exist to work for the bosses. The workers, without any rights regarding their employment, must strive to shift the boss-class and abolish their privileges. The workers cannot obtain any permanent improvement in their conditions unless they abolish the boss-system. "Harmony" between the two classes is impossible. Its advocacy merely means giving in to the bosses.

Another question is:

"Don't you think that Russia should settle her debts to this country?"

Proposed answer: "No; these debts are boss-class debts, not workers' debts, although they are willing to pay if a meeting of the

two governments takes place, and the settlement is not a danger to the working-class."

This reply is good, and needs little to be added to it.

TRAINING WEAKNESSES.

The examination of several groups of comrades has drawn our attention to a weakness which is very general among party members; this is a lack of thorough understanding of party discipline and of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

Party discipline is not a formal, blind acceptance of a lead from the centre. It is based fundamentally on a clear understanding of party policy, and how to pursue it. It means that members put party interests before their own individual convenience or feelings. Party discipline can only be really exercised when members understand why they should do a thing, how to go about it, and give a report on the results of their activity. (See Stalin's "Theory and Practice of Leninism," pp. 114, 116.)

The Dictatorship of the Proletariat simply means that, after the working-class have seized power and set up their own state machinery, working-class interests, immediate and future, come first and foremost, and the activities of any other class are suppressed.

The Dictatorship is designed to safeguard the revolution, which would otherwise be unable to establish itself. It will only last as long as there is any chance of the workers' power being taken from them again; and will become obsolete with capitalism. (Students should read Stalin's "Theory and Practice of Leninism," p. 120.)

TRAINING METHODS.

We have received letters from two districts stating that the question and answer method is not suitable for the training of backward members. Much depends on the trainer, who should bear in mind that party training is designed not only to educate members, but to train them to think, and to express themselves. This is the reason for our use of the question and answer method.

But at the same time it should be remembered that this method is not to be automatically and formally applied. If the trainer comes to the group with the lesson well prepared, and explains the subject under discussion, the backward members should have no difficulty in following the main line of argument. Question and answer between members and trainer will then elucidate points that may be obscure.

Quite a number of locals say that training in their area is stopped for the summer. While making due allowance for the season of the year, it is a mistake to imagine party training is, like the bourgeois technical schools, a winter occupation. Party training work is continuous. New leads and new problems continually arise which have to be understood to be interpreted correctly. Only when these are understood can practical work be best done. Besides, the recruiting of new members is a continuous process.

There may be practical difficulties in the way of holding group meetings, but no interruption on the plea that training is a winter occupation is permissible.

* * *

Many comrades, new to the party, want a brief summary of what the party stands for, and the difference between it and other parties. The following outline, we trust, will prove helpful to the training groups generally.

WHAT IS THE COMMUNIST PARTY?

The Communist Party is composed of class-conscious working men and women who realise that Capitalism must be overthrown by the workers and a working-class republic established in order to secure the interests of the workers.

The Communist Party is an international party of the working-class, comprising many sections; the Communist Party of Great Britain is one of the sections, the C.P. of France is another, and so on. These sections jointly decide the programme and policy of the party at the World Congresses and elects the Executive Committee of the Communist International, which

directs and co-ordinates the activities of the sections.

The various Socialist parties were all affiliated to the 2nd International before the War, but there was no centralised direction. Each national section reserved the right to apply or not apply international resolutions. Most of them merely paid lip-service to internationalism. Thus, when the War came, the majority joined with their War in the interests of their governments and supported the national capitalism. **THEY BETRAYED THE WORKERS.**

For many years Lenin and a group of his supporters, the Bolshevik section of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party, had urged that capitalism had reached its final stage of development—imperialism.

They showed that imperialism led inevitably to huge wars between the rival capitalist states and the industrialisation of the colonies, where millions of helpless coloured workers were enslaved and forced to enrich and strengthen capitalism. They showed that capitalism was declining and that the workers could not any longer depend on separate pure trade union, co-operative and Parliamentary action to secure their demands; the Socialist parties must reorganise internationally and nationally, draft a programme and policy in line with the changed conditions, and rally the workers everywhere to fight against capitalism, otherwise the workers would suffer in huge wars between the imperialists, and be beaten down to slave conditions.

This viewpoint was ignored. The Bolsheviks refused to take part in the War and urged the workers of Russia to refuse to fight their fellow-workers and overthrow Czarism and capitalism. This they did in October, 1917, and the Soviet Republic was established.

The Bolsheviks next appealed to all those Socialists who had remained true to their principles to form a new International Party. This was accomplished in March, 1919, and the 3rd International was formed; the various sections changing their names to "Communist Parties," the title used by Marx to describe the first revolutionary working-class parties.

Book Reviews in Brief

The English Agricultural Labourer 1300—1925. by Montague Fordham and T.R. Fordham. Price 2/6 cloth Paper 1/-. Lab. Pub. Co. Ltd. 38 Gt. Ormond St. W.C.1.

In the brief space of some fifty pages the authors attempt to tell the story of the struggles of the agricultural labourer for better living conditions, and security of tenure—an impossible task within the limits set. Most of the data in chapters one to five are familiar to readers of De Gibbon, John Richard Green and Thorold Rogers. The remaining Chapter on "the Labourer in the Twentieth Century" is too sketchy to give any adequate knowledge of wages and conditions of life during the last twenty five years.

In the preface, by M. F. some idea of the petty bourgeois standpoint of the authors may be gleaned from the following extracts:

"With a steady price for the farmer there must be a fair wage for the labourer. . . ."

"And when the State or the county council takes over the land from the landlords, and the markets are organised, there will be a future for all. . . ." "With a steady, sufficient price for produce, farmers will get enough to pay good wages. . . ." "Security for the farmer, and a future for the man at the bottom, who does the work on the land."

That, say the authors, is what is needed in the country!

B.

Relations with Russia." Speech in favour of International Trades Union Unity, by Fred Bramley. Price 3d. Published by Trade Union Unity, 162 Buckingham Palace Road, S.W.1.

This pamphlet will appeal to the trade union membership; it is a good statement of the case for International Trade Union Unity from the T.U.C.G.C. standpoint, that is, the absolute need for it if the British

Trade Unions are to face successfully (from a Trade Union viewpoint) the results of the decline of British industrial economy.

Limited as the objective is in itself, the need for International Trade Union Unity is great for all the various national sections of the Trade Union movement, and its achievement will be, for the working class, a great stride forward in the struggle against capitalism.

This pamphlet will help.

Some Russian Impressions. By Ben Tillett. Price 3d. By the same publishers.

Is attractively got up. Its author's name in the movement will give it added weight, and its perusal should do much toward clearing the minds of many people who have been duped by the capitalist press into a belief that life in Soviet Russia is a hell upon earth.

Ben Tillett touches on numerous phases of life in Soviet Russia, shewing that here the workers are the rulers and their interests come first and last.

The style of the writer is the antithesis of "dry" or "statistical," and the result is that his views are so expressed as to be "readable" even for those who are not usually attracted to pamphlets.

Money and Prices. By Maurice Dobb. Syllabus series No. 16, issued by Labour Research Dept. Price 6d.

In this pamphlet the Labour Research Department continue their useful little guide books to the study of special subjects. No one interested in the struggle for "stability" and in the recent decision of the British Government to return to the gold standard should fail to secure this latest number of the series. The author, Maurice Dobb, is exceptionally well qualified to deal with the subject.