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THE SITUATION IN GERMANY

THE Von Papen-Schleicher government has been formed by the heavy industry of the Rhine and the landlords of Pomerania and Silesia. This act expresses their unity as against the interests of the whole body of workers and it also expresses the will of the entire bourgeoisie to hurry on the coming of a fascist dictatorship.

This government represents a new and decisive step in the direction of that policy which the German bourgeoisie, with the aid and consent of the Social Democrats and of the All-German Trade Union Confederation, introduced in March, 1930, by forming the Brüning Cabinet—the policy which it has continued to pursue up to the present time, steadily intensifying its character of hostility to the working class and to all working elements, and speeding up the carrying through of the open fascist dictatorship. The great difference between the Brüning government and the Von Papen-Schleicher government is that Germany has already taken the path of fascist dictatorship. The difference is to be found in the different degree of influence which the two wings of the German bourgeoisie—the social fascists and Hitler's Party—are to wield in the coming developments. Until a mass backing for fascism had been created, comprising millions of persons and organised by the Hitler party, the bourgeoisie devoted its main attention to the application and promotion of social democracy in the immediate work of carrying through a fascist dictatorship. In the newly-formed Von Papen-Schleicher government the centre of gravity has been shifted from social democracy, which represents the main social prop of the bourgeoisie, to the bourgeoisie's fighting organisations, the *terrorist* bands of Hitler's party (though, since social democracy provides the main social support, its services are still required in order to uphold the supremacy of finance capital). A new factor is also the immediate danger of a monarchist restoration.

The Communist International and the Communist Party of Germany have characterised the Brüning government as a government for the carrying through of fascist dictatorship. The Brüning government continued the foreign policy of fulfilling the Versailles peace treaty—a policy which was introduced by one section of the German bourgeoisie, under the leadership of Stresemann, and which continues to receive the fanatical support of the social democrats up to the present time, a policy of fulfilling that treaty which, in view of the present crisis in Germany, is daily proving more intolerable in its conditions.

By means of emergency decrees, signed by President Hindenburg and meeting with the approbation of the German Socialist Party in its entirety, the Brüning government has brought in new taxes which weigh especially severely on the masses, reduced social insurance and proceeded to cut down wages. During the last three years the German workers have been robbed of no less than 30 billion marks' worth of wages and salaries. But even this robbery has failed to alleviate the crisis, as have all other measures directed against the interests of the workers.

The crisis continues to grow more and more acute from day to day. The bourgeoisie, in conjunction with the National Socialists and the Social Democrats, faced with a crisis of extreme severity in Germany, and with the necessity of carrying through an emergency decree which reduced the standard of living of the masses, tried to explain away these circumstances to the masses of workers by arguing that this situation, and the measure taken to meet it, were alike exclusively conditioned by the peculiar position of Germany, as a country defeated in the imperialist war, and by the existence of the system established by the Versailles Peace Treaty. It is precisely these arguments which they have used in order to distract the masses from a fight against the measures taken by this government of capitalists to render their lot harder. However, they did not succeed in arresting the growing wave of discontent with the home and foreign policy of the Brüning government—discontent, which was felt by ever greater numbers from among the working elements, not only the workers and employees, but also large sections of the small and middle peasants and of the working petty bourgeoisie. On this basis a rapid upsurge of revolutionary feeling seized the working masses and, hand in hand with the ever-increasing accentuation of the economic crisis, pre-conditions began to grow more favourable for a revolutionary crisis.

The extreme accentuation of the crisis, the ever-increasing pressure of the yoke of the Versailles Treaty and the aggravation of all international antagonisms were accompanied simultaneously by a great wave of nationalism and chauvinism, directed against the Versailles system and those who stood for it—against France and Poland in the first instance.

The National Socialist Party (Hitler's Party), by employing the methods of demagogical agitation, nationalist and anti-Versailles in its character, and by combining the cry against "Jewish"

capitalists with the use of anti-capitalist phrases, succeeded in making capital out of this wave of national feeling. They were able to get the masses of the petty bourgeoisie, and also a certain proportion of the unemployed, under their leadership, and with the aid of this movement to grow into the formidable political power, which is the main support of finance capital in Germany to-day. As the National Socialists' basis for support among the masses increased, the rate at which fascist dictatorship was being carried through was steadily quickened. The latest successes of the National Socialists, in particular the successes gained by them in Prussia, have enabled finance capital in Germany to clear the way for further and speedier measures against the working class, and for repressing the resistance of the masses, by setting aside the Brüning government, which found its support in the Catholic Centre Party and in social democracy, and replacing it by a government which constitutes nothing more nor less than the loud speaker of heavy industry and the big landlords.

In foreign politics the situation of the German bourgeoisie has got worse and worse during 1931 and up to the present time. After a number of fruitless attempts to loosen the bonds of the Versailles system, German imperialism was compelled to swallow such gross acts of provocation as those committed in Memel and Danzig by Lithuania and Poland, without being in a position to administer a decisive or severe rebuff. The further discussion of the reparations agreement, and the moratorium hangs like a sword of Damocles over the head of the German bourgeoisie. Every effort made by the German bourgeoisie to pursue a policy based on any wider aims has been thwarted by the fact that it is dependent on these treaties. The attempts of the German bourgeoisie to prevent France and England from arriving at an agreement in the reparations question have so far borne few positive results. The view taken of the future by the majority of the big capitalist newspapers immediately before the fall of the Brüning government was, even in matters of foreign politics, pessimistic in the extreme.

The Von Papen-Schleicher government represents the attempt of the German bourgeoisie to escape from this situation of political tension in home and foreign affairs. The German bourgeoisie is not only seeking salvation in home affairs, where it is confronted by an ever-growing number of conscious enemies of the capitalist social "order," but also in foreign politics, where it wants to pursue an imperialist policy under the slogan of a struggle against the Versailles system.

The very composition of the Von Papen-

Schleicher government shows clearly the path the German bourgeoisie intends to take.

The main figures in the government are, in part, members of the German National Party closely allied to the National Socialists and in part "non-party" representatives of the *Reichswehr*, likewise closely allied to the National Socialists, such as General Schleicher, or representatives of heavy industry and landlords from the provinces east of the Elbe. Besides the National Socialist backing among the masses, the Von Papen-Schleicher government finds its support in the National Socialist governments of Brunswick, Hesse, Mecklenburg-Strelitz, Oldenburg, Anhalt, Bremen and Danzig. It has prospects, in the near future, of the support of National Socialist governments in Württemberg, Prussia, and the full and undivided support of the German National government in Thuringia. This means that Germany is taking the path of fascist dictatorship, which finds its main support among the masses who adhere to the National Socialist Party.

The tremendous success of the National Socialists at the presidential elections and the elections in Prussia, the weakening of the German proletariat by the social democracy, combined with the fact that the Communist Party has not yet been able to rally the broad masses of workers who still support social democracy into a united front under its own leadership, have created pre-conditions favourable to the setting up of a fascist dictatorship. The bourgeoisie is afraid of the working class, however, which is daily growing more radical in its outlook, and this fear compels it to achieve fascist dictatorship, not by way of a forcibly effected *coup*, but by means of a series of individual governmental acts outlined in the programme of the Von Papen-Schleicher government.

The programme of the Von Papen-Schleicher government represents the intensified continuation of the policy pursued hitherto by the Brüning cabinet with the consent of social democracy. It is a programme of mass exploitation, mass repression and mass misery such as the German working class has not witnessed, on such a scale, under any government since 1918. The policy of emergency decrees, and robbery of the workers' wages pursued hitherto, and the progressive pauperisation of millions of unemployed, and of persons in receipt of relief, was defined by Von Papen in his governmental declaration as a "policy of state socialism." According to his view, as expressed in the same declaration, the government whose function it was to carry through fascist dictatorship in Germany, has converted the state into a "charitable institution."

According to Von Papen, the principal evil is not the breakdown of the capitalist order of society, but the "cultural bolshevism" and the "Marxist way of thinking" which have become so widespread in Germany to-day.

His speech was a clear and unmistakable challenge to the German working class, and the very first measures to carry out the programme of the Von Papen government give a concrete idea of the course to be taken in Germany. The *Reichstag* was dissolved. The fascist terrorist groups, the S.A. and the S.S., are to be legalised and brought into the closest connection with the *Reichswehr*. The purpose of dissolving the *Reichstag* was to make the attempt to secure a backing for the Von Papen government within the *Reichstag* itself, besides the extra-parliamentary backing it receives from the proletarian mass organisations of Hitler's party, and that which it obtains from the various National Socialist provincial governments. The legalisation of the S.A. and S.S., and their conversion into a basis for the *Reichswehr*, is intended to assure the German bourgeoisie greater freedom of movement both in matters of foreign policy, and in home affairs, and to help the German bourgeoisie to strengthen their military forces; both for purposes of foreign policy, and for an attack upon the revolutionary movement.

In close connection with this, we have the prohibition of the Communist Party, for which the Hitler party is openly clamouring, and for which the Von Papen government is preparing, and an intensification of the terror against the revolutionary press and mass organisations.

While the revolutionary working class are to be throttled and repressed, the social-democrat and republican officials are to be removed from the more important parts of the state apparatus.

In the sphere of home politics the Von Papen-Schleicher government further intends to abolish unemployment insurance, and to transfer those at present receiving relief to charitable relief, and cut wages still further, and weaken or abolish collective agreements. Hand in hand with the reformist leaders of the All-German Trade-Union Confederation, the Von Papen-Schleicher government is proceeding to fulfil one of the chief demands of Hitler's party, viz., the introduction of compulsory labour service, the erection of a militarist system into which all the young workers of Germany are to be forced.

In the sphere of foreign politics the basis of the programme of the Von Papen-Schleicher government will be a struggle against the Versailles system by an aggravation of all the national problems of Germany's eastern frontier (Memel, Danzig, Silesia, the "Polish corridor"). Besides

this, the question of equality in armaments, and the abolition of payment of reparations will also be raised, and at the same time a hostile policy pursued towards the U.S.S.R. to pave the way for opening negotiations with France for a mitigation of the Versailles treaty.

The Von Papen government, alike in its composition, in the support on which it rests and in its programme, denotes a general course of aggravating all the internal and external political contradictions of Germany. These are increased by the addition of contradictions between Prussia and those provinces of South Germany (Bavaria and Baden) where French influence is stronger than it is in Prussia. What hopes are pinned in the new government, by a certain part of the bourgeoisie is shown by the fact that immediately after Von Papen took over the government the prices rose on all industrial shares on the exchange. The exchange calculates that the ex-president of the *Reichsbank* Schacht, whom Hindenburg is now again putting forward as the advocate of a new inflation, will quickly proceed to gratify the National Socialists by effecting a "currency reform" by means of a new inflation.

Social Democracy and all the other parties of the Weimar coalition, have been taken by surprise by the governmental crisis, at the present moment. The events connected therewith are hurrying on the process by which Social Democracy is being turned fascist, this process finding its expression in the way the Social Democratic Party accommodates itself to a régime of fascist dictatorship, and in the way ever-increasing numbers of social-democrat officials are going over directly to the National Socialists; at the same time the workers among the Social Democrats are showing a tendency to go over to the Left. The Social Democrats make a show of using blunt language and opposing the new chancellor Von Papen; but in actual fact they are conducting a resolute struggle against the Communist proposals to form a united front to fight fascism and the robbery of the working class—a united front which is coming into being from below, over the heads of the Social Democrat leaders and against their will. The Social Democrats call upon their followers "to be prepared," but at the same time give them to understand that they will not undertake any direct action on the part of the working masses against this government which has come into power by legal and "constitutional" means. They will not support this government, but will regard it as the "lesser evil" in comparison with a government of National Socialists, the formation of which they regard for the moment as unlikely. By a policy of this sort they think they

can prevent the new government from attacking them directly and thus maintain, at least to some extent, the positions they hold in the state departments. Hitherto the Social Democrats have waged their entire struggle against the Communist Party under the slogan of the "lesser evil." At the presidential elections they pointed to Hindenburg as a rock of refuge for the constitution, a sort of pledge against a seizure of power by the fascists. Now that Hindenburg, after winning his election battle, thanks to social-democratic support, is delivering the state power into the hands of the fascists, the most favourable situation has arisen for the formation of a broad proletarian united front, together with the social-democrat workers, and their severing from the Social Democratic Party. In quite a number of cases social-democratic local organisations have proceeded to revolutionary action in conjunction with the Communists and under Communist slogans. The German Party must pursue a consistent course towards the formation of a united front, by creating actual united front bodies in the enterprises, at the labour exchanges and in street demonstrations. At this time the Communist Party of Germany appeals with renewed force to all workers, without distinction of party, to organise the united front for resistance to fascism and reaction; against wage-cutting,

and the abolition of social insurance. It calls for the formation of united front committees in all places where workers are at work or where they assemble. It is organising direct action by the revolutionary unemployed, and is rapidly reorganising its work in the factories to consolidate the basis of the Party. Day by day, in the press and at meetings, it is conducting propaganda for a political mass strike. In its appeals and daily work the Party is intensifying its struggle against the Young Plan and the Versailles system, and is at the same time demonstrating that the Von Papen-Schleicher government, despite—or rather by means of—its "fight" against the Versailles system, is trying to come to an agreement with French imperialism, that only the Communists are waging a consistent struggle to the end against the Versailles system, whereas the nationalist cliques are trying to involve Germany in a new imperialist war, above all in a war of intervention against the U.S.S.R.

Undoubtedly the German Party will succeed in organising the mighty Red Self-Defence of the masses, that broad united front of the proletariat which, through a political mass strike, and through a broad popular movement of anti-fascist action, will frustrate the plans of the bourgeoisie for a violent capitalist way out of the crisis.

THE MANOEUVRES OF SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY ON THE EVE OF THE SECOND ROUND OF WAR AND REVOLUTION

THE crisis intensifies, the efforts of capitalism to find a way out become more and more hopeless. The construction of Socialism in the Soviet Union grows ever more quickly on the other side. Since the events in the Far East the danger of an imperialist war against the Soviet Union is an immediate prospect.

We stand before the heaviest collisions, the most gigantic struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, that has ever taken place. This is not only economic struggle against the attempt to transfer the burdens of the crisis to the shoulders of the proletariat, or only a struggle of class against class in one country. A truly international clash of the two classes is preparing, which will be a decisive battle in the struggle for the capitalist, or revolutionary, way out of the crisis. This will be a military collision of an extent and importance which the world has not yet known. A new and greatly strengthened wave of the epoch of wars and revolutions is arriving.

These great historical events cast their shadows before them. The sharpening of the class struggle, and the approach of the second round of war and revolution, impels Social-Democracy immediately to employ "left" manoeuvres, on the eve of the new revolutionary crisis, to hold the masses back, and prevent them entering the struggle under the leadership of the C.P. Social-Democracy carried out its task to prevent the overthrow of capitalism, as the chief social support of the bourgeoisie previously, chiefly by openly opposing any struggle, by declaring it unnecessary, or a senseless "putsch." Struggle against the war! Unnecessary; there can be no talk of any war dangers. At the most the threat is from the side of the Soviet Union. Struggle for economic demands in the period of the crisis! Impossible; all classes must make sacrifices during the crisis. These were their arguments, this was basically the position of Social-Democracy, but now the situation intensifies. The revolutionising of the working class assumes wider forms. A still greater intensification is to come. The Social-Democratic workers also press forward to struggle against wage cuts and the capitalist offensive. They desire to fight against Fascism, and they are against the war on the Soviet Union.

In these conditions Social-Democracy has recourse to certain weapons from the arsenal of

its "left" wing. It appears in a new uniform; whereas, yesterday, the war danger was an invention circulated by the Bolsheviks, to-day it is immediate. Whereas, yesterday, the only place from which the danger of war came was the Soviet Union, to-day they talk about intervention, and apparently, call for the Soviet Union's defence. Whereas, yesterday, economic struggle was impossible and strike-breaking tactics were resorted to, to-day they try to place themselves at the head, to disorganise; call for general strikes in the future, to prevent the struggle to-day; even place themselves at the head of a general strike, when the C.P. is leading it with every prospect of victory (Poland) to make it harmless to the bourgeoisie, by killing it. Whereas, yesterday, the unemployed were only men of a second-rate category, to-day, they are beginning in Germany to reduce the contribution of unemployed trade union members to pennings, to keep them in the reformist trade unions. Whereas, yesterday, the pretended struggle against Fascism was limited to support for the State (which is becoming more Fascist) as the "lesser evil," now they begin to rattle the paper sabre against the Von Papen Government and operate the "united front," in the form of the Iron Front, and from that they proceed to speak about coalition with the Communists (Kautsky) to whom, however, they put as a condition—the renunciation of the dictatorship of the proletariat. All this is undertaken to continue the tactic of the "lesser evil" and prevent the further desertion of the masses to the Communist camp.

These manoeuvres of the Social-Democratic leaders are themselves an indication that serious events are approaching, even if other evidence of this were not forthcoming. These "left" manoeuvres, which are being carried out on the entire front, in all the most important countries, are nothing else than the support of the bourgeoisie, by the Social-Democratic leaders in a different form, to suit the changed situation.

Take the central question, the struggle of the Socialist system (Soviet Union) with the capitalist system. At the outset of the relative stabilisation, the most "left" leader of the Second International, Otto Bauer, declared, to frighten middle class respectability, that in the period after the world war, the rulers were Pacifists, and the Soviet Union prepared the revolutionary war.

"But this Pacifism of the rulers and leaders is opposed to-day by *military revolutionary counter-tendencies* as in the previous century. The bearer of these tendencies is Bolshevism. Its objective is civil war, which will transform into a war of revolutionary nations against the counter-revolutionary ones" (Kampf, 1925, Nos. 8-9, p. 282). Even at the beginning of the economic crisis, the Second International held that war threatened from the side of the U.S.S.R. Even then it (the U.S.S.R.) was still characterised as "imperialist." After the onslaught of the Chinese militarists on the Chinese-Eastern Railway, all Social-Democratic newspapers wrote of "Red Imperialism," which was threatening peace. The appeal issued by the Berlin D.P.C. of the German Social-Democratic Party on the 28.7.1929 declared :

"A country which desires to make itself free from foreign domination, which desires to finally be master in its own house, in its own country, is branded by the Communists as a disturber of the peace. *The imperialism of Soviet Russia has brought about this conflict.*"

After Japan's onslaught on China, "Vorwärts" wrote that a secret Treaty existed between Japan and the Soviet Union, for the parcelling out of "spheres of influence" in Manchuria. On the other hand, they write in a provocative way about the Soviet Union "drawing in its horns," to Japanese imperialism.

In this whole period, during which the danger of war did not exist for the Second International, they directly agitated against the Soviet Union, in the sharpest way, while the war against the Soviet Union was being practically prepared. Social-Democracy, which actively participated in this preparation, as the trials of the Mensheviks and interventionists clearly proved, fulfilled the task of covering up and justifying this policy ideologically.

Now the Second International suddenly writes in its resolution :

"The Japanese armies are now concentrated on the frontier of Soviet Russia. This is a threat to world peace which the workers cannot regard idly."

And in another place :

"The workers will declare themselves in solidarity with the defence of the Soviet Union if she is attacked, and answer the attack on peace." ("Arbeiter Zeitung," 21.5.32).

Why this sudden change? We are already in close proximity to the imperialist onslaught on the Soviet Union. The widest masses are already clear on this and excited by it. Now it is neces-

sary to hold them back by all means, whether by the most brutal violence on the one hand, or especially with "radical" phrases on the other.

The contrast of the attitude of the Second International now, and before the world war is interesting. In 1914 also, the Second International declared against the war, and threatened that war would lead to revolution. But to-day it has "developed" very much "further." To-day it also speaks quite "radically," but does not announce the resolution, even as a pretence. The most decisive question is that whereas the Second International in 1914 promoted the war by its passivity before the outbreak of hostilities, to-day it does the same thing *actively*; it provides the ideological armour for war; and by its participation in the bourgeois organs of State power it plays its part in the practical organisation of war.

This is clear when we examine the appeal of the Disarmament Conference in Zurich, and see what they concretely propose in the resolution of the Executive of the Second International.

Let us recall the manner in which the League of Nations supported Japan in its onslaught on China. It did not do this completely openly, but made one or two conditions to the Japanese. This was only done to quieten the resistance of the revolutionary people of China. This swindle is exploded. Now the Second International tries to represent the League of Nations as "helpless" and writes that "its authority has been undermined." As if the League of Nations at any time had any intention of proceeding against Japan and was only prevented from doing so by lack of forces! In actuality the whole "action" of the League of Nations was nothing else than a concealment of the fact that the imperialist powers are *allies* of Japan, daily supplying her with munitions, and at the same time preparing the onslaught on the U.S.S.R. from the west. "The authority of the League of Nations is undermined," because the masses have already seen through the swindle, and the Disarmament Conference in Geneva has shown the "desire" for disarmament of all the imperialist powers. They have not succeeded in concealing from the masses that the imperialists systematically supply Japan with munitions because of the exposures of the Communist press, step by step, on the basis of the reports of worker correspondents, dragging it into the light of day.

At this dangerous moment for the imperialist governments, the Second International leaps into the breach, organises its "Disarmament Conference," puts forward "new demands,"

It demands the following :

1. The immediate unconditional evacuation of Shanghai and Manchuria by the Japanese forces.

2. Should Japan refuse, the recall of all Ambassadors and Consuls from Japan.

3. Where necessary, the operation of economic and financial sanctions, if Japan is not prepared to do that which is necessary in the interests of world peace. ("Arbeiter Zeitung," 19.5.1932).

Are these demands not very "radical"? Are they not a guarantee for the maintenance of peace? But the Second International is still more "extreme" :

"If, despite all this, Japan refuses to cease its preparations for attack, and threats, then the Second International will appeal to the I.F.T.U. to prevent the manufacture and transport of munitions, together with it, and resist any transport of munitions or goods to Japan and boycott all ships coming from or making for Japan" (Ibid).

Is this not "radical" action? Even the *manufacture* of munitions is to be stopped. But in reality these are only *words* about action, to prevent the *real struggle*.

The Second International here applies to the same imperialist governments, who have already shown that they are solidly allied with Japan and stand in the same front with her, only not with charges, but with the demand that they take "measures" against Japan. A real struggle against the robbers' onslaught on China, and the imperialist war which is being prepared against the Soviet Union, is only possible when one exposes the fact that Japan is not alone. Japan is only a link in the imperialist chain. Whoever really desires to fight against the menace of military onslaught on the Soviet Union must expose the rôle of the imperialist powers as allies of Japan, must fight against these powers, must conduct the struggle against his "own" Government, in his "own" country, and prevent the war supplies already to-day, step by step, through mass actions.

The Second International speaks of a struggle first, *after* the imperialist powers have recalled the Ambassadors, and if Japan goes further in spite of this, it threatens to fight only *after* the intervention of the imperialist powers which, however, as they know only too well, will never take place. They know full well that, in reality, precisely the contrary to the perspective they outline, is taking place; in addition to Ambassadors, the imperialist powers supply the necessary material basis for the war, and prepare the west front against the Soviet Union in support of Japan. This is the *real* action of the Second

International. It is a manoeuvre with the object of holding the working class back from struggle against the imperialist war, now when it is *the* question of the day, through the creation of illusions as though the imperialist governments are ready to oppose Japan. This is only for the purpose of winning time, to conclude the preparations of war against the Soviet Union satisfactorily.

For one part of the Second International this manoeuvre was still not sufficiently radical. Otto Bauer demanded that the "Second International should direct an urgent appeal to the working class of the world at the present moment, shrink from no sacrifice, and utilise every means, irrespective of all the differences in principle between democratic Socialism and Bolshevism, to support the defence of the Soviet Union against Japanese imperialism, should these declare war against the Soviet Union, and to fight against any other power which seeks to use the Russian-Japanese conflict for attack upon the Soviet Union with every means." (Ibid, 21.5.1932).

If Otto Bauer also disagrees with his colleagues of the Second International on the method of the manoeuvre, he is completely agreed with them in one (and precisely the decisive) point. He is agreed with them that one should first take up the struggle if . . . if . . . if . . . Until that time democratic peace and order is the first duty of citizenship. To attain this peace Otto Bauer "differentiates" from his friends, and hopes by this means to keep the workers (who are moving strongly to the left) under the influence of the Socialist Party. The Stuttgart resolution of 1907 contained the following paragraph :

"Should the war nevertheless break out, it is our duty to fight for its rapid conclusion, and make every effort to utilise the economic and political crisis created by the war, to arouse the peoples, and thus accelerate the elimination of capitalist class rule."

This resolution which, thanks to this paragraph quoted, which was proposed by Lenin and Luxemburg, still breathes revolutionary spirit, proceeded from the connection between the proletarian revolution and the struggle against imperialist war. Later this was betrayed, like all the other pledges of the Second International, and only one Party really adopted it as an instruction; the Bolsheviks under the leadership of Lenin.

In the period of the general crisis of capitalism, while world capitalism prepares its onslaught upon the only country in the world where the proletariat rules, and Socialism is being constructed, the resolution of the Second International declares :

"Should the war break out, despite all attempts to prevent it, the first duty of the Parties concerned, is to make every effort to ensure a united International policy of the working class for peace." (Ibid, 21.5.1932).

Of course, here there is not one word about proletarian revolution. There remains only "united international policy." But *which policy*. This, the gentlemen have forgotten to say. We will help them somewhat.

Which war are we concerned with to-day? With the war against the Socialist Fatherland. Here one must see things in their true colours, *which policy* one will carry out "in the event of the outbreak of war," *against whom* one will fight for peace. The question is, *which side* to take?

The leaders of the Second International show where they stand by their participation in intervention throughout the whole of the past. This even comes to light also from their own resolutions. What is it but open support on the side of the interventionists, whose plans have so recently been exposed, when one writes, "the Second International states that the defence of the Soviet Union will be all the more guaranteed, the more the policy of the Government of the Soviet Union enables all the Socialist forces of the country to actively participate in the defence of the Russian Revolution." (Ibid).

What the "Socialist forces" want, may be observed from the "Socialist Vestnik" where the Mensheviks describe their objective as the "re-institution of property," namely, precisely that of the preparation for war against the Soviet Union by the imperialist powers.

According to this formula the slogan of the Second International to defend the Soviet Union is, consequently, "overthrow the dictatorship of the proletariat, place the Mensheviks in power, and bring capitalism back again." For this reason the Second International fights against the Soviet power with the Russian Mensheviks. The working class of the entire world can only defend the Soviet power when they have clear revolutionary parties, which daily lead this struggle, and organise the revolution in their "own" country. These parties are the Communist Parties. Consequently the Second International directs its main fire against the Communists precisely in the question of war. Of course, in the name of the "defence" of the Soviet Union.

"Where in the world can the Russian workers find friends and support, should Japanese imperialism really arm for an attack on Soviet Russia? In the Communist nonentities, or the great Social-Democratic Parties of the Western world? The responsible personages in Moscow

will not grasp this. Nevertheless, perhaps the Communist workers do." (Arbeiter Zeitung, 20.5.1932).

Therefore join the Socialist Party if you want to defend the Soviet Union. How it comes about, that the "Communist nonentities" are thrown into prison, martyred, persecuted and shot by the rulers of capitalism, while the Social-Democratic Parties, the self-styled "best defenders" of the Soviet Union, are drawn into their Governments, is not stated. Is it not clear that the Social-Democratic Party is seeking to achieve exactly the same object as the ruling class, only in another way, namely, the destruction of the only Party which will be dangerous to the bourgeoisie in a war against the Soviet Union? The British I.L.P. is now creating committees for the "defence" of the Soviet Union. Even the Pilsudski Social-Democrats of Poland call for the defence of the Soviet Union. All the time this has only one object: to disarm the working class. To satisfy the workers that "our great Party is on the watch," to be able to carry out a hundred times more scandalous betrayal at the decisive moment than in 1914.

Recently "Vorwärts" let slip an admission which shows what the Social-Democratic leaders really think about the defence of the Soviet Union.

"Yes, things are really so serious now, that Moscow has every reason to make a basic change in its previous foreign policy. (It would seem that this foreign policy is to blame for the seriousness of the situation.—Ed.). Above all, the illusion must be forsaken that the capitalists are opponents of the Soviet Union, while the hearts of the workers beat for her. In reality things are already practically the reverse." "Vorwärts," 21.5.1932.

And so the workers are against, and the capitalists, however, are for the Soviet Union! Obviously the reason why the masses should enroll for the war against the Soviet Union. For through this war, also, those capitalist interests which trade with the Soviet Union will be encountered, while the workers (in conjunction with the Mensheviks) will be able to realise their "ideal" of democracy.

This is the real content of the "defence" of the Soviet Union by Social-Democratic leaders. Fight against everything which really defends the U.S.S.R., against any attempt at a true struggle. The Social-Democratic leaders have arrived at the manoeuvre of the "defence" of the Soviet Union by a whole series of other "left" manoeuvres with which it is connected. The first step on this path was Otto Bauer's "change" in the question of the

Soviet Union. This road is paved with "State capitalism," "general strike against Fascism and the offensive of capital," "the united front of all toilers." The masses desire Socialism and not war, the leaders of the Social-Democratic Parties show them the "nationalisation" of the debts of the bankrupt banks, and tell them this is the way to Socialism, we are already growing into it, without any struggle at all. The masses want to fight against their economic misery, the Social-Democratic leaders who take the revolutionary spirit of the masses into account are ready to place themselves at the head of any strike, to retain their influence over the mass and to throttle it, at the right moment when a struggle is unavoidable. The Polish Socialist Party, for example, placed itself at the head of the general strike, to prevent it coming under the leadership of the Communist Party, which would have led it to a complete victory. The masses want a united struggle against Fascism. The Social-Democratic leaders talk about a united front, meaning the unity under their leadership, unity for the prevention of the revolutionary struggle.

Social-Democracy is combining its manœuvres to conceal the preparations of war, with its manœuvres for the struggle against the revolutionary way out of the crisis. The object of "left" manœuvres like "State capitalism," the "socialisation" of the mines (in Germany), etc., is to hold the working class back from the struggle for the proletarian revolution, and the "left" manœuvre in the question of war, is to hold them back from real defence of the Soviet Union.

More then ever before, to-day, the fighting unity of all toilers is imperative. Every worker must realise that the preparation of the imperialist war goes ahead on every hand. There is only one force which can present serious resistance, which has the will and is capable of combining the struggle against imperialist war with the fight for the transformation of the Imperialist War into civil war, with the fight for the proletarian revolution. This force is the Communist Party, and the unity of all toilers must be established under its leadership, for the struggle for these aims, in spite of and against all "left" manœuvres of the Second International.

OPEN LETTER TO THE INDIAN COMMUNISTS

DEAR Comrades,
The revolutionary struggle of the toiling masses for their national and social liberation has reached a turning point. The national bourgeoisie, which has betrayed the revolutionary people, are trying their best to preserve their influence over the toiling masses, to ward off the approaching Indian revolution.

It depends to a great extent upon the efforts, the energetic and self-sacrificing struggle and correct policy of the Indian Communists, whether the treacherous bourgeoisie will maintain its influence and carry out its counter-revolutionary job successfully, or whether the working class, headed by the Communist Party of India, having isolated the national reformists, will lead the toiling masses of town and village to a victorious struggle for independence, land, and the workers' and peasants' power.

The objective conditions and the growth of the class consciousness of the Indian proletariat testify to the fact that the latter course has every chance of fulfilment, provided the Indian Communists overcome their lagging behind in the formation of a mass All-Indian Communist Party; provided they, on the basis of the platform of action published by them, and the experience of the past years, energetically and jointly undertake the formation of the Communist Party and

organise the struggle of workers and peasants, not in words but in deeds.

I. THE CORRELATION OF CLASS FORCES.

The Indian bourgeoisie which is trying to preserve its influence over the masses, and which did not break off its negotiations with British imperialism at the end of the Second Round Table Conference, is continuing its policy of counter-revolutionary compromise with British imperialism and betrayal of the revolutionary people. British imperialism, making use of counter-revolutionary national reformism, widely developed the policy of repression and provocation, the organising of the reactionary elements of the country, trying to drown in blood the rising masses of workers and peasants and simultaneously continuing negotiations with the Indian bourgeoisie. Full agreement between the Indian bourgeoisie and the British imperialists is being hindered at the present time by the rapidly developing revolutionary movement under the conditions of the deepening economic crisis.

Because of the sharpening of the economic crisis, the insignificant and temporary reduction of taxes in a few provinces has not helped the position of the peasants in the least. The burden of ruin, oppression and poverty, which is pre-conditioned by the whole system of imperialist

feudal-money-lending exploitation, and is aggravated by the present decline of agricultural prices, together with the actual increase in taxation and reaction, is reaching an unprecedented height. In spite of the fact that the process of drawing the peasant masses into the struggle is proceeding *unevenly*, it has already assumed such a powerful character (guerilla warfare in Burma and Kashmir, struggles in U.P., etc.), that on the one hand it has compelled the National Congress (which was negotiating an agreement with the imperialists) to continue pretending its sham opposition towards imperialism longer than it wished, to deceive the masses and disorganise the peasant struggle. On the other hand it has forced the British imperialists to hasten in the use of barbarous forms of mass terror to break up the people's movement.

On January 7th, 1932, the "Bombay Chronicle" was compelled to admit that

"a noteworthy feature of the peasant movement in the United Provinces is the fact that the peasants are becoming their own leaders . . . that the peasant movement to an ever-increasing extent takes place at the initiative of the peasants themselves, and that they have identified themselves with the Congress because they could not get assistance from other organisations."

The leaders of the National Congress, Gandhi, Nehru, and Co., are compelled to admit the fact, in a number of speeches, that the anti-imperialist movement and the agrarian struggle are beginning to come together more and more. The terrified bourgeoisie are now trying to disorganise the peasants' struggle and hold the peasant movement back, so that it be limited to a peaceful, submissive economic campaign for slight reduction of taxes, postponement of debts, etc. However, in spite of the efforts of the National Congress, the peasant movement is beginning to exceed the limits marked out by the Congress, and dissatisfaction of the peasantry with the policy of the Congress is beginning to spread.

Dissatisfaction with the policy of the National Congress is likewise increasing among the petty-bourgeoisie in the towns (the increase in the wave of terrorist actions, increased interest of various elements in the terrorist movement, in the working-class movement and Marxism, speeches at student meetings in Calcutta, etc.) and is expressed to a still greater extent among the working masses.

The working class has roused the town petty-bourgeoisie and the peasantry, by its activities beginning from 1928, to the struggle against the British imperialists and thus had a tremendous

influence on the development of the people's movement in 1930-31.

The events of the last few months (the Bombay demonstration against Gandhi, the Sholapur strike, etc.) show that the process of drawing the Indian proletariat into the economic and political struggle, accompanied by its liberation from the influence of the National Congress, is growing, and in spite of the still existing uneven character, is beginning more and more to assume an *all-Indian character*. All the facts show that in most cases, the workers themselves begin the strikes and that among the workers, not only in Bombay, but also in other places, there is growing a strata of active workers who are capable not only of becoming the cement and the leaders of a mass revolutionary trade union movement, but can become, with energetic work carried on the part of the Communists, the mass basis of a strong, working class, illegal Indian Communist Party.

Some comrades are inclined to think that the working-class movement entered a period of decline and depression as the result of the defeat of the Bombay strike in 1929. Such a point of view is entirely wrong. It is true that the defeat of the strike (which occurred as the result of the absence of a C.P. and neglect of the task of spreading the strike to Ahmedabad and Sholapur), the growth of unemployment in the first half of 1930, the terror of the employers and the police and particularly the insufficient work of the revolutionary wing of the trade union movement had undoubtedly a bad effect on the position of the G.K.U.* But this does not at all justify the theory of decline, because it was exactly in the years 1930-31 that (1) there was a final split of the Communist groups from "Left" national reformism and for the first time there really commenced the formation of an illegal Communist Party; (2) the working masses took a most active part in all political activities to the point to open fights against the police and the troops (Sholapur, etc.); (3) the backward sections of the proletariat of the country (Bangalore, Cawnpore, Baroda, etc.), who had been lagging behind, began to be drawn in the struggle; (4) a number of independent political activities of the working masses took place, and the working class, by its methods of struggle, put a specific imprint on the whole mass movement. The advanced sections of the proletariat commenced an open struggle against the National Congress. The historical demonstration of Bombay workers on the day of Gandhi's departure to London, and the Sholapur demonstration of textile strikers, are

* "Girni Kamgar" (Red Flag) Union.—Ed.

very remarkable instances of such a struggle, against the influence of the National Congress.

The development of a spontaneous working-class movement, the growth of the class-consciousness of the proletariat most definitely refutes the theory of reaction among the working masses, of a decline of their fighting spirit, of the low level of class-consciousness of the Indian proletariat outside Bombay. Such theories merely show that some comrades have not overcome their disbelief in the power of the working class, are not in contact with the workers outside Bombay, and confuse the question of the literacy of the workers, with the level of their class-consciousness. These comrades have brought with them, into the workers' movement, the anti-proletarian bureaucratic organisational principles of the National Congress, division into leaders and masses, and practical disbelief in the strength of the revolutionary rank and file, therefore they cannot even explain the outbreak of spontaneous economic strikes and the tremendous participation of the working masses in the anti-imperialist movement. This shows that many Communists have not yet pondered the experience of the end of 1927 and 1928, when the Bombay textile workers very quickly kicked out the reformist group of Joshi, to the astonishment of the revolutionary leaders, and solidly came over to the platform of the "Red Flag."

It may be stated accurately that in India "the strength of the present movement lies in the awakening of the masses (chiefly the industrial proletariat), and its weakness lies in the insufficient consciousness and initiative of the revolutionary leaders" (Lenin).

The general picture of the Communist movement is not satisfactory. On the one hand there is a tremendous unprecedented development of the working-class movement. On the other hand, the Communist Party still consists of a small number (though the number is increasing) of weak groups, often isolated from the masses, disconnected with each other, not politically united, and in some places not clearly differentiated from national reformism, adopting a conciliatory policy towards it. Instead of a struggle for a united all-Indian Communist Party, we find socialism, provincialism, self-isolation from the masses, etc., which, though it could be understood to some extent in 1930, now represents the *main* danger to the revolutionary, proletarian movement.

The lagging behind of the Communist vanguard must be rapidly and most decisively overcome. This is the first and the *most important* task for all those honest Communist revolutionaries who stand by the platform of action of the C.P. of I.,

and are faithful to the cause of the Indian and world proletariat.

2. COMMUNISTS AND THE STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE.

The biggest mistake made by Indian Communists consists in the fact that, in reality, they stood aside from the mass movement of the people against British imperialism. In spite of the fact that the documents of the Communist movement refer to this mistaken policy, no change has yet taken place, and self-isolation from the struggle for independence still exists.

In June, 1930, one of the documents of the Bombay organisation said:

"We came to a position in Bombay when we actually withdrew from the struggle and left it entirely to the National Congress. We limited our rôle to that of a small group who sit aside and issue . . . leaflets occasionally. The result was one which could have been expected; in the minds of the workers there grew the opinion that we are doing nothing and that the Congress is the only organisation which is carrying on the fight against imperialism and therefore workers began to follow the lead of the Congress . . .

"The result of the policy of actual withdrawal from the political struggle, lack of attempts to lead the masses, to organise them, to isolate the reformist elements proved to be harmful in regard to the growth of the C.P. itself."

The self-isolation of the Communists from the anti-imperialist mass struggle, alleged to be a purely Congress movement, has created confusion in the Communist ranks. It helped to increase the disbelief in the strength of the proletariat and the growth of its class-consciousness among Communist-intellectuals. It has hindered the development of the process of differentiation in the revolutionary movement, has hindered the isolation of "Left" national-reformists from the working masses, and objectively strengthened the positions of the bourgeois National Congress.

The whole history of the Indian working-class movement, however, proves that this is a most dangerous error. At the dawn of the Indian working-class movement, Lenin, estimating the participation of the Bombay workers in the protest demonstration against the arrest of Tilok (in 1908) wrote:

"In India also the proletariat has already reached the point of a conscious political struggle, and as this is the case, the days of the Anglo-Czarist order in India are numbered."

The movement of 1921-22, developing under the influence of the October revolution, showed a further maturing of the proletariat. Even the

enemies of the revolutionary proletariat, such as Gandhi, were compelled to admit (see "Young India") that the workers of Bombay, Ahmedabad and other towns came forward during this period as a most active force, thereby frightening the bourgeois National Congress terribly. But the present period, which is developing under the influence of the Chinese revolution, and the successful construction of Socialism in the U.S.S.R. (the Bombay strikes, the boycott of the Simon and Whitley Commissions, the Meerut trial, the movement of 1930-31, the formation of the C.P., etc.), shows the gigantic extent of the working-class movement, its further progress, and its particular activity in the struggle for independence. The whole history of the working-class movement decisively refutes those who do not believe in the strength of the proletariat, and its ability to fight for the leadership of the people's movement.

The bourgeois *National Congress*, deeply hostile to the proletariat, distracting the workers and peasants from the struggle against the capitalists and landlords, has so far succeeded in maintaining influence over considerably wide masses of the workers. This can be explained, mainly, by the fact that bourgeois national reformism has cleverly made use of the hatred of the working masses for British imperialism, and using this, has been foisting on them a policy of internal class peace concealed by "radical" phrases on the "joint national struggle."

Thus the liberation of the proletariat from the influence of the treacherous bourgeoisie, and its conversion from an active political force into the *leading* force with the hegemony of the people's movement can be brought about at present only by the exposure of the bourgeois National Congress and its "left" wing, Bose, Kandalkar, Roy, etc., as the betrayers of the struggle for independence. It can be realised only if the Communist Party takes a most energetic part in the struggle for independence, on the basis of an irreconcilable struggle against the national reformists.

This participation in the anti-imperialist movement is *closely* connected, and interwoven with the energetic participation of Communists in the everyday struggle for the economic interests of the working masses, with the most energetic support, organisation and development of the peasant struggle, the agrarian revolution and the attraction to their side of all revolutionary-democratic elements who are prepared to struggle against British imperialism.

The prerequisite for a correct policy for Communists in the anti-imperialist movement is a definite, sharp, clear and *uncompromising* struggle and exposure of the National Congress and

especially the "Left" national-reformists, first of all its special variety — the group of Roy-Kandalkar.

However, while struggling against "left" national reformism, it is incorrect to separate ourselves from the mass movement of the people, who appear to be under the leadership of the National Congress. A distinction must be made between the bourgeois Congress leadership and those sections of the workers, peasants and revolutionary elements of the town petty-bourgeoisie, who, not understanding the treacherous character of the National Congress, followed it, correctly seeing the *basis* of their slavery in the domination of British imperialism.

The National Congress was able to preserve its leadership over the masses of town poor, workers, student youth, artisans, etc. (who participated in a number of armed struggles with the police force of British imperialism on their own initiative), not by its positive political programme which conceals its bourgeois-feudal contents under vague "radical" promises, but only on the basis of assurances of its loyalty to the independence movement, utilising the hatred of the people toward blood-thirsty robber imperialism and the still existing illusions of a "united national front."

To isolate the National Congress and all the "left" national reformists from the toiling masses, to help the separation of the forces of revolution and counter-revolution and establish the hegemony of the proletariat in the struggle of the people, the Indian Communists must take the most energetic part in the anti-imperialist movement and must be in the forefront in *all* activities, demonstrations and clashes of the toiling masses with the imperialists, coming forward as the organisers of the mass struggle, openly exposing everywhere and at all times, by concrete examples, the treachery of the bourgeois National Congress and its "left" wing. It is necessary to participate in all *mass* demonstrations organised by the Congress, coming forward with our own *Communist* slogans and agitation; to support all the revolutionary student demonstrations, be at the forefront in the clashes with the police, protesting against all political arrests, etc., constantly criticising the Congress leaders, especially "left" ones, and calling on the masses for higher forms of struggle, setting ever more concrete and ever more revolutionary tasks before them.

The experience of the Girmi Kamgar Union confirms the correctness of this analysis. The Kandalkar-Roy group was able to split the G.K.U., because (paying lip service of their loyalty to the revolutionary struggle for independence) they appealed to the workers to support the united national front, and urged the workers

to join the bourgeois National Congress, describing it as a people's organisation, thus helping it to disorganise the revolutionary struggle of the toiling masses. It was only by use of "anti-imperialist" phraseology, utilising the hatred of the working masses towards the imperialists, that the national reformists were able to attract considerable sections of the workers to their side.

But if the existence of "united national front" illusions played its part in maintaining the influence of the National Congress, the self-isolation of the Communists objectively assisted the reformists, and retarded the process of the breaking away of the workers from the bourgeois National Congress. The treacherous Roy-V.N. Joshi-Kandalkar group tries to hide its counter-revolutionary essence and its affiliation to the National reformist camp, by the old and well-known bourgeois method of charging the Communists with ultra-radicalism and sectarianism.

This charge of sectarianism is nothing but slander of the Communists for their Bolshevik irreconcilability to national reformism, for their revolutionary hatred of the imperialist and feudal system of exploitation, for their persistent and continuous preparation and mobilisation of the toiling masses for the revolutionary overthrow of imperialist rule.

The treacherous Roy-Kandalkar group, in their appeal to the Trade Union Congress in Calcutta, in the leaflet issued in Bombay against Bradley and the Meerut prisoners, by their condemnation of the position of the revolutionary wing at the Nagpur Congress of trade unions, and the organisation of a reactionary bloc with the Joshi-Giri-Bokhale group, their disruptive work on the railroads, their struggle against the general strike, and the platform of action of the C.P.I., etc., only prove once more that they are agents of the bourgeoisie in the labour movement, that they are carrying on a policy of subordination of the working class to the bourgeoisie, that they are hindering the differentiation and break of the toiling masses with national reformism, and disorganising the revolutionary struggle of the workers and peasants for independence, land and bread.

Pledging their support to the Comintern in phrases, the Roy-Kandalkar-Joshi group are the worst enemies of the international revolutionary proletariat and the Indian anti-imperialist and agrarian revolution in deeds.

The conclusion to draw from this is: that the formation of an All-Indian Communist Party, the isolation of the national reformists, and the development of the people's revolution under the leadership of the proletariat, can only be achieved when the Communists determinedly liquidate their self-isolation from the anti-imperialist struggle of

the masses. It can only be achieved when the Communists show that the C.P. is the leader of the toiling masses and the only leader of the anti-imperialist and agrarian revolution *in practice*, as the vanguard of the masses, showing the way of revolutionary struggle, sharply and mercilessly exposing and struggling against the National Congress and its "Left" wing.

From this point of view, the Communists must also sharply combat all ideas of those comrades who unconsciously arrive at self-isolation from the mass anti-imperialist struggle through their desire to preserve the cadres, to gain time for building the Party.

Such a line is harmful and shortsighted. The preservation of cadres, the guarantee of continuity and the formation of an illegal Party is an *extremely necessary task*. However, the fulfilment of it must not be achieved through self-isolation from the anti-imperialist struggle, but only by the correct combination of illegal and legal methods of work, organisation, and the most energetic drawing of workers into our ranks, and developing of new cadres from workers and trustworthy revolutionary youth.

3. THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE NATIONAL CONGRESS AND THE PETTY-BOURGEOISIE.

The increase of the dissatisfaction of wide masses with the policy of the National Congress (negotiations in London, etc.), directly connected with the deepening of the crisis, the offensive of imperialism, and the further revolutionising of the toiling masses, has compelled the leaders of the National Congress to follow the path of new "Left" manoeuvres to strengthen their influence. Very characteristic in this connection is the fact that the "Left" national reformists (Bose, etc.) have again raised the question of their readiness to create a separate organisation of "Lefts" and have begun to "criticise" the participation of the National Congress in the Round Table Conference, etc. (see his speech at the Conference of the Youth in Maharaster). All this is done in order to once more fool the masses, and organise, if necessary, a "safety valve" like the former League of Independence to give an outlet for the dissatisfaction of the masses. These manoeuvres of the bourgeoisie show the process of ferment and disappointment which is spreading among the toiling masses, and confirms the *correctness* of the platform of action of the C.P.I. which speaks of the necessity of the sharpest differentiation, criticism and exposure of "Left" national reformism, including its foremost detachment, the group of Roy, as the necessary prerequisite for the mobilisation of the toiling masses

for a revolutionary struggle and the creation of a mass C.P.

Struggling against the bourgeois National Congress, some comrades mistakenly identify the bourgeoisie with the petty-bourgeoisie, mechanically contrasting the "class" interests of the proletariat with the independence movement as a whole; while other Communists, fighting against this mistaken conception, *forget* about the bourgeoisie, forget about the instability, the waverings and hesitations of the petty-bourgeoisie, and sometimes in practice join with or follow the latter, thus objectively subordinating the proletariat to the leadership of the national bourgeoisie.

For example, it was a mistake when the leaders of the trade union movement stated (see "Bombay Chronicle") that the split in Calcutta is a matter for the workers, only affects the trade union movement, is only connected with the economic struggle and has no connection whatsoever with the "patriotic" feelings of the nationalists. The struggle, against the bourgeoisie, inside the working class, is of decisive importance for the whole of the anti-imperialist movement. The split and issues raised in Calcutta are also an important stage in the anti-imperialist struggle, and the differentiation of the forces of revolution and counter-revolution. The organisation of an All-India centre of the trade union movement, based on the principles of the class struggle, must serve, in spite of the mistakes made, not only for the class consolidation of the proletariat, but must also help in the mobilisation of the peasantry and the revolutionary strata of the petty-bourgeoisie around the proletariat and its Communist vanguard. To do this it is also necessary to distinguish between the revolutionary patriotism of the toiling masses, suffering from national oppression and the treacherous counter-revolutionary pseudo-patriotism of the bourgeoisie. We must learn to prove that that portion of the trade union Congress which followed Bose, Kandalkar, Roy and Co. has carried on and is carrying on a struggle against the "patriotism," against the anti-imperialist fight of the revolutionary people. Those who separate the class interests of the proletariat from the struggle for independence in *practice* drive the toiling masses and the revolutionary sections of the petty-bourgeoisie into the arms of the National Congress and the "Left" wing, strengthen the position of the bourgeoisie, instead of rallying the toiling masses around the Communist Party and fighting for the hegemony of the proletariat.

A mistake of an opposite character is the statement of some comrades that the anti-imperialist movement of 1930-31 can be described as a move-

ment of the town petty-bourgeoisie. From the viewpoint of these comrades, the proletariat and peasantry as the basic forces of the Indian revolution disappear, and the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie with its influence over the masses (still great) is forgotten. The tactics of the Communists are adapted as a result to the town petty-bourgeoisie and hence criticism of the National Congress and the "Left" national reformists is toned down. Among the supporters of this view there arose at the end of 1930, under the influence of the waverings of the town petty-bourgeoisie, a theory of "reaction" in the working-class movement (see "Railwayman," November, 1930). This theory incorrectly explained the situation of 1930 and would be wrong for the present period. Is it correct as "Railwayman" states, that the working class in 1930 came into motion under the influence of the dissatisfied petty-bourgeoisie and fell under its leadership? It is not.

In 1928-29 the proletariat by its strikes, its struggle against the Simon and Whitley Commissions, its revolutionary position at the Nagpur T.U. Congress, etc., aroused the petty-bourgeoisie to the anti-imperialist struggle. In 1930 the most active element in all mass actions in the towns (Bombay, Sholapur, Calcutta, Madras, etc.) was the working class. In many cases the advanced sections of the workers spontaneously took the initiative into their hands, drawing the students and the city poor to their side (Calcutta, etc.). Therefore, to underestimate the growth of the revolutionary consciousness and activity of the working class, to claim that it was an appendage of the petty-bourgeoisie, means in reality to fail to see its process of development, to lag at the tail end of events, give up the idea of forming a mass Communist Party and blame the workers for their (some of the revolutionary leaders) own pessimism, shortsightedness and inability to organise the struggle of the working class. Depicting the petty-bourgeoisie as the leading force in 1930 and construing a theory of "reaction," the authors of the article made a mistake, in the sense that they gloss over the question of the treachery of the national bourgeoisie, which succeeded, in 1930, in leading the petty-bourgeoisie, and a considerable portion of those sections of workers and peasants, who, for the first time, were drawn into the independence movement. By stating that the working class was following the petty-bourgeoisie, the authors of the article unconsciously help to conceal the bourgeois character of the National Congress, identify the petty-bourgeoisie with the bourgeoisie and in reality hinder the exposure of the national reformists—objectively helping to spread the harmful theory of the necessity of toning down

criticism of the National Congress, so as not to frighten away the masses who follow it.

Actually what the author of the article entitled "reaction" meant was that among the workers there was a growing discontent with the treacherous policy of the National Congress, that the illusions of the "united national front" had begun to disappear, and a drift of the masses from the National Congress had commenced. The absence of the C.P. hinders this process and makes it possible for the enemies of the working class to bring demoralisation into the ranks of the proletariat. It is from this point of view, without throwing responsibility for the mistakes of the revolutionary leaders on to the workers, that we should attentively consider the counter-revolutionary speech of Ruikar, and the resolution adopted by the Nagpur textile trade union in January, 1932. Speaking of the growing disbelief of the workers in the leaders of the National Congress, Ruikar called on the workers not to support any political party whatever, but to *only* carry on an economic struggle, and persuaded the Nagpur textile union to pass a resolution not to take any further part in the national movement and restricting themselves merely to the trade union struggle. ("B.C.," January 14th.)

These facts testify to the drifting of the masses from the National Congress and the treacherous work of the national reformists Kandalkar-Ruikar-Roy, once more confirm the harmfulness and the danger of the theory of "reaction," which is linked up with self-isolation from the anti-imperialist struggle and lack of faith in the working class. Self-isolation from the anti-imperialist struggle aids the work of all the agents of imperialism, who are trying to detract workers from the political struggle, and disorganise their ranks, especially at this moment when millions of peasants are being drawn in, when dissatisfaction and disappointment with the National Congress is growing, when the class character and treachery of the National Congress, in the struggle for independence, and the interests of the peasantry, becomes clearer.

In close connection with the mistakes exposed above we find the underestimation of the danger of "Left" national reformism and an insufficient struggle against it. In all the statements of the Communists (leaflet for the Karachi National Congress, etc.), the question of the "Lefts" and their special function and rôle was *not raised*. A struggle is carried on against persons but the "programme," manoeuvres and nature of "Left" national reformism is not exposed. Such a mistake was made also at the Trade Union Congress in Calcutta. But it is not accidental that the

"Left" national reformists are hastening to cover themselves with "socialist" armour and the renegade Roy swears devotion to the Comintern. The "Lefts" will come more and more to the forefront, especially the Roy group, whose particular task is to carry on disintegrating work among the proletarian *vanguard*. The position of the comrades who tried to secure unity with Kandalkar was entirely wrong, because instead of raising questions of principle (the struggle against national reformism), they raised the question of persons, forgetting that the positions of groups and persons always reflect the interests of definite classes, and thus these comrades have been objectively helping the National Congress. The point of view of those comrades who think that criticism of the "Left" national reformists in the trade unions will lead to the isolation of the C.P. is wrong. On the contrary, if criticism is taken to the *masses*, the Communists will only strengthen their influence and win over the masses to their programme. We must hold the "Left" national reformists to their words, and expose their phrases appealing to the people, before the masses by *comparing them with their deeds*, showing that the first and smallest test was the fact that, instead of fighting against the imperialists, they went to the Round Table Conference; instead of helping the peasants they helped the imperialists to collect taxes; and now they are disorganising the no-rent movement; instead of supporting the workers they sabotage the general strike; instead of a revolutionary struggle they preach counter-revolutionary non-violence and submission; instead of supporting the revolutionary workers they split the Trade Union Congress in Calcutta and made an agreement with the Joshi and Giri group, the open agents of the imperialists, etc. Therefore, we must consider as incorrect the fact that the proletarian revolutionaries, while struggling against the national reformists at the Calcutta T.U. Congress, did not come out simultaneously with a special declaration against the Sen-Gupta group, thereby hindering the differentiation and the struggle against national reformism. The struggle against national reformism, and still more against its dangerous variety (the Roy-Kandalkar-V.N. Joshi group) serves as a base, and is connected with the overcoming of two incorrect points of view which have appeared in the process of the formation of the Communist movement. One of these consists in passive resistance to the extensive recruiting of revolutionary workers into the ranks of the Party. The other consists in glossing over the *class character of the Communist Party*. It is wrong to propose to the revolutionary petty-bourgeois organisations to

fuse with the Communist Party. An alliance of the proletariat with the peasantry is the *basis* of the strategy of the Indian C.P., but while fighting for the leadership of the anti-imperialist and the general peasant struggle, we must not for a moment forget the separate organisation of the town and village proletariat, and the formation of a completely *independent* class Party—the Communist Party. While fighting in alliance with the peasantry, the Indian proletariat must preserve its class independence; this is the only guarantee, not only that it will be able to ensure its hegemony (if a Communist Party exists) in the general national movement, but that it will be able to *draw* the majority of the oppressed peasantry, after the overthrow of the power of the imperialists, *with it* in the struggle for socialism.

4. THE PEASANTS AND THE NON-PAYMENT OF TAXES MOVEMENT.

The tremendous growth of the peasant movement, taking on the character of guerrilla warfare in some districts, the struggle in the United Provinces, etc., was the main reason compelling the National Congress to move more and more to the right, against the revolutionary people, concealing its actions by “Left” manoeuvres. The National Congress has retarded the “no-rent and no-taxes” movement in every way for one and a half years, and helped the British imperialists to collect taxes and debts from the peasants. Now, stating that it sympathises with the non-payment movement in words, it continues to carry on disorganizational counter-revolutionary work against it in reality.

The present “no-rent and no-tax” movement bears a spontaneous character. The task of the Communists at the present time is: following the policy as outlined in the platform of action of the C.P.I., to actually start the organisation of a mass movement for the non-payment of taxes, rent and debts, drawing all revolutionary democratic elements into this campaign, and giving it the anti-imperialist character of the struggle for independence. Only in this way, proving by concrete examples how the “radical” words of the National Congress differ from their disorganising actions, will it be possible to *isolate* the national reformists and develop a powerful peasant movement. Besides direct agitational and organisational work by the Party and the utilisation of the industrial workers connected with the villages, it is necessary to call on the revolutionary elements of the *rank and file* (followers of the National Congress; the youth leagues; the peasant organisations, etc.), to undertake the organisation of a nationwide movement for the non-payment of taxes and rent, in spite of the National Congress and over

its head, organising *peasant committees*, self-defence groups, and establishing contact with the town workers.

It is incorrect to oppose the slogan of the general strike to the mass movement for non-payment of taxes and debts, civil disobedience, and the boycott. While supporting this mass movement, the Communists must win the leadership of it, and exposing the treachery of the National Congress by concrete example, develop and guide it into genuinely revolutionary channels.

5. THE SLOGAN OF THE GENERAL STRIKE AND THE STRUGGLE FOR THE MAJORITY OF THE PROLETARIAT.

At the end of 1930 some revolutionists (see article of “Railwayman”) took a negative attitude to the slogan of the general strike. These comrades “explained” their negative attitude by claiming that the workers were not yet sufficiently class-conscious and that most of the trade unions opposed this slogan.

The basis for this position was an incorrect estimation of the general situation, lack of faith in the strength of the working class, and confusion on the question of the tactical tasks of Communists.

The objective situation of 1930, and at present, shows that the slogan of a general strike was and is timely, corresponds to the relationship of class forces, and is one of the basic uniting slogans for the next stage of the struggle of the working class for hegemony in the people’s movement.

The author of the article confused the question of the slogan of the general strike as a tactical line for the Communists, with the question of the *date* for calling the strike, which depends on a number of concrete factors. We must not, under the excuse of disagreement with the fixing of a date for the strike, carry on a struggle against the tactical line of the revolutionary proletariat. “To consider the mood of the workers is important when choosing the moment of action, but not for deciding the tactical line of action, of the working class” (Lenin).

It is also incorrect to consider the slogan of a general strike according to the attitude of the trade union leaders. The majority of the Indian trade unions are bureaucratic, non-mass organisations, acting against the interests of the working masses, *without contact with them*. At the present time, the strength of these reformist trade unions is the result of the poor activity of the proletarian revolutionaries, of disorganisation in the workers’ ranks, and the fact that the national reformists utilise the anti-imperialist sentiment of the working class. It is useful to recollect the experience of Bombay in 1928 and the rapid breaking up of the textile “Union” of Joshi and Co.

When considering the slogan of the general strike we must not mistake the attitude of the reformist leaders for the real sentiments of the working class. This is a gross error.

In order to break down the disorganising influence and work of the reformists, it was necessary not to withdraw the slogan of the general strike, but on the contrary transfer the struggle for it to the *rank and file*, to the masses, exposing the reformists and *organising* the workers.

The events of the last few months (the increase of strikes, the growing demand of the railwaymen for a railway strike, the growth of unemployment and poverty, resistance to the terror of the imperialists, etc.) show that support for the slogan of the general strike is *increasing*. The task of Communists is to come forward in deeds not in words as *initiators* of the struggle of the workers. To start to organise strike committees, composed of rank and file workers and using the assistance of *all* revolutionary democratic organisations (youth leagues, rank and file revolutionaries at present deceived by the National Congress) and thus mobilising *all* forces, over the head of the reformist trade union leaders, developing the strike movement, especially on the railways, and by means of them, linking them up with political demands, leading the masses to the general political strike. We greet the fact that Indian workers, as stated in the "Railway Mazdoor," are beginning this task. The general strike is of historic importance for the development of the revolutionary movement and the conversion of the proletariat into the leading force, mobilising the peasants and the city poor around it. It will deliver the first powerful blow at the power of the imperialists — bringing the revolutionary people right up to the highest form of struggle, the revolutionary uprising.

The development of the strike movement places the task of forming mass trade unions, and factory committees, before the Communists and the necessity of combining the battles for the everyday interests with the political struggle. The revolutionary T.U. movement has registered a number of individual successes, like the strikes at Sholapur and Bombay, the calling of a conference of textile workers with the participation of 400 delegates from 60 factories, the strengthening of its position among the railwaymen, the growth of the workers' press, etc.

However, the weakness of the G.K.U., the loss of the leadership of the strike at the "Madhowji Dbaramsi" factory, the loss of the leadership in the tramway union, etc., also show that the Communists disdain the everyday work in the factories and trade unions, do not build up groups of active workers, do not form Communist frac-

tions, do not carry on sufficient everyday organisational and agitational work. It is *only* by leading and defending the interests of the workers in large and small struggles *constantly and every day*, in attack and defence, that the Communist Party can win the unshakable *confidence* of the working class and lead it to the decisive battle against the exploiting classes.

It is time to get rid of bad traditions in the trade unions (the traditions of bureaucratic methods of work from above, the division into leaders and rank and file) and to start to form mass trade unions with *elected* management committees, consisting of workers from the bench, regularly functioning and *in contact* with the working masses, boldly promoting workers, supporting them and in every way developing their initiative and self-reliance.

We must carry on energetic work among the workers who follow the reformist trade unions. It is a great mistake to continue the practice of self-isolation from workers' meetings, and the mass trade unions which are under the influence of the reformists. Communists must *always* take part in them and carry on work among the workers, urging them to join the united fighting front of the proletariat.

During strikes and other economic and political actions of the workers, it is necessary to propose to the workers who follow the reformists to help the general struggle, take part in the rank and file unity committees, defend the workers' demands, etc., and thus fight for the unity of the workers, not in words, *but in deeds*, exposing the reformists at the same time.

At the same time, it is necessary to change the passive attitude of Communists to the question of the *All-Indian* trade union movement and repudiate the special theory that "the trade union Congress is not living and concrete for the workers." In this, as in the other questions, lack of faith is shown in the working class and local tasks are *counterposed* to all-Indian tasks, the G.K.U. is counterposed to the trade union Congress.

Such counterposing is very harmful. While developing our activity a hundred times for strengthening the G.K.U. and converting it into an all-Indian textile union (including Sholapur, Ahmedabad, Nagpur, etc.), it is necessary to completely do away with a negative attitude towards the all-Indian trade union movement, and begin to form mass trade unions all over the country, in the coal, steel and jute industry, the plantations and the railroads, *attracting* the workers of the reformist trade unions to our side.

After the split of the Calcutta trade union congress, the revolutionary wing did *nothing* to form

a mass trade union movement, while the national reformists are carrying on a "unity" campaign (i.e., disorganisation of the revolutionary proletariat), organised a number of all-Indian campaigns ("Labour Day," etc.), formed a textile federation, seized the initiative on the railroads, formed provincial trade union councils, etc.

Even now the revolutionary trade union movement is in a position to send a number of groups of active workers to various centres in the country so as to start work among the rank and file workers. Only by boldly *promoting* workers and tested revolutionary Communist intellectuals into the leadership, starting real work and abandoning a number of mistakes explained above—only in this way will the Communists be able to start the organisation of the proletariat and develop the struggle for the hegemony of the working class in the people's movement.

6. THE STRUGGLE FOR AN ALL-INDIAN PARTY.

The biggest gain of the proletarian movement, the greatest move forward is the fact that the advanced workers and revolutionaries have entirely separated from the National Congress and commenced to form an illegal Communist Party. The idea of an illegal C.P. has *already* been adopted and is beginning to be carried out.

However, the development of the Indian Communist movement is being blocked by the state of discord, the separate existence of the Party groups, a number of mistakes connected with it and enumerated above, without overcoming which, the movement cannot normally develop further.

If the period of isolated circles might have been considered inevitable in 1930 and the beginning of 1931, such a position must be considered as *extremely* harmful and dangerous to the further development of the Communist movement at the present time.

The movement has now reached a stage of development when it is *absolutely necessary* to raise the standard of struggle for an All-Indian Communist Party resolutely and firmly, for uniting and welding together all the Communist groups, for the organisational and ideological *unity* of the Communist ranks, utilising and developing the initiative from below to form and develop new local groups and organisations at the same time.

Hence it must be recognised that the Party organisation has not carried out a correct policy; instead of a struggle for the Party, it has, in reality, taken the line of provincialism. Instead of helping the local groups, it has taken up the position of self-limitation, and reducing the whole Party merely to a local organisation, not linked

up with other local organisations. Instead of rousing and organising the *ideological* struggle for the Party, widely explaining and discussing all the questions of principle of the movement (for which purpose it is necessary to create an illegal printed organ of the Central Committee and legal newspapers in the *shortest possible time*), the Party organisation was not even able to continue publication of the legal Marxist paper of all-Indian importance. The absence of such illegal and legal papers (and their substitution by the trade union press does not improve the position) not only drove all disagreements deep inside, hindering the working out of a united Party line, but it played a great negative rôle in the formation of the Communist Party, strengthening of contact between the various districts, development of the class struggle against the imperialists and the bourgeoisie, and winning the workers and the revolutionary youth to the Communist Party. Revolutionary newspapers are appearing everywhere in the country (in Calcutta, Madras, Punjab, etc.), trying to preach Marxism and defend the proletarian point of view. However, the absence of an illegal (and a legal) Party press makes it exceedingly *difficult* to influence them, to struggle against confusion, discord and gross mistakes, *hinders* the working out of a united Communist line and the establishment of unity of views and methods of struggle. It is necessary to clearly understand the teachings of Lenin on the rôle of a central Party paper as an agitator and *organiser* of the masses and the Party. This is particularly important for the *present* period of the Indian Communist movement.

A psychology of provincialism has developed in the circles and refusal to work on an *All-Indian* scale. On all questions which were of All-Indian importance (the All-Indian Trade Union Movement, the general strike on the railroads, the peasant struggle, the movement for the non-payment of rent and taxes, the Round Table Conference, the jute strike, etc.), the Communist groups proved unable to rise above the provincial horizon. They did not see the general task and the All-Indian scale of the struggle, which in its turn, led them to narrow down their tasks, on the spot, in their provinces. In practice, they completely cleared the All-Indian arena for the national reformists, who took the initiative in the organisation (i.e., in reality disorganisation) of the railroad movement, the textile federation, the united front campaign, the work among the miners and metal workers of Jamshedpur, etc. Abandonment of the All-Indian arena, *self-isolation*, for instance, inability of revolutionary leaders of the Bombay

workers to give assistance to the jute strike in Calcutta, etc., in practice leads to the strengthening of the influence of the bourgeoisie, hinders the formation of the C.P., prevents the winning of the hegemony in the struggle of the people by the working class, leads to the *loss of initiative* in all questions whatsoever (in the struggle for the trade union congress, preparations for the railway strike, etc.).

Provincialism and discord is also shown in the fact that the G.K.U. alone is made to take the place of the All-Indian trade union movement. In practice this leads to the fact that the Communist groups *voluntarily* leave the All-Indian arena and objectively play into the hands of the bourgeoisie and the imperialists.

The existence of the Party as a number of isolated groups brings about complaints that there are no forces, no comrades available, that it is impossible to cope with the great tasks facing the revolutionary movement. Hence we often find passivity, despondency, mutual disputes, deviations of all kinds, sectarianism and an opportunist attitude to national reformism, in which the possibility of splits, on an unprincipled basis, becomes very great. However, this complaint of the absence of forces is contradicted by thousands of facts of every-day life which show that among the workers and the revolutionary youth there are thousands of active fighters sympathetic to the C.P.

It is necessary to come forward decisively for an All-Indian C.P. While increasing a hundred-fold local work (especially in Calcutta, etc.), it is necessary at the same time to move the centre of gravity of Party work somewhat to the All-Indian activity, and begin to build the Party, carrying on the struggle for a common political line, creating a network of local Party organisations, developing the sense of responsibility, Party feeling and discipline, encouraging local initiative and courageously drawing workers and those revolutionary intellectuals who are true to the working class cause into our ranks. Such a change will not weaken, but on the contrary will make the local activity, contacts and agitation, stronger and more stable. It is necessary to build and extend Party organisations everywhere, encouraging local initiative. The strength of the Communist Party is determined by the degree of its contact with the wide masses, above all with the proletariat. The only correct form of organisation to secure this contact, and the fighting ability of the Party is the system of *factory* cells. Particularly in India, under conditions of terror and comparatively high concentration of the proletariat, the formation of factory cells is *absolutely* essential,

obligatory and highly important task of the Party. It is necessary to get in touch with, and draw in all active industrial workers, because that is the chief guarantee of successful building of an illegal Communist Party, able to withstand the terror and lead the struggle of the working class. It is essential to arrange propagandist circles, short courses, etc., at the same time, to develop and teach the active workers the elemental essentials of Marxism, helping them in every way into active Party work as organisers and leaders of working class struggles and Party organisations. The Communist groups were also unable to properly combine legal and illegal forms of work. In some districts, following the correct position of the platform of action of the C.P.I. that under present conditions the C.P.I. can exist *only* as an illegal Party, the Communists have not been able to ensure the formation and normal existence of illegal organisations and leading organs.

It must be thoroughly realised (and this will determine how seriously and consistently the Communists stand by the illegal Party and the revolutionary struggle) that the leading organs of the Party, and the kernel of the Party organisations, must be in an *illegal position*, and that mixing the conspirative and open apparatus of the Party organisation is *fatal* to the Party, and plays into the hands of Government provocation. While developing the illegal organisation in every way, measures must be taken for preserving and strengthening the conspirative kernel of the Party organisation. For the purpose of all kinds of open activity (in the press, meetings, leagues, trade unions, etc.), special groups and commissions, etc., should be formed which, working under the leadership of Party committees, should under no circumstance injure the existence of illegal cells.

To sum up: the slogan of an All-Indian illegal, centralised Communist Party, ideologically and organisationally united, a true section of the Comintern, fighting for the platform of action of the C.P.I. and the programme of the Communist International must become the *central slogan* for gathering and forming the Party; and for the struggle against waverings, against the tendency of maintaining isolated circles, against toning down the struggle against national reformism and opportunist sectarianism, all of which hinder the victory of the working class.

CONCLUSION.

The international situation is becoming more and more acute. Japanese imperialism is carrying on war in China and, together with a number of imperialist States, is preparing its division

and complete subjugation. It meets the resistance of U.S.A., which is striving to strengthen and widen its imperialist position in China by way of reducing the share of the other imperialist robbers and increased exploitation of the Chinese masses. The military offensive, the war of the imperialist States against the U.S.S.R., the first working class republic, which has the sympathy of the revolutionary proletariat and the oppressed colonial masses of the world—is *fast approaching*. British imperialism is once more trying to utilise India, as in the world war, to supply reinforcements for its army, use its raw materials, and make it into a strategic basis for the war against the U.S.S.R. and the revolutionary peoples of the East. The Indian bourgeoisie is *once more* betraying and selling the revolutionary people for a mess of pottage.

In the approaching deadly struggle between world imperialism and the proletarian State—the rôle of the Indian Communists is enormous. The Indian anti-imperialist and agrarian revolution can deliver a death-blow at British imperialism and thus hasten the complete destruction of capitalism throughout the world and guarantee the victory of the world revolution. The C.P. of India occupies a responsible sector of the world revolution. And for this struggle the Indian Communists must prepare in a truly Bolshevik manner.

At the present time, the tasks are exceptionally difficult. But for the Indian Communists there is no other revolutionary way to solve these tasks than the Bolshevik way, that is: With

the maximum of energy, tenacity and consistency, following the Marxian-Leninist theory and practice, to undertake, in spite of difficulties, individual failure and defeats, the fulfilment of these tasks and the most important of them—the creation of a true Communist Party.

There can be no greater crime than if the Indian Communists (having their platform of action of the C.P.I. and agreeing with the present letter) *instead* of struggle for the great historical aims of the Indian and world proletariat, follow the path of unprincipled factional struggle, fractions and personal groupings. Unprincipled factional struggle will play *into the hands* of the British imperialists. True Communist groups must put the interests of the proletariat above everything else, direct all their efforts towards the rapid formation of the Communist Party, settling all questions of dispute within the framework of the Communist International and if necessary with its assistance.

The Communists of the whole world do not doubt that, in spite of their present weakness, inexperience and partial isolation, the Indian Communists will show sufficient Bolshevik firmness, courage and decisiveness to enter the wide All-Indian area of struggle for the Party—the leader and organiser of the Indian revolution.

Central Committee of the Communist Party of China.

Central Committee of the Communist Party of Great Britain.

Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany.

THE REJECTION OF THE GOLD STANDARD AND THE CURRENCY INFLATION IN ENGLAND

By K. MILLER.

THE fate of the gold standard reflects the changes which have taken place in the position of Great Britain in the world market since the war. The stabilisation of the pound in 1925 was the result of the victory of the rentiers, over the interests of the industrialists. At the same time it marked a very important step in the struggle for the restoration of the rôle of London, as an international money-market. In order to preserve London's position as international banker, it was necessary to have a stable pound. Pre-war parity was to reinvest it with its lost prestige. However, the gold exchange could be re-established only with the financial aid of the American banks. We thus see that the stabilisation of the pound was carried out under conditions which made it clear, from the very beginning, that London's pre-war financial hegemony no longer obtained.

The interests of the rentiers proved to be decisive because the British bourgeoisie receives huge revenues from its international financial transactions. The banks alone have received over 60 million pounds annually from financing international trade since 1924. The revenues from shipping, which are largely connected with the position of England as an international warehouse, have exceeded 120 million pounds since 1925. In addition England receives enormous sums annually in the form of interest on its foreign investments. Since 1926, these revenues amounted to 285 million pounds. Naturally, any rise in the pound automatically increased the real value of these investments and added to the incomes of the rentiers.

However, the stabilisation of the pound, at pre-war level, involved, at the same time, a deterioration in the conditions under which British industry competed with its rivals. The rise of the pound increased the burden of the indebtedness of British industry. The share received by the rentiers was higher in England than in other countries. It is sufficient to say that in the budget for 1930/31—369.3 million pounds out of a total expenditure of 799.1 million pounds, or nearly one half of the total, were used to pay interest and debts. Thanks to the rise of the pound, the burden of the internal debt, expressed in 1913 prices, increased, according to the Federation of British Industries, almost 2½ times between 1920 and 1929. It is also known that the taxation per head of population in Eng-

land is higher than in other capitalist countries. In the struggle for the financial hegemony of London, the bourgeoisie sacrificed the immediate interests of the industrialists. However, to blame the gold standard for all the defeats sustained by British industry in competition with its rivals would be very superficial. British industry lagged behind the other countries in its technical equipment. Thus, according to Stewart, the economic adviser of the Bank of England, from a financial point of view, the process of England's adjustment to the restoration of the pre-war parity had already been completed in 1925, but from an industrial point of view England has not yet completed its adjustment to the conditions of international competition.*

The British bourgeoisie, in explaining their failures, generally refer to the rise in real wages, in consequence of the return to the pre-war gold pound. However, this claim is indirectly refuted even by the McMillan Commission. In its report (page 52) we read: "The rise (in wages, K.M.) in many industries subjected to foreign competition was far below the average and in some cases considerably below the rise in the cost of living." The bourgeoisie not only compensated itself for the increase in the rate of the pound by the direct attack upon wages, but also reduced the income of the working class below the level of 1925.

In the course of all the years following upon the stabilisation the British bourgeoisie protected the rate of the pound at the price of considerable sacrifices. Mr. Goodenough, director of Barclays Bank, stated, in one of his speeches, that the Bank of England was only able to replenish its gold reserves, in many cases, by buying gold at prices exceeding the legal maximum. According to Goodenough, many foreign deposits remained in London only because the banks paid particularly high rates of interest on them. This was due to the fact that England over-credited herself in her anxiety to maintain her position as international banker. Capital was attracted from abroad only to be invested in other countries. The share of foreign funds in the export of British capital has greatly increased since the war. And this has been in part due to the growing adverseness of the trade balance. The export of British goods prior to the war equalled 82 per cent. of imports;

* Minutes of Evidence taken before the Committee on Finance and Industry, Volume II., pages 184-185.

in 1929 it dropped to 69 per cent. Thus, England found it more and more difficult to preserve its financial hegemony under the constantly deteriorating conditions of competition for British industries.

BRITAIN'S REVENUE.

The crisis sharpened and deepened the effect of the causes which existed during the pre-crisis period as well. The reduction of world trade affected England with special force, owing to the enormous importance of the foreign market to England's national economy and the special structure of its payment balance. In the latter, a big part is played, as we have noted above, by revenues from shipping, foreign investments and banking commission. In 1929 shipping revenues amounted to 130 million pounds, and in 1931 to 80 million pounds, while the revenues from foreign investments fell off during the same period from 250 million to 165 million. The banking commission dropped respectively from 65 million to 30 million. The adversity of the trade balance increased at the same time from 381 million pounds to 411 million. As a result England's payment balance in 1931 was unfavourable to the extent of 110 million pounds. This was the first case of an unfavourable payment balance since the war, excepting the year 1926, when the General and the miners' strikes took place. The credit crisis in the Central European countries, the freezing of British credits, coupled with the manoeuvres of the French banks, caused an international run on the banks of England. Between the end of July and the date of the abolition of the gold standard, England lost about 200 million pounds in foreign deposits. The unrest in the navy, and the political demonstrations of the British proletariat strengthened this pressure upon the British gold. Though England did not, at that time, witness the classic picture of a credit crisis—bank failures—nevertheless, the events in September constitute a peculiar manifestation of a credit crisis. England's entire banking machinery found itself under attack, and the dropping of the gold standard was a forced necessity, rather than a deliberate manoeuvre of the British bourgeoisie, even though it coincided with the interests of some sections of this bourgeoisie. The British bourgeoisie fought to keep the pound at par to the end. The "national" Government was even constituted under the slogan "Save the Pound." But the force of circumstances proved to be stronger than the interests of the financial oligarchy. From this point of view the rejection of the gold standard balanced up, in a way, the entire post-war development of British capitalism.

Immediately after the discontinuation of the

exchange, the pound dropped by 12½ per cent., the lowest level reached in September amounting to 70 per cent. of par. The decline of the pound continued until the end of 1931. In December, it stood at 69.52, the depreciation exceeding 30 per cent. Beginning with January, 1932, the pound displayed a tendency to recovery, accompanied by fluctuations. The average rate of the pound, expressed in the basic gold exchanges rose from 70.70 per cent. of par in January to 77.11 per cent. in April. And this despite the reduction of the official British bank rate which was equal in April to 3 per cent (the crisis rate in September, 1931, being equal to 6 per cent.), and was reduced on May 12 to 2½ per cent.

IS THERE INFLATION IN BRITAIN?

In England we have a very peculiar position, dissimilar to any classic instance of depreciation of money. In the first place, is there an inflation in existence? In the direct sense of the word no inflation exists. That is, if we understand a growth of the money circulation causing a depreciation of the exchange by inflation. The British bank-notes in circulation before the gold standard was dropped amounted to 351,618,000 pounds sterling. After the abolition of the gold standard the circulation increased very slightly, by a few million pounds only. Towards the end of the year the increase became more pronounced, the total value of the banknotes in circulation on December 23 being 370,031,000 pounds. But this increase was due to seasonal causes and was below the increase of last year. After the New Year the circulation again declined to approximately the level preceding the abolition of the gold standard. Thus, no emission was resorted to to cover the budget deficit. It must be noted, however, that, contrary to the boasts of the "national" Government, the balancing of the budget deficit was achieved by the aid of rather doubtful methods. In reality, the budget deficit was concealed through the increase of the debt to the extent of 20 million pounds. In addition, the payment of the credits received in Paris and New York for the salvation of the pound involved a loss of 40 million pounds. This sum, too, did not go into the budget, increasing the State debt instead. We shall not speak of the fact that the budget was balanced at the expense of the working class, through the cutting down of the social insurance benefits, and raising the customs duties, in consequence of which the prices of consumable goods went up. At the same time, the "national" Government did not dare to infringe upon the revenues of the rentiers. It still cannot pluck up the courage to carry out a debt conversion and reduce the rentiers' interest. This

despite the growth of the real revenues of the latter, due to the reduction of the prices during the crises.

However, despite the fact that the money circulation has not increased since the abolition of the gold standard, the rate of the pound declined, and has been constantly fluctuating and the movement of prices has a definitely inflationist tendency.

SPECULATIVE RISE OF THE POUND

If the prices of September 18, 1931, are taken as 100, the picture of the change of prices in England compared with those in other countries will be as follows: The index of the British wholesale prices during the first weeks after the abolition of the gold standard rose, reaching 110.3, that is increasing by more than 10 per cent, by November 11, 1931; up to February 24, prices fluctuated at more or less the same level. Since then a slight reduction has been recorded. At the end of March, however, the prices were still 6 per cent. above the September level. During the same period, prices in other countries maintaining the gold standard have steadily declined. In the United States the decline from September to April was approximately 14 per cent. However, the wholesale price index does not provide a sufficient indication because it includes a number of commodities of the world market whose prices immediately reflect the fall of the exchange. Therefore, the cost of living index must also be taken into consideration, for an indication of the purchasing power of the pound. This index rose from 145 in September (1914 being taken as 100) to 148 in December, 1931, the increase being mainly due to the rise of food prices. But beginning with January, this index has declined somewhat. It is necessary to take the fact into consideration, that these indexes hide the real increase in prices, because while the prices of some individual commodities have gone up, those of others have gone down. The average figures, therefore, are not sufficiently characteristic. For instance, while the general wholesale index in March, 1932, was slightly below that of March, 1931, the prices of a number of commodity groups were considerably above last year's. Grain prices in March, 1932, exceeded those of March, 1931, by 17 per cent. Thus, the situation of the pound is extremely peculiar and must not be approached with the ordinary criteria. However, contrary to all the school examples, inflation does exist in England. It expresses itself not only in a rise of prices, but also in a retardation of their decline. The depreciation of the pound is primarily due to the unfavourable payment balance, combined with the effect of internal causes. It is

necessary to remember that while the circulation of money has not increased the circulation of commodities has decreased. The industrial production of Great Britain in 1931 compared with 1929 decreased by $23\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. At the same time the amount of money in circulation did not change. This had to exercise approximately the same effect as an increase of emission.

The rise of the pound which has taken place during the last months has been due to a series of external causes, primarily to the influx of foreign investments and speculation on the rise of the pound. This influx is being strengthened by the flight from the dollar in connection with the threat of inflation in the United States. Besides, the British bourgeoisie is pumping gold out of India,* thereby decreasing the adversity of its payment balance. The import of gold from India since the gold standard was dropped has been equal to approximately 45 million pounds. Thus, the reinforcement of the pound is due partly to the increased exploitation of the colonies.

At the present time one may state without risk of error that the great hopes which the British industrial bourgeoisie placed upon the abolition of the gold standard have not been justified. To be sure, a certain improvement has taken place in industry. The industrial index of the London and Cambridge Economic Service went up from 81.1 in the third quarter to 89.5 in December, 1931. The textile industry was the principal beneficiary of this improvement. In the cotton industry the percentage of unemployed dropped from 44.6 in September to 27.4 in December. However, it is necessary to remember that at this time the unemployment relief regulations were so amended that the official unemployment statistics do not reveal the real state of affairs. The situation of some of the heavy industries continued to deteriorate during the autumn months of 1931 as well. Besides, it is difficult to say to what extent the recovery of the textile industry has been due to the depreciation of the pound, and in what measure to the anti-Japanese boycott in China. Thus, the largest share of the increase of cotton goods exports in the first quarter of 1932 falls to China. No doubt the fall of the pound immediately improved conditions of competition for British industry. For instance, the price of cotton cloth remained practically unchanged, the price of coal remained stable, and the same applies to the prices of iron and steel. But the decline of world trade, coupled with the measures adopted by a number of States against dumping of British exchange, interfered with the realisation of the advantages of the slump in the pound.

* See No. 9, *Communist International*.

The depression of the pound slightly stimulated British exports, which were larger in the fourth quarter than in the third. Taking 1930 as 100, export increased from 74.4 to 78.8. However, imports showed an even greater increase, rising from 99.2 in the third quarter to 117.3 in the fourth. This growth of imports was a forced one, in anticipation of the increased tariff. Thus, from the point of view of decreasing the unfavourable trade balance, going off the gold standard did not justify the hopes placed upon it.

During the first quarter of this year exports did not increase. Moreover, they even slightly decreased compared with the last quarter of the past year. In December, 1931, exports amounted to 32 million pounds compared with 31 million pounds in March, 1932. True, the export of cotton goods increased somewhat, but this was offset by the decline in the exports of coal, iron and steel. Unemployment also increased. In December the number of unemployed was 2,760,817, in February of this year—2,809,103. April recorded a further rise of unemployment by 84,800 compared with the slightly reduced figure of March.

COST OF LIVING

The advance in the cost of living which has taken place since September shows whose class interests the inflation serves. It is designed to bring about an imperceptible reduction in wages, and to further increase the burden due to the crisis on the working class. The inflation represents one of the elements of the system of measures enforced by the bourgeoisie in its feverish haste to save British capitalism. All of these measures, such as protectionism, the cut in expenditure on the social insurance, are calculated to reduce the living standards of the working class. But the bourgeoisie does not limit itself to these indirect methods of cutting down real wages, and combines them with direct pressure upon the latter. According to Prof. Bowley the wage index dropped from 188.5 in September, 1931, to 182.8 in March of this year. The tempo of the decline of wages exceeds that recorded during those months of 1931 which preceded the dropping of the gold standard. From January, 1931 to September, 1931, the wages declined from 190.5 to 188.5 (1914 being taken as 100). Thus, notwithstanding the demagoguery of the Labourists, the example of England confirms the fact that inflation and depreciation of currency indirectly lowers the standard of living of the working class.

The question of England's exchange policy served as an object of struggle between different sections of the British bourgeoisie, both during

the period of the restoration of parity, and in connection with the abolition of the gold standard. The evidence before the McMillan Commission furnishes a wealth of material characterising the positions of the different groups of the bourgeoisie from this point of view. The Federation of British Industries was opposed to the gold standard even before its abolition was decided upon. The Federation blamed the restoration of the pre-war parity as being chiefly responsible for the decline of the competitive powers of British industry. At the present time, it favours a moderate inflation and even the introduction of bi-metallism, propagating the introduction of a single empire exchange based upon the pound, in particular. A large section of bourgeois public supports different projects of inflation and stimulation of prices. It is sufficient to state that the McMillan report advances the proposal that prices should be raised to their pre-crisis level. Adherents of inflation are to be found in every capitalist political party in Great Britain. The pressure of these elements is considerably powerful, as was shown by the debate in the House on May 9th this year. Chamberlain, expressing the Government's point of view in monetary policy, spoke in favour of raising wholesale prices, and the cost of living. But this is only possible at the present time by means of inflation. It must be added that the "Economist," the most weighty organ of the British bourgeoisie, frankly explained the reasons making a depreciation of the pound necessary during the first weeks following upon the abolition of the gold standard. It wrote that this was "easier and in a certain sense fairer than a direct wage cut." The banks, and the circles connected with foreign trade, took a stand in 1925 in favour of restoring parity, but are forced at the present time to reconcile themselves to the abolition of the gold standard, as there is no other solution for the British bourgeoisie. And, though the depreciation of the pound reduces the value of British foreign investments, the rentiers are prepared to accept this, preferring to receive something, at least, rather than nothing at all in consequence of the bankruptcy of their debtors. For it was not a mere coincidence that the payments of the debts to England by India, Australia and other countries have increased after the abolition of the gold standard. In any event, we no longer meet with adherents of the restoration of parity, even in the banking circles. However, a large majority of the bankers insist upon the return to gold, even at the price of a devaluation because only a stable exchange can serve as a guarantee that London will preserve its position of the international money market. This return to gold must be effected as soon as possible. A peculiar posi-

tion has been adopted by the Midland Bank on questions of exchange policy. McKenna, its director, is an opponent of the gold standard and believes in so-called "managed currency," and in a moderate inflation. He justifies his position by rather antiquated currency theories. Apparently his position is due to the industrial connections of his bank. Among the Big Five this bank is the most closely associated with the home market and industry. Probably this is the reason why it reflects the viewpoint of the industrialists.

LABOUR POLICY

The British Labourites are fully in accord with their industrial bourgeoisie. They come forward as opponents of the gold standard and supporters of inflation. Williams for instance, constantly propagates these ideas in the "Daily Herald." In one issue of this paper (March 10, 1932) he wrote: "By all the laws of common sense, what we need to-day is a policy of credit and currency expansion." The Labourites support McKenna's idea of managed currency and propose to replace gold by a currency based upon the price indexes, with a view to stabilising the prices. The entire arsenal of theoretical arguments of the Labourites have been borrowed completely by them, from the different representatives of modern bourgeois science. The essence of their policy is sufficiently clear. Inflation must assist the reduction of wages without the Labourites and the trade union leaders losing their face. It is characteristic, for instance that G. D. H. Cole, (their theoretician) wrote in the "Economist" (October 17, 1931) that a return to gold "could not be done without a drastic scaling-down of wages, in order to reduce costs." In his evidence before the McMillan Commission, Sprague, who is connected with the Bank of England, remarked viciously enough in connection with the Labourite attack upon the gold standard that "so far as I see it, various people who are interested in social betterment, including Labour leaders, are prepared to have a reduction in real wages if it is disguised. They object to a reduction in money wages, but they seem to consider that a reduction in real wages, if it is accomplished without any reduction in money wages, is all right."

The rise of the pound, which has been

observed during the last few weeks, does not entirely coincide with the interests of the British bourgeoisie. First of all, because the short term deposits flowing into London have a fluent character, and always threaten to ebb out. The British bourgeoisie, including its banking section, does not want a repetition of the events of last September. Besides, any rise of the pound adversely affects the conditions of competition for British industry and partly neutralises the effect of the custom tariffs. In addition, the constant fluctuations of the pound interfere with England's foreign trade operations. At the present time, the British bourgeoisie will probably seek to stabilise the pound at its present level, without undertaking the task of returning to gold, for the time being. The policy of the leading representatives of the British bourgeoisie has, and will continue, in the immediate future, to have a highly empirical character. It does not want to tie its hands. At the same time it is necessary to note the extremely contradictory situation of the British bourgeoisie. It is not averse, as we have noted above, to an inflation, but fears its effect upon the financial operations of London. At the same time the resistance of the working class to any reduction in wages prompts the bourgeoisie to seek devious round-about ways. In this search the British bourgeoisie grasps at inflation. But its policy in the immediate future will be determined, not so much by subjective wishes, as by the real development of the economic crisis, and by those objective changes which this will effect in British and international economic life. A deepening of the economic crisis will increase the adversity of the payment balance, and cause a budget deficit at the same time, which may, perhaps, reach quite impressive figures. In such a case, the effect of the factors making for a growth of inflation will become stronger.

Our Party in Great Britain is confronted with the task of exposing the inflationist attempts to save British capitalism and revealing how the depreciation of the currency worsens the living conditions of the toilers and increases the burden of the crisis weighing upon them. Our Party must show the wide working masses how the Labourites and the trade union bureaucracy act, in questions of currency inflation, as true representatives of the interests of the British mill owners and manufacturers.

PROBLEMS OF THE STRUGGLE AGAINST IMPERIALIST WAR

(An article, published in the "Leninist Youth," the illegal organ of the Y.C.L. of Japan, on January 26, 1932, No. 18.)

I.

OUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE MOBILISATION ORDER.

NOW that an imperialist war is actually taking place, what must be our attitude to the mobilisation order? To this question we can give a clear answer: "To refuse to join up is a mistake." Why? The question may be asked: is not leading to fight against mobilisation one of the important methods of our struggle against the war of conquest? The answer to this question is: No, this is not so. Below we shall deal with this question in detail.

Of course, we are against the war of annexation at present waged by Japanese imperialism in Manchuria, but we are also against every imperialist war in general and against the war on the U.S.S.R. We are conducting and will continue to carry on a determined struggle against the war of conquest in Manchuria, and against the war of plunder against the U.S.S.R.

At the same time we must not forget that in order to make every war impossible, in spite of the ruling class, we must overthrow Japanese imperialism and establish a dictatorship of the proletariat. In other words, the imperialist war must be converted into a civil war. In order to emerge victorious in this civil war, we must make every effort to disarm the bourgeoisie and arm the proletariat. This is what determines our attitude towards the army, towards this highly important section of the governmental machine of the bourgeoisie. We must make every effort to win the soldiers to our side by demoralising the army.

From this point of view, from the point of view of carrying out our basic line, the question of the mobilisation is a practical question, with which we are confronted. It is from this point of view that we must analyse this question.

Let us see what the acceptance of the mobilisation order means. It means that the workers join the army and become soldiers, it means that the workers will don soldiers' uniforms and take rifles into their hands. Hence, to accept the mobilisation means that the workers will take rifles into their hands, while to reject the mobilisation is to refuse to take rifles into our hands.

Which of these two positions corresponds to our basic policy of "disarming the bourgeoisie and arming the proletariat" is perfectly clear. But we may be told: "We are also for disarming the bour-

geoisie and arming the proletariat. But what we are concerned with are the class-conscious workers and not those whose minds have been poisoned by the bourgeoisie." Very well. But the workers are not born class-conscious. Only by our leading the mass struggle and on the basis of this struggle, does the proletariat become class-conscious and begin to realise that its emancipation can be secured only by the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Let us even assume that all the workers are equally class-conscious. But in this case whom are we to prefer, workers possessing arms or workers armed only with stones and sticks? The former, of course. And what does this mean in the long run? It means that we, together with the proletarian masses, by accepting the mobilisation order, will go from the factories and mills into the army in order to lead the soldier masses to the struggle against the bourgeoisie and, by means of the struggle, to win the soldiers to our side. It further means that we are shifting the field of our activity for winning the proletarian masses, by mobilising them for the struggle against the bourgeoisie, at least as far as the mobilised soldiers are concerned, from the factories and mills to the barracks. And in this case, the transfer of proletarian masses into the barracks will create highly favourable revolutionary prospects for the realisation of our basic aim of disarming the bourgeoisie and arming the proletariat. But this does not in the least alter the fact that the conditions of work in the barracks are twice as difficult as in the factories. We must say, however, that, if we carry on this work successfully, despite the difficulties, it will be many times, scores of times more useful to the revolution than the work in the factories (as far as the mobilised soldiers are concerned). He who quits this struggle because of the difficulties is not a revolutionary worker.

The question is clear. To accept the order for mobilisation is to continue our class struggle in a new place; which is the decisive and most favourable place, from the point of view of the victory of the proletariat. To reject the order for mobilisation is to reject the struggle on this battlefield, to abandon everything without a struggle. That is precisely why we must respond to the mobilisation call together with the proletarian masses and lead the masses of soldiers in the imperialist army to the struggle against Japanese imperialism regardless of all difficulties, and wage a tireless and determined struggle to win these soldiers to our side.

II.

HOW WE MUST WORK IN THE FACTORIES AND VILLAGES
IN CONNECTION WITH MOBILISATION.

It is necessary to maintain the closest contact between the mobilised soldiers, and the workers and peasants of those factories and villages in which they were employed before the mobilisation. On the basis of such a close contact we can draw the soldier masses into the class struggle outside the barracks, for only in this way will it be possible to create the united front of the soldiers, workers and peasants.

The question arises : how is this connection to be established ? In those cases when men are mobilised from the factories and villages in which we work, we must take the initiative and organise mass meetings in connection with each mobilised comrade (for instance, a farewell meeting to this or that comrade, etc.) and develop propaganda and agitation against the war, explaining by concrete examples from the life in the factory or village, in whose interests and for what objects the war is being waged, who will benefit by it, and who will lose by it. (Such meetings should be held as frequently as possible.) At the same time—and this is most important—it is absolutely necessary to create a permanent organisation at these meetings in connection with the mobilised comrades (for instance, a society for assisting such and such a comrade). In doing this it is necessary always to remember that this must be an organ of the united front from below.

With the aid of these organisations we can establish contact with the mobilised workers and peasants, and this will also serve us as a field of activity for extensive propaganda and agitation work against the war ; finally, this may be converted into an organisation of our struggle. The successful fulfilment of this task depends upon the extent to which we actively work in these organisations and succeed in mobilising such mass organisations as the young workers' sections of the trade unions, and the League Against Imperialism for work in these organisations.

In these organisations we must inform the mobilised soldiers on all the events occurring in the factories and villages in which they were previously employed, on the circumstances of their families, as well as on all other important events in the class struggle ; this to be done in great detail and as frequently as possible. On the other hand, it is necessary to make every effort to obtain information on the situation of the mobilised soldiers and troops of occupation. Further, to discuss the soldiers' letters (or, if possible, to hold discussions with the soldiers on furlough), meetings of workers and peasants should be arranged, and constant agitation and propaganda should be conducted against the war on the basis of the letters and talks with the soldiers. It is necessary that this work of agitation and propa-

ganda should be linked up with the concrete everyday demands of the masses on the one hand, and with the work of explaining the conditions of the workers and peasants of the U.S.S.R. on the other.

Only on the basis of the anti-war work described above, only by closely linking up this work with our work in the factories and villages, can we lead the masses belonging to these organisations, and the great masses in the factories and villages, in a struggle against the imperialist war, in an effective struggle against the capitalists and landlords (that is, in mass revolutionary actions such as strikes, demonstrations, etc.) ; only on this basis is it possible to strengthen and consolidate all the mass organisations, including the Y.C.L.

III.

HOW TO WORK AMONG THE SOLDIERS IN THE BARRACKS.

In the barracks it is first of all necessary to work in such a way as to win the confidence of the soldier masses. We must be the most disciplined soldiers. Our conduct must by no means be either nihilist or anarchist. We can work successfully only if the masses see that we are bold and trustworthy fellows. On this basis we must promote the concrete everyday demands of the soldier masses by every means, for instance, the demand for improved food and clothing, the demand for the right to leave the barracks without a pass, and we must tirelessly conduct agitation and propaganda work. At the same time, we must link up our entire agitation and propaganda with the conditions of the workers and peasants in the factories and villages, and the vital events of the class struggle—here it is necessary extensively to employ the method of discussing letters from outside—agitation and propaganda should be conducted against the imperialist war.

The utilisation of experiences from the life of the workers and peasants of the U.S.S.R. particularly from the life of the Soviet Red Army, and of the Chinese Red Army, is of decisive importance in the agitation and propaganda on behalf of the U.S.S.R. and in the interests of the Chinese revolution. We must display the maximum of initiative and utilise every opportunity, no matter how small, for the work of agitation and propaganda. This work of agitation and propaganda must be developed to the point of a real struggle against the officers in the barracks and against Japanese imperialism, in order to strengthen and consolidate our organisations. In the organisation of a real struggle it is necessary to create soldiers' committees as an organ of the united front from below (the soldiers' committees in the military units are as important as the shop committees in the factory, and must develop into soldiers' councils at the time of revolutionary crisis.

To accomplish this it is necessary to create at least small groups at first, in which it would be possible to unite the soldier masses and, by means of determined work in these groups to prepare the ground for the creation of soldiers' committees. The attraction of the League Against Imperialism to this struggle is of great importance, both to the correct leadership of the struggle and to the strengthening and consolidation of our League.

Here we are confronted with one more question. This is the question of how the concrete anti-militarist work should be conducted in the barracks, at the present time, when the imperialist war is actually being waged. To this our reply is: Refuse to go to the front, support the revolutionary proletariat. For the entire object of this struggle is to disrupt the efforts of Japanese imperialism to mobilise its forces, to win the barracks, to win the sympathies of the troops for the revolutionary proletariat. It is hardly necessary to emphasise the tremendous revolutionary importance of this struggle. However, in the past we devoted little attention to this. An example of this kind is provided by the instruction issued by the Central Council of the Youth Section of the Dsenkio (Revolutionary Trade Union Federation) on the development of the struggle on the eve of the new year. Point 7 of this instruction says: "It is a mistake to refuse to join up when called. Join the army and go to the front, turn your arm against the bourgeoisie and fraternise with the soldiers of the enemy army."

In respect to the mobilisation order, the question is treated correctly, but as regards going to the front, etc., this is a mistake. It is a mistake because it does not touch the question of refusing to go to the front, right in the barracks at all, it does not touch the question of the mass struggle for the support of the revolutionary proletariat. To be mobilised (that is to become soldiers) and to go to the front are entirely different things. The instruction should have been more explicit on this point. Of course, the soldiers can be mobilised in a comparatively short period compared with the times of peace. It is precisely this fulfilment of the mobilisations order which demands that we should organise the struggle in earnest, more energetically, more widely.

We must conduct tireless, energetic and determined agitation and propaganda among the soldier masses to urge them to refuse to go to the front, turn their arms against Japanese imperialism, and to draw them into the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat. The soldier masses should be mobilised for sabotage, strikes and demonstrations and the importance of joint action with the workers and peasants outside the barracks should be explained to them. It is absolutely necessary to raise this struggle to a higher stage. Under the present conditions in Japan, when the prerequisites of a revolutionary

crisis are rapidly maturing, but where, owing to the extreme weakness of the subjective factors, things have not yet reached the stage of a revolutionary crisis though war has actually broken out; owing to the insufficiency of organised political forces (this applies particularly to the army), it is not impossible to limit our work to agitation and propaganda alone. In that case it will be impossible to prevent the soldiers from being despatched to the front as the ruling class want to do. Moreover, Japanese imperialism has already sent some tens of thousands of soldiers and dozens of warships to China.

But this should by no means serve as a reason for ignoring the need for sabotaging this despatch of troops. On the contrary, precisely because of this we must conduct a vigorous struggle and carry on extensive agitation and propaganda. For only on the basis of the correct preparation of an energetic struggle and through this struggle will we be able to strengthen our organisational and political forces and to create favourable conditions for the successful conduct of our struggle.

From the above it follows that when the soldier masses are mobilised we must, of course, go to the front with them. We reject petty-bourgeois individual boycott. It is necessary to be always with the masses and to fight to the end.

IV.

HOW TO WORK AT THE FRONT.

At the front we must energetically prepare the work for fraternising with the soldiers of the enemy army, and for turning the guns against Japanese imperialism. That this work has to be conducted under very difficult conditions is true. But if we, as bold, determined and united soldiers, succeed in gaining the confidence of the soldier masses and do not miss a single opportunity to conduct the work (for instance, during a march every short break for a smoke should be used for the purpose of the agitation and propaganda) then this will not be impossible. It is necessary to remember that Bolshevik daring, energy and perseverance is irresistible.

Should it be necessary to fight against the Red Army, then the soldier masses should be welded together into a compact group and, choosing the right opportunity (the choice of this opportunity is very important), go over to the Red Army.

Here we conclude our short and very inadequate article. It is desirable that these comrades who are rich in experience, should write on the concrete work within the army.

* * *

Comrades! The prerequisites of the revolutionary crisis are rapidly maturing. Japanese imperialism is waging a real war with a view to colonising Manchuria and attacking the U.S.S.R. If

we, the young Bolsheviks, carry on an energetic fight against the war in the factories, villages, in the army and at the front, at this time, this will be of very great importance. We must appreciate the significance of the historical tasks confronting us. Let us courageously fight for the successful fulfilment of this difficult but glorious task.

* * *

The above article published in the "Leninist Youth," the organ of the Japanese Y.C.L., clearly shows that in the struggle against the new imperialist war our Japanese comrades are behaving in an exemplary Bolshevik manner. Despite all the difficulties of war-time, the Communist Party of Japan is conducting a determined struggle with a view to mobilising the masses, in the rear, and at the front, in the cause of the revolution. The Japanese Communists are showing a magnificent example of how Bolsheviks ought to behave in the time of imperialist war. The European Communists, despite the fact that the European Communist Parties have a longer history than the Communist Party of Japan, can learn much from the Japanese comrades in the struggle against imperialist war.

In this commentary to the above quoted article, we only wish to develop and supplement some of the ideas expressed by the Japanese comrades. The article raises the question of "How we must work in the factories and villages in connection with mobilisation." The answer is that it is necessary to act on the basis of the tactics of the united front between the soldiers, workers and peasants; as the point of departure, the article suggests the organisation of various gatherings and meetings, in connection with the departure of the mobilised workers and peasants. The article recommends that various subsidiary organisations be formed, such as a society for assisting such and such a comrade. These suggestions appear essentially correct, but it is wrong to propose to make these organisations permanent. Why should they be permanent? And is it possible at all to create permanent organisations in all such cases? It seems more correct to us to create in such cases temporary organisations with such flexible forms as will enable them to evade the blows of police repressions.

Within the army, in the barracks, the article proposes "to display the maximum of initiative and utilise every opportunity, no matter how small . . ." in order to raise "the work of agitation and propaganda to the level of a real struggle against the officers in the barracks and against Japanese imperialism . . ." In the organisation of a real struggle it is necessary to create soldiers' committees as an organ of the united front from below. (The soldiers' committees are as important in the military units as are the shop committees in the

factory, and must develop into soldiers' councils at the time of the revolutionary crisis."

These proposals too can be commended to all the Communist Parties, but must necessarily be added to them the suggestion regarding soldiers' party cells. The first duty of a party member and of a member of the Y.C.L. when he enters the barracks, is to create soldier cells (company, regimental, barrack cells), consisting of both members of the Party and of the Y.C.L. Only such cells are able to successfully organise soldiers' committees and provide correct political leadership from within. According to the decisions of the Sixth Congress of the Comintern, the soldiers' cells must be based in turn upon special machinery created by the respective party committees, which must not be organisationally connected with the general party machinery (so as not to expose the general party organisation in case of a police raid) and must make it its task to render direct assistance and leadership in the work of the soldiers' cells.

The article makes it the basic task of the soldiers' committees (hence also of all the party soldiers' cells):

"To conduct tireless, energetic and determined agitation and propaganda among the soldier masses to urge them to refuse to go to the front, to turn their arms against Japanese imperialism and to draw them into the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat."

This slogan is not sufficiently explained in the article and is in need of a particularly careful analysis. The bourgeoisie is preparing war this time by somewhat different methods than it did in 1914. As before, the preparations are conducted in the greatest secrecy. But while in 1914 a sudden declaration of war was prepared, accompanied by an instantaneous general mobilisation, now, according to Comrade Manuisky's apt expression, the bourgeoisie is "crawling" into war. The Japanese bourgeoisie demonstrated this method of war preparation in classic forms. The Japanese imperialists occupied Manchuria and are now waging a big war against China on the pretext of protecting the Japanese residents in China. True, the Japanese representative to the League of Nations committed the "indiscretion" of referring to Japan's "war" against China, but he was immediately stopped by the chairman, the Socialist, Paul Boncour, who explained that there is no war in China and requested the Japanese representative to withdraw remarks on the war. This method of war preparation has been adopted by the ruling classes, apparently, because it permits them to begin a war unobserved, and confront the toiling masses with an accomplished fact. At the present time, no doubt exists that in Western Europe and in America the ruling classes are essentially resorting to the same method of preparing war, and,

for this reason, the European Communist Parties must carefully consider the Japanese experience. It is necessary to foresee, on the basis of this experience, that this time there will be no general mobilisation in the form of a simultaneous act; things will begin with smaller and apparently partial military operations in the form of punitive expeditions, perhaps training manoeuvres, etc. For these operations they will use the standing army, to which new units of reservists will be gradually added, who will be drafted as the need arises. This fact must be taken into consideration by all the Communist Parties in determining their line of tactics in the struggle against the war preparations of the ruling classes. Under these conditions the question of going to the front will be raised primarily with regard to those on active military service who will not be told, of course, where and why they are being sent. Apparently, at this first stage of hostilities under present conditions, the soldiers' cells will not be able to issue the slogan of refusal to go to the front. This slogan can be issued by the Central Committee of the Party after it has established the fact that the authorities are already beginning military operations. But here it will be necessary to take into consideration the following factor: Should only some small unit refuse to go to the front, and should it not be supported by great movements of the soldier masses, and by revolutionary demonstrations of solidarity on the part of the workers and peasants, such action will only adversely affect the entire further development of the anti-militarist struggle, for, being isolated, it will be quickly suppressed and the action will be fruitless. Thus, the slogan of refusal to go to the front must be preceded by serious preliminary work of revolutionising the soldier masses and preparing the "public opinion" of the workers and peasants; it should be issued only after the ground has been prepared for mass discontent and readiness to struggle, on the crest of the developing mass revolutionary movements. The work of the Party organisations must here be concentrated, not upon agitation in favour of the slogan of refusal to go to the front, but upon the development of mass movements in the factories which are of military importance. Under the present conditions an imperialist war will be primarily a war

in the rear. The main, decisive blows of each belligerent will be directed against the deep rear of the enemy, where the most important munition factories and the central ammunition bases are located. The proletariat of each imperialist country, following the fundamental slogan that the enemy is to be found in its "own" country, and consciously and determinedly pursuing the Leninist slogan of defeatism, must first of all see to it that the war industry is paralysed and develop a broad strike movement, combining it with the unemployed movement and the mass revolutionary struggle of the peasantry. On the background of these mass revolutionary actions of the workers and peasants, the unrest among the soldiers and sailors, their refusal to go to the front, might add enormous strength to the entire general revolutionary anti-militarist struggle of the toiling masses against the imperialist robbers, especially if the Communist Party succeeds in combining the soldiers' movement against being sent to the front with active support of the struggling workers and peasant masses, and if it succeeds in getting considerable army units and warships, with their full equipment, to join the people.

As long as the Party does not succeed in calling forth wide anti-militarist demonstrations of workers and peasants, and so long as only the first units of the standing army, which usually consists of the "most disciplined" forces are at the front, it is very important that the revolutionary elements among the soldiers and sailors should go to the front, so that they could act there as a ferment and as organisers of fraternisation (and in case of a struggle against the Red Army of the U.S.S.R. or against the Red Army of the Chinese Soviets, as organisers of desertion to the Red Army). The Japanese comrades appear to be aware of this important factor in the struggle against their own imperialism, for in the above-mentioned article they write that: "when the soldier masses are mobilised we must, of course, go to the front with them, we reject petty-bourgeois individual boycott, it is necessary always to be with the masses and to fight to the end." However, the formulation of this question is not very clear in the article, and we therefore thought it necessary to make the above commentary.