

I.L.P. AND C.P. BY POLLITT
LETTER TO THE AUSTRIAN WORKERS BY DIMITROV

WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE



May 15th, 1934

VOLUME XI

COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL No 10

THREEPENCE
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OVERLEAF

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Number 10

Published fortnightly in Russian, German,
French, Chinese, Spanish and English.

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MAY DAY REVIEW OF THE REVOLUTIONARY FORCES OF THE PROLETARIAT

(Preliminary Summary of the Revolutionary May Day Celebrations in 1934.)

WHAT were the most outstanding features of the May 1 celebrations in 1934?

Firstly, there was the triumphant joy of the victorious proletariat and the toilers of the land of the Soviets who have destroyed for ever the frightful system of exploitation and slavery, liquidated unemployment in the towns and pauperism in the villages; and who under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party are building a classless society on one sixth of the earth's surface, converting their workers' and peasant's Red Army in the face of a whole world of enemies into the most organised, most disciplined, most conscious and most powerful army in the world.

And secondly, there was the *sharp revolutionary hatred of the masses of the proletariat* towards the system of wage slavery and national oppression, mass ruin and fascist terror in the countries of capital, a burning hatred which sometimes takes the form of countless strikes, revolutionary demonstrations, barricade fights against the armed forces of dying capitalism, and at other times hides in the depths of their hearts waiting for the moment to burst out into mighty spontaneous explosions of revolutionary struggle, sweeping away the régime of the fascist dictatorship.

"'Anxiety' prospers in its purest form at the point where it has a chronic character 'always equal to itself,' miserable and contemptible, whereas the needs of the proletariat assume a sharp rough form. urge it on to a life-and-death struggle, revolutionises it, and therefore gives rise not to 'anxiety' but to passion." (Marx, "German Ideology," p. 197, Russ. Ed.)

And, finally, both in the Soviet Union and in the capitalist countries there was a growth of mass revolutionary heroism, this invincible, all-conquering force of the proletarian revolution and the construction of classless socialist society.

* * *

The celebration of May 1 in the Soviet Union showed with exceptional clarity that on Soviet territory, won from the enemy in bloody battle, a new, bright and joyous life is being born. Millions of demonstrators marched in the streets. Every column of this organised army of toilers was decorated in its own way, had its own individual character, but all of them had one common feature—joy, happiness and good cheer. The columns sang, laughed and danced. At the head of every column marched the notable and honoured people of the factories and mills—those with orders on their

breasts, Voroshilov marksmen, men and women shock brigaders of the enterprises, for whom labour on Soviet ground has long since become a matter of honour, pride, valour and heroism. Over their columns the demonstrators carried emblems of their work, specimens of the goods produced by their factories. They proved that in a country freed from the capitalist parasites, the dreams of the English and French utopians of the 19th century are being fulfilled, in the fact that "labour itself has become the joy of life." (Fourier.)

The social-democrats throughout the entire world have poured slander on the Soviet Union, publishing innumerable articles on the alleged starvation and the difficult material situation of the Soviet proletarians. The Communists have never said that full satisfaction of all needs, and an abundance of the blessings of life, have already been attained in the U.S.S.R., which is forced to build socialism in capitalist surroundings at unprecedented speed and with enormous successes. But May 1 plainly showed that even at the present day there are no longer any traces of recent want in the columns of the workers, collective farmers, and office employees who demonstrated that the slogan of the great Party of Lenin and Stalin, to bring about a prosperous life for the workers and collective farmers, is being carried out in a very short time.

But the main thing is that along with the liberation from the yoke of capital, along with the introduction of the 7 and 6-hour day, along with the abolition of pauperism, the Soviet system has made it possible to bring about the all-round development of the abilities of every toiler, confidently creating the necessary prerequisites for carrying out the final aims of Communism—"the development of human life as an aim in itself."(Marx.)

And even bourgeois scientists have more and more often been compelled to admit that Socialism in the U.S.S.R. has not only not extinguished the initiative of competition, and the many-sided individuality of every member of society, but, on the contrary, for the first time in the history of mankind, socialism has developed the initiative of competition, the self-activity of the toilers on a mass scale, liberating them at the same time from the oppressive features of the capitalist hunt for profits. Thus for example, a well-known American economist, Stuart Chase, in a letter which was broadcast by radio from Washington, said the following:

"In the light of this achievement (Chase has in view the annual increase of the basic capital in

industry in the U.S.S.R. by 15-20 per cent.), the well-worn argument that socialism will destroy initiative and progress becomes obviously foolish. No honest man, whatever his political views, could fail after these facts to recognise that modern technique is developing more rapidly, and more fully in the conditions of a planned system based on collectivisation than it could develop in the conditions of the 'free play of forces' under capitalism and under the rule of finance capital." (Re-translated from the Russian report in the "Izvestia.")

Another god-fearing bourgeois journalist, on arriving back in Finland sacrilegiously gave over the radio his impressions of the Soviet Union: "God works great miracles, but the Soviet Government is doing still bigger ones."

The gigantic successes of the Soviet Union are the most powerful force revolutionising the masses of the toilers in the capitalist countries, convincing them of the correctness of the path taken by the Bolsheviks, the path of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and Soviet Power, inspiring them with confidence of victory and inflaming their righteous hatred towards the capitalist system, which has outlived itself, and is doomed, but which is still offering resistance by savage robber methods of terror and by unrestrained lying to, and deception of, the toilers. The victorious march of socialism sounds a mighty echo over the earth, inspiring the toilers of the whole world.

And this international character of the entire self-sacrificing struggle of the Soviet toilers was emphasised with unprecedented power by the May Day demonstration in 1934.

Comrade Voroshilov, the People's Commissar of the Army and Navy, when greeting the May Day parade, "the entire Red Army, all the toilers of the Soviet Union and the proletariat of the whole world," in the name of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the workers' and peasants' government, uttered the following words which are capable of giving still greater revolutionary good cheer and confidence to all the toilers who are carrying on the difficult struggle against imperialism, against the bourgeoisie and the landlords:

"Comrades, we are proud that on this international holiday, we can say to the whole world of workers, to all the friends of the land of the Soviets, that our cause is unshaken, that we are standing firmly and confidently at our historic post, that we shall build up the new human life at the same speed, with the same unswerving will, and with the same constantly growing success as we have done hitherto.

"Let our brothers know that they are not alone, that at the head of the historic struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie stands the mighty

working class of a great country, the class of conquerors."

And the large delegations of English, French, Irish and Australian workers, and the Austrian Schutzbunders watched the mighty columns of troops marching past, the ordered ranks of innumerable tanks as they filed through the Red Square, the flocks of aeroplanes, and the millions of the toilers of the Soviet Union participating in the processions, and they could personally convince themselves that they really are not alone in their struggle.

The U.S.S.R. rises like a rock of peace over the capitalist world, which is feverishly preparing the new catastrophe of a world imperialist war, and primarily a counter-revolutionary war against the Soviet Union. And if the bourgeoisie lose their heads and succeed once more in igniting the flames of bloody war, then the proletariat of the world will repeat after Engels: "If you have nothing left but to open the last war dance, we shall not weep. . . . But if you release forces with which you will be unable to cope afterwards, then however matters may go, at the end of the tragedy you will be a wreck and the victory of the proletariat will either have been won already or will be inevitable." (Quoted from Lenin, Vol. 23, page 105, Russian Edition.)

* * *

The picture unfolded during the compulsory "celebration" of the "national holiday of labour" in fascist Germany was the exact reverse of that in the U.S.S.R. No mimicry could help the bloody fascist royal jesters. Even open robbery, the inclusion of the Soviet emblem, the hammer and sickle, in their May Day badge, together with the swastika, could not help. Since it was beyond their power to prohibit the revolutionary holiday on May 1, fascism tried to appropriate it for itself, claiming that May Day is an ancient German festival, and has nothing to do with the Communist International. This was probably the reason that the announcement was made in the factories in Germany that wages would be paid for May 1 only to those who produced a certificate that they marched in the columns, while one of the fascist trade unions openly stated in its May Day circular that "participation in the national demonstration is compulsory for all factory workers and employees. All who do not turn out will be fined 20 marks."

Even the correspondents of the British conservative papers who, as is well known, are extremely well-inclined towards the hangman régime of Hitler, were compelled to stress in their telegrams the "artificial character of the demonstration in Berlin," to state that Hitler's speech in the Tempelhof met with only the "moderate approval" of the audience ("Times"), which was shown, evidently, as the

"Morning Post" admits, in the unceasing popping of corks from lemonade bottles. According to the "Daily Telegraph," "small groups of Berlin storm troops openly laughed among themselves while Hitler was making his speech." All the main streets in Berlin were surrounded by special cables which separated the public from those who were demonstrating. The streets leading to the Tempelhof were lined by two and in some places three files of storm troopers who stood shoulder to shoulder right up to the Tempelhof Square. A characteristic point indicating the state of mind of the workers who were compelled to participate in the fascist celebration was that, in spite of all the measures taken by the National Socialists, nearly one-half of those who participated in the demonstration left the procession on the way.

We do not know yet how many open revolutionary actions, demonstrations and strikes took place on the First of May in fascist Germany. A year ago the world proletariat was only able to learn of the numerous militant actions of the German workers on the First of May, several weeks later. The fascist press maintains an elaborate silence over all the manifestations of the popular rage. To-day, however, we can speak about the high activity of the Communist Party on the First of May. Berlin and the main industrial centres were swamped with leaflets and newspapers illegally published by the Communist Party of Germany. An especially large quantity of illegal literature was spread about while the meeting was actually taking place in the Tempelhof, which bears evidence to the atmosphere of sympathy with which the workers, who were compelled to participate in the meeting, surrounded the Communist distributors of anti-fascist literature.

The fascist "Börsenzeitung" which quotes the contents of the First of May number of the "Rote Fahne" was compelled to state that "the Communist newspaper still continues to call the masses to struggle against capitalist exploitation, against piece wages, against fascist terror in the workshops, for freedom to strike and of assembly, and for the setting up of illegal militant trade unions. . . . It still continues to glorify the Soviet Union, and the notorious slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat continues to be repeated."

The fear of the growing forces of the proletarian revolution, of the forces of the Communist Party of Germany which is preparing the masses for the armed overthrow of the fascist dictatorship, a fear which is not to be hidden, can be detected in the words uttered by General Goering, the Prime Minister of Prussia, who is at the same time Chief of the Prussian Police, when he stated that "I dealt very severely with Communism" (so he stated to the representative of the "Reuter Agency"). "It suffered great losses and was almost destroyed. Only

the last group of activists remained. But *then Communism began . . . to liven up slowly . . . and began to work again energetically but carefully. . . . Communism has been suppressed, but it stands to reason that it has not been destroyed, since it cannot be destroyed altogether as long as it exists in other countries. It would be a mistake to under-estimate this danger.*"

For once, Goering, the Minister and Police President of Prussia, spoke the truth. Communism really cannot be destroyed, just as the working class cannot be destroyed while capitalism exists. And the history of the Soviet Union has shown that in contradistinction to this, the bourgeoisie not only can be, but will be, destroyed as a class utterly and completely right throughout the world.

When we speak of Germany we cannot pass by in silence the fact that five years have passed since the historic May Day of the year 1929, when the then Police President of Berlin, the Social-Democrat, Zorgebel, who is now on a pension from the Hitler Government for his services to finance capital, shot down a revolutionary demonstration of workers. At that time German social-democracy was still the most powerful party in the Second International. It was in power. It taught "the democratic path to socialism," and ridiculed the Communists who called for the revolutionary struggle against capital, fascism and war, for the dictatorship of the proletariat, and for Soviet Power in Germany. At that time it shot down workers' demonstrations in the name of democracy, and 33 workers, courageous unto death, were shot dead on May 1, 1929, by the bullets of Zorgebel's policemen. At that time it (German Social-Democracy) disbanded the mass revolutionary organisation of the proletariat (the Red Front Fighters, etc.). At that time it prohibited the revolutionary working class press (the "Rote Fahne"). At that time it, German Social-Democracy, which was in power, prepared the prohibition of the Communist Party and the organisation of the suppression of the working class by fascist methods. Only five years have passed since that time. But what years! Now German Social-Democracy no longer exists as an organised party, although its fragments and remnants among the masses continue to play the role of main social support of the bourgeoisie. But the Communists are alive, and in spite of the persecution carried on by the Social-Democrats when in power, in spite of their deception of the workers by slogans of democracy, in spite of the fact that Hitler has come to power and in spite of his ferocious fascist terror, the Communist Party of Germany is becoming the only mass party of the working class in Germany.

The path taken by German Social-Democracy is being followed by every section of the Second International without exception, whatever the "Left"

phrases with which they cover themselves. On the First of May, 1934, they all have shown their treacherous faces.

The international revolutionary proletariat brands the reformist leadership of the English trade unions with shame, which in spite of protests from the lower organisations of the Labour Party and the trade unions, decided to postpone the May celebrations from May 1 to the first Sunday in May, namely, on May 6, and which thereby attempted to transform the celebrations into a peaceful Sunday afternoon parade that could give no offence to the bourgeoisie. The revolutionary French proletariat are indignant at the fact that on the day when militant First of May demonstrations took place in Paris, when barricade fighting took place on the streets, the "Left" social-fascist Jeromsky was at work in the state institution where he is employed, while the leader of the reformist trade unions, M. Jouhaux, vanished from Paris altogether.

The German proletariat, however, it will be remembered in spite of the social-fascists and the whole of their apparatus of bourgeois domination rose to the revolutionary struggle in 1929, an event which became "a turning point in the class struggle in Germany" (Resolution of the X Plenum of the E.C.C.I.) and which demonstrated that the pace at which the German working class movement was rising was being accelerated. *In the same way the First of May revolutionary actions in 1934 are the clearest evidence as to how far forward the mighty process of the liberation of the proletariat of the capitalist countries has moved forward from the democratic, pacifist, and reformist illusions and traditions, with which they have been inculcated for tens of years by the Social-Democratic hirelings of the bourgeoisie.*

These actions, further, show how far forward has gone the *mighty process of transferring the basic masses of the proletariat on to the path of revolutionary struggle, on to the path of bolshevism.* The First of May, 1934, in the capitalist world was a holiday celebrated by militant growing Communism!

All the forces of the fascist counter-revolution, of the bourgeois state and social-fascism were cast against the working class. Not for many years has so much blood flowed on the streets of the capitalist cities which, at one time or other, boasted of their civilisation and democracy. Never before did the white terror of the bourgeoisie assume such a monstrous mass character. Never before have hundreds and thousands of workers who were arrested at the demonstrations been threatened by the death sentence "by law," for participation in the celebration of May 1 (as they are being threatened even in France, the country which only yesterday was "a lever of democracy"), or for the mere distribution of Communist leaflets (as the terrorist law issued

by the fascist government especially for the First of May does in Germany). Never before were the capitals of European, American and Asiatic cities so full of such a mass of policemen and troops as on the First of May, 1934. We need only note, for instance, that 12 regiments of infantry and 10 squadrons of cavalry were concentrated in Paris. In addition to the permanent garrison in Paris, reinforcements were drawn in from Cherbourg, Rouen, Nantes, Brest, Bennes, Nevers, Bourges, Orleans, Strassburg (an artillery regiment) and other cities. Tanks and heavy artillery, etc., were concentrated in the city. The bourgeoisie felt as though it was on the edge of a flaming volcano which was preparing for an inevitable eruption.

And in spite of this rabid terror, with the aid of which the bourgeoisie attempted to scare the proletarian masses, the First of May demonstrations at no time in the years following the first round of revolutions have borne such a militant, such a revolutionary character, as the First of May demonstrations of 1934.

Four points characterise the militant activities of the First of May. Firstly, *the stormy development of the strike form of protest* against the bourgeoisie and against fascism, and these strikes more and more often assumed the character of a *general political strike*. Secondly, *the tremendously sharpened revolutionary character of the actions of the proletariat* whose hatred for the régime of exploitation and terror begin to be transformed into open armed struggle, into barricade fighting and conflicts with the police and fascist bands everywhere. Thirdly, *the growing striving of the proletariat towards unity* in the class struggle which broke down all barriers set in the path of the establishment of the militant unity of action by the social-fascists. And finally and fourthly, *the overwhelming domination of communist slogans in the First of May demonstrations*, slogans of revolutionary struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat, and for Soviet power throughout the whole world.

We will quote just a few examples of the First of May struggles in different capitalist countries without setting ourself the task of giving any exhaustive picture of the movement.

Austria. Under the leadership of the Communist Party which has become transformed in an exceedingly short time into a mass Party, the workers carried through revolutionary open-air meetings and demonstrations in all the districts in Vienna which are famous after the days of the heroic struggle (Favoriten, Medling, Ottakring, Floridsdorf, Bregitenau, etc.). In the woods near Vienna in Tafelberg, just as they did in the old times of Czarist illegality, ten thousand workers organised a revolutionary May meeting. A police aeroplane discovered the place where the meeting was going on. The workers

were dispersed by detachments of gendarmes and of the Government Schutz corps. On the eve of the First of May the treacherous Austrian social-democracy called on the workers "to clench their fists, and to stop at home" (Austrian Arbeiter Zeitung, issued in Czecho-Slovakia).

France. The strike struggle developed on an unheard-of scale. It is especially worthy of note (this sphere still continues to remain the weakest in the practical activity of the Communist Parties throughout the capitalist world), that in France an important section of the workers in the munition plants went on strike. In Toulon the strike embraced 90 per cent. of the workers employed in the military arsenal. In the military arsenals in K . . . , Bourges, Brest, Lorient, Cherbourg and Toulouse, a large section of the workers went on strike. The demonstrations which took place in the whole of France and especially in Paris took on a really revolutionary character. Barricade fighting took place in the Paris district of Alfortville. The whole day the workers were masters of the streets, and it was only at night time that the police cleared the proletarian district after long continued fighting. The same took place in the working class suburb of Jean D'Arc in Paris which the police only succeeded in occupying at four o'clock in the morning. The Paris authorities decided to wipe the heroic working class suburb from the face of the earth.

The "Humanite" was perfectly correct in declaring "that the government was able to convince itself that the Paris workers are children of the Commune, that they will not allow themselves to be scared and that they are not prepared to hand over the working class districts to the fascists and police."

The strikes, revolutionary demonstrations, and conflicts with the police which took place throughout the whole of France are witness to the fact that in France as well a tremendous turn has taken place in the direction of a speeding up of the ripening of a revolutionary crisis.

Japan. In spite of the monstrous oppression of the fascist military clique, and of the absolute-autocratic regime, in spite of the tremendous wave of chauvinism and in spite of the war, workers' First of May demonstrations took place in many centres in Japan. In Osaka alone, over 15,000 proletarians took part in the demonstrations. Even in Tokyo, the citadel of the Japanese monarchy, two revolutionary First of May processions took place which collected over 4,000 participants.

China. In Shanghai alone over 20,000 workers struck work. According to information printed in the bourgeois press, all the factories were closed. No newspapers appeared. Martial law was introduced in the working class districts.

In *Spain* the First of May struggle developed into a general strike.

A general strike also took place in *Belgium*. On the streets of *Warsaw*, Communist demonstrations, which broke through to Bank Square, kept taking place during the whole of the First of May. The biggest factories in Warsaw struck work on the First of May. For the first half of the day the trams ceased running. Revolutionary demonstrations took place in Lvov, Lodz, the Dombrov Basin, and other industrial districts in Poland.

In *New York* alone over 200,000 workers and employees took part in a demonstration and meeting held on the First of May.

60,000 workers struck work in the capital of *Mexico*.

In *Athens* soldiers refused to carry out the instructions of their officers to use their swords for the purpose of dispersing a workers' demonstration.

What needs to be noted above all is the stormy pace at which the *mass revolutionary heroism of the toilers* is growing. The mighty epoch of proletarian revolution and the construction of Socialism in the U.S.S.R. gives birth to great people who rise to political struggle and revolutionary creative activity right from the heart of the toiling labouring masses. All the friends of the Soviet Union followed with beating hearts the firm will and unshakable determination of the Chelyuskinites, the heroic deeds of the Soviet airmen, the heroes of the Land of the Soviets, Comrades Molokov, Kaminin, Lyapidevsky, etc. But it was only a hundred of the toilers of the Socialist Soviet Union who achieved such world fame. Millions of others, on socialist building construction jobs, or employed in gigantic machine construction, chemical and metallurgical enterprises, etc., on collective farm and state farm lands, at their studies in thousands of schools and universities, in the workers' and peasants' Red Army are carrying out their heroic task of constructing socialism for the beloved fatherland of the toilers throughout the world.

But here are the names of the heroes of revolutionary struggle against capitalism, against fascism, names which will remain eternally in the memory of emancipated mankind.

John Scheer and others tortured and murdered by fascism, vanguard fighters for Communism in Germany, who remained true to their duty as proletarian revolutionaries to the very end. Comrade Lutgens who issued a revolutionary Communist call to the toilers of the whole world before he died under the executioner's axe. Or the social-democrat, Wessel, hero of the Austrian armed struggle, executed by the fascist murderers, who cried out before he died: "Long live the U.S.S.R.," "Long live the Communist International," and his wife who said when taking her last farewell from her husband: "I shall do everything that your children shall be worthy of you." Or the plain working girl, the

sixteen-year old seamstress, Emma Ritt, from Chernovitz, who, when the investigating attorney declared that she was threatened with a term of hard labour imprisonment, sang the "International" in reply, and who, when the attorney sat down, cried out, "Stand up, I am singing the 'International'." Or the old working woman, mother of the worker Willemin who was killed in the recent fight with the fascists in Belleville, France. After the death of her son she joined the Communist Party, addressing words of boundless hatred to the bourgeoisie: "We will take our revenge."

And, finally, Georgi Dimitrov, hero of the revolutionary struggle against fascism who placed the fascist rulers in the dock and who enthused the German workers with revolutionary faith and confidence in the oncoming and not distant victory of Communism.

To-day these are no longer isolated individuals. They include the 300,000 members of the mighty ranks of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army of China. They include the glorious fighters in the Austrian armed struggle. They include the heroic strikers in Spain. They include the fighters of Alfortville and other districts in France who fought on the barricades against the police and the fascists. They include tens and hundreds of thousands of workers in all capitalist countries who are arising to the revolutionary struggle. And to-morrow they will include millions.

"A whole series of 'legal positions' have been taken away from the working class, but it has become steeled by its experiences, and is receiving fierce but useful lessons in illegal organisation, illegal struggle and the preparation of its forces for the revolutionary storm." (Lenin, Vol. xxiii, p. 107, Russian Edition.)

Around the Communist Parties, battalions are growing and becoming steeled of those who seek revenge, who are rising to the last decisive battle against the bourgeoisie. Heroism is becoming the class prowess of the proletariat of the whole world.

The class heroism of the proletarians who are selflessly fighting against the bourgeoisie, is the most noteworthy feature of our epoch, the most noteworthy feature of the Communist May Day of the year 1934.

The Communists are faced with many tasks as yet unsolved. Their work has still many weak spots. They do not as yet in the capitalist countries stand at the head of the majority of the workers. They have not yet transformed the factories into fortresses of the Bolshevik Parties. Their work in the reformist and fascist trade unions is still impermissibly weak. Their positions in the armies of the opponent are still absolutely insignificant. They have still not yet linked up the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat with the growing ferment of the toiling peasantry. They have still not yet reorganised their party ranks sufficiently to correspond to the new fighting situation which is swiftly ripening throughout the whole of the capitalist world. But to-day, faced with the tremendous First of May actions, faced with the stormy growth of the heroism of the toiling masses, the words of the great leader of the world proletariat, Vladimir Ilyitch Lenin, sound prophetic:

"Let the 'Socialist squelchers' croak, let the bourgeoisie spit fury and rage. Only people who shut their eyes so as not to see, and fill up their ears so as not to hear, can fail to notice that throughout the whole world internecine conflicts have begun in the old capitalist world which is pregnant with Socialism. We have every ground for regarding the future with complete confidence and with absolute certainty, a future which is preparing us new allies, new victories of Socialist construction in a number of the more advanced countries. We have the right to be proud and to consider ourselves lucky that we were the first to cast down the wild beast, capitalism, in one corner of the globe, capitalism which covered the world in blood, reduced humanity to hunger and wildness, and which will perish inevitably and speedily, however monstrous the animal manifestations of its frenzies before its demise." (Lenin, Vol. xxii, p. 109, Russian Edition.)

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found proving that an offence under the Act is likely to be committed.

The Bill then proceeds to indicate that anybody found guilty under the Act may be immediately sentenced to three months' imprisonment (amended after the House of Commons' discussion to four months, to satisfy those who "were afraid that citizens would be deprived of the right to trial by jury"), the maximum being two years' imprisonment or £200 fine, or both, but this must be on indictment.

Finally, any document seized may be destroyed or otherwise dealt with, as the court thinks fit.

What does the Attorney-General use to justify this New Bill? In his speech in the House of Commons on April 16th, he stated: "The 'Soldiers' Voice' was a leaflet claiming to be the organ of the Communist soldier. The corresponding leaflet for the navy, claiming to be the organ of the Communist sailor, was the 'Red Signal.' The 'Soldiers' Voice' of October, 1931,

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THE LABOUR PARTY, I.L.P. AND THE COMMUNIST PARTY

By HARRY POLLITT.

THE process of differentiation in the I.L.P. which showed itself at the York Conference is of all the greater importance in that it took place in a situation of the rising activity of the working class in England.

In the last months prior to the conference there had already been a significant rise in industrial production, especially in the war industries, resulting in a certain decrease in the unemployment figures.

The National Government has also mobilised all its power to carry through a new Unemployment Insurance Bill, the first of a series of new legislative measures that constitute the greatest danger to the whole working class movement. This Bill has since been followed by the introduction of a new Sedition Bill, and both these government acts are part of a single line, i.e., that of strengthening the dictatorial powers of the National Government representing the dominant interests of the capitalist class, through which they hope to attack the revolutionary vanguard of the working class, split the employed and unemployed workers, organise concentration camps and also to develop through the training centres one of the most serious menaces that has yet confronted trade union standards and conditions in Britain. Both these acts are a most important stage in the war preparations of the National Government and together constitute a step forward towards fascism in Britain.

But in the working class movement there is a rapidly developing wave of militancy taking place. It was manifest in the Hunger March and National Congress, in the wide demand for wage increases which at present, involves 2,000,000 organised workers in the biggest wage increase movement we have seen since 1924. Throughout the working class movement there is tremendous desire for fighting the National Government and the employers, there is a steady increase in the radicalisation of the masses, although reformist illusions are still strong. At the same time, there is a growing desire and demand for unity in the class struggle, and resentment against the policy of the reformist leaders of the Labour Party and Trade Union Congress who disorganise the workers' ranks and fight against united action.

Inside the I.L.P. itself, for over a year there has been a big ferment and discussion on questions of policy, of the united front, and relations

with the Communist International; the right wing have been openly fighting for a return to the Labour Party and breaking off of the united front with the Communist Party. Abroad, in the last months, we had witnessed the heroic armed struggle of the Austrian workers, defeated and betrayed by the Austro-Marxist leaders, who are the idols of the I.L.P. leaders; the twenty-four-hour general strike against fascism in France; the tremendous growth in the activity and influence of the Communist Parties in Germany and Spain, and primarily the triumph of Socialist construction in the land of the proletarian revolution—the Soviet Union. This was the background in which the York Conference met.

The dominant group in the I.L.P., represented by the "left" reformists—Maxton and Brockway—deliberately exerted their influence to prevent a clear discussion and decision being reached on all the basic questions facing the Conference. Maxton, in his presidential speech, declared that he refrained from giving any lead on the outstanding issues before the Conference, claiming it was not his duty to give such a lead to the Conference. But, whilst pretending not to lead, he actually gave a most important lead, that is, he confused the delegates and in this manner endeavoured to win support for the N.A.C. line, that of "left" reformism.

The confusion and unclarity of all the issues on the Conference Agenda, and, in fact, in all statements of I.L.P. policy is not accidental. *It is the policy of the I.L.P.* It is carried through in order that the I.L.P. can retain its chief political rôle as a barrier between the Communist Party and the leftward moving workers in the Labour Party.

The most important questions discussed were those of the united front, and relations with the Communist International. It is well known that the Lancashire and South Wales districts of the I.L.P. had refused to carry out the united front with the Communist Party, and at this conference it was expected that they would make a big fight to get support for this line, and the right wing had organised every delegate that it was possible for them to get to take part in the York Conference.

Under pressure of the revolutionary members of the I.L.P., the N.A.C. had been forced to insert in their annual report a paragraph relating

to the refusal of the Lancashire Division of the I.L.P. to carry out the decisions of the Derby Conference on United Front activities with the Communist Party, and when this paragraph came up for discussion, 57 delegates supported the demand of a Liverpool delegate that the paragraph should be referred back to the N.A.C., on the ground that it did not condemn the attitude of the Lancashire division of the I.L.P., led by Sandham, strongly enough. A number of the resolutions in the Conference called for a continuation of the united front on the basis of "energetic participation in the day-to-day struggles of the working class," but the line of the N.A.C., which glossed the question over, finally carried.

It is interesting to note how the carrying of this resolution was prepared. An elaborate questionnaire had been circulated to all branches of the I.L.P. in regard to the results of co-operation during the past year with the Communist Party. Many delegates protested against the character of the questionnaire issued by the I.L.P. As is usual with all I.L.P. documents and policies, it was misleading, confusing and unclear, and those delegates who protested that nobody could understand it were quite right. But on the basis of the replies to the questionnaire the following resolution was put by the N.A.C. to the Conference:

"The National Council of the I.L.P. wishes to further common working class action on all issues, particularly among militant organisations, with a view to building up a united Revolutionary Socialist Movement.

"After surveying the results of co-operation with the Communist Party during the last year, the N.A.C. recommends that the National co-operation of the two parties be based *on specific objects*, as agreed upon by the representatives of the two parties from time to time.

"Every section of the Movement will be required to carry out such a minimum basis of co-operation.

"The N.A.C. recognises that the extent of co-operation beyond this minimum must depend upon local circumstances and leaves this to the discretion of the branches."

In moving this resolution, Brockway, on behalf of the N.A.C., defined it as meaning that the I.L.P. as a whole would continue co-operation with the Communist Party on such specific objects as the anti-war and anti-fascist movement, German relief work and the Congress Campaign, but *not day-to-day activity* (my italics, H.P.), that the whole party would be expected to carry out this decision, but that it would be left, depending upon the local circumstances, for the I.L.P. branches to decide whether to extend united front

co-operation with the C.P. further or not. Need it be stated that this assertion means the limitation of the united front, a limitation affecting burning questions of the economic and political day-to-day struggle against the capitalists and the National Government? Thus, for instance, Brockway firstly deliberately limits the scope of the united front with the Communist Party, at the very moment when the whole situation demands the intensification of the process of drawing in the widest masses of workers in the factories, trade unions and labour parties against the capitalist offensive and against the National Government. Secondly, that at the National Congress of Action in February, the I.L.P. voted for the Congress Resolution of Action, a resolution which is of such a character as can only be put into operation by the most systematic daily activity on the part of all who support the Congress, by their work in the factories, trade unions and working class localities.

The delegation of the Communist Party that is to meet the I.L.P. to discuss the confused and ambiguous united front resolution that was adopted at York will very sharply bring this fact before the members of the I.L.P.

The next and biggest discussion of the Conference took place on the question of the relations of the I.L.P. with the Communist International. It will be recalled that at the Derby Conference of the I.L.P. a year ago, by 83 votes to 79, and in the teeth of the opposition of the N.A.C., a resolution was adopted to inquire how the I.L.P. could assist in the work of the Communist International.

Letters have passed between the I.L.P. and the Comintern. But while the Comintern in its letters strives to develop the tendencies making for transfer to the path of revolutionary class struggle, and rejection of the old paths of reformist policy which showed themselves among the masses of the I.L.P. members at the Derby Conference, the N.A.C., on the contrary, aimed at the very opposite. The objective of the N.A.C. in conducting this correspondence was not to find how they could put the resolution of the Derby Conference into operation, but how they could sabotage it, and find the basis for getting a reversal of the policy at the York Conference. There is no need in this article to enter into any details about the controversy which has taken place. It is familiar to all readers of our magazine. The last letters of the I.L.P. to the Comintern* contained numberless petty questions, their purpose being only one, namely, by discussing details, to hinder the discussion at the Conference of the most important question of prin-

* See No. 7, "C.I."

ciple regarding either a revolutionary or reformist, including "left" reformist, policy which the I.L.P. must carry out in the future. In reply to this last letter, in which the N.A.C. asks that a reply should be sent in time for their York Conference, the Comintern sent the following cable: "We have nothing to alter in our letters in which we showed fundamental differences in principle between revolutionary proletarian lines and the 'left' reformist line of the present leadership of the I.L.P. We appeal to Conference to clearly decide which of these two lines Conference accepts and which it rejects. This, and not those organisational and subordinate questions raised by the N.A.C. in their last letter will decide the question of sympathetic affiliation to the Communist International.

"The members of the National Council are trying to confuse this clear presentation of the main question by continuing the tactics of bombarding the Comintern with an endless series of questions, although all questions of principle in relation between the Comintern and sympathetic Party are clearly answered in our last letter to the I.L.P.

"We do not doubt that the working class members of the I.L.P. will come to a correct decision. But we are very much afraid that even the best decisions which your Conference may make in accordance with the desire of your membership for co-operation with the Comintern, could be frustrated under some pretext or other if the new leadership of the I.L.P. were to consist of members supporting the same line as the former leadership.

"It is self-understood that we are prepared to clarify any particular question which seems unclear to members of your Party, or which may give rise to doubts, and by means of joint agreement settle all questions of the relations of the I.L.P. and C.I. to our mutual satisfaction.

"This can be done without difficulty only if your Party makes a firm clear decision without reservations to affiliate as a sympathising Party to the C.I. on the basis and line of our last letter, and takes steps to guarantee that this decision will be carried out."

The N.A.C. took the view that the Comintern cable made a clear demand that the I.L.P. should accept sympathetic affiliation and remove those that were hostile to this policy from the leadership of the I.L.P. The following statement was therefore issued by the N.A.C.:

"The N.A.C. recommend the following statement of policy in regard to the International Association of the I.L.P. :—

The objects of the I.L.P. in this respect are:

1. To bring about the unification of all

genuinely revolutionary sections of the working class in one International.

2. To secure international common action on immediate issues by all sections of the working class.

In furtherance of the *first* of these objects, the I.L.P. will continue:—

- (a) To oppose the formation of a new International;
- (b) To associate with the Independent Revolutionary Parties with a view to influencing them to work for the establishment of an inclusive revolutionary International.

At the same time, despite the attitude of the E.C.C.I., which makes affiliation or sympathetic affiliation impossible under the present circumstances, the I.L.P. is ready to associate with the Communist International in all efforts which, in the view of the I.L.P., further the revolutionary struggle of the workers.

In furtherance of the *second* object the I.L.P. will take every opportunity of approaching the two Internationals and all other sections of the working class to urge united action against Fascism, War and Capitalist Attacks."

To this resolution a series of amendments were put. Briefly, the line of them was as follows:—

- (1) The straight issue that the York Conference "decides immediately to seek affiliation to the C.I. as a sympathetic body under Rule 18 of the Statutes of the C.I."
 - (2) That the York Conference should accept sympathetic affiliation to the C.I. on condition "that the Conference receives a definite assurance that the Statutes relating to democratic centralism of the C.I. will be faithfully observed."
 - (3) That the I.L.P. shall "maintain its principles and its independence, to co-operate with the Third International in the struggle against capitalism, imperialism and war, but not to affiliate to it, and to oppose the formation of a new international."
- There were two other amendments, one which was for the formation of the new International, and another which condemned the formation of the Fourth International.

For some time prior to the Conference a Committee working for affiliation to the Comintern who are members of the I.L.P. had been campaigning for the line of the Comintern being accepted by the York Conference on the question of affiliation. There is also in the I.L.P., as is known, a Revolutionary Policy Committee, but it had not taken too clear a stand on the question, and some of these members had been raising a number of conditions upon which sympathetic application should be accepted, but the position became considerably clearer when in

one of the Comintern's letters it was clearly pointed out that the issue facing the York Conference would be of deciding which of the two political lines in the I.L.P. was to be supported, the revolutionary, or the "left" reformist line.

It is instructive to note that in a group meeting called to discuss the question of the general policy of the I.L.P., only five delegates were sufficiently interested to turn up. But in a group meeting called to discuss the question of the relations with the Communist International, forty delegates and visitors turned up. The discussion which took place in this group meeting was very good, the support of the delegates for the line of the Comintern was clearly expressed, and at the close of the meeting, it was decided to issue the following short statement to the Conference delegates:

"The National R.P.C. wishes to announce to delegates that at a large meeting held last night it decided (with one dissension) to unite with the Affiliation Committee in full support of the Dumfries Amendment for immediate sympathetic affiliation to the C.I."

The statement of the N.A.C. was introduced by John McGovern, M.P., who had been chosen for this because, as a result of his participation in the Hunger March, he had achieved a certain popularity in the ranks of the I.L.P., and was therefore the most suitable person to cover up the reformist tactics of the N.A.C. by "left" phrases. McGovern, in his speech, did not attempt to analyse the political content of the Comintern letters or to deal with the fundamental issues that were raised. Instead, by a series of such phrases as "the I.L.P. has been on its belly to Moscow too long," "I am not prepared to take my instructions either from Arthur Henderson or Joseph Stalin," McGovern continued the policy of Mr. Brockway, a policy of slanderous attacks on the Comintern and the U.S.S.R.

It is perfectly clear that no attempt was made to show that there is a fundamental difference, involving the very life and death of the workers, as between the policies of Henderson and Comrade Stalin. But this type of demagogic phrase was considered to be the reply to the basic issues that were being raised in the discussion.

A number of delegates then spoke on behalf of sympathetic affiliation to the Comintern, and it should be said at once that, in most cases, their speeches were excellent, and for the first time one felt the atmosphere of revolutionary fervour and enthusiasm coming into the Conference and sincere desire of the revolutionary membership of the I.L.P. to be able to work in the closest manner with the Communist International and to carry out every phase of the work that this in-

volves. That is to say, the development of the fighting united front of struggle, the merciless campaign against reformism and against a "left" reformist line, and for a united revolutionary Party in Britain. The discussion was closed by a statement from Brockway, who, as usual, posed as being the perfect gentleman who would not reply "to the attacks that had been made upon him." In his speech he defended the line of the N.A.C., and stated that the only Communist Party of any importance outside the Soviet Union was in Germany, that the seven "left" parties were all playing a more important rôle in their respective countries than the Communist Parties, and finally very melodramatically informed the Conference that the issue they now had to decide was whether they are going to fight for the Comintern line, which as the last cable showed, meant to clear out the elected leadership of the I.L.P., including such men as Maxton, and "putting in their places the members of the Affiliation Committee, whose speeches they had heard that day." This closed the debate and the vote then took place.

When the voting took place on the straight issue of sympathetic affiliation to the C.I. without conditions, 34 votes were given for this and 126 against. We have knowledge of many branches that were also in support of this policy, but who had been unable to send delegates for financial reasons. For the "sympathetic affiliation to the C.I., but desiring a definite assurance that the Statutes relating to the democratic centralism of the C.I. would be faithfully observed," were 51 votes for and 98 against. Further votes and further amendments are of no importance and have no political significance.

In considering the discussion on the voting on the various amendments we can say that there were fifty delegates at the York Conference who stood more or less consistently for affiliation as sympathisers. For even those delegates who wanted assurance about democratic centralism did not deny the analysis of the Comintern regarding the two political lines inside the I.L.P.. If one has to consider this vote in relation to the vote cast at Derby a year ago, then the following can be stated. At Derby there was no clearly defined group working for the line of the Comintern. At that time all sorts of heterogeneous elements were voting for co-operation with the Comintern without a clear understanding of the implications of the questions connected with revolutionary policy.

As a result of the Derby resolution, for a year a discussion has been taking place within the I.L.P., the result being that, with the help of the Comintern letters, the issues have become more

and more clarified, until finally at York a position was reached where 34 delegates voted for the resolution, the principle of which was affiliation to the Comintern without any conditions. And 51 delegates were prepared to vote for sympathetic affiliation to the Comintern, if some minor questions could be cleared up.

This differentiation represents a step forward and indicates the firm basis for the continuation of revolutionary work inside the I.L.P. It is significant to note that hardly a speech was made at the York Conference but what some reference was made either to the Communist Party or the Communist International! And we will say openly that the results would have been much better had it not been for the bad work of our own Party, the membership of which is not yet fully conscious of the importance of the task of winning the revolutionary members of the I.L.P. for the Communist International and the enormous significance that this would have at home and abroad.

And if full use had been made of the letters of the Comintern in local discussions between local branches of the I.L.P. and Communist Party locals, if more use had been made of personal connections between members of the I.L.P. and members of the Communist Party, then a much better result could have been achieved. For example, in Lancashire, the stronghold of the right wing of the I.L.P., it was possible to have such discussions with I.L.P. branches and members as resulted in 11 votes being cast from Lancashire for the policy of sympathetic affiliation to the Communist International. But a disquieting thing one has to note is that in Scotland, where we have the best mass contact and influence, hardly any impression was made upon the Scottish delegates, the overwhelming majority of whom stood behind the N.A.C. at the York Conference. In conversations with delegates it became clear, too, that many of our methods of agitation and propaganda amongst the I.L.P. members can be improved, that things which we took for granted have still to be explained to the I.L.P. comrades, that our propaganda is not yet simple enough, that we have not given sufficient explanation to the I.L.P. comrades of how the Communist International works, of the Communist International's policy in regard to trade unionism, and the question of democratic centralism. If these shortcomings had been eliminated in the months prior to the I.L.P. Conference, a very different result would have been obtained.

What is the perspective before the I.L.P.? We doubt if even the N.A.C. themselves feel they have achieved a victory. The right wing which

began to consolidate its forces before the York Conference will carry on a still further sharp campaign in favour of returning to the old reformist policy. It was significant to note the silence of Fred Jowett, one of the founders of the I.L.P., during the whole of the discussion at York. The policy of spreading unclarity and confusion is to be continued so that the N.A.C. can try to hold the Party together by appearing to be all things to all of its members, but as the fight for united front activity and for sympathetic affiliation is and will be carried forward by the revolutionary members of the I.L.P., it is inevitable that the next few months will lead to further political differentiation in the ranks of the I.L.P.

After the Conference, the Central Committee of the Communist Party issued a statement from which we quote the most important paragraphs:

"Precisely at this moment, when large numbers of workers, influenced by swiftly moving events at home and abroad, are trying to understand how to fight their way out of the capitalist crisis, the I.L.P. leaders are doing their utmost to spread confusion and doubt. This is the worst crime of Left reformism.

"They play with the phrase 'dictatorship of the proletariat,' but deliberately avoid the question of *Soviet Power*, which is the form of the workers' dictatorship and which can only be achieved by renouncing Parliamentaryism and fighting for the overthrow of capitalism.

"They talk about revolution, but pretend it can be brought about by pacifist methods and purely industrial action, thereby preventing the masses from understanding the necessity of preparing working class force to use against the fascist inclined ruling class. They are for the united front, but continually propose limitations on activities and pretend that their united front can be carried on without a relentless fight against the chief saboteurs of united action, the General Council of the T.U.C., and the leaders of the Labour Party.

"They are for 'struggle against the danger of imperialist war,' but in reality help the imperialist war preparations by slandering the Soviet Union and attacking its peace policy.

"They are for a 'revolutionary international,' but persistently attempt to discredit the Communist International by slandering its policy and caricaturing its discipline.

"The York Conference of the I.L.P. shows the imperative necessity of strengthening the fight against 'left' reformism in Britain, and for the winning over of the militant workers for the clear line of revolutionary struggle and support for the programme of the Communist International.

"It showed the splendid possibilities before the militant section of the I.L.P., organised around the Affiliation Committee, of continuing their struggle for affiliation to the Communist International and the most effective daily forms of the united front."

If the local organisations of the C.P. really carry on a determined campaign to explain the policy of the C.I. to the members of the I.L.P. and to expose "right" and "left" reformism, if the Affiliation Committee of the I.L.P. itself will now utilise every opportunity for popularising the Comintern's letters and especially the cable to the York Conference, and carries on systematic work in preparation for the summer Divisional Conference of the I.L.P. supporting the policy of the Affiliation Committee, if this work is energetically carried out, if it is followed by the Divisions of the I.L.P. sending representative delegates to the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International, then within a very short space of time a real tremendous support can be won inside the I.L.P. for the line of the Comintern.

The issue is now clear beyond all doubt; it is the fight within the I.L.P. of either back to reformism or forward towards revolution. There

is now a firmly established group of revolutionary members of the I.L.P. who are for the line of revolution. If they will now boldly place this position before all members of the I.L.P. and organs of the I.L.P., they will receive an increasing support, and if the Communist Party will also understand the importance of the problem, and will see that in every phase of united front activity, the most sincere and comradely attempts are made to get the maximum results out of the united front that is carried out between the Party and the I.L.P., at the centre and in the districts, then the work begun at York can be carried forward much more effectively, existing doubts will be cleared away, the differentiation between revolutionaries and reformists will be increased, and the revolutionary members themselves will soon begin to feel so strong that they will be able to put forward the demand for a special Conference of the I.L.P. to again discuss the question of its international associations and policy, because bound up with this question is every phase of current policy, in the struggle against capitalism and reformism in Britain, and the building up of the revolutionary forces that can go forward to the winning of Soviet Power in Britain.

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invited its readers who were soldiers to understand that 'the way to victory lies not through voting but through mass struggle. What is needed is a repetition of the united strike!' The issue of May, 1932, contained this passage: 'Let us use the knowledge of arms which they give us, when the opportunity presents itself, to overthrow their rule and in unity with our fellow workers, to establish the Free Socialist Britain . . .'. In November, 1932, the same production said: 'We suggest to you, comrade reader, that you should make a beginning now in your unit. Get in touch with that other fellow in your lot who thinks like you. Then start in to convert the rest of your mates to your ideas. If you do not know where to begin, what about writing for advice to that Communist or member of the unemployment movement you used to know at home?' The 'Red Signal' of October, 1932, said: 'They will put a gun in your hands. Take it and study the art of war. Its knowledge is essential for workers in order to fight against the capitalists of their own country in order to put an end to capitalism.' In May, 1933, it said: 'If war does come, then it must be turned into a civil war against the capitalist warmongers and their bankrupt system. We urge our comrades of the lower deck to get

in touch with this great movement wherever possible.' In 1932 there were 17 perverse pamphlets, of which the 'Soldiers' Voice' was one, and the 'Red Signal' another, containing such incitements, and there were 20 different places of distribution. In 1933 there were 11 different pamphlets and 14 places of distribution. It was estimated that in each of the last two years something like 50,000 of these perverse pamphlets had been produced to be distributed for circulation among members of His Majesty's forces." ("London Times," April 17th.)

The worthy Minister is disturbed by these anti-militarist efforts. The memory of Invergordon still lingers, while the feverish war preparations of the National Government require still further repression of all "dangerous thoughts" that may penetrate among the forces so largely recruited from the unemployed. But it is clear that this Bill, which follows on the heels of the New Unemployment Bill, has a far deeper purpose than that of intensifying the struggle against anti-militarist propaganda, for it makes the mere possession of any document that "could give rise to disaffection if circulated in the Army" an offence. Under this category there is hardly a single piece of

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LETTER TO THE AUSTRIAN WORKERS

By GEORGE DIMITROV.

I HAVE before me a letter dated December 7, 1933, which I received in the Leipzig jail only on January 15, 1934, from a group of workers in the Karl Marx House, which now—after the February events in Austria—has become known to the whole world.

Here is the text of the letter:

Karl Marx House,
Vienna, Dec. 7, 1933.

Dear Comrade Dimitrov,

On behalf of many we give you our warmest greetings. Millions are listening to your courageous words.

You give new strength to millions. Your struggle shall not be in vain. It is also our struggle. The great army of the class-conscious proletariat stands behind you in serried ranks.

We ask you, Comrade Dimitrov, to send us a few lines in reply.

With greetings for freedom . . .

(A number of signatures follow)*

I read and re-read the letter from the Austrian workers many times while in the dungeons of Goering's secret police in Berlin, when I learned from the German fascist press about the heroic battles of the Austrian workers. With a throbbing heart I followed the development of events and the outcome of the armed battles between the Austrian proletariat and fascism, feeling great joy over the manifestations of proletarian heroism and deep hatred for the treacherous policy of the leadership of Social Democracy.

After arriving in the U.S.S.R., although I was still ill as a consequence of the hardships of imprisonment and the tension at the trial, nevertheless, as soon as my health permitted, I tried first of all to acquaint myself with the Austrian events, and the historical lessons which followed from them, not only for the workers of Austria, but also for the workers of all capitalist countries.

I would now like to share my impressions and some of my thoughts about the Austrian events

* On the very same day that I received this letter I tried to send the following short reply through the strict police censorship:—

To-day I received your friendly letter of December 7 last year, and read it with great joy and thankfulness. As far as my conduct at the trial is concerned, I was only trying to fulfil my proletarian duty and to remain faithful to my heroic class, right to the very end.

With militant fraternal greetings . . .

I do not know whether even this short reply reached its destination.

with those comrades who wrote to me, as well as with all the Austrian fighters for the proletarian cause.

I do not know how many of those who wrote this letter are still alive. But now every Communist feels that in the struggle for the common cause of the workers he is linked up by indissoluble bonds with the Austrian workers who remained alive, as well as with those who have fallen in the battles.

We Communists feel drawn still closer to the workers who have fought and are still fighting, now that Austrian reaction is celebrating its sanguinary victory over the working class. Thousands of slain and wounded workers, thousands of prisoners, terror raging throughout the country, a régime of tyranny for the proletariat, comparable only to the fascist régime in Germany—this is the result of the hangman's work of the Dollfuss government.

The bourgeoisie is covering with glory the Dollfusses and the Feys, who used howitzers to shoot down the workers and their wives and children. The Papal Nuncio sends these hangmen his blessings. And at the same time the cowardly leaders of Austrian social democracy read the workers a lesson telling them that it was not necessary to take to arms, that the working class committed an error by answering, with an armed struggle, the general offensive of fascism, which threatened to sweep away not only all the economic and political gains of practically half a century of struggle of the Austrian working class, but even threatened its bare existence.

But would capitulation without struggle have saved the Austrian proletariat from reaction? No, it would only have made the reactionary forces more arrogant and more sure of their strength.

The Austrian proletariat was right in its determination not to betray its own class, in refusing to submit without struggle, to a fate resembling that of the working class of Germany, which was betrayed by German Social-Democracy. The armed struggle of the Austrian proletariat served as a clear warning, not only for the Austrian bourgeoisie, but also for the bourgeoisie of other countries. It showed that the proletariat will not reconcile itself to the reign of fascism.

No, it was not the armed struggle of the Austrian working class that was a mistake; the mistake was that this struggle was not organised and led in a revolutionary Bolshevik way.

The fundamental weakness of the February

struggles of the Austrian workers who succumbed to the pernicious influence of Social-Democracy, was that they failed to understand that it was necessary not only to defend themselves from the attack of fascism, but also to turn their armed resistance into a struggle for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and for the seizure of power by the proletariat. The armed resistance of the Austrian proletariat to fascism did not grow into a genuine armed insurrection. This was the main mistake.

Reaction has triumphed in Austria. But this victory is temporary; it is of such a nature that it even now contains elements of the future defeat of the bourgeoisie. What is necessary at present is that the Austrian workers should not despair, should not lose confidence in the strength of their class, but, on the contrary, should draw all the necessary political and organisational conclusions from the lessons of the February battles, especially with regard to Social Democracy.

Remember 1905 in Russia, comrades. At that time tsarism quelled the heroic uprising of the Russian workers. But who, however, does not know that it was just this uprising that was the historical prerequisite for the victorious October in 1917? In 1923, the September insurrection of the Bulgarian proletariat was suppressed. But just as in 1905 the Russian proletariat, under the leadership of Lenin, was able to benefit by all the lessons of the insurrection, gain confidence in its cause and carry its struggle to final victory, so the Bulgarian workers, with the Communist Party at the head and under the leadership of the Communist International, after the bloody suppression of the uprising, became even more steeled, strengthened their Party and are now unwaveringly carrying on the struggle against Bulgarian fascism. After the experience of the September insurrection, the Bulgarian proletariat clearly perceived the roots of its weaknesses and the correctness of the theory and practice of Bolshevism. The Bulgarian proletariat and its Communist Party, which was driven underground, accepted the doctrines of Bolshevism as the foundation for their activity and struggle and converted the defeat of the September uprising into the prerequisites for the victorious development of the revolutionary proletarian movement in Bulgaria. And now, even the class enemy is compelled to admit that the Bulgarian proletariat and its Party have become much stronger than they were before the September insurrection in 1923.

The Austrian workers should take these historical lessons to heart. And as in 1905 in

Russia and in 1923 in Bulgaria, so now in Austria, as a result of the sanguinary suppression of the working class combatants, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie have become separated by an unbridgable gulf, which is one of the conditions necessary for the future victories of the proletariat.

II.

Otto Bauer speaks of the catastrophe in Austria. Yes, there is a catastrophe, but it is the catastrophe of the whole Second International, of its theory, policy and tactics. It is the catastrophe of the Social Democratic theory of the peaceful, painless growing of capitalism into socialism through bourgeois parliamentary democracy; the catastrophe of the reformist policy which tries to patch up disintegrating capitalism; the catastrophe of the tactics aimed at averting the proletarian revolution.

After the collapse of German Social Democracy, this is the second catastrophe, a catastrophe, towards which the Social Democratic parties of other capitalist countries are similarly heading. It is in vain that Otto Bauer, in order to prove that the coming to power of fascism was inevitable, refers to the example of Germany where, upon Hitler's coming to power, as he says, neither the powerful Social Democratic Party nor the strong Communist Party offered any resistance. But if the German Social Democracy had not throughout this entire period through its Severings, Zoergeibels, and Grzechinskies, conducted a sanguinary struggle against the anti-fascist front which was rallying under the leadership of the German Communist Party; if it had not sabotaged the numerous proposals made to it by the Communist Party, including that of January, 1933, to form a united front against fascism; if it had not rejected the proposals made at that time by the Communist Party for immediate proclamation of the general strike and if it had not broken up the joint actions of the Communist and the Social Democratic workers against fascism, then we can confidently assert that the German proletariat would have been able to prevent the fascists from coming to power, and the German people would not have become victims of the fascist orgy. The Communist Party of Germany, unfortunately, was not at that time strong enough to overcome the sabotage and betrayal of Social Democracy, and to lead the German workers to an open armed fight against the Hitler bands. It is clear that in Germany, just as in Austria now, Social Democracy bears full responsibility for the victory of fascism.

The events in Austria and Germany and the victorious construction of Socialism in the U.S.S.R. constitute the greatest historical test, based on the experience of millions of people, of the two policies—the policy of the Party of Lenin and Stalin, the policy of the Comintern, on the one hand, and the policy of Austrian and German Social Democracy, the policy of the Second International, on the other. The first policy, the policy of the proletarian revolution, has already brought the working class in the U.S.S.R., as well as the basic masses of the peasantry which are under its influence, to Socialism. The second policy, the policy of conciliation with the bourgeoisie, as has been strikingly shown by the events in Italy, Germany and Austria, has led to the victory of the counter-revolution, to the triumph of fascism.

The U.S.S.R., the great creation of the Bolsheviks, stands firm like a rock—the bourgeoisie and the landowners have been crushed, the power of the working class has been established, a strong proletarian state has been set up, a powerful workers' and peasants' Red Army has been formed, a new, Socialist economic system has been built up, unemployment and pauperisation in the villages have been abolished, and there is a steady rise in the material and cultural level of the toiling masses in town and country. But in Austria and in Germany there is not a trace of "democratic socialism" left. There, Dollfuss and Fey, Hitler and Goering, hold absolute sway. The working class have had all rights taken from them, arms are in the hands of the bourgeoisie, the Vienna "Commune" (*Gemeinde*) is occupied by the Heimwehr, and the communal workers' houses, which Social Democracy held up as a symbol of the "peaceful growing into Socialism," have been partly destroyed by artillery fire and are being taken away from the Austrian proletariat.

But, comrades, in 1918 you had everything in your hands. You had arms, you formed your Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. You were flanked on two sides by the Soviet Republics of Hungary and Bavaria. The bourgeoisie lost their heads. They were afraid that you would deal with them as the Russian workers dealt with their bourgeoisie in 1917. They were afraid that *you* would confiscate their houses and palaces for the workers. Now *they* bombard your workers' houses with artillery and give them to the murderers of your wives and children to live in. They expected that you would disband all their political parties; now they have suppressed your organisations. They expected that *you* would close down the whole bourgeois press, now they have closed down your press. They were

afraid that *you* would fill up the prisons with the Dollfusses and the Feys, the Starhembergs and the other hangmen of the workers; now *they* fill them with workers and execute the revolutionaries.

If the Austrian and German proletariat had in 1918 followed the policy of the Russian Bolsheviks, there would now be no fascism in Austria, Germany, Italy, Poland and in the Balkan countries. And there is no doubt that the working class, and not the bourgeoisie, would have been master of the situation in Europe.

But Austrian Social Democracy, with Fritz Adler and Otto Bauer at the head, misled the working class. It made an alliance with the bourgeoisie against the revolution. It tried to frighten the Austrian workers by the difficulties of the heroic struggle of the Russian workers and peasants, it promised the workers to establish Socialism without revolution, without bloodshed—solely by means of the ballot and parliamentary stratagems. It urged the workers not to fight the bourgeoisie, but to compromise with them on the basis of small, temporary concessions, and by this means the bourgeoisie saved themselves from the revolution. You, comrades, unfortunately, did not listen to the voice of the Communists who were trying to convince you of the fatal effects of this policy. For years you submitted to the treachery of the leadership of the Social Democratic party which, with its policy of capitulation to reaction, led the working class from retreat to retreat and from defeat to defeat. For fifteen years reaction and fascism had been organising their forces systematically and unhindered under the very nose of the Social-Democratic Party.

Was it possible, however, to hinder this consolidation of the forces of reaction and to hold Austrian fascism in check? There is no doubt that this was possible, but only through revolutionary struggle. Remember, comrades, July 15, 1927, when the masses went out on the streets upon the acquittal of the fascist murderers of Shattendorf. That moment was a turning point in the class struggle, and in the relation of the class forces in Austria. It gave the bourgeoisie a great advantage over the proletariat, and the bourgeoisie commenced to make vigorous preparations to establish a fascist dictatorship in Austria. If the Social Democratic Party had had even the least desire to struggle, it could have easily converted the movement of July, 1927, into a proletarian revolution; but even if it had not had sufficient courage to do this, it could still have achieved the defeat of fascism—the only thing that was necessary was not to hold back the workers. But Social Democracy broke up

this powerful action of the Austrian proletariat against fascism. It surrendered the arms of the workers' arsenal in 1927, it concluded the Huettenberg Pact in 1928, opening the doors of the factories to the fascists, it introduced the law of Julius Deutsch on discipline in the army which permitted the government to clear the army of proletarian elements; it commenced to reform the constitution of December 8, 1929, in accordance with the demands of the Heimwehr. Since 1930 through the agency of Seitz, it permitted fascist demonstrations and banned Communist demonstrations.

Social Democracy had its military organisation (the *Schutzbund*), stores of arms, two-thirds of the entire population of Vienna behind it, and held almost undivided sway over the working class of the whole country. And yet the fascists killed one worker after another with impunity, and every time Social Democracy retreated, it threatened that at the next murder it would compel the bourgeoisie to put a stop to the terror "by the force of the organised working class." The Dollfusses, the Feys and the Heimwehr went on with their work, knowing the worth of such statements. By endless retreat you do not demonstrate the strength of the organised working class.

III.

And yet the Austrian proletariat could have won in February, 1934, too, if you, Social Democratic workers, had refused to follow the Social Democratic leaders, who from the very beginning demoralised your struggle by their policy of capitulation and defeatism, if you, together with the Communists, had taken the organisation and the leadership of the struggle into your own hands at the proper time.

An armed struggle is not an act which is separate from the general policy of a party. A party which is constantly retreating, which in the course of fifteen years calls on the workers to evade the struggle, cannot in the course of twenty-four hours politically and organisationally adopt the line of armed struggle.

Otto Bauer, in his pamphlet, "Austrian Democracy Under Fire," is now complaining that the general strike was not successful. But had Social Democracy taken pains to prepare it? No, on the contrary, the Social Democratic leadership tried beforehand to clear itself in the eyes of the bourgeoisie from all responsibility for the strike, declaring that under the four conditions (violation of the constitution, suppression of the Social Democratic Party, suppression of the trade unions, appointment of a commissar of Vienna),

the workers would themselves take the initiative of declaring such a strike.

Otto Bauer himself relates in his pamphlet: "In the factories and in the Party branches the greater became the number of those who gave voice to their impatience, their longing to fight. Why wait? they said. By the time one of these four points materialises we shall no longer be in a condition to fight. Let us strike now while we are still ready for battle. Otherwise we share the same fate of our comrades in Germany."*

These workers were a thousand times right.

Bauer himself now affirms that during the February days the leadership of the Social Democratic Party was opposed to struggle, but could no longer hold back the spontaneous movement of the workers. Otto Bauer drags in the crisis to justify the treachery of the Railway Union bosses, who broke the strike on the railways, and thus allowed the government to bring in artillery from Burgenland, while the workers of Floridsdorf were shedding their blood.

He tries to whitewash the printers' union officials, who on February 13, on the second day of the armed struggle, called on the printers to end the strike and return to work.

In his pamphlet, Otto Bauer relates that the Social Democratic leaders allowed themselves to be arrested so that they might not be obliged to join the workers in the fight, and precisely those leaders were arrested "who had taken no part whatever in the fighting, who were sitting on that Monday, as on other days, in the trade union offices at their desks in the Vienna Town Hall, in the provincial government offices, in the offices of the district and municipal administrations."†

Yes, it was so. That is how the traitors to the working class always act. But is the secretary of the Second International, the leader of Austrian Social Democracy, Fritz Adler, who shamefully stole away from the struggle, and who, at the time when the Austrian workers were fighting with arms, publicly declared that he could not take part in their struggle "because he was busy with current affairs"—is he any better than these cowardly deserters who call themselves leaders of the working class?

Comrades, can we go into struggle with such deserters in our ranks? These deserters are people who before the battle already wail about defeat, who attempt to bring panic into the ranks of the combatants at the first shot. These people do not want the victory of the working class; they are afraid of it. They only want to scare the bourgeoisie a little, to make it more ready to come to terms with them. Thus, they first

* Otto Bauer, "Austrian Democracy Under Fire," p. 23.

† *Ibid.*, p. 7.

hold the workers back, and then deliberately limit the scope of their action, trying to keep the broad masses out of it. To the workers who wanted to support the Schutzbund in its struggle their reply was: "Go home and cook your dinners while there is gas; armed struggle is the business of the Schutzbund and doesn't concern you." They refused to give arms to workers who wanted to fight.

One's heart aches at the thought of the sufferings which the Austrian working class is now enduring as a retribution for the crimes of the Social Democratic leadership.

My consciousness, as that of a soldier of the revolution, cannot reconcile itself to the fact that the glorious fighters of the Karl Marx House were members of the same party as the members of the Carinthian and Vorarlberg organisations of Social Democracy, who deserted to the camp of the Heimwehr at the first shot in Linz. It is hard to realise that the Social Democratic proletarians, who fought and died with so much heroism, were for many years led by such miserable political philistines and cowards as Otto Bauer, Friedrich Adler, Deutsch and Seitz.

* * *

Your armed struggle was in fact a struggle for the re-establishment of the constitution which Dollfuss had violated, and it did not go beyond these limits, it did not turn into a struggle for power. And yet in the epoch of the general crisis of capitalism, when the bourgeoisie is no longer able to govern by the methods of parliamentary democracy and enters upon the road of fascism, the fundamental question of the struggle of the working class is not the re-establishment of bourgeois democracy, which has outlived itself historically, but the struggle for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, for the dictatorship of the proletariat. Only the slogan of Soviet power brought to the consciousness of the broad toiling masses could have cemented the ranks of the fighters and created an indissoluble bond between the workers in action and the rest of the proletarians and peasantry. Only if the Austrian workers had set themselves the aim of fighting for Soviet power could their armed action have grown into a genuine armed uprising.

Yes, comrades, unfortunately, your armed struggle was not a struggle for power, and thus, as Marx and Lenin have taught, it was not a genuine armed uprising. The fact that your armed struggle lacked this aim—the seizure of power — was the fundamental defect of your heroic action.

But it was by no means an accident that in that struggle the Austrian workers did not go beyond armed resistance. It followed from all

the political principles of the Austrian Social Democracy. "We do not intend to overthrow either capitalism or the bourgeoisie," the political thesis of the Social Democratic leadership declared. In other words, in that concrete situation it meant: You, the fighting workers, must not attack the enemy, you must only defend yourselves against him in your communal houses. Guided by such principles, the workers let the initiative in this struggle slip out of their hands — they surrendered it entirely to the enemy.

What was the fate that overtook the workers who followed this principle of Social Democratic leadership? Locked in their houses, isolated from each other, they were held as if in a mousetrap. They did not secure possession of either the approaches to these houses or the hills from which the enemy's artillery could with impunity bombard such positions of the workers as the Karl Marx House. By advising the workers to stay at home and wait for the outcome of the struggle of the Schutzbund, the leaders of Social Democracy cleared the streets of the working class districts of the city for the government troops, which moved over them completely unimpeded. The government troops had the opportunity of taking one stronghold after another from the workers who were on the defensive, whereas offensive tactics on the part of the workers could have brought confusion among the troops and drawn the wavering elements among them to the side of the proletariat.

The bourgeoisie did not stand on ceremony in requisitioning privately-owned means of transport for the struggle against the workers, nor in taking prisoners as hostages, whereas the fighting workers, trained in the school of Austrian Social Democracy, starved, but would not violate private property by requisitioning provisions. It did not occur to them that they must also take hostages from the bourgeoisie. And now Otto Bauer and the leader of the Schutzbund, Julius Deutsch, are flaunting this petty-bourgeois lack of stamina as a model of civic virtue. If the Russian workers had, in their time, adopted this sort of tactics, they, too, would now have the Dollfusses and the Feys riding on their backs.

What heroism, what self-sacrificing fortitude on the part of the workers, and what a criminal waste of workers' blood on the part of the Social Democratic leaders!

IV.

What is to be done now, comrades? The first thing to do is to analyse seriously the experiences of the period beginning with 1918 and ending with the armed struggle of February, 1934, to use the lessons of this struggle, which like a

mirror fully reflects the bankruptcy of the Social-Democratic policy. And the sooner this is done, the better it will be for you and for the whole of the Austrian working class, the nearer it will bring this working class to decisive victory.

As against Bauer's "criticism," in which he glosses over his own crimes and those of the whole Social-Democratic leadership, you must, in my opinion, subject the system of views with which Social-Democratic leadership poisoned the workers to the severest and most ruthless criticism. You must cast a glance back on the road which you traversed under the leadership of Social-Democracy and ponder over it, you must remember what the Social-Democratic press wrote, what the Social-Democratic leaders said in defending the choice of this road, and compare these with the inexorable facts. You must critically think over the pamphlet of Otto Bauer, which is in fact an indictment against the author himself and against the whole Social-Democratic policy. You must recall what the Communist International said to you during these fifteen years. And you must tell your class the whole truth, however bitter it may be.

And this truth will bring you to the conclusion that the Communists have proved right, and not the Social-Democrats, the Comintern, and not the Second International. The Communists were right when they said that Austrian Social-Democracy was leading to the defeat of the revolution of 1918. They were right when they warned you that the policy of Social-Democracy was leading to the strengthening of the bourgeois dictatorship. The Communists were right when they said that Social-Democracy was safeguarding the rule of capitalism instead of leading the workers to Socialism. They were right when they said that unless the bourgeoisie was deprived of its power all the economic, political and social concessions which the working class wrested from the bourgeoisie, all its communal houses, and so on, were in constant danger of being taken away again. The Communists were right when they said that the interests of the proletariat would be safeguarded, not by compromising with the bourgeoisie, but by an irreconcilable class struggle against it.

The truth will further compel you to admit that the Austrian Social-Democracy is now politically bankrupt. The Party to which so much was given, and which lost and ruined everything, has no more right to exist. Such a party only deserves the hatred of the working class. Only after overcoming the political and organisational influence of Social-Democracy will the Austrian proletariat get on to a new road which will lead

it to victory over the Dolfusses and Feys, over the Heimwehr and over fascism.

You must break with the Social-Democratic organisation, and together with the Communist workers establish a genuine fighting unity of the working class of Austria. This fighting unity is possible only on the basis of revolutionary struggle. This unity will increase tenfold the strength of the working class, will make many times weaker the offensive of fascism, will increase the revolutionary influence of the proletariat on the peasantry and create the conditions for the victorious struggle against the bourgeoisie and capitalism, for the struggle for Soviet power.

At the present time the greatest danger for the revolutionary unity of the working class of Austria would be to attempt to resuscitate and save Austrian Social-Democracy, even on a basis of a new "Left" programme. Such attempts would bring nothing but the disruption of the working class movement of Austria. For are there not among you, people who, in the course of these fifteen years, did nothing but "straighten" the policy of Social-Democracy in a "Leftward" direction? You see the results.

For the workers who are disappointed in Social-Democracy, it would be an equally fatal delusion, if in the struggle against Dollfuss fascism, they were to think of seeking support in Hitler fascism. Remember that the Austrian National-Socialists were on the side of the slaughterers of the workers during the armed struggle of the Austrian proletariat. Now like "brown" ravens they flock to the field of battle and, using the sacrifices and sufferings endured by the proletariat for their demagogic ends, attempt to draw the Austrian workers, who are disappointed in Social-Democracy and are at the parting of the ways, to the side of Hitler fascism.

We, Communists, look with the greatest confidence to the future of the Austrian working class. We are firmly convinced of the final victory of the proletariat throughout the world. This firm conviction gave me the strength, during the Leipzig trial, to look the ferocious enemy straight in the face, just as the glorious fighters of the Karl Marx House looked in the face of death. Beyond the incendiary fires and ruin, beyond the slavery and misery, which fascism is bringing, we saw in the east the U.S.S.R.—the gigantic stronghold of the working class of the world. There is no force which can stay the historic march of humanity to Socialism. One of the battles is over, the fighters count those who have fallen, but their strength is not broken; the great proletarian army is marching onward to its final victory.

Perhaps, comrades, Social-Democratic workers, the thoughts expressed in this letter may seem to you difficult to accept. Nevertheless, I hope that this letter will help you in your critical evaluation of the past, to draw the proper conclusions. But if anything in this letter is not quite clear, or gives cause for doubts, I should be very glad if you shared them with me.

GEORGE DIMITROV.

Moscow Hospital,
March, 1934. * * *

This letter had already been written when, at the end of March, I received from one of the authors of the first letter, the following letter† written on March 2, 1934:—

Karl Marx Hof, Vienna,
March 2, 1934.

Dear Comrade Dimitrov,—I was glad to hear the news that you, as well as the two others, Comrades Popov and Tanev, have left this brown hell-hole and that you are already in the Soviet Union. Thousands of proletarians heave a sigh of relief, because we need such heroic fighters in our ranks; if we had such people we would not have reached such a pass that the working class of Austria has suffered so disgraceful a defeat through betrayal. It was a bloody lesson for us, it is like 1905 in Russia, and I hope it won't take so long until we proclaim a Soviet Austria and will be able to clasp the fraternal hand of Russia and jointly build a new state in which only proletarians will be allowed to live—an out-and-out workers' state.*

Dear Comrade Dimitrov, be good enough to write a few lines to us so that we really can see that you are in Russia, because we have already become pessimists.

With greetings of freedom,
X.....

Yes, comrades, you are right. If your ranks had been headed by real Bolshevik fighters your heroic struggle would certainly have ended differently. But such fighters can develop only in the process of irreconcilable class struggle against the bourgeoisie. However, Social-Democracy failed to carry on such a struggle; moreover, the Otto Bauers and Friedrich Adlers prevented this struggle. Only in constant struggle in a united revolutionary front against fascism, will new, steeled, fearless fighters grow up. Only under

† See the pamphlet, "Civil War in Austria," p. 37.

* There is something wrong here, comrades. Of course, you mean a Soviet state, which is the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat. But in it there are not only workers, but all the toilers, building Socialism under the leadership of the proletariat.

the banner of Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin will new Bolshevik leaders grow up, and the Austrian proletariat will at last obtain what it needs for victory in its heroic struggle—a powerful Bolshevik Party.

April, 1934.

G. DIMITROV.

POSTSCRIPT FROM THE EDITORIAL BOARD.

On the basis of the first news received regarding the February events in Austria, the Executive Committees of the Communist International, of the Red International of Labour Unions, and of the Young Communist International, described these events in their manifesto* as an armed uprising. This, also, is how these events were characterised in various articles printed in our journal, the "Communist International."

On the basis of the first information it received, the Comintern was already in a position to assert that the Austrian workers who carried on a heroic struggle resorted to arms *in spite of* their treacherous social-democratic leaders who yielded one position after another to Dollfuss and who endeavoured at the last moment to avoid a struggle by negotiations and compromise with Dollfuss. These leaders also only agreed to declare a general strike when the struggle had already begun, and did so under pressure from the masses, but they continued to sabotage the general strike (the reformist railwaymen's union, for instance, refused to participate in the strike, etc.). The Comintern, therefore, exposed the lie spread by the social-democratic parties which attempted to take the credit for the heroic struggle of the Austrian workers and to make political capital out of it. It was for this reason that the Comintern stated that the Austrian events represent "a most important step in the turn of the masses of social-democratic workers to Communism," a statement which has fully justified itself.

At the same time the Comintern pointed out wherein lay the weakness, the error of the workers who resorted to arms. The Comintern manifesto stated: "But were the Austrian workers prepared for this armed struggle, prepared in accordance with the situation? No, comrades. The leaders of the social-democracy did not allow the workers engaged in the uprising to take the initiative into their own hands. The members of the Schutzbund did not capture beforehand the central districts in order to make them the arenas of the struggle; nor did they take beforehand the stations and the important military strategic points. The rebels limited themselves to defence action in the workers' houses of Florisdorf, Simmering and other places, and did not take the

* Ibid, p. 43.

offensive against the armed enemy. Yet, *'The defensive is the death of every armed uprising.'* (F. Engels.) The defensive tactic of the Schutzbundists could not prevent the shooting and defeat of the working class population by the artillery of Dollfuss." (See International Press Correspondence, Vol. XIV. No. 17, p. 434.)

But an important question was unclear in the first days of the struggles, namely, the question as to the nature of the aims which the Schutzbunders set themselves when they took up arms. Did they, the Schutzbunders, when they defended the rights of their working class organisations, when they defended the workers' dwellings against the onslaught of the fascists, at the same time set themselves the aim—though spontaneously and not fully consciously—of overthrowing the power of the bourgeoisie and of establishing the power of the proletariat, which, in the last analysis, in case of victory could only lead to the establishment of Soviet power? Or, on the other hand, did they, due to the fact that their social-democratic prejudices were still powerful, fight to defend the democratic rights which the workers had won hitherto, i.e., did they in essence, carry on the struggle to re-establish the constitution which Dollfuss had violated?

Bearing in mind the tremendous self-sacrifice displayed in the struggle by the Austrian Schutzbunders, and taking their heroism into account, the Comintern was at first inclined to give an affirmative reply to the first question. But to the degree that more complete information was received, it became clear that to the very end, the Schutzbunders did not raise the question of proletarian power, and that therefore it would be more correct to reply in the affirmative to the second question—and this found its expression in oral speeches made in the Comintern, and in articles printed. In the speech made by Comrade Schönau at the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. on February 17, 1934, and printed in the No. 7/8 of the Russian Edition of the "Communist International," we read that: "We know that the main political weakness of the struggle was that it bore a clearly expressed defensive character. *This is no accident.* This is the result of the entire policy of treachery pursued by social-democracy and of its programmatic, strategic and tactical line. It was in this spirit that *it* educated the wide masses under its influence. The sharply expressed defensive character also bears witness to the fact that many of the members of the Schutzbund, who fought so heroically, were not quite clear as to the aims of the struggle. The struggle could only be victorious if it became a

struggle for Soviet power, but this was not recognised by the broad masses, and therefore the struggle bore a defensive character."

Similarly, the article written by Comrade Kurt and printed in the issue No. 6 (English Edition) of the "Communist International," which subjected the tactics of the armed struggle of the Austrian workers to a detailed criticism, pointed to the fact that the fatal defensive character of these tactics followed logically from the line adopted at the Linz Congress of the Austrian Social-Democratic Party, and from arguments put forward by Otto Bauer at this congress when he stated that "only the enemy can compel us to take the path of violence," and when he repeatedly stressed "only the defensive rôle of violence in our programme," and when he urged that "civil war must be avoided by every means and method," etc. But if the defensive tactics adopted by the Austrian workers in the February battles were no accident, if they followed from the basic line accepted by social-democracy, in so far as it limited the aim of the working class to the notorious "defence of democracy," then it is correct to qualify the February events in Austria as an armed uprising. Bearing in mind, therefore, the line followed by the workers, these events must be qualified as a defensive armed struggle. And it was to such a conclusion that the Comintern came, and Comrade Dimitrov's letter to the Austrian workers is based on this estimate. We must firmly defend this estimate so that the Austrian workers may be able to draw the necessary conclusions and to learn the necessary lessons from their heroic struggle which ended in defeat. It would be supremely dangerous for the further development of the revolutionary struggle in Austria if the Austrian social-democratic workers explained their defeat only by the treachery of their leaders who deserted them in the struggle, and if these workers attempted to correct matters by merely replacing these old leaders by new ones, while retaining their old social-democratic outlook, and failing to understand the following words used by Comrade Dimitrov: "In the epoch of the general crisis of capitalism, when the bourgeoisie is no longer able to govern by the methods of parliamentary democracy and enters upon the road of Fascism, the fundamental question of the struggle of the working class is not the re-establishment of bourgeois democracy, which has outlived itself historically, but the struggle for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, for the dictatorship of the proletariat," i.e., a struggle which only the Communist Party is leading.

THE NEXT TASKS OF THE INTERNATIONAL REVOLUTIONARY TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

COMRADES, only a little over a year has passed since the Twelfth Plenum of the E.C.C.I., but much has changed in the relations between states and classes. All the promises of the bourgeoisie and the pseudo-Marxist astrologists that they would find a way out of the crisis have turned out to be idle talk. The idea that not all is well with the capitalist system is becoming more and more widespread in leading circles of the bourgeoisie. Very characteristic in this respect is the speech recently made by the "saviour" of the capitalist world from Bolshevism, Benito Mussolini. In one of his speeches, made two years ago, he asked the question as to whether the developments taking place throughout the world represent a *crisis within the system or a crisis of the system itself*. Recently, however, in the fifth year of the crisis, Mussolini made the following statement to the fascist Grand Council :

"The crisis has penetrated so deeply into the system that it has become a crisis of the system itself. It is no longer a case of surface injury, it is an organic disease. We can state to-day that the capitalist mode of production has outlived itself."

One of the captains of finance in France and one of France's leading statesmen, E. Caillaux, is no less definite in his views. This outstanding bourgeois financier has, on the basis of an analysis of the world economic situation and of the state of international finance, come to the conclusion that "this crisis is a transition from one economic order to another." We can quote dozens of similar statements which go to show that outstanding politicians of the capitalist countries, and noted economists and leaders of industry are compelled to acknowledge the fact that it is now a case of a crisis of the very system itself. As to the social-fascists, even they are now gloomily writing about the end of capitalism. This means that, having created so much destruction in the sphere of industry, agriculture and finance, the crisis has shaken bourgeois ideology and the faith of bourgeois ideologists in the capitalist system. To emerge from the crisis at all costs—that is the problem. And this explains the feverish armament race, accompanied by feverish negotiations, and the ever new combinations which aim at cutting the Gordian knot and finding a way out of the crisis in the struggle for the re-division of the world and war against the Soviet Union, all of this being done, of course, under cover of a fog of pacifist phrases.

Never before have the two ideologies, the two policies—Communism and fascism—come into such sharp conflict. Both systems have their territorial bases and huge natural resources, and they clearly embody the forces of dying capitalism on the one

hand and the forces of growing and victorious Communism on the other. Bolshevism which is deeply international, and organically linked up in theory and practice with the international proletariat and the toiling masses of the colonies, stands face to face with the zoological nationalism and animal-like rage of counter-revolution, now exerting all its strength to hold up and turn back the wheels of history. In this struggle between Communism and fascism, international social-democracy which has suffered a moral, political and organisational defeat in connection with the bankruptcy of German social-democracy, has taken the side of fascism and is callously, cynically or under cover of left phrases, carrying out its basic line, namely, "better fascism than Bolshevism."

The report of Comrade Kuusinen, the co-reports of Comrades Pieck and Pollitt, the speeches of Comrades Pyatnitsky, Manuilsky, Knorin, Lensky, Torrez, Wang Ming, Okana and others, have already thrown light upon the basic problems which now confront the international Communist movement. I will therefore devote my speech to a series of trade union questions which, in spite of their trade union modesty, are of serious political significance in this period of preparation for revolution into which we are entering. Never before have *trade union* questions assumed the importance of *political* questions to such an extent.

The first question requiring an answer is the following :

What has happened to international reformism since the Twelfth Plenum ; what is the position of our main enemy within the working class, viz., international social-democracy, and what stage of regression has been reached by the Amsterdam and Second Internationals ?

The crash of the German trade unions and German social-democracy has caused not only organisational and financial losses to the Second and Amsterdam Internationals, but it has been a great moral and political blow to them. If we limit ourselves to just the trade union sphere we get the following picture : The membership of the Amsterdam International, which was about 13 million at the end of 1932, has fallen after the defeat of the A.D.G.B.* to 8 million. The same has been the fate of all the international trade union federations which are under the direct political influence of the Amsterdam International. Thus, for example, in the Food Workers' International, the Germans accounted for 29.8 per cent. of the total membership.

* German Federation.

Among the builders the figure was 43.9 per cent., among the earthenware workers 83.3 per cent., among the leather workers 44 per cent., among office employees 50 per cent., among the printing workers 37 per cent., among the quarry workers 53 per cent., among the postal workers 54 per cent., among municipal workers 55 per cent., among tobacco workers 61 per cent., among glass workers 65 per cent., among metal workers 44.8 per cent., etc. Immediately after the capitulation of the German trade union bureaucracy, the leaders of the Amsterdam International, under the influence of the disgust of the masses, began to express their criticism of the conduct of their German colleagues. Then the second period came on, when the Amsterdam leaders passed from condemnation of the Germans to expressions of sympathy, to amnesty and justifying their policy and tactics. How can we explain this change in the tactics of the Amsterdam leaders? This is to be explained by the fact that the bankruptcy of the German trade union bureaucracy signifies the moral and political bankruptcy of the reformist trade union bureaucrats in other countries. Having begun by criticising the capitulation of the German reformists, they discovered that the disgust of the masses with reformist policy in general was directed along these lines. This, therefore, compelled the trade union leaders to make a complete change in their tactics, and they began to look for factors which would lessen the guilt of the leaders of the German trade unions, and prove that they could not have acted otherwise.

But the fact remains that the membership of the Amsterdam International was reduced at one blow by 39 per cent., and from the European International it had been, it became transformed in the main into a federation of trade-union members of the countries of the Entente, who under the banner of struggle against fascism, are actually carrying out the policy of the Entente. This may be seen from the slogan calling for the boycott of German goods, the aim of which is to increase exports from their own countries. This may be seen further from the attitude taken up by the Amsterdam International towards the Austrian problem. The Amsterdam International set up a special commission to render assistance to the Austrian trade unions, but this aid is directed along lines worked out by the French General Staff, and the commission keeps strictly within the framework of these directives (financial aid for anti-German strikes, etc.).

The International reformist trade union movement received a heavy blow for another reason, namely, that Germany provided an example demonstrating the relative value and stability of the big mass reformist trade unions and the small Red trade unions and revolutionary trade union opposition. Everyone knows that German fascism aimed its

chief blow against the Communist Party and the revolutionary trade union opposition. How did it happen that the Red trade unions and revolutionary trade union opposition, which were weaker than the A.D.B.G., have held out, and notwithstanding their heavy losses, are continuing their work and are establishing independent class unions under the most difficult conditions, whereas the All-German Trade Union Alliance (the A.D.G.B.), with its huge apparatus, its millions of members, its rich treasury, etc., after the first serious blow, has disappeared from the scene of political struggle? The German social-democrats themselves both in Germany and abroad have raised the slogan with regard to the A.D.G.B. and their Party, that "the apparatus is dead, long live the movement!" How did this happen? The German example proves once more that numbers are not the decisive factor in the struggle. The decisive factor is quality, i.e., that a correct revolutionary policy be pursued by the given organisation, and this correct policy can be only a Bolshevik policy. The small Red trade union opposition, with its correct militant policy has weathered the storm, and is continuing the struggle, but the huge All-German Trade Union Alliance, with its reformist and anti-working class policy, has ceased to exist. It would be a mistake to draw the conclusion that we do not need to pay attention to quantity. No, the conclusion to be drawn is that it is necessary to combine quantity with revolutionary Bolshevik quality, and then we will be able to fulfil our tasks in the struggle for Soviet Power.

The bankruptcy of the German trade unions could not but create a great feeling of indignation among the masses of reformist workers in all countries. They are now asking their leaders what has happened to the million-strong trade unions in Germany. The leaders are manoeuvring and are trying to put the blame on the Communists, but this is much more difficult than it was before, because even the bourgeois press throughout the world acknowledges the fact that the Communist Party and the Red trade union opposition are conducting a heroic struggle against fascism, whereas the leaders of the social-democracy, both in Germany and abroad, simply pass their time debating the question as to how good it would be if things were better, while attempting to put the blame for their own bankruptcy upon the working class of Germany.

The rapidly progressing process of fascisation in capitalist countries, of course, creates *additional difficulties* for us in our work, but the sharpness of class relations, the unheard-of bankruptcy of the Second and Amsterdam Internationals, create *new possibilities for us*. Our main enemy in the working class has become weaker but has not completely disappeared, even in Germany, where social-

democracy is attempting to revive its organisations and to hold the workers back from the united front with us, and once again to direct the energy of the masses along the lines of "democratic socialism." However, the situation has changed. International social-democracy now has a much smaller field for manoeuvring, and this creates new possibilities for the Comintern and the Profintern not only in the capitalist countries, but in the colonies and semi-colonies.

International social-democracy has been considerably weakened, since the Twelfth Plenum, although in a number of countries (Great Britain, France, Czecho-Slovakia, etc.) it still has millions of followers. As far as our struggle is concerned, the situation has become more favourable notwithstanding new difficulties. *The rank and file social-democratic worker listens more attentively now to our words and proposals, and is more ready than previously to struggle alongside of us.* Proof of this is contained not only in all the information we receive from Germany, but also in the numerous facts quoted here by speakers from various countries. *The relation of forces within the working class has changed in our favour.*

The central task facing the international Communist movement is to prepare the working class for the struggle for Soviet power. Everything else is subordinate to this central task. What then is the obstacle which hinders the preparation of the broad masses for the revolution? What needs to be done for the preparatory period to be passed through as rapidly as possible, and to achieve the transition to the period of action?

Of all the conditions which are needed for the direct struggle for power, in the countries where the elements of a revolutionary crisis are rapidly maturing, the one thing lacking for us is the majority of the working class. *Therefore the problem of problems at the present time is the struggle for the majority of the working class.* What needs to be done in order to approach this central strategic task more rapidly? All the congresses and plenums of the Comintern and the R.I.L.U. have dealt with this, and especially insistent in this regard were the Eleventh and Twelfth Plenums of the E.C.C.I. The working class will come to Communism in the long run, but the path can and must be shortened by the use of tested Bolshevik methods of winning over the masses. Experience teaches us that we should seize on the elementary demands of the workers, that we should develop the struggle of the employed and the unemployed for their vital demands (questions of wages, social insurance, unemployment relief, etc.) and not set up a theory that the working class is split into two permanent groups, the employed and unemployed (Varga). All these questions should excite our organisations, which must take an interest in them. The Party organisations must all the time

urge the revolutionary trade unions and the R.T.U.O. to direct their energies towards these everyday tasks. The nearer we approach these questions, the more varied the economic struggle becomes, and the easier will it be to switch the economic struggle over into a political struggle, to transfer economic strikes into political strikes, and to win the masses rapidly to our side.

Since the Twelfth Plenum of the E.C.C.I., the sections of the Comintern and the R.I.L.U. have conducted a number of very serious economic and political struggles. The delegates from France, U.S.A., Japan, Great Britain, Czecho-Slovakia, Poland, the Balkan countries, etc., have already spoken about them here. They have all quoted good and bad examples, and they have all very seriously examined here the weaknesses and mistakes of the Party and trade union organisations in conducting these struggles. But if we ask ourselves what is common in all this self-criticism, what are the characteristic features of all the positive and negative examples given here, we must say that they are as follow :

- (1) The insufficiently consistent, systematic and stubborn preparations of these struggles.
- (2) The inability to utilise and consolidate even those movements which arose and developed under our direct leadership.
- (3) The uneven nature of our activity, i.e., after intense efforts during the struggle and the movement, a decline of energy and a halt in activity.

Even if we examine the best movements, we find in them, with few exceptions, all three of these elements or one of them. This is why, in spite of the growth and the influence of the Communist Party, we move ahead organisationally with extreme slowness, with few exceptions. I will give only two examples. The Citroen strike was the outstanding event in the working-class movement in France during the last year. Have we maintained the positions which we possessed during the strike up to the present time? Have we widened them? We have to declare that not only have we failed to widen them, but we have not even kept them. It looks as if we are waiting for a new outbreak at this factory before we display any activity. Take another example. After a long struggle Comrade Arthur Horner was elected miners' agent in South Wales, and he succeeded in getting 10,000 votes against 7,000 cast for the reformist candidate. This was a great success. Of course, the Party exerted pretty big efforts to attain this. And what followed? Did the Political Bureau and the leaders of the M.M. (Minority Movement) discuss how Horner should work, how to utilise this position, how to organise the 10,000 miners who voted for Horner? I think that our British friends cannot give us a positive affirmative reply on this matter. Why is this?

It is because they regard elections as an end in themselves, and not as a means of widening our influence, of consolidating our positions and struggling for new positions. I come to this conclusion on the basis of another example from the same region, from South Wales. In the executive committee of the South Wales Miners' Federation, we have one Communist and two sympathisers. What is being done by this Communist and these two sympathisers, how do they carry on the work, what is their platform, in what way do they differ from the non-Communists and non-sympathisers? Nobody knows, because nothing is said of this, either in the Party or the trade-union press.

When we win a certain position, we do not utilise it, though the reason we win positions is to utilise and widen them.

The basic task is to get right down into the midst of the masses, to explain to every worker that we are a party of revolution, while the reformists are the party upholding the constitution (to use the terms which were first formulated 30 years ago at the 2nd Congress of the C.P.S.U.), and that the reformist parties are now parties of counter-revolution.

I come once more to a question on which we have systematically adopted resolutions at all the plenums and congresses of the Comintern and the R.I.L.U. Moreover, this is a question which is elaborated day by day by the Comintern and the R.I.L.U. when solving current questions of the political and economic struggle of our sections. I refer to the united front. Is everything clear on this question? Here at the plenum everything seems to be clear. But the united front suffers a series of unexpected transformations in the interval between the clear formulations and the putting of them into practice. We have seen this in the numerous examples which have been given by those who have spoken before me and especially by Comrade Piatnitsky.

We have all decided thousands and thousands of times that we form the united front only for the struggle against capital. It turns out that there are tens and hundreds of cases in which the united front is formed for joint discussions. We have all decided thousands and thousands of times that the united front does not mean the liquidation or concealment of our views. None the less, the comrades who have spoken before me have given scores of examples showing how we have been engulfed in the united front, out of fear to face the enemy with open visor. We have all decided thousands and thousands of times that the united front does not mean the slurring over of the views and the criminal activity of the trade union bureaucrats, but we can see numerous cases—a vivid example is Strassburg, dealt with by Fachon, in which we tie up our own hands and keep quiet as to the crimes committed by the reformists. We have all decided thousands and

thousands of times that the united front must be used to strengthen and consolidate our positions by recruiting workers into the Red trade-unions, to strengthen and widen the opposition in the reformist and other unions, to organise factory sections, etc., but the speakers here have given a tremendous number of examples which show clearly that in some cases, after we have taken the initiative in forming the united front, we have not only not grown stronger but we have even become weaker, i.e., in other words, the united front turns against us in the places where we conduct an incorrect line. Why? Because frequently the united front is understood as an agreement between the leaders, as a mutual amnesty and not as the unity of the rank and file for the struggle against the reformist leaders.

We have all decided thousands and thousands of times that the united front must serve to bring out the initiative of the rank and file, to promote new active elements from the masses, to attract social-democratic and non-Party workers to active struggle, but experience shows that in a whole series of cases the united front does not produce these results, and that at best we and the social-democrats remain where we started. Then why a united front? What do we get from it? Why does it work this way? Why is it that the correct decisions of the Comintern and the R.I.L.U. and the overwhelming majority of the leading organs of our parties and trade unions arrive at the lower cells in a distorted form? Why is it that in some cases a fear of the united front even shows itself? It is because the leading organs of our parties and our revolutionary trade unions and the trade union opposition consider a question settled when they publish theses or resolutions, whereas *the question only begins with the publication of the thesis or resolution*. It is necessary, not only to print resolutions, but to explain the methods and forms of creating the united front in all the lower organisations, to gather together all the members of the lower organs, to mobilise all the fractions from top to bottom, to decide on a plan of action, to work it out to suit every factory, every district, every branch of industry, and to face every member of a trade union, and especially every Communist with extremely concrete tasks. For instance, one must recruit several members of the Red trade union or the trade union opposition, another must form a group of several members at his factory, a third must distribute such and such a quantity of Party and trade union literature, a fourth must specialise on establishing contacts with the social-democratic workers, a fifth has the task of selecting a group of non-Party workers, a sixth is instructed to speak at social-democratic and fascist meetings, etc. If the lower Party organisations keep track of the activity of each one of their members, direct his work, advise him what to do, and correct

his mistakes, not *post factum*, several months afterwards, but while the work is being carried through, *then our work will give us hundreds per cent. more than it gives now*. The situation is taking on a more and more intense character, while our work is by no means being carried on with the intensity which is required in the present conditions.

I have spoken of *how* to apply the united front. Now I wish to speak of the question of where to apply it. The united front should be carried into practice primarily in the factories. We must take the initiative in formulating the direct demands of the workers. We must organise the interchange of opinion on questions affecting the workers of the given shop, the given factory, the interchange of opinions on more general questions of the policy of the fascists or "democratic" government, etc. We must press forward the election of all kinds of commissions for the protection of wages, to investigate the position of the workers, and of the working women, and to study the conditions of labour. We must press forward the election of delegates to present the demands of the masses, etc. As members of these delegations we should propose the most influential workers, social-democratic, and non-Party, discuss all problems with them, create a feeling of comradeship and internal discipline so that the social-democratic workers will not be able to refuse to carry out a decision adopted jointly. We must prepare movements of protest, demonstrations, strikes, etc., and must without fail draw social-democratic and non-Party workers and workers belonging to fascist organisations as well, into all the organs leading these movements. *Activity in the factory is the starting point for the achievement of influence over the masses*. It is not essential to shout, "Let's form a united front, a Red united front, a revolutionary united front," etc., etc. This is not always needed and not always useful. Even the reverse is the case. Joint actions in defence of the smallest interests of the factory workers is the united front in the best and really Bolshevik sense of the word.

Where else should we apply the united front? In the reformist, catholic and other unions. How can it be done? We, as members of the given organisation, must take the initiative on ourselves and gather together the members of the trade unions employed in the given factory to discuss the specific questions affecting the workers of the shop, factory or some particular category of workers. We must get the revolutionary workers, the supporters of the revolutionary trade union movement elected as representatives, collectors of membership dues, and make certain that we win every elected office in the factory and the union. It is not sufficient to win an elected post. We must utilise the post we occupy to distribute our literature, to agitate for our views

and our tactics. We must fight against capitulation to the reformist trade-union bureaucrats, for we *fight for elected positions not to get jobs for our own people, but so that we shall be able, through them, to carry on a correct policy which will be advantageous to the working class*. Through the trade-union members and officials who sympathise with us we must organise all kinds of protests and actions to the point of strikes, all the time impelling the movement ahead against the employers, against social-fascism. Our work in the reformist trade unions must take the line of criticising the organs of the reformist trade-union movement for their treachery, their strike-breaking. But this criticism must be conducted on the basis of concrete facts. The main thing is to organise our forces, to form a strong and internal discipline, and *not to allow that which we have already obtained to be frittered away*. The only way to consolidate our ideological influence is through the trade union group in the factory, through the unification of all the oppositional elements in the trade union, and the unification of all the lower oppositional trade union organisations for the struggle for our programme. If we take this course, our work in the reformist trade unions will produce definite positive results.

We have some positive examples from France, but they are still isolated cases. Compared with the whole mass of workers in the reformist trade unions, these examples are not very outstanding, even though they are very welcome. We must fight for the lower reformist trade union organisations. If we display boldness and stubbornness, and carry on serious work among the masses, we can obtain big results. It is sufficient to quote Denmark as an example where we have succeeded in winning the Stokers' Union to the side of the revolutionary movement. It is true that this was done with the aid of the Seamen's and Harbour Workers' International, but nevertheless this fact is something serious and positive for the work of the Communist Party and the R.T.U.O. in Denmark. Such things are possible in other countries as well, but only if we display the maximum flexibility, endurance and Bolshevik persistence. Otherwise we shall lose even the positions which we have won, as in San Paolo, Brazil, for example, where we won the textile workers' union and then lost it. How can we hold our own in the reformist trade unions when the trade union bureaucrats are against us? How can we hold our own if the entire state apparatus supports the trade union bureaucrats against us? If we fight furiously for trade union democracy, if day by day we expose the system of appointing functionaries, the red tape shown in the attitude to the workers' interests, the trickery behind the scenes and cases of strikebreaking, if every step which we take is not an isolated act of a few brave and bold people but is

connected with the masses, it will become more and more difficult to expel the revolutionary workers.

Where else must we carry on our work for the formation of the united front? In the fascist trade unions. There are different types of fascist trade unions, for instance, in Italy, Poland and Germany. But what is common to them all? It is that the trade union leaders are appointed, the electoral principle is abolished, membership is compulsory, etc. Along these lines we can and must carry on tremendous work. First of all, the entire work should be concentrated in the factories among the masses of members. We should mobilise the workers against compulsory membership, against the payment of membership dues to the fascist trade unions. The whole agitation and propaganda among the working masses must be conducted under the slogan: *Where do the workers' coppers go to?* We should demand that the fascist officials come to the workers' meetings and say what they do with the union funds, organise a boycott of all functionaries appointed by the fascists, take the initiative of calling meetings from below to discuss where the workers' money goes to, expose all the fascists as hangers-on of the capitalists, and as spies and direct agents of the bosses. If the fascists themselves hold meetings, we must get into them and by means of questions, heckling and speeches disclose the treacherous face of the fascist functionaries, and introduce our resolutions at their meetings. As the fascists have abolished the election of trade union representatives, and there is no check on the way the money is spent, we should set going in the fascist unions the slogan of elections of special supervisory committees at the factories, organs to control the expenditure of the money, special committees to protect wages, to investigate conditions of labour, etc. Every time the fascist functionaries go to the bosses, we should set talk going and arouse discontent among the masses, by putting forward the idea that it is necessary to elect special authoritative commissions to negotiate with the employers on the question of conditions of labour, and all the time lead the masses to the struggle against fascism.

The fascists are manoeuvring. Mussolini has proclaimed the slogan: "To the people." In some cases the fascists are even trying to offer jobs to workers who are with us, or who sympathise with us. Communists must not take jobs when appointed by the fascists. If the fascists allot a well-known influential worker who sympathises with us to some post, the worker must not take this post without discussing the question at the factory, at a meeting of the workers. There he must say to the workers: "If you elect me, then I will carry out the functions given to me." Simultaneously he must advance the proposal that a special workers' commission should be elected to assist him, so as to operate directly on

the masses and strengthen his contacts with the masses. We must regard the acceptance of posts in the lower trade-union organisations as an exception, but in these cases as well, the penetration into the lower organs of the fascist trade-unions must be done only with the aim of disrupting them from within (collective withdrawals from the unions, etc.). But this must not be left to the initiative of individual workers. It must be discussed by the Party organisation, which must be extremely vigilant, and if it decides to send anybody on such work, a thorough check must be taken of him. But even this is not enough. We must help him to carry out this difficult work. We must instruct him, tell him what to do and how to do it, otherwise the individual may find himself in the trap set by our enemies.

The question of the fascist trade unions is becoming more and more keen now in connection with the approach of war. Fascism is acting in two directions. On the one hand it is smashing even the reformist unions, and on the other hand it is forming its own unions. German fascism liquidated by decree everything that remained of the reformist, catholic and Hirsch-Dunker trade unions, and under the leadership of Krupp and Thyssen set up the *labour front* which must be opposed by our *workers' front*. At the same time, in Poland an Association of All the Fascist trade-unions (the so-called Z.Z.Z.) has been formed, the membership of which is already more than 100,000, and the basic line of the fascists is to extend this organisation to all the war factories. This fact alone should make us take a much more-serious attitude to the work in the fascist trade unions, to the questions of disintegrating them internally, to winning over the workers who are in these unions, and to forming points of support for ourselves in all organisations where the working masses are to be found.

I wish here to use the concrete example of the fascist trade unions in Poland to show how we should develop our work. Although Comrade Henrikovsky spoke of two types of fascist trade unions (voluntary and compulsory), in essence the difference between them is insignificant. What should Communists do in those factories where there are trade-unions belonging to the fascist Association of Trade Unions? Our Party cell and illegal trade union group will carry on agitation against the workers joining the fascist trade union. If a section of the workers makes a decision which is binding on all, then we demand that a general meeting of workers be called, and also that meetings be held in the departments to discuss this question. We not only demand, but take the initiative for calling such meetings on ourselves. If we succeed in getting a general meeting or departmental meeting called, we carry a decision refusing to enter the fascist trade union, and we propose that the workers elect a committee, a com-

mission or special delegates from the shops to discuss and decide current questions. If, nevertheless, all the workers are forcibly registered in the fascist union, we ourselves, of course, also join it, struggling against individual desertions from the union, which means dismissal from the factory. As members of the fascist trade union, we carry on systematic work to unite the workers, expose the leaders of the fascist trade union, the absence of democracy in it, etc., and lead the workers up to the struggle against the fascist system as a whole. If elections take place at the factory for any trade-union organ (representative, delegate, member of committee, etc.), we put forward our candidates, get them elected and utilise the elected post to rouse the workers against the fascist union, showing them in practice by a series of concrete measures that the fascist trade union is an agency of the employer, while the fascist state is the weapon of finance capital for crushing the working class movement and enslaving the working class.

You may ask whether a Communist can really be a member of a fascist union? He can. Why cannot he trick the fascists and join the union on the instructions of his organisation? To trick the enemy is of benefit to the working class. Lenin gave us very definite and unambiguous directives on this matter. The chief thing in such cases is systematic help to the Party organisation or the Communists who carry out the line decided on. If there are no elections either at the factory or in the trade union, the committee and the representatives being appointed from above, the acceptance of posts in the lower trade union organ of a fascist trade union is *permissible in the exceptional circumstances* of which I spoke above, and is dependent on the agreement of the workers of the given factory and the election of a special commission of support. The party organisation must pay special attention at these factories to the formation of *trade union groups of communists and non-Party workers*, on whose activity the success of our work in the fascist trade unions will depend.

If we were to count up how many times the Comintern and the R.I.L.U. have passed decisions on the need to strengthen and develop work in war factories, we should get a pretty long list, quite a few years old. But we are in the literal sense of the word moving along at a snail's pace in this connection. Can we continue to move at such a pace? We cannot. The factories producing rifles, machine guns and tanks, the shipyards, the gun foundries, the explosives works, the chemical factories, etc., and finally transport must now be the central objective of our efforts.

In connection with the approach of war, I should like to speak of one question, namely, sea transport, and here I include the harbour workers. It is well

known that since the imperialist war all the imperialist powers, when building passenger and merchant steamers, have in view the necessity of converting them into auxiliary steamers in case of war. For this purpose special platforms are built for mounting guns, and constructional alterations are made in cargo and passenger ships so as to make their transformation easier in case of war.

What have our Parties and trade unions done to expose to the broad masses this specific form of preparation for war? Sea transport will play and cannot help playing a tremendous rôle in a war. What have our sections of the Comintern and the R.I.L.U. done to organise the seamen and harbour workers? Very little. And yet, there are great possibilities at the present time in this sphere. The biggest federation in the Amsterdam International was the International Transport Federation, led by the well-known demagogue, Fimmen. It was the most active. The smashing of the German trade union movement led not only to this federation being weakened numerically, but to its financial bankruptcy. The federation even stopped the publication of its journal, even though, according to its own statement, it still has almost a million and a half members. On the other hand, in connection with the special strikebreaking policy of the International Transport Federation in the last class struggles of the seamen in the Baltic countries and in other European countries, the hatred towards this federation is increasing among the masses. It would seem that there is every reason to gather the discontented, to organise them, to form groups, to help the International of Seamen in its work, but this is not being done. The International of Seamen and Harbour Workers which has carried on great work since the Hamburg unity congress, does not find the proper support in the chief countries. What has the British Communist Party done to develop work among the seamen? Nothing. What has the American Communist Party done? Very little. What have the French Communist Party and the C.G.T.U. done? Still less. And war is coming nearer and nearer. In this war, sea transport will play a very big role. In this sphere there are possibilities not only in the sense of forming a serious trade-union opposition, but even in the sense of winning individual unions over. To ignore the work among the seamen and harbour workers is to show an insufficiently serious attitude to the approaching war. We must understand that one of the very important sections of our front is to prepare the masses for the forthcoming imperialist and anti-Soviet war. Think for a minute—if we seriously set this work going in Britain, U.S.A., France and Japan, what tremendous importance this will have for the further fate of the development of the world workers' movement and our struggle against war.

Of course, we cannot imagine that work among the merchant seamen is enough to deliver a shattering blow at war. That would be an exaggeration, but this is the section of the proletariat which can do more in the struggle against war than other sections of the proletariat, because the merchant seamen are most closely connected with the sailors of the navy.

Finally, we should not forget that over 100,000 seamen pass through the ports of the U.S.S.R. every year. They come to our clubs, read our literature, listen to lectures, go to the Soviet cinemas and make themselves acquainted with our socialist construction, etc. How do our Parties, our sections of the R.I.L.U. utilise these enormous permanent "workers' excursions"? We spend a long time preparing workers' delegations to the U.S.S.R. Sometimes all the workers' delegations comprise several thousand persons. The Parties, the revolutionary trade unions, the "Friends of the Soviet Union" and other bodies busy themselves with them. In sea transport, without the slightest effort on the part of the Parties and the revolutionary trade unions we have over 100,000 "excursionists" a year to the U.S.S.R. They return with new impressions. Often they return already organised, but for instance, in Great Britain, they cannot find with whom to get into contact. How do the Parties utilise this tremendous mass of seamen? Do they establish contacts with those who return, and try to use them for developing and widening the work among the seamen? I know of no such cases. If they exist, it is very desirable that the comrades should not keep them secret. We must put a stop to the abnormal situation in which this sector of our front is utterly neglected, in which the seamen and harbour workers who are becoming revolutionary do not find sufficiently rapid and proper help from us. We must put an end to such a situation when the Sections of the Comintern and the R.I.L.U. have a lukewarm attitude towards these problems. We must put an end to the situation in which hundreds of thousands of seamen return from the U.S.S.R., and neither the Party nor the revolutionary trade unions realise that they should utilise them among the seamen and harbour workers, but also among the broad strata of the workers of other branches of industry.

What are the conclusions which we have to draw from an analysis of our work since the XII Plenum of the E.C.C.I.?

1. At every Plenum and Congress we disclose all our weaknesses and shortcomings over and over again, and it appears that *part* of the old mistakes are repeated year after year, and simultaneously new ones are added, as can be seen from the examples quoted by Comrade Piatnitsky. Cannot we once and for all agree to make an attack with our united forces against this repetition of old mistakes?

2. The influence of the sections of the Comintern

and the R.I.L.U. has undoubtedly increased, because the strength of the organisation is determined not only by absolute figures, but also by comparison with other organisations, and on the basis of the circumstances in which the given organisation has to struggle. If we take into consideration the tremendous intensity of all the forces of our class enemy, who uses the refined methods of terror and provocation against the revolutionary trade union movement, we must say: Yes, we have moved ahead in spite of all, forward, even though in different sectors there are hold-ups. But we very badly consolidate our growing influence (U.S.A., Japan, France, etc.).

3. Are we moving ahead with the same speed as the growth of the prerequisites for the revolutionary crisis? No, we have an uneven process of development of the revolutionary crisis in various countries. We have an uneven development of the sections of the Comintern and the R.I.L.U. But there is one common feature characteristic of all the sections, and that is they lag behind the tempo of the development of events. This lag is smaller in some countries (China, Germany, Poland), and greater in others (France, Great Britain, U.S.A.), but it characterises the condition of our movement.

Are the sections of the R.I.L.U. alone to blame for this condition? No, we must say quite frankly that the leadership of the R.I.L.U. is also to blame. We have by no means done all that could have been done. We lost time in the struggle against the Amsterdam International immediately after the destruction of the German trade unions, and this loss of tempo undoubtedly did harm to the international revolutionary movement. We do not react with sufficient speed, promptness and activity to the events which are taking place, and this, of course, is bound to have an influence on the world trade union movement. Comrade Heckert has spoken of this. He has the *right* to do so, but it was his duty also to say that he is a member of the Executive Bureau of the R.I.L.U., and that he also bears some responsibility for this.

5. All the efforts of the sections of the Comintern and the R.I.L.U. must be directed to overcoming this lagging at all costs and in the shortest possible time. All the efforts of the leaders of the R.I.L.U. must take this direction. Otherwise events may catch us unawares. We must bear in mind that although the sphere for the manoeuvres of social-democracy has become narrower and smaller, still it continues to manoeuvre quite smartly. I will give an example. A few days ago, Paul Faure, the leader of the French Socialist Party, which, as you know, has now split, spoke at a big meeting in Bordeaux and literally said the following:

"From the international point of view, we go to Geneva and together with the people of the

Russian revolution we demand general disarmament. If we (?) do not achieve this, then we shall join with Soviet Russia, with the other Red Nations, and ensure international peace."

This same socialist who for long years closed his ears to the Soviet peace proposals, now threatens to form an alliance with Soviet Russia. And in order to confuse things still more, this social demagogue exclaims that he is prepared to unite with the other "Red Nations." What does this mean? What is he talking about? What Red Nations has Paul Faure found? Is this a synonym for the allies of France—Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, Roumania, Yugoslavia? Evidently it is. But why are these countries red?

6. We must undermine and finally abolish the influence of social-democracy. By the example of the U.S.S.R. we must teach the working masses to fight. We must remember that events are developing with tremendous speed and that any lagging in a situation when class contradictions are rapidly developing, plays into the hands of the enemies of the proletariat. This is why the slogan of all the sections of the Comintern and the R.I.L.U. must be: "Down with lagging behind!" This is the lever which we must press at all costs to raise the sections of the Comintern and the R.I.L.U. to the necessary level.

7. The number of illegal sections of the R.I.L.U. is growing. The sections of the R.I.L.U. which are still legal may be driven underground in connection with the sharpening of the class struggle. And if our legal Communist Parties do not sufficiently prepare for this turn of events, the revolutionary trade unions and the trade union opposition give still less thought to it. And yet, this question is one of extreme importance. Both the Communist Party and the revolutionary trade unions must combine a fierce struggle for the legal open existence of the revolutionary trade union movement with the adoption of a series of measures in case they are forced to go underground.

8. The intense situation sharply faces us with the question of trade union cadres for legal, semi-legal and illegal work. We must realise that this is a neglected sector. In our Communist Parties and in our revolutionary trade unions, in the revolutionary trade-union opposition, we have not as yet, with few exceptions, a well thought out Bolshevik policy of cadres. Very often people are sent into the trade unions when they are no good on other work, on the mistaken supposition that they will be good there carrying on mass work. This is not true. The growth of the mass movement demands leaders and creates leaders. We must be able to train them, and promote them from the ranks. This

applies to the entire revolutionary trade union movement from top to bottom.

9. The more intense the class struggle becomes, the more vigilant must the Parties be in the struggle against deviations from the general line of the Comintern. The sharper the struggle, the more attentive the Parties must be towards the leadership of the trade unions, where in view of their composition, the vacillations of which Lenin warned us are inevitable. Without tireless Party control, without the formation of Communist fractions, the revolutionary trade unions may not only lag behind themselves but drag a certain part of the workers with them. Firm and systematic leadership over the trade-union fractions is the prerequisite for utilising the trade unions as one of the weapons for destroying the capitalist system.

10. Without the Communist Parties we cannot create a mass revolutionary trade-union movement. The Communist Parties cannot concretely raise the question of power without basing themselves on a mass trade-union movement. Therefore, at the present time, the question whether the sections of the R.I.L.U. are really revolutionary and really mass sections assumes exceptionally great importance.

Such are my conclusions. Can we carry out the tasks which we are set? Without a doubt. Once we raise the question of the struggle for the Soviet Power seriously, we thereby presuppose that we shall carry out all these tasks. Then what is the matter? Our leading cadres frequently take an attitude of expecting more lengthy prospects than is called for by the objective situation. Therefore they do not sound the alarm regarding the lag behind, frequently acting with the unconscious thought that: "We have plenty of time." They often do not see that the masses and the events are getting ahead of them. They do not ponder the fact to the end that history has entered a period of sharp turns and changes. The revolution may break out at any moment when the Communist Party is not yet ready, but we also know that the revolution cannot be victorious without a Bolshevik Party. This is why we must set ourselves with tenfold energy to carry out the decisions of the Comintern. The masses are expecting initiative and guidance from us. They know that the Bolsheviks are not rhetoricians but people of revolutionary action.

Of course, the difficulties are great, for the enemy is strong, but there are no difficulties which the Bolsheviks cannot overcome. Communism is invincible. It breaks down all barriers, and sweeps away all obstacles, for the Communist Parties embody all the power, all the energy, all the revolutionary passion of our great class and the future of toiling mankind. Remember the words of Stalin: "*The Communist Party is invincible, for it knows where to*

lead the masses and does not fear difficulties." Let us not hide the face of the Communist Party, but march with open visor into the struggle, for Communists

do not hide and should not hide their aims, let us fight for the tasks set by the Comintern and undoubtedly we shall conquer. (Applause.)

WOMEN IN THE SECOND ROUND OF REVOLUTIONS AND WARS

THE question of work among women is a question of our united front tactics, a question of the hegemony of the proletariat.

Lenin taught us that: "Without women there can be no proletarian revolution:" but I do not wish to speak to-day on the rôle of women in revolutions in general, I wish to deal with the new features in the exploitation of female labour resulting from the post-war situation in capitalist countries. I wish to speak about the factors that increase the rôle of women in the revolutionary movement of our days, and what new features have been introduced by the crisis and the situation of the eve of new wars. The new development consists in the changes in the composition of the working class owing to the increasing utilisation of female labour in all branches of industry, particularly in industries engaged in the manufacture of munitions and war supplies and in factories connected with the war industries.

Millions and scores of millions of women have been drawn into all branches of production in the capitalist countries.

The new developments also consist in the fact that the bourgeoisie has taken account of the experiences of the first imperialist war, and is systematically and according to definite plan, preparing the masses of toiling women for the fulfilment of yet another task important for capitalism, i.e., work behind the lines during war and the uninterrupted functioning of the industrial, economic and administrative apparatus during the new imperialist war which is now being prepared.

The exploitation of the labour of women and children in industry was "the first word in the capitalist utilisation of machines" (Marx). The nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century were an epoch when the cheaper labour of women was drawn into industry on the basis of the developing machine technique and capitalist rationalisation. This process reached its culminating point in the years after the world imperialist war. Consider the following figures. In *Germany* the number of women in industry rose to 25 per cent. of all industrial workers in 1929 by comparison with 23 per cent. in 1926. In *Poland* in 1931-32 30 adult

women were employed for every 100 men, in 1932 this number rose to 35. In *France* statistics show that until very recently 40 per cent. of all the industrial workers were women. In *Great Britain* there are 5,500,000 women employed in industry. In the *United States* women workers constitute 21 per cent. of all industrial and transport workers. The number of women workers engaged in industry in *Japan* was 52 per cent. in 1926, 53 per cent. in 1930 and 46 per cent. in 1932. 1933, which was a year of the feverish growth of the war industries in *Japan* will undoubtedly bring an increase in the number of women engaged in industry. In *China*, women workers constitute about 53 per cent. of the total number of industrial workers, and girls constitute 23 per cent.

Here it is necessary to emphasise that the most essential feature of this process is not only the numerical growth in the number of women workers employed, but especially the *re-distribution* of women in various spheres of labour. If it is true that advanced technique has led to a decrease in the number of highly skilled workers employed, and has drawn women workers into branches of industry such as were formerly closed to them, then side by side with this we see that women workers are transferring from *non-skilled* labour to more skilled labour, from the more backward branches of industry to new branches, from trades which have up to now traditionally been considered women's trades to trades which have up to now been monopolised by male labour. Finally, almost everywhere a clear process is to be noted of women's labour being shifted from agriculture to the cities.

According to the statistics of the German industrial inspection, the total number of women engaged in industry grew by 20.8 per cent. in the three years preceding the crisis. But in such branches of industry which have traditionally always been considered women's trades, i.e., textile industry, food industry, etc., the number of women employed *remains stable*. At the same time, however, the electrical industry and machine industry show an increase of 48 per cent. in the number of women employed, the metal industry reports an increase of 20 per cent., the chemical industry an increase of

16.5 per cent., rubber and asbestos 43 per cent. and the leather industry 26 per cent., etc.

Of still more interest is the fact that this increase took place mainly in the large and *highly mechanised* enterprises. For example, in 1929 the number of women workers in the silicate industry was 17.76 per cent. of the total employed in the big factories and 6.76 per cent. in the middle sized enterprises. In the metal industry the number of women workers was 26.3 per cent. in the large enterprises and 11.5 per cent. in the middle sized factories. In the machine construction industry—large works 4 per cent., middle sized 1 per cent. In the electrical, precision instruments and optical industries—large factories 34.8 per cent., middle-sized 12.6 per cent. The situation was quite the contrary in the textile industry and needle trades where the ratio was the reverse.

In Austria, for example, only 30 per cent. of the male workers work in large enterprises, whereas over 50 per cent. of the women workers are employed in large enterprises employing over 100 workers. Of the total number of women employed, 6 per cent. are *engaged in small enterprises*, whereas 18 per cent. of the men employed work in small sized enterprises.

Here I want to call your attention to the fact that while women workers in Austrian industry constituted 36 per cent. of the total number of workers their distribution according to branches of industry was as follows: metal trades 50 per cent. of the total workers employed, textiles and needle trade 63 per cent., rubber industry 49.5 per cent., silk and artificial silk 50.5 per cent., chemical industry 35.4 per cent.

What practical conclusions have we to draw from these figures from the point of view of the possibility of mass work among women? The conclusions are that the whole situation of the post-war period is favourable to us in the sense that we can develop our activities among women not only in the trades traditionally employing women but also in other branches of industry as well, for example, in the chemical industry, in the metal trades, and that in the large enterprises the work among the masses of proletarian women must be developed in accordance with their present status in industry.

I will now deal with the question of wages.

The demand for female labour varies inversely as to the wages they are paid. In all capitalist countries without exception the wages of women workers in industry are 30-40 per cent. lower than the wages of men workers. In Great Britain, for example, the average wage for men in large sized enterprises is 60.8 shillings a week where women receive only 28 shillings. The respective figures for small enterprises are 43 and 26 shillings.

This difference in wages varies in the different branches of industry sometimes reaching 50 per cent. It was precisely this that led to a rapid growth in the employment of women in all branches of industry. This fact also explains why less women workers than male workers have been discharged from industry during the crisis. For Germany this may be seen from the statistics of the trade unions and social insurance bureaux. In 1929 in Germany there were 19 per cent. unemployed women among the trade union membership, in January, 1933, the number of unemployed women was 18 per cent. If we take the number of employed men workers in April, 1929, as 100, then in April, 1932, this figure was reduced to 70.8 per cent., while the number of employed women amounted to 77.7 per cent.

These figures, however, by no means go to show that unemployment among women is less than among men. Unemployment among toiling women, who are less organised, has grown tremendously during the years of crisis. At the same time the results of unemployment are considerably more felt by the women, because both in fascist Germany and democratic England the bourgeoisie in line with its old traditions shamelessly deprives unemployed women of unemployment benefits and all forms of social insurance, since the women constitute that section of the proletariat which is weaker and less able to show resistance.

If *post-war capitalism* created a considerable demand for female labour it has, on the other hand, created conditions for the ever increasing supply of female labour. The agrarian crisis has resulted in a further impoverishment and proletarianisation of the countryside particularly with respect to the women who are thus compelled for the first time to seek work as wage workers. The general crisis which led to the lowering of the wages of the worker and *to the ruining of the petty-bourgeoisie in the cities* has resulted in casting on the labour market a still greater number of women who formerly were not engaged in industry (wives, daughters).

If we take the total number of unemployed in all capitalist countries to be 50,000,000 then about 30 per cent. of them, 15,000,000, are women.

The number of homeless women is increasing day after day. Thus in 80 of the major cities of America alone, 100,000 cases of homeless women have been registered, and there is a terrific growth of prostitution. Suicides among women have become "an every-day occurrence."

But it is not this unprecedentedly difficult situation of the toiling women that I want to deal with here. I want to say that in this fact of unemployment and vagrancy among women there lies tremendous danger for the working class as a whole, and that

this is not merely a question of helping these women, but is one of the weakness and strength of the working class.

The *gigantic reserve army* of cheap labour outside the factories and the cheaply paid section inside the factories, as well as the forced labour camps, have created in the midst of the working class a convenient starting point for a further offensive of the bourgeoisie on wages and on the standard of living of the working class aimed at finding a capitalist way out of the crisis. And the bourgeoisie which has taken up the task of "crisis" rationalisation has utilised this starting point in all countries to its own interests and in its efforts at an impudent, open and shameless attack against the working class.

This offensive is taking place under cover of various disguises. This offensive is being camouflaged by very clever and crafty arguments about the necessity of supplying employment for a maximum number of families, etc. A drive has been launched against female labour, especially the labour of married women.

But no matter how clever this camouflage may be, we see in this a feature common for all capitalist countries, i.e., this drive against female labour is a new form of the capitalist offensive *against the wages of the proletariat as a whole*, it is a struggle to reduce costs of production in order to squeeze out surplus value during the crisis as well.

Take the case of Germany. German fascism and the Hitler government has cynically issued the following slogans:

"Free the women from the double burden of housework and factory employment. Send the men back to industry and the women back to the fireside."

"As the head of the family, the husband must be given the possibility of earning sufficient to keep a family of five."

"We do not deprive the woman of her right to work, but women should not select work alien to their nature."

"Limit the utilisation of female labour."

"In the question of double earnings we should exclusively consider the principle of public health."

"Defend the wife and mother engaged in industry."

"Women and girls should not engage in labour which contradicts the principle of safeguarding women workers."

"Remove women from dangerous occupations."

"No night work for women."

Can we imagine for one moment that these slogans can be carried out? Certainly not. We see at a glance that this is only a clever and able attack against the wages of the working class as a whole.

This "drive" against female labour is only a mask to cover the lowering of wages of the industrial

workers by utilising working women as *cheaper* labour power. It is carried out very cleverly. Whereas Hitler began his campaign in regard to the *politically backward* and unorganised sections of the working women by using uniform methods, although in a disguised form, in the case of women working in industry, however, Hitler applies not only camouflaged methods but also the most differentiated methods in order to utilise these women as a means for lowering the wages of the workers in general.

Take for example the problem of double earnings: it is solved by the most varied means as you will see from the following examples.

Direct wage cuts for all workers in the given factory.

The Nazis in the Brinkman cigarette factory in Dresden signed an agreement with the employer, according to which not only all of the women are to be discharged, but an *all round 2 per cent. cut in wages is to take place* because the exclusive employment of men leads to an increase in labour costs.

The indirect lowering of wages of the men to the level of the women's wages.

In fifteen textile factories in the lower Rhine district working women were discharged and men taken in their place. The "Rhine Westphalia Gazette" wrote as follows on October 13, 1933: "The wages of men are 50 per cent. higher than those of women, and consequently the productivity of their labour must be increased by 15 per cent."

The indirect lowering of wages by means of regrouping and discharging workers.

The Maggi Singen factories discharged 200 women and engaged 160 girls at lower wages.

Indirect cutting of wages by means of re-grouping labour power and hiring young women in the place of married women.

In a number of textile enterprises, the married women were dismissed and young girls were put in their places, at cheaper wage rates. ("Informatsia Textilintern," June 1, 1933.)

Indirect cutting of wages by means of re-grouping workers and hiring young workers on a large scale.

Under the pretext of hiring men workers because of their supposed skill, young workers replaced older women workers in the silk industry.*

But the carrying out of all of these measures leads in certain cases to a direct and in others to an indirect lowering of the wages of the entire working class. The shameless bourgeois press has no desire to conceal this fact; it states quite definitely that decisions on double earnings in the family must be made dependent upon the question of wages.

"The refusal of employers to hire men instead of women are in most cases questions of wages!" wrote "Germania" on May 7, 1933.

"It must be emphasised as sharply as possible

* "Koelnische Zeitung," Feb. 15, 1933.

that the removal of married women from industry should not become an end in itself," wrote the "Vossische Zeitung" on April 13, 1933.

All of these facts go to prove one thing: that the Hitler government, by its actions on the question of double earnings, is striving *not towards the removal of women from industry*, but has only one aim, i.e., to cut the wages of the working class as a whole, and because of the sharp crisis the bourgeoisie is not in a position to discontinue the utilisation of women as cheaper labour power.

Hitler's attempts to disguise this attack on wages are exposed by *facts*, which show that, in his struggle for the well-being of monopolist capital and because of his imperialist strivings Hitler did not and could not make his aim the liberation of women from industry. At a time when the slogan of women returning from industry to the fireside was issued new women workers were being engaged in all branches of industry, new cadres of women were being introduced into the most dangerous trades and in the administrative and economic apparatus.

Wassag is a factory producing explosive material in Wittenberg on Elbe.

"In the first 4-5 months of the Hitler dictatorship 1,400 people were given employment."*

In this case reference was made almost exclusively to women, mainly *young working women*. The Rhine-Maine chemical plants also stated that in August, 1933, they gave employment to 1,300 new workers among whom women predominated.†

Under cover of noise and idle chatter about women returning to their duties as mothers, the "Frankfurter Zeitung" of September 15 reports that the number of women engaged in industry has *increased by 9.1 per cent. in the first 9 months of 1933*. All of these examples signify one thing, namely, the *method of lowering* the wages of all workers, the reduction of production costs and of the possibility of undertaking dumping on a wide scale.

Shouts about "double earnings," about women returning to domestic life, are only a smoke screen under cover of which an offensive against wages, working hours and social insurance is being launched.

On November 25, the Ministry of Labour and Industry issued a circular which reads in part:

"The difficulties which confront us in the struggle against "double earnings" result from the very definition of this term. The *struggle against "double earnings"* has created the further danger that the principle of paying according to results will be more and more pushed to the background. The struggle against "double earnings" is anti-social, since it punishes a person or a family for their striving to a higher productivity, whereas

at the same time "double earnings" connected with interest on capital is not taken into account and on the basis of creating capital should not be taken into account. From this examination of "double earnings," it follows that the solution of this exclusively difficult and complicated problem by legislative measures would do *more harm than good*. But administrative measures determining what are to be classified as illegal "double earnings" are not applicable. Therefore, neither one nor the other can be applied."

Thus this new decision has been completely annulled. All of the fascist papers and primarily the industrial journals write that the "misunderstandings on the question of 'double earnings,' which have been introduced *into our real peoples' government by alien elements have been eliminated.*"

Thus we see that monopolist capitalism cannot refrain from utilising women labour.

The historic conditions of the penetration of female labour in industry are marked by the specific feature that *from the very beginning and up to this very day female labour is utilised by capitalism to lower the cost of production*, and to bring pressure to bear upon the working class as a whole. This leads to a split in the working class, to a reduction of the general standard of living of the working class and to a decrease of its share in the social product. We must always bear this in mind in our explanatory work among the broad masses.

It is unfortunate that both in Germany and other countries our Parties have been unable to remove this mask and failed to counterpose this demagogy by a campaign of serious exposures, and have failed to organise resistance to this attack on the standards of living of the workers.

The Parties have not explained that *mass dismissals of workers* are now to be observed anywhere and that everywhere where women and primarily married women are being discharged their places are taken either by *young girls* who work for *considerably lower wages*, or by *men who are offered the wages of women*. This is usually followed by a *general wage cut for all workers*, and sometimes the employers succeed in lowering the already *meagre wages* by a simple threat of dismissals.

This threat that workers will be dismissed whose families have "double earnings" has created the illusion among women workers that, notwithstanding the law governing "double-earnings," they may remain in employment if they worked at a higher productivity. The productivity of labour has actually increased in correspondence with the growth of competition between the working men and women, a point about which the reformist papers wrote even before Hitler came to power, pointing out that since the question of "double earnings" has been raised

* "Pravda," beginning of August, 1933.

† "Frankfurter Zeitung," Sept. 5, 1933.

there is a noticeable rise in the productivity of labour of women. As a result of the remnants of petty-bourgeois craft ideology, workers have understood this question of "double earnings" as a means of liquidating unemployment among male workers. We see that all of this led to a deepening of the split of the working class along sex lines, thus leading to a *deepening of the split among the proletariat in general.*

In order to remove its own responsibility for these measures and their consequences, the bourgeoisie has tried to place the entire responsibility upon the workers.

Thus the fascist paper "Treuhänder der Arbeit" attacked the working women by declaring that they were to blame for the competition in connection with the question of "double-earnings," they put the blame on "unfriendly jealousy" and demagogically appealed to the dignity of the working class, declaring that it will be "unworthy of the German working class if it does not immediately put a stop to these tactics which hit against the economically weak."

Who exposed this shameless demagogy and where? Unfortunately no one in not one of our Parties.

I may be told that the situation in Germany is by no means characteristic for other countries.

But let us take Poland. In Poland the last year is characterised by a strong offensive of the bourgeoisie against the working class, under the same guise as in Germany. The Polish Minister Pistor issued a law for the dismissal of *married working women.* This law is already being enforced, and 7 per cent. of all civil servants will be discharged in the near future. *Married women will be the first to be discharged.* In the Sokol cigarette factory in Warsaw 80 women were discharged; in the head offices of the railway in Lvov, out of the 120 workers discharged a considerable number were women. Such examples are numerous.

And the fact that in the recent period the entire bourgeois press is publishing articles on women and their rôle in industry more often, on the attempts to displace women by the labour of men, on the discharge of women, especially married women, etc.—all of this is proof of the fact that the processes taking place in Germany are taking place elsewhere.

Even in little Finland we see this process. The sawmills and woodwork factories are discharging women on a mass scale and engaging men at lower wages.

Here the entire strategic plan of the capitalists in all countries without exception consists in displacing cheap labour power by still cheaper and more profitable labour power.

The only difference is that in Japan, for example, this manoeuvre, this plan, has been adopted for carrying out the dumping of exports on a scale impossible for any other capitalist country.

Thus we see very clearly that here there is not only an attack against the working women but against the working class as a whole. Thus when we consider the situation of the masses of toiling women, we do so not only with a view to defending this more exploited section of the working class, but also in order to mobilise our forces for work among the masses of women in order to bring them into the foremost ranks of the proletarian front. We do so in order to put an end to this split in the working class, in order to show that in the struggle against the capitalist onslaught on the working class, on the standards of living of the latter, the winning over of the majority of the working class is impossible without winning over to our side the broad masses of toiling women.

Besides this it is necessary to point out that following upon its experience in the imperialist war, the bourgeoisie is preparing to utilise female labour on a much larger scale during war in order to ensure that the apparatus of production and the war industries function uninterruptedly. The forced labour camps for women also serve this purpose since they supply a reserve of very cheap militarised labour power.

In Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, France and other countries, there is a *continuous growth* in the percentage of women engaged in the war industries and affiliated trades, viz., chemical, artificial silk, etc.

In Japan, where many women are employed in the arsenals and munition plants, women are being prepared to take up responsible positions in case of war.

Thus for example in the naval arsenal in Kure, and in the electrical plants *women are being prepared to work as turners, etc.*

There can be no doubt whatever that in case of a new war all branches of industry will utilise women labour on a much broader scale than they did in 1914-18.

All of this proves that women already occupy an important position in industry. Their position in industry will be even more important during the next war, when they constitute the overwhelming majority of the working class. In accordance with this rôle played by women, they constitute a huge economic and political force, and *to ignore this force would be a crime before the working class,* which is on the eve of the struggle for power.

But name at least one Party, with the exception of the Chinese Party (but only in the Soviet districts) that has not committed this crime? Where are the leaflets, slogans, partial demands, articles in your papers which would help the broad proletarian masses to understand the policy of our Parties in these questions, which would help our Parties to develop a *united proletarian front* in the struggle against the capitalist offensive upon the working class, at a time

when the bourgeoisie is doing everything possible to break these masses away from the general workers' front?

Aided by its social-fascist agency, the bourgeoisie is conducting a very clever and stubborn struggle for the women masses. It particularly considers the rôle to be assumed by women in the coming war, and not merely in the sphere of industry. Therefore, in waging a struggle to win over the masses of women, the bourgeoisie simultaneously tries to militarise them and to make them a link in the general imperialist chain.

What is taking place now with regard to the militarisation of women is the "to-morrow" about which Lenin wrote as far back as in 1916. Lenin wrote that "To-day the imperialist bourgeoisie is militarising everybody, even the youth, and to-morrow, apparently, it will begin the militarisation of women." We know that almost all governments have already enforced or are preparing laws on the mobilisation of women during war. (France, Italy, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugo-Slavia, U.S.A.)

The bourgeoisie is devoting even more attention to the training of women's detachments for civil war. These organisations range from open fascist organisations, such as the national-socialist "Frauenshaft" in Germany, the "Rodzina Woiskova," made up of wives of officers and petty officers and organised on the initiative of Marshal Pilsudski in Poland, the "Daughters of the American Revolution" and the women's sections of the Ku Klux Klan in the U.S.A., to the broad mass sport organisations which actually aim at "raising the fighting strength of the nation and defence of the fatherland from the enemies at home."

It would, however, be absolutely wrong to presume that the bourgeoisie limits its activity to recruiting and training the women of its own class or to the groups of petty bourgeois intelligentsia, civil servants, etc., which are drawn to it. The bourgeoisie is stretching its arm into the ranks of the proletariat both in the city and countryside, and of the petty bourgeoisie. Many factors contribute to help it in this work: objectively—the political backwardness of the masses of women, subjectively the social fascists and the church, not to mention the democratic, pacifist, and feminist women's organisations and leagues, especially created by the bourgeoisie.

Nationalism and chauvinism constitute the weapon used by fascism, especially German fascism, in its work among the women masses. The manoeuvres of German fascism in its attempts to win over the women masses are worthy of our serious attention since the successes of fascism among the women have been evident until recently.

These successes to a considerable extent are of course a result of the specific character of the German

petty-bourgeoisie. The slogans so lavishly scattered about by the fascist leaders before they captured power, and which seemed to us the height of cretinism, proved to be quite profitable ones. The national socialists knew the psychology of their petty-bourgeois women. Goebbels, Fedor and others issued the following pearls: "*The woman must be handsome and bring children to her husband,*" "The woman must be merely a servant of the man, only a mother," "Politics and professions are not for women," "The woman must be the servant of the State and give birth to its soldiers, the woman must look after the tired warriors, the woman must help in the revival and victory of the German race." Such were the chauvinistic and race ravings that found their way into the hearts and minds of the German petty-bourgeois women. But it would be absolutely incorrect to insist that fascism was unable to issue slogans capable of attracting certain strata of the working women. Even now the fascists are repeating such slogans because they feel that their position is not so stable, and they are attempting once again to play the game that they have once already played with success. The "Völkischer Beobachter" of August 16 wrote: "The woman has received a new aim in life. No longer shall she be the slave of the conveyor during her whole life, but a mistress in her own home."

However, the fascists were not satisfied with merely establishing a system of agitation. They went further and are now attempting to consolidate their influence over the masses of women organisationally. The "unification" of certain women's unions and the dissolution of others are two of the manoeuvres which accompany the demagogic and thoroughly false agitation and propaganda. We, however, should not under-estimate the importance of this propaganda aimed at *separating the working women from the general class struggle*, the establishment of women's detachments in case of civil war, and the organisation of a strong reliable hinterland in preparation for new imperialist wars.

This same task is being carried out for the bourgeoisie by the Second International and its Sections in the various countries. The methods of the Second International are somewhat different. The Second International specialises in slander against the Soviet Union, in loud cries about so-called red imperialism, in terrifying the women by stories of the *militarisation* of children in the U.S.S.R., and finally in spreading pacifist illusions among the broad masses of women.

The social-fascists cannot brag about a mass women membership in their parties, but they are able to obtain certain influence over the women through their husbands, brothers and sons who

belong to the social-democratic parties and trade unions.

We must also not under-estimate the scope of the ideological influence over the working women and women from the petty-bourgeoisie exercised by the Socialist Party through its press, charity organisations, municipal organisations, co-operatives, etc. The ardent pacifism which serves as a cover for the leaders of the women's organisations in the Second International meets with great sympathy among the masses, *whose sentiments are directed against war*. The aversion of the masses to war is immediately utilised by the socialists to create a similar aversion to revolution. Thus one of the speakers at the women's conference of the British Labour Party, whose speech was met very sympathetically by the conference, declared that the women are not only against war, but they are against all wars including civil war, and that women would not raise a finger to help the carrying out of wars.

The bourgeoisie works very energetically, with the help of its various agents, in the direction of leading and consolidating under its influence the broad masses of semi-proletarian and proletarian women. But its work is decisively hindered by the capitalist system itself.

The increasing poverty, unemployment, wage cuts, social insurance cuts, etc., which were mentioned above, lead to a growth of dissatisfaction and to the activation of the masses of women who under capitalism suffer under the double yoke of slavery in the factory and in the home.

Radicalisation is particularly manifested among the working women. In almost all countries the working women are beginning to play an active rôle in the strike struggles, and call independent strikes *in factories where they constitute a majority*. Thus in the huge strike wave that recently spread over the United States an important rôle was played by women. At the same time precisely in the United States there has been a considerable amount of strikes in the food industry and needle trades in which only women participated. In Great Britain, over 150,000 women textile workers participated in the great Lancashire strike last year.

In Poland the activity of the masses of women has grown immensely. A whole series of strikes such as the strike in the Vidzievsky textile mills were called on the initiative of the women. The participation of workers' wives in demonstrations has grown extraordinarily. Even the bourgeois papers report that women with babies in their arms demonstrated in the streets in Poland in reply to the Communists' call of "All out on to the streets."

In Bulgaria where the working women constitute a majority employed in the basic industries the number of strikes has been steadily growing, and in

several cases economic strikes have been transformed into political campaigns.

In Roumania, in numerous strikes in the textile factories of Bukharest and the match factories in Klusch and Arda and other places, working women have played a very important rôle. Thus, the working women of the "Saturn" factory called a strike, seized the factory and held it for 14 hours and surrendered it only after tear gas was employed. During the famous February struggle of the Roumanian railway workers, one thousand women tobacco workers came out in a solidarity strike under the influence of the Communist Party on the day following the shooting of the workers.

Finally, in Hitler Germany, under conditions of a wild fascist terror, even the "unified" press is not able to conceal from the public the numerous cases of strikes and actions of the working women. Moreover, these strikes are not only of an economic, but of a political character. We will not cite individual examples, but it is nevertheless necessary to speak about such instances of class consciousness and revolutionary sentiments of the working women, as the calling of a protest strike after the events of January 30 in 17 factories in Wittemburg where the women constitute the majority of workers, or the actions of the working women in a number of factories in Berlin, Leipzig and other cities.

The hints of the fascist women's press about the instability of the sentiments of the women in connection with the struggle against high prices, and conflicts in the market places, as well as the continuous trouble and changes in the leadership of the unified women's unions, are excellent proof of the fact that the broad masses of toiling women are showing their preparedness to fight and all they are lacking is correct revolutionary militant leadership by the Communist Party, which should consist first of all in systematic activities among these masses. Do the masses of women receive this leadership? No, they do not!

The Twelfth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. pointed out the "necessity of decisively putting an end to the under-estimation of work among the masses of proletarian women." But did the Sections of the Comintern put an end to this under-estimation? Unfortunately the reply must be in the negative.

Notwithstanding the huge possibilities not only for strengthening our influence among the toiling masses of proletarian women, but of drawing these masses into the general class struggles of the proletariat, the activities of our Parties in this sphere have up till now been limited to general agitation and propaganda, while the directives of the E.C.C.I. on the major questions of work among women, on the transferring of the centre of this work into the

factories, on the establishment of delegate meetings in the factories have not been carried out.

The Thirteenth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. correctly sets the task of the necessity of raising the work among women to a level which will correspond with the rôle of women in industry and in the coming wars. But side by side with this the Plenum must point out that the women's departments in the parties will only be able to justify their existence if at their head there are *real Bolsheviks* and if they are drawn into the *general system of party activity*. *The questions of cadres for women's work must be taken up more seriously in connection with the growth of the importance of the women proletariat and the necessity of widely recruiting women into the party and advancing them for leading party work.*

The tasks outlined in the theses demand a decisive turn on the part of all Parties with regard to work among women. The entire Party organisation from top to bottom must carry on work among women, utilising all the auxiliary organisations, the trade unions and other proletarian organisations for this purpose.

Work among women is of especial importance precisely now in connection with the increasing danger of new imperialist war and the preparation of a counter-revolutionary war against the U.S.S.R. The Party must take into account that in case of war and mobilisation many spheres of Party work will be left without cadres, as a result of the basic party cadres being transferred to the front. There-

fore, it is now necessary to take steps to prepare Party cadres from among the women who will be able to take the place of the men comrades in the basic spheres of Party activities, in the Party apparatus, in the war industries and in the transport industries.

Without recruiting the broad masses of proletarian women into the active political struggle, a successful struggle against war and the victory of the revolutionary movement are impossible. This was taught to us by Lenin. Comrade Stalin teaches us how to treasure this force. He says :

"Working women stand side by side with the working men. They are both working for the same cause. The working woman can help in the common cause if she is conscientious, if she is politically enlightened, but she can ruin it if she is downtrodden and backward, of course not due to any fault of her own, but to her backwardness."

The whole world knows about Comrade Stalin's speech at the Congress of collectivised peasants on the rôle of the women in consolidating the collective farm system.* This was a speech which inspired millions, a speech which roused ever new legions of enthusiasts !

We must learn to utilise all the forces in the movement, to mobilise them for the solution of the tasks confronting every Communist Party and the Communist International.

* Workers' Bookshop.

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revolutionary working-class literature that could not be made the basis of a prosecution. But what is more, unlimited powers are given for searching any premises if there are "reasonable grounds for suspecting that an offence may be committed." It is not difficult to see that this law can very easily be used to drive the Communist Party into factual illegality and to institute a reign of terror against all those who are engaged in a revolutionary struggle against capitalism.

It is worthy of note that even the liberal bourgeois "Manchester Guardian," after examining the Bill, ended up by declaring that it "must be vigorously resisted," but the "vigorous resistance" of the liberal bourgeoisie was expressed by the liberal spokesmen in the House of Commons debate when, for instance, Isaac Foot declared that "no one could justify these attempts to disturb the allegiance and loyalty of those serving in the forces . . . (but) . . . it was an unnecessary advertisement to the world of any small difficulties that might exist . . ."

Major Lloyd George (son of his well-known father) stated still more clearly that "we have sufficient Acts of Parliament to handle the situa-

tion, and we have handled it successfully in the past."

For the liberals, it is clearly therefore a question of disagreement with the National Government as to the best tactics to be adopted in the existing circumstances against the revolutionary movement and particularly against revolutionary work in the army.

As to the Labour Party, it is already proving itself, in regard to this fascist blow directed against the British working class, a worthy brother of the German and Austrian and other Social-Democratic parties. The main line of "attack" by the Labour leaders is, for instance, that "there is not the slightest evidence that it (the Bill) is needed" (Major Attlee). The "Daily Herald," the Labour Party's official organ, disarms the working class still further in a leading article entitled "A Bad Bill" by declaring that "Public opinion will demand from the government precise and specific cause to an extension of Executive powers so wide as this Bill seeks to take." And if the National Government gives such "precise and specific causes"?

(To be concluded.)

SOME OF THE EXPERIENCES OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF CHINA IN ORGANISING AND LEADING THE STRIKE STRUGGLE

By LI MING.

THE TURN TO THE ENTERPRISES.

THE strike movement in China has grown and become more accentuated over the last two years, and the leading rôle of the Communist Party has grown with it. Many of the big strikes, as for instance the general strike of the printers in Shanghai, the two general strikes of tobacco-workers in the Anglo-American tobacco factories in the same city, and the struggle of textile workers, etc., were carried out under the leadership of the Communist Party of China. In North China, during the period from January to June, 1933, the Party and the red trade unions participated in the conduct of twenty-seven strikes and struggles of the industrial workers, and led seventeen struggles absolutely independently. Eighteen of these twenty-seven militant actions ended in partial or complete victory for the workers. On three occasions the Party directed street demonstrations and clashes of the strikers with the Kuomintang police. Heavy losses were sustained by the Kuomintang and yellow trade unions in these struggles as a result of this activity. These struggles gave clear proof that success in preparing strikes and in carrying them out is inseparably connected with the livening-up of Party activity in the enterprises, with the activity of Communists in the mills and works, and with the utilisation of all kinds of economic conflicts between the workers and the employers. A report on trade union activity in Hupeh, for instance, reads as follows:—

“At the time when wage cuts, shortening of working time, dismissal of workers and so forth, gave rise to discontent among the textile factories, we had no connections with the workers. But due to the fact that we turned our attention to the enterprises, and concentrated our forces there, carrying on painstaking work and establishing contacts with the workers, and using all opportunities, without overlooking the smallest trifles for solving everyday partial conflicts, we succeeded in creating trade union groups in the enterprises. We correctly conducted the tactics of the united front from below, and after isolating the leaders of the yellow trade unions and reactionary groupings, brought forward and trained cadres from the working masses, and knew how to utilise legal possibilities. Finally, we

checked our work carefully and in good time, and rectified our mistakes, and so forth. The result was that within a few months we organised successful strikes at the Boy-Yang factory, directed the general strike at the Yu-Yuang textile factory, and took part in the struggle of two thousand workers at the Ho-Yuang mill. As a result of these activities we set up trade union groups at these factories, and delegate conferences of the workers of six textile mills, and founded a mass basis for the textile trade union in Tian-tsing.

In the mines in Hupeh province we had thirty members of the Party, over forty members of the red trade unions and over 500 members of an auxiliary organisation, working under our guidance. The living conditions of the workers there are also very difficult, and militant tendencies are developing among them. But, due to the fact that we were unable to set our activity going inside the mines, and confined ourselves to mere palaver outside the mines, neglecting the development of the struggle from day to day, we failed to organise and carry out a strike there. This does not imply, however, that the miners are more backward than the textile workers; all it proves is that our comrades who are at work there did not know how to carry out proper tactics and work.”

Furthermore these struggles emphasised once again the importance of correct slogans and demands, the importance of a correct interconnection between the political and economic, general and local requirements.

For instance, the local comrades on the Beiping-Yuang railway, who only took the political situation into account, launched the slogans: “Down with the special Party organisations of the Kuomintang,” and “Down with the yellow trade unions,” but forgot to put forward the economic demands of the workers and to connect them with political demands. The provincial committee of the Party in Hupeh soon rectified these mistakes by setting forth such economic demands of the workers as: “Payment of benefits amounting to half a month’s salary,” “establishment of a weekly rest day,” and so forth. Broad masses of workers rapidly and determinedly entered the struggle for these demands and even

introduced a free day each week by taking the law into their own hands. The revolutionary activity of the workers rose to a great height in the process of this movement, and they developed their struggle, not only for the satisfaction of economic requirements, but for their political needs.

The workers left the yellow trade unions, drove away the "special Party organisations" of the Kuomintang, and set up a genuine workers' class trade union organisation, while the yellow trade unions lost their positions. In this connection they no longer confined themselves to the demand for the payment of two weeks' benefit and the establishment of a rest day. The workers also insisted on the restoration of the collective agreements concluded in 1926 after the victorious strike, but cancelled by the capitalists, and on a rise in wages. But while the revolutionary consciousness and activity of the workers rose to a higher level, our comrades continued automatically to adhere to their former demands. The provincial committee of the Communist Party, however, once again rectified the mistakes of the local Communists in good time and launched extensive slogans. Thanks to this, a wave of militancy rapidly rose again, not only in the railway depôts of Tchantsis-kou (Calgan) but everywhere along this railway line. The railwaymen sent their representatives to Calgan from all points to establish connections with the newly-organised class trade union. The Communist Party took stock of these circumstances, and succeeded in carrying out a delegate conference of railwaymen on the Beiping-Suy-Yuang line for the purpose of extending the anti-militarist movement, and in organising anti-Japanese volunteer detachments and mobilising many workers to proceed to the front to carry out anti-militarist work among the soldiers.

The experience of the economic strikes has shown further, that the economic struggle must also be linked up with the anti-imperialist struggle in the interests of developing both the strike and the anti-imperialist movements. The extension of the economic struggle creates a mass basis for the anti-imperialist struggle as well. At the same time the development of the anti-imperialist movement arouses even backward workers, generalises and extends the movement, and raises it to a higher level. The seizure of Manchuria by Japanese imperialism called forth a new upsurge of the anti-imperialist movement among the Shanghai workers. The Party then succeeded in supporting the movement of the textile workers at the Japanese mills against withdrawal of rewards and in linking up the demands of the workers with slogans of struggle

against the seizure of Manchuria, and with demonstrations against the Kuomintang government which capitulated to Japanese imperialism. All this contributed not a little to drawing in the textile workers into a tremendous anti-imperialist movement and strike struggle, a strike which extended and embraced 40,000 workers and lasted over 100 days. Not only did the workers take part in it, but so did their families, children, old folks, etc., take active part in very fierce struggle against the Kuomintang police. The strike and the whole of this movement assisted the heroic defence of Shanghai.

"In such cases the proletariat plays the rôle not merely of one of the classes of bourgeois society, but the rôle of a hegemon, i.e., the rôle of guide, vanguard, and leader." (Lenin, Economic and Political Strikes.)

THE ROLE OF THE STRIKE COMMITTEE IN THE STRIKE.

In these strikes, the Party strove to organise committees which would ensure the revolutionary leadership of the struggle, and be elected by the workers themselves on whom they would rely. In this respect the strikes of the tobacco workers at the Anglo-American factories in Shanghai may serve as a positive example. In April, 1933, an Anglo-American firm decided to cut down working time at one of its factories, by introducing a five-day working week and later a three-day week. The Communist cell at this factory mobilised the trade union organisations and called mass meetings, at which it launched slogans calling for the three-day and five-day working week to be abolished. At these meetings the election took place of a strike committee (eighty members), which included all the delegates and active workers from different shops. Seeing that the capitalists refused to satisfy the demands of the workers, all the workers at once declared a general strike under the leadership of the strike committee. The employers called in big police detachments, but after bloody conflicts, the workers drove the police away from the factory. The next day the strike committee called a mass meeting at the gates of the factory, which was guarded by the police. As a result of the second clash with the police, the workers seized the factory.

The strike committee decided to call on the other two factories belonging to the same firm to strike in solidarity. For this purpose a demonstration was organised, and those who took part in it reached the gates of these two factories, after driving off the police detachments which attacked them on their way there. They called a mass meeting at the gates so as to agitate the

workers of these factories to jointly participate in the struggle. Although the leaders of the yellow trade unions at these two factories used all possible means to deceive the workers and to prevent their participation in the strike, the mass of the workers responded to the call of the strike committee. At this mass meeting representatives from these two factories were additionally elected to the strike committee, and the number of members of the committee was increased thereby to 160. Despite all the manoeuvres of the Kuomintang, the capitalists and the leaders of the yellow trade unions, despite the police terror, this strike, which was carried on under the leadership of the revolutionary strike committee, and which relied on the masses, ended in a victory for the workers.

EXAMPLES OF WORK IN THE YELLOW TRADE UNIONS.

(The Strike of the Printers in Shanghai).

The main condition for the successful organisation and leadership of the strike struggle is that the tactics of the united front from below and the steadfast exposure of the demagoguery and treachery of the leaders of the Kuomintang and yellow trade unions are correctly carried out.

In this respect the tactics of the Communists in the organisation of the printers' strike in Shanghai may be taken as an example. In the spring of last year the owners of the printing plants in Shanghai began an offensive against the workers, having previously come to an agreement with the leaders of the yellow trade unions regarding an increase in work to be fulfilled, and about the violation of the collective agreement in one of the printing plants. The workers declared a strike, demanding that the collective agreement be fulfilled. The owners immediately dismissed all the strikers, and replaced them by new workers. At that time, revolutionary organisations among the printers were very weak, but when the leaders of the yellow trade unions made an attempt to force the workers to accept the terms imposed by the capitalists, the revolutionary organisations put forth the slogans: "Not a single worker to be dismissed," "All the terms of the collective agreement to be fulfilled," "The strike to be continued to a victorious conclusion." These slogans were accepted by the mass of the workers, who, under the leadership of the revolutionary organisations, set up a committee of struggle. At the same time, propaganda was carried on, calling on all the workers of all the newspaper printing plants to take part in the strike. It was shown that only by means of a general strike of printers would the employers be compelled to satisfy the demands of the workers, and that should the strike of the workers in the one printing plant suffer defeat, the employers

would undoubtedly attack the workers of all the other plants. This propaganda was rapidly disseminated among the widest masses of printers. Then, the yellow leaders having thus suffered defeat, plunged into outright provocation. They put forward the suggestion that the workers seize the printing plants while at the same time they came to an arrangement with the employers, that the latter should call in the police while the plants were being seized so that all the active workers, and particularly the revolutionary workers, should be arrested. Our comrades noticed these intrigues behind the scenes, and immediately discussed the situation with the workers. It was decided to launch two slogans: "Workers of all printing plants should jointly participate in the seizure of the printing plants," "Members of the executive committee of the trade union must take part in the seizure of the enterprises." The following day the dismissed workers as well as the workers of all other printing plants gathered in good time at a place appointed. The yellow leaders of the trade unions failed to appear and disappeared altogether. Our comrades saw that a police detachment was already stationed not far away, and therefore they changed their tactics with great flexibility. They did not lead the workers to seize the printing plant, but organised a mass meeting, at which they discussed the betrayal of the yellow leaders in absconding.

The mass of the workers started for the premises of the trade union, but all the leaders had fled and the workers found documents which testified to the connections of these leaders with the capitalists and to the way they extorted membership dues. Nevertheless, the leaders were found in their hiding places and forced to come to the meeting where they received their deserts. However, they did not lose their audacity altogether and managed to shift the blame diplomatically on to one of the leaders. For the time being, the meeting decided to expel this culprit alone, but at the same time it was decided to call mass meetings in the printing plants for the purpose of discussing the question of a general strike.

On the following day the leaders of the yellow trade unions spoke very cunningly against the general strike at a meeting in one of the printing plants. They proved demagogically that the capitalists had everything ready for the suppression of the strike, and that should a general strike be declared, the capitalists would dismiss all the workers and replace them by new ones. At the same time, they said, all the trade unions would be dispersed, and therefore anybody who insisted upon the general strike was an agent-provocateur, an agent of the capitalists. Some

of the active workers fell into the trap, and were afraid to speak against the trade union leaders. For this reason the proposal to declare a general strike was not accepted at this meeting. Upon receipt of this information, our comrades immediately proceeded to discuss with the active workers the question of exposing the intrigues of the yellow leaders. The following day at a meeting in another printing plant, when the yellow leaders came out with the same kind of provocative speech, the active workers whom we had put on their guard rejected the line put forward by the T.U. leaders, the result being that the proposal to declare a general strike was accepted unanimously. Revolutionary influence in this movement grew to such an extent that when the yellow leaders declared a general strike as a manoeuvre and with a view to preserving their leadership over the strike movement, the workers understood this treacherous move and barred them from the strike committees. The strike was carried out entirely under the leadership of the Communist Party and the revolutionary trade union organisations, and ended in complete victory.

This example proved the extent to which the yellow trade unions are capable of manoeuvring, and how thoroughly we must expose the machinations and intrigues of their leaders, and that in order to defeat them we must lead strikes independently, and thus bring them to victory. The experience gained in this struggle proved that:

- (1) Our comrades correctly adhered to the tactics of the united front from below and advanced the demands supported by the broadest masses, in order to mobilise the latter for joint struggle;
- (2) Our comrades correctly used the tactics of exposing, step by step, the deceit, machinations and provocation of the yellow trade union leaders;
- (3) They succeeded in launching such popular mass slogans as "Down with the policy of non-resistance," so as to rouse the masses to struggle against the yellow leaders.
- (4) Our comrades knew how to make use of the meetings and even of the press of the yellow trade unions for the purpose of conducting our propaganda. In this way we secured the leadership of the strike and realised the tactics of the independent conduct of the struggle. And finally,
- (5) As a result of this struggle we secured elective posts and the lower mass organisations of the yellow trade union (not only the strike committees, but also posts in the executive committee of the trade union,

and in the factory committee in one of the printing plants).

This experience has been very valuable and serves as an example for further work inside the yellow trade unions.

But we have, unfortunately, failed to popularise this valuable experience on a wide scale and to use it in other places. Many examples could be quoted of mistakes committed and wrong tactics applied in regard to activity carried on inside the yellow trade unions, such as the "leftist" deviation, expressed in chatter about "down with the yellow trade unions," "leftist" phraseology to the effect that we have completely exposed the manoeuvres of the yellow trade unions once and for all and that their influence has completely collapsed, where in reality, although the influence of the yellow trade unions has really declined, nevertheless, the broad masses of the workers still continue to remain in their ranks. There is, on the other hand, the right deviation, consisting of the transformation of the united front from below into negotiations with the officials at the top, into diplomacy, which in effect represents capitulation to the leaders of the trade unions. A struggle must be developed on two fronts against these deviations, and the positive examples of our activity should be popularised.

THE ROLE OF COMMUNIST CELLS IN THE FACTORIES.

(Strikes at ————— in Shanghai).

The most important lesson to be derived from the strike struggles in China is the fact that they have proven the necessity of creating active Communist cells in the factories.

Only a cell which is capable of working independently, of waging everyday agitational and organisational work among the workers, and which reacts to the moods and requirements of the working masses can make use of all the opportunities for attracting the mass of the factory workers into the economic and political struggle.

In the everyday conduct of its policy, tactics and slogans in the enterprises, the Communist Party must have efficient cells as a foundation. A strike at a Shanghai flour mill may serve as one of the best examples in this regard. In the summer of last year the workers there found themselves in a very difficult position due to repeated wage-cuts, and the Party cell bore the moods of the masses in mind. At a meeting of the cell it was first decided to conduct agitation, and on the following day to call a mass meeting at the gates of the flour mill. The organisational side of the conduct of the meeting was thoroughly discussed, and work distributed between the members of the cell. The mass meet-

ing took place the following day, and the workers decided to demand a two dollar wage increase. The militant mood of the workers rose considerably, and the workers declared a strike on the spot and decided to send their delegates to negotiate with the management. Our comrades pointed out the following: "If we are to force the capitalists to satisfy our demands, it is better that all the workers should go there together and present their demands." In response to this call, all the workers went with our comrades to the office, surrounded it and presented their demands. The manager categorically refused to consider them and called in the police, and thereupon the workers locked the gates of the flour-mill, barricaded them from inside, and gathered stones, iron bolts, etc. A half-an-hour later a big police detachment came on the scene, and tried several times to make their way into the factory, but they were beaten back by the workers. Then the police surrounded the mill from outside, but the result was that in the morning the management were forced to agree to the demands of the workers, and sent the police away.

In the case we have quoted the cell showed that it was in close contact with the working masses, and that it was able to lead a struggle. But it is impossible to train such cells, such cadres, in one

day—they must be tempered in the process of uninterrupted struggle, in the process of continuous work. The leading party organisations must improve their leadership over the activity of the cells, their representatives must take part in the meetings of the cells, and discuss all the questions connected with their activity with them, and should at the same time check their work, rectify their mistakes and help them in their work.

Finally, it must be noted that there are many weak spots and shortcomings in different spheres of our Party activity. Weak spots are to be noted in conspiratory work and struggle against agents-provocateurs. The Communist Party of China has had organisations, which grew up in the process of the struggle, but which collapsed or lost contact with the masses due to poor conspiratorial methods of work. This is one of the most important questions in the activity of the Communist Party of China and of the revolutionary trade union movement. But under the leadership of its Bolshevik Central Committee, the Chinese Party organisation will know how to make use of the positive experiences of the Party in this connection and will overcome the individual mistakes and weaknesses.

THE LATEST "FASCIST" MOVE OF THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

THE movement towards fascism in Great Britain continues to develop in its own way.

Ministers of the National Government continue their orations regarding British "democracy," while steps are taken to rob the masses of what still remains of "democratic liberty" in the conditions of capitalist Britain in decline. Not content with the centuries old law of King Edward III., under which fighters like Tom Mann have been arrested and sent to jail on the grounds that they *may* commit a crime if left at liberty—not content with the more than a hundred-year-old Incitement to Mutiny Act, under which individuals may receive a maximum penalty of penal servitude for life for attempting to undermine the allegiance of the soldiers of the King—not content with the "more than 68 Acts of Parliament under which the Englishman's castle can be invaded"—the National Government has decided to introduce a new law, the "Incitement to Disaffection" law.

What, then, does this new Bill propose?

The Bill takes as its starting point that "if any person endeavours to seduce any member of his Majesty's forces from his duty or allegiance to his Majesty he shall be guilty of an offence under this Act," and on this basis the following regulations are to be established: Firstly, that even *possession of any document* which might give rise to disaffection if circulated in the Army is an offence. Secondly, that if anybody "does or attempts to do, or causes to be done or attempted any act preparatory" to committing an offence under the Act, he shall be guilty.

Thirdly, if a magistrate has "reasonable ground for suspecting that an offence may be committed under the Act," he may issue a search warrant entitling the police to enter any suspected place "at any time, and if necessary by force," to search the premises and any and every person found there, if there are "reasonable grounds for suspecting" that evidence will be

(Continued on page 376.)