

WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE

FIGHT

FOR THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL
ORGAN OF THE MARXIST GROUP (TROTSKYISTS)

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EDITORIAL

A POLICY FOR THE BRITISH WORKER

WHAT exactly is the worker in Britain to do to-day? We in a monthly journal cannot carry on agitation on every issue that affects the workers in that way that a daily paper or even a weekly can. We have rather to sketch the main lines of development from month to month, draw the political conclusions and point out the necessary action, immediate and future. At the present time the British worker is in a state of uncertainty, particularly the British worker who is a member of his Trade Union and Labour Party, sees that economic and political events are moving at a bewilderingly fast rate, and is ready to take action, but does not know exactly what action. Arguments for and against unity bewilder him. The future is still darker.

First of all there is his economic position. There is a boom, there is trade recovery. The capitalist press sings the praises of the National Government, the wholesale and retail dealers raise prices, particularly the prices of food which the poor have to buy. An extra penny on the loaf, an extra tuppence on bacon, is nothing to the man with a thousand a year. It hits the worker hard, it is despair for the housewife on the dole, for the thousands in the depressed areas. The inevitable result of this recovery will be a series of strikes. The workers in every industry are moving already. In some industries

as cotton and the building trades, the employers have forestalled this inevitable movement by offering small increases so as to pin the workers down before they feel the full effect of the rise in prices. In others, like the railways, the struggle is on. The workers will fight. And they can fight with the greater confidence because at the present time the ruling class do not want more industrial unrest than they can help. The European situation is too uncertain, war too imminent. A year or two before the last war, the workers were at grips with the ruling class. But the Asquith Government invited the Labour leaders to a conference, told them of the approaching war and asked them to do their best to settle the disputes on behalf of the unity of the nation. These Labour leaders agreed.

The lesson is important to remember to-day. The war situation is far more urgent than it was then. And as the struggle over wages develops, openly and secretly the bourgeoisie will appeal to the Labour leaders for "reasonableness" and "understanding" and "common sacrifice" (by which they mean workers' wages) in face of the common danger. For us the difficulties of the bourgeoisie are the opportunities of the workers. No agreements must stand in the way of the workers' demands. There is a boom, the employer has less excuse than ever

for keeping the worker on low wages, and anxious for the sake of increasing business and for rearmament, to prevent strikes, can be attacked with greater prospect of success.

But this boom must be seen for what it is. As every worker knows from experience, if not from Marxian economics, capitalism progresses by spells of crisis and boom, depression and recovery. The characteristic of capitalism in decline is crisis after crisis. One of the greatest crises of capitalism brought the last war in the frantic competition for markets (e.g. in the Near East) sources of raw materials (e.g. in Africa) and control of industrial centres (e.g. Alsace-Lorraine). The second manifestation of this decline was the world wide unemployment and depression which began in 1929. We are supposed to be getting out of it now. How? One way is by the colossal expenditure on armaments for a war still vaster than the last one, for war is ultimately the only method of redivision of markets, sources of raw material, etc. But this brings its own reward. Expenditure on armaments only piles up a greater crisis for the future. Broadly speaking money invested on ships, mines or coffee brings some return which in ordinary times enables production to be continued. But investments in armaments bring no return, and are a steady drain on the resources of the country. A similar reason prevented the National Government from spending money on vast public works to increase employment; Baldwin and Chamberlain know that this is no remedy. They understand capitalism to-day well enough to know that there is little in the idea of stimulating production and increasing confidence by that sort of expenditure. For them the unemployed worker has his dole. What more does he want? But when it comes to armaments, there they cannot wait. For with the war coming, they must have their arms whatever crisis it may bring in the future. That crisis however is certain.

But there is a second point to be noticed about the boom. Formerly when capitalism was progressive, a boom always was powerful enough to absorb many of the unemployed and develop production to a pitch higher than it was before the intermediate depression. To-day this is not so. Boom or crisis, Britain has its permanent millions of unemployed. America remains with over 12 millions unemployed. Even with the artificial assistance of rearmament, the bankruptcy of the system remains. All of us, who are thinking further than the end of our noses, must bear that in mind. The bankruptcy of the system remains and the bankruptcy of the capitalist system is not a tiresome phrase that we repeat for effect because Marx prophesied it, because Lenin and Trotsky said it. Ultimately, it was the cause of the victory of the workers in Russia, of their defeat and prostration in Italy, in Poland, in China, in Portugal, in Germany. It is the cause of the terrific struggle in Spain to-day of the preparations for the final struggle in France. When an economic system is bankrupt, the rulers and the exploited in country after country are driven to sharper and sharper conflict, and one side must ultimately establish a dictatorship, the ruling class to preserve the old order, the workers and exploited, if victorious, to establish the new order—which to-day is—Socialism.

In getting our minds clear politically therefore we must get our fundamentals right. Capitalism is bankrupt, the

boom gives us all an opportunity to struggle at once for better wages. But that is necessarily temporary. The crisis will break upon us in the near future with greater intensity than ever, either in a depression more devastating than the last or in its most acute form, imperialist war. There is no escape from the ultimate choice, either the ruling class maintains its power, or the working class takes power. This translated into political terms means only one thing—that democracy, parliamentary democracy is doomed. The struggle to-day and in the future is between bourgeois domination, Fascism, or workers' power, Socialism. Capitalism is bankrupt and this means that parliamentary democracy is bankrupt also. The National Government by its Sedition Bill, its Public Order Bill, its method of dismissing the dockyard men, is getting its weapons ready to strike at the workers. But if these do not hold the workers down, overnight Mosley's bands will increase tenfold and British Capitalism will use the same methods as Italian, German and Spanish Capitalism. If proof is wanted, why have the British ruling class come to terms with Mussolini, why are they Hitler's apologists, why do they support Franco, why do they turn a blind eye to all that Hitler and Mussolini are doing in Spain? They are the enemies of democracy abroad and as soon as their power is threatened at home, they will be its bitterest enemies here.

What then becomes of the war for democracy? If even a Labour Government comes into power, British capitalism, with its need for markets, control of sources of raw material, etc., remains the same. Did they change in 1929-1931? The French Popular Front Government is rearming with might and main in the same way as the British National Government. And the cause is the same in both countries—the bankruptcy of the capitalist system. Let us agree at once on this -- to fight for democracy is to attempt to preserve capitalism. To admit that capitalism is bankrupt, and then fight to preserve it is hypocrisy or ignorance. The Liberals know that the war is coming and they want to have a good excuse for fighting. They have to fall back on democracy as in 1914, the same dirty old swindle. They cannot fight for democracy on the side of Germany. So they want an alliance with democratic France and the Soviet Union. Citrine, Bevin and the Labour leaders want the same. Stalin, and the millions of Russian bureaucrats, satisfied with their power and privileges in Russia as Citrine, Bevin and the others here, want the same alliance. And this United Front, of Stafford Cripps, Maxton and Pollitt, what is their war policy? They too want an alliance between the democratic countries and Russia. Every one of them will admit in words that Capitalism is bankrupt, but despite the disaster of the last war for democracy, they will go into this one again. The new United Front will not support the National Government's rearmament, but if it can put a Labour Government into power, it will support rearmament. The thinking worker must ask himself. "Why should I support capitalist rearmament under any circumstances? If capitalism were overthrown in Britain and we had a Workers' State here, I can see sense in fighting for that. It offers a hope for the future. But whether I fight under Baldwin and Duff-Cooper, or under Attlee, Bevin, Cripps, Strachey and Pollitt, I am fighting for what? For a system that is bankrupt, for a system that brought the great crisis that is heading for

a new war. A change of government under parliamentary democracy does not alter the fundamentals of the system." That is the only honest and intelligent view. The policy of the worker at the present should therefore be as follows: Wherever he is he will support the struggle for better wages and democratic rights. While seeing democracy for what it is, he will realise that it is a form of government which offers better opportunities for workers' struggle than Fascism and he will oppose every attempt that the capitalists make to weaken it. That is a vastly different thing from fighting an imperialist war on behalf of democracy. The worker will realise also that Capitalism in its efforts to destroy the workers' movement will be compelled to show its hand more openly and will have more difficulty in organising an assault on the workers, if a Labour Government is in power. So the worker will fight to replace the National Government by a Labour Government. He can exercise more pressure on it. But the moment this or any other Government talks about rearmament, the clear thinking worker will oppose with all his force this attempt to use workers in defence of a bankrupt system.

That is the main political line for the coming period.

That line can be fought for anywhere, in the Labour Party or out of it. It is the correct line. But it does not go all the way. The best place to put this line into practice is inside a revolutionary party, which knows how to fight on immediate issues, to defend the democratic rights of the workers and at the same time to prepare for the unrelenting struggle against Capitalism and particularly against capitalist war. There is a vast deal of confusion among the workers at present. As the war approaches, the Labour leaders edge closer towards the British bourgeoisie. The Stalinist bureaucracy does the same and sends the C.P. the same way. The I.L.P. edges closer to the C.P. Cripps and Maxton and Pollitt for all their aggressive words will make the imperialist war, from the left instead of from the right. Now that the war approaches Cripps drops his revolutionary pose quickly enough and is for a "real" collective security instead of a "false" pack of lies and nonsense. We who see these people for what they are must firmly but quickly co-operate and lay the foundation of the new party. There are thousands in Britain who understand the position. It is our unity and co-operation which is the unity most needed by the workers at the present time.

NOTES OF THE MONTH

THE MOSCOW TRIAL

EVERY political move in Europe is a preparation for the coming world war. The Moscow Trial is no exception.

Stalin is looking ahead, preparing to meet the changes coming with a period of universal armed struggle. A nationalistic policy for Russia in wartime must clash violently with the deep-seated internationalism of the Russian working class. Already events in Spain are menacing the foundations of the policy of "socialism in one country." Stalin hastens to destroy the "old guard" of Bolshevism, lest its tradition and inside knowledge of his manoeuvres sets a spark to the dynamite of proletarian internationalism, before or during the second world war.

THE FOREIGN ENLISTMENT BILL

THE I.L.P. is hoping to fight this Bill on the legal ground that it does not cover enlistment in civil war. We support this fight, but since it would be easy for the Government to tighten up the Bill, by an amendment, we feel that the fight must be a political one also. We must use every means — trade union agitation, protest meetings, pressure on Labour M.P.'s, etc., to fight the Foreign Enlistment Bill, which is a direct attack on working class liberty. It is yet one more instance, like the Political Uniforms Bill, of how the Government, under the guise of "no favouritism for either side" is steadily cutting down the right of the workers to organise, nationally or internationally, while leaving the Fascists to do practically as they like. The Government made no effort to get any kind of promise from Germany and Italy to stop

volunteering, before passing the Bill. They were not concerned with "isolating the conflict in Spain" or "keeping the peace of Europe" but simply with putting a stop to the fine spirit of international working class solidarity shown by the workers of England who wish to go to the help of the workers in Spain.

One further point should be noted. The French Popular Front Government is ranged beside the National Government on this question. They have already passed a Bill making it possible to ban volunteers at a moment's notice. This Bill was passed unanimously—*all the French C.P. Deputies voting for it.*

This Bill does not, however, become operative until Germany, Portugal and Italy stop sending men to Spain, but it means that *in principle* the C.P. of France has agreed to the ban.

THE L.C.C. ELECTIONS IN MARCH

THE reaction of the capitalists to a Labour administration is always a good barometer for judging the militancy of that administration. This is clearly shown by the response of the City to the big L.C.C. loan last September. This loan, for £10,000,000 bearing interest at 4%, was tremendously oversubscribed and the lists closed in half an hour. The City knows its money is perfectly safe with the Labour L.C.C. All capitalists know that if Labour is in power on the L.C.C. for ten years it will not have brought us one step nearer Socialism.

Nevertheless, we urge every worker to vote for Labour in the March elections, and to see that everyone he knows also votes. Working always on strictly orthodox capitalist lines, Labour has done a great deal for London. They have at least made a start on slum clearance and re-

housing, though if they had been less orthodox they could have done far more. The insistence on a good return for money invested still makes the rent of L.C.C. flats far too high for the majority of workers. They have tackled the problem of newer and better schools, and their refusal to spend public money on Cadet Corps is wholly admirable. We only hope they will stick to it in the face of the Labour Party's support for re-armament.

Our policy in the L.C.C. elections is, as in all elections, critical support for the Labour candidates. Reformism cannot and will not give the workers Socialism, but it must be given a chance to prove this in practice before the workers will lose their faith in Reformism and turn to the revolutionary alternative.

THE DOCKYARD DISMISSALS

IN America, employers campaign against trade unionism, with the help of government forces. In Britain, with the trade union movement under the control of the employing class, by reason of the subservience of the T.U.C., that class is content to victimise individual militant trade unionists. For example, the government dismisses from naval dockyards trade unionists suspected of anti-government activities.

THE SECOND MOSCOW TRIAL

IN 1934, Kirov was assassinated. White Guards were at first said to be instrumental in it, and the Latvian Consul was implicated. But after a matter of six weeks, Zinoviev and Kamenev were found to be "indirectly" responsible, and Trotsky was brought in through a mysterious letter, though like a number of letters that Trotsky was later supposed to have written, this one was never produced.

Over a hundred communists were shot as a result of that assassination, Zinoviev and Kamenev sent into exile in Siberia, and a great "purge" throughout the country took place, which meant more shooting and imprisonment of unknown men.

The trial in August "established" that Zinoviev and Kamenev were directly responsible for the shooting of Kirov, and that they planned to murder Stalin, Voroshilov and Kaganovich and then to seize power themselves. They had no political programme to put in the place of "Socialism in a Single Country," they had no mass support, they could see that everybody loved Comrade Stalin's socialism, but, stupid fellows, they had a "lust for power" which led them to terrorism. The attempt to frame-up Trotsky was sharper. He arranged the assassination of Kirov, and attempted the assassinations (over a period of four years with innumerable "agents" to do the job) of Stalin and Voroshilov. But these two bore charmed lives, they were always too far away or their cars went too fast. Trotsky plotted with the secret Nazi police. All this was "established" at the August trial, only no evidence was brought forward except the bare statements

Acts of sabotage such as tampering with battleship machinery are certainly not in the interest of the National Government and British capitalism. But a formal logic which insists that therefore such acts are in the interest of the working class is false, for the following reasons:

In the first place, as long as the masses of workers are toiling to produce fresh battleships and other machinery for capitalism's slavery, no amount of damage by individuals will paralyse its armaments. In the second place, the purely negative character of acts of sabotage leaves the masses of the people out of account. The masses must find *their own* government, if arms are to be used in the cause of socialism, just as the means of production must be under workers' control if they are to be used for the common good. The machine wreckers of capitalism's early days destroyed industrial machinery in a misguided effort to free themselves from wage slavery. Some workers to-day *may* seek to damage battleship machinery in order to free their fellowmen from the ruin of imperialist conflict. If so, they are equally misguided. The primary need of all workers is a *mass struggle, at the point of production and in the streets*, for their own soviet state. And the creation of that workers' state requires the destruction not of technical machinery, but of the legal and bureaucratic machinery of the capitalist state.

of the accused, which were extraordinary fragmentary, often completely contradictory, and easily proved to be the fabrications of the G.P.U.* Zinoviev and Kamenev were shot and 11 other prisoners with them. Tomsky, implicated in the trial, committed suicide. A further purge took place; more shootings, more imprisonments.

Now we have the present trial in which 13 more old revolutionaries, including Piatakov and Serebryakov have been murdered, and Sokolnikov and Radek and two lesser known revolutionaries imprisoned for ten years. The crimes put down to these men grow more extravagant. Not only terrorism now and working with the Gestapo, but working with Japan too, promising to give away large portions of territory at the end of the war, plotting with these enemies of the Soviet Union. These men with their long history as revolutionaries, what was it to them to help in the plans of a new imperialist slaughter to which the blood bath of 1914 would not compare? Nothing at all! To prove that, they are responsible for train wrecks (the *Daily Worker* tells you all about maimed girls and children they tried to murder) for industrial catastrophies, for ruined crops. Trotsky, of course, is the greatest monster of all. But we have no reasonable motive except "lust for power." Yet it is well to note that among the accused in these trials, there

* For a profound and detailed analysis of the "evidence" and testimony in the August trial, we strongly recommend to our readers "Behind the Moscow Trial—The Greatest Frame-up in History," by Max Shachtman. Unfortunately we gave the price of this in our last issue as 6/-. It is only 1/3d, and is obtainable from *The Marxist Group*, 25, Aubert Park, Highbury.

is not to be found a single former kulak, manufacturer, banker, Czarist, White Guard, Menshevik, Social Revolutionary, anarchist, or any other one-time opponent of the Russian Revolution and the Soviet regime. All of them, except of course the obvious G.P.U. agents, were tried old Bolsheviks.

The purge going on is more far reaching than before. Everywhere according to the testimony of the Soviet press itself, in every big town, in every agricultural area, in big factories, in all industries, Trotskyists exist. Trotskyism has been liquidated "finally and irrevocably," as "finally and irrevocably" as Socialism has been established time without number since Trotsky was expelled in 1927. A classless Society exists, according to the official reports, everyone is "happy and joyous" and singing anthems of praise to Stalin, yet everywhere the purge has to go on; more shootings and more imprisonments. And this is not the end. Further frame ups are being prepared. Bucharin and General Putna—and literally hundreds of lesser known communists—are now under arrest. Any breath of criticism against the system is Trotskyism, is terrorism. This state of affairs is what these shameless bureaucrats of the Soviet Union and their hirelings in the Comintern have the impudence to call socialism. The trial is an indictment not of the socialist system but of the rottenness of the regime of the Soviet bureaucrats. The wide discontent of the masses has been laid bare before the whole world.

The *Daily Worker*, brazen as ever, says the trial is a blow for peace, for socialism and democracy. For Peace! By the trial and its attendant terrorism, Stalin attempts to wipe out in the Soviet Union any possible rallying centre for working class international action during the next war. That war for him is a war of national defence. He will keep faith with his imperialist allies, and no revolutionary flag will be borne on the bayonets of the Russian army.

Trotskyism stands for world revolution. It is the chief enemy to-day for the bourgeoisie and for the betraying Third International. "Turn imperialist war into civil war." The Trotskyists alone raise Lenin's slogan.

The brazen slanderers of the Comintern call Trotsky Fascist, Trotskyists, agents of Fascism. They bring forward no proof in their mock trials, because there is no proof. They know the true revolutionary character of Trotsky's writing and teaching. But they have to cover up their own vile treachery to the working class, and the further they go along the counter-revolutionary path, the louder they howl against Trotsky, the dirtier the slanders they hurl against him.

They call Trotsky Fascist. They who in the U.S.A. are ready to ally themselves to "sprouting Fascists," in France with "all sincere Frenchmen" including the Croix de Feu and the National Volunteers, in Italy with the "Old Guard" as well as young Fascists.

The betrayal of the working class can only be done by the working class leaders. In 1914, the bourgeoisie used the Social Democracy. In the coming war, their chief manipulators will be the Communist Party leaders.

Every article in the *Daily Worker* on the trial ended with an incitement against Trotsky and Trotskyists. Trotsky's life is in danger from the official communists. We here are prepared for them to attempt the persecution of our comrades. They have done it elsewhere, they will do it here. In Spain to-day, with lies and slander and demagoguery, they incite the workers to shoot the revolutionary fighters of P.O.U.M.

The trials are a pledge from the Stalinists to the bourgeoisie of their good faith as allies in the coming war.

As soon as we have the official account of the trial we shall publish a detailed analysis. Unless one uses their own documents the Stalinists can always escape exposure by denial.

TROTSKY DEFENCE MEETING

Five to six hundred people took part in a meeting at the Memorial Hall on Wednesday, February 10th, calling for the defence of Leon Trotsky. A resolution put to the meeting asking for international working class investigation into the charges made against Trotsky at the Moscow Trial was carried by an overwhelming majority.

A FUND FOR FIGHT

DESPITE the large sums that we receive, according to the Stalinists, from Hitler's secret police, we are very poor. Subscriptions from members and sympathisers help to keep this journal going. We are fighting a fight in which the odds against us are terrific. The bourgeoisie, from the Fascists to the Liberals, and the working class leadership from the Labour Party to the Communist Party all are out to defeat us with every weapon in their power, because we represent the socialist revolution and opposition to all Imperialist wars. Winston Churchill, Boothby, Sir Bernard Pares; these members of the bourgeoisie have already warned against us on the public platform as the real revolutionary communists, while the Communist Party has to slander us as Fascists to cover up from the working class its own counter-revolutionary rôle. If you, our readers, understand the enormity of our task, and accept that a new revolutionary party has to be built, and built quickly in this country, we ask you to send us a donation. If you send only sixpence, we shall be very grateful. We are planning to set up a headquarters in London next month, where there will be files of working class newspapers and journals for reference, where our literature will be sold, where we can hold forums, discussions and educational classes. We want money for that. We want money for our paper. We want money for Leon Trotsky's Defence. We want money to send to Spain. Help us if you can. Send to the Marxist Group, 25 Aubert Park, Highbury, N.5.

FOR WORKERS' DEMOCRACY IN SPAIN

IN CATALONIA we have just passed through a crisis in the government of the Generality. This was a counter revolutionary crisis, provoked in order to eliminate our party. It was resolved by forming a new compromise government based on fundamental dissensions that will inevitably provoke a new crisis. This should receive the serious attention of the workers in Catalonia and Spain. Who really directs our political destinies in this government? Who holds the power?

In Catalonia, there are certain widely held beliefs which are quite erroneous. That the workers' revolution can be realised from above, that the Council of the Generality is a government which can achieve the revolution; that because the trade unions hold the majority in the government the working class has the power. These ideas are completely wrong and must be corrected.

It was the working class that stopped the military fascist uprising on the 19th July and conquered important positions in all fields. We have taken over factories, shops and all means of production in general. To-day we have arms in our hands and are struggling at the front against fascism. We hold strategic positions in the State apparatus and in the Public Safety, in the militias, in the economy and the workers also control many of the governmental departments. But with all this we do not have the power. We can still lose the revolution. The Italian workers after the war, also took over the land, the mines, the factories and the workshops. They also had the arms, and still they lost their revolution. It is true that they had no ministers in the government, but this is of little importance. It is the fighting power of the workers in the streets which determines the strength or weakness of a government and a movement. Participation in a government is no guarantee of revolutionary strength as was the case with social democracy in a whole series of countries. It is also possible to be outside of the government altogether and have an overwhelming power, like the Bolshevik Party of 1917.

The working class of Catalonia and of Spain must clearly face the question of power. Even holding the means of production and exchange, the arms, and a secure place in the bourgeois state, they can still lose the revolution. For the triumph of the revolutionary movement it is absolutely necessary that the working class take full power, and destroy the capitalist state.

The capitalist state power includes the legislative, executive and judicial branches. To hold two or three cabinet seats does not destroy the capitalist power, and to think that it does would lead to catastrophic results. This does not mean to abandon these seats and governmental posts already held by the workers. On the contrary. The workers have won incalculable advantages in the streets; the power, in fact, is still held by control of the streets, and the Council seats now held by revolutionaries are conquests which must be held and defended by blood and fire. So long as they remain faithful to the revolutionary proletariat, they can be useful to the workers' cause. From the Council of the Generality they can always see that the revolutionary achievements are not

FOR AN ASSEMBLY OF WORKERS PEASANTS AND SOLDIERS

This month we reprint an article from "The Spanish Revolution," the English edition of P.O.U.M. (The Workers' Party for Marxist Unity), copies of which can be obtained from the Marxist Group, 25 Aubert Park, Highbury. In our December issue, we criticised P.O.U.M. for taking office in a government which was a bourgeois capitalist government despite the working class representatives in it. Now the government with the collaboration of the P.S.U.C. (the Spanish Communist Party) has expelled P.O.U.M. Events have therefore forced P.O.U.M. to adopt a correct position in regard to the Spanish Government. This document clearly and concretely points the way to the new organ of power which must be created by the revolution and which will be its solid guarantee. This is what distinguishes P.O.U.M. from the republicans, the official communists and the reformist socialists who are fighting for the democratic republic which existed before July. It is for this that P.O.U.M. journals are suppressed, for this, for calling for Workers' Power, that the Stalinists dub P.O.U.M. as an agent of Hitler, and incite the working class to pogroms against it. P.O.U.M. is likely to be made illegal, as the Bolshevik Party was made illegal in August 1917 by the Kerensky government in conjunction with the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries. The P.S.U.C. calls for a "strong government" which would do this job, which could be used against the creative revolutionary impulse of the working class, which would put the militias into a regular army under the thumbs of professional militarists, and which would agree to an armistice and plebiscite sponsored by the Imperialists at Geneva. Against these betrayals and treachery, to save the revolution, the workers must finish up with bourgeois parliamentary democracy and take the power into their own hands. The future of the revolution and the working masses in Spain depends upon their understanding of this.

confined within the bourgeois democracy and the capitalist state. Parliament must be destroyed at Madrid as well as Barcelona. It is completely out of date; we cannot rely upon it. Our strength, the strength of the revolution, lies in the working class itself. It lies in the workshop committees, which sprang up spontaneously, in the peasants' assemblies, which have taken over the land, and in the fighters at the front.

The revolution must be saved, and it can only be saved by organising it. It cannot be left to its own free spontaneity. It must be organised.

Only the workers, peasants and soldiers can save the revolution. The factory committees, the peasant assemblies, and delegates from the front must be united in a great organisation that will guarantee the revolution, that will be the democratic expression of the working masses, that will be a substitute for the broken down bourgeois parliament, and that will be the organ of the new workers' power.

The revolution, started on the 19th of July as a direct consequence of the military fascist uprising, is passing through serious moments. The capitalist class, terrorized during the first phase of the movement, is now trying to raise its head, working its way back into the new institu-

tions created by the revolution and reoccupying the strategic position it had lost. Of course, it does not reveal its intentions openly, but rather, as is customary in all popular revolutions, it uses middle class and even working class parties and groups to carry out this hidden work the more effectively and unhampered.

Their design is especially favoured by the unusual situation created by the war. The absolute necessity of winning it as well as the special requirements and complicated problems which it raises, lead to situation which, if skillfully handled, may find the masses easily swayed and may favour the plans of those who are trying to strangle the revolution, confining it within the channel of the democratic republic. The working class should realise that its whole future is being decided, that the war and the revolution are inseparable and that only by destroying the roots at the base of the capitalist regime can the possibility of a fascist victory be destroyed.

If fascism did not triumph completely on the 19th of July, that is only due to the heroic might of the working class, which, abandoned and without arms, was able to block the fascist advance and, taking the arms from the enemy, to destroy the sources of power of the old regime and to abolish the rights of private property and to initiate a profound revolution.

In these historical moments the working class came to control the absolute hegemony of the revolutionary movement, and the middle class parties, which the working class had followed for years, disappeared almost completely from the political scene.

They are now trying to undermine the positions captured by the workers, and in part they have succeeded. The Central government at Valencia, in spite of its composition, is a typical "national union" government, jealously preserving the capitalist democratic constitution, which is completely behind the times; this government differs in no fundamental way from the former Peoples' Front government. The government of Catalonia, although of analogous composition, has been infinitely more progressive than the Central Government, since it here has operated in a different political climate, one determined by the C.N.T.* and the P.O.U.M., which have held revolutionary positions and have prevented the middle class ideology of the Peoples' Front from infecting the workers' movement or placing it at the service of the capitalist democratic interests.

The elimination of the P.O.U.M. from the Council of the Generality is the first step in an extensive manoeuvre which would lead also to elimination of the C.N.T.; this move is designed to change the situation in Catalonia to one more favourable to halting the revolution.

Under these circumstances the Central Committee of the P.O.U.M. believe that the most effective means of combatting this extensive manoeuvre and at the same time, of consolidating the aims of the working class and giving impetus to the revolutionary process, is to provide adequate organs of expression for the revolutionary aspirations of the working class, which constitute the basis of the future regime. To maintain the bourgeois parliament at this time is an inconsistency which may prove fatal. The democratic parliament is an institution which belongs to

* The Anarchist Party.

HELP P.O.U.M.

We have a letter from a comrade who has gone to Barcelona asking urgently for money, food and clothes for P.O.U.M. There is especially an urgent need for warm clothes, including babies' and children's woollies. You want to help the Spanish workers in their fight. You want to help P.O.U.M., the only party in Spain that approaches a revolutionary position by calling upon the workers to take power. Send aid to them through THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL SPANISH COMMITTEE, c/o The Marxist Group, 25 Aubert Park, Highbury. The committee will arrange the collection of clothes if you send them a letter. Buy the P.O.U.M. bulletin, price 2d, for news of the Spanish revolution by the men who are fighting in it.

the epoch prior to July 19th. Neither by its composition nor its spirit can it meet the revolutionary needs of the present moment. The new society will not be forged in a parliament, but rather in a constituent assembly which will lay the basis of a Spain freed from landlords and capitalists, a Union of Socialist Republics.

The representatives to this assembly cannot be elected under a system of universal suffrage, a survival of the capitalist democratic regime, but should be chosen by the workers, peasants and soldiers, represented by shop and factory councils, peasant assemblies and delegates from the front. It is from this assembly that the new socialist structure of the country, the workers' and peasants' government should spring. Such a government would represent the will of the masses who are fighting against fascism and offering their blood, not for a democratic republic, but for a society free of capitalist exploitation.

The Central Committee of the P.O.U.M. believes, finally, that a genuine workers' democracy is an indispensable condition for the decisive victory of the working class and to guarantee the triumph of the revolution. It would guarantee the revolution against all attempts at dictatorial control by certain parties and organizations. To this end it is absolutely necessary to set up factory and shop councils, elected directly by the workers themselves in general assemblies called by the trade unions—in short the whole working class must participate actively and directly in the discussion and solution of the whole series of problems which the war and the revolution have brought before the country.

The basic aims of the moment are then:

1. Dissolution of the bourgeois parliament.
2. A constituent assembly of delegates of shop councils, peasants' representatives, and of delegates from the front.
3. A workers' and peasants' government—a workers' democracy.

Solidaridad Obrera, the organ of the anarcho-syndicalists said in a recent article:

"The time has come for complete Socialization of production and consumption. The municipalization of real estate must be accelerated. Banking also must be socialized. The workers' army must be built immediately. As soon as possible the National Revolutionary Congress should be convened to put an end forever to the bourgeois parliament. Finally, we must note that once the revolution has started it must be carried through to its conclusion with all its consequences."

This is the first time the C.N.T. press has come out for a National Revolutionary Congress. They are to be congratulated, for herein lies the possibility of achieving the real working class revolution for which we have struggled from the first. From these lines, we can see that it is not just another protest against parliamentary government such as the Anarchists repeatedly make, but rather a recognition of the need of calling an assembly which would spring from the new situation created since July 19th.

Since then we have ceaselessly propagated the need for new organs of power, of committees of workers, peasants and soldiers who would choose representatives to meet in an assembly or congress and solve the problems of building the new socialist society.

We believe that there is no one, except the Stalinists,

or the worn-out liberal press, who defends the old parliaments of Spain and Catalonia. The old experienced capitalist governments of France and England are not deceived by proposals to confine our revolution to capitalist democracy. They know what is what. This childish argument, to justify the existence of the legal parliaments, fools no one.*

What is certain is that the parliaments have not given up their powers, and even if they do not exercise them to-day, they may reappear to-morrow and attempt to occupy their former position. The very existence of the Parliaments, even if they are asleep and inactive, presupposes that the old institutions of bourgeois democracy are respected and preserved. Furthermore, they stand in the way of new bodies which are truly revolutionary. These new bodies must be the sole organs of power and the governing officials must be named by them."

*In this connection it is interesting to note the statement of J. L. Garvin in the *Observer*, January 17th, 1937:

"If there were a false truce now the fury would break out again. This conflict in its nature will have to be fought out to some more decisive stage before there can be the least possibility of peace by compromise. Nothing could be more ludicrous than the ignorant suggestion that the majority of the Spanish people are neither Nationalist nor Red—whether in the Communist or Anarchist sense—and that it is still possible to restore a sort of Liberal parliamentary regime worked by a party system and free elections!"

Editor.

DOCUMENTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL. No. 1.

LENIN

On Bourgeois Democracy And The Dictatorship Of The Proletariat

1. The imperialist war of 1914-18 has once and for all disclosed to the most backward of the workers the true nature of bourgeois democracy, revealing it as nothing less than a Capitalist dictatorship even in the freest republics. In order that a German or an English group of millionaires might be enriched, millions of men have been murdered, and the military dictatorship of the capitalist class has been established even in the freest republic. Even after the defeat of Germany, this dictatorship is still kept up in the Entente countries. More than anything else the war has served to open the eyes of the workers, has stripped bourgeois democracy of its sham ornaments and revealed to all the nations vast abysses of greed and speculation during the war and because of it. The bourgeoisie carried on the war in the name of liberty and equality, and in that same name military contractors have amassed untold riches. No effort on the part of the yellow Berne International will be able to conceal from the masses the plundering character, now definitely unmasked, of bourgeois "liberty," bourgeois "equality" and bourgeois "democracy."

2. In Germany, which, in a capitalist sense is the most highly developed country in Europe, the first months of republican liberty, brought by the destruction of Imperial Germany, showed the German working man and the whole world, which class is actually dominant in the

bourgeois democratic republic. The murder of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg was an event of world historic significance, not only because the best and leading personalities of the real proletarian communistic International were tragically done to death, but also the foremost European—one might say without exaggeration—the foremost world state—has revealed its class foundations to the very roots. If persons under arrest, that is persons under the protection of the State, can be murdered with impunity by officers and capitalists under a government of social patriots, then it follows the democratic republic under which such things happen is, in effect, a bourgeois dictatorship. People who give vent to their indignation at the murders of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, but who have not grasped this truth, merely display either their own stupidity or their own hypocrisy. In one of the freest and most advanced republics in the world, in the German Republic, "freedom" consists in the liberty to kill with impunity the arrested leaders of the proletariat. It will never be otherwise as long as capitalism is dominant, since the development of democracy does not weaken the class struggle but, on the contrary, aggravates it, until, as the result of war and its sequels, it has now reached boiling point.

Throughout the whole civilised world the deportation, persecution and internment of Bolsheviki is taking place,

as for instance, in Switzerland, one of the freest bourgeois republics. In America, too, there are even Bolshevik pogroms. From the standpoint of "democracy pure and simple" it is simply ludicrous that civilised, advanced, democratic countries, armed to the teeth, should dread the presence of some few dozens of individuals from backward, starving, ruined Russia, which has been called savage and criminal in thousands of bourgeois papers. It is obvious that a social order which could produce such a crying contradiction is, in effect, a dictatorship of the capitalist class.

3. In such a state of things, Proletarian dictatorship is not only fully justified as a means of overthrowing the exploiters and of suppressing their resistance, but is also absolutely necessary for the mass of the workers as the only protection against capitalist dictatorship, which led the way to war and will probably prepare a new war.

The main point which Socialists fail to understand, and which reveals their short-sightedness, their enslavement to bourgeois prejudices, their political treachery towards the proletariat, is that in capitalist society there can be no middle course between capitalist dictatorship and proletarian dictatorship. Any dream of a third course is merely the reactionary lament of the lower middle classes. This is plainly shown by the experience of the last hundred years and more during which the bourgeois democracy and the labour movement have been developing in all advanced countries. Especially is it shown by the experiences of the last five years. The entire science of political economy and the whole gist of Marxism are eloquent of this truth, clearly demonstrating the economic necessity of capitalist dictatorship under any system of production for profit—a dictatorship which can only be destroyed by that class which has been developed, increased, paid and strengthened by and with the development of capitalism itself—that is, the proletarian class.

4. The other theoretical and political mistake made by Socialists consists in not understanding that the forms of democracy have inevitably changed in the course of centuries, beginning with its embryo in ancient times, in proportion as one ruling class was replaced by another. In the republics of ancient Greece, in the mediæval towns, in the most developed capitalist States, democracy has had different forms and has been of varied extent. It would be folly to assume that the greatest revolution in history, the first transfer of power from the hands of a minority of exploiters to the hands of the impoverished majority could take place within the framework of the old bourgeois parliamentary democracy without the most abrupt changes, or the creation of new forms and institutions for democracy, embodying the new social conditions of its existence.

5. Proletarian dictatorship is like the dictatorship of other classes in that it arises from the necessity of suppressing the armed resistance of the class that loses its political supremacy. The fundamental difference between proletarian dictatorship and that of other classes, such as the dictatorship of the great landowners of the Middle Ages, and that of the capitalist class in all civilised capitalist countries, is simply that the two last named dictatorships were a forcible suppression of the resistance of the majority of the population, the working masses, whereas proletarian dictatorship is the forcible suppression of the resistance of the exploiters, i.e. of an insignificant minority of the population—the landlords and capitalists.

Hence it follows that proletarian dictatorship must inevitably bring with it not only a change in the forms and institutions of democracy, generally speaking, but also precisely such a change as will bring a hitherto undreamt of extension in practice of the use made of democracy by those who have been oppressed by capitalism, i.e. the working class.

And, in fact, those forms of proletarian dictatorship already worked out in practice, e.g. the Soviet power in Russia, the Rate system in Germany, the Shop Stewards Committees and similar Soviet institutions in other countries, all signify, and in practice realise for the working class, i.e. for the enormous majority of the population, the practical possibility of democratic liberty and privileges to an extent never before known even approximately in the best democratic bourgeois republics.

The essence of the Soviet power consists in the fact that the continuous and unique basis of all State machinery and public authority is constituted by the mass organisations of exactly those classes which were oppressed by capitalism—the workers and semi-proletarians, peasants not exploiting hired labour and forced to sell at least a fraction of their own labour power. These very masses, which even in the most democratic bourgeois republics, though enjoying equal rights in law, are still kept in practice from all participation in political life and from the enjoyment of all democratic rights and liberties—are now brought into permanent, unavoidable and therefore decisive, touch with the democratic administration of the State.

6. The equality of all citizens, irrespective of sex, religion, race or nationality, which was always everywhere promised, but never carried out by the bourgeois democracy, and indeed never could be carried out under capitalism, is immediately and amply realised by the Soviet Power, or, in other words, by proletarian dictatorship. Only the dictatorship of the workers can achieve this equality, because they have no private property interest either in production or in the struggle for distribution and redistribution.

7. The old bourgeois democracy and the parliamentary system were so organised as to keep the working classes at the greatest distance from the administrative machinery. But the Soviet power, i.e., proletarian dictatorship, on the contrary, is so organised that it brings the masses of the working class in close touch with the administration. The same purpose is attained by the legislative and executive functions under the Soviet organisation of the State, and by substituting industrial functions under the Soviet organisation of the State, and by substituting industrial units, such as works and factories for territorial constituencies.

8. Not only under the monarchy, but even in the most democratic bourgeois republics, the army was an organ for oppression. Only Soviet Government as the established State organisation of the classes oppressed by capitalism, is capable of abolishing the dependence of the army on bourgeois leadership, and of really amalgamating the proletariat with the army, of arming the proletariat and disarming the bourgeoisie, without which conditions the victory of Socialism would be impossible.

9. The Soviet organisation of the State is adapted for the leading part played by the proletariat as the class which has been most concentrated and united by capitalism. Experience gained from all revolutions and all movements

of the enslaved classes, the experience of the world Socialist movement teaches us that is only the proletariat that is able to unite and carry with it the scattered and backward sections of the toiling and exploited population.

10. Only the Soviet organisation of the State is able completely to break up and destroy the old i.e. bourgeois,

bureaucratic and judicial apparatus which under capitalism existed, and was bound to exist, in the most democratic republics, and formed for the masses of the workers the greatest practical obstacle in the way of realising democracy. The Paris Commune took the first historic step along this path; the Soviet has taken the second.

BEWARE OF THE POPULAR FRONT

THE LESSON OF FRANCE

LAST month we showed how the German workers were ruined by the policy of Social Fascism. We showed with unimpeachable evidence from the official publications of the Third International how the Social Democracy was proclaimed the chief enemy by the Stalinist bureaucracy, because the Social Democracy stood for Locarno, The Versailles Treaty, The League of Nations, etc., while Fascism in Germany was anti-Locarno and anti League. The Soviet bureaucracy therefore, in the fantastic belief that it could come to terms with Hitler and play off Germany against France, formed United Fronts with the Fascists against the Social Democracy. The Communist Party cannot deny these things. It is because they cannot face the proof of their subservience to the Soviet foreign policy that they call us Fascist provocateurs, etc. To-day they are sacrificing the workers even more shamelessly.

They do it cleverly. But unless the workers awake in time they will be sacrificed as they were sacrificed in Germany. When the German movement collapsed, the Stalinists continued with their Social Fascism for over a year. They say to-day that it was after February 6th and the attack by the French Fascists that they changed their policy to the United Front. That is a lie. The *International Press Correspondence* in the month of April 1934, was still calling the Social Democracy, Social Fascist, and in October 1934, Harry Pollitt was still shouting for a Soviet Britain. What caused the change?

In the summer of 1934, France decided that an alliance with Russia would be useful against Germany. Herriot and Pierre Cot, the French Radicals (Liberals) went to Russia and made the first arrangements. Now see the change in the policy of the Communist Parties as directed by Stalin. In Germany, the German Social Democrats had been the chief enemy. If the German Social Democracy had come into power in Germany, they would have drawn closer to France which stood for the League and isolated Russia. Hitler was anti-League. French Social-Democracy under Blum was pro-League. Stalin was concerned with getting support for his alliance. So the Communist Party of France offered the United Front to Blum, made no conditions, had no fighting programme and fooled the workers with demonstrations and a lot of anti-Fascist propaganda. Not satisfied with that they roped in the Radicals telling innumerable lies about winning the middle classes. The Radicals preferred the Franco-Russian alliance to the Franco-German, so many of them came into the Popular Front. Then the Communists began to agitate for a strong, free and happy France to fight Hitler. Now one thing is certain. If you want a strong France to

fight Germany, you cannot carry on the class struggle. The class struggle weakens the bourgeois state. Marxists want to weaken it. They want to weaken it and break it to pieces substituting Workers' Power. It is the only way out of capitalist crisis and imperialist war. But the Communist Party of France can only pretend to carry on the class struggle, for the Soviet bureaucracy wants a strong France, a strong bourgeois France.

Are we merely being theorists? We pointed out that the Stalinists could not support a strong, free and happy bourgeois France and lead the workers against the capitalists. As soon as the great strikes broke out, the Communist Party rushed to the rescue of the capitalists. The million and a half workers in factories had to be got out some how to be happy and strong and free to help Soviet Russia against Fascist Germany.

Humanité of June 2nd came out with: "The Trade Union militants as they have indicated, are using all their strength to achieve a rapid and reasonable solution of the conflicts that are in progress." What this meant the bourgeois knew. Powerless before the masses, they received unexpected help from these renegades. *Paris Soir* on the same day wrote: "Will they be able to stop the development of events? Those responsible for the Trade Union movement are undertaking this task with the hope of succeeding in it." The Communists and the Trade Union leaders were not responsible for the movement. It had come from the rank-and-file, but thus early the bourgeoisie could see what they were after. When some eager workers began to run their factories themselves, the Industrial Editor of *Humanité*, for merely reporting it in the Press, was publicly dismissed from his post. But the strike continued, and on June 6th *Humanité* began to fear a possible insurrection. "It is a question neither of demagogy nor of insurrection," they pleaded. "It is simply a question of making the bosses give back a little of their purchasing power to the men who have for four years lost up to thirty per cent of their purchasing power, and in some cases, even more." They knew that at any moment the movement might overflow from economic into political channels and the struggle for state power begin. They fought to prevent it. "It is in the interests of the entire nation," said Vaillant-Coturier in the same issue. Thorez, the general secretary, raised the slogan, "One must know when to end a strike." Every word weakened the workers and strengthened the frightened bourgeoisie. By June 7th, the French C.P. were almost frantic, seeking to drown the class-struggle in the whole nation, Fascists and all. Vaillant-Coturier, in *Humanité* of that date, said: "What is outstanding in this move-

ment, which grows from hour to hour, is . . . the reconciliation of the opinions and religious beliefs, from the Communist and Socialist to the national volunteer, from the Catholic to the unbeliever, and the speed which characterises the work taken up again after victory." The national volunteers are Fascists. Even the bourgeoisie were laughing at them: "The inspirers of the People's Front," said *Paris Soir* of June 7th, "suddenly in the face of the fire that has broken out have adopted the rôle of extinguishers."

But nothing could hold back the French workers from the satisfaction of their immediate demands. Blum, more active in those few days than any Social Democratic ministry has been in all its life, passed bills hastily through parliament, and, peace being restored, the Capitalists began quietly to sabotage by raising prices and at the same time preparing for the second clash which they know must come. But to the Communists, the strike was a warning. The workers' movement was certain to break out again. Moscow did not want that. Moscow wanted a strong, free and happy France to fight against Hitler. The Communists therefore began to fund the Popular Front too narrow, and to look beyond Radicals to those on the Right, who were unalterably anti-German. Since January, 1936, they had thrown out the slogan, "The unification of the French nation." Now they began to fight for it. Blum and Daladier were sympathetic to an understanding with Germany and in opposition to these Communists, whose propaganda and agitation became one long incitement to hostility between France and Germany. They put forward the new slogan of a Front of Frenchmen. "Unity, unity, unity! It is on this unity that the future of our country depends," wrote Vaillant-Couturier on July 12.* On July 15 they hailed the army: "It is to the honour of the people of Paris to have, in dignity, saluted its soldiers and its army." They paid tribute to the Senate: "The Communist Party does not intend any more to yield to the popular custom of attacking the Republican Senate." And on July 29 these anti-Fascists, who had all these years so exploited the French workers' desire to fight against Fascism, offered the Fascists the United Front. "We shake hands with the sincere Croix-de-Feu and with the sincere National Volunteers, with all those who really wish the well-being of the people." They began to attack the Socialist Party. It is Germany and the Red Referendum and "After Hitler our turn" all over again.

That is the position to-day in France. The Communist Party has voted for the Bill prohibiting volunteers going to Spain from France. That is what the Popular Front means—an incessant amount of talk against Fascism, any number of promises. But the moment the workers take action, the Communist Party is on the side of the bourgeoisie to use its influence on the workers to keep them quiet in order to be ready for Hitler's attack against the Soviet Union. It is an infamous treacherous policy. It uses the revolutionary words to lead the workers into an imperialist war, telling them that it is for the defence of the Soviet Union. As if Herriot, Laval, Daladier and Leon Blum would fight any war except for French Imperialism. It is not only a lying, treacherous policy, it is a false policy, as false as Social Fascism was false, and false policies lead inevitably to defeat. Our section in France calls upon the French workers to resist every war waged by the French bourgeoisie. Certainly let the

Soviet bureaucracy accept help from France against Germany, or even from Germany against France. Yes! From Germany against France, as Lenin in 1918 accepted help from the British and French brigands against the German brigands to use his own expressive words. But while he did so he never ceased to call upon the international working class movement in *all* countries, to carry on its struggle against Imperialism in *all* countries. It is the Soviet bureaucracy, national, conservative, reactionary, relying on the bourgeoisie instead of the proletariat that forces the Third International to accept this policy and deceive the workers.

[Next month we shall bring this series to a close, with an article on the Popular Front in Britain.]

THE MARXIST GROUP (*Trotskyists*)
for "THE WORKERS' PARTY"
for THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

Books of the Moment:

"The 3rd International After Lenin," by Leon Trotsky, price 7/6d.

"Behind the Moscow Trial," by Max Shachtman, price 1/3d.

Read regularly the journals of our international sections:

UNSER WORT (German section)

LA LUTTE OUVRIERE (French section)

LA LUTTE OUVRIERE (Belgian section)

THE VANGUARD (Canadian section)

Read also

THE SOCIALIST APPEAL (America)
and **THE RED FLAG**

(H. Boyd, 238 Edgware Rd., W.1.)

Send to Robert Williams, 25 Aubert Park, N.5 for any of the above.

The following booksellers and newsagents also stock **FIGHT** and other Trotskyist literature:

Bibliophile, Little Russell Street, W.C.1.

Burn and Terry, Shaftesbury Avenue, W.C.

Colletts, Charing Cross Road, W.C.

Clapham Socialist Bookshop, 79 Bedford Road, Clapham North.

Johns, Torrington Place, W.C.

Librairie Internationale, 73 Russell Square, W.C.

Librairie Internationale, Percy Street, W.C.

Lahr, Red Lion Square, W.C.

London School of Economics Bookshop, Aldwych.

London Weekly Mail, New Bridge Street.

Parton Street Bookshop, Parton Street, W.C.

Preis, Little Russel Street, W.C.

Solosky, Charing Cross Road, W.C.

Strauberg, Coptic Street, W.C.

Socialist Bookshop, 35 St. Bride Street, E.C.4.

THE CLASS STRUGGLE

FOOD AND THE WORKERS

LATEST statistics issued by the Ministry of Labour (*Ministry of Labour Gazette*, Jan. 1936) show an increase in the cost of living index of 4% since January, 1936; the increase in food being 5%. This index is worked out by the Ministry of Labour and is intended to indicate "the average increase in the cost of maintaining unchanged the pre war standard of living of working class families." This standard—worked out in accordance with a hypothetical diet for an "average family"—is of necessity artificial. It makes no allowance for the difference existing in the food standards of the people between 1914 and to-day, for the higher standard made possible to-day by the great technical increases in the methods of production, storage and transport,—in short, for progress in its truest sense—the increase in the material well being of the mass of the workers.

As is to be expected, wages have made some slight move upward with the rise in the cost of living. But an examination of the *Ministry of Labour Gazette* shows that there is a time lag to the workers' detriment and that the increases cover but a proportion of the total workers in industry. During 1936, 4,000,000 workers received a total increase of approximately £500,000 per week in weekly full time wages. Exclusive of agricultural workers there were approximately 11,000,000 workers in industry. Thus although increased food prices, etc., affect all workers and unemployed, only four-elevenths of the insured workers obtained increases. Many of these increases were obtained in accordance with sliding-scale agreements, and the remainder won by negotiations or direct action. Already large sections of the workers are making demands for increases, and many bitter struggles are likely during the coming months; but again the time lag between the increase of prices and increase in wages will act against the workers, even if the struggles are successful.

Many eminent authorities, such as the British Medical Association, have recently made enquiries into the actual food consumption necessary to maintain people in good health. With these enquiries is also linked the research that has been undertaken by authoritative bodies into the actual average consumption of food in this connection. A recent publication of great value to students of working class conditions is that issued by the Engineers' Study on Economics (E.S.G.), "The Interim Report on the Design of a Family Budget with Special Reference to Food."

In a "desirable budget" of a "statistical average family" the report puts forward an annual expenditure of £314 (over £6 per week) or approximately 63/- per week for each wage-earner. It says that about 37/- out of this 63/- would be required for expenditure on food. This "desirable budget" makes no allowance for "saving, new homes and furniture," because it was considered that the whole of the £314 would be required to attain the desired standard of living.

Yet the Report goes on to state that 75% of the wage-earners in this country earn less than £3 per week.

On the question of food the Report states: "There is little doubt that a large part of the population is suffering from lack of nutritious foodstuffs, particularly fresh dairy produce, fruit and vegetables; and as increased consumption of these is beyond the means of the poorer classes, the economic factor is obviously of first importance. It appears futile to produce and place on the market extra foodstuffs, or other goods, unless the people are able to procure them." So the major necessity for the working class is a great reduction in food prices or a tremendous increase in actual wages earned. But under Capitalism wages and prices do not move in harmony.

Another report issued recently by the Medical Research Council, "A Dietary Survey in terms of the Actual Food-stuffs Consumed" contains some interesting matter. It makes the charge that ignorance is the main cause of inadequate diet in many households, but admits "that the limiting factor in a large section of the community is food purchasing power." This report goes on to make the further charges that the cinema, "the dogs," keeping up of appearances, and the purchase of luxuries instead of essentials are responsible for much of under-feeding. In short, were the great mass of the people kept in stalls and fed with essentials according to a scientific diet, making very little allowance for "luxuries" and the utilisation of leisure, the present standards of income would suffice to produce a well-fed nation.

In strong comparison, however, is the last report of Dr. C. C. M. M'Gonigle (M.O.H. Stockton-on-Tees) who, dealing with families with incomes of less than £3 per week, states: "Contrary to popular belief, I find the average working class woman has sound thumb knowledge of practical dietetics (though no theoretical knowledge) and thus to the limit of her purchasing power she buys food wisely and well. . . . And further, I have satisfied myself that standardised death rates are not influenced by purchasing power." (E.S.G. Report).

Without the mass of the people obtaining sufficient of the right sort of food (essentials), adequate clothing and shelter, and with no allowance for the purchase of "luxuries" for new homes and furniture, it is impossible to talk of progress or culture, and ridiculous to talk of a "fit and satisfied nation." Although there is very little "starvation" there is wide-spread malnutrition — "we know that a very large section of the population have not a diet fully adequate for health," says Sir John Orr.

It is typical of Capitalist methods that provision is made to treat diseases which arise from inadequate diet, but Capitalism will not and cannot prevent these diseases by providing the only final cure, an adequate standard of life.

The Capitalist machine is against the demands of the workers for increases and a decent standard of living. Instead it seeks to make reductions. All the increases obtained by the workers' struggles are subsequently taken away by Capitalism through increased prices, taxation, etc.

All the schemes of Marketing Boards, etc., are put into operation in order to maintain prices at a "profitable" basis by limiting production, etc. Yet the full utilisation of the resources of Great Britain by scientific means would produce only one-half of the food required; and the all-embracing reforms necessary to change the methods in order that food best fitted to be produced in England is developed (e.g. meat, milk, vegetables and fruit), while other foodstuffs (e.g. wheat and sugar) are purchased abroad, are of such a fundamental character that they would amount to a revolution.

It is clearly impossible to carry out such reforms, to eliminate the profit factor and institute a system of production and supply for use only, under Capitalism. Only under a *Socialist system* will it be possible to do this, to develop the agricultural resources without reference to "war-time supplies" and to carry on with other countries a free interchange of manufactured goods for foodstuffs needed by the British workers. Only under an International Socialist System can the material needs of the whole of the workers be satisfied.

A.A.B.

THE HARWORTH MINERS

THE year 1936 saw a steady and growing militancy amongst the working class Trade Union Conferences. Sectional strikes all revealed a determination on the part of the workers to break from the crippling "negotiating" agreements and press forward for higher wages and better conditions.

An instance of this tendency is to be found among the miners. This section, far ahead of the general movement in militancy, has been since the end of the War, driven down to an intolerable standard of living. The coal owners, ably aided by the Capitalist State, i.e. the police and the Courts, have been able to carry through their attacks because of the lack of support for the miners from the rest of the T.U. movement. In 1926 when it did respond to the call for solidarity, the T.U. leadership betrayed the General Strike and deserted the miners, leaving them to face defeat. The years since then have seen a series of defensive battles, starvation and mass unemployment among the miners.

Thus the revival of the struggle in this industry is to be more than welcomed. We must learn from the past that the ruling class policy of "divide and rule" must be combatted by the mobilising of the T.U. movement as a fighting force, ready to give its full support to any section attacked.

1937 presents us with an opportunity to put this principle into practice. The Harworth miners' dispute demands our backing. The issue at stake is the fight of the Notts Miners Association for recognition in this coal field as against the Notts Miners Industrial Union (Spencer Union). This latter body is an independent organisation, founded by a Mr. George Spencer, then M.P. for Broxtowe, in 1926. Taking advantage of the disunity and demoralisation consequent upon the General Strike betrayal, he stepped in and negotiated a district settlement on behalf of his "Union." It has functioned since then as the representative Miners' body, with the blessing of the company concerned.

Yet in Britain we have not much experience of "Company Unions" as such. Yet it can easily be imagined what the workers conditions are in the tender care of such a body. Victimisation and economic terrorism are powerful weapons in the hands of the employing class. When the workers' own organisation is also controlled by the employers, it becomes an added means of exploitation and coercion.

In February, 1936, the Notts Miners Association started a branch in the Harworth district and commenced to recruit. Friction during the year and the growth of the N.M.A. membership, led to its taking a ballot at the colliery as to which Union the men desired. The result was a 90% vote for the N.M.A. The Company thereupon announced that membership of the Spencer Union would be a condition of employment. 800 refused to sign to this effect and were locked out. A further 300 men have since struck work in sympathy. The strike has been notable for its bitterness. The employers have the support of the police and State officials. The 800 men locked out have been refused the dole by the "impartial" Ministry of Labour and a local leader received two months hard labour for threatening a blackleg. Yet officials of the Spencer Union and the colliery are visiting strikers to "persuade" them to return to work. The Company has now stated that the men may belong to either Union but that the Spencer Union only is the recognised negotiating body. This has been rejected by the strikers who demand that the N.M.A. be recognised.

This dispute, involving fundamental principle of the right of freedom of organisation and T.U. recognition, has now had national repercussions. From the South Wales, Lancashire and Notts. coalfields messages of full support have been received. On January 20th, a Conference of delegates was held on the question by the Mineworkers Federation. It was decided to empower the Executive to take a ballot vote of all the coal fields on the question of enforcing the principle for which the Harworth men have struck. The Executive, however, still have power to negotiate, and the Conference stands adjourned. The E.C. was further instructed to approach the T.U.C. in order to enlist the support of the whole Trade Union Movement. The T.U.C. have received the appeal, but as yet content themselves with "keeping in touch."

The above facts should be adequate to convince militant Trade Unionists of the importance of this struggle. The principled issue is basically that victory at Harworth will mean the crushing of Company Unionism and the rebuilding of the T.U. Movement as an instrument of class struggle. The miners, always to the front of the struggle, demand more than resolutions. We have to make up for our desertion and apathy in the past. Branches, District Committees, National E.C. and Trades Councils, should be stirred to provide financial assistance

and to run solidarity campaigns. We must educate working class public opinion to realise that our own economic life depends on the success of our fellow workers.

The working class is awaking to industrial activity. It is essential for our future that the movement mobilises itself for the forthcoming struggles. Here is the real United Front for which to fight. Against the employing class, on the economic field, for better wages and conditions, every section attacked or going forward supported by the others. At the same time as we develop the fight against the employers, let us take care that no treacherous leadership steps in to betray the struggle in the interests of peace and compromise. Neither the Miners' Executive nor Citrine, Bevin and Co. are in favour of a struggle. Trade Union leaders have long since lost their fighting spirit; to work amicably with the ruling class both in Parliament and in industry is their aim. (The Miners' leaders met the coal owners and after a discussion of a

general character, both adjourned to the Mines Department to ask for a coal export subsidy!) The T.U.C., already flirting with the idea of supporting rearmament, is frightened of offending its "friends" by a General Strike threat.

Therefore, militants must press for the utmost support for the Harworth Miners. No compromise or face-saving formulae. Let the 800 men who refused to be intimidated start a struggle in which the Trade Union Movement will prove itself an instrument for the improvement of working class conditions and not a Benevolent Society or home for job hunters and careerists.

Revolutionary Socialists, while convinced of the ultimate necessity for working class freedom and security, of overthrowing capitalism, will actively participate in the economic struggle. We recognise that victory at Harworth is a step forward to the eventual and final victory of Workers' power in Britain.

On the Job No. 2.

FROM THE ENGINEER'S BENCH

EDITOR'S NOTE: The above article comes from a young member of the A.E.U. The engineering industry occupies an important place in the present period of war preparations. The indications of militancy expressed by the writer, the attitude of the A.E.U. Conferences, the militant organisation of the aircraft workers and the growing strike wave demonstrate that the engineers are preparing to struggle against the employers and against any peace in industry leadership. We shall print in our next issue a detailed examination of the engineer's position, particularly with reference to re-armament, and will endeavour to indicate what in our opinion are the main tasks before the workers. A late note from another member of the A.E.U., we felt should also be included in this issue.

THE southward shifting of industry, the development of new production processes, and the introduction of masses of semi-skilled, juvenile and female labour, have been instrumental in changing the social strata of large numbers of shops particularly in and around London. In place of the old skilled and apprenticed worker, we find only skilled and fully rated men in the tool rooms and a nucleus in the assembling and machine shops. The vast majority of the factory consists of young workers, usually semi-skilled and underrated; trainees from the depressed areas, and young women and girls, working under skilled setters or charge hands.

The immediate organisation of these shops with their challenge to rates and conditions should be undertaken. Where these shops are affiliated to the Employers Federation, the Amalgamated Engineers Union has always pressed for and obtained proper treatment for its members. But in the non-federated firms such as Standard Telephone, Creeds, its subsidiary T.M.C., etc., the Unions are unable to enforce their standards unless they have the workers in the firm organised. This task has not yet been seriously attempted. The fault here lies partially with the rank and file, who themselves working in Trade Union shops, do not press the divisional machinery and organisers to take adequate steps to organise the "black" shops. Those

union members working in them, unless extremely militant, become dispirited with the task, faced with such odds and with no substantial outside assistance. The unorganised workers, mostly young, often recruited from rural areas, conscious of their own lack of experience, intimidated and indifferent, make no effort at organisation, or to support their more militant comrades.

To organise these shops the local branches (union) must draft militant members into these factories. We must revise our rules to allow for a women's section, and by means of outside propaganda, meetings, leaflets, etc., demonstrate the more favourable rates and conditions prevailing in Trade Union shops.

These black shops, however, although increasing with the drawing in of more new workers into rearmament and the consequent withdrawal of skilled labour from them to the better firms, fortunately as yet do not represent the more vital section of the industry. Despite their backwardness the workers in these firms have been responsive to general outside pressure and it is from them that the A.E.U. has gained the majority of its 40% increase of membership in the last three years. These new members are bringing a breath of militancy back into the union that showed itself in the Waygood-Oris strike.

The real tragedy for a militant is the taking of direct action out of the hands of the workers in the organised shops, by numerous agreements; the York Memorandum with its consequence, i.e. preventing the union backing strike action, and the attempts by the leaders to turn the A.E.U. into a benevolent society, that occasionally bargains with the Employers' Federation for an increase just sufficient to keep the members quiet, are obstacles to progress. We must therefore work to expel the present leadership, tearing up all restricting agreements, and embark upon an immediate programme of struggle in the industry that will drag in its wake the unorganised and hesitant workers.

The immediate body to develop is the Shop Stewards' Movement, which represents the union's unofficial way of backing strikes. In the recent A.E.C. dispute, a substantial collection was raised in every London union shop, a powerful example of militancy and solidarity. The responsibility of preventing the undermining of our trade rests with the militant Trade Unionist. It is time he became conscious of what is menacing us and begin to stir our organisation in the direction of struggle.

DO THE A.E.U. BOSSES WANT 100% MEMBERSHIP ?

JUST at this moment, the active A.E.U. membership—unfortunately only a small percentage of the whole—is puzzling itself over the extraordinary action of the E.C. over a dispute at Barrow.

Briefly the facts are these: A.E.U. workers at Vickers Armstrong, Barrow, decided to have 100% T.U. members in their shop. The matter was taken up by the local District Committee and the usual negotiations with the management were embarked on. Conferences took place and the matter even went to York Conference, but as usual, no results were forthcoming. Finally, the men, at a Mass Meeting called by the Shop Stewards, decided to put an embargo on all overtime by A.E.U. members until non-members either joined up or were removed.

Vickers Armstrong then called in the help of the Employers Federation, who wrote to the E.C. of the A.E.U. drawing their attention to the affair, and complaining that it was contrary to agreement, contravened the York Memo, and so forth. The E.C. immediately wrote to the Barrow District Committee instructing them to call off the ban on overtime, but the District Committee stood firm and continued to stand firm, despite a personal visit from the A.E.U. President, J.C. Little. With the result that at the end of December last (the whole business had occupied nearly six months), the E.C. suspended the whole of the Barrow District Committee for acting contrary to rule and *not in accordance with the best interests of the members!*

There the matter stands at the moment, but the E.C., no doubt feeling that there position is not very popular, have issued a lengthy manifesto to all A.E.U. branches, explaining their action as best they can. This manifesto is sure to be thoroughly discussed and it offers a first class opportunity to militant A.E.U. members to expose the shameful policy of class collaboration which is all that the T.U. leaders have to offer nowadays.

Members should ask themselves what steps the E.C. are taking "in the interests of their members" to get modified the terms of the various agreements, known collectively as the York Memo, by which they have bound themselves to follow "Rules of Procedure for the Avoidance of Disputes." Proceedings by which the Employers may, by means of adjourned Conferences (which the A.E.U. Secretary lucidly reports as "failure to agree"), so lengthen out any dispute that the men concerned are due for their pension—if any—before the affair is settled.

It is time that the Executive of the A.E.U. realised that the small benefits and concessions they have obtained from the employers, and of which they make such a song and dance, have not been obtained through the brilliant diplomacy of the E.C. nor yet through the generosity of the kind hearted Employers Federation, but

simply because the employers realise that it is cheaper to give small concessions than to have a serious stoppage to contend with. But what the employers have given away with one hand they have got back with the other, because they have lured the T.U. leaders into signing agreements which tie them hand and foot in the future struggle for better conditions— if only its leaders are militant enough to demand it.

On the Job, No. 1.

THE BUILDING WORKER

The article appearing in our last issue on this subject gave the impression, due to the cutting of the article, that there could be no increase in Building Trade wages for 5 years. It should have been made clear that the agreement did not allow for a demand for a general increase in wages but only for an increase under a sliding scale. This is the reason for the present increase in wages of 3d. per hour.

On the question of "wet time" and "control of entry into the industry, I understand that a scheme is being prepared whereby men will be insured against time lost through wet weather. An attempt is also to be made to deal with the system of apprenticeships with which will be linked plans for the control of entry into the Building Trade.

A.A.B.

NOTICES.

We apologise that this month the Colonial Question article on India and the Youth article have had to be omitted owing to lack of space.

We ask readers to take special note of our change of address, but we have made arrangements with the Post Office for all correspondence sent to Kings Cross Road to be forwarded.

CORRESPONDENCE

FROM A COMRADE IN GLAMORGANSHIRE

Dear Comrades,

I am now in a position to inform you that the proposed Debate between us and the local C.P. is all off!!

Let me explain in detail what happened: The local light of the C.P. issued the challenge that a Public Debate be arranged. He issued the challenge as can be expected, when his own theories as a member of the Stalinist party failed to coincide with his natural revolutionary instincts as a member of the world's working class. The challenge was accepted by me and your prompt offer of a speaker was much appreciated.

My opponent, upon my producing your acceptance, at once got to work inside his C.P. local, who, significantly enough, agreed with him that the Debate should be staged.

They got in touch with the Polit-Buro of South Wales, inviting Idris Cox to take it on, he being in their opinion the star man for the job. And they had a reply from the Polit Buro telling them that there is more work to be done re Spanish Aid, etc., than giving a platform to Trotskyism!

I laughed long and long and loud!

However, the fact remains that the workers want to know things, and when they come to find out that the C.P. is stopping them getting to know, then, and then only, will the C.P. be relegated to its proper place in the world, i.e. right with the World Bourgeoisie. C.P. is used here meaning also the Third International.

Wishing you the best, L.P.

EDITORIAL NOTE: The Marxist Group is always ready to arrange to send speakers for lectures or debates on the Trotskyist point of view on any working class subject.

CORRESPONDENCE

FROM A COMRADE IN JARROW-ON-TYNE

Dear Comrades,

I regret that I am unable to be present at your Conference but wish to convey to you my sincere wishes for its success and the formation of a new Party. It is regrettable that it is necessary to form a new Marxist Party and terrible to realise that the necessity is due to deviations from the Marxist line by the Communist Party — the Party to which I believe most Trotskyists have belonged at some time since its formation in 1921.

In asking me to give a survey of the situation locally, you are setting me a difficult task; however I will attempt it.

TRADE UNIONS.

T.U. membership on the whole is weak, due primarily to the high percentage of unemployed. Attendance at Branch Meetings is small, those attending being mainly men in fairly regular or casual employment and reactionary or reformist in outlook. Some few militants in a few branches.

Trade Unions are used by careerists who first get elected to Trades and Labour Councils and are then eligible for nomination as candidates for Town Council, they being, of course, members of the Labour Party as well.

Unions hold aloof from the unemployed and make no attempt to organise them in any way.

LABOUR PARTY.

Had majority of 2 on Town Council up to last week, when 4 Labour Councillors were expelled by local Party for so-called breach of discipline. These four have appealed to National E.C. Three of the four are Catholics.

I am inclined to suspect that the Labour Party does not desire to have a majority on the Council and have engineered the present situation in order to get out of it. They could have had a majority three years ago but did not seize the opportunity.

The recently organised "Crusade" to London was entirely due to pressure from the rank and file in protest against the ban on the steel works. But rank and file members were allowed no say in its organisation, the Labour Councillors taking the lead in order to guide it into "safe channels," and prevent any display of militancy by the marchers along the route. The Labour leaders' excuse is that it was a "town protest" and was agreed to by the whole of the Town Council including the Moderates or Tory Councillors. Due to the United Front of Labour and "Moderate" Councillors re the Crusade, and the hearty co-operation of the Labour Agent and the Conservative Agent, there was no Council Election in November last. The argument of the Labour leaders being that to fight each other at the November Elections would disrupt their United Front on the question of the Crusade. The workers of Jarrow were thus disfranchised in November last.

Until recently the main body within the Party was the men's "Individual Section" in which a group of rank and file militants were gaining support and exercising pressure on the heads of the Party. I am of the opinion that the heads, realising this danger to their positions, enlisted the aid of the National Executive, who insisted that the men's Individual Section should be liquidated and Ward Committees set up in place of it. This was done some months ago, with the result that the rank and file militants were split up among the different Ward Committees, and being few in numbers were less effective than when in one body.

COMMUNIST PARTY.

The Jarrow Local was formed in 1925 and within six months had secured about 40 members. The membership at

present is only 4. This is the result of the activities of a disruptive clique within the Local. This clique drove members out of the Party by various means and was responsible for the Local adopting tactics which brought ridicule and discredit on the Party, for instance forcing a demonstration of unemployed in which only 20 or 30 took part instead of working along the right lines to get a mass demonstration.

Previous to this clique getting the lead there were good militant demonstrations of several thousands of unemployed led by the Party.

The membership at present makes no attempt to organise the workers for struggle and appears to be content to sell a few copies of the *Daily Worker* and tail after the Labour Party. They firmly believe themselves to be 100% Marxists and their faith in the 3rd International is remarkable. Although they have a "bookshop" displaying about a dozen obsolete pamphlets, its use is mainly as a gossip centre.

THE UNEMPLOYED.

The present widespread unemployment in Jarrow dates back to 1921. I doubt whether any other town of similar size has seen so much active struggle on the part of the unemployed against their terrible conditions.

At one time we had an N.U.W.M. branch with about 1000 members. As far back as 1921 the unemployed demonstrated 3,000 strong, marched to the "Guardians" at South Shields and faced up to police batons. There have been numerous demonstrations of unemployed in Jarrow for such things as extra winter relief. The last real demonstration of a militant nature was the Means Test March on Durham in 1933 where we were severely beaten up by the police and I and six others got six months hard labour each.

The bad tactics of the local C.P. in forcing demonstrations when they were not opportune has had the effect of "killing" demonstrations and exposing the weakness of the Party.

As I said before, the recent Crusade to London was sponsored by the whole Town Council; it was a united front of Labour with Tories and this accounts for the shameful co-operation along the route between the mens' leaders and Conservatives in various towns who provided hospitality. They were determined to prevent any display of militancy.

To a large degree the charity mongers with their gifts of old clothes, etc., have corrupted the unemployed. No lead is given them by the C.P., neither is there at present an N.U.W.M. branch. At any move of the unemployed to protest against their conditions by way of demonstration, the Labour Party Councillors rush to the fore in order to direct it into what they consider "safe channels."

This, broadly speaking, is a survey of the Jarrow position. You will probably consider that most of it is ancient history, but will realise that in order to understand the present, we must go into past events.

There are many ex-members of the Labour Party and of the C.P. who are thoroughly disgruntled, discussing the position at street corners. These individuals are full of criticism but display no desire to get together with a view to starting some activity. I find it difficult to get them to take a sane viewpoint of Trotskyism as they accept what is dished up to them in the *Daily Worker* regarding the recent trial, and then again the Moscow broadcasts four nights a week are accepted as the truth.

I see that I have forgotten to make mention of the Co-operative Society which has 20,000 members.

With Revolutionary Greetings,
L.S.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—We welcome correspondence giving details of conditions in various parts of the country, criticising FIGHT, or raising any points for discussion in this paper.

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