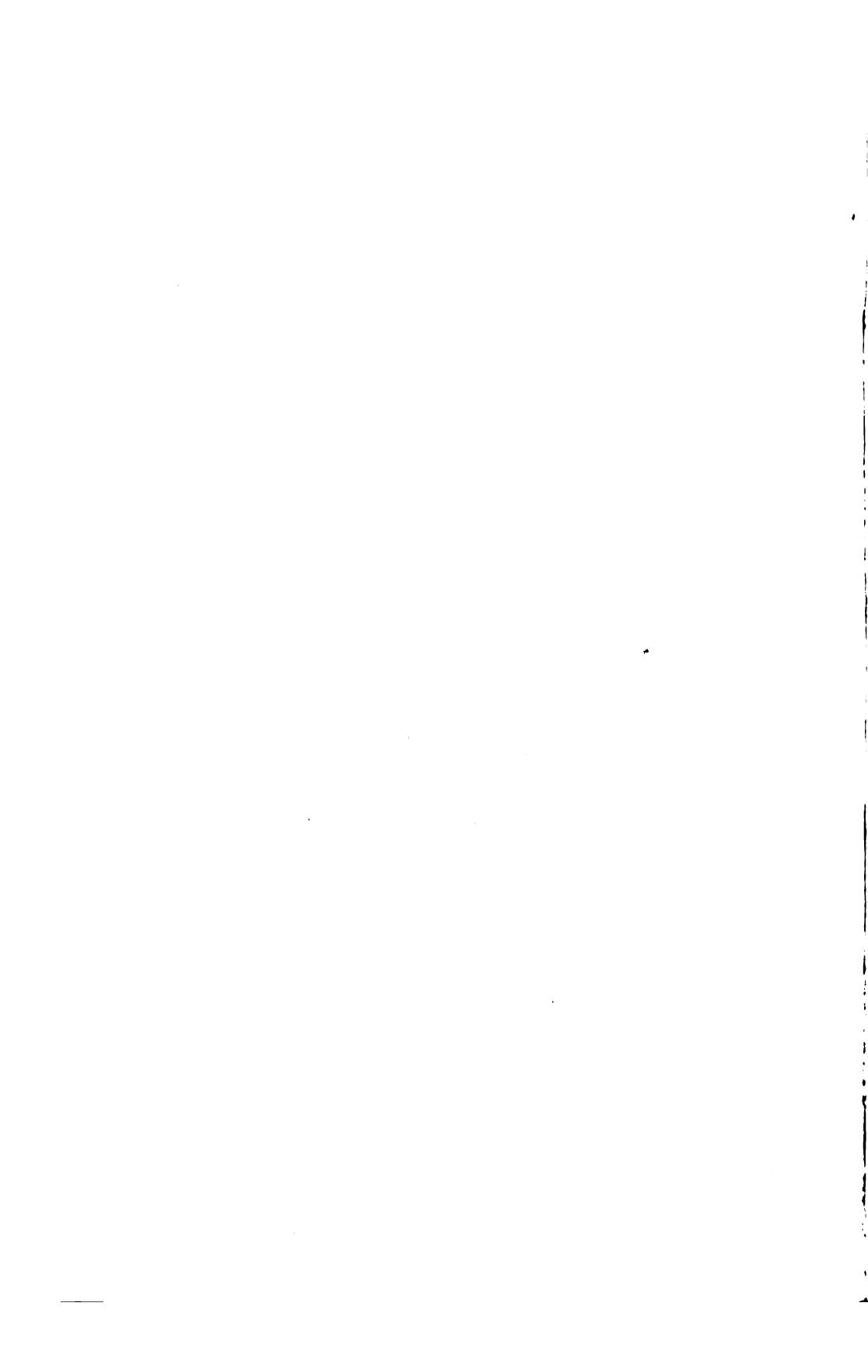


**THE  
COMMUNIST REVIEW**



# THE COMMUNIST REVIEW

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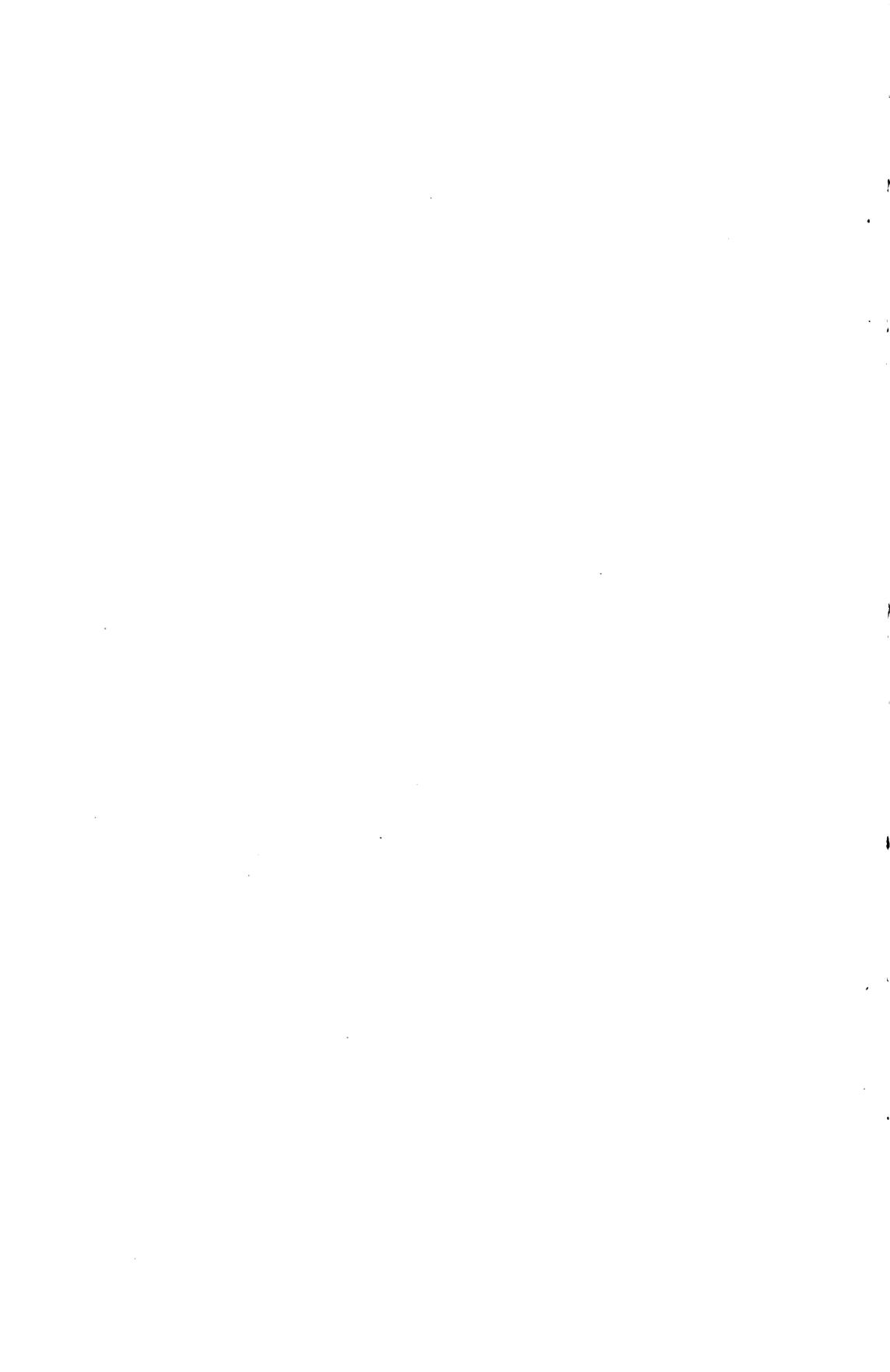
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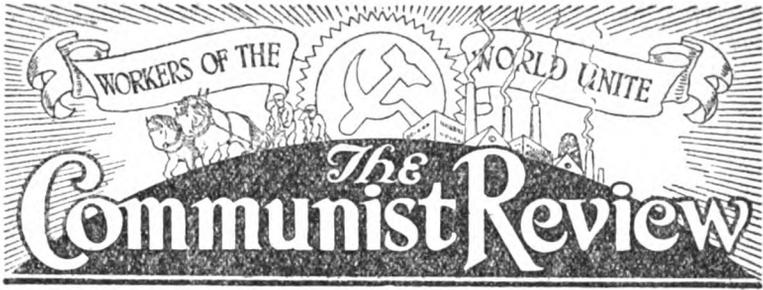
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## THE EDITORIAL VIEW

**N**OVEMBER this year marks the ninth anniversary of the Russian Revolution. For nine years the regime of Bolshevism, under the guidance of the Communist Parties of the Soviet Union, and with the assistance of the Communist International, has been consolidating itself and laying firmly the foundations of Socialism. Nine years of triumph, indeed, but not without a grim struggle. What that struggle has meant only the Russian proletariat can understand.

Outside the Soviet Union, a real judgment as to the achievements of these nine years must be based, not on the particular conditions of to-day—though these far outstrip most European States, and bear comparison with the highest—but on a comparison betwixt 1917 and 1926. One must never forget that when the workers and peasants, led by the Bolsheviks, the Communist Party, seized power in November, 1917, they were faced with a position so near complete disaster as to be unparalleled in history. The civil war and intervention period from 1918 to 1921, when the bourgeoisie and landowners, backed by world imperialism, of which Great Britain was the leader, overran great areas of Russia, murdering and destroying, completed the breakdown and brought the actual famine. Yet even at this appalling prospect the spirit of the workers and peasants, of their revolutionary Communist Party and its great leader Lenin, never failed. Above all the Red Army defending the revolution did not fail, and the enemies of the Republic were one by one defeated and driven over the frontiers.

\* \* \* \* \*

The dictatorship of the working class under the leadership of the Communist Party was able to defeat not only the counter-revolution of the bourgeoisie and rich peasantry, but also the armed intervention of the Allied Powers. As a result of their

military victory, the Russian workers have been able to use their dictatorship to cement the alliance with the poor and middle peasantry, without which the proletarian State could not exist, and to lay the foundations of Socialist society.

This building of Socialism in alliance with the peasantry is the new economic policy introduced in 1921. Already before this date the land, foreign trade, banking, transport and heavy industry had been nationalised, but the actual tasks of Socialist construction could not be undertaken so long as the internal and external enemies remained undefeated. The five years, 1921 to 1925, have been used by the Russian workers to restore industry to its pre-war level, but Socialism will not be completely established until the efforts of capitalism have been far surpassed, until Russia has been industrialised and her millions of peasants can buy cheap and excellent commodities from a great Socialist industry.

\* \* \* \* \*

The year 1925-26 has seen the first drive towards the creation in Russia of this new Socialist industry. Under NEP private capital has been allowed to exist alongside Socialist production. Yet Socialist production has enormously outstripped private capitalist production. Of the total turnover of commercial and industrial undertakings of the Soviet Union for 1925-26, 48.2 per cent. goes to State enterprises, 28.6 per cent. to co-operatives and only 23.2 per cent. to private enterprises. In the five years from 1921 industrial production has increased 110 per cent. and agriculture 28.8 per cent. Last year industrial production increased 14 per cent. (heavy industry 19.7 per cent), and agriculture 7 per cent. Between June, 1925 and June, 1926, no less than three hundred thousand new workers were brought into heavy industry.

How fast the Socialist elements in the economy of the U.S.S.R. are increasing, how rapidly the proletarian basis of the State is being broadened is seen not only from the above figures but from the fact that in 1925-26 the State has expended £75,000,000 on new industrial construction. For the year 1926-7 it is calculated that no less than £84,500,000 will be spent on new industry (power stations, re-equipment of plant, new factories, etc.).

Along with this great increase in material prosperity as Socialism grows, goes an increased well-being for the workers. Between the years 1922-23 and 1925-26 wages have risen 67 per cent. and the wages of unskilled workers in most industries, in transport, railway, post and telegraphs are now to receive a further 10 per cent. increase, thus bringing them nearer to those of

the skilled worker. Before the war the average worker earned 364 roubles a year. To-day he earns 630 roubles, plus 16 per cent. for social insurance. Even taking into account the rise in the cost of living, this represents a very much higher standard of life than before the war. The Russian worker has every year two weeks holiday with pay, and under the social insurance scheme he receives not only free medical treatment, but free holidays in rest homes and sanatoria. In 1922, 200,000 workers passed through convalescent and rest homes, etc. In 1925, 250,000.

Of these 80 per cent. were workers and 20 per cent. employees. These are the practical achievements of the revolution and Leninism for the workers.

\* \* \* \* \*

What has capitalism done for the working class over the same period? Since the close of the war Europe has been an armed camp. Workers have been shot down and murdered, in Germany, Hungary, Bulgaria and Poland. There have been anti-Communist "Labour" Governments in Germany, Austria, Sweden, Belgium and Great Britain. In Germany, to-day, there are 2,000,000 unemployed and Hindenburg is sitting as place warmer for the Hohenzollerns. In Austria, Sweden and Belgium there is unchecked reaction, while in Great Britain to-day, side by side with 1½ million unemployed, and 1,000,000 miners locked-out, reaction and government by intimidation grow apace.

The victorious Russian workers have sent £1,000,000 as a token of solidarity with the miners, and imposed an embargo on all coal and oil. But the Amsterdam International, on the other hand, with its 15,000,000 members, has deliberately sabotaged every attempt to help the miners' struggle, while the reformist trade union and Labour Party leaders in England have betrayed the General Strike, and betrayed again and again the miners' fight.

\* \* \* \* \*

Capitalism has nothing to offer the workers but starvation, misery and insecurity. Having ruthlessly dismembered whole nations, it is now confronted with the fruits of its own stupidity. Artificial trade barriers and customs accentuate the crime of the Versailles Treaty of 1919, until even the criminals themselves are forced to cry out against their own folly, for such is the meaning of the Bankers' Memorandum. This document, issued by the bankers and industrialists of 16 countries with a view to removing trade restrictions, has its origin stamped upon it in the preponderance of British signatures, and reflects the straits into which British industry in particular has fallen. Its appearance

coinciding with the Imperial Conference, means that Britain, which has been mainly Free Trade, is facing the alternative of the development of an extensive tariff system being operated throughout the British Empire. This changed relation is due to the development of U.S.A., whose economic and financial penetration in Europe has revived Germany as an intensive competitor of Britain.

The degree of unity between the respective signatories is almost imperceptible, due to their different interpretations of what this vague document means. The French and Italians sign with reservations, the U.S.A. states that it only applies to Europe, and to Germany it means the annulment of the Versailles Treaty. These contradictions are the reflection of the unequal development of the imperialist groups and endorse the thesis on the international situation presented at our Eighth Party Congress last month, which outlined the new relations created by the war and the development of Anglo-American antagonisms.

This memorandum means that Great Britain is trying to assert and maintain her role as the dominant factor in world politics, and is seeking for a combination which can operate against her developing rival, U.S.A. By her failure since Locarno to create a Continental bloc against U.S.S.R., and her loss of political hegemony of Europe with the drawing together of Germany and France, she seeks in order to retain her power, to create a wider bloc, as for example, the conference at Romsey.

The third factor of Locarno is expressed in the Bankers' Manifesto, namely, the attempt to draw together the debtor States of Europe in a bloc against their creditor, U.S.A. The degree of success in this direction is to be noted in the comments of the world Press, which are adverse, and the significant silence in the British Press, which, in view of the opposition generated, are attempting to conveniently forget it. Nevertheless, the manifesto is a grudging recognition by the British bourgeoisie that the development of the U.S.A. is of such a character that Britain can only hope to become a very second-rate power, unless the development of U.S.A. is curbed.

\* \* \* \* \*

The ninth anniversary of the Russian Revolution thus, more than ever, shows the world divided into two camps—the camp of the free Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, where every day the position of the workers and peasants grows stronger and conditions of life improve, and the camp of imperialism, where the hours and wages of workers are worsened; where millions are more or less permanently unemployed, where workers' organisa-

tions are attacked and destroyed, and where vast sums are spent on preparing for war, as for example in China. To-day, the choice is clear before the workers of the world—the way of Baldwin and MacDonald, or the way of the Communist International and the Russian Workers' Republic.

**NOTE.**

**Next Month a Special Review of J. T. Murphy's Book, "The Political Meaning of the Great Strike" by J. R. Campbell.**

# The Ninth Anniversary of the Soviet Republics

**O**N November 7th the toilers of the U.S.S.R., and with them the world proletariat and the oppressed nations of the East, will celebrate the ninth anniversary of the existence of the **first Republic of Soviets in the world.** On this anniversary every class conscious proletarian should sum up the results of struggle of their class brothers in their own country, and compare them with the attainments of the working class in the U.S.S.R.

The year which followed November 7th, 1925 was the first year in which the Soviet Republic having healed the wounds of seven years of war and restored industry to the pre-war level began to construct a **new** industry, and **extend the economic** basis of Socialism. This year also marked a **new** period in the crisis of world capitalism.

The Leninist teaching that the Socialist revolution is the only way out from the post-war blind-alley has been confirmed in actual events. The last year has been characterised by the uninterrupted construction of Socialism in the U.S.S.R., and the sharpening of the economic crisis in Europe and the capitalist attack on all fronts.

The Social-Democratic leaders are no longer talking about the downfall of the Soviet regime, the decline of Soviet economy, etc. The actual facts glaringly contradict this anti-Soviet agitation. That is why the **main** trump card of the Social-Democratic press is the assertion about the "degeneration" of Soviet Russia, the slowing down of the tempo of economic growth, the alleged retreat of Socialist economics before the attack of private capital, the "kulakisation" of the countryside, the ousting of workers from organs of Soviet power by petty bourgeois elements of town and village.

Making the widest use of absolutely unfounded and, in the majority of cases, slanderous cries of the ultra-Lefts about the "degeneration" of the leader of the U.S.S.R.—the Communist Party of the Soviet Union—the Social-Democratic leaders have recourse to the last resort of the demagogue: "The Communists say we are opportunists," declare Boncour, Pilsudski and Vandervelde and MacDonald. "But look at the Russian Bolsheviks, that is where there is real opportunism, that is where the cause of Socialism is being betrayed!"

All this slanderous campaign of the ultra-Lefts and Social-Democrats is founded partially on falsehood, and partially on complete ignorance. Facts, as we shall see, refute their assertions.

**Firstly, the growth of Socialist elements in the economy of the U.S.S.R.** is steadily continuing. The State has expended more than 750 million roubles on new industrial construction. Giant engineering works have been constructed, such as the Volk-hovo hydro-electric power station (Volkshovstroï); a number of factories in the Ukraine and along the Volga have been restored and set going, and many new combined factories and works are being constructed.

If we compare the figures only of the extension of production (which the enemies of the U.S.S.R. do), during the last year, and this year, of course the percentage of increase in output and the number of workers in the second instance is less than in the first. But this by no means testifies a slowing down, or what is more, the failure of Socialist construction, for during the preceding year the percentage of increase was **most exclusively** to be accounted for by the **repairing of old factories**, while, during this year, it is distributed between the repairing of old and the **construction of new factories and works**—the building of a number of which will be completed only in 1927 or 1928.

The prospective plan of the development of industry proposes **not a decrease but, on the contrary, a systematic increase of the sum of capital expenditure.** Thus, for instance, the preliminary figures of the Gosplan (State Planning Commission) estimate capital expenditure in 1926-27 at 845 million roubles as against 750 million roubles in 1925-26. The proof that there is no retreat whatsoever from Socialist economy is testified by the **more rapid tempo of development of industry** as compared with agriculture. Whereas, for instance, the production of agriculture during the past year increased only by 7 per cent., the output of industry increased by 14 per cent., and the production of heavy industry even by 19.7 per cent.

If we take a five-year perspective plan of development of national industry, (we find the estimate proposals of Gosplan show a 110 per cent. increase of industrial production and 20.8 increase of agricultural, the trading section of peasant production), it will increase by 42-43 per cent.

**Secondly,** there has been absolutely no retreat of Socialist economy whatsoever before private capital. Private capital is playing a negligible role in the process of production. During the past year it has not increased its role despite even the attempts of the State to bring it into the process of production. Private capital displays a certain activity only in trade.

Last year private capital undoubtedly utilised the shortage of

industrial goods to revive its own speculative activity. But the growth of co-operation and State trade did not stop. Private capital was ousted from a **number** of sectors of the commercial front. Hence, one may only speak of a slowing down in the tempo of ousting the "private trader" during the past year. From the point of view of the **accumulation of capital**, the State economy is many times more powerful than private capital.

Last year was marked by certain economic difficulties. But these economic difficulties in the first place were difficulties of **growth**, and, therefore, quite different from the crisis of capitalist countries, secondly, they were difficulties arising from the historically inherited disproportion between industry and agriculture.

The Soviet Republic, ruined by seven years of war and deprived—as a result of the financial blockade of international capital—of the possibility of receiving large credits abroad, has been compelled to industrialise **with its own resources**. The fundamental strategic slogan which the Communist Party put forward at the Fourteenth Congress—the industrialisation of the country—in this way endeavouring to fulfil the Lenin plan of organising a correct exchange of wares between town and village and thus bringing agriculture on to the rails of collectivism.

The severe "**regime of economy**," now being conducted by the Party and authorities with the full support of the toiling masses; the increased campaign for a **regime of economy in all social life** and in accordance with this, increased investments in **savings banks**; the system of **international loans**—such are the main methods for raising the financial resources necessary to strengthen industrial construction.

The re-organisation of production conducted by means of technical improvements raising the productivity of labour, **the lowering of overhead charges** which have overburdened the cost of production; **improvement in the quality** of production—such are the main measures which will enable Socialist industry to ensure an alliance with agriculture.

Still more fantastic are the assertions about the "degeneration" of the Soviet State. The Social-Democratic leaders dreaming of a **restoration of bourgeois democracy in Russia** are disappointed with the **strengthening of the political power of the Soviet State which is the result of the wise policy of extending Soviet democracy**. In their endeavour to conceal the fact of the **strengthening of the political alliance of the proletariat and peasantry in the U.S.S.R.**, the fact of **the extension of Soviet democracy**, they hypocritically assume the guise of enemies of the kulaks.

Can the fact of the increased number of electors in the 1925-

1926 campaign (as compared with 1924-25) from 17 million to 19.5 millions, be called a sign of the "degeneration" of the Soviet State? Can the fact of the increase (in the villages) in the percentage of peasant electors from 41 to 47, (and in the towns) the increase from 24 per cent. to 37 per cent., of the petty handicraft workers, the workers not organised in trade unions, workers' wives, etc., all of whom formerly stood aside from any participation in the elections to Soviet organs be called as proof of the decline of the **proletarian** dictatorship in Russia?

If we remember that the activity of the main section of the toilers of the U.S.S.R.—members of the trade unions—has increased (percentage of participation of this category increased from 52 to 57) and that in all the leading Soviet organs the position of the proletariat remains unshakable, then, the fact of the increased activity of the peasants (though far behind the activity of the toilers organised in trade unions), of the handicraft workers, workers' wives, will merely go to show the strengthening of the political alliance of the proletariat with the widest strata of toilers.

And, if we remember Lenin's watchword that the alliance with the peasantry in Russia is the main task of the ruling proletariat, then we will understand that the ninth year of the existence of the Soviet Republic in Russia has been a year of strengthening of the proletarian dictatorship. This strengthening of the proletarian dictatorship has taken place side by side with an extension of the proletarian basis of the dictatorship. This is shown in the growth in the number of industrial workers (from June, 1925 to June, 1926, 300,000 new workers were brought into heavy industry), as well as an increase in the proletarian kernel in the Communist Party itself.

On the basis of the growth during the past year in the internal power of the Soviet State, the influence of the Soviet Union on an international scale has continuously widened and the endeavours of the Soviet Government for peace have been strengthened. Thus the Soviet Government has patiently tolerated the behaviour of the puppet of imperialist Japan—Chang-Tso-Lin, who has broken the Soviet-Chinese treaty and his own treaty with the U.S.S.R. and openly provoked the Soviet Government to military encounters. The Soviet Government has displayed the maximum of self-restraint, for her policy is different in principle from the imperialist colonial policy of Tsarist Russia. The Soviet Government is more anxious than any other that the sovereignty of the Chinese people should not be infringed.

The Government of the U.S.S.R. took the initiative in respect to guarantee treaties with the Baltic States, the conclusion of which has been delayed up to the present day—as the former Estonian Ambassador in Moscow, Birk, has publicly disclosed

—because of the resistance of Poland, and the military circles of other Baltic States.

Strictly carrying out a policy of peace the Soviet Government at the same time has frequently made it understood to the whole world that it is a revolutionary government of the victorious proletariat. This, for instance, was the case on the occasion of the incident with the British Government concerning the latter's note in connection with the monetary aid from the A.U.C.T.U. to the British workers.

Then the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs in reply to the British Government pointed out that the Soviet Government is a government of the working class, that the role of the Communist Party in the working class movement of the U.S.S.R. and its trade unions can in no degree abandon their self-activity and independence in every sphere of defence of the interests of the working class and their trade union struggle, including, of course, relations between the fraternal organisations of other countries and the mutual exchange of aid in case of necessity.

These rights of the workers in trade union organisations are recognised, although not in any distinct form, at least de jure in all West European countries, and in the U.S.S.R. these rights of the trade unions are assured both de jure and de facto by the very structure of its State and nature of its political regime.

The balance sheet on the ninth anniversary of the Soviet regime may be drawn up with a credit balance in the matter of the extension of the Socialist elements of the country's economy, the strengthening of the alliance of the proletariat and peasantry and drawing the wide masses into Soviet construction. The peoples of the U.S.S.R., particularly the small nations, which were oppressed by Czarism, are energetically engaged in building up economy in a new life. **The Soviet Republic is steadily proceeding along the path indicated by its great leader—Lenin.**

# The Margate Conference

By HARRY POLLITT.

**T**HE most amazing thing about both the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party Conference is the complete lack of any analysis at either of these important gatherings of the existing world situation in general, and the situation in England in particular.

The Margate Labour Party Conference was no exception to what has been the accepted rule. The 1,200 delegates from trade unions, local Labour Parties, Divisional Labour Parties and Socialist societies met, and were expected to arrive at correct decisions on matters of policy that can only be done after a careful analysis of the objective conditions facing the working class movement.

Of course, it is argued by the existing leadership that no change in policy is necessary, that the Liverpool Conference laid down once and for all the main policy of the Labour Party. At Liverpool the Communist delegates pointed out that the whole series of elaborate resolutions carried at that Conference was based upon the viewpoint that capitalism was slowly recovering; that a complete reconstruction must take place before any real Socialist measures can be adopted, that slowly and surely, peacefully and quietly, without any unconstitutional measures, it would be possible by means of the Labour Party policy to pass out of the bondage of capitalism into the promised land of Socialism.

We were laughed out of court, called the "apostles of pessimism and despair." Unfortunately for our critics and the Labour leaders, the class struggle does not always fit in with their theories. The result has been that from the time of the Liverpool Conference to the Margate Conference, a series of profoundly important events has taken place, which simply cannot be ignored unless the leadership must lead to disaster.

These events can be specially enumerated; the General Strike and the miners' lock-out; the threatened attack upon the trade unions and the increasing of the powers of the House of Lords and the continual decline of British capitalism.

Abroad, Locarno, and the series of counter groupings to maintain a balance of power; the pact against the U.S.S.R.; the new and acute situation arising from the last meeting of the League of Nations; the tremendous events in China; the policy

of the British bourgeoisie towards India, Egypt, South Africa and Canada.

All these are issues that have had and are having an important bearing on all the current struggles of the working class, and yet the annual conference of a so-called working class political Party, representing over 4,000,000 workers, can take place without the leaders stating clearly and simply how and why these issues have arisen, what they mean, what their importance is to the working class, and what in this situation is the immediate political line the workers must take.

If once the reader grasps the fact that so far from being done, the exact opposite is the case, he will see at once what the real role of the Labour Party under the control of the present leaders means for the whole movement. To give point to this, it is necessary to remind the reader that at the Scarborough Tory Conference, Baldwin devoted the greater part of his speech to an explanation and justification of the Government role during the General Strike.

At Margate, the General Strike was never mentioned by a single leader, and the attempt of the Left Wing group to raise the question, as was done in the excellent speech of Alex. Gossip, was deliberately steam-rollered and suppressed by the platform on the ground that the General Council had asked for no criticism to be allowed at this stage.

The supreme test of the Labour Party leadership came with the General Strike, it ended in the greatest betrayal in working class history, and yet Labour's annual conference can take place without that same leadership being compelled to state and defend its actions during the General Strike and after, because it is not considered the thing to go into such questions in the British movement. Such low, vulgar tactics, it is argued, are all right for the Continental movement, but after all "our movement is composed of gentlemen."

But there was one issue that could not be burked and that was the miners' heroic stand. The challenge from the coalfields could not be kept out of the Conference Hall. The Executive, through Robert Williams' address, thought they were strong enough to be able to dismiss the miners' lock-out with a resolution of a particularly nauseating character. They never had such a shock in their lives. The fight against this resolution by the organised Left Wing, who demanded the campaign for the Levy, Embargo and Dissolution of the Tory Government, brought out in opposition MacDonald, Thomas, Tillett and Shinwell, and the whole trade union bureaucracy, but the delegates from the local Labour Parties, I.L.P. and many trade unions knew that they

simply dare not line up with the cowardly and defeatist resolution of the Executive of the Labour Party.

On a vote being taken to refer the resolution back for re-drafting in the light of the conference discussion, despite a whole series of obstructionist tactics from the platform to delay the taking of the vote, particularly in view of the tremendous effect created by Arthur Horner's speech, the voting resulted as follows: For reference back, 1,368,000; Against, 2,159,000.

The resolution was then put as a substantial motion, with a plea that it should be carried unanimously. The result was: For the resolution, 3,315,000; Against, 210,000.

I want to draw attention to that figure of 210,000. This was the average vote on any proposal affecting Communists as delegates, or Communist policy as put right up against Executive policy. The figures are not high, but their importance for us is great, because in the main, the whole of the votes represented came from delegates from local Labour Parties, and from trade unions, where the delegations demanded a quota of the allotted total vote. They can, therefore, be said to represent accurately the views of the delegates nearer to the actual struggle of the workers, than do those of the greater portion of the delegates, who, in one capacity or another, are officials of the movement, and, as a consequence, reflect the official bureaucratic viewpoint.

It should also be noted that just as after the refusal of the Bournemouth T.U.C. to do anything of a practical character to help the miners, the miners afterwards by a huge majority, rejected the Government surrender terms and their delegate conference adopted a new fighting policy. So, while Margate turned them down, the miners in the same week endorsed that new policy and gave their Executive the mandate of full speed ahead.

If the Margate Conference leaders, were afraid to deal with the General Strike because they knew that they dare not face the workers; if they were afraid to stand openly and boldly for the miners, at least the average trade unionist had a right to expect that the Conference would have something to say about the new Tory attack upon the trade unions, and the proposed increase of powers to the House of Lords, in order to destroy any attempt of the next Labour Government to use Parliament in the interests of the workers.

If any had such hopes they were doomed to disappointment. The very Labour Party that bases itself upon the trade unions, that is practically useless without the miners; that year by year takes the pennies of the trade unionists, had no fighting lead to give these workers in view of the imminent attacks upon their rights of organisation.

What was the position at the Tory Conference, held just one week prior to Margate? The following resolutions adopted un-animously will clear the air.

#### TRADE UNION LAW.

"That, in view of the experience afforded by the General Strike of May, 1926, this Conference is of the opinion that the present state of the law relating to trade unions constitutes a menace to national security, whilst depriving the individual of political and industrial freedom, and that this Conference, therefore, urges the Government to introduce legislation to amend the law:

"(1) To make illegal any strike called without a secret ballot of the members of the trade union affected.

"(2) To increase the security of the individual worker against victimisation and intimidation on account of his political beliefs.

"(3) To make mass picketing and the picketing of a man's private residence illegal.

"(4) To require the national accounts of trade unions to be audited by chartered accountants."

#### HOUSE OF LORDS REFORM.

Sir R. Sanders, M.P., moved: "That this Conference welcomes the assurance of the Prime Minister that it is the intention of the Government to deal in the present Parliament with the question of Second Chamber reform, and respectfully urges that it would be advisable that a measure on the subject should be introduced next session."

The above resolutions read with the speeches at the Conference, and the subsequent speech of Baldwin, show clearly that this is no stage play. An announcement has subsequently appeared in the Press, that Lord Birkenhead is now drafting a Bill on the trade union question.

Now what was the Labour Party's reply? The following resolution speaks for itself:

#### TRADE UNION RIGHTS. EMERGENCY RESOLUTION.

"This Conference regards the declared intention of the Government to restrict the legal activities of trade unions in trade disputes and political action and to limit their freedom to manage their own internal affairs as a gross piece of class legislation and an intolerable interference with the hard-won and long-established rights of organised workers.

"It declares its determination to resist with all its strength any such attempt, and, should the Government persist in its intention, confidently awaits the issue of the struggle."

These are the two policies. One clear and breathing confidence, the other weak, hesitant, expressing "its determination to resist with all its strength," but not indicating a single practical tactic that can rally the workers to begin a counter attack now. "Confidently awaits the issue of the struggle," in the same way and with the same results, as they awaited the General Strike?

With the bald facts of the situation staring them in the face one would have imagined that the Labour Party leaders would immediately take advantage of the present industrial situation, link up the attack on the trade unions with the Government attack

on the miners and intensify the campaign for the dissolution of the present parliament, which as everyone knows was elected on false pretences, and mis-uses its power against the famous British principles of "fair play and democracy." This slogan of the dissolution of the forgers' parliament is quite popular, not only with the working class, but with a large part of the population in general, which sees quite clearly the disastrous results of Baldwin's mismanagement of the affairs of State. Nothing of this kind was initiated, no attempt was made to warn the workers or arouse their class instincts and call them to battle. Only a shoddy imitation of the Parliamentary game. The results of such a policy if we allow it to continue can lead to nothing but further defeats and disillusionment.

The effect of the Tory Government's declaration of war upon the organised working class means that if and when Labour secures a majority in Parliament it will be important to do anything in a constitutional way, because at that time the powers of the Lords will have been so extended and increased that they will be able to nullify every effort of a Labour majority. Yet when Mr. MacDonald was the head of the Labour Government he did not dare to touch the rights and privileges of the House of Lords. He once tried to explain that he had too much contempt for the House of Lords. Mr. Baldwin in this, as in his open appeal to the American people not to send money to the British miners, is not too proud or dignified. He is a realist and inclined to make the best use of any weapon that the Labour Government leaves untouched, if it will aid him in keeping the workers in misery and subjection.

Further, the Margate Conference should have demanded that the General Council of the T.U.C. immediately put into operation a campaign to operate the Scarborough 1925 decision on the formation of factory committees, because strong workshop organisation will be not only a tremendous bulwark against the attempt to destroy the trade unions, but a most powerful weapon in all the immediate struggles of the working class. Without the trade unions the Labour Party is nothing. Any weakening of the unions is, therefore, a weakening of the Labour Party itself. It is then an added argument among the many that have been used that the slogan of the dissolution of the Tory Parliament should be adopted in order to attack the Government, not by an exchange of Parliamentary courtesies and gentlemanly decorum, but by bold campaigning in the country, rousing and leading the working class movement to that point where the Government would be forced to dissolve. By these means the whole repressive policy of the Tory Government could be challenged now, and a new fighting spirit aroused throughout the whole of our movement.

In regard to the international situation the usual Liberal

foreign policy resolutions were adopted, backing of Geneva and the Protocol; trade with Russia; sympathy with China, but no demand for withdrawal of all armed and naval forces in and around China.

This is one side. Now look at the other. There was running through the conference a sound, healthy note of opposition. It was very noticeable that MacDonalld had to attack any resolution, however apparently unimportant, that contained anything likely to embarrass the next Labour Government. The opposition was that of the organised Left Wing which worked loyally and sincerely with the Communist fraction.

This Left Wing consisted of delegates from trade unions, but chiefly from local and Divisional Labour Parties. There were no "big names" or "star turns" among them, but, by good team work, they created the impression that here was the first open organised opposition at a Labour Party Conference, and it was a very good augury for the future.

Margate definitely cleared the air as far as our policy is concerned. It is now a straight fight between MacDonalld's Liberal Party policy and those who stand for a working class policy. In other words, a Communist policy. Many good Left wingers may not accept that implication of opposing MacDonalld, yet they will work loyally with us, being unafraid of any platform slander about "conspiracies" and "fractions."

The other comrades who want a "Left Wing" without the direct association of the Communist Party, have seen at Margate what is in store for them, unless they realise that it is impossible to build a Left Wing movement around personalities, and face the fact that the trend to the Left is the result of objective conditions plus the class peace policy of MacDonalld. Further, these comrades must realise that in such a Labour movement as ours, the Communist Party must have an integral and leading part because its whole policy is based upon an analysis of the present objective conditions and the class struggle.

Those "independent Left Wingers" who continue to waste so much good time criticising the "deplorable tactics of King Street" will, if they are wise, learn from Margate that there cannot be any Centre, carefully preserving its balance, but only an organised Left Wing, with its roots in the working class movement and struggle, and that this must either lead to open association with the Communist Party or a perpetuation of sterile individual efforts, which, in reality, are a help to MacDonalld, and not to the working class.

To our Party in particular, Margate has one striking lesson. That is, that on the confession of their responsible leaders, the

Labour Party cannot disqualify a trade unionist, who is a member of the Communist Party, and elected by his trade union as a delegate to a Labour Party Conference. It is clear to me that so far as our leading Party members are concerned, locally and nationally, that the only way they can express Party policy at Labour Party Conferences, either in their own delegations, or on the floor of the Conference, is by being elected as delegates from their trade unions.

This means that we have to redouble our activities in the trade unions, in order to win the confidence and following of the workers, thus securing positions of responsibility and influence, and using them not like the reformists, to stem the rising tide of the workers' demands and aims, but to fight for a working class policy.

This is not a job that can be left to the future. We must begin now. It is a question of looking a few years ahead, and beginning the organising and preparation work now.

Our Party must also bring immediately before the widest masses of workers its alternative policy to MacDonald, better known as "The Reds and the Labour Party." This policy which challenges every issue raised by MacDonald as Labour Party policy, should be immediately discussed at local Labour Party conferences, and ways and means devised for getting it on the Agenda of next year's Conference.

The National Left Wing Movement should profit from the experiences of Margate and take up an energetic campaign for its activities. The Communist Party will support this campaign to the utmost of its power. If such steps as these are taken and we do take our trade union activity more seriously, our Party has a tremendous opportunity before it during the period immediately ahead of developing the driving force and taking the organisational measures to make it possible for the new leadership of the working class movement to come right to the front.

# Russian Education

By A MEMBER OF TEACHERS' DELEGATION TO U.S.S.R.

**T**HE first impression one receives on an examination of education in Russia is the tremendous enthusiasm shown by all concerned. In England, the bourgeoisie favours education so long as it is "safe," that is, so long as it turns out from the elementary schools well-drilled slaves and obedient dope press consumers; from the technical schools skilled cheap labour, and from the secondary schools and universities leaders imbued with bourgeois culture and ideology. Unfortunately, however, the teachers are not always "safe," and some are even turning to the Communist Party. The suspicion of this by the bourgeoisie is seen in economy campaigns, Geddes' axes, famous circulars and the like. In Russia, there is no such suspicion. In all the live elements of the Union there is a real enthusiasm for education and a realisation of its power. Whatever economies are made in other directions, none is effected in education. Foremost amongst the constructive work of the present and future is Communist education.

The establishment and preservation of Communism demands a Communist mentality among the workers; our Russian comrades have realised that the most important agent for creating this is the establishment of a new type of education which shall make no hypocritical pretence of impartiality, but which shall boldly place as its aims the creation of skilled, intelligent, class-conscious workers. Hence it is the workers themselves who demand that teachers shall be better paid, a demand that is resulting this year in a substantial increase (averaging 25 per cent.) in the wages of all types of teachers.

At the time of the November Revolution, the teachers were in the main definite opponents of the Bolsheviki, and the Soviets were faced with deliberate sabotage. Now, teachers are everywhere showing the greatest enthusiasm and devotion to the new order which has given them real freedom in the schools. The recent English delegation of teachers was frequently informed by individual teachers that though they themselves were not members of the Party, yet they rejoiced in the new atmosphere and methods brought into the schools by the Soviet Government. The Director of the Darwin Museum of the Second University of Moscow, after showing us the wonderful exhibits, which for their scientific value are unequalled by any other natural history

museum of the world, assured us that he was not a Communist, he was not a Marxist, and he was not even a materialist, but he must state that the museum would never have reached its present position but for the help of the present Government.

In accordance with the practical and Communist aims of Russian education, there has been evolved a new type of school. In the main there is no separation of subjects in what are called the Labour schools, the Soviet equivalent of our elementary and secondary schools. Human labour is the central portion of the work. The child studies his surroundings in the village or town and is hence led to the study of nature, social life and industry. In the later stages of the work he learns about the world, especially in terms of what is the most important for modern life, the conditions of industry. Further, there is no pretence that the school is above politics, nor are the teachers obliged to avoid it as a dangerous subject. Some idea of the result was afforded by the interesting and intelligent questions put to us by children in an Excursion Centre near Moscow.

The enthusiasm of the teachers and organisers is shown by their eagerness to learn of others; they read foreign educational books and periodicals, select what is best in the latest methods and welcome criticism of their own efforts. The resulting system almost everywhere adopted is that of the laboratory method combined with the project plan. For Communist children it is essential that children should be accustomed to working together, hence there is no separation of the sexes and the children work out their subjects of investigation or their projects in little groups and engage in full discussion upon them. It must, of course, be understood that no one thinks that the work of the school should all be conducted in the actual school buildings or under the active supervision of a teacher.

Some idea of how this project and complex system is actually applied can be obtained from a description of what was observed at the Kostimmo Excursion Centre near Moscow. The project started with an examination of the neighbouring village in the course of which the children painted a picture of every house. From a calculation of the number of houses, the value of the land and of other details they came to the conclusion that the revenue per head per annum amounted to 45 roubles, 80 kopecks.

It was obvious that the peasants could not live on this, how then did they live? Examining the surroundings, the children came to the conclusion that something was obtained from the forest. It was, therefore, necessary to make the forest productive and its future was thus the main question. From the problem of the preservation of the forest, the children next reached a statement of the various institutions engaged in this work and

studied whether the work was done on an industrial or on a co-operative basis. Further, they examined how the wood was used and observed the carving that was carried on in the homes of the peasants. All this work was done by small groups working together and freely discussing their results before drawing them and writing or publicly speaking about them.

Another feature of school life in Russia is the system of self-government everywhere adopted. The children form their own committees for governing each class and representatives from these bodies see to the general discipline of the school. Moreover, the children themselves have a part in the general arrangement of the studies of the school, and in addition, each class has its own special committees for special purposes. One of the most interesting things observed by the present writer was the sight in School No. 33 of Moscow, of a small child of nine conducting an election of a hygienic commission.

All types of organisations are encouraged in the schools and the pride of the children in their membership of the Pioneers is very striking. Parents' committees are also formed and take an active interest in the work of the schools.

No account of education in Russia would be complete that did not allow the special difficulties that have to be faced. The Tsardom feared education, and at the time of the establishment of the Soviet system, something like eighty per cent. of the population must have been illiterate. In the United Kingdom at the beginning of the present century, one per cent. of the recruits for the Army were illiterate, in Russia the figure was sixty-two per cent. The liquidation of illiteracy is thus one of the great problems of Russian education. Despite civil war and famine, so much progress has been made in the nine years since the November Revolution that it is hoped that only a few more years will be required for the complete solution of the problem as far as those are concerned who are under the age of thirty.

There are, first of all, the Labour schools for the rising generation, supplemented by institutions for the vagabond children who constitute a special problem produced by the Revolution, the civil war, the famine and the hunger. Then comes the Red Army, one of the most wonderful and efficient institutions of the Soviet Union. Out of a population of 140 millions, 80 per cent. are peasants who have received practically no education, hence the recruits for the Red Army are on their entrance, mainly illiterate peasants. Every man of twenty-one is obliged to serve in the army for twenty months and within the first few months he must learn to read and write. Further, he is instructed in political science and obtains a new and Communist outlook upon the world. Consequently each soldier on returning to his district be-

comes a centre of Communist culture and a source of enlightenment to the peasants.

One other difficulty is the result of the material condition of the Soviet Union. Industrially, and hence materially, it is far behind Western Europe. One result is that the equipment of the schools is poor, and like the buildings, is usually inferior to that of the average English school, though great improvements are taking place and many schools produce their own desks and other equipment by the work of the pupils. Similarly, the lack of sufficient and suitable textbooks has been a great disadvantage which is now being to some extent, overcome.

The State Publishing Company is the largest publishing firm in the world. Between October, 1925 and October, 1926, it has published twenty-three million textbooks. Again, when the Soviet Government set to work to organise schools, it found comparatively few in existence, now there are 80,000, though these are far from enough, and the country districts are especially in need of the further increases that are being made.

Lastly, the lack of accommodation in Moscow itself necessitates running all the schools in two shifts, morning and afternoon. Nevertheless these difficulties are being faced in such an efficient and resolute manner, and such splendid foundations for a real Communist education are being laid that another generation will see Russians the best educated people in the world, not indeed, in useless bourgeois culture, but in the new Communist culture of the workers.

The need for technically trained workers is being met in three ways. For the higher branches by the Technical Schools and Universities, for the young workers in factories by factory schools, and for those who have only a very elementary education by the "Rabfacs" or Workers' Faculties where the education continues up to the standard of entrance to the Technical Schools and Universities. In all these education in social subjects occupies an important part.

Lastly, there are the more indirect agencies for the education of adults. Even such a bourgeois opponent of the Soviet system as Sir Martin Conway, has testified to the splendid condition of the museums of Russia. In every museum special guides are ready to conduct the numerous parties of workers and to explain the exhibits. The theatres in their revolutionary development are the most interesting in Europe. The famous Meyerhold Theatre in Moscow, with its new methods and theories has begun to attract the attention even of bourgeois critics. The Proletcult movement and the Workers' Theatres have also introduced new methods both of acting and of staging. Everywhere in Moscow there are theatres working out unconventional new methods. The

plays themselves are usually Communist and revolutionary in subject, like the finely written and well staged "Cry of China," recently produced at Meyerhold's Theatre, or if not then revolutionary speeches are introduced.

Everywhere theatres are springing up and the workers are originating their own theatres, often in the factories themselves. The boasted bourgeois culture of London cannot support one opera, Moscow supports three, one of which travels to the workers in the outlying suburbs, and all of which are eagerly supported by the people.

One of the most important of all the agencies of public instruction is the newspapers. The Russians waste no time on divorces and murders and there is no society life to produce scandals. Instead there are clever readable articles on the things that really matter both at home and abroad. The Russian worker has a far closer knowledge of foreign affairs than any but the select few of our own people. This explains why they at once realised that the miners' struggle was part of the class war and that they themselves were directly interested and hence voluntarily started collecting for their English comrades before any request had come from their own trade union and other officials.

Two common features of Russian life should be mentioned, in every factory and in every school there is a Lenin Corner with flags and portraits and there is likewise a wall-newspaper with paintings, which, in the high artistic level usually reached, are alone enough to refute the charge that education in Soviet Russia is producing a grey, dull life from which the Arts are banished.

Lastly, one thing may be mentioned as an example to all trade unionists and class-conscious workers, there is only one trade union for all educational workers. This includes all whose work is connected with education, from the cleaner to the university professor all are members with equal rights. English teachers divided among 3 different organisations and with only one class-conscious organisation in the country (the Teachers' Labour League), may well ponder over the example of this union whose membership for the month of October amounts to 713,000.

# Who Fixes Wages in U.S.S.R. and How ?

By G. MELNICHANSKY.

[The writer of the following instructive article is one of the foremost leaders in the trade unions of the Soviet Union, and took an active part in the recent meetings of the Anglo-Russian Trade Union Committee. As an active trade union fighter of international fame, he writes with first class authority on this all-important question of how wages are fixed in the Soviet Republics.—Ed.]

**I**N the Union of Soviet Republics there is a strict separation of the functions of administration of industry from the functions of organisation and of protection of the interests of manual and office workers employed in industry. The former is centred in the organs of national economy, trusts and factory administrations, and the latter in the labour organisations, the trade unions. There are thus two organs interested in questions of wages and conditions of labour. All questions of this character are, therefore, decided jointly by these two organs. This decision is usually consolidated by a collective agreement for a definite period—six months or one year.

As it is necessary for two parties to come to an agreement on any question which might arise, it stands to reason that there may be differences of opinion between the parties, and that they might find it impossible to come to an agreement on some question or other. To deal with such difficulties we have the institution of "conciliation chambers" and "arbitration courts" attached to the organs of the People's Labour Commissariat.

In the event of differences arising between the trade union and the economic organ, both sides submit the disputed question to the decision of the conciliation chamber, whose task it is to make the two sides come to a voluntary agreement. The conciliation chamber is not empowered to make compulsory decisions. But if the conciliation chamber fails to make the two parties reach an agreement, and the question remains undecided, an "arbitration court" is summoned. This court consists of an equal number of representatives of the two parties, who, on their part, nominate a chairman, or in other words, a super-arbiter. According to the laws of our country, the decision of the Arbitration Court is final and obligatory for both parties.

Our legislation has also provided for such cases as, for ex-

ample, when the representatives of both parties cannot agree on the candidature of the chairman or super-arbiter. In such a case, at the demand of one of the parties the People's Labour Commissariat, or its organs in the provinces, are in duty bound to intervene in the conflict and to appoint their own representatives as chairman-super-arbiter. Practice has shown that the contending parties are more frequently inclined to hand over the dispute to the Arbitration Courts at the outset, avoiding the conciliation chambers for fear of delay. This system is applied when the general wage and conditions of labour are fixed throughout a factory or in separate branches of industry.

But within the enterprise itself there is a special commission consisting of an equal number of representatives of the factory administration and the union (the factory committee) and the "wages conflict commission" who watch over the correct application of the collective agreement, and decide any questions of wages and conditions of labour which arise in application of the collective agreement. Here are decided contentious questions in connection with the amount of wages, the definition of qualifications, and any errors in the payment of wages, etc. These decisions are arrived at with the agreement of both parties to the dispute and are final, provided they do not infringe the code of labour laws.

In our country great importance is attached to negotiations between the trade unions and the representatives of the economic organs concerning the conclusion of a collective agreement, as well as to the agreement itself. According to the rules which guide our work the administration of the trade union must prepare a draft collective agreement a considerable time before the beginning of the negotiations with the economic organs, and if such an agreement is already in force it must bring forward new draft proposals—the changes in the collective agreement which it proposes to place before the economic organs.

This draft plan is distributed between the factory committees whom it concerns, and these committees have to discuss the new proposals and to bring up the plan for discussion at the delegate and general meeting of the workers of the enterprise. The factory committee, as well as the delegate meeting and the general meeting in the factory, are entitled at the discussion of the plan to reject it or to introduce changes into some of its paragraphs, as well as any amendments.

All the amendments and new proposals are entered in the minutes and are handed over to the administration of the union. When the amendments and new proposals of all the enterprises concerned have been received, the administration of the union sums up the entire material and brings it up for discussion at a special conference of the factory committees of all the enterprises con-

cerned, giving at the same time its own judgment on all the proposals which are received. This judgment finally confirms what demands are to be placed before the economic organ for necessary changes in the old collective agreement. It is these demands which had been endorsed by the conference of factory committees which are brought up for discussion with the economic organs.

In the process of the negotiations themselves with the economic organs the administration of the union must keep the factory committees constantly informed on the progress of the negotiations and their prospects.

The process of fixing wages and conditions of labour in private enterprises is the same as in the State enterprises, that is, by means of signing a collective agreement on the basis of a mutual understanding. If necessary, the conciliation chamber or arbitration court is resorted to when, in the case of private enterprises, the People's Labour Commissariat is not entitled to appoint a compulsory super-arbiter. If the private owner of the enterprise cannot or does not want to come to an agreement with the union, the strike method is applied.

# Indian Currency

By E. N. ARMITAGE.

**T**HE recently published report of the Royal Commission on Indian Currency and Finance is a document at once comprehensive, involved, contradictory and so completely sophisticated that one cannot, when reading it—or should we say reading between the lines?—help but come to the conclusion that the Government of India, having spent a matter of Rs.331,000 upon its compilation, is more concerned with the problem of deluding the workers, with a so-called Gold Standard, than it is with that of giving them a medium of exchange in which they can have confidence.

One of the greatest obstacles, from the Commission's point of view, to a satisfactory solution of the currency problem, is the inherent habit of hoarding by the native. As the native has always looked upon his silver rupee as his standard of wealth, the Commission has devised a plan whereby the silver rupee could be reduced in value, and replaced by a token of baser metal, or paper convertible into gold.

The minimum amount of gold purchasable being 400 ounces, about £1,700 in value, it will be interesting to see the natives queueing up at the proposed State bank for the purpose of satisfying themselves that they have a really "visible" Gold Standard!

The terms of convertibility being quite beyond economic possibility for the native worker, it is hoped to instil into him the more economic habit of investment—"replacement of the uneconomic evil of hoarding."

## Different Methods of Robbery.

Although there is a unanimity of opinion that a Gold Standard should be installed in place of the present sterling exchange standard, there is considerable difference of opinion as to the exact ratio which the rupee should bear to sterling through gold. In other words, should the native be robbed from behind, or when he is blindfolded? The majority opinion is that the rupee should be stabilised at its present rate of 1s. 6d., whilst a "minute of dissent" is put in by Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas strongly advocating the "historic" rate of 1s. 4d.

To the uninitiated native, already robbed of his silver rupee, it would appear of little consequence whether his paper one had an exchange value of 1s. 6d. or 1s. 4d. The Commission is, of

course, quite aware of the fact, and indeed, having perpetrated a conjuring trick upon him, proceeds to fall out over the problem of how best the goose can be induced to lay its golden eggs.

The dilemma in which the Government of India finds itself to-day is one of almost exact parallel to that which has recently been faced by the British Government, namely, the choice of two evils—a financial or an industrial crisis. Realising quite clearly that the leading strings required for the successful negotiation of a financial crisis were held in Wall Street and not in London, the British Government chose, what (for capitalism) would be the lesser evil, culminating in the preliminary skirmish of the General Strike.

In April of last year, Churchill announced the intention of the Government to bring to a "successful conclusion" the policy, recommended by the Cunliffe Commission in 1919, of a gradual return to parity of sterling in relation to the dollar, a recommendation acted upon without deviation by each succeeding Government, including that of MacDonald. Keynes, the economist of Liberalism, pointed out in no uncertain manner the industrial strife which was bound to ensue.

### The Position in India.

Whilst fully alive to the issues involved, the Government of India, like that of Britain, prefers to choose (for them) the lesser of two evils. Indeed, they can do so with much greater confidence than their fellow conspirators at home: the tank and the armoured car during industrial disputes are a much more useful form of argument east of Suez than in this somewhat more enlightened country, whilst—at the moment—they would be useless as a means of negotiating a financial crisis.

A basic fundamental, from which the Commission builds its recommendations, is that "In a well-regulated system of currency, the volume of currency should vary freely in response to the varying requirements of trade." In superb contradiction of this dictum it then proceeds firmly to nail upon the Gold Standard the rupee at a fixed rate of 1s. 6d.

Briefly to follow the course of the rupee, during the period of unparalleled capitalist economic instability—1914 to the present day—we see that in 1917 it broke away from its "historic" value of 1s. 4d., rising until February, 1920, when it reached 2s.; it then fell away rapidly to 11½d. in August, 1921, afterwards rising again until June, 1925, when it reached its present rate of 1s. 6d.

The period from 1917 to February, 1920, was, of course, the boom period in this country; exports of cotton and other goods

from Britain to India had never previously reached such dimensions for the very simple reason that the merchant in India was required to pay so many less rupees for an equal value in sterling than he had to pay when the rupee was at a lower level of exchange. From 1920 to the present day, with slight exceptions, the reverse process has been in operation.

### **Lower Wages or a Lower Rupee?**

The Commission having decided that the rupee must be stabilised—in conformity with the general plan of attempted economic stabilisation—at 1s. 6d. Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas, like Keynes, shows the necessity for reducing wages to a level compensatory for the relative appreciation of a rupee from 1s. 4d. to 1s. 6d. Rather than adopt this course of accentuating industrial strife and “the deliberate intensification of unemployment” he—again with Keynes—would adopt the more subtle method of reducing the value of the rupee, i.e., its purchasing power, and allow wages to remain stationary.

Two quotations from the report will suffice in proof of this contention.

1. “Industries generally in India are still suffering from the prevailing depression. An adjustment in wages to the 1s. 6d. basis, if it has to be enforced, will therefore entail a long and bitter struggle between capital and Labour.”
2. “The adoption of a 1s. 4d. rate would result in an arbitrary reduction of the **real** wages of labour.”

### **Consequences of a 1s. 6d. “Gold” Rupee.**

The most obvious consequence, to the native, of a change in his currency from what we may term a silver to a gold basis would be the rapid decline of silver values thus forcing from him his, collectively, considerable possession of silver. By this means, and with the looked-for rise of an “aristocracy of Labour,” it is hoped to instil into the more fortunate the habit of investment. The instillation of the investment habit is merely another move in the splitting tactics of capitalism. A conclusion, as clear as daylight, may here be drawn—**support for a reformist movement in India is playing directly into the hands of British Imperialism.**

A further consequence, of no little import, would be the effect upon China, which still retains a Silver Standard; a heavy depreciation in silver values, at the instigation of British Imperialism, is a prospect which John Chinaman is ill inclined to relish.

Industrially, the intensification of the struggle by the native worker to maintain his meagre standard of living may safely be predicted. In fact from whatever angle we view the problem of reforming the currency of India, our conclusion is strengthened that for the Imperialists a pre-requisite to capitalist stability is a lowering of the standard of living for its slaves.

# The Party and the Opposition Bloc

By N. BUKHARIN.

*(Continued from last issue.)*

## **From the Idea of Freedom for Groups—to the Lead of Political Democracy in the whole Country.**

I now pass on to the fourth problem, the problem of Party mechanism in the system of the proletarian dictatorship. You are aware that up to now we Leninists have regarded the unity and coherence of our Party as the first prerequisite for the maintenance and firmer establishment of the proletarian dictatorship. We Leninists have always imagined that the proletarian dictatorship can only be secure in our country, if our Party plays its role properly and when this Party is in the first place the sole party in our country, that is, when the legal existence of other parties is made impossible, and in the second place the Party is consistent in its structure, that it represents a structure excluding any independent and autonomous groups, fractions, organised currents, etc.

I shall not remind you, comrades, of the expenditure of energy, the many words and the many gestures, which we have witnessed from comrade Zinoviev, from this very platform, in his efforts to demonstrate this elementary Leninist truth. And now this has all changed at one blow. Now the whole opposition, the whole oppositional bloc—Trotsky, Kamenev, Zinoviev, Krupskaya, etc.—demands freedom for fractions within the Party. The first signal for this change of front was given by comrade Zinoviev from the platform of our Fourteenth Party Congress. As you well know, Comrade Zinoviev declared on this occasion that we should call upon all former oppositional groups to share the leadership of the Party. This germ has since developed, not merely into a bud, but into a full blown, if not particularly sweet smelling and aromatic flower. (Laughter.)

It must be observed that if the opposition now insists on having our Party reconstructed on a basis permitting a freedom to form groups and fractions, some of the comrades of the opposition are arriving at conclusions of which we must take careful note if we want to know which way the wind is blowing. Comrade

Ossovsky, of whom we have already spoken as a member of the opposition, pronounces the following judgment in the article quoted: In our country there is no unity of economic interests. The working class has its interests, and the peasant class has its interests, differing somewhat. And then there are private capitalists in the Union, again a third group of interests. But we have only one Party. And if we have only one Party, and will not legalise other parties, then we must arrange matters so that there can be elements within our Party itself who represent capitalist interests. I am telling you all this in my own words, but comrade Ossovsky writes in a learned language as follows:

“The positive solution of this question (that is, the question of the unity of our Party) would not be difficult if we had not to prove the possibility of the unity of a party not the only legal one.” (That is, if there were other parties as well.) “We should then be the sole ruling Party, but not the only party in the country. It is a much more complicated matter to prove the possibility of absolute unity in the sole legal party in a country containing extremely multitudinous economic tendencies. No one denies that our economics include spheres in which capitalist spirit of enterprise could play a positive role. In this case the Party, remaining a united and sole party, has to actually protect all the interests in the country, including those of capitalist enterprise.”

These are the super-clever theoretical arguments with which comrade Ossovsky seeks to justify the demand for freedom to form fractions. If you want to have one party only in the country, he says, and there are various interests to be considered, then strive to give “freedom” to those who protect the interests of the rich peasantry and the capitalists. It is difficult to defend the interests of the rich peasantry and the capitalists within the confines of our Party constitution. Let us open the door, and you will have a fraction of NEP-men, a fraction of the petty bourgeoisie, and all this together will be called the C.P.S.U. Then the dictatorship will flourish in our country, for then the Party will correspond to a Workers’ and Peasants’ State. Strictly speaking, we could go even further in the same direction. Presently he will be saying: “Workers,’ Peasants’ and NEP-men’s State.” Then everything will be in the best of order. Workers’, Peasants’ and NEP-men’s State. Workers’-Peasants’-NEP-men’s Party, one sole Party in the whole country, and everything in perfect order. (Laughter.) You will now understand what lies at the bottom of all this. The fractional groups in our Party are naturally based upon various social currents, and if we permit the formation of fractional groups, if we permit the existence of fractions, then the next stage will be nothing more nor less than the legalisation of other parties.

An example: There is a Medvedyev fraction, whose standpoint has been made known to you in an article published in the "Pravda." (See "Imprecorr" Vol. 6, No. 54, 29th July, 1926, p. 904, "The Right Danger in our Party.") Comrade Medvedyev demands that our State industry be placed in the hands of the concession capitalists, and that the Comintern and the R.I.L.U. be liquidated; he demands immediate affiliation to the Amsterdam International; he demands the cessation of all discussion on the peasantry, for the peasantry is—the "dreary village." This is a well-developed Menshevist programme.

We are told that we should grant freedom to this legitimate view, to this fraction. Do they not call themselves, seriously, the "Workers' Opposition"? It does not matter that they want to dissolve the Comintern and perform other revolutionary wonders; all this signifies nothing if only they call themselves the "Workers' Opposition."

Let us assume that we permit the existence of these fractions, and that our Party includes a legally recognised Medvedyev fraction. Then the Menshevists would next come to us and say: We ask for nothing more, at present we only want what Medvedyev wants: close the Comintern, destroy the Red International of Labour Unions, pursue a policy of extensive concessions and ignore the peasant, for why should you bother with him? They would say to us: "Why will you not legalise us, since there is already one such legal fraction in your Party?" It is obvious that we should then have to legalise the Menshevists. If we legalise such a fraction as this in the Party, we legalise by this another party, and if we legalise another party, then we are truly slipping down from the line of proletarian dictatorship to the line of political democracy. That is, to the line so long advocated by the Menshevists, by Kautsky, by the S.R. and by many others of our political enemies.

It is to be observed that oppositional circles seem to like to dally with the idea of two parties. This same Ossovsky prophesies that we shall have two parties in the immediate future, both of which will call themselves Communist at first: One party which will be in favour of withdrawal from the Anglo-Russian Committee and will stand for a very "international standpoint," and another party which imagines that Socialism can be built up in our country alone, a sort of "National-Communist" Party. This entertaining of the idea of two parties has already become extremely popular in oppositional circles. The standpoint taken by the opposition on the freedom to form groups and fractions is one step on the road to this idea, which in its actual essence is the idea of the justification of a split in the Party.

This is in our opinion the fourth fundamental problem dealt with at the Plenum of the C.C., and I believe that the opposition has here too wandered completely from the path of the A.B.C. of Leninism with respect to the importance and the character of the Party in our country, and from the A.B.C. of Lenin's teaching on the organisatory character of our united and sole Party.

## RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS.

### **In what Direction is the Ideology of the Opposition Developing?**

Comrades, I now come to the question which must have occurred to every one of you: In what direction is the ideology of the opposition developing, which is its ideological marching route, where is it going? I must refer once more to Medvedyev's standpoint, but shall not repeat its outlines, as these are already well known to you.

It was not for nothing that the central organ of our Party entitled its article against Medvedyev's standpoint: "The Right Danger in our Party." Nobody with ordinary commonsense can deny that the extreme Right is represented in our Party by a group of the one-time Workers' Opposition, for it is impossible to imagine a more extreme Right in the sphere of international revolutionary politics than a standpoint in favour of the liquidation of the Comintern, a standpoint which names the West European Communist parties a "rabble of petty bourgeois lackeys" living "on Russian gold," which demands the liquidation of the Red International of Labour Unions, the abandonment of our Socialist industry to foreign capital, etc. This standpoint inclines further to the Right than any other in our Party, strictly speaking, it is ideologically already quite outside of our Party. And we must never forget that the present opposition, which represents a bloc comprising various oppositional currents, includes as one constituent the group around comrade Medvedyev. The opposition has given us no sensible reply to our repeated requests to turn aside from the Medvedyev standpoint, at least at the Plenum of the C.C., and join hands with us for a determined attack upon it.

But this is not all: About a year ago a group of comrades commissioned comrade Zinoviev to write an article against a letter in which Medvedyev explained his viewpoint, and to publish this article in the names of a number of comrades. Comrade Zinoviev did not execute this commission. When he was asked at the C.C. Plenum why he did not fulfil this duty, he replied literally: "Since you are directing your fire against the Left, I did not think it suitable to attack the Left comrade Medvedyev." Thus comrade Zinoviev regards the standpoint of comrade Medvedyev

as a "Left" standpoint. Thus it would appear that, if Medvedyev is of the "Left," then comrade Zinoviev stands to the Right of him. I do not know what is to be thought of this logical conclusion. In reality comrade Zinoviev is, of course, not Right of comrade Medvedyev. This is happily not yet the case, but if we regard the ideological position of the various oppositional groups, objectively and without consideration of persons, we can find an ideological bridge connecting the components of the opposition bloc.

### **What Does Medvedyev Write on the Peasantry Question?**

"It is foolish"—he writes—"to suppose that the economic position of the small peasant can now be saved; it is inevitably doomed to decay and to complete extermination. It is mere petty bourgeois Utopianism to believe that there can be any uplift in peasant economics."

This is what we all said under the capitalist regime. But to speak like this under the conditions furnished by the proletarian dictatorship is to accept a standpoint widely differing from the Leninist. Comrade Medvedyev comes to the conclusion that there is no use in troubling about the "dreary" village. For him the peasantry is represented by this pseudonym of the "dreary village." Why should we, real proletarians, trouble ourselves about the "dreary villages" (or with the "stupid rabble" in the Comintern)? Let us rather give our industry to the concession capitalists, in order that we may earn a few more pence. Such is the weak, placid, trade unionist countenance which peers forth from behind this platform. But when the comrades of the new opposition maintain that the differentiation in the peasantry has made such strides that the middle peasant comes scarcely in question, or when comrade Preobrashensky fails to observe the difference between private capitalist and peasant economics, then we have here an undoubted ideological relationship to Medvedyev. These two standpoints are not identical, but they are ideologically related.

If our opposition throws doubts on the Socialist character of our State industry, and comrade Medvedyev attaches so little importance to this Socialist character of our industry that he is prepared to abandon this industry to the concession capitalists, this is the second bridge connecting the ideology of the two groups.

If comrade Medvedyev does not believe that we have a proletarian dictatorship, and is of the opinion that it is the task of the proletarian organisation to exercise pressure upon the State, and at the same time we find other comrades of the opposition letting slip such sentences as that on the "extremely non-prole-

tarian character" of our State, then we have here the third ideological bridge between the group of oppositional comrades and the group around comrade Medvedyev, which latter group may be said to be leading the way as "vanguard" of the whole oppositional bloc.

If Medvedyev believes that our Party is rotten, that it has run off the rails of proletarian policy, and comrade Kamenev asserts that our policy deviates from the interests of the broad masses of the workers, again this ideological similarity forms a bridge, the fourth uniting these two groups with one another. All deviations begin in this manner and lead in their later development to entirely anti-Bolshevist conclusions. This is where the collective opposition and the Medvedyev group are ideologically related.

We shall be told that the most far-reaching, revolting and evil-smelling proposition made by Medvedyev is that for the liquidation of the Comintern, whilst there is nothing similar to be found in either Zinoviev's or Trotsky's utterances. This is true, for the present. We should be the first to thank destiny were it to remain true for ever. But if the opposition continues on its present path, it may still lead to such a crisis. Ossovsky so often mentioned—an adherent of comrade Trotsky—has already hinted at this conclusion. He writes approximately as follows: Our Party, the C.P.S.U., is exposed to the pressure of various forms of economics, etc. (Here we must recollect what has already been said above on the representation of capitalist elements.) Consequently it must renounce its role as leader of the Communist International.

Let us think this thought to its logical conclusion: If the C.P.S.U. does not renounce its role, this means that in no case will it lead the Comintern further on the path of revolution. This means that its "degeneration" will involve the degeneration of the Comintern. The ultra-Left in Germany are already saying this to-day. Their conclusion is the necessity of creating a Fourth International. What will our opposition say when it maintains that our Party has fallen away from the line of revolution, and yet it still remains the leader of the Comintern? In this case the opposition will begin to declare loudly that the Comintern has fallen away from the proletarian path with the Russian Party. The further development of the views of the opposition will then be along the line of a false, neglectful and declinatory attitude towards the Comintern.

I repeat: We shall be the first to thank destiny if this does not come to pass. We shall be the first to be pleased. But if it

is not to happen, then the opposition must leave the path of destruction which it is now treading. It must pause and think whither its ideology is leading it.

### **The Opposition at an Intermediate Station—on the Platform of Trotskyism.**

What is the ideological current thus developing in the opposition? The current is tending in the direction of Shlyapnikov and Medvedyev, it is becoming a completely liquidatory tendency on the basis of disbelief in the building up of Socialism in our country. At the present moment, the opposition is resting at an intermediate station, called Trotskyism. The official ideology of the whole opposition in its totality—including comrades Zinoviev, Kamenev, Krupskaya, etc.—is obviously that of open Trotskyism.

At the time when we prophesied that the matter would end in Trotskyism, we were not believed by many comrades, members of the opposition. They said: That will never be the case. You will remember how Zinoviev rose up again Trotsky, what thunders he called down upon him, both at home and in the foreign Party press. How many pamphlets were written by Zinoviev, Salutzky, Safarov, Kanatchikov, and a large number of other comrades, many of them somewhat evil-smelling pamphlets, which aggravated the question to a point to which it should never have been brought. But now comrade Trotsky has become the ideological leader of this whole oppositional group, whilst neither comrade Zinoviev nor comrade Kamenev has a single independent idea. They come forward with common declarations, with a common standpoint, with common signatures; and the main point is that all the ideas contained in these utterance are the ideas of comrade Trotsky.

This is in accordance with the facts. I have already described these ideas. Whose opinion is the present opinion held by the opposition in the peasantry question? It is comrade Trotsky's opinion. I have detailed our differences in questions of economic policy; I have described comrade Preobrashensky's standpoint. Whose standpoint is this? It is Trotsky's standpoint, which has borne away the victory in the opposition, whilst Zinoviev and Kamenev have capitulated before it.

And in the question of organisation, in the question of granting the freedom to form groups and fractions—whose are the views defended here by the opposition? It need not be said that these are Trotsky's views, for he has stood for them for decades. These are views which Trotsky expounded in 1923-24, at the same time as his demand for freedom for groups and fractions.

Comrade Zinoviev, at a Moscow Functionaries Meeting, held on 11th December, 1924, spoke as follows:

“We, therefore, beg you, the Moscow organisation, to give us a clear and unequivocal answer (the subject dealt with was the discussion with Trotsky). If you believe the time to have come for legalising the fractions and groups, say so plainly. (Thus spoke comrade Zinoviev in 1923 and 1924.) We do not believe that this time has come yet, or that it will come at all during the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It cannot come, for this is a question bound up with the freedom of the press and the political rights of the whole of the non-proletarian strata of the population, etc. Those who do not grasp this do not understand anything whatever of the whole situation. It is our attitude towards the peasantry which is involved. We cannot permit a schism in the Party, for we should thereby permit a split in the State.

“The slightest disorder in the Party takes immediate effect upon the whole apparatus of State . . . This is being discussed by both the specialists and the other categories of employees. Schism in the Party inevitably engenders schism in the whole State apparatus. Thus the question of fractions is a question of ‘life and death’ to the Party.”

Thus comrade Zinoviev spoke against Trotsky. But to-day it is he who is contending for fractions and groups: he has forgotten everything and appears to consider all that he said so recently, on 11th December, 1924, as empty chatter.

“Trotskyism is and remains at bottom to a great extent a Left nuance in the European, that is, opportunist pseudo-Marxist anti-Communist spirit.”

This is what comrade Zinoviev wrote on Trotskyism. In another place he writes:

“It has often been said that all the misfortunes of the Party started from the Tenth Party Congress.”

Why this? It was precisely the Tenth Party Congress which declared such a discussion within the Party to be superfluous.

“The policy of the Tenth Party Congress is the policy of Leninism. The attack made by comrade Trotsky against the

fundamentals of Bolshevik policy, against the fundamentals of Leninism, on the basis of the balance drawn by the Tenth Party Congress with respect to the freedom of fractions and groups, cannot be acknowledged as right." And so forth.

Thus comrade Zinoviev wrote at one time. And now all this has been thrown upon the dustheap. Now all this is forgotten. It was spoken with the greatest enthusiasm, but is none the less forgotten. Trotsky remains as victor in the bloc established on the basis of withdrawal to a distance from Lenin's ideological principles, though it was Zinoviev who designated Trotsky's standpoint as nothing more nor less than a variety of Menshevism, containing nuances fundamentally hostile to Bolshevism, etc.

### **The Ideological Sources of the Opposition Bloc.**

Let us turn to the question of the ideological sources from which the opposition bloc derives its ideas. I am of the opinion that the bedrock foundation of the ideology of this opposition bloc in all its constituents is actually, as seen at the Fourteenth Party Congress, disbelief, or at best doubt, of the possibility of building up Socialism in our country, and I maintain that this arises out of the former viewpoint held by all the representatives of the present opposition bloc.

Thus, for instance, in comrade Trotsky's case his lack of faith is associated with his conviction that if international revolution is not victorious, then the counter-revolutionary peasantry are inevitably bound to overthrow the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is the fundamental standpoint developed by him in his theory of permanent revolution and is the standpoint from which he has not departed.

In the case of comrades Kamenev and Zinoviev their lack of faith is a part of their past; at the time of the October revolution they thought that we, as sole Party backed by the proletariat, were not capable of coping with the tasks imposed by power.

And then comes the "Workers' Opposition." Here again I must remind you of a fact which many of us have forgotten. One of the deserters at the time of the October revolution was comrade Shlyapnikov: he left his post at this turning point. He was People's Commissary at that time, and sent in his resignation. It may, of course, be assumed that he did not do this on his own initiative, but probably after consultation with those sharing his views.

The three main elements of the present bloc have shown

by their historical past that their estimate of the class forces in our country is such that they doubt the possibility of the working class, under the leadership of our Party, proving capable of drawing the mighty waggon of our backward country out of the bog into which it has fallen. These are the first and deepest sources of the ideology of the present opposition bloc.

### **The Party will not Permit a Fractional Split.**

I think it will now be fairly plain to you why the opposition has had recourse to such unheard of action as that leading to the affair of comrade Lashevitch and others. (I shall not enter into the nature of this affair here, since it is as well known to you as to me—the decisions of the Party will be published.) The steps taken by these oppositional comrades have led to a violation of Party discipline perfectly unheard of in the history of the Party, and it has been possible that a candidate to the C.C., with the undoubted approval of members of the Polit-Bureau, has held mass meetings in the forest, against the Party, against the line pursued by the Party, for the purpose of overthrowing the present leaders of the C.C. of the Party, and of creating a new organisation actually representing the germ of a new Party whose influence was to extend over the whole country.

Comrades, I shall not here demonstrate to you the entirely criminal character of such action from the standpoint of the Party. This seems to me entirely superfluous. You all understand it without explanation. But I honestly want to understand how it could come about. I think it has been made possible because these comrades, as regards ideology, have fallen away from the line of the Party to such an extent, and are internally so completely convinced that without them the Party will fall over a precipice, slip from the proletarian pathway, and drive the country to the verge of the abyss, that they feel themselves impelled to grasp at any available means—they rush into the forest and cry for "help." This is the only possible subjective justification for them.

But from the standpoint of the Party there is no justification. The Central Committee and the Central Control Commission have been faced by the fact that a number of comrades, including some holding extremely responsible positions, had actually taken such steps as the convocation of an illegal meeting against the Party and its leaders. Were we to tolerate such actions, our Party would cease to exist to-morrow as a Leninist Party. We cannot tolerate this. We say to these comrades: Defend your principles, declare your standpoint, speak in the Party meetings; but if you take to the forest, if you will not reply to our questions, if you refuse to make statements before the Control Commission,

if you choose the method of organising a new Party within our Party, the method of illegal organisation, then we shall fight you relentlessly. But we shall not let matters go so far as this. Comrade Zinoviev was perfectly right, two years ago, when he said that the question of schism in the Party is a matter of life and death to the Party and to the proletarian dictatorship.

The danger is somewhat lessened by the fact that the comrades of the opposition have only in their imagination the masses of the proletariat behind them, In reality they will continue to be more and more like generals without armies, or admirals of the Swiss fleet. (Laughter and applause). This will come about the more rapidly as the Party itself attacks the work of enlightenment more energetically and steels its own ideology.

This work of enlightenment is the leading point on our agenda. This is the first task to which we must devote attention.

The opposition is speculating upon various possibilities. It is speculating upon our economic difficulties. It is speculating on the fact that we suffer many shortcomings in our present life, that many different trends of feeling have arisen among the workers during the past year, and will probably be followed by many others. And finally, it is speculating on the supposition that the present Central Committee will not be capable of leading the Party without them, the highly gifted supermen. The opposition believes that we shall break down under a task too difficult for us. But we, comrades, are confident that if the opposition will not help us to lead the Party, then we shall do it without them. (Enthusiastic applause.)

*(To be concluded.)*

# A Query and an Answer

DEAR COMRADE,

I wish to draw your attention to what is a very serious discrepancy between "The Theses on the Lessons of the British General Strike" as printed in the "Inprecorr" (Vol. 6, No. 47) and "The Theses" similarly printed in the "Review" of this month (July).

In dealing with the rôle of our Party during the Strike, the "Inprecorr" on page 770, section "M." states that we did correctly in issuing, in addition to the slogan of "The overthrow of the Baldwin Government," that of "The *Workers'* Government," while the "Review" on page 132 refers in this latter direction to our slogan of "The formation of a *Labour* Government." Now there is obviously a tremendous distinction between the slogan of a "*Workers'* Government" and that of a "*Labour* Government." If through some mishap in translation or from any other cause the Comintern is under an impression which is not based upon the actual state of affairs in this country—for, speaking personally, as far as Manchester was concerned, in all documents that came through during the General Strike from the Centre, there was no question of a "*Workers'*" but only of a "*Labour*" Government—then the C.I. must be made to see that our Party leadership did, in fact, commit a serious error.

This question has been fought out on the Manchester D.P.C., some comrades justifying the Centre's slogan of the "*Labour* Government"—others saying it was incorrect, likely to mislead the workers, and urging only the "*Workers'* Government" as the correct slogan.

Not that those of us who were for this latter slogan imagined that the situation was so ripe that one could conceive a "*Workers'*" Government, *i.e.*, one resting for its authority upon the organs of the working class alone, displacing the Bosses' Government which was carrying on under the screen of a Parliamentary majority. Our view was and is, that in putting forward the demand for a "*Labour*" Government, the Party was in effect saying to the workers that "Nationalisation of the Mines without compensation and with *Workers'* control" is the only way out of the chronic crisis in the mining industry—and that a "*Labour*" Government, resting on a Parliamentary majority, with the State machinery in general in the hands of the capitalist class and its henchmen, would be able

to achieve this—a fact which we know is not true and which we dare not for a moment let the workers imagine is true. It is ridiculous to suggest that in putting forward the demand for a “Labour” Government, we of the Party knew quite well that such a Government could achieve little, but we put it forward in order that the workers would have an opportunity of becoming disillusioned of the Parliamentary machine—the workers might become correspondingly disillusioned of the Party which told them to strive for the use of an instrument which turned out to be useless. No, the correct slogan is the one which the C.I. apparently imagines our E.C. put forward. The “Workers’ Government” slogan gives the Party the chance of explaining to the workers exactly under what conditions “Nationalisation, etc.” is possible.

If the workers in the beginning interpret the Workers’ Government as merely a “Labour Majority” Government, being as yet under the influence of reformist notions, then the Party is in the strong position of being able to say “Very well, we’ll help you to get your Labour Majority Government, but we warn you, etc., etc.” An attitude the Party couldn’t possibly take with justification when itself calling on the workers to demand a Labour Government.

The question is a serious one and therefore one that the Party must be absolutely clear on—otherwise in the more serious revolutionary crises ahead the Party may commit unnecessary mistakes.

Yours fraternally,  
G. COHEN.

DEAR COMRADE,

In reply to your letter of July 20th, we are desirous to inform you, in the first place, that you are under a misapprehension as to the degree of informedness of the C.I. about the Party slogans during the General Strike. Long before the Theses of the E.C.C.I. were adopted on June 8th, the E.C.C.I. was in possession of the manifestoes and other documents issued by the Party, and was fully aware that we spoke of a “Labour” Government and not of a “Workers’” Government. The latter form can only have been used in the English edition of the “Inprecorr” by an error on the part of the translator. The version in the “Review” is an official one.

Secondly, we must state quite clearly and definitely that when we spoke of a “Labour” Government, we did so deliberately, and in full knowledge that it would in all probability be understood as a Government of the Labour Party. To be absolutely clear on

the point, we considered that if a Government, not merely of the Labour Party, but one headed by MacDonald, were formed as a result of the Strike, this would be a highly desirable result, which the Communist Party could only rejoice at as a big step forward in the class struggle.

Thirdly, we are fully in agreement with you that a Government headed by MacDonald could scarcely be conceived of as even introducing, let alone forcing through Parliament, a measure for the nationalisation of the mines without compensation. We agree, further, that it would be a dangerous thing for the Communist Party to sow the illusion that it would do so. It was for this reason that, as you will see on referring again to our manifesto of May 5th, we were very careful to avoid saying that it would.

But there can be no question that the mass of the workers, quite independently of our desires, would believe that such a Government would carry out this and other Socialist measures. If they believed this in 1924, feeling that it was only the minority character of the MacDonald Government which prevented it then, they would certainly believe it when the Government had been swept into power in consequence of a workers' victory during the General Strike. And it would only be hard experience that would teach them otherwise.

This point is the crux of the issue you have raised, and just this you seem to miss. Nowhere in your letter do you indicate what in your mind is the concrete and objective difference between "Labour" Government, *i.e.*, a Government of the Labour Party and a "Workers'" Government. We can scarcely imagine that by the latter you had in mind a Soviet Government: or that you consider that under no circumstances can Communists advocate a Government by the Labour Party as such. The only possible conclusion is that you had in mind, "Not a Right-wing Government, but a Left-wing Government"—possibly relying for support on Councils of Action as well as Parliament (again, we do not like to assume that you were suggesting a struggle at this stage for a Workers' Government, relying solely on Councils of Action and dismissing Parliament, *i.e.*, a revolutionary Government in the full sense of the word).

The question is, therefore, "Had the Communist Party a choice between a fight for a Right-wing Government, which would certainly sabotage the campaign for nationalisation, and a fight for a Left-wing Government, which might be expected to promote and begin such a campaign, at any rate, if not to carry it relentlessly through to a conclusion?" Put in this way, the question admits of only one answer—the Party did not have such a choice, except in its own imagination.

What was the situation? After the last Labour Government, both the C.I. and our Party decided quite definitely that the *mass*

of the workers was very far from disillusioned in a Right-wing Government yet. Whereas within the active minority of the Labour movement there was growing disillusionment in MacDonald, the popularity of MacDonald amongst the mass of the workers was, if anything, even greater than before (as shown by the million extra votes gained in the 1924 elections). This was due to the fact that the very existence of a Labour Government for the first time (coupled, of course, with the progressively deteriorating economic situation), had aroused to political consciousness hundreds of thousands of workers who previously had been quite apathetic in politics.

You will find this viewpoint confirmed in the resolution of the last Plenum (printed in the new pamphlet "Orders from Moscow"). Now, in these circumstances, the cry "Down with the Baldwin Government: Form a Workers' Government" (always assuming that you had in mind a difference in substance, not in words) would have been futile. It would have passed over the heads of the workers, or at best would have been understood as a demand for the formation of a Labour Government—and our explanations to the contrary would have merely caused bewilderment. It would have represented a jump ahead of actual development, and would, in fact, have been a typical act of "Ultra-Leftism," resulting in practice merely in isolating the Party.

Our view was and is that the formation of even a moderate Labour Government *as the result of a General Strike* would have been itself a fact of tremendous revolutionary significance, in that it would have given the workers a sense of class power such as they never yet had. In such circumstances we should immediately take up the fight to push the Labour Government further, to rally the workers around demands for drastic action against capitalism, to expose the Labour Government if it failed, to maintain the Councils of Action in being, etc. But all this, while essential, would be subordinate to the vast educative experience which the working class itself would gain, watching the actions of an actual Government brought into being by their victory over the capitalists, and therefore with no excuse for compromise or hesitation.

Subjectively, we know in advance that MacDonald would not attempt to fight capitalism (except where pushed, as on the Campbell Case and the Anglo-Russian Treaties). But that should not blind us to the fact, that if MacDonald were *forced* to take office on the crest of a victorious General Strike, this would objectively be a big step forward, even from the point of view of his exposure before the workers. Lenin's chapter in "Left-wing Communism" remains as fresh as ever on this point.

Yours fraternally,

THE EDITOR, "Communist Review."